



LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD

Sept. 5, 2024

"Our politicians and leaders will make mistakes, they will disappoint us, they are human, so the rest of the work is up to us."

Michelle Obama



Photo by Bob Wuerthner

The Invitation of *Water*

An inter-generational service

Worship Service, Sept. 8, 2024, 10 a.m.

Worship Leader: Rev. Tori Rosati

Religious Exploration welcomes children ages 4-13.

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



- Sun. September 8, Water Ceremony and In-Gathering service
- Sun. Sept. 8, 11:15, Blueberry Ruminations, FP Library
- Tue. Sept. 10, 6:30 p.m. Women for All Seasons
- Fri. September 13, 6:30 p.m. Song Swop
- Sun. September 23, 11:30 a.m. Reflection Circle with Rev. Tori
- Sun. September 29, 11:15 a.m. Coffee/Team with the Minister
- Sat. October 5, 10:00 a.m. Paula Moulton memorial service

A Loss Among Us



It is with a heavy heart that we share the news that our beloved June Barrier passed away over the weekend following a time of declining health. She died peacefully surrounded by her loved ones. June's strong spirit and welcoming presence around the church will be deeply missed. Please join us in keeping June's family, and all of us who knew and loved her, close to your heart as we remember the gift that was her life. During times of grief and loss, let us take comfort from the support we can offer one another. May the love we share abide in us, around us, and beyond us, in these days and always.

The Invitation of *Water*

Our worship theme for September is "The Practice of Invitation." Join us this Sunday to explore the many ways that water invites us to deepen our faith lives. This intergenerational service will be interactive with movement and ritual to reflect our relationship to water and to this community. Feel free to bring water from home to symbolize something you bring to this congregation as we unite our individual offerings into the collective well of our faith community. Rev. Tori Rosati leading worship with Mary Gelfand as Worship Associate and music from our Music Director Chris Staknys along with Chris Wells, Rich Gaito, and the FPUU Choir.



Religious Exploration begins September 15th

Our Religious Exploration program at First Parish is deeply connected to our Unitarian Universalist values. We believe that our young people are an essential part of our community, and their voices and perspectives enrich us all. Through our program, we nurture spiritual growth, encourage a sense of wonder, and empower each other

to live out our shared values of justice, compassion, and respect for all beings. Our program offers young people a safe and supportive space to explore their beliefs, ask big questions, and build lasting friendships. We are committed to helping them develop the skills and confidence to make meaningful contributions to our community and the wider world.

This year, we will be exploring the **Soul Matters** curriculum, which focuses on a different theme each month to guide our learning and spiritual growth. Our theme for September is **"The Practice of Invitation"** where we will reflect on what it means to extend an open heart and mind to new experiences, ideas, and relationships. Here's a bit about how our program works: Our Sunday services begin at **10:00 AM**. Children will join their families for the beginning of the service, before transitioning to their RE classes, where they will explore the monthly theme through engaging activities, stories, and discussions tailored to their age group. We also offer childcare for children 3 and younger.

We hope you will **join us for our intergenerational in-gathering service on September 8th** with **formal classes starting September 15th**. We will also have a special opportunity this fall for families to gather, connect, and enjoy fellowship together. Look out for more information coming on this soon. To ensure your child's participation in this year's program, please take a moment to register [HERE](#) and feel free to reach out to me or our RE Team lead, Jacky Peters at Jpkrf@roadrunner.com with any questions.



Blueberry Ruminations

The Blueberry Festival & Crafts Fair was a resounding success this summer earning \$5,832. (See last week's newsletter for more pictures!). Now it's time to talk it over. What should we keep, what not, what new ideas? Join us this **Sunday, September 8** in the Library after service. All are welcome!

Laboring for Love

Excerpts from the Sept. 1 sermon by Rev. Tori Rosati

... This year, our worship services, religious exploration classes and upcoming small group ministries, will be using a theme-based UU curriculum called *Soul Matters ...The Practices of Our Faith*. ... To this end, each theme is going to center on how it helps us to embody liberating love in our daily lives.

Love is a core and central part of our faith, affirmed this past spring when our Unitarian Universalist Association voted to adopt new values and covenant statements that all centered and oriented around love. ...

Our theme for September is the "Practice of Invitation." ... One of the ways that love invites us – it invites us to labor for it. On this Labor Day weekend, ... I think this conversation on love is fitting – to think about it as labor – as the work we do in the world to ensure rights, humanity, and liberation for all.

... Valerie Kaur ... In her book, *See No Stranger*, ... explores this notion of love as a form of "sweet labor." ... This love was not sentimental or trite, it was, what Kaur calls, "revolutionary." ... "You don't have to know the answers. You just have to be ready for the moment when the world says, now." ...

So, what does laboring for love look like in our own time? ... To begin, we can't love each other if we don't see each other.

Two years ago, I accompanied the youth group at my previous church on an overnight trip to the Common Cathedral in Boston, Mass. CC is an outreach initiative and street ministry organized and led by currently and formerly unhoused people in the city. ... Every year, they host several programs for young people to come and spend time with them, hearing their stories and providing a service activity to support their mission. I think I can speak on behalf

of our group that this was one of the most transformative experiences we d ever had.

... It was deeply immersive, relational, and meant to engage us on a heart level with this community. ... It was meant to teach us both about the structural causes of homelessness and how policies and action could address them, alongside the individual, sometimes heartbreaking and other times joy-filled stories shared with us by our hosts.

... This experience ... brought the systemic, often overwhelming and complex challenge of homelessness to a personal level. ... When we see no stranger, when we allow ourselves to open to the realities ... of our time, we draw closer to each other. And this awakens love s potential to keep us focused and attuned to what and who we are fighting for.

... What could we take back with us to effect change – anchored, not in a performative or surface-level way, but in the love that was created between us that weekend? There were no strangers when we left that day. ... Witness is a powerful part of the work of love – looking toward rather than away from the challenges, we face. Allow ourselves to be broken open by what we see. ...

As the UUA points out, “We are stronger together. Our collective wisdom and creativity combine to bring more justice into the world in ways that could not be imagined among any of us working alone.”

Over the last three years, our denomination has voted to adopt statements advocating for a range of political issues that we are facing in our world, urging us to fight for them on behalf of love – healthcare equity including gender-affirming care and the impact of systemic racism, the pandemic, poverty, ... voter suppression laws targeting vulnerable communities, reproductive rights and freedom, a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients, a coordinated and global justice response to climate change, and more recently expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and their decades long struggle for safety, support and self-determination, including an end to US military aid, alongside recognition of the Israeli families aching for the return of their captive loved ones. Each of these calls us to practice immediate witness ... to do something to meet the pressing needs of our time.

Kaur writes, ... “Sound government is necessary but not sufficient to take us across the threshold. We need a shift in consciousness and culture. A revolution of the heart. A new way of being and seeing that leaves no one outside our circle of care. A love without limit. Revolutionary love.” ...

As we move through the next two months of this election season – I ask us all to reflect on what it means for you to put your love into practice – to labor for it. What will you fight for? What will you risk? The answer to that question will be yours – but you will not be alone because you have community, these

warrior companions around you to who labor alongside you and together we bring more love into this hurting world. Love only begets more love.

So, let this be love's call to each of us in the time ahead ... and then when the votes have been counted, the decisions made – let us cross that threshold, continue to draw on that source that makes us all one, that sees no stranger, our sweet labor to reimagine the face of this good and beautiful earth and be ready anew for when the world says once again, ... now."



First Parish Bylaws under Review

A new sub-committee is being formed to review and revise First Parish's By-Laws and Policies and Procedures. We are looking for a couple of volunteers to join us. If you are interested, contact Tom Veronesi: tomveronesi@gmail.com

Actions of Immediate Witness

At Sunday's service we talked about some of the Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW), statements that are voted on every year at our Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly. These actions all respond to the many social and moral issues of our times and "call one another into our better selves through collectively discerning social justice actions to clarify our shared commitments to justice, equity and compassion."

As we collectively discern our actions in these days of war, violence, and human rights infringement it is central that we explore how we are putting our values into action. To this end, our denomination, through the AIW process, has given us a guide for how we do this. You can learn more about recent AIWs that have been passed by our denomination [HERE](#). Additionally, Rev. Tori will be holding a space in the coming months for us to explore together some of the recent statements in more depth as we develop and share our commitments to advancing our values in the world. Look out for more information coming soon.

Changes to Article II

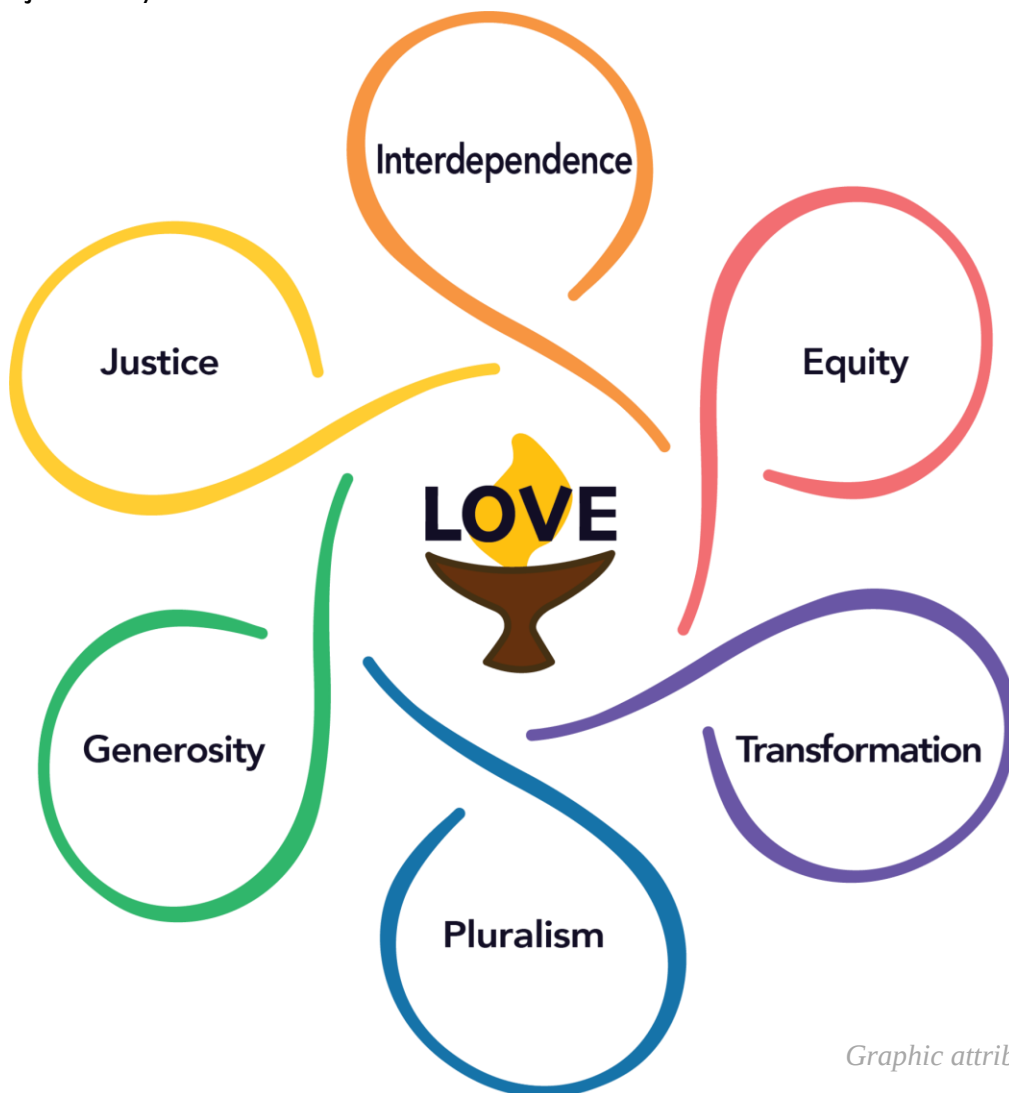
As we so often talk about, Unitarian Universalism is a *living tradition*. As such, we are called to review our values with the changing times as we strive to

embody our faith in the world. In this spirit, our denomination has been going through a changemaking process that culminated this past June at the UUA General Assembly where delegates voted to adopt new revisions to Article II of our bylaws. This is the section that formerly contained our *Principles and Purposes* or where the 7 Principles resided.

This process began in 2017 when the UUA Board charged that a Study Commission be formed to review and revise Article II. Over the course of 7 years, this commission reviewed, drafted, submitted for feedback, edited again, changes were voted on, more edits made, before they were finally adopted this past June. The new revisions now express our *Values and Covenant* with values that include **Justice, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, and Generosity**, with **Love** at the center.

We will be exploring these new statements and what they mean for us at First Parish throughout the church program year ahead. In the meantime, I invite you to explore in more depth the changes. You can read more about them [HERE](#).

Yours on the journey,
Rev. Tori



Graphic attributed to Tanya Webster

Women for All Seasons will have their first fathering of the Fall on Tuesday, September 10 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the church parlor. Subsequent gatherings will be the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month through June. All women are welcome!



The HYBRID **SONGSWOP** is on the second Friday every month. This September it's on Friday 13 from 6:30-8:30pm. It will be held online and in the Sanctuary at FPUU.

All are welcome, acoustic instruments only please. Singers, Poems, Stories etc. Microphones are provided. You may perform or be a part of the audience. Y'all come. You'll be glad you did! For more information contact, Bruce Childress, Rich Gaito 207-251-4432 or Jaylene Summers 207-251-3317



The Halcyon String Quartet, Music Director Chris Staknys second from left, performed at First Parish in mid-July



For the month of September, we will share our offering with **Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Southern Maine**. The mission of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Southern Maine is to connect trained and caring adults with children and teens, ages 7 through 17, who may be “at risk” or could benefit from immediate intervention. Their goal is to help at least 2,000 youth, and last year they successfully met more than 98% of that goal. About 20 are awaiting assignments to a

mentor in York County. Multiple studies continue to show reduced addiction, better school attendance, significant improvement in school grades and better overall attitudes and social skills.

Today's B.B. & B.S. of Southern Maine represents one of the most important, useful and relevant approaches to head off and hopefully stem upfront, youth despair, violent behavior, loneliness and isolation, for the benefit of all in our society.



First Parish members and friends Jim Thompson, Herve' Lavoie, Tom Socha, and Bob Wuerthner found time to play tennis this summer!

Share the UU World magazine Please bring your copies of the UU World magazine to church when you have finished reading them so we can share the magazine with new folks. Put them on the Membership Table in the Parish Hall. You can ink out our name if you prefer to remain anonymous.

Letters

Send us a letter: First Parish News, at uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com. We invite you to express your ideas and suggestions for how our church can be even more welcoming, exciting, helpful, spiritual, activist, you name it! Or they may be letters the church has received, such as those thanking us for a "Share the Plate" donation.



***UUtheVOTE*: MUUSAN Network Meeting**

Interested in the November Elections and Voting Access? Check out the September 7 MUUSAN Network meeting, all about UUtheVote and what Maine congregations are doing.

Online and in-person at the Brunswick UU Church. To register or for more details, visit: www.MUUSAN.org



Contribute to FP News

Join our newsletter contributors! Do you have a photo to share? Perhaps an article or an upcoming event? Or write us a letter!

Please e-mail us by **Tuesday, 10 a.m.**

uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com.

- Allison Lazos, Graphics, and layout
- Vicki Adams, Editor



Rev. Tori's office hours are mostly Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the church. Due to other obligations her

schedule may change. Please email the office to set a time if you wish to speak with her.

One of the important duties of a minister is pastoral care for those in need. Our minister, Tori Rosati, is available to any congregant in need. Tori can best be reached at uukennebunkminister@gmail.com. For pastoral emergencies, please use Tori's cell: (978) 238-8210.

FPUU Staff/Leadership and Committee Contacts

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