

# BRIDGING



Newsletter of the First Parish Church, Bridgewater, MA, Unitarian Universalist September 2015

## From the Minister...

### "Life is a Journey"

"To finish the moment, to find the journey's end in every step of the road, to live the greatest number of good hours, is wisdom." ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

To say that "life is a journey is a cliché" from which many bits of wisdom – and advertising – have been spun:

"Life is a journey, not a destination." ~ Lynn H. Hough, 1920.

"Life is a journey. When we stop, things don't go right." ~Pope Francis

"We believe that life is a journey, and we are all travelers." – Malaysia Airlines

Our worship theme for September is "Journeying," and we'll be thinking about the journey of life we're all on. We return to our sanctuary again on Sept. 13th for our traditional ingathering service and Water Communion (BRING WATER!). Many of us have gone on actual journeys this summer, and our tradition is to gather a bit of water from one or several of the places we visit – or from home – to create a ritual in which we share a bit of ourselves as we gather again in our beloved community of memory and hope. So our first service highlights personal journeys – the diversity of places we've come from and gone to as we travel the road of life together.

But in a broader sense, we are all part of a vast stream of travelers from whom we are descended. Almost all Americans descend from ancestors who once came from "away." Some were dragged here, some were driven here by hunger or fear, and some were drawn here by the promise of a better life. "Give me your poor, your tired, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free." ~ Emma Lazarus

Just now, we are being treated to a rising tide of xenophobia, especially in political campaigns, not only here but also in many parts of the world, most prominently just now across Europe and in the United Kingdom. Greece is being flooded with immigrants from North Africa just as her people are suffering through their own devastating economic downturn. Masses of immigrants have gathered at Calais hoping somehow to start new lives across the channel in England. Much as we hear the complaints from here and in Europe, though, the top hosts of refugees are in the Middle East, where half of Syria's population has been displaced either internally or to other countries in the neighborhood. The UN High Commissioner on Refugees reported in June that there are now 59.5 million refugees worldwide, more than at any time since WW II.

If we are to speak about peace on earth (as we will on our Peace Day Sunday, Sept. 20th) we must speak about the forces of war and climate change and competition for scarce resources that are today the leading causes of displacement. How can we as Unitarian Universalists make a difference?

On Sept. 27 Matt Meyer, a very talented UU musician from Arlington Street Church, will lead the service in words and music, holding up the journey we are on together as Unitarian Universalists and reflecting on one of the earliest recorded migrations in history, the journey of the Children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Did I mention that everyone should BRING WATER to our first service on Sept. 13th?

In Faith,  
Rev. Paul

## Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher

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Peter Jacobson

Sonia D'Alarcao

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## Social Justice Committee

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## Membership Committee

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## Green Sanctuary Committee

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# Worship Services in September 2015

## Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of September will be Journeying. Many of us literally will have just come back from our summer journeys. But more symbolically, we are beginning on a new journey together into the church year ahead.

### Worship Services:

September 13 – Water Communion Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher. The Lay Worship Leader is Sam Baumgarten; Ushers are Debbie Baumgarten and Quentin Jarvis.

If you have collected water from your journey over the summer, please don't forget to bring a small container of the water to pour into our communal bowl. This ceremony symbolizes the places... far or near... we've been to over the summer and the anticipation and joy of gathering together again.

September 20 – Peace Sunday worship with Rev. Paul and the Peace Committee. The Lay Worship Leader will be a Peace Committee member; Ushers are Pat and Jack Hart

September 27 – Worship with UU musician Matt Meyer. Lay Worship Leader is Stefan Michaud; Ushers are Korin Zigler and Mark Young.

**About Worship Associates, Lay Worship Leaders & Ushers.** We hope all members who are physically-able can fulfill at least one of these tasks twice a year. If you have a particular date you'd like to volunteer, please tell us in advance and you'll likely get your choice. Otherwise, if you are a church member and can do this, but haven't volunteered, expect to be assigned a couple of dates.

Rev. Rachel or another worship committee member will be calling people during the week to remind them of their assigned dates. But if you cannot fulfill the role on this date, please try to find a substitute and let Rev. Rachel know as soon as possible. You may phone her at: 508-378-3904 (home phone) or 508-944-6436 (cell) or email [revrayted@comcast.net](mailto:revrayted@comcast.net).

**Worship Committee meeting:** The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is Tuesday, September 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend. You may share your ideas with us about worship... or simply sit and observe the meeting.

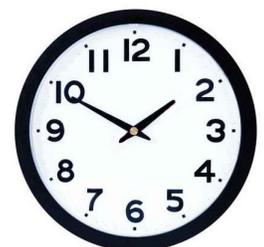
**Committee members:** Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Chair; Denise Haskins, McKayla Hoffman, Stefan Michaud, Tom St. Thomas and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

## MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Paul is on site in Bridgewater on the second, third, and fourth Tuesday and Thursday of every month and the first, third (and fifth) Sundays of every month. On the first full week of the month, Rev. Paul is off. Also, staff meetings are held each Tuesday from 12:30 – 2:30pm.

All regular business should be handled before or after the first week. Emergencies of course come up, and he understands that. You can reach Rev. Paul by email ([psprecher@uuma.org](mailto:psprecher@uuma.org)) phone (home: 781-210-2016, cell: 781-774-0086).

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.



## Working for Justice with the Brockton Interfaith Community

by Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Community Minister



As most of you know, I've been working with the Brockton Interfaith Committee (BIC) for the past couple of years. I am now serving on its Board of Directors. This year BIC is working on two issues which I think would be particularly good for our members to be involved with. First is getting a progressive tax rate into our state constitution and second is the continuing Jobs Not Jails campaign.

BIC and its parent organization, the Mass Community Action Network (MCAN) are partners in the Raise UP MA campaign. Its goal this year is to get a Fair Share state constitutional amendment on the ballot. Presently, Massachusetts is stuck with a flat income tax. This amendment would allow the state to tax millionaires at a higher rate than the rest of us... to give the state much-needed revenue. The MCAN website describes it like this:

"In our great state of MA, young adults are drowning in debt because of unaffordable state college tuitions, public schools in our urban areas are starved for funding, and we face huge needs in the transportation sector.

"With our partners in Raise UP MA, we are launching a campaign to raise much needed state revenue for transportation and education through a tax on millionaires. We are organizing to win a Fair Share constitutional amendment. This will increase the income tax rate for people earning over a million dollars by 4% on their income over one million dollars. We will raise over \$1 billion in new state revenue, dedicated to public schools, state university affordability, and to transportation, fixing roads, bridges and mass transit."

Our task as volunteers would be to collect voters' signatures (like we did the last couple of years for the minimum wage and earned sick time issues) to get this amendment on the ballot. We would have between September 8 and early November to do this. I will be approaching some of you later about joining me in this campaign. More details can be found at: <http://raiseupma.org/fair-share-tax-and-progressive-revenue-campaign/>.

BIC is also continuing with the Jobs Not Jails Campaign, seeking prison reform. What interests me (and I hope you) is that there's an omnibus bill called the Justice Reinvestment Act, before the legislature. It addresses such issues as ending mandatory minimums for drug offenses and bail reform. I plan to attend a rally and public hearing at the State House on Wednesday, September 23 and would love company for this event. (See: <http://jobsnotjails.org/jnj/>)

Lastly, BIC will be celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Thursday, November 12 with a dinner and program. This is also major fundraiser for BIC. There will be a raffle of some interesting items: wine, food, crafts and tickets to sporting events. We already have one pledge of support from a church member. Our resident artist Mark Young is donating a painting. (Thank you, Mark!) Dinner tickets will be \$50 per person and \$75 per couple. There's a reduced rate of \$300 for a table of 8. More details to follow next month. I plan to attend a rally and public hearing at the State House before the Joint Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, October 14 and would love company for this event. (See: <http://jobsnotjails.org/jnj/?p=557>) There will probably be a bus leaving from the BIC office in Brockton that morning.

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## **READ TO ME, FATHER PROJECT UPDATE**

Over the last two years members and friends of the First Principle Project at First Parish have been working to create a special program at the Bridgewater Old Colony Correctional Center. In conjunction with the Department of University and Community Partnerships at Bridgewater State University (BSU) and staff at OCCC we have initiated the *Read to Me, Father* program in Bridgewater. This program allows a father to record a video of himself reading a book to a child (or children) under 10. The video and a copy of the book are sent to the child to strengthen the bond between father and child.

The genesis of this idea came from a workshop led by Rev. Michael Walker at Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton in which several members of First Parish participated. Our text for the workshop was *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander which was the UUA common read for 2012-2013. As a result of reading this book and the discussion held at Messiah, participants wanted to work in some way with prisoners. At one of the meetings we learned about a program at Concord MCI called *Read to Me, Daddy*. Since we have both a prison, and a university with a Criminal Justice major in Bridgewater, starting a similar program here seemed to be the answer. Along the way were several detours including the search for a new president at BSU, change of personnel at the prison, and delays in procuring equipment. However, we are soon to reach our goals: helping the fathers with their reading skills, preparing them to create the video, and very soon doing the actual filming.

The video equipment and materials are being provided by OCCC. Susan McCombe, director of the Department of University and Community Partnerships, has arranged for a budget of \$800.00 a year for books for the program. This will be paid to First Parish for distribution by the First Principle Project Committee.

A very dedicated group of volunteers has completed the Volunteer Orientation program at the prison, held a series of training meetings, and has met for several weeks with a small group of fathers at the OCCC getting ready to make the videos. By the end of August the first videos should be ready to be mailed to the children. The members from First Parish are Rev. Paul Sprecher, Sonia D'Alarcao, Betty Gilson, Lisa Rue, Lisa Troy, Angela Sheble; and Susan Irish as a committee member. Two volunteers from BSU are Ben Carson, English Dept. Chair, and Abigail Wotton, a graduate student. We are looking forward to working with future groups of fathers. If you are interested in joining us or would like more information, speak with one of the group.

### **Helping the Hungry**

Our **Social Justice Committee** collects non-perishable food items for the local food pantry. We invite you to help the hungry in our local area by bringing canned and packaged foods on the first Sunday of each month. A box is placed at the front of the sanctuary, near the piano, to receive the items, which the Social Justice Committee members gather and bring to our local food pantry.



### **Feeding the Homeless\***

Our church volunteers provide lunches for **MainSpring House** shelter for the homeless in Brockton. We gather on the **first Monday\* of each month at 9am in the lower parish hall** to prepare and wrap 100 bag lunches, which are then brought to the shelter by one or two of our volunteers.

You can help in many ways, including joining us at the above gatherings, donating baked goods, other food items, and paper goods as needed, taking home some of the fixings and preparing parts of the lunches (such as tuna or egg salad) at home for the volunteers to assemble at the church, or simply donating money toward the cost of the lunches, which is about \$100 per month for 100 lunches.

Please contact Betty Gilson (774-226-0942) for further information, or just drop by that morning to help.

*\*The lunches are prepared on Mondays to be eaten on the first Tuesday of each month. If the first Tuesday falls on the first day of the month, the lunches are made on the final Monday of the previous month.*

## **MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHEES**

Since the first Tuesday of September is September 1, September MainSpring House lunches will be prepared Monday, August 31 at the church. Donations and volunteers are always welcome. Speak with Betty Gilson.

## **CARING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, September 14 at 7pm the Caring Committee will meet at the home of Mary Hatfield. If you have issues to be addressed by the committee, please contact a member.

Betty Gilson, Andrew Harding, Mary Hatfield, Louella Mann, Jan Thompson, Korin Zigler

## **SPECIAL PROGRAM AT FIRST PARISH**

On Thursday, September 17 at 7pm the church will be presenting a special program on immigration issues, one of the major concerns in our country today. This program will be in conjunction with the Bridgewater State University (BSU) English department and other departments. Ben Carson, chair of the English Dept., has invited Margaret Regan, author of two important books on immigration to come to BSU to speak with students involved in a special multi-discipline program on campus. The students will be using her book *Detained and Deported* in their course. She will participate in programs and classes at BSU on Friday, September 18.

Since another of Ms. Regan's books, *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona-Mexico Border*, was the UUA Common Read for 2011 - 2012, she has been invited, and has agreed, to do a presentation at First Parish. This will be for the general public and area U U churches. The Social Justice Committee (SJC) will be coordinating arrangements for the program on September 17th. Please share this information.

## **ANNUAL CELEBRATION FOR PEACE**

Sunday, September 20 the Eleventh Annual Celebration for Peace will be held in Bridgewater. Special programs, many at First Parish, will begin at 8:00 am and continue through 4pm. Plan on joining in these events. See the flyer for complete details.

## **T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB**

Friday, September 25 at 7pm the T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet location TBD. This will be the meeting at which we will discuss *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. (This selection was originally scheduled for the Aug. meeting, but has been moved to this later date.) Please join us.

## **NOTICE FROM THE CHOIR DIRECTOR**

If you would like to join the First Parish Choir this year, please see Denise at coffee hour after the Water Communion Service or email her at [denisehaskins@comcast.net](mailto:denisehaskins@comcast.net). We'd love to have you! Don't worry if you can't read music, you can help us make music even if you can't read!

## **SHARE THE PLATE CHARITY FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER**

The September and October Share the Plate Charity will be Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC). Half of the undesignated collection for those two months will be donated to BIC. First Parish is now a member of this faith based advocacy group which is working for issues that are close to the hearts of people at First Parish. Our community minister Rev. Rachel Tedesco is a member of the BIC Board. Please read her report in this issue of *Bridging* to learn more about BIC's activities and how you can help with its work.

# Bridgewater Celebration for Peace

Sunday, Sept.20, 2015 8:00 am - 4:00 pm



## Participating Locations:

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 50 School St.

Bridgewater United Methodist Church, 35 School St.

Central Square Congregational Church, 71 Central Sq.

Bridgewater Town Common

- 8:00 am A Taize Service of Praise, Worship, and Music (Bridgewater United Methodist Church)  
9:00 am Service (Central Square Congregational Church)  
9:30 am Breakfast (Central Square Congregational Church)  
10:00 am Gathering Music by Peter Jansen (First Parish UU)  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm Services at area churches  
12:00 pm Coffee Hour (First Parish UU)  
12:30 pm Gathering at Peace Pole followed by Procession to area churches (First Parish UU, lawn)  
1:00 - 3:00 pm Peace-themed Activities: crafts, hanging of Peace banners, music, drumming, dances, and chanting (Town Common)  
3:00 - 4:00pm Barbecue (First Parish UU)  
4:00pm Closing Ceremony at Peace Pole (First Parish UU)  
Ongoing: Street Art Showcase on the Theme of Peace, an opportunity to do positive graffiti (Central Square Congregational Church)  
For more information contact:  
Betty Gilson 774-226-0942 or <mailto:gillyflower@verizon.net>



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

21 SEPTEMBER 2015

[www.un.org/peaceday](http://www.un.org/peaceday) | #peaceday

PARTNERSHIPS  
— FOR PEACE —  
DIGNITY FOR ALL

## AUDIO VISUAL TRAINING: We need help!



We have new Audio Visual equipment. We are willing to train. It's fun and not difficult. FYI:

1. Thanks so much to Alan Yabroudy for the updates and new set up of the sound system in the sanctuary.
2. Thanks also: Jan Thompson who has single handedly (almost) operated the camera and recording at church services for years.
3. There is a new, small sound system for the Upper Parish Hall.
4. In addition there is a new projector and screen that can be used in either location.

We need people who are willing to learn to set and operate these during services and events. It is important to have more than the 2 or 3 we have now. It's rather simple once demonstrated.

For those willing to help, we will show you how. First demonstration will be Sunday August 30<sup>th</sup> about 10:30ish, just after the summer service ends.

We will also set up another time, with refreshments, to walk you through it all before regular church services res Please contact David Wilson; 813-789-8059 or email [dcw@wilsonsevent.com](mailto:dcw@wilsonsevent.com)



## Off the Common Coffeehouse

*Located in the Upper Parish Hall at First Parish Church  
50 School Street, Bridgewater*

### October 3, 2015 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

*featuring*

## Greg Greenway

### Coming Attractions

**November 7** — Hungrytown with Diane Battistello

**December 5** — RiLeY CoYoTe with Cardboard Ox

**January 2** — Low Lily with Robin O'Herin

**February 6** — The Honey Dewdrops (\$15.00)

**March 5** — The Lords of Liechtenstein  
and Pesky J Nixon (Split bill - \$15.00)

**April 2** — Anni Clark  
and Curt Besette & Jenn Kurtz duo (Split bill)

**May 7** — Susie Burke & David Surette with Andy & Judy

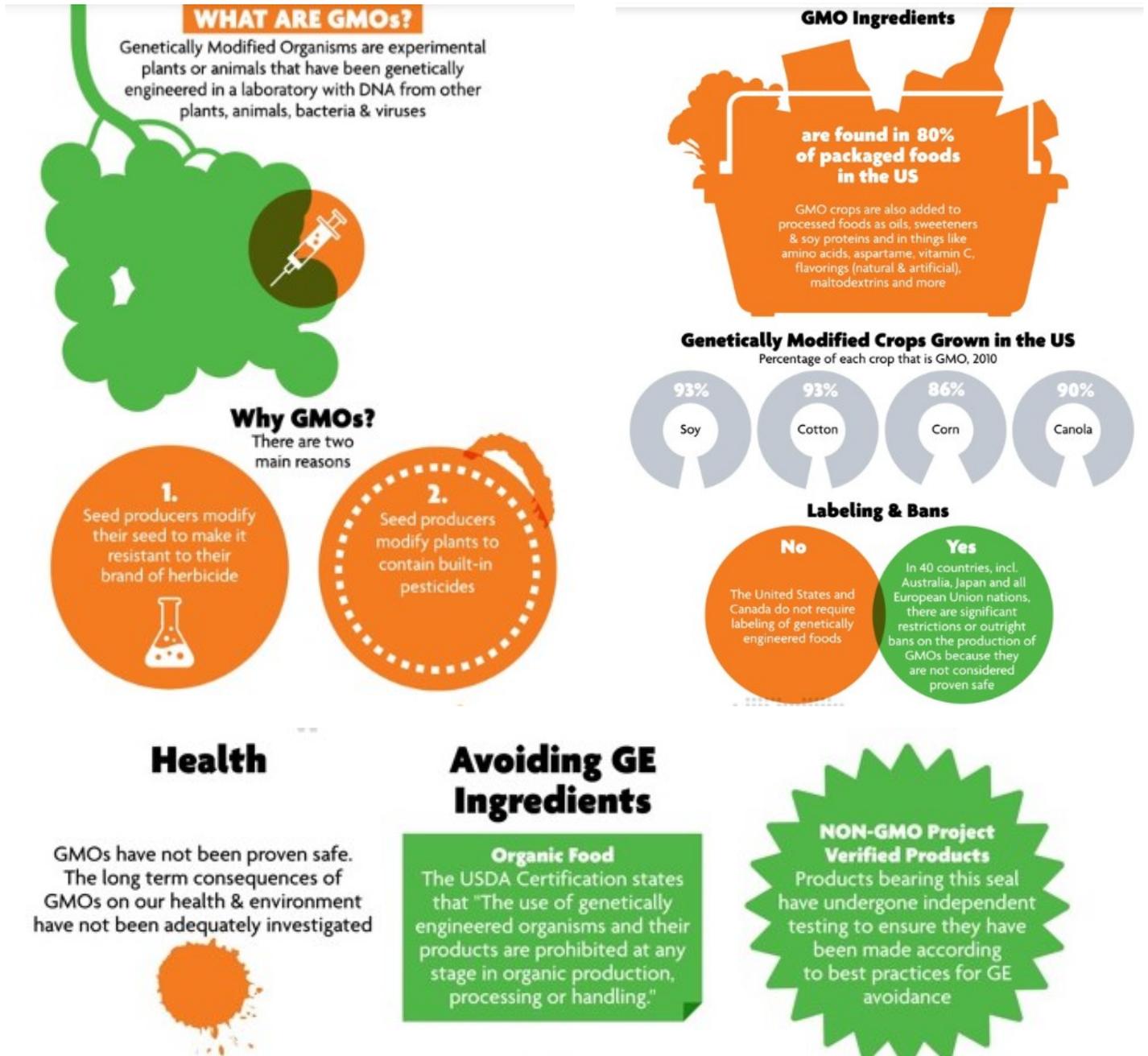
*Admission: \$13*

*Enjoy our homemade  
Refreshments*

*Sign up for open mike!*

## Green Sanctuary's Tip of the Month

Lately, the topic of genetically modified foods (GMO's), also known as genetically engineered (GE) foods, has been in the news. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the DARK Act, a bill that would overturn state GE food labeling laws, block the FDA from ever implementing mandatory GE food labeling, and allow food companies to continue to make misleading "natural" claims for foods that contain GE ingredients. Let's educate ourselves about genetically engineered foods!



<http://healthresearchfunding.org/pros-cons-genetically-modified-foods/>

# September 2015 CALENDAR

Monday, August 31

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

Tuesday, September 1

7:30pm Committee Council meeting in the UPH at First Parish

Saturday, September 5

9am-12noon All-Church Clean-up

## Sunday, September 6

No service today

## Sunday, September 13

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Water Communion Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher.

Monday, September 14

7pm Caring Committee will meet at the home of Mary Hatfield

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 17

5:30pm RE Committee Meeting

7pm Special Program on Immigration at First Parish

## Sunday, September 20

8am –4pm 11th Annual Celebration Peace at First Parish (see flyer in this newsletter)

10:30am Peace Sunday worship with Rev. Paul and the Peace Committee.

Tuesday, September 22

7:30pm Worship Committee will have their monthly meeting in the church office

Wednesday, September 23

Public Hearing and Rally at the State House for the Justice Reinvestment Act

Thursday, September 24

7pm Social Justice Committee will meet at First Parish

7:30pm Parish Committee will convene at First Parish for their monthly meeting

Friday, September 25

7pm T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club—location TBD

## Sunday, September 27

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with UU musician Matt Meyer.

### First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist

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