



The Open Door

First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist

923 Main Street

Fitchburg, MA 01420

Wil Darcangelo, Minister

978.343.6307 fitchburguu@gmail.com www.fitchburguu.com



March, 2022

2022 Volume 3

Sunday Services begin at 10:30am

Happy News from First Parish

It is such a pleasure to type these words! The Utility Room (former kitchen) is ALL BUT-TONED UP! It is clean and freshly painted, with not a trace of the sad area it was for the past few years. The insurance money was enough to cover this work. It is time for us to shop for a fridge! Members and Friends have so far donated \$525 toward the fridge fund. If anyone else wishes to send a contribution, just send a check with "fridge fund" on the note line. We cannot cook in a Utility Room, but we can use it as a staging area for serving food. So, bring on the catered events and the Coffee Hours!

CELEBRATE with us! Come to church on Easter Sunday for our Utility Room Opening Celebration - our first real, downstairs Coffee Hour in years! Bring your homemade edibles and let's have a First Parish food fest. We are good at that!

More Happy News from the Board: At Sunday's Board Meeting, we decided that masks are now optional at First Parish. It will remain this way unless Covid numbers rise again.

The office is working on getting 2021 calendar year pledge totals to you. If you know how much you gave, you do not need anything from us unless you get audited. We like to send them as a courtesy anyway.

Changes in Administrative Staff at FPC

PLEASE NOTE that The Office Administrator job is now in the capable hands of Andi Cunningham. Anything for the office should still be sent to fitchburguu@gmail.com.



Open Door News:

Submissions, for now, should be sent to the church email AND to Kathy Swantee. Andi has amazing tech skills and can help Kathy put the newsletter together. We will revert to sending it out by the first of each month, so let's get April notices in by 3/25.



Church Staff

Wil Darcangelo, M.Div, Minister	978.602.2684	wildarcangelo@gmail.com
Dr. Robin Dinda, Coordinator of Music	978.227.6311	rwdinda@verizon.net
Jon Shadd, Sexton	978.790.3512	
Andi Cunningham, Office Administrator	978.627.6253	fitchburguu@gmail.com
Alison Lake, Church Bookkeeper	978.407.3350	

Leaf Seligman, Minister Emeritus

Executive Board Members

Laura Doell, President	978 257 3249	ladoell@gmail.com
Kathy Swantee	978 340 2547	kaswantee@gmail.com
Fred Bernard	978.257.3249	bernardalfred420@gmail.com
Sara Dunham	978.340.2547	saracristian4@gmail.com

Our Vision

We choose to support a worldview of a community guided by compassion, informed by justice, empowered by love, and where all are welcome.

Our Mission

First Parish continues in its historic charge as social and spiritual innovators in service to the community of Fitchburg and through its example, the world surrounding it.

March Services

March 13- Deborah Demazure "Welcoming the Unwelcome"

March 20- Wil Darcangelo with Susan Navarre "Historic Women of Fitchburg"

March 27- Sedie Maruska - Topic TBA

April 3- Wil Darcangelo - "Believe What You Will"

Monthly Recognition Sundays

This year we have instituted a monthly Recognition Sunday that coincides with various national month-long observations. Each month we will invite a speaker from the local community who has demonstrated accomplishment and service in the spirit of the month being recognized. Each speaker/ recipient will be invited to give the Sunday message and will receive a framed certificate of recognition. The remaining months we have chosen to recognize and for which we should seek out speakers/recipients are as follows:

- **March: Women's History Month**
- **April: National Poetry Month**
- **May: Older Americans Month**
- **June: Gay Pride Month**

It may be possible to announce a call for nominations among the community for some of these and/or we may nominate/elect recipients from among the members of the worship committee or congregation. This project will be managed by the Worship Committee.

This project has the ability to raise our standing in the community, invite new people into the building, help defray the cost of guest speakers, and bring to the forefront of our minds the causes for which each of these months are recognized.

If you would like to serve on the Worship Committee, please contact Wil.

First Parish News

Merry Meet

The Pagan Group meets on the 3rd Sunday of the month at noon. We will hold an in-person Merry Meet for the first time in March! For more info about the group, please call or text Shay Bradham at 603-930-3863. You can also sign up for info at <https://www.purrfectlypagan.com/> or join the Meetup group at <https://www.BoardMembers.meetup.com/fitchburg-pagan-meetup-group/>

In case you need work done and were wondering...

Heath and Asa Boisvert are Boisvert Construction. In addition to revamping the old kitchen as a brand new Utility Room, they have done some excellent work on homes in Townsend. Laura and Al Doell recommend them highly!



Heath Boisvert

508.622.7167

Westminster, Ma

boisvertconstruction@gmail.com

Licensed and Insured

Cs 112762 HIC193545

Volunteers needed for Wil's ordination on June 12 after service

Thank you to Kathy Swantee and Sally Cragin for offering to run the activities during the Picnic! We have a list of tasks, and are looking for volunteers to organize other elements of this very special day. (Invitations; refreshments; set-up; clean-up etc.) We will picnic and have fun together until the Ordination at 2PM. Then it will be time for our FPC congregation, the Lancaster congregation, and Wil's guests to participate in Wil Darcangelo's Service of Ordination. This will formally recognize Wil as a member of the clergy, and confer the title of Reverend.

Please email the church at fitchburguu@gmail.com or call the office if you'd like to help out!

RE HAPPENINGS

The teens are transforming the classroom! We will be beginning a mural soon and adding some color to the walls!!! Updates as they happen will be added to the Open Door. -Yvonne



ANOTHER ORDINATION

Our CRE, Yvonne Andrews, will be ordained in NYC in early June! We will be proud to have two ordained ministers on our staff, as well as our Minister Emerita Leaf Seligman! Leaf will lead Wil's service of ordination.

DILLON FUND

Applications for receiving funds from the Dillon committee are due no later than Sunday, March 13. Application forms can be found in the folders on the wall outside the church office. Please read the guidelines before filling out the forms completely. The Dillon Fund is for the benefit of the active youth of the church.

Dillon Committee: Fred Bernard, Gail Beck, Dennis Pierce and Heidi Hertel-Therrien

FPC and the local Arts

*It is exciting to announce that Wil and the BA have initiated a collaboration between a local theater group and our church! City on a Hill Arts will be presenting **The Diary of Anne Frank** on **April 8/9** and **15/16** at **7:30PM**. After the production, the group will assist Wil in restoring Phillip's Hall. For more info about attending the show, contact Debbie Moylan at director@cityonahillarts.org or see their website at www.cityonahillarts.org*

Bowlarama for the Stratton Playhouse

Tom and Debbie Moylan, Laura and Al Doell, Jamie and Wil Darcangelo went bowling at Putnam Lanes Saturday night. This well-attended event was a fundraiser for Stratton!



Update on other BA initiatives

This highly functional committee, led by Ann Saalbach, vets all building use and then makes recommendations to the Board. We are currently working on an agreement with a start-up which could save us money yearly if all goes well. (still an initial proposal)

*We have met with Attorney Deb Phillips, who did some legal research for us about the future of the church building. **This was done at a sharply discounted rate, so please give Deb your thanks if you happen to know her!***

We have also met with Linda Mack from CFNCM in our ongoing efforts to create the best possible 501(c)(3) for ensuring that our building is usable, used and sustained into the next century.

From Your Board President

As I move into the last four months of my two-year term, I need to express the enormous sense of gratitude that joy that I feel. We made it. We made it through the pandemic intact. Not only intact, but in swimmingly good shape for our future. We have attracted new members and new attendees who may become members. We hired a CRE and a new Office Administrator. The Finance Committee, the BA and the Board have held regular meetings and guided FPC through it all. Wil has been instrumental in providing high-quality services every week that we are in session. In the initial shut-down time, the Membership Committee worked hard to provide an online connection group for members and friends. We reached out to new residents with a huge mailing as we moved toward reopening. There was an amazing Cleaning Day before we reopened which involved both Members and Friends of FPC. There were so many donations and pledges, too. I have wanted to write individual thank-you letters to so many people but I returned to work this year and I teach weaving classes at the Townsend Senior Center. It was imperative that the church keep on as a needed entity in the heart of Fitchburg—so that had to be my priority focus during this time. So I must resort to a group thank-you. Rest assured that I know who contributed in any way and I am forever grateful. People are assigning credit to me, but I was just the task-master. It took a whole village of Members and Friends to achieve the work it took to stay strong and come back stronger.

And now look at us. We are highly functional. We have held safe in-person services since September, with Robin Dinda's outstanding music and great speakers. Wil has built a base of speakers who we have loved and want to hear again. We are attracting more building users. There is a new person in the office who is phenomenal. She and I are whipping the office into a smooth, organized place to get things done. There is delight in seeing a more regular flow of people coming in and out.

So, Wil called it! He said from the beginning of the pandemic shut-down that we would "come out of all this stronger" and I agreed. And we are stronger.

What can all of us do to keep FPC strong? Come to service if you can. Keep pledges and financial donations coming in. And think about helping with just one thing before we break for summer. Maybe Wil's Ordination, or the resumption of downstairs Coffee Hour on Easter. If a group of you are so moved, maybe we could re-form the Social Justice Committee. If someone stepped up to Chair or Co-chair the Membership Committee it would be one item I could take off of my plate.

Perhaps some of you could think about being on the Board next year? We have a volunteer to be President (yet more cause for gratitude!) Being an At-large Board member is basically attending one meeting a month.

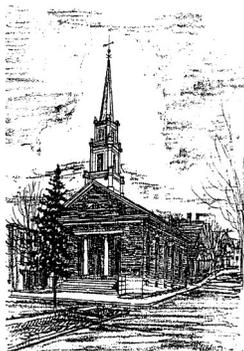
Could you help Wil by volunteering to be Liturgist at one or two services this spring? See if you can help with just one thing.

I have no relatives in MA other than my nuclear family, but I feel as if I have a true beloved community—and it's all of you! You make my heart full, and I wish for all of you to feel held the same way. You are held in my heart, and I think of FPC individuals often with fondness even if I am not reaching out to individuals as much as I'd like. Be safe, please. We all understand if you still choose not to be in public places. Please do reach out to me or Wil any time. We always respond.

With much love and thanks,
 Laura Doell

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