



First Parish, Hingham

Old Ship Church

Unitarian Universalist

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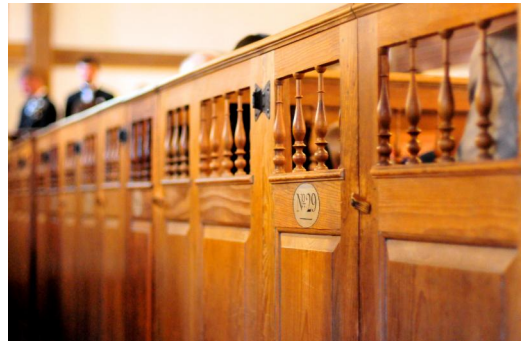
January 2015 Newsletter

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A Month of Sundays...

Sunday, January 4

Ken's first two sermons of the new year will relate to his "winter class" which has been re-titled: "The Meaning of Life: For Stoics, Epicureans, and the Rest of Us". The first of the two sermons will be "The Meaning of Life for a Stoic" - with particular focus on the "Meditations" of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and the many ways his reflections still speak to us today. Is ours an era more in need of a genuine "stoicism" than ever - once we understand more of the ancient school of philosophy that goes by that name?



Sunday, January 11

"The Meaning of Life for an Epicurean". "Epicurean" is a much misunderstood and sometimes maligned word. But maybe the epicurean life is the best life... once we understand the meaning of the ancient philosophy that goes by that name. (Or maybe in order to best navigate our lives we need to learn to be a bit stoic and a bit epicurean ...)

Sunday, January 18

"What Would MLK Preach Today?" As we honor Martin Luther King, Jr., it seems well worth reflecting on what we imagine his message might be today in the wake of Ferguson and Staten Island and Cleveland... and much else, in our nation and in our world.

Sunday, January 25

This will be our annual pulpit exchange with Second Parish. Ken Read-Brown will be preaching at Second Parish in Hingham, and Second Parish's pastor, Stephanie Shute Kelsch, will be preaching at Old Ship. Stephanie's sermon will be: "Bach's Guide to Unitarianism".

Interestingly, Ken is descended from First Parish Old Ship's first minister, Peter Hobart, and Stephanie is descended from the first minister of Second Parish, Daniel Shute. So this apparently is an exchange made in heaven.

Most Sunday mornings...

Most Sunday mornings at Old Ship begin with gatherings in small circles in the Parish House parlor for sharing and spiritual enrichment. And we are all invited! Our web site has more detailed information about these opportunities:

- The "Bodhisattva Study Group" meets at 8:30 on the first and third Sundays of each month,

offering time for meditation and then conversation concerning a Buddhist book the group is reading - which this year is "No Time to Lose" by Pema Chodron.

- "Men's Breakfast" meets at 8:30 on the second Sunday of each month for sharing and conversation (and bagels and coffee and tea too).
- "Women's Breakfast and Knitting" meets on the fourth Sunday of each month at 8:30 for... breakfast and knitting... and conversation.

Childcare available before Sunday services: If you plan to attend the Men's Breakfast or Bodhisattva Study Group or Women's Knitting or a committee meeting on Sunday morning and need childcare in order to do so, please call our office by Wednesday before the Sunday, and we will do our best to arrange childcare in the nursery for you.

Musing *from the Minister's Desk*

The year 2014 draws to an end in the midst of a disconcerting swirl of national and world events - Ferguson, New York, Cleveland... ISIS, Taliban bombings, continued drone strikes, North Korea... climate change, immigration reform, partisan dueling worse than ever...

And as the headlines do their work on our hearts and minds, we navigate at the same time our personal lives of joy and sorrow woven fine. Well might we wonder in an idle moment: What is the meaning of life? In a way, that's the question I address one way or another in every sermon I preach and every class I preach. More accurately it is a series of interlocking questions that we each no doubt ask ourselves... at least from time to time: What is the meaning of life? What is the meaning of my life? How can I make my life meaningful? And so on.

Further, if we are to make New Year's resolutions that have any significant value, ought those resolutions not be rooted in some sense (however vague it might sometimes be) of life's meaning or of the meaning we wish to make of our lives?

It is with such musings in mind that I prepare to teach my twenty-seventh (or so) "winter class" here at Old Ship, which this year will be "The Meaning of Life For Stoics, Epicureans... and the Rest of Us." Originally I had planned just to focus on the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius - his personal reflections composed largely from the perspective of the ancient school of philosophy known as Stoicism. But more recently I've been thinking that we need a broader canvass in order to more fruitfully feed our contemporary need for meaning. So though the *Meditations* will be our primary text, we'll also be looking at other Stoic writings and a little from Epicurus too. And though Stoicism and Epicureanism have often been viewed primarily in contrast to one another, they are more accurately complementary.

As always, everyone is invited to these conversations - which this year will be Wednesdays from January 7 through February 4 (take your pick between 1:00 and 7:00 - or both!). Details are repeated elsewhere in the newsletter and on the web site. It's just the next installment of this more than a quarter century of shared "conversations about things that matter" - conversations that have enriched my life more than words can express... and I hope this is true for many of you too.

Whether or not you join us for these gatherings, I wish you all a New Year filled with blessings... and if hard times come your way, may you have all the love and support you need. Old Ship - and I - are here when you need us.

Peace and blessings,
--Ken

My Parish House office hours are ordinarily Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday beginning about 10:00. Monday is my day off, and Thursday my sermon writing day. My primary phone contact is through the Parish House office - 781-749-1679. The office answering machine includes my cell phone if you need to reach me quickly - since when I am not in the office I am either working in my study at home, or making visits or attending meetings elsewhere. I can also be reached on email.

--Ken

Religious Education Notes

Dear Old Ship,
We have put the first term of "church school" to bed... Finishing with a flourish; yesterday's wonderful nativity tableau...

And just as everything does at this time of year, the end of the old is immediately followed by the start of the new...

That's my way of saying that we need teachers for the upcoming term; the theme will be "Science & Nature, Wonder & Awe." (We only have two signed up. Yikes!)



My colleague Dan Harper has written up a wonderful handbook for volunteer teachers, I've used a bit of it below to help you decide whether or not volunteering to teach is something you can consider.

Volunteer job description: Sunday school teacher

Goals of this volunteer job:

- * "Transforming ourselves, each other, and the world."*
- * The overall goal of [Old Ship's Sunday morning religious education] is to help children have fun and build community, gain religious literacy, learn basic religious skills, and prepare children to become UU adults should they choose to do so.*
- * To grow spiritually and religiously yourself, to deepen your own Unitarian Universalist faith.*

Time frame:

- * Working in a team, serving as a Sunday school teacher on Sunday mornings January 4th through April 5th (i.e., about 15 times), for an average of 2.5 hours a week. Scheduling details can be arranged directly with the DRE and your teaching team.*

Statement of Accountability:

Sunday school teachers report to the Director of Religious Education, and are also supported by the Children/Youth Religious Education Committee, the Board member whose portfolio includes youth ministry, and adults who provide logistics support.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- * Willingness and ability to do ministry with children.*

- * *Willingness and ability to grow and develop as a Sunday school teacher.*
- * *Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of in-service trainings when offered, and/or engage in self-directed study of teaching in a religious education setting.*

Benefits and opportunities:

- * *Opportunity to be a positive influence in the lives of children.*
- * *Expenses for workshops and trainings paid upon prior arrangement with the Director of Religious Education.*
- * *Direct access to Director of Religious Education for support.*

Many hands make light work...

Please contact me to volunteer or to ask any questions you have...

Beverly Tricco

Director of Religious Education

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Educating Hearts and Minds

OLD SHIP LIFE LEARNING PROGRAMS

A full schedule for 2014-2015 programs - including classes as well as ongoing groups open to all - is posted on our web site; fliers are also available on our literature tables.

The Meaning of Life For Stoics, Epicureans...

and the Rest of Us five sessions, Wed. Jan. 7-Feb. 4, 1:00 and 7:00 - Ken Read-Brown

Are you a philosophical Stoic without knowing it? You may realize that you are and have been for a long time after you read portions of the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius along with a few of the Discourses of the Roman slave Epictetus; and then compare with some of the writings of Epicurus (maybe you're an Epicurean...). In any case, together we'll discover why and how these writings can still inspire us and guide us. For more information and to sign up contact Ken at 781-749-1679 or oldshipkrb@gmail.com.



So You Want to Meditate

Saturday, January 17, 2:00-4:00 (*note change in time*) - Ken Read-Brown

Whether you are a long time meditator or wish to begin, this second of three gatherings this year will offer some basic instruction in mindfulness meditation and in Eknath Easwaran's passage meditation. There will be time for questions and conversation, and plenty of time to meditate. For more information and to sign up contact Ken at 781-749-1679 or oldshipkrb@gmail.com.

Children of the Same God

Please join us on Thursday, January 15 at 10:30 a.m. when Susan J. Ritchie will speak on her book *Children of the Same God: The Historical Relationship Between Unitarianism, Judaism, and Islam* in the Performing Arts Center in the Derby Clubhouse at Linden Ponds. Susan Ritchie is the parish minister at North Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Lewis Center, Ohio. She holds a doctorate in cultural/religious studies from Ohio State University. She has published many articles and chapters on Unitarian Universalist history and polity, American

religious history, comparative religion, cultural theories of religion, and the literature, theology, and history of Ottoman Islam. She is also secretary and member of the board of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

--- Eva Marx

Among Us

We extend deep sympathy to Herb McMeekin and all his family. Herb's wife of 64 years, Betty, died on December 13. Herb and Betty have been members of Old Ship for most of their married life, and have contributed in a variety of ways over all these years. A memorial service for Betty will be held at Old Ship on Saturday, January 3, at 11:00, with a gathering to follow in our Parish House.

Tom Potter's back surgery has once again had to be postponed because of an infection. We extend continued thoughts and prayers to Tom and Betty during this hard time.



We share the sad news that after a brief illness Old Ship member Janice Mullen died on Christmas Eve morning at her home in Hull. We extend our deepest sympathy to Janice's son Matthew, known by many of us at Old Ship; to her former daughter-in-law Kelly; and to her cousins, nieces, and nephews. Janice was a devoted member of our choir and much beloved by all of us at Old Ship. She will be dearly missed.

Visiting hours will be from 2:00 to 4:00 on Tuesday, December 30, at Hamel, Wickens & Troupe Funeral Home, 26 Adams Street, in Quincy. Ken Read-Brown will lead a brief service at 3:00. A memorial service for Janice will be held at Old Ship on Sunday afternoon, January 11, at 3:00, with a reception to follow in our Parish House.

Thanks to Old Ship Carolers!

Once again this year we sent forth a spirited (and tuneful!) chorus of carolers to sing at Harbor House, Bridges, and at two Old Ship homes. Many thanks to all: Pat Bianco and her grandchildren Lexi and Jake, along with Jayden Squires-Lee; Laura Burns; Davalene Cooper; Eric Cornetta and daughter Liza; Eric Espinoza; Peter Lochtefeld; Anne McGuire and daughter Katie and Katie's cousin Samantha; Cynthia McKeon and David White; and Ken Read-Brown.

Please send any items for "Among Us" either to Julianna Dunn in the Parish House office (office@oldshipchurch.org). Like our Candles of Joy and Sorrow on Sunday mornings, this page helps us to knit the fabric of community.

Nurturing Community Council

We talk about nurturing a lot at Old Ship. We talk about it A LOT in the Nurturing Community Council. But, what do we really mean when we use that word? Have we

over used it and, therefore, diminished the importance of it? It's a beautiful concept; "to help someone or something grow, develop or succeed". I also am drawn to the third definition (according to Merriam Webster) ; "to hold (something such an idea or strong feeling) in your mind for a long time."



What do WE mean when we use it? As a community, we decided to become nurturing. We have intentionally set forth to help our community grow, develop and succeed. Are we aware that this is what we are doing when we say hello to a new face or an old friend? When we listen to someone, truly listen, during fellowship hour and hear about someone's struggles or success, are we conscious of active nurturing? When we pour a cup of coffee with a smile, are we realizing that this simple act grows our community?

We are a special community at Old Ship; more diverse than obvious at first glance. We have many talents, skills and opinions. That is part of what makes us so special. What can set us apart from perhaps the other communities to which we belong is that we are here by choice. We have chosen to be Old Shippers. We have chosen to be a community. We have chosen to be nurturing. That is something that I hold in my mind each and every day.

- Janet Asnes, for the Nurturing Community Council

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Social Justice Council

Hingham Food Pantry donations

159 Lbs of food donated by Old Ship congregation to the Hingham Food Pantry on Sunday, December 14! The total donated during October, November and December totaled 630 lbs. Thanks to all for the generous donations.

We will continue the food donations throughout the spring. Here are the dates approved by the Nurturing Community Council: January 18, February 22, March 29, April 25, May 31, and June 14.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SJC annual potluck dinner on Saturday evening January 24

We are excited to have presenters from three organizations addressing hunger and food insecurity: Hingham Food Pantry, Boston Food Bank, and Lovin' Spoonfuls.

Bring a dish to share and be prepared to learn more about what these organizations are all about.

Looking ahead to Sunday, February 8: the SJC will sponsor soup and a movie at 12 p.m. in the Parish House.

Donations to Guest At Your Table--if you did not drop off an envelope in the Meeting House, please make a donation online at <http://www.uusc.org/welcome-to-guest-at-your-table>. Be sure to include that you are from Old Ship in Hingham on the online form where it asks for your congregation. And remember, all donations are matched dollar for dollar by the congregation at Shelter Rock.

SAVE THE DATE: January 10, 2015 at 5:30 PM

Fellowship Hall

A TIME TO SUP AND MINGLE WITH FRIENDS

The Board of Trustees invites everyone to a delicious evening out, all ages. Please bring something to share and join with friends as we start out the New Year in community. We will have a short presentation on our community's priorities, opportunities, and challenges. There is a lot going on in 2015...

Hope to see you there!

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