



LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD

**December 31, 2025**

*Hope is nocturnal. ...  
So it makes a home  
in the deep shadows  
where it waits to be found  
by those who need it  
most.*

Dave Cate



*Blueberry Ball Drop from the First Parish steeple.  
Join us tonight at 9pm or midnight to ring in the  
New Year. Photo by Vicki Adams*

## **“Making Waves”**

Worship Service: January 4, 2025, 10 a.m.

Led by: Rev. Tori Rosati

Come in person or click below to join the service!

<https://uukennebunk.org/Sunday-Service-Access>

Or by cell phone (audio only) 929-205-6099, meeting ID 734 887 010,  
Password: 02448



## First Parish and Community

- Wed. Dec. 31, 9 p.m., 12 a.m. Blueberry Ball Drop\*
- Sun. Jan. 4, 11:30 a.m. Board Budget Preview\*
- Sun. Jan. 11, 8:30 a.m. Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting\*
- Mon. Jan. 19, 10 a.m. MLK Celebration: Living Your Purpose \*

\*See newsletter for more information

*The First Parish Office will be closed January 1 - 2.*

## This Sunday: Making Waves



As we turn our attention to January's monthly theme of "Practicing Resistance," this Sunday, we will explore how sometimes resistance comes in the form of deep presence. Together, we'll reflect on how we might ride the deep channels of love and justice that give rise to our faith and consider what kind of presence the world is asking of us now. Rev. Tori leading with Allegra Highsmith and music from Chris Staknys.

## A Letter from Rev. Tori

Dear ones,

I hope this message finds you all well on this eve of the new year. The sweetness of the holiday season at First Parish lingers in my spirit and I hope it does for you too. My heart is full of gratitude for the creativity, presence, and love so many of you brought to caring for each other and the wider community through this time of year that can feel both wonderful and celebratory as well as tender and a little sad. There was so much collaboration, shared vision, and willingness to step in when needed. The hope that we

explored all month - not as some future dreamed of place - but as lived action, has been alive in our midst.

As we reflect together on the year past and look ahead to the one to come, I am full of wonder and awe at how far our hearts can stretch when we pull together to do the good work of nurturing love in the world: the beloveds we've grieved together, the presence we've brought to pushing back against injustice, and all the faithful ways we have shown up for one another when no one else was watching.

That spirit is at the heart of what I am bringing with me into the coming year – my faith in what we can create, nurture, and bring into being when we work together. We have no assurances at what lies ahead of us in our individual lives, in our communities or our world – so much is uncertain and unknown, and there is much work to be done. I do, however, have a deep and abiding faith Us (capital U intentional). A hope and faith, as we explored at Christmas Eve, that is not always born in the light of day, but nurtured in out of the way places, along new roads yet to be uncovered, and among and between people where they gather, as they have always done, to tend the fires of love, justice, and possibility together.

Yours on the journey,  
Rev. Tori

## Board to Present 2026 Budget

**When:** Sunday, Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> 11:30 a.m.

**Where:** FPUU Library

**What:** to understand, learn the process, and have an opportunity to ask questions about the proposed 2026 budget

## Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting

Join us next Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. for the Semi-Annual Congregational meeting. All are welcome to attend, but only members may vote.

# Call to Establish a Safety Task Force

The Board of Directors is establishing a Safety Task Force charged with developing and managing a comprehensive safety program within the framework of our welcoming church community and shared ministry practices.

This initial task force may become a standing ministry after congregational approval of revised bylaws at the May 2026 annual meeting.

This task force will work in cooperation with the Properties Ministry and others and report to the Board of Directors. It will consider UUA recommended practices and consult with the Kennebunk Fire and Police Departments.

It will build a culture of safety by preparing plans and managing the resulting programs related to:

- Safety of the building and congregation in emergency situations, during church services and other regular activities.
- Compliance with municipal fire and safety codes and recommended practices and their communication to the congregation.
- Safety of the Church digital communication systems.
- Regular CPR and AED classes and fire drills.

Congregational Members and Friends, especially those with a background or interest in church security are encouraged to contact any Board member with questions and interests in joining the STF. Initial choice of membership on this STF will reside with the Board of Directors.

Ted Trainer, Chair  
Tom Veronesi, Vice Chair  
Linda Thompson, Member  
Gray Hirschfield, Member  
Amy Wood, Member  
Karen Carey, Clerk  
Chris Wells, Treasurer  
Rev. Tori Rosati, Minister

# New Year's Eve Celebration in Kennebunk and at First Parish

Join Rev. Tori for the Annual Blueberry Drop at 9 p.m. and midnight



DECEMBER

31

Count down to 2026 at the  
First Parish Bell Tower!

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

ICE SKATING AT THE WATERHOUSE CENTER

BRICK STORE MUSEUM OPEN 5PM - 9PM

EARLY BIRD BLUEBERRY DROP AT 9:00PM

WILD MAINE BLUEBERRY DROP AT MIDNIGHT!

Main Street, Kennebunk

[facebook.com/NYEKBK](https://facebook.com/NYEKBK)





# Embracing Change and Whatever the New Year Brings

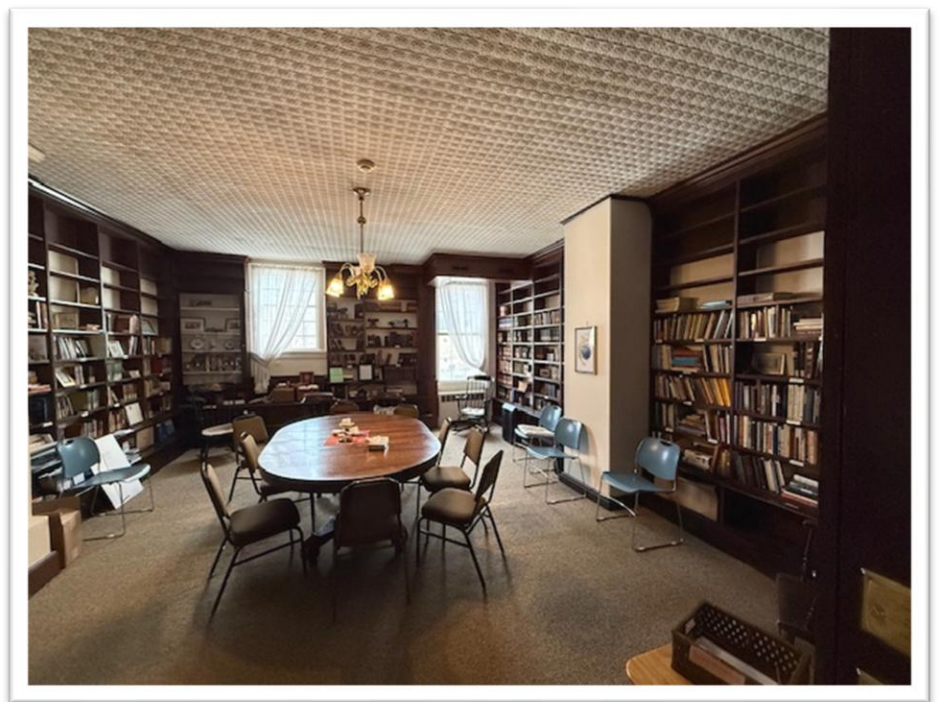
Change can be hard. And these days it seems like the pace has accelerated. But change can also bring good things. As we start 2026, Amy Wood's workshop will help people see the upside of change and learn how to take advantage of it. The workshop is open to everyone, free of charge. To reserve your place, email [CAROL.MORRIS](mailto:CAROL.MORRIS). This session will take place from 10-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 10, at the Democracy Cooperative, 2 Storer Street, Kennebunk.

Amy Wood, Psy.D

## We can borrow, buy, and tend our books at First Parish Library

First Parish Library is a resource as well as a historic treasure. Four years ago, several dedicated church members and friends renovated the room and thinned out the books. Current books include new ones as well as the old ones. Before the books were brought back in, volunteers established categories and painted and labeled the shelving.

Entering the library, to the left you will find Wellbeing & Nutrition, Energy & Healing, Women's Studies, Feminism, Paganism, Men's Studies, LGBTQ, Race & Equity, Indigenous Peoples, and Children's books. At the front (north) side of the room are Rev. Channing sermons and other



religious texts. To the right, working from the windows to the door are various histories, fiction, Maine history, New England history, Unitarian Universalism, Judaism, Buddhism, Hindi, Islam, Christian Scientist, Christianity, Spiritual exploration, Community Building, Social Science, Social Justice, Poetry, and Art. The back shelves on either side of the door contain books for sale donated by Arlene Horn and Ginny DiMarco with proceeds going to the church, paperback classics, and miscellaneous.

You may sign books out (and back in!) using the sheet provided on the small table, as you enter the library. Book donations are welcome if they are in very good condition and fall under our current categories. New ones can be suggested. We are in the process of reworking and expanding onto more shelving. Of particular interest are books written by or donated by our members and friends. Recently, these include:

*I Am Jayvyn*: a novel by First Parish Member Peter Brown, donated by the author.

*Giving Up Is Unforgivable*: a manual for keeping a democracy by Joyce Vance, donated by Bernie Reim.

*Poems for a World on Fire: Meditations on Hope*, by First Parish member Helen Rousseau.

*Unleashing Creativity: An Inspirational Awakening*, by First Parish member Helen Rousseau and her creativity group.

Our library had its origins early in our history but was established in 1862. The library served the whole town until Kennebunk Free Library opened in 1907. In the fall of 2021, we had the value of our varied 3,000 books assessed. Those worth keeping were wiped down, dusted, and shelved. The remainder were sold or discarded due to poor condition. Sales garnered \$3,000, a portion of which purchased a new carpet, and the remainder put in a restricted fund for other improvements.

Everyone is welcome to borrow books and to use the library for meetings, or just plain reading when not used by groups who rent this space. The only rule is: no food or drink allowed (except water).

Bibliophiles: We are hoping for one or more Library Volunteers to re-shelve books, periodically dust shelving, and straighten up as needed. Let me know if this is you!

Linda Thompson, Chair, Arts & Improvement

# Holiday Celebrations at First Parish

*Rev. Tori at the pulpit, photo by Bernie Reim*



*The Congregation by candlelight on Christmas Eve, photo by Allegra Highsmith*



*The Priestesses at the Yuletide Winter Solstice Service - Mary Gelfand, Susie Desantis, Tory Leuteman, Margaret Jones, Deirdre Drennan, Cynthia Howard, Ginny Lawrence, Kathe Wright. Photo by Bernie Reim*



*LEFT: Second youngest child assists with candle lighting at the Christmas Eve service with Rev. Tori. Photo by Bernie Reim*





*Youngest child lights the first candle at the Christmas Eve Service.  
Photo by Bernie Reim*



*Brian Kaufman plays guitar with the First Parish Choir at the Christmas Eve Service, photo by Allegra Highsmith*



*LEFT: Al Adams and Rev. Tori lead the candle lighting ceremony at the Christmas Eve Service, photo by Bernie Reim*




*First Parish Jazz Ensemble performs at the Winter Solstice - Al Adams, Chris Wells, Jaylene Summers, Chris Staknys, Gerard Carey. Photo by Bernie Reim*

# Reservations are now available

**24th Annual MLK Celebration**

**"Living Your Purpose"**  
with  
**Keynote Speaker,**  
**Dr. Chris Matthews**  
and  
**Jazz Piano by**  
**Kevin Preval**



**Monday, Jan. 19, 10 a.m.**  
**First Parish UU Church**  
**114 Main Street,**  
**Kennebunk**

**Register:**  
**[uukennebunk.org/MLK2026](https://uukennebunk.org/MLK2026)**  
**\$20, 18 and under free**  
**If space allows: donation at**  
**the door**

Kennebunk's 2026 Martin Luther King Day celebration will take place Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, at 10 a.m. in the First Parish Sanctuary and Parish Hall. Donation: \$20, 18 and under free, to benefit a Black History Month event for school children in Portland.

Thanks to Hervé Lavoie, you can make your reservation now at: [uukennebunk.org/MLK2026](https://uukennebunk.org/MLK2026) Please copy and send this poster to your friends! More information coming including ways to volunteer.

Your Social Justice Network



# WHAT'S UP IN JANUARY

By Bernie Reim

The month of January is named after the Roman god Janus, who faces both forward and backward at the same time. Janus is the god of transitions, passages, doorways, gates, and the god of all beginnings. Let us resolve to make this a better year than 2025 by learning from the past while at the same time creating a better future for all of us by living closer to our true potential.

This is the first full month of winter in the northern hemisphere. ... By the end of the month and we will have gained 56 minutes over our shortest day ... [when] the sun only rose at an angle of 24 degrees above our eastern horizon. Its height will now slowly increase every day [until] it reaches its maximum of 68 degrees high on the summer solstice. It will be about 46 degrees high on our sky at this latitude in the spring and fall equinoxes. ...

There will be several good highlights this month that will make it well worth your time and effort to see if it will be clear. These include Jupiter reaching opposition on the 10<sup>th</sup> in Gemini, a strange metallic asteroid named Psyche looping through Taurus the Bull, Saturn still visible in our evening sky, Comet 24/P passing through Virgo, and the Quadrantid meteor shower peaking on the third in spite of a full moon.

You can see Bernie's complete "What's Up" column in the *Astronomical Society of Northern New England* Newsletter at [ASNNE.org](http://ASNNE.org)

## Solar energy news: MUUSAN

The Maine Legislature will consider a new renewable energy bill this term. Information brought to you from Jerry David, who with Janine Coy represents our church in the Maine UU State Action Network (MUUSAN).

**LD 1730:** An Act to Make Small, Portable, Plug-in Solar Generation Devices Accessible for All Maine Residents to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis

**Summary:** This bill creates a new category for small plug-in solar generation devices less than or equal to 1,200 watts, eliminates interconnection requirements for these devices, and establishes basic safety requirements. This measure will help bring renewable energy accessibility and affordability to Mainers.

**Sponsors:** Senator Nicole Grohoski, **Committee:** Energy, Utilities & Technology

**Senator Mark Lawrence of York, Chair, D - Senate District 35,**  
**Mark.Lawrence@Legislature.Maine.gov**

**Public Hearing:** Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 1 p.m., Cross Building Rm. 212

**Call to Action:** Written [testimony](#) is for January 6th hearing.

**UU Connection:** This reform makes clean energy ownership accessible to renters, low-income households, and families whose homes aren't suitable for traditional solar, helping them lower electricity bills at a time of steep utility price increases. By enacting LD 1730, Maine has a chance to lead in energy equity and resilience without subsidies, without fiscal impact, and with enormous public benefit.

**Give testimony: at the MUUSAN web site**

## All Through the Night

Christmas Eve sermon by Rev. Tori Rosati

"Hope," poet Dave Cate wrote, "is nocturnal. ... So it makes a home in the deep shadows where it waits to be found by those who need it most."

This is certainly the story of the Nativity—people who needed hope most, under the pressures of empire, tyrant kings, and brutal decrees—people fleeing home with no room that would receive them, crossing borders, searching ... for a sign that Love would come.

It is a story that has endured through time because sadly, with each generation it reminds us of how long we still have to travel on the road toward justice and peace. ... UU minister A. Powell Davies ... preached on Christmas Eve in 1944, five years into our war with Nazi Germany, ... that the night of Christmas told the story of "an empire that was disdainful and arrogant, of the privileged and the mighty who sold their souls for the tinsel of a moment's pomp, of institutions where God was a commodity and truth a joke grown stale." Sound familiar?

All of these moments of our past and present are often described with the language of darkness ... as if nighttime held only danger and despair. But tonight's story challenges that metaphor. ...

For many, darkness has been a place to move safely beneath the gaze of power. Enslaved people traveled night roads to escape those who claimed to



own them, guided by stars and whispered signals along the Underground Railroad where night offered cover, protection, and freedom.

Night too has been a place of inner wrestling and spiritual transformation. Mystics like St. John of the Cross wrote of a “dark night of the soul,” those seasons when familiar certainties fall away, when faith and meaning are tested, and when something new is quietly forming within us.

In all these ways, night has been an honored place of reverence, guided those who dared to move, and revealed what could not yet be seen by day. So, the question before us as a people now: what is night asking of us, in our time? ...

It comes with rest—places of protection and gestation, stars to help find the way, moonlight to uncover hidden paths, and the sacred quiet to hear the voices from within and without crying for peace, justice, and freedom. Night comes as a place for hope to live. But more importantly—a place for us to live hope ... in this fraught and uncertain world. ...

So, let us be midwives of the night. Let our light, however small and fleeting, find its shape, its form, its brightness in the blessed cloak of darkness that urges us forward. ...To shelter the vulnerable, to tend the fragile life that breaks through the rubble, to listen deeply ... all through the sacred night that makes room ... for Love to shine.

So has it been and so may it always be.

## Hotline for immigrants

If you see ICE or Border Patrol in your neighborhood, please call this Hotline: 207-544-9989. [bit.ly/MaineICEWatch](https://bit.ly/MaineICEWatch) is monitoring federal agencies that profile, abduct, and detain members of our community, denying due process and threatening our safety.

**Please save the number and URL in your phone for easy access should you need them.**

# Make sure you are in our New Directory!

We will be printing an updated church directory in January. If you have any changes to your contact information or do NOT want to be included, please let Allison know: [uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com](mailto:uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com) or by calling 207-985-3700.

Please do not share our church directory, even amongst ourselves. There are many scammers out there seeking contact information. Please point people to the front office for copies.

## Support for Our Trans Beloveds



In this moment, when Trans lives continue to be targeted and threatened, we hold close the resilience and sacred worth of our trans siblings. As we commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance, and the Trans lives lost to violence this past year, it is important to find support and

ways to connect. The UUA is offering a new, all-ages online pastoral care program for Trans people, their families, and caregivers. Click the link on the picture to learn more. May we hold in our hearts all Trans lives today and every day and commit ourselves to nurturing a world where all can live in safety, dignity and wholeness.

## Sunday Bookcase & Links



- *Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*, Rainer Maria Rilke translated by Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy
- *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience and Creative Power*, Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone
- [\*We Are the Great Turning\*](#), Joanna Macy and Jessica Serrante
- *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*, Barbara Brown Taylor

# Minister's Discretionary Fund

In light of the ongoing delays in programs such as SNAP and other forms of assistance, many in our community are facing unexpected financial hardship. The Minister's Discretionary Fund is available to help members of our congregation and the wider community who are struggling to make ends meet, particularly during this difficult time.

If you, or someone you know, could use some support, please reach out to Rev. Tori. All requests are received with care and handled in strict confidence. Contact: [uukennebunkminister@gmail.com](mailto:uukennebunkminister@gmail.com) or 978-238-8210

## Letters to the Editor

What's on your mind or in your camera? Write a letter or send a picture to First Parish News! Email the FPUU Office: [uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com](mailto:uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com)

## Listen Up!

Did you know our monthly Soul Matters themes come with a musical playlist to help us deepen into the messages? Playlists are organized as a journey, so consider listening from beginning to end and using them as a personal musical meditation.



- Click [here](#) for the Spotify playlist on Choosing Hope
- Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on Choosing Hope

### FPUU News Crew:

Vicki Adams, editor

Allegra Highsmith, photo editor

Allison Lazos, production

Rev. Tori Rosati, advisor

# First Parish UU Church Kennebunk

## JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Office Closed Happy New Year!	2 Office Closed	3
4 10 a.m. Worship Service led Rev. Tori 11:30 a.m. Board Budget Presentation	5 9-12 Office Open	6 9-12 Office Open 10:30 a.m. Pastoral Care 5:15 p.m. Sangha 7 p.m. Properties	7 9-12 Office Open 5:30 p.m. Worship	8 9-12 Office Open 5:00p.m. Choir	9 9-12 Office Open	10
11 8:30 a.m. Semi-Annual Meeting 10 a.m. Worship Service led Rev. Tori	12 9-12 Office Open 7 p.m. Finance	13 9-12 Office Open 5:15 p.m. Sangha 5:30 p.m. Family Small Group Ministry 6:30 p.m. W.F.A.S. 6:30 p.m. M.O.G.	14 9-12 Office Open 5:30 p.m. Soup Vespers	15 9-12 Office Open 5:00 p.m. Choir	16 9-12 Office Open	17
18 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Rev. Tori 11:30 a.m. What Now? Social Justice	19 9-12 Office Open	20 9-12 Office Open 5:15 p.m. Sangha	21 9-12 Office Open 6 p.m. Board of Directors	22 9-12 Office Open 5:00 p.m. Choir	23 9-12 Office Open	24
25 10 a.m. Worship Service led Brook Detterman 11:30 a.m. Worship Reflection	26 9-12 Office Open 5:30 p.m. Membership	27 9-12 Office Open 10 a.m. Small Group Ministry 5:15 p.m. Sangha 6:30 p.m. W.F.A.S. 6:30 p.m. M.O.G.	28 9-12 Office Open 10 a.m. R.E. 5:30 p.m. Small Group Ministry	29 5 p.m. Choir	30	31