



Stone Temple News

August 2024

[OPEN THE ATTACHMENT FOR ACTIVE LINKS]

From the Minister's Study

By Rev. Rebecca Froom, Lead Minister

We are living in a historic summer, with tumultuous politics and escalating war. Now more than ever it is important to ground ourselves in our values. Our beloved UFPC covenant is one place where we find values for meaningful action, with the beautiful call to “cherish and sustain the web of life” and “to strive for justice, compassion, and peace.” Another place we can turn is to our Unitarian Universalist values.

This has been a historic summer for Unitarian Universalism. At the annual General Assembly (GA) of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in late June, delegates officially passed the new UU Values Statement in “Article II” of the UUA’s bylaws. While our Seven UU Principles will always hold a cherished and important place in our UU heritage, we now have a new articulation of our UU Purposes, Values and Covenant to ground and guide the work of the UUA and its member congregations. We now place the value of Love at the center of our faith surrounded by the values of Equity, Generosity, Interdependence, Justice, Pluralism, and Transformation. You can read the full text of our new [UU Values and Covenant here](#). [A friendly reminder to please open the PDF of this newsletter in order to click on live links]. I also encourage you to read this UU World Magazine article [“At All-Virtual GA, Unitarian Universalists Center Love and Pledge Bold Social and Climate Justice Action”](#) to learn more about the process of adopting this new values statement and other meaningful work at this year’s GA.

The process to revise the “Article II” of the UUA’s bylaws and reframe our UU Principles as a new UU Values and Covenant statement took many years. There were robust conversations at several General Assemblies, articles in the UU World, and online surveys from the Article II Commission. At UFPC and across the country, we reflected on the new UU Values in worship and other settings. Some of the comments I most appreciated hearing at GA came from individuals who were part of the 1985 revision of Article II that reworked the 1961 articulation of our UU Principles. These speakers reminded us that we are part of a living tradition where we are called to bring new language to ground and guide our values and beliefs every generation or two to reflect and respond to the ways that we and the world are growing and changing. It took time for the UUA to grow into our 1961 and 1985 UU Principles. We will grow into our newly reframed UU Values and Covenant with time. We will find the words and phrases that most resonate for us as individuals as we wrap our minds and hearts around this renewed statement. Congregations will slowly update the UU Values page on their website and the UUA will print new pamphlets and bookmarks. We will create art, music, and religious education materials to make these newly worded UU Values and Covenant come alive.

This historic summer, may we begin to find grounding and guidance in our new UU Values of Equity, Generosity, Interdependence, Justice, Pluralism, and Transformation as we place Love at the center of our faith.

I will be away on study leave and vacation for much of August, returning August 26th. While I am away, Nan Moore, our Affiliate Lay Community Minister, will be on call for pastoral care.

Introducing Elizabeth Foster
Our New Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

On August 15th we will welcome Elizabeth Foster to our church staff as our new Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry! Elizabeth recently graduated from the Boston University School of Theology with a Master's of Divinity in Interfaith Leadership. She most recently served as the Ministerial Intern at First Parish Canton UU, and offers accessibility consulting through her business, Crooked Heart Consultancy. She is passionate about religious education and storytelling, having served as a DRE before attending seminary, and is thrilled to now be in this role at UFPC. Elizabeth is deeply committed to disability justice, and is the Vice President of EqUual Access and Co-Chair of the Rider's Transit Access Group for the Boston MBTA. Her ongoing academic research focuses on Unitarian and Universalist involvement in the historical eugenics movement. In her spare time, she enjoys singing, English Country Dancing, and writing poetry, as well as trying new recipes. She lives in Roslindale with her cousin, Evan, and her cat, Jade.

In her first weeks with us, Elizabeth will be collaborating with our staff and the Religious Education Committee. Her first Sunday will be September 8th when we return to the sanctuary for our annual Water Ceremony and the beginning of a new worship-year. Many thanks to the DREFM Search Committee for their hard work this spring and summer: Albert Vaughn, Andrew Carleen, Mahmooda Qureshi, Mariah Maines, Peter Kovach, and Rev. Rebecca Froom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For our most up-to-date announcements, please see our "Weekly Announcements" which are emailed to the congregation on Thursdays or Fridays, posted on our website and available by print on Sunday mornings.

Summer Garden Party

Saturday, August 3, 4:00–6:30 pm, in-person

You are invited to a summer garden party potluck on Saturday, August 3rd from 4:00-6:30 pm in the UFPC garden. Bring your favorite picnic blanket, yard game (like corn hole or badminton), or a favorite food to share. We look forward to seeing you. Let us know if you plan to attend.

–Marie-Louise, Joyce and Elizabeth, mariejm1961@yahoo.com, 857-526-2579

Sunday Summer Meditation

Sundays, 9:00–9:45 am, in-person

During the summer Sunday meditation will be offered in the garden from 9:00 - 9:45 am (weather permitting). We will start with a guided meditation, followed by a walking meditation, then silent meditation, and we will close by sharing thoughts and insights. (No meditation on the holiday weekend of Sunday, September 1st. Contact: Marie-Louise Jackson-Miller at mariejm1961@yahoo.com.)

Chalice Circle: "Climate Change:

Developing Resiliency to Meet the Challenges Ahead of Us"

Susan Curran and Josiah Shevlin, co-presenters, Karl DeBisschop, facilitator

Sunday, August 4, 10:30 am–12:00 pm, in-person and on Zoom

We are living in the age of climate change-warmer winters, hot summers, inconsistent weather patterns, rising sea levels and 100-year-old storms that occur almost annually. How do we develop resiliency to meet the challenges ahead, for ourselves and our vulnerable neighbors?

Each summer we gather in the parish hall on Sunday mornings for Chalice Circles rather than worship. Chalice Circles are a form of small group ministry which invites deep listening, reflection, and sharing on a thoughtful topic. Each Sunday a congregant leads that week's Chalice Circle, presenting the topic for reflection and discussion. The presenter is paired with a facilitator from our Chalice Circle leadership team. Chalice Circles run from June 23rd–September 1st. Childcare is provided.

Join by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82251479714>

Join by telephone: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 822 5147 9714

Kindred Spirits Discussion Group for Seniors

Tuesday, August 20, 10:00–11:30 am, in-person

Join us for a monthly discussion group, grounded in our UU values, where we reflect on current events and pressing social issues. This group is open to seniors aged 60+ and will meet on the third Tuesday of the month at our church. We will meet in the dining room. Coffee and tea are provided. Please contact Rev. Rebecca Froom with any questions at rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com or 617-803-1159.

Water for our Water Ceremony

You are invited to bring water to contribute to our September 8th Water Ceremony during the first Sunday worship of our 2024-2025 church year. The water can be from a place that is meaningful to you (near or far) and / or the water can symbolize your life journey this season – representing a joy, sorrow, change, hope, fear, or dream in your life now. (We will also have water available onsite during the service, so all may participate.)

Upcoming in September

September 8

On this **Ingathering Sunday**, we return to our sanctuary for the start of the worship-year. Our worship service, titled “The Invitation of Water” will be led by Rev. Rebecca Froom and Elizabeth Foster, our New Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry. We will hear music from our own Norman Corey and guest musician John Muratore on classical guitar. You are invited to gather on the Hancock-Adams Common in front of the church beginning at 10:15am to connect with UFPC friends and listen to classical guitar music provided by John Muratore. We will enter the sanctuary together at 10:30 am. In this multigenerational worship service we will celebrate our annual Water Ceremony. Please bring water from a place that is meaningful to you (water will also be available at the church, so all may participate).

Social hour following the service will feature ice-cream Sundays!

September 15

Our **UFPC Choir** will hold their first rehearsal from 9:30 - 10:10 in the organ loft. All singers are welcome! For more information contact our Music Director, Norman Corey, at ncorey@socialaw.com.

Our Sunday morning **Spirit Circle Religious Education Program** for children begins this day. For more information contact our Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry, Elizabeth Foster (after August 16th) at dre@ufpc.org.

Visitors Program Vignettes

By Bill Westland, Church Historian

As we go through one of the most divisive and contentious periods in American history, we should pay attention to United First Parish Church's own John Quincy Adams. We just celebrated his 253rd birthday with his annual Presidential Wreath Laying Ceremony. I am going to repeat a few of his opinions and what others thought about him because they are really relevant in today's divided society. Nobody ever took public service more seriously than Adams and when President James Madison appointed him to be our ambassador to Russia in 1809, Adams said: "I implore the blessings of Almighty God upon my undertaking. I humbly ask for the continued consciousness of purity in my motives, and, so as far as it has been or may be deserved, the approbation of my countrymen." Can we say the same of our elected officials today? Nobody ever outlined what should be the goals of American foreign policy more succinctly than Adams when President James Monroe appointed him Secretary of State in 1821. This is what he said. "Whenever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions and her prayers. But she does not go abroad in order to seek monsters to destroy. Americans do not go abroad to slay dragons they do not understand in the name of spreading democracy." Were truer words ever spoken?

As President he defined the role and function of government in language which still holds true today. On one occasion he said: "The great object of government is the improvement of the condition of those who are party to the social contract." Another time he said: "It is the responsibility of government to improve the condition of life of those who are subject to its authority." Finally, he said: "It is the duty of government to foster the moral, political and intellectual improvement of society. The goal of government is the progressive improvement of the governed." Both political parties today seem to have forgotten what Adams said. In 1838 when he was a Congressman, he received a petition from a group of women about women's rights, which the House refused to hear. He admonished the House members by saying: "I say women exhibit the most exalted virtue when they depart from the domestic circle and enter the concerns of their country, humanity and their God." When he defended the mutinous slaves in the famous Amistad trial he said: "When you come to the Declaration of Independence, that every man has a right to life and liberty as an inalienable right, the case is decided. I ask nothing more on behalf of these unfortunate men." Perhaps the most important thing that he said that is being ignored in today's political climate was his admonition: "Always vote for principles. Though you may vote alone, you may cherish the reflection that your vote is never lost."

President Martin Vanburen, a long time bitter political foe of Adams after Adams' death wrote: "Mr. Adams was an honest man, not only incorruptible himself but also an enemy to venality in public service. He loved his country, desired to serve it usefully, and was properly ambitious of the honor of doing so." This is high praise from a political opponent. Can we say the same of our current political figures? Charles Francis Adams had this to say about his father: "Amidst the storms of civil commotion he nursed the vigor which nerves a statesman and patriot. For more than a half century whenever his country called for his labors in any capacity, he never spared them in her cause. A son worthy of his father." Our minister, William Parsons Lunt, at John Quincy Adams' funeral service held here at United First Parish Church on March 11, 1848 had this to say: "We should review his long, useful and illustrious life, recount the principal incidents of his career, and draw from his well-known character lessons that may be edifying. Where in history can you find such a glorious destiny assigned to a single life?" John Quincy Adams and his integrity should be a role model for all of us.

Church Staff and Lay Leaders

Staff: Rev. Rebecca Froom (Lead Minister), Rev. Dr. Sheldon Bennett (Minister Emeritus), Nan Moore (Affiliate Lay Community Minister), Elizabeth Foster (Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry) David Bousquin (Office and Property Manager), Norman Corey (Music Director)

Board of Governors: Fiona Sankey (President), Jacqueline Rodriguez (Vice-President), Clyde Cortright (Treasurer), Erwin Schaareman (Assistant Treasurer), Patricia Sullivan (Clerk), Karl DeBisschop (Stewardship), Claire Fitzmaurice (Social Justice Action), Juan Ramos (Communications), Marie-Louise Jackson-Miller (Congregational Life), Peter Kovach and Andrew Carleen (Religious Education), Jordan Waterworth (Worship Committee)

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