



FIRST PARISH CHURCH IN WESTON

JOURNEYS OF FAITH

2016 - 2017



*Whoever you are,
wherever you find yourself
on your journey of faith,
you are welcome here at
First Parish Church in Weston.*



349 Boston Post Road | Weston, Massachusetts 02493
On the Town Green at School and Church Streets since 1698
781-893-7798 | www.firstparishweston.org

Why Church?!

It's All About Connecting . . .

with God, your truest self, and community

Connect with God. Sometimes it is a matter of wanting to find a definition of God that makes sense to us – our own definition, not our parents' or ancestors' conceptions. Often it comes out of a feeling that “something is missing in my life” and wanting a more profound sense of relationship and belonging. That is what worship and prayer and a spiritual life are all about.

Connect with our true selves: transform our imperfect lives. Perhaps we might prefer using other words like “self-improvement,” “education,” or even “faith development.” We want opportunities to acknowledge our limitations, to grow, to learn, to serve others.

Connect with community: make the world better. Parts of our world are just magnificent blessings. Some parts are broken, in pain, hurting. There is a wonderful Hebrew phrase – *Tikkun olam* – meaning “to repair the world.” We need opportunities to help, perhaps not the whole world at once, but our part.

Come join us in the journey of faith.



Tom Wintle
Senior Minister



Bristol Huffman
Director of Family Ministries

Our Welcome:

Gathered in 1698 by the Puritan settlers of Weston, First Parish was founded to serve all the residents in our neighborhood and was known as the “parish” or town church. This town church identity still guides us, for we seek to be a vibrant community church.

Our Covenant:

We worship and educate ourselves and our children in ways formed by the Puritans and reformed by the Unitarians, guided by our covenant:

*“In the love of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus Christ,
we unite for the worship of God and the service of humankind.”*

Our Aspiration:

“You will be cared for, and you will be asked to care for others.”

FIRST PARISH FAMILIES

Intergenerational community is important to us at First Parish, and we strive to engage people of all ages in our worship and programming. All are welcome on Sunday mornings!

What to Expect on Sunday Mornings

Worshipping Together

We invite children and youth to join their families for worship in the sanctuary, starting at 10:30 am every Sunday. After about 20 minutes worshipping as a whole congregation, children and youth leave the service together to go to Church School.

Each week, Church School begins with time in the beautiful Sears Chapel. Completed in 1930, it was designed specifically for children's worship. In the chapel, we sing together, play games, take an offering, pray, and explore a story from the Bible.

Church School

Every Sunday is filled with fun learning activities designed to engage children's imaginations, spirits, and senses. Our innovative lesson plans were custom-designed for First Parish and often incorporate technology, drama, music, art, games, and nature. Although staff members supervise our Church School program, dedicated high school volunteers lead many activities.



Childcare

Childcare is available on Sunday mornings from 10:15 am – noon in our nursery playrooms, supervised by trained professional staff and volunteer youth.

Children's Music Program

Our goal is to make all singers feel welcome, regardless of skill level or experience. Gwen Coburn directs our Junior Choir of young singers that rehearses weekly and offers songs in worship throughout the year.

7th & 8th Grade "Covenanting" Program

Students meet on Sunday afternoons, when they learn not only about our own Unitarian Christian tradition but about other religions as well. Throughout the year, we visit local houses of worship to experience "neighboring faiths" first hand. Over these two years, students are encouraged to develop and articulate their own beliefs about religion, ethics, and the world through discussion, reflection, and service learning. At the culmination of the 8th grade year, each student composes and delivers a personal Faith Statement to the whole congregation.

Want to learn more or get involved?

Contact Bristol Huffman, Director of Family Ministries
(dfm@firstparishweston.org/781.893.7798, x 102)

FIRST PARISH CHURCH IN WESTON
SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS
2016-2017

- September 11 – Welcome Reception.** After worship, we invite everyone to enjoy a light lunch in the Parish Hall and to greet friends, old and new.
- October 16 – All-Parish Project Forum.** Come to the Parlor after worship for a discussion of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Anderson.
- October 16 – Annual Weston Crop Walk.** This walk combats hunger locally and nationally. Meet at the Town Hall at 1:00 pm to walk or make a donation in support of walkers.
- October 30 – Weston-Wayland Interfaith Action Group Book Talk and Panel Discussion.** This event, to be held at Wayland’s Islamic Center of Boston starting at 3:30 pm, will include a talk by Linda Wertheimer, author of *Faith Ed: Teaching about Religion in an Age of Intolerance*, followed by a panel discussion with Tom Wintle participating.
- November 6 – Intergenerational Pancake Breakfast.** Turn your clocks back one hour on Saturday night and then enjoy this annual pancake breakfast for one and all before worship.
- November 6 – All Saints Sunday Pilgrimage.** After worship, join Tom Wintle and David Miller on a bus tour of Unitarian and Universalist sites in Boston.
- November 9 – Kristalnacht Observance.** At 6:00 pm, join Tom Wintle and our Rabbi-in-Residence Melvyn May on the front lawn of the church where we will light candles to remember the Holocaust/Shoah and rededicate ourselves to oppose hate, discrimination and bigotry everywhere.
- December 4 – Soup on Sundays.** During Coffee Hour on many winter Sundays, enjoy a cup of hot, homemade soup or take a container home, with proceeds to benefit our Partner Church in Torda.
- December 9 – All-Parish Christmas Supper & Carol Sing.** Make reservations early for this great tradition for all ages.
- December 11 – All-Music Sunday.** Senior Choir presents “A Baroque Christmas.”
- December 24 – Candlelight Christmas Eve services** at 4:00, 5:30, and 7:45 pm.
- January 29 – Annual Budget Hearing.** Discuss the proposed budget in the Parish Hall after worship.
- February 5 – Annual Congregational Meeting.** Meet in the Parish Hall after worship to vote on the budget and elect new committee members.
- April 2 – All-Music Sunday.** Senior Choir presents Haydn’s oratorio *Creation*.
- April 9 – Palm/Passion Sunday.** Beginning with the annual palm processional, the service will recall the triumph and the tragedy before the Easter resurrection.
- April 14 – Good Friday Service of Tenebrae.** The service begins at 7:00 pm in Sears Chapel.
- April 16 – Easter Worship.** One service at 10:30 am, followed by the annual Easter egg hunt.
- April 28 – Women’s Tea.** We invite women and girls of all ages to share a time of memories, fellowship and refreshment in the church parlor beginning at 4:00 pm.
- May 21 – Grade 8 Covenanting Sunday.** Grade 8 students will share their faith statements during worship.
- June 4 – Church School Sunday/All-Church Picnic.** Come celebrate our children and their completion of the year’s church school program. Afterwards, enjoy great food and fun at the annual picnic!

CONNECTING WITH A FAITH COMMUNITY

You will be cared for, and you will be asked to care for others.

Tom & Bristol at Bruegger's
Mondays – 1:30-2:30 pm
Drop by to chat about First Parish,
your spiritual journey,
or any other topic on your mind.
Begins September 12th.



Dinner Connections Monthly Suppers: Participants are assigned to a group that will meet about once a month at group members' homes for dinner and socializing; all groups gather at the church on a Saturday in the spring for a gala potluck.

Women's Bible Study: Join Bristol Huffman and others in the Parlor for a quiet time of reflection on scripture, art and poetry. *Wednesdays at 8:30 am.*

FPCW Book Group: We choose books from a variety of genres so you're sure to find something you like! *Meets monthly, usually on Thursday mornings at 9:30 in the Parlor.*

Pastoral Callers are a quiet yet vibrant presence at First Parish, especially by spending intentional, one-on-one time with parishioners experiencing difficulty. We invite you to participate in their Caring Network that provides occasional assistance to parishioners – you might provide a meal, a ride, or deliver flowers. The Pastoral Callers also offer occasional forums on topics relevant to family life.

New this Year: "Here Together" Parent Conversations! Confidential peer support for parents of youth/young adults experiencing difficult life transitions or struggling to thrive. For more info, contact Bristol Huffman (dfm@firstparishweston.org). *Meeting monthly starting Sept. 19 at 5:00 pm in the Parlor.*

Volunteer to Join a Committee: Lay leadership in a congregationally led church is vital to our communal health and ability to minister to ourselves and others. New committee members are voted in at the Annual Meeting in February.

Parish Library: We have a collection of books on topics of religion and personal development for adults and children available for borrowing.

Miles & Gertrude Hanson Memorial Garden: A lovely garden where you can enjoy a peaceful interlude. It also is a resting place for cremated remains of parishioners – call the Church Office for more information.

Senior Choir: Come sing with us – a full-year commitment not required! Aided by professional section leaders, the wonderful and digitally re-mastered Hook & Hastings organ, and dedicated director and organist, the Senior Choir strives to present music from many different cultures, ages, and traditions. All-Music Sundays in 2016-2017 will feature "A Baroque Christmas" and Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*.

Senior Men's Lunch
Bring a bag lunch to the
First Parish Library for
stimulating conversation
and camaraderie.
*First Tuesdays of each month
(October – June) at noon.*



CONNECTING WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Make the world better.



2016-2017 All-Parish Project: Conversations About Race

For many years, we have focused on finding, funding, and finishing a special project that has the potential to change us and change the world. This year, we will seek to educate ourselves through books and guest speakers and make available other resources on the topic of race relations.

Sunday Forum, October 16

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness
by Michelle Alexander

Outreach Efforts: First Parish provides more than \$45,000 in financial grants every year, along with volunteer support, for many outside organizations in three distinct areas:

- **Victims of violence**
- **Developmental needs of infants & children**
- **Homelessness and affordable housing**

Bristol Lodge Suppers: On the fourth Wednesday of each month, dedicated volunteers prepare and serve dinner for clients of Bristol Lodge's soup kitchen – presenting a great opportunity for multiple generations to work together to make the world a better place.



Syrian Refugee Relief: Having raised \$100K for refugee relief by Summer 2016, we will continue our efforts to raise awareness and funds to help people forced from their homelands by the battles taking place in Syria, taking our efforts beyond First Parish in the coming months.



Knitters & Stitches Prayer Shawl Ministry: First Parishioners and friends gather at noon in the parlor most Mondays for conversation and creative handwork, including the knitting of prayer shawls given to others in times of stress that they may be surrounded by the love of God and of First Parish. They also create many items for children in need.

Church School Outreach Initiatives: Our curriculum encourages children and youth to think about ways to make the world better for others. Some hands-on initiatives benefit the Weston Council on Aging, Mary's House Shelter in Waltham, The Outdoor Church in Cambridge, and Heifer International.

Partner Church in Torda (Transylvania), Romania: First Parish has partnered with the Torda congregation since 1992, highlighted by exchange visits between both churches' ministers and three groups of First Parishioners traveling to Romania, the latest in the summer of 2014. We offer the support of our friendship as well as financial assistance. In winter months, we also sell homemade soup during Coffee Hour with proceeds benefitting the Torda church.



2017 Sabbatical Guest Preaching Schedule

- January 8 – Greg Mobley.** Rev. Mobley is Pastor at First Baptist Needham and Professor of Christian Bible at Andover Newton Theological School. He is inspired by and seeks to be inspiring about the Christian story and is also entranced by Judaism, spending much time at Hebrew College.
- January 22 – John Nichols.** Rev. Nichols is *Minister Emeritus* of the UU Society of Wellesley Hills and has served many UU congregations as Interim Minister during the past 15 years.
- February 12 – Margaret Bendroth.** Ms. Bendroth is Executive Director at Boston's Congregational Library. She received her B.A. from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in history from the Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of several books and recently served as President of the American Society of Church History.
- February 26 – Martin Copenhagen.** Currently President of Andover Newton Theological School, Rev. Copenhagen was Senior Minister of the Wellesley Congregational Church for many years. He has published six books including *Living Faith While Holding Doubts* and *Words for the Journey: Letters to Our Teenagers About Life and Faith*.
- March 5 – Jeff Barz-Snell.** We welcome back Rev. Barz-Snell, a former FPCW Ministerial Intern. He is the Minister of The First Church in Salem, UU, one of the oldest Protestant churches in North America (1629). The church was involved with the famous witchcraft trials of 1692 but is now a center of reason and tolerance.
- March 12 – William Schulz.** Rev. Dr. Schulz is one of the stars of liberal ministry, having served as President/Executive Director of Amnesty International USA for 12 years, and also as President of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the UU Service Committee.
- March 19 – Sarah Stewart.** Rev. Stewart is Minister of First Unitarian Church in Worcester, having previously served the Starr King UU Fellowship in Plymouth, NH for 11 years. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, she received her M.Div. from Harvard University and integrates her liberal Christian upbringing with a commitment to the free and inclusive faith of Unitarian Universalism.
- March 26 – Mary Margaret Earl.** Rev. Earl is Executive Director and Senior Minister of the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury. She is also Community Minister for the First UU Church in Providence and was President of the Board of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless.
- April 9 – Sarah Drummond.** Rev. Drummond is Dean of the Faculty & Vice President for Academic Affairs at Andover Newton Theological School. She has also served Harvard as Assistant Dean of Freshmen and Chaplain for Religious Education at Memorial Church.
- April 16 (Easter) – Anne Robertson.** A graduate of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Rev. Robertson is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Bible Society. She authored the Bible study series, *Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series*, piloted at FPCW.
- April 23 – Robin Bartlett.** Rev. Bartlett currently is Minister at First Church in Sterling, MA, an ecumenical federated church affiliated with Unitarian, Congregational, and Baptist denominations, and an exuberant and growing congregation.
- May 7 – Tom McKibbens.** Rev. Dr. McKibbens served the First Baptist Church of Worcester and most recently the First Baptist Church in America (Providence, RI). He is a longtime friend and colleague of Tom Wintle.
- May 14 – Tony Lorenzen.** We welcome Rev. Lorenzen back to FPCW, where he previously served as Ministerial Intern and Interim Director of Family Ministries. A graduate of Harvard Divinity School, he has served churches in Billerica, MA, Southlake, Huntsville and Houston, TX, and currently is Minister of Hopedale (MA) Unitarian Parish.