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First Parish, Hingham
Old Ship Church
Unitarian Universalist
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March 2021 Newsletter

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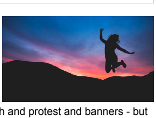
Deadline for April newsletter: Friday, March 19

Worship in March

Click here to join worship on Zoom @ 10:25 a.m. on Sundays!



Sunday, March 7
We are pleased to welcome as our guest preacher Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, Executive Director and Senior Minister at the UU Urban Ministry. Her sermon will be "Justice and Joy - A Reflection on the Inner Work of Making Outer Change." She writes: "We think of racial justice work as march and protest and banners - but there is much work we do within and between us, and much joy to be found in the journey." Ken Read-Brown will lead the service. Then, Fellowship Hour (on the same worship Zoom link) will be a forum to learn more about the UU Urban Ministry and how we might get more involved.

Sunday, March 14
During this season of our annual stewardship pledge drive, "Giving Like the Berries" will be Ken's sermon (inspired in part by reflections in Robin Wall Kimmerer's, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*). Are there lessons for all of us – and not only in this season – from traditions of the "giveaway" in indigenous cultures?

Sunday, March 21
"My 19th Century Transcendentalist Friends" will be Ken's sermon: Are Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, Henry Thoreau, and the rest of that group of transcendentalist women and men still relevant well over a century and a half later? In what ways were they relevant in their own time? (*This sermon is related to Ken's class this month - March 10 17, 24 - on the Transcendentalists; see details below in the Life Learning section.*)

Sunday, March 28
Palm Sunday falls at the beginning of Passover this year; so the words and music of our service will blend themes of these holy days on the Jewish and Christian calendars: hope, liberation, service, and courage.

A reminder that past worship services are available for viewing on our Old Ship Church YouTube site.

Colin McGinnis has been our tech wizard for Sunday services, expertly videoing and uploading each service. If you'd like to volunteer to learn the tech ropes to help out in the future, email Ken Read-Brown.

from the minister's desk
Musing

I've often shared this Archibald MacLeish poem with you as spring approaches. He didn't use the word miracle in this poem, but it seems to me that's pretty much what he was talking about; or at the very least the amazement and wonder at the particulars of spring's arrival. As for me, I'm okay with calling it all miracle; and we sure need reminders of miracles these days, don't we, even just the everyday kind (which is the sort I'm most familiar with). Anyway, here's the poem:

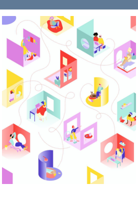
Why it was wonderful: Why, all at once there were leaves,
Leaves at the end of a dry stick, small, alive
Leaves out of wood. It was wonderful,
You can't imagine. They came by the wood path
And the earth loosened, the earth relaxed, there were flowers
Out of the earth! Think of it! And oak trees
Oozing new green at the tips of them and flowers
Squeezed out of clay, soft flowers, limp
Stalks flowering. Well, it was like a dream.
It happened so quickly, all of a sudden
It happened.

I've had a copy of MacLeish's poem on my desk for years – decades actually. I find that simply glancing at it, whatever the season, never fails to bring a smile of recognition: Yes, this is an amazing, even miraculous universe in which we live – of course filled with too much suffering and sorrow, but fortunately filled as well with the saving graces of miracle and beauty and wonder.

Whatever else your life brings you this season, may it also bring these and other graces.

Peace and blessings,
Ken
cell: 781-635-2060
oldshipkrb@gmail.com

Message from Janet Asnes
President, Board of Trustees



As we approach the year anniversary of us "closing" our doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic I find myself reflecting not on the challenges that this year has brought to us but on how we met those challenges straight on. First and foremost in my mind is that we never actually "closed". We shifted to an online presence immediately, holding our Sunday services on YouTube and increasing our Facebook presence. Now we hold live services, classes, meetings and discussions on Zoom.

Last March we had just kicked off our annual pledge campaign, Focus on Generosity, part of which was meeting face to face with one another to talk about Old Ship's finances and how best to achieve our goal of presenting a balanced budget at Annual Meeting. Having fallen short of our pledge goal, we presented a deficit budget. At that meeting, we as a deliberative body, made some changes to the line items and voted in a balanced budget. I am proud to say that as of January 31st, we have reached 80% of our pledge goal for the current church year. We budgeted for $264,000 in pledges for FY21 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021) and have received $211,467. That is 80% of our goal at the halfway point. Everyone at Old Ship has been focused on generosity.

It is March again and we are about to launch this year's Annual Pledge Campaign. The Board of Trustees is finalizing the budget to present at Annual Meeting. Again, our goal is to present a balanced budget. Soon you will be receiving communications about the budget and our goals for the year. Your Pledge Campaign Committee this year is Diane Elliott, Elizabeth Murry, Dave Petrie, Nina Wellford, Ginny Perelson and Janet Asnes.

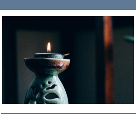
Proud of our historic Meeting House, what truly defines us as a congregation are not the four walls of a building but the strength of the connection we have to one another as a community. We have proven that this year. Not only did we not skip a beat, we are well on our way to meeting, and perhaps even surpassing, our pledge goal. May we continue to strengthen our commitment to one another and to our Old Ship Community.

Blessings,
Janet Asnes for the Board of Trustees

Parish House Update 2/23/21

Thanks to all the Old Shippers on the Building Design Requirements and Campus Integration Teams who have been diligently meeting to prepare for the next phase of the work on our potential new Parish House. We are waiting for the draft report from the archeological survey of the new Parish House site, and then, if all is clear, we should be ready to hire an architect. DJ MacKinnon will begin conversations with neighbors then as well. The Communications and Financial Resources Teams are forming, and eventually, we will need a team to focus on Interim Operations. Please let us know if you are interested in joining in.

If you have any questions or concerns or want to join the process, please feel free to call or email a member of the Project Management Team (Diane Morrison, Brian McPhillips, Ron Pollara, Nina Wellford, Tom Willson), the Board, or Ken. Thank you!



Among Us

We extend healing good wishes and prayers to Joan Drescher, who has been recovering from a stroke suffered early in February.

Ode to Mark

by Fan Leonard (on behalf of us all!)

Here's a hurrah for the best of sextons and all that he does for us! People believe in God although we can't see him. We don't see Mark Curran either unless we happen to be at the parish house when he is, but we believe in him implicitly because we see his good works!

Almost thirty years ago, accompanied sometimes by their two little boys, Mark took on the care of grounds and buildings of the Old Ship Church and Parish House. In all the years since, it has been more than just a job to Mark and to Crissi, his wife, who has been there whenever her help is needed. Whatever needs doing always gets done. If extra work is called for, Mark notices and does it whether he is asked or not.

In the fall when we come back and everything is clean and fresh and the floors of the parish house shine, we know that there are hours of work behind this wordless welcome. And on snowy or icy mornings, no matter how early you arrive, someone has been there ahead of you, and the steps are sanded, and the walk to the meetinghouse is cleared.

A number of years ago we asked Mark and Crissi to attend a ceremony of thanks from the whole congregation, but they would have none of it. Ironically, considering that we wish to honor them, we missed getting their names in the recent directory. We hope you will forgive us our imperfections! As we thank you both for your spirit of kindness and generosity and the pleasure of your company (for those of us who are lucky!)

Pastoral Care Leadership Team

We are all on the pastoral care team, but our "Pastoral Care Leadership Team" meets each month to share any concerns about parishioners who are ill, in the hospital, or facing other significant challenges, and to coordinate responses. If you have a pastoral concern to share with our Team, please feel free to contact any member of the group:
Ralph Brown
Liz Flint
Elaine Gomez
Alicia Harkness
Fan Leonard
Catherine Mayes
Carol Valentine
Joan Wilson
Ken Read-Brown

Music Notes

Dear Old Ship,

The days are getting longer and spring is around the corner. I love waking up early, and I am often up before the sun. One of my favorite things about being an early riser is seeing the sun peek up over the horizon and through the trees as the new day begins. For me, watching the sunrise with a cup of tea and a book is the perfect way to start the day. Recently, I've been reading from a book of poems called "the sun and her flowers" by Rupi Kaur. I would like to share a short poem that I've come back to reread several times.

despite knowing
they won't be here for long
they still choose to live
their brightest lives

sunflowers by rupi kaur

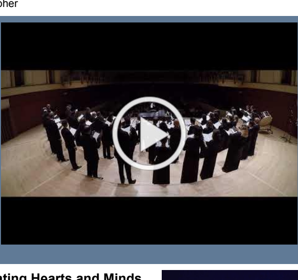
The ties between vocal music and poetry are strong. When the music and the words come together in just the right way, magic happens. The stronger the connection, the more meaningful the experience can be for both the listener and performer. It's no surprise that many singers are also avid poetry fans.

I will share one more poem with you, this time set to music. The text of *Sure On This Shining Night* is taken from a longer poem by James Agee called *Description of Elysium*. (Read the complete poem here.) Samuel Barber set these words for solo voice in 1940 and then later arranged the piece for choir. The beautiful harmonies and long turning melody compliment and support the text. This piece is one of those magic moments where the music and the words come together just right.

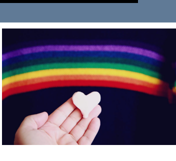
Sure On This Shining Night (Samuel Barber)

What are some of your favorite poems? Have any been set to music in a way that is meaningful to you? If so, send them my way -- I would love to hear from you.

Musically Yours,
Christopher



Educating Hearts and Minds



Greetings from the Children's Religious Education Program!

It has been a cold month! All of our activity in religious education has been online. We still have a lovely group of younger kids meeting on Zoom every week. They are eager to share stories and talk about what excites them. Recent topics of interest have been astronomy and animals. The youth group has also enjoyed playing games online and designing a new sweatshirt for the group. Look forward to pictures!

I recently used the word "queer" and someone in the congregation asked me for a definition. We have both youth and adults in the congregation who identify as queer so I thought I would use this space to provide an explanation. The University of Nebraska, Omaha defines queer as "a term for people of marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations who are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. This term has a complicated history as a reclaimed slur." If you want to hear more about how some folks use and experience the word "queer," I really enjoyed this article, 9 LGBTQ+ People Explain How They Love, Hate, and Understand the Word "Queer". *A warning that this article does reference slurs and has somewhat sexual language.*

As I think about the month ahead, I hope for more warm weather and the opportunity to get outside.

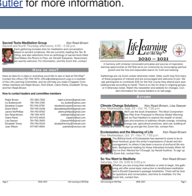
Stay safe folks <3
Chloë

Children's Religious Education

Storytime with Debbie — Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. join Debbie Squires-Lee for storytime and discussion on Zoom. This is open to children and youth of all ages, and content is geared towards grades K–4. For the Zoom link, please email Debbie Squires-Lee.

Youth Group — Typically gathers every Sunday afternoon in front of the Meeting House or on Zoom. We do a check-in. We share stuff we did during the week. We make plans and discuss current events. We advocate for a more just world. Please join us! Grades 8–12 are welcome. Contact Chloë or Maureen Butler for more information.

Life Learning on Zoom!

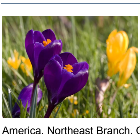


The 2020-2021 Life Learning brochure is available by clicking here.

This Month, Register Now!

Are the Transcendentalists Still Relevant?
Wednesdays, March 10, 17, and 24, led by Ken Read-Brown
7:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m

Emerson has long been a sort of Unitarian saint, with his young friend Thoreau (though not a church-goer) close behind. Walt Whitman, though not part of New England transcendentalist circles, was inspired by Emerson. Do these three 19th century white men still have worthwhile, even helpful, messages for us in the early 21st century? All are invited to this exploration. Contact Ken with any questions or to sign up.



Spring (Vernal) Equinox Poetry Circle

Friday, March 19, 7 p.m. on Zoom

Spring officially arrives on the 20th at 5:37 AM EDT. On the eve of the Equinox, you are invited to join the ongoing poetry renaissance in America, Northeast Branch, Old Ship affiliate! Bring and read or speak a favorite poem, one that speaks to new beginnings, or one that inspires you, challenged or comforted you, or even one that made you laugh out loud. Perhaps a poem that holds hope or a treasured springtime memory.

This evening is an opportunity to share and perhaps deepen our appreciation of poetry, and remind us of our connection with the natural cycles of life. Come with or without a poem.

For more info: Elizabeth Torrey (781-749-0543) elizabethtorrey@hotmail.com

"A light exists in spring
Not present on the year
At any other period -
When March is
scarcely here."
- Emily Dickinson

Ongoing Offerings

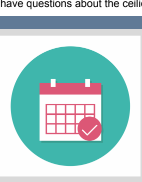
Bodhisattva Study Group — Gathers each Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. On the first and third Sundays, Ken Read-Brown leads us in a twenty minute meditation, then we read aloud (this year from *Welcoming the Unwelcome* by the American Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron), then we talk, concluding by 9:45. The other weeks will include meditation and conversation facilitated by members of the group. All are welcome. For questions and for the Zoom links, email Ken Read-Brown.

Men's Breakfast — Gathers on the *second Sunday* morning of each month at 8:30 a.m. for sharing and conversation. The next gathering will be March 14. Contact Ralph Brown or Rich Elliott for the Zoom link.

Women's Breakfast and Conversation — Meets on the *fourth Sunday* morning of each month. We will meet on March 28 from 8:30 a.m.–10:15 a.m. Open to all the women of the church. We gather to share our lives and enjoy one another's company. Conversations are confidential and, again, all are welcome! Click here to join.

Sacred Texts Meditation Group — Meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 4:00 p.m. We sit for about ten minutes meditation, then read a chapter from the *Tao Te Ching*, then we talk, concluding at about 5:15. All are welcome. For the Zoom link, email Ken Read-Brown.

Ceilidh! — Gathers on the first Tuesday of each month. So our next monthly song/poem circle will be gathering on Zoom Tuesday evening, March 2, at 7:00 p.m. Welcome approaching spring with music and poetry. Email Ken if you have questions about the ceilidh, or for the Zoom link to attend.



The Old Ship Calendar

The Old Ship Church calendar is available on our website by clicking here.

If you have an upcoming event or meeting and you want to see it on the calendar, please email Chloë in the office.

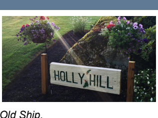
Additionally, if you contact information has changed, please email Chloë so she can update the Old Ship database.

Upcoming Committee Meetings on Zoom

Board of Trustees — Thursday, March 4, 7 p.m.
Building Design Committee — Weekly, Mondays 5 p.m. & Thursdays 7 p.m.
Campus Integration Committee — Weekly, Tuesdays 5 p.m.
Children's Religious Education Committee — Tuesday, March 2, 7:30 p.m.
Committee on Ministry — Tuesday, March 30, 7:00 p.m.
Deacons — Friday, March 19, 3:00 p.m.
Interim Religious Education Team — TBD
Pastoral Care Leadership Team — Tuesday, March 9, 1:00 p.m.
Worship and Music Committee — Wednesday, March 24, 5:00 p.m.

Contact Chloë for links to these meetings.

Serving Others



News from the Social Justice Council

Next SJC Meeting is Saturday, March 13, at 9 a.m. Please contact Davalene Cooper for the Zoom link. All are welcome to join us in supporting social justice service and action at Old Ship.

Coming March 7: How Might We More Directly Support the UU Urban Ministry (UUUM)? — We are excited that our worship service on March 7 will feature the Executive Director of UUUM, Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, who will be our preacher, sharing the service with our minister, Ken Read-Brown. Immediately following the service, we will have an opportunity to learn more about the programs of the UUUM. This Forum has been scheduled as a follow-up to our fall discussion regarding Old Ship's interest is engaging more deeply and directly in antiracism work. UUUM offers many opportunities to engage with the people served by the UUUM and the area around Dudley Square. Please join us for this important conversation about how we will continue our work to dismantle white supremacy and create a more beloved community.

Special Plate Collection for March: Holly Hill Farm — This month, our special plate collection recipient is Holly Hill Farm's programs that produce fresh and healthy food for local food pantries, including its Farm To Food Pantry (F2TP) Program. Through the F2TP Program, volunteers plant, grow and deliver organic vegetables and herbs to local food pantries on the south shore. This program is often staffed by high school students who are involved in planting, composting, cultivating, harvesting, cleaning and prepping vegetables, and finally, delivering the organic produce to three grateful food pantries. This is another opportunity for our congregation to support those with food insecurity--and to provide healthy food that is otherwise not easily obtained through food pantries.

You may make your donation online through the Old Ship website by designating your donation to Holly Hill Farm or by sending your check to the church office, payable to Old Ship, with Holly Hill Farm designated on the memo line. We thank all of you for your support of special collections during the pandemic!

Hingham Food Pantry — The food pantry continues to collect non-perishable food items on the following dates: Monday, March 1, 15, and 29, from 2:30-4 p.m. and Wednesday, March 3, 17, and 31, from 12:30-2 p.m. General food items needed include cookies, granola bars, canned beef stew, canned spaghetti, tuna, pasta sauce, white rice, mac & cheese, and hearty canned soups. Donations also can be dropped off at Stop and Shop (large bin located at the front of the store, near the customer service area).

Continued Thanks to our Father Bill's Cooking Teams — The six teams of volunteers from Old Ship and the surrounding community have continued to "Serve Others" throughout this pandemic year by providing nutritious meals for the residents at the Father Bill's Shelter in Quincy. Currently our six teams are well staffed but if a family wants to help out, Father Bill's can always use donations of 30 bagged lunches. Check out the Bag Lunch information at Father Bills-Mainspring Bag Lunches and then contact the volunteer coordinator Mary Ann Mendes if you would like to participate. Other ways of helping can be found at Ways to Help- Father Bills-Mainspring.

Anti-Racism "Drop-In" Book Group — We will meet on Sunday, March 21, at 7 p.m. via Zoom, to discuss David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI,* This is a part of Native American history that many of us do not know. At one point, members of the Osage tribe were quite wealthy because oil was discovered on their reservation land. And then members of the tribe were being murdered. If you would like to join our discussion, contact Davalene Cooper for the Zoom link.

Also, for your reference, here is our schedule for the remainder of the church year: April 11, at 7 p.m. Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye,* May 16, at 7 p.m. Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns, and* June 13, at 7 p.m. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow.*

Old Ship Social Justice Action Alert Network — Sign up for the Old Ship Social Justice Action Alert Network to find out about specific advocacy opportunities such as letter writing, advocacy calls, and participating in educational/advocacy events with local legislators. Send your email address to Davalene Cooper, Keeper of the List.

Help Texas

Both the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) are raising money to help those in Texas affected by the recent cold weather disaster.

The UUSC is providing emergency grants to existing grassroots partners in Texas who have been hard-hit by last week's extreme weather. Our focus, as always, is supporting communities whose access to aid is most limited. Please visit UUSC.org/TexasRelief to donate.

The UUA Disaster Relief Fund disburses grants to UU congregations and recognized UU non-profit entities. The Disaster Relief Fund is part of a covenant between the UUA and congregations, between congregations who give generously and those in need, and with our community partners. Through this work, we are able to embody our faith and values. Click here to donate to the fund!

breeze

Photos for Breeze

Breeze, Old Ship's new membership database, is able to display photos of Old Ship members and friends. Old Shippers who have created Breeze accounts are able to upload pictures of themselves to be displayed on their account page.

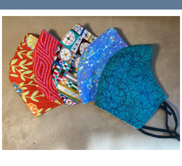
Photos of Old Ship members and friends that appear in the new printed 2020 Directory are available and can be added to Breeze account pages.
Old Ship managers of the Breeze database intend to add these photos to Breeze. This means that members and friends whose photos appear in the new printed directory will not have to do anything to have their photos added to Breeze.

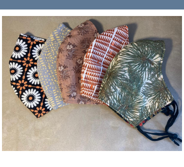
However, some members and friends may wish to not have their photos appear in Breeze. **If you don't want your photo to appear in Breeze, please send an email to Sharon Prehn, chair of the Old Ship Membership Committee. Her email address is prehn@verizon.net.**

If you email Sharon by April 1, telling her that you don't want your photo to appear in Breeze, she will make sure that it doesn't.

You may have a photo that you would like to use in Breeze instead of the one that appears in the printed directory. If that is the case, you are able to upload a picture of your choosing.

You can always log into Breeze by visiting https://oldshipchurch.breezechms.com/. If you haven't created an account, you can create one by clicking here. If you encounter an error, please feel free to reach out to Chloë in the office. We are excited to continue using Breeze to its fullest potential!





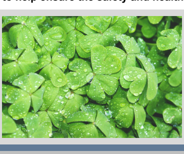
Masks Still Available!

As we turn to face the new year, let's toss out our old masks, and start afresh! Thanks to you, Old Ship crafters sold over 100 masks in December. They are proving to be an excellent design, and their unique fabrics make us feel great every time we put one on. So, check out our website HERE and refresh *your* face! All proceeds support our work at Old Ship. Above are some of the designs still available.

Important Parish House Reminder

Our weekday renter of the Fellowship Hall is "Launch" – a state-funded program whose mission is "to empower and encourage self-determination for individuals with disabilities by accessing work and social opportunities in a truly community-based setting." Launch is a source of very helpful income for us, but just as importantly we are pleased to be able to support their good work.

Please remember that the Fellowship Hall is exclusively for the use of Launch — do not walk through or enter for any reason on any day (even weekends). This is more important than ever during the time of Covid-19, to help ensure the safety and health of Launch clients and staff.



Happy St. Patrick's Day from your friends at Old Ship Church!