First Congregational Parish Unitarian of Petersham, Inc.

On the Common Since 1738

Parish News – Fall 2026

It's a pity you don't know
What the little flowers know.
They can't face the cold November,
They can't take the wind and snow:
They put their glories all behind them,
Bow their heads and let it go,
But you know they'll be there shining
In the morning.
Oh, my Joanie, don't you know
That the stars are swinging slow,
And the seas are rolling easy
As they did so long ago?
If I had a thing to give you,
I would tell you one more time
That the world is always turning
Toward the morning.

From ***Turning Toward the Morning*** by Gordon Bok, 1975.

A Note of Thanks From our Organist

This is a musical note of thanks to each of you who have contributed to our music at First Parish. It is truly inspiring to hear the sounds of harmony coming forth from our community of faith.

During the Sunday Open Doors Meditation, thanks to Deb Thompson Hawley, Tim Hawley, and Loyall Allen for music filling the sanctuary.

Our thanks to James Green for his violin accompaniment to the Summer Vespers in Memorial Garden.

To our First Parish Vocal Ensemble and Rini Kilcoyne… we very much appreciated your fine music for the Water Communion Service.

Thanks to Marc Erwin for his fine musicianship and faithful support of our Sunday services.

Vocal Ensemble Continues

To prepare music for the November 22nd Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, rehearsal dates are: Oct. 24, Nov. 7, and Nov. 21, 11:00-12:00. Musicians from St. Peters Parish, Orthodox Congregational Church, and First Parish have been invited to sing with us. You are invited to add your voice to our ensemble, too. Please contact Music Director Loyall Allen, loyall4allen@gmail.com ; 603-831-3925.

Welcome to Fall! There is a lot of positive energy in our church with interesting programs and inspiring music. We are benefiting from our regular part-time minister and are addressing capital needs. In a world and nation that are struggling, I believe you will find value in our community. Please join us!

Sincerely,

Philip Hubbard, For the Parish Committee

It is hard to believe that Fall is upon us. A look out the window at the display of colors both on trees and lawn pulls the viewer outside to absorb the beauty of Fall.

Reverend Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn commenced our church year on September 13 with the Water Communion Service. We look forward to Reverend Julie-Ann's twice monthly, inspirational services in addition to exciting lay-led and ministerial-led services on a variety of topics. Special thanks to Laura Wolfgang Davis who led the Oct. 4 service along with her fellow musicians including her father, who accompanied her on the oboe.

Thank you to all who took part in our experimental summer services that consisted of Open-Door Sundays with a time for silent meditation or contemplation and two vesper services held in the Memorial Garden led by our organist, Loyall Allen, accompanied by James Green on violin. Thank you, Loyall and his wife, Pam!

Julie-Ann has begun her brown bag educational series. The next session will be held on Oct. 11 @ noon following the service. Bring a bag lunch, your curiosity and your questions!

Finally, please visit the new website! You will find updated information at:

https://unitarianchurchpetersham.org.

Thanks to Tim Hawley and Kevin Mooney for putting in the time and effort to get the site up to date. Talk to Tim if you have suggestions for the site.

From Building and Grounds/Treasurer

We have been working steadily on small improvements as well as deferred maintenance and energy conservation issues, which needless to say are often complicated, expensive and (sometimes) controversial.

Most visible to everyone is the new walkway that runs from West Street across the front of the church. The old asphalt walkway had deteriorated and was uneven, most especially in the winter when ice and snow accentuated the irregularities, making the walk hard to use and keep clear. The new granite pavers will be a great improvement, with the handrail alongside to steady the steps of elderly congregants. The stone was intended to match the existing steps, which it does, but freshly cut stone always looks brighter than weathered stone. It will fade over time and blend in over a few years.

Also underway is the drawn-out process of insulating the Sanctuary. All the 1910 knob-&-tube electric wiring must be removed because it constitutes a fire hazard if it remains in place with new insulation all around it. Although some old wiring had been removed in previous projects, a good deal remained around and over the Sanctuary. Glenn Tattan has been working on removing the old electric wiring and should be finished by the week of Oct. 5-9. We are updating our light fixtures while we are at it, for less energy use.

Once the old wiring has been removed, new insulation can be blown in --- and the congregation can gather in warm comfort on Sunday mornings, assured that the church is burning significantly less heating oil than before. We are expecting to be able to install the insulation under a MassSave program grant, which will reimburse us for all of our insulation costs. We have pushed this project along in order to take full advantage of the reimbursement program before it is cancelled or scaled back by politicians with dissenting views about the global warming crisis.

Coming Events

Sundays, October 11, October 25, November 8 and December 6, 12:00 – 1:30 Brown bag lunch and learn about Unitarian Universalist history.
Rev. Julie-Ann will share and discuss the threads that are woven into modern Unitarian Universalism. Each stand-alone session will be held in the dining room (lower level of the main church building) and are open to all.

Sunday Services Schedule

Oct 11	Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn *Question Box Service*
Oct 18	A Chorus for These Times *Performing mobilizing folk songs*
Oct 25	Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn *All Souls – Why Universalism*
Nov 1	Dan Everett *Thinking More Clearly for a Better Society*
Nov 8	Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn *Why Covenant Matters*
Nov 15	Rev. Tom McMillan
Nov 22	Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn *Thanksgiving Interfaith Service*
Nov 29	Iva Kazda *Who was Jacob Riis?*
Dec 6	Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn *Hanukkah*
Dec 13	Philip Hubbard *Impressions of Charleston*
Dec 20	Community Discussion in Ladies Parlor
Dec 24	Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn *Christmas Eve*
Dec 27	TBD

Be sure and check our web site for updates and details.

