



“Workings”

*Make Connections, Get Involved
and Learn More about*

First Parish Unitarian Universalist in Arlington, MA

www.firstparish.info

email: office@firstparish.info

630 Massachusetts Avenue

Arlington, MA 02476

781-648-3799

*“Workings” is updated
throughout the year;
please visit our website
for the most recent version.*



Welcome to First Parish!

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion. We believe personal experience, conscience and reason are final authorities in religion. We put religious insights to the test of our hearts and minds. We uphold the free and responsible search for truth and meaning and are not bound to any statement of belief or creed. This is a free faith bound by our aspiration to act in love.

To learn more about First Parish, visit our website at www.firstparish.info.

First Parish is a welcoming congregation, warmly and openly welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. In 2024 and 2025, we received the denominational renewal status for our ongoing commitment to LGBTQIA+ people.

First Parish is a proud voluntary member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, www.uua.org.

Worship Services:

Sundays, 10:00 am, at the Meetinghouse (September - June)
and on Zoom (all year)

General Questions:

Email office@firstparish.info, or call 781-648-3799

First Parish Office Hours:

Monday through Friday, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm



Please send updates for the "Workings" booklet to clerk@firstparish.info or office@firstparish.info.

"Workings" updated September 3, 2025

*Dancing chalice graphic
by Kendall Dudley*

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Important Dates

2025 – 2026

Ingathering Service, 10:00am	Sunday, September 7
Arlington Town Day: Pie Palace & “Man-Made” Chili	Saturday, September 20
Ferry Beach Weekend (Saco, Maine)	Friday, Oct. 3 – Sunday, Oct. 5
New UU Classes, 9:00am – 12:00pm	Saturdays, October 18 & 25
Harvest Moon Fair (everybody pitches in!)	Saturday, November 22
Thanksgiving Sunday	Sunday, November 23
Winter Music Sunday	Sunday, December 7
“Embracing the Darkness” Service, 7:00pm	Friday, December 12
Winter Solstice Service, 6:00pm	Saturday, December 20
Candlelight Christmas Eve Services 4:00pm (<i>with ASL interpretation</i>) and 6:00pm	Tuesday, December 24
Stewardship Sunday	Sunday, March 1
Youth Group Service, 10:00am	Sunday, March 22
Easter Service. 10:00am	Sunday, April 5
Alliance Sunday	Sunday, April 12
Spring Music Sunday	Sunday, May 3
Shinn Service (social justice guest speaker), 10am	Sunday, May 10
Annual Meeting, 11:30am	Sunday, May 3
Coming of Age Sunday service	Sunday, May 31
Lay-Led Summer Services	June 21 – Sept. 6

Ministers and Staff

Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kūpono Kwong, Interim Lead Minister

leadminister@firstparish.info

Rev. Erica Federspiel Richmond, Parish Minister

parishminister@firstparish.info

Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education

mre@firstparish.info

Daniel Parsley, Music Director

daniel.parsley@firstparish.info

K Milano, Youth Group Coordinator

youthcoordinator@firstparish.info

Bella Jaffe, Religious Education Assistant

reassistant@firstparish.info

Kenneth Seitz, Pianist and Director of Music, Emeritus

Ebiere Omoregie, Office Manager

officemanager@firstparish.info

Allison Sillers, Administrative/Communications Associate

office@firstparish.info

General First Parish business is handled by the office staff.

Email office@firstparish.info, or call 781-648-3799

Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm,

The ministers are available by appointment, except as noted below. To schedule an appointment, the ministers are best reached by their individual emails (above).

Rev. Jonipher takes his sabbath on Monday and Wednesday

Rev. Stevie takes his sabbath on Wednesday and Saturday

Rev. Erica takes her sabbath on Monday and Friday

On Saturdays and Sundays, all three ministers prepare for and lead worship and other programming.

Make Connections at First Parish

First Parish is a welcoming, inclusive community offering individuals, families, and people of all ages opportunities for spiritual growth and meaningful connection. Our ministers and shared ministry teams provide care and support throughout life's journey to all in the wider community.

Easy Ways to Connect

- Stop by the Welcome table on Sundays after worship
- Sign up for our weekly e-Bulletin (email newsletter).
 - Emailed weekly on Thursdays (Wednesday in summer)
 - Sign up: www.firstparish.info/ebulletin
- Come to a First Parish event, such as those presented by the Alliance (our group for women of all ages)
- Join an affinity group. We have gender-based groups, like our Men's Group and the Alliance, age-based groups such as our Transition to Retirement and Aging Well groups, LGBTQ+ groups, and others based on shared interests and identity.
- Volunteer at a First Parish event, such as ushering on Sundays or helping at the Harvest Moon Fair in the fall (the Saturday before Thanksgiving).

The Path to Membership

- **Join a “New UU” class** (usually offered twice a year) to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, First Parish, and what membership means. You don't have to be new to UUism or join First Parish afterwards, though you will have that option.
- **Sign the membership book.** New members are also invited to participate in an optional membership ceremony during worship.

To learn more, or if you have questions, email NewUU@firstparish.info.

Religious Education at First Parish

Our religious education program (a.k.a. "RE") nurtures the spiritual growth and community life of children (nursery through middle school) and youth (high school). Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education, oversees this program, alongside the Religious Education Committee (a group of lay volunteers elected by the congregation). We also offer adult religious education through our "STAR" program offerings. To learn more about Religious Education at First Parish, you may talk with Minister of Religious Education Rev. Stevie Carmody (mre@firstparish.info) or a member of the Religious Education Committee (Children and Youth) or STAR team (Adult). You may also explore the "education" section of our website at www.firstparish.info.

Infants and Toddlers

We love the sounds of babies and welcome them in our worship services. If you would prefer to worship without your small ones, we have a nursery with caring and experienced staff. People of all ages are also welcome to take advantage of the video screen in the vestry (where we have coffee hour) if they want more space to move around.

Pre-K to Grade 7

Children are encouraged to attend the first 10-15 minutes of worship services and to come to the front of the sanctuary during the Time for All Ages. Children pre-K to grade 7 then go to other parts of the building to attend a variety of RE classes led by trained volunteer teachers. Children grade 3 and younger must be delivered to their classroom and picked up at 11:30 a.m. by an adult.

Our RE program is a place where children learn and discuss liberal religious values to help them navigate life's challenges. Adults and children together discuss the big questions of life and ponder spiritual issues. Children make friends of all ages for life, learn to care about others, and grow spiritually and emotionally. They are encouraged to take the values they learn on Sunday mornings back to their homes, schools, and playgrounds. Our hope is to raise children to act beyond the church doors with open eyes and loving hearts.

Our Whole Lives of Sexuality (OWL) and Coming of Age (Grades 7-8)

These programs help our middle-grade youth deepen their faith, put their values into practice, and think deeply about their place in the world and their aspirations for themselves and our society. OWL is led by a team of trained teachers, while Coming of Age is a rite-of-passage course in which young people work closely with adult mentors. Both programs meet on Sunday evenings.

We do not charge for participation in most of our programs, but there is a fee for OWL and Coming of Age due to additional costs for these special programs. We also ask that families commit to consistent weekly attendance.

Youth Program

Volunteers (adults and youth) support spiritual growth and community life of youth with the guidance of Minister of Religious Education, Rev. Stevie Carmody, and the Youth Group Coordinator.

Since we are a collaborative program, run primarily by volunteers, we encourage adults in our congregation to contribute their time and energy to support and enhance our Sunday morning and evening programs. Here are some ways you can help:

- Assist with a One-Room Sunday School
- Co-teach a grade during one of our three teaching terms
- Offer to be a substitute teacher
- Share your skills as a musician, artist, baker, storyteller, or field trip driver, as often as you can
- Become a mentor for our Coming of Age program
- Lead an intergenerational story in worship
- Volunteer to help in the RE Office with administrative needs

CONTACT: Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education, mre@firstparish.info.

Youth Group

(Meets Sunday evenings, 7:00–8:30 p.m.)

Adults assist the Youth Group as advisors (work regularly with the youth), friends (participate in more occasional events), and members of the Youth-Adult Committee (YAC). Adults interested in any of these roles must apply to the Youth Program Coordinator.

CONTACT: K Milano, Youth Program Coordinator,
youthadvisor@firstparish.info.

Adult Religious Education

STAR programs... **S**pirit, **T**ransformation, **A**dventure, **R**eflection... enable people within and outside the First Parish community to come together to teach, explore, and share their passions with one another. Please contact STAR if you have questions or an idea for a program you would like to offer.

CONTACT: Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education
(mre@firstparish.info) or STAR@firstparish.info.

Religious Education Committee

PURPOSE: To provide oversight of and support to the Religious Education program at First Parish.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Betsy Carlton-Gysan (first term ends 2026)

Eric Breck (first term ends 2028)

Janis Fleishman (member/treasurer, first term ends 2026)

Sharon Jacobson (first term ends 2026)

Catherine Kass (first term ends 2027)

Lauren Newton (first term ends 2028)

Cathy Selsnick (first term ends 2028)

CONTACTS: Betsy Carlton-Gysan, Chair (re@firstparish.info)
Full Committee (recommittee@firstparish.info)

Music at First Parish

Singers and Instrumentalists

Singers and instrumentalists – members of our congregation – provide music at most Sunday services from September to June under the direction of Dr. Daniel Parsley (musicdirector@firstparish.info), our Music Director. New singers and instrumentalists are always welcome!

Choir

(Rehearses Thursdays, 7-8 p.m., and many Sundays, 9 a.m.)

PURPOSE: The Choir, our church's most active musical ensemble, sings during most Sunday services during the program year.

MEMBERSHIP: New choir members, grade 8 through adult, are welcome throughout the year. Please also contact Daniel if you would like to sing occasionally for special services.

CONTACT: Dr. Daniel Parsley, Music Director,
musicdirector@firstparish.info

Bell Choir

(Rehearses Thursdays, 8pm-9pm)

PURPOSE: To provide musical opportunities for members interested in hand chime ringing. The ensemble performs at 2-3 services a year. Open to all interested in learning about bell ringing. Some musical experience is suggested.

CONTACT: Jennifer Kobayashi, ringers@firstparish.info

C Winds

C Winds is a flute ensemble for intermediate to advanced level flutists with good music reading skills. They play on services 2-3 times a year and occasionally perform with piano, cello or bass.

CONTACT: Robin Baker, music@firstparish.info

Instrumentalists

PURPOSE: To provide instrumental music during worship services, and to give instrumentalists in our congregation an opportunity to share their talents with the First Parish community. Instrumentalists play in a variety of large and small groups, depending on their interests.

MEMBERSHIP: New instrumentalists, grade 8 through adult, are welcome throughout the year. Please contact the Music Director if you are interested in contributing to a service with instrumental music.

CONTACT: Dr. Daniel Parsley, Music Director,
musicdirector@firstparish.info

Music Committee

(Meets the first Thursday of each month, September–June)

PURPOSE: To work closely with the Music Director and accompanist in creating a music program serving the mission of First Parish, to serve as a congregational liaison for music staff and a sounding board for ideas and projects, to be actively involved with equipment and instruments relating to the music program, and to coordinate music events at First Parish.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; a musical background is helpful but not essential.

CO-CHAIRS: Robin Baker (first term ends 2026) and
Bob Rowlands (first term ends 2026)

MEMBERS: Lyn Fulton-John (first term ends 2028)
Beverly Morse (first term ends 2028)
Heidi Swartz (first term ends 2027)
Anne Wright (first term ends 2028)

CONTACT: Robin Baker and Bob Rowlands, Co-Chairs
Email the Co-chairs and Music Director - music@firstparish.info

Care and Support: Shared Ministry

Committee on Shared Ministry

PURPOSE: To oversee and support the work of the Lay Ministry and Worship Associates (see below) and to conduct the application process for those wishing to become Lay Ministers or Worship Associates.

MEMBERSHIP: Members are invited and appointed by the Parish Committee. They serve for a maximum of three two-year terms.

CHAIR: Cathy Modica (second term ends 2026)
Amy Anderson (first term ends 2026)
Annette Sawyer (first term ends 2026)

CONTACT: sharedministry@firstparish.info

Lay Ministry

(Meets the 1st Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.)

PURPOSE: To offer timely and effective care and pastoral support to those in our congregation, working closely with our Ministers. If you need support, please email the Lay Ministry team at layministry@firstparish.info.

MEMBERSHIP: Lay Ministers are interviewed and selected by the Committee on Shared Ministry (see above). Any First Parish member who has regularly attended services for at least two years and will commit to a two-year term may apply. If you might be interested in becoming a Lay Minister, contact sharedministry@firstparish.info.

CO-CHAIR: Carolyn Carlson (third term ends 2027)

CO-CHAIR: Greg Ruccio (second term ends 2026)
Jeanne Feeley (first term ends 2026)
Julie Garry (first term ends 2026)
Christa Kelleher (second term ends 2026)
Robbie Rinearson (second term ends 2027)
Dawn Terkla (first term ends 2027)

CONTACT: layministry@firstparish.info

Grief Support Group

(Meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, except July and August)

PURPOSE: A drop-in Zoom session led by our lay ministers. Bring your memories, your heartache, your whole self.

CONTACT: layministry@firstparish.info

Wider Network of Care

PURPOSE: To offer support to individuals and families in times of need, including food, rides to medical appointments, and other small gifts and services.

MEMBERSHIP: Coordinated by the Lay Ministers. All are welcome to join the network and are contacted when help is needed.

CONTACT: layministry@firstparish.info or sign up on our website at firstparish.info/lay-ministry/wider-network-of-care/.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

PURPOSE: To knit or crochet simple, warm shawls that are distributed by the Lay Ministers as needed.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Barbara Tosti, prayershawl@firstparish.info

Transition to Retirement Group

PURPOSE: Drop-in group that focuses on the emotional aspects of the retirement process (not the financial).

MEMBERSHIP: All are welcome, wherever you are in the process of retiring (planning for it, have a date, already retired)

CONTACT: Lay Ministry, layministry@firstparish.info

Spiritual Growth and Mutual Support

These groups help adults deepen their spiritual journeys and their relationships with others. All welcome new participants who share their interests.

General Spiritual Growth and Support Groups

Covenant Groups

(Meet monthly throughout the year)

PURPOSE: To provide an opportunity to get to know other people at a deeper level, in a consistent small group, while discussing topics that explore our spiritual paths as informed by life experience.

MEMBERSHIP: Recruitment of new members occurs each fall, with groups beginning in September. Groups are limited to nine members, who are expected to commit to attend for a year. Each covenant group has a convener and the conveners meet with each other monthly.

CONTACT: covenantgroups@firstparish.info

Evening Chapel

(Meets Wednesdays at 9pm, December through April)

PURPOSE: Weekly drop-in evening chapel gatherings throughout the winter. It is a 20-25 minute gathering complete with music, meditation, readings, and sharing.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome - no registration necessary.

CONTACT: Rev. Erica Richmond at parishminister@firstparish.info.

Lectio Divina

(Meets online Tue., 7–8 a.m., Wed., 9–10 a.m. & Thu., 8–9 a.m.)

PURPOSE: To engage in a spiritual practice of reading and listening, lingering with, and sharing personal responses to selected biblical texts. Diverse responses to the text provide new insights and help participants develop their spiritual lives and set intentions for their daily lives.

MEMBERSHIP: All are welcome – no registration is necessary.

For more information, including readings, schedule and Zoom links, please visit firstparish.info/adult-education/lectio-divina.

CONTACT: lectio@firstparish.info

Meditation Group

(Drop-in group meets online Sundays 9–9:30 a.m., and in-person Mondays, 6–6:30 p.m. for silent meditation)

PURPOSE: To provide opportunities for Buddhist meditation, support, and discussion.

MEMBERSHIP: Use the email below to receive a participation link on Zoom.

CONTACT: Monique Chaplain, meditation@firstparish.info

Spirit Talks

(Meets every Monday throughout the year)

PURPOSE: Weekly discussions provide an opportunity for a small group to reflect together on a spiritual theme inspired by a different quote each week.

CONTACT: spirittalk@firstparish.info

Women's Groups

The Alliance

Alliance events are typically on Friday evenings; Board meetings are held monthly on Zoom; The Alliance annual business meeting is held in May.

PURPOSE: To provide occasions for First Parish women to meet for fellowship, to deepen their intellectual and spiritual lives, and to engage in service projects. The Alliance provides financial support to local, regional, national, and global charities.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to those who identify as women at First Parish; new participants are welcome. Alliance programs are open to all at First Parish regardless of gender.

CURRENT MEMBERS: Andrea Winslow (President), Nina Duncan (Vice-president), Robbie Rinearson (Secretary), Kay Snowden (Treasurer), Tina Schultz (Communications)

CONTACT: alliance@firstparish.info

Women's Book Group

(Meets the First Thursday of each month, 7:15–9 p.m.)

PURPOSE: To read and discuss interesting books with other First Parish women.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all women; new participants welcome.

CONTACT: Mary Cummings (Coordinator),
womensbookgroup@firstparish.info

Women Aging Well

(Monthly on the 4th Thursday, 10 a.m.–noon, online or in-person)

PURPOSE: To foster engagement and build community among women over fifty who wish to explore themes related to planning and consciously living out our later years.

MEMBERSHIP: Women over fifty; new participants welcome.

CONTACT: agingwell@firstparish.info

Men's Groups

Men's Group

(This group meets online every other Sunday at 7pm)

PURPOSE: To offer a place of fellowship, encouragement, and creative connection for First Parish men of all ages and backgrounds.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all interested men; new participants welcome.

CONTACT: David Dreyfus, mensgroup@firstparish.info

Older Men's Group: Thursday Lunch

(This group meets online every other Thursday at noon)

PURPOSE: To offer a monthly fellowship gathering for older men, aimed at reinforcing camaraderie and discussing topics of general interest.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all older men; new participants welcome. Email the address below for the link to participate

CONTACT: oldermen@firstparish.info

Other Affinity Groups

Jewish Connections

PURPOSE: To bring opportunities for Jewish learning, ritual, celebration, gatherings, and perspectives to our community through worship, study, and conversation. We host a potluck Seder for Passover, a Latke Party for Hanukkah, and Tashlich for Rosh Hashanah most years.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Rachael Stark, [jewishconnections@firstparish.info](mailto: jewishconnections@firstparish.info)

Diversity Book Club

(Meets the third Tuesday of alternate months throughout the year, on Zoom)

PURPOSE: To meet to discuss books, both fiction and nonfiction, that represent a diversity of experiences and perspectives. Check the First Parish website for book selections every other month at <https://www.firstparish.info/series/diversity-book-club/>.

MEMBERSHIP: All are welcome - email for link

CONTACT: diversitybookclub@firstparish.info

Get Involved at First Parish

First Parish is an active, engaged congregation deeply rooted in the Arlington and wider Boston community. We live our values both in service to the First Parish community and in our commitment to social justice in our local communities and the world at large.

Social Justice and Inclusion at First Parish

Our social justice work at First Parish is primarily focused on seven major issues, chosen by our Social Justice Committee. Each issue is represented by at least one working group:

- Climate Justice
- Defending Democracy
- Immigration Justice
- Indigenous Justice
- LGBTQ+ Justice
- Peace and Justice in Israel-Palestine
- Racial Justice

New participants are welcome to join any of these working groups. Working groups are created by groups of people who share an interest.

If you have a group of people who want to work together on another issue, contact the SJC at socialjustice@firstparish.info.

Climate Justice

Climate Action Working Group

PURPOSE: This group takes local actions supporting global transformation of economies to clean energy sources, while eliminating fossil fuel usage that damages the climate system and has an unjust, disproportionate impact on communities that have never been heavy users of fossil fuels. CAWG promotes efforts in Arlington and nearby communities, Massachusetts legislation and executive action, and leads the effort to shift First Parish facilities to clean energy.

CONTACT: Alan Linov, climateaction@firstparish.info

Defending Democracy

Defending Democracy Working Group

PURPOSE: Focuses on equity, fairness, and justice issues in Massachusetts, guided by UU Principles related to justice and the democratic process. The group participates in efforts (with UU the Vote) to oppose and overcome discriminatory barriers to voting, and supports issues like the [Massachusetts Fair Share Amendment](#).

CONTACT: Joanne Pohl, defendingdemocracy@firstparish.info

Immigration Justice

ArCS Cluster of Refugee Immigration Ministry

PURPOSE: Mobilizes local volunteers who want to make a difference in the lives of refugees in Arlington, Cambridge, Somerville and nearby communities. ArCS provides practical help (including housing, access to health care, household goods, etc.), emotional support and financial assistance to individuals and families throughout their journey to establish themselves in a new community. See our website www.ArCSCluster.org.

CONTACT: Eric Segal, arcscluster@firstparish.info

Indigenous Justice

Indigenous Justice Working Group

(Meets the fourth Monday of each month at 8pm, September-June)

PURPOSE: Explores the grave injustices experienced by the Indigenous people of Massachusetts, from being displaced from their homes centuries ago to the vast health and social inequities today. Members seek truth and raise ideas about how we might learn about, acknowledge, and confront these injustices to heal and move forward together toward a more just future.

CONTACT: Ellen Leigh, IJWG@firstparish.info

LGBTQIA+ Justice and Inclusion

LGBTQIA+ Affirming Committee

PURPOSE: Inclusion and expression of the concerns and spiritual needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons among us in every aspect of congregational life. We seek to increase our collective understanding of the issues and concerns of people of all sexual orientations through a variety of programs, events, course offerings, and social justice activities. To reinvigorate and maintain our Welcoming Congregation designation with the UUA, in collaboration with our lay and ordained leadership.

CHAIR: Zoe Stewart

CURRENT MEMBERS: (Appointed by the Parish Committee)
Lisa Davis, Ruben Hopwood, Wendy Page, Michaela Kirby, Carolyn White, Loren Gomez (begins January 2026)

CONTACT: welcoming@firstparish.info

Peace and Justice in Israel-Palestine

Peace and Justice in Israel-Palestine Working Group

PURPOSE: This group organizes programs, guest speakers, and films for people to reflect on events in Israel-Palestine within a framework of Unitarian Universalist values. It provides opportunities for the First Parish community to engage in action-oriented coalitions and participate in civic measures, such as protests and public statements, aimed at moving toward peace and justice in Israel-Palestine.

CONTACT: Stephanie Galaitsi, PeaceandJustice@firstparish.info

Racial Justice

Racial Justice Coordinating Committee

PURPOSE: RJCC identifies and supports activities that promote racial justice within the First Parish community and in the broader world, including providing education on race consciousness, microaggressions, cultural (mis)appropriations, institutional racism, and white supremacy. RJCC also leads in bearing witness on present-day events (through meetinghouse lawn banners and vigils), leads book discussions from antiracist authors and thought leaders, advocates for civilian participation in handling police complaints, works with ministers on racial justice projects, and manages a racial justice library. Our current priority is Reckoning and Repair.

MEMBERSHIP: (Appointed by the Parish Committee)
Maggie Carey, Maryglenn Vincens and Tom Estabrook.

CONTACT: Maggie Carey, racialjustice@firstparish.info

UU Urban Ministry

UU Urban Ministry

PURPOSE: First Parish is a long-time member of the UU Urban Ministry, a social justice organization in Roxbury with a mission to work across race and place to dismantle racism and white supremacy culture and to advance racial, social, and economic justice. Its programs currently focus on domestic violence services, Roxbury youth, and artists of color. Engagement offerings may include guided area tours, educational racial-justice webinars and other initiatives to build awareness and connection to the Roxbury community.

CONTACT: Maryglenn Vincens, urbanministry@firstparish.info

Social Justice Committee

PURPOSE: The Social Justice Committee:

- Convenes First Parish social justice leaders to coordinate and plan the program
- Promotes awareness and celebration of social justice efforts at First Parish
- Facilitates task groups to conduct components of our program that have well-defined processes and few meetings
- Evaluates proposals to initiate new self-directed working groups
- Manages funding for social justice activities and programs
- Serves as initial point of contact for outside groups
- Organizes and facilitates occasional actions and events that are outside the scope of any current working group

CURRENT MEMBERS: Melissa Berczuk (Chair), Maggie Carey, Anne Ehlert, Tish Miller, Joanne Pohl

Giving First Task Group

PURPOSE: Giving First is the program in which half of our Sunday service offerings are contributed to nonprofit organizations doing social justice work. At the end of every calendar year, this task group solicits nominations of beneficiary organizations from the congregation, selects a monthly slate for the coming year, and guides nominators in sharing information about their organization with the congregation.

CONTACT: Anne Ehlert, givingfirst@firstparish.info

Emergent Issues Task Group

PURPOSE: Recognize and respond to social justice issues as they arise or take renewed prominence. Group members manage the public witness banners on the meetinghouse lawn. The group also organizes and facilitates other groups in organizing public actions.

CONTACT: emergentissues@firstparish.info

Service Groups at First Parish

Worship Support

Worship Associates

(Meets on the 2nd Wednesday each month, September–June)

PURPOSE: Worship Associates work closely with the ministers to help shape worship services year-round that serve the spiritual needs of the congregation and run smoothly on a practical level.

MEMBERSHIP: Worship Associates are interviewed and selected by the Committee on Shared Ministry. If you might be interested in becoming a Worship Associate, contact Shared Ministry at sharedministry@firstparish.info. You must be a First Parish Member who has regularly attended services for at least 2 years.

CURRENT TEAM: Loren Gomez, Chair (second term ends 2026)

Mary Babic (first term ends 2027)

Mary Breen (first term ends 2026)

Lyn Fulton-John (first term ends 2027)

David Klingsberg (first term ends 2027)

Bill Licea-Kane (second term ends 2026)

Lillian Povey (first term ends 2026)

David Whitford (third term ends 2027)

CONTACT: worshipassociates@firstparish.info

Ushers

(Serve on Sundays, 9 a.m.–noon, September to June)

PURPOSE: To warmly welcome and provide information to attendees, and help the service flow in a smooth, safe, and orderly fashion.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all, grade 5 through adult. Ushers arrive early to help prepare for worship services.

CONTACT: Kate Tranquada, ushercoordinator@firstparish.info

Worship Tech Team

PURPOSE: To help the First Parish provide hybrid worship. Team members facilitate Zoom during Sunday Worship, including operating the sanctuary cameras during worship.

They can be available to help individuals or groups feel more comfortable using Zoom and other technologies and can provide training sessions to the community

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: TechHelp@firstparish.info

Events

Art Exhibition Committee

PURPOSE: To coordinate art shows in the Stanton Parlor and Narthex display window, and to host receptions.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Steph Miserlis, Jim Ptacek, Marilyn Downs, Michaela Kirby, Peggy Gardiner, Carol Saunders Chamberlain, and Nancy Crasco at artteam@firstparish.info

Ferry Beach Retreat Planners

(Meet regularly in September, intermittently the rest of the year)

PURPOSE: To plan the annual family retreat held at the Ferry Beach Retreat in Saco, Maine, and to establish policies and practices as needed.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome, including Youth Group members.

CONTACT: ferrybeach@firstparish.info

Fundraising

Harvest Moon Fair Committee

(Meets weekly in October and November, intermittently the rest of the year)

PURPOSE: To organize and run the annual Harvest Moon Fair, First Parish's largest fundraiser, which occurs on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Dozens of volunteers are needed each year!

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Aaron Kitzmiller, fair@firstparish.info

Man-Made Chili (Arlington Town Day)

(Cooks on and before Arlington's Town Day each September)

PURPOSE: To raise spirits and money by making chili for Arlington's Town Day.

MEMBERSHIP: All he/him/hises welcome.

CONTACT: Aaron Kitzmiller and Greg Ruccio,
manmadechili@firstparish.info

Pie Palace (Arlington Town Day)

(Cooks on and before Arlington's Town Day each September)

PURPOSE: This task group plans and leads the annual Pie Palace, a fun, community-wide event where pie slices are sold to happy customers on Arlington Town Day while raising funds for the social justice program. Task group members contact pie bakers, recruit workers for the booth, and buy supplies.

CONTACT: Maureen Dolan, PiePalace@firstparish.info

Property and Grounds

Property Committee

(Meets the third Thursday of each month, year-round)

PURPOSE: To maintain and enhance the First Parish buildings and grounds, making the First Parish property an inviting and safe environment with minimal environmental footprint.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; new participants welcome.

CHAIR: Greg Ruccio (third term ends December 2025)

CURRENT MEMBERS: David Dreyfus (second term ends 2027)

Tim Keefe (first term ends 2028)

Steve Pillemer (first term ends 2028)

Mara Prentiss (first term ends 2027)

Helen Rasmussen (first term ends 2028)

Mark Wilke (first term ends 2028)

CONTACT: property@firstparish.info

Property Helper Bees and Garden Tenders

PURPOSE: Helper Bees assist with special projects. Look for announcements of special shared fall and spring work days. Garden Tenders beautify First Parish's grounds by watering and tending the gardens.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome, of all ages.

CONTACT: property@firstparish.info or gardens@firstparish.info

Memorial Garden Committee

PURPOSE: To oversee and maintain the Memorial Garden and Remembrance Corner.

MEMBERSHIP: New members welcome.

CONTACT: Barbara Tosti, memorialgarden@firstparish.info

Learn More about First Parish

Officers, Governance, and Administration

The officers and standing committees (listed below), in close cooperation with the staff, conduct the basic work of the congregation. Standing committees are mandated and by the [First Parish bylaws](#).

Officers and members of standing committees are nominated and elected for three-year terms at the congregation's Annual Meeting each May. The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) offers a slate of nominees. Nominations, including self-nominations, may also be made from the floor, but people are encouraged to talk with the LDC about their interests. Terms begin and end at Annual Meeting.

At other times of year, the Parish Committee may appoint an individual to a standing committee until the following Annual Meeting at the request of that committee's chair or co-chairs.

[The bylaws](#) limit individuals to two consecutive three-year terms on a standing committee unless they receive the approval of the Parish Committee for a third term. Officers and members of the Parish Committee may not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms; they become eligible for re-election at the Annual Meeting a year after their second term ends.

If you might be interested in any of these positions, contact the LDC at leadership@firstparish.info and/or talk with the committee's chair(s).

Officers

CLERK: Joanna Pushee (second term ends 2028)

TREASURER: Carolyn Hodges (second term ends 2027)

ASSISTANT TREASURER: Annie Hewitt (second term ends 2028)

AUDITOR: Pamela Linov (second term ends 2027)

MODERATOR: David Whitford (first term ends 2026)

Standing Committees listed in the Bylaws:

Parish, Finance, Human Resources, Leadership Development, Membership, Music, Religious Education, Social Justice, Stewardship, Trustees of Trust Funds, Denominational Affairs

Parish Committee, “ParCom” (Governing Board)

Meets the third Tuesday of each month, year-round with additional meetings as needed. Meetings are open to any First Parish member.

PURPOSE: To serve as the governing body of First Parish: to create parish-wide policy, hold a long-term vision, oversee and empower committees, foster new initiatives and discern priorities among them, prepare and oversee the annual budget, conduct an annual evaluation of the overall ministry of the parish, approve non-called program staff, monitor the overall condition of the physical plant, and speak for the congregation on matters of public concern.

MEMBERSHIP: Clerk, Treasurer, and seven other individuals, all of whom must be First Parish members.

CHAIR: Marie Meteer (first term ends 2028)

VICE-CHAIR: Kate Tranquada (first term ends 2027)

TREASURER: Carolyn Hodges (second term ends 2027)

CLERK: Joanna Pushee (second term ends 2028)

CURRENT MEMBERS: John Anderson (first term ends 2026)

Susan Moore (first term ends 2026)

Amy Speare (first term ends 2028)

Allan Tosti (second term ends 2027)

Board Member-At-Large (open position)

CONTACT: Chair and Vice-Chair – ParishExec@firstparish.info

NOTE: The Executive Committee of the Parish Committee consists of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and Rev. Jonipher and Rev. Erica as non-voting ex officio members. The Exec. Committee is empowered to make small/urgent decisions and brings larger issues to the full ParCom.

Finances

Finance Committee

(Generally meets at least every other month; and as needed)

PURPOSE: To monitor and oversee the church's financial condition and to prepare a draft of the annual budget for approval by the Parish Committee and the church membership.

MEMBERSHIP: Must be a First Parish member; a numbers background is helpful but not essential.

CHAIR: Lissa McBurney (second term ends 2027)

CURRENT MEMBERS: Stephen Pillemer (first term ends 2028)

EX OFFICIO MEMBER: Carolyn Hodges, Treasurer (second 3-year term ends 2027)

CONTACT: finance@firstparish.info

Trustees of Trust Funds

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Trust Funds is to ensure the long-term survival of First Parish. The Trustees are fiduciaries for the congregation who are guided by that purpose to manage, invest and distribute the Trust Funds, including both restricted and unrestricted monies. The primary goal for distribution of unrestricted funds is to support the capital needs of First Parish's infrastructure.

MEMBERSHIP: Trustees must be members of First Parish.

CHAIR: Julie Dunn (second term ends 2028)

CURRENT MEMBERS: Bob Fowkes (first term ends 2027)

Martha Pereli. (second term ends 2027)

Megan Rising (first term ends 2028)

Alan Schweitzer (second term ends 2027)

Kay Snowden (first term ends 2026)

CONTACT: trustees@firstparish.info

Human Resources Committee

(Generally meets monthly or as needed)

PURPOSE: To help to create and regularly review employee policies. Human Resources also regularly reviews the staff pay structure and benefits packages and plays an advisory role on all staffing issues, making recommendations to respective managers or the Parish Committee when asked to do so.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; human resources experience is helpful but not essential.

CURRENT MEMBERS: Sara Galantowicz (first term ends 2027)
Sara Whitford (first term ends 2027)

CONTACT: humanresources@firstparish.info

Leadership Development Committee

(Meets as needed)

PURPOSE: To encourage and facilitate participation in First Parish committees, support our lay leaders by promoting leadership development throughout our congregation, and nominate individuals to fill vacancies on standing committees and as parish officers.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; past participation in one or more First Parish committees is ideal.

CHAIR: Kiki Giatis (second term ends 2027)

CONTACT: leadership@firstparish.info

Membership Committee

PURPOSE: To greet and welcome newcomers to First Parish, to help them learn about our community, and to increase the congregation's awareness of the importance of welcoming newcomers and including them in the life of First Parish. To guide those who wish to become active and involved members of First Parish on the path to membership.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Amy Anderson (second term ends 2028)

CURRENT MEMBERS: Christian Collins (second term ends 2028)

Lois Fine (first term ends 2027)

Mary Fusoni (first term ends 2028)

Mary McCartney (third term ends 2027)

Sarah Quick (first term ends 2028)

Jerry Silberman (first term ends 2027)

Cindy Stinson (first term ends 2028)

CONTACT: membership@firstparish.info

Stewardship Committee

(Meets as needed)

PURPOSE: To foster a culture of stewardship at First Parish, ensure financial support of First Parish by members and friends via year-long education regarding its financial needs, and oversee the annual pledge campaign.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Joel Carlton-Gysan (first term ends 2027)

CONTACT: stewardship@firstparish.info

The Generalist Ministry Team

First Parish is served by the elected leaders, volunteers, and staff. First Parish is also served by two full-time ordained ministers. Both ministers preach and participate in worship services and are available for pastoral care, weddings, and memorial services.

Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong (he/they) is the Interim Lead Minister, selected by the Interim Search Committee in the spring of 2025 and is generally called “Rev. Jonipher.” Rev. Jonipher will serve a two-year term, after which First Parish will call a new settled lead minister.

Rev. Erica Richmond (she/her) is the Parish Minister hired by the Parish Committee in August 2020 and is generally called “Rev. Erica.”

How do I reach a minister?

Both ministers are available by appointment. For personal, spiritual, and pastoral care, you may choose whichever minister with whom you would like to meet. Pastoral conversations are confidential, but the content of conversations shared with one minister may be shared with the other. You can email Rev.Jonipher@firstparish.info or Rev.Erica@firstparish.info.

In case of emergency, please phone the church office:
781-648-3799.

Who does what?

Each minister serves as the ministerial contact for various groups and committees at First Parish as well as supervisor to other staff members. Each year, the ministry team divides among themselves the responsibilities for ministry at First Parish. View the Ministerial Contact List on the next page of this booklet to view this year’s ministerial committee contacts.

What About the Committee on Ministry?

During the current ministerial transition period, the Committee on Ministry is inactive. In its place, a Transitions Team has been appointed by the Parish Committee to serve during the interim period before First Parish calls a new settled minister.

Ministerial Contact List

Committees and staff have individual ministerial contacts:

Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kūpono Kwong (leadminister@firstparish.info):

- Finance Committee
- Human Resources
- Leadership Development Committee and Program Council
- Music: Music Committee, Music Director and Accompanist
- Office: supervises Office Manager and Office Associate
- Parish Committee, Executive Committee, Trustees
- Worship: Ushers and Worship Associates

Rev. Erica Federspiel Richmond (parishminister@firstparish.info):

- Adult Programming: Covenant Groups
- Lay Ministry: Prayer Shawl, Wider Network of Care
- Membership Committee
- Building: Property Committee and related committees/groups
- Shared Ministry Committee
- Social Justice: Social Justice Committee and Working Groups:
 - Climate Action Working Group (CAWG)
 - Defending Democracy
 - Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG)
 - Peace and Justice in Israel/Palestine
 - Racial Justice Coordinating Committee (RJCC)
 - Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry
- Stewardship Committee
- Welcoming Congregation Committee

Rev. Stevie Carmody (mre@firstparish.info):

- Religious Education (RE):
 - Youth Program Coordinator and RE Program Assistant
 - RE Committee
 - Youth-Adult Committee (YAC)
- Adult Programming: STAR as well as
 - Ferry Beach
 - Lectio Divina

All other groups may contact either the lead minister or parish minister.

Practical Tips on How to Do Things

What is the Parish Committee and how do I contact it?

The Parish Committee is First Parish's governing board. Email questions, suggestions, or requests to ParishExec@firstparish.info. Meetings are generally on the third Tuesday of each month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. on Zoom, and are open to all First Parish members.

How do I make an appointment with a minister?

The ministers handle their own schedules. Email them directly:

Rev. Jonipher at leadminister@firstparish.info

Rev. Erica at parishminister@firstparish.info

Rev. Stevie at mre@firstparish.info

What is Realm?

Realm is First Parish's on-line directory/database and a very helpful resource. Email realm@firstparish.info to request an invitation to join Realm or get help using it.

How do I contribute a listing to the weekly e-Bulletin or Teaser?

Submit the form at www.firstparish.info/publish by Wednesday noon.

How do I request a spoken announcement during the Sunday service?

Email it to announce@firstparish.info by Wednesday noon.

How do I request a table during coffee hour?

Email table@firstparish.info by Wednesday noon.

How do I book a Zoom link or a physical space for a First Parish meeting or event and list it on the First Parish calendar?

Fill out the form at www.firstparish.info/calendar.

How do I submit an article to the Spire?

Email it to spire@firstparish.info by midnight on the last Sunday of the month.

What do I do if someone's behavior seems dangerous?

If you feel unsafe while in the building, dial 911 immediately. Or you may talk with any staff member.

What if what I want to do isn't listed here?

Email office@firstparish.info, or call 781-648-3799.