

# The Spire

The Newsletter of  
**First Parish of Norwell,  
Unitarian Universalist**  
24 River Street  
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[www.firstparishnorwell.org](http://www.firstparishnorwell.org)

December 5, 2018  
Volume XVII, Issue 4

## Sunday Services - 10 am

Rev. Lise Adams Sherry preaching  
unless otherwise indicated

### December 9: “Bless the Children”

We’ll hear poems and stories reminding us about how important our children are. It’s also **Outreach Sunday** and donations received today will go towards helping buy gifts and other necessary items for children in foster homes. Don’t forget to bring any gifts you bought for children in foster homes today.

### December 16: “Nativity in a Box” Rev. Lise and Gabe Millins, DRE

It’s our annual multigenerational, slightly chaotic and always fun, retelling of the Christmas story with input from other religious traditions. All are welcome to join in the story or participate as an encouraging audience member. Our multigenerational choir will sing and our chime choir will perform, too.

### December 23: “Blue Christmas”

The holidays can be a challenging time of year, and that’s okay. We’ll take some time to simply be with our difficult feelings in community.

### December 24:



It’s our annual candlelight service when we join together as the larger community to celebrate the birth that changed the world. Baby care is available. The collection from both services will be used to benefit people in need throughout the year. Join us at either 5:00 or 7:30 pm.

### December 30: “Soap Box Sunday” Scott Babcock, Worship Leader

Do you have an issue, a favorite activity, an idea or “ah ha” moment you’ve been ruminating on and would like to share with others? Now is your chance! Talk to Scott Babcock if you’d like to participate.



**OFFICE HOURS**  
(September to mid-June):

Closed on Mondays  
Tuesday, Wednesday,  
Thursday: 9 am-1 pm  
Friday: 9 am-12 pm

**Minister:**

Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, x11  
[lisherry@uuma.org](mailto:lisherry@uuma.org)

**Director of Religious Education:**

Gabe Millins, x12  
[DREfirstparishnorwell@gmail.com](mailto:DREfirstparishnorwell@gmail.com)

**Music Director:**

Gingy Grimes  
[gingygrimes@gmail.com](mailto:gingygrimes@gmail.com)

**Office Staff:**

Hope Weinman, Office Administrator, x10  
[office@firstparishnorwell.org](mailto:office@firstparishnorwell.org)

Donna McDonald, Bookkeeper, x14  
[donna@firstparishnorwell.org](mailto:donna@firstparishnorwell.org)

**Parish Committee 2018-2019:**

Chair: Dave Hockman  
Members: Scott Garland, Mary Mercier,  
Amanda Metzger and Prue Miller

**Treasurer:** Dave Traggorth

**Minister Emeritus:** Rev. Richard M. Fewkes

The deadline for the next issue of the Spire is  
**Monday, January 7, 2019.** Submissions  
should be emailed to Hope at  
[office@firstparishnorwell.org](mailto:office@firstparishnorwell.org).

January 6: **“Burning Bowl”**

Join us as we bring in the New Year by ritually burning our regrets and baggage from the last year (or years) so we can start anew.

**LISE’S LETTER**



*Each night a child is born  
is a holy night—  
A time for singing,  
A time for wondering,  
A time for worshipping.  
--Sophia Lyon Fahs*

It’s nearly Christmas time again, and with it comes the annual rush to deck our homes, make our favorite recipes, find the (nearly) perfect gifts for our loved ones and wrestle with our theology. Yes, wrestle with our theology. (And I’m writing about Christmas, because we don’t seem to be as challenged with other holidays we may celebrate: Hanukkah, the Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa and other holidays honoring the light.) As Unitarian Universalists, many of us find it difficult to believe in a virgin birth, to sing songs that praise the “Lord,” or to fathom how shepherds and wise men were able to hear about and follow a star to a birth in a barn. For most of the rest of the year we talk about the Hebrew and Christian Bibles as a history of faith, rather than a literal history. We discuss finding reverence in nature. We describe g/God as the “Spirit of Life,” “Ground of Our Being,” “However You Define It”. Then we get caught up in the history, tradition and grandeur of Christmas which seems to contradict our expressed theology of the other 11 months of the year. Why?

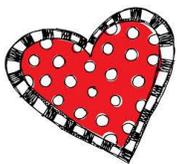
Well, it is traditional. Many of us grew up singing Christmas carols and loving them. I still do. Their verse was made to rhyme and fit the older theologies, and for many there are wonderful memories of Christmas Eve church services and family and friends singing

**WE ARE UU!**

these songs together. Christmas also contains the wonderful story of one child being born who can save the world. Even if we don't believe that Jesus will save our souls, who wouldn't want to believe that one person could bring a revolutionary message that would so transform our world that peace would finally reign? It's all pretty heady stuff. And as Unitarian Universalists, we do like to be in our heads quite a lot (which, of course, is part of our problem with Christmas).

Sophia Lyon Fahs, who was a Unitarian religious educator active in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, provides a spin on Christmas that is both helpful and fits with our values. Her poem, of which the last part appears above, reminds us to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all, not just Jesus or other religious leaders. In fact, her poem also helps us to recognize the humanity of our prophets, which depending on your day, might be a more valuable lesson to relearn. Simply put, Fahs helps us to remember that we all have potential, we all have wisdom and gifts to share, that the miracle of Christmas doesn't happen just one night a year, but every time any child is born all year long. That is definitely worth celebrating by decking our halls, cooking up a storm, and finding presents or small acts of kindness that celebrate our love for one another. Don't you think?

Blessings,  
Rev. Lise



### CARING CORNER

We are happy to report that Maddy Farrar is home, and would enjoy visitors.

Our thoughts are with Pearl Jayko, who spent Thanksgiving week at South Shore Hospital. Cards and calls are appreciated.

Patty Crumley would also appreciate our help as she faces testing and treatment over the next few months. She will be in need of

transportation to and from Dana Farber at South Shore Hospital. If you can help, please contact Sue Robinson at [artsue45@hotmail.com](mailto:artsue45@hotmail.com).

Help us to keep in touch, celebrate the happy moments in life and support you during the difficult times. Please send your news to Hope Weinman in the Church Office at 781-659-7122 or [office@firstparishnorwell.com](mailto:office@firstparishnorwell.com), or contact any member of the Pastoral Care Team (Sue Robinson, Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, Marcia Babcock, Noel Constantino, Betsey Detwiler, Joanne Howard and Joyce Hockman).



### CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR FOSTER KIDS

If you have volunteered to provide a gift for a foster child this year, remember that they should be dropped off at the church by 11 am on **Sunday, December 9**. They may also be dropped off at church December 5-7 during regular our office hours. Please contact Betsy Gordon at 781-659-4745 or [ewgordon@verizon.net](mailto:ewgordon@verizon.net) with questions or if you are not able to drop your gift off at church. Thank you for your generosity!



### POINSETTIAS ON SALE

Christmas Eve poinsettias, which will decorate our Meeting House, can be ordered during Sunday Coffee Hours on **December 9 and 16** for our Christmas Eve services. Plants may be purchased in honor of or in memory of someone, and will be listed in the Order of Service in Christmas Eve. Please see Marie Miller to order red, pink, or white poinsettia plants, which you may take home after the Christmas Eve service. The cost of each poinsettia plant is \$6. Checks, made payable to First Parish of Norwell, or cash, will be gratefully accepted as payment.



## RETURNS FOR PLANET EARTH

The new FPN campaign is underway and already raising money for our Helen Fogg Service Committee. After ten days and an initial run to a local redemption center, we have already collected \$20 for the fund!

As a reminder, we are recycling “returnables” of empty bottles and cans this year when you bring them to church. There is a dedicated middle carriage shed bay that is marked and labeled for your donated returnable items (*carbonated soft drink, beer, malt beverage, and sparkling water bottles and cans*). Drop them off any time!

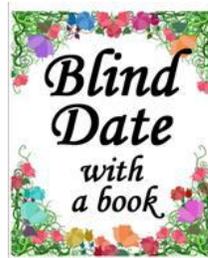
*Please note:* look for the CRV marking on your bottles and cans that indicates the item is returnable for money (included on the labeling is our state, “MA” and the “5¢” value). Please see the first photo below for an example of the relevant labeling. In addition, please do not include regular plain water bottles, such as the second photo to the right. Those you may throw into your regular recycling bin at home.

Please contact Les Taylor with any questions you have at 781-837-2929 or [lestaylor@me.com](mailto:lestaylor@me.com). Thank you!

**CAN** be returned:



**CANNOT** be returned:



## FIRST PARISH BOOK GROUP

The First Parish bookworms are trying some new things at their next 2 meetings. If you haven't participated in our discussions before, this would be a great time to start! Join us the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Fogg Parlor.

On **January 2**, we will hold a “Blind Date with a Book” event. This is a post-Christmas gift grab with a twist! Wrap up a book, and attach a label with a few clues, but not the actual title or author. For example, “Little Women” might say ‘historical novel - four sisters - local author’. Don't feel you have to buy a book to participate; you absolutely can pass along a book from your own bookshelves. We'll each pick one, open them together, and talk about our favorite books of the year.

On **February 6**, bring 10 copies of a poem that has meaning for you. We'll share and discuss them.





## CHURCH IS COMMUNITY - MONTHLY DINNER AT FPNUU

In October, we seated a record 92 people and plated more than 100 servings at our very own Community Dinner. Why would so many people come to OUR church, share a meal, meet old friends and make new friends? PLEASE come on **Wednesday, December 12** between 5 to 6:15 pm to find out! ALL ARE WELCOME AND IT'S FREE! Sit with our other guests, hear their stories and experience yourself what makes your fellow parishioners energized about continuing this dinner and keeps the guest coming back! We would LOVE to have you sit with our guests and hear their stories while you enjoy a delicious meal made by your loving congregants. Won't you please join us?

Or, maybe you want to join in with our enthusiastic volunteers who, with the support of the entire church, create excitement for our parish and a fun Community Dinner for all our guests where we invite our congregation, our friends and our neighbors to enjoy a fabulous home cooked meal. If so, try participating by:

- Signing up to prepare food (this can be done on your own schedule)  
Betsey Drollett - 781-934-6672 or [dbwindyhill@gmail.com](mailto:dbwindyhill@gmail.com)
- Setting up the morning of the dinner  
Marcia Babcock - 781-659-2956 or [marciabab@aol.com](mailto:marciabab@aol.com)
- Working the dinner itself in the kitchen, serving guests, cleaning up or greeting guests at the door  
Jack Wallace - 781-834-4696 or [jeanjacques99@verizon.net](mailto:jeanjacques99@verizon.net)
- Sitting with our guests and helping them feel welcome as you enjoy their company and your own dinner
- Inviting your friends and neighbors to attend

- Providing rides for people who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend
- Bring yourself, enjoy dinner with friends and neighbors to see how it all works
- Donate food or money.

This is part of our CHALICE outreach and we are now committed to hosting a dinner at our church every month (September - June). To sustain this effort, we are seeking a pool of volunteers who can sometimes work on a team to put on the dinner. Most jobs don't include cooking, and some can be done ahead. If you have questions or want to sign up, please contact Marcia Babcock, Deborah Chase, Betsey Drollett, Joyce Hockman, Joanne Howard or Jack Wallace.

What makes this event exciting, energizing and joyful?

- Individually, we feel good about what we are contributing, making it easier to be nice to ourselves and others
- We make others feel special by volunteering with them or serving them in a way they need
- We improve the quality of life of people in need
- We extend the mission of our church to the broader community
- We feel excited and energized, which is infectious to active members, inactive members and non-members

Here at FPNUU WE CAN DO IT! We can reach out to our neighbors and, together, host them at our place. Thank you all for supporting this ongoing community dinner series, September through June. With your donations of time, treasure and talent as well as your encouragement we will continue to build enthusiasm and excitement for FPNUU within and outside our congregation.





## NOTE FROM THE DRE

*"Each night a child is born is a holy night."  
--Sophia Lyon Fahs*

A church member told me that they recently woke from a dream, and had the 'aha moment' that the actual birth of Christ WAS basically a nativity in a box: A loose plan, mostly on the fly. Try to get a room at the inn, and when that doesn't go as planned, improvise and go to a stable. I laughed and agreed! The wise men didn't have directors' notes. In the darkness, they followed what they learned in a dream, and an extraordinarily bright star. They all did their best that night.

RE will once again be doing our version of Nativity in a Trunk on **Sunday, December 16**. Some parts scripted, some improvised, with Jesus' birth as the focus. We also "invite" the world's Great Teachers into the meeting house. All five major religions are represented. Many of us find the peek-ins from the Great Teachers to be nothing more than symbolic nods. We acknowledge the "light" of Hanukkah and Solstice. Perhaps The Winds carry the prophetic voices. We nod to the seven candles of Kwanza, also bringing light to these days and symbolizing its seven principles. The children learn that the Great Teachers who appear in our Nativity come from different places in the world and in (mostly) different times. The Nativity in a Trunk is NOT their only lifetime learning of the story. They will have exposure to the Nativity from the Bible, RE conversation, wider culture, and from their families.

The children enjoy being promoted through roles, of the same script, over the years. ALL are invited to take part and so many do. In fact, ALL do. "Being an audience member" is a role too, you know! We are fluid, flexible, and follow our north star. A bit of noise and bit of extra energy are to be expected, from all ages. Be patient. Be kind. Sing along. Join in. Enjoy the moment of once again revisiting

the birth of Jesus Christ: a baby born in a manger when no one else would make room. Who in that inn could have predicted that the baby would grow to be among the Great Teachers and his greatest teachings would be that of love? The story, the SAME story, of the nativity has been taught for generations over hundreds and thousands of years. We will do our best.

-Gabrielle Millins



## MULTI-GENERATION TIMELINES FOR RE PROJECTS

- We are collecting mittens, hats and scarves for Carolina Hill. The last day to donate is **Sunday, December 23**.
- Guest at your Table will be running through December. Please submit donations to Gabrielle Millins in person or in her mailbox in the office. Boxes and information are on the Welcome Table outside the Parish Hall.
- A stack of white felt is waiting for you on the Welcome Table! Please take one to create your own panel for the banners that hang in our Meetinghouse every December.
- Looking to teach something to our youth during mini-sessions this winter in January and February? We have room for you! The mini-sessions are a way for church members and friends to spend 40 minutes with a small group of kids doing something "different." Lead a service project! Teach music! Introduce a language! Art project! Zumba class! Yoga class! Lead a science experiment! Do a soccer clinic in the snow! Teach meditation! Bring the WORLD to our classroom. (A child will thank you!)



## WOMEN'S GROUP PARTY

Kick your holidays off with a bang by joining us on **Friday, December 7**, at 6:30 pm in the Parish Hall for FPN's annual

Women's Group Christmas/Holiday shindig/potluck/Yankee swap. All FPN women are invited.

Please bring:

- Something for the "You Bring It - We'll Eat It" potluck dinner. All appetizers, entrees, and desserts are welcome and will be devoured! (Feel free to also bring along a drink to share - soda, juice or other.)
- A gift (unwrapped) for the New England Wildlife Center (check out their wish list at [https://www.newwildlife.org/donate\\_trashed/goods-we-need/](https://www.newwildlife.org/donate_trashed/goods-we-need/).)
- Something wrapped to contribute to the Yankee Swap (\$10-15 limit on new items; NO limit on items being rehomed. More info available once you reply.)

RSVP to Kerry Ouellet at [kerrysuzi@gmail.com](mailto:kerrysuzi@gmail.com).



## HELEN FOGG SERVICE COMMITTEE

*"A different world cannot be built by indifferent people."*

Mark your calendars for some or all of these Service Committee-sponsored events as our congregation helps build the better world we envision:

**Sunday, December 9** – Bring in all GIFTS for CHILDREN in FOSTER CARE today by 11 am. Please see the article on page 3 for more information.

**Wednesday, December 12** – COMMUNITY DINNER at 5:00 pm in the Parish Hall. Please

see the article on page 5 for more information.

Sunday

**Sunday, January 27** – "IT'S CRIMINAL". This is a multi-award winning documentary film that "highlights the economic and social inequities that divide the United States and offers a vision of how separated communities can learn to speak to each other. The feature documentary shares the life-changing journeys of incarcerated women and Dartmouth students working together to write and perform a play about the imprisoned women. It's a transformational movie that delves into privilege, poverty and injustice and asks viewers to think about who is in prison and why. While exploring disparities, it also offers a poignant and inspiring story of how empathy can bridge the divide." Look for more details in the January Spire.

Ongoing activities:

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE boxes additional information is included in the article on page 6 on additional multigenerational RE activities.

BOTTLE and CAN COLLECTION – please see the article on page 4 for more information.

Finally, thanks go to Mary Nickerson and Rev. Lise for leading a Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil on the Norwell Common on November 20, and to the Parish Committee for the Thanksgiving message board words: "We don't need higher walls, just longer tables".

## CAREGIVERS' SUPPORT GROUP

Do you find you tell yourself that nobody else could possibly know or understand what you're going through? Helping your loved one through life's challenges and crises can be difficult. You are not alone! Join us on **Wednesday, December 12**, in the Fogg Parlor at 6:30 pm (after Community Dinner) We meet monthly, usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Any questions, please see Rev. Lise.



## JAMES LIBRARY AND CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Tim Ray Jazz Trio  
(<http://www.jameslibrary.org/special-event/tim-ray-jazz-trio/>)

Tim Ray Jazz Trio

**Saturday, December 8, 7:30 pm**

Tickets: \$30 Adults, \$25 Seniors 65+, \$15 Students

Jazz pianist extraordinaire Tim Ray has appeared on over 80 recordings and has performed with an extensive list of pop music icons, including Aretha Franklin, Lyle Lovett and Tony Bennett and with special appearances with the Boston Pops. He'll be joined by John Lockwood on bass and drummer Mark Walker. Classic jazz at its finest!

Actor J.T. Turner in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol

(<http://www.jameslibrary.org/special-event/a-christmas-carol/>)

**Monday, December 10, 3:00 pm**

Tickets: \$20 Adults, \$10 Students

Witness the classic tale of A Christmas Carol come beautifully to life as actor J.T. Turner portrays Charles Dickens and every single character from the story in this one-man show. Charles Dickens was famous for bringing his A Christmas Carol to life for audiences every year, and this version brings all the drama, comedy and redemption Dickens intended. Ages 8 through adult.

For more information on any of the events at the James, please contact them directly at 781-659-7100 or visit [www.jameslibrary.org](http://www.jameslibrary.org).



## FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

For taxpayers over the age of 70 ½, Congress has voted to make permanent the exclusion from income of up to \$100,000 per person, per year, for Individual Retirement Account (IRA) distributions which are given directly to charities.

The requirements are relatively simple. The charitable distribution must be:

- From a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA;
- Direct from the IRA trustee to the charitable organization—with no intervening possession or ownership by the IRA owner;
- On or after the IRA owner has reached age 70½; and
- A contribution to an organization that would qualify as a charitable organization under Sec. 170(b)(1)(a), other than a private foundation or donor advised fund.

Charitable IRA distributions come with several tax benefits:

- Avoiding the percentage limitation on charitable contributions: This is perhaps the most significant tax benefit.
- A Sec. 408(d)(8) charitable IRA distribution completely avoids this issue of limiting contribution deductions to 50% of your adjusted gross income, by excluding the direct IRA contributions from gross income. In effect the donor gets a charitable contribution deduction—since any direct contribution isn't included in income, it is, effectively, deducted.

You should be able to contact your investment advisor and they should be able to properly set up the contribution and IRA distribution.

**DECEMBER 2018**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			5 Alliance, PH 11:30 am  Book Group, FP 7 pm  Dancers, PH 7-9 pm	6  Dancers, PH 7-9 pm  Choir, Sky. 7:30 pm	7  Trumpet Lessons (JM), PH 3-7 pm	8  Private rental, PH 4-10 pm
9 Handchime Choir, Sky. 9:30-9:50 am  Morning Svc. & Church School 10 am  Coffee Hr., PH 11 am  Multigen. Choir, Sky. 11 am  Youth Group, FP 11:15 pm  Compassionate Friends Svc., MH 5 pm	10  AA, PH 8:30 pm	11  Knitters, FP 9:30 am	12  iSpi deadline, 9 am  Community Dinner, PH & Kit. 5 pm  Caregivers' Support Grp., FP 6:30 pm	13  Choir, Sky. 7:30 pm	14  Trumpet Lessons (JM), Sky. 3-7 pm  Private rental, PH (evening)	15  Private rental, PH (evening)
16 Multigen. Choir, Sky. 11 am  Handchime Choir, Sky. 9:30-9:50 am  Morning Service & Church School 10 am  Coffee Hour, PH 11 am  Youth Group, PH & Kit. 5-7 pm	17  AA, PH 8:30 pm	18  Knitters, FP 9:30 am	19  iSpi deadline 9 am	20  Choir, Sky. 7:30 pm	21  Trumpet Lessons (JM), Sky. 3-7 pm  	22
23  Morning Service & Church School 10 am  Coffee Hour, PH 11 am	24  <i>Worship Services, MH 5 &amp; 7:30 pm</i>  AA, PH 8:30 pm	25  	26  <i>Church Office closed</i>	27  <i>Church Office closed</i>	28  <i>Church Office closed</i>  Trumpet Lessons (JM), PH 3-7 pm	29
30  Morning Svc. & Church School 10 am  Coffee Hr. PH 11 am	31  AA, PH 8:30 pm	1  <i>Church Office closed</i>  	2  Alliance Board, FP 10 am  Book Group, FP 7 pm	3  Choir, Sky. 7:30 pm	4  Private rental, PH 8 am-10 pm  Trumpet Lessons (JM), Sky. 3-7 pm	5  Private rental, PH 8 am-10 pm