



# Pilgrims' Progress Newsletter

APRIL 2015

First Parish Church is open to everyone and welcomes participation in the full life, leadership, and ministry of the Church.

We are a diverse congregation.

We welcome persons of any race, gender, ethnic origin, mental or physical ability, religious tradition, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and economic circumstances.

We affirm that the love of Christ for each person knows no bounds.

## The Labyrinth in the Woods: A Community Resource In Honor of Susan Fitzgerald

Susan Fitzgerald has been dreaming about an outdoor labyrinth for many years. We are inviting you to help make that dream come true. First Parish Church and The Brunswick Topsham Land Trust are working jointly on an outdoor labyrinth that will be located on one of the BTLT trails near the Community Gardens just off Baribeau Drive. The setting is lovely, set gently into the wooded area, but with a clear view of the field. Our intention is for this labyrinth to be a spiritual resource to the wider community. We are very excited about this project and this opportunity to work together on a project for the whole community.

A labyrinth is a single path that winds around itself, drawing participants into a center space. People find that walking the labyrinth provides an opportunity for relaxation and spiritual reflection. We have a portable indoor labyrinth that Susan Fitzgerald and a group of people made over ten years ago. This labyrinth is set up in Fellowship Hall six times a year and open to the public. Many people from the wider community come to walk the path. We believe that a permanent outdoor labyrinth will make this spiritual practice available to many more people. In fact, we hope as word gets out that school groups may walk to the labyrinth and church groups may travel here to use this labyrinth.

We would like to raise the money for this project in just one month - this month of April. The estimated cost for this project is \$35,000 to cover both construction and ongoing maintenance. This is an opportunity for all of us to express appreciation and gratitude to Susan for her loving ministry in the church over the last 16 years. It is also a way for us to reach out to the wider community with spiritual nurture. If 350 people (which is about half our church membership) each gave \$100 we'd have the money we need. We are grateful for whatever gift you are able to give- no matter how small or large. I encourage parents to invite their children to give some of their own money as well. If you have friends outside the congregation that you believe would like to contribute, please invite them to do so. We'd like everyone to be a part of this project both in its construction and in its use. We will have an opening celebration when it is completed. We would like the fundraising to be completed by the end of April.



Please make your check payable to First Parish Church and note it **"labyrinth project."**

Thank you to Tim Glidden and Liz Webster (labyrinth coordinator) who have been working with me on this project. Also thank you to the staff and board members of the BTLT who have been so receptive to and enthusiastic about this project. It is a delight to be working with them.

Easter Blessings, *Mary*

# Worship Notes

## Sunday Worship: 10:00 AM

**April 2 Maundy Thursday Communion**  
Followed by a Soup and Bread Supper  
Fellowship Hall 6:00 PM

**April 3 Good Friday Service**  
7:30 PM in the Sanctuary

**April 5 Easter Sunday**  
6:00 AM Sunrise Service on the Bike Path by the Water Street entrance, followed by a Fellowship Breakfast from 7-8 AM in Fellowship Hall.

**10:00 AM Easter Service in Sanctuary**  
Adult Choir, Brass Quartet, Chapel Ringers and Junior, Cherub and Westminster Choirs.  
Oasis Healthcare Network Special Easter Offering  
Nursery care available: All other children are welcome in worship.

**April 12**  
Peter Garlid preaching: Preble Street Ministry  
Adult Choir

**April 19**  
Geoff Parker preaching  
1 John 3:1-7  
"Circular Arguments, Crossed Answers"  
Adult Choir, Chapel Ringers  
4 Cs Meeting after worship in the choir room

**April 26**  
Geoff Parker preaching: 1 John 3:16-24  
"Love and Living"  
Adult Choir, Parish Ringers

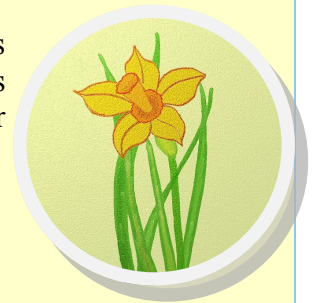
## Mary's Musings

Our Christmas wreath, which is still up, looks as good as new. I'm considering just changing the ribbon to a bright yellow and calling it an Easter wreath. It's a bit hard for most of us to get our heads around the fact that Easter (April 5) is just a week away. The ongoing cold temperatures and the remaining piles of snow just don't compute very well with our typical images of Easter. On the other hand, maybe this unusual weather reminds us how much we need the promise of new life to give us hope in all the circumstances of our lives.



We will have a sunrise service again this year, even if we still need our winter jackets. So please join us early in the morning (6am) on the bike path off Water Street in Brunswick. Know that Pastor Geoff and I will be glad to see you. There will be a breakfast back at Fellowship Hall after the service. At 10:00am we will be glad to see everyone else in the sanctuary for a festive celebration.

If you are traveling over this holiday or are unable to join us for either service know that our prayers are with you.



EASTER BLESSINGS!

*Mary*



## Special Offering

Our Special Offering on Easter will go to support the vital work of the Oasis Free Clinics which provide free medical services to persons of limited means living in the greater Bath-Brunswick area. Over the years, Oasis has expanded from a Tuesday night walk-in clinic to a full-time primary care practice, a prescription assistance clinic and a twice a month free dental clinic. These clinics see over 4,000 patient visits and provide close to one million dollars in free medications each year. Over 80 health professionals volunteer their time with the support of administrative volunteers to provide these services. Oasis depends entirely on grants and the donations from individuals, businesses and local communities, as well as annual support from the United Way. First Parish Church will be happy to receive your donation to Oasis Free Clinics throughout the month of April. There will be special donation envelopes as well in the pews on Easter Sunday.

## STAFF: Children's Ministries, Youth Ministries, Labyrinth Updates

We are delighted to have both **Becky Wilkoff** and **Mandy Similien** working with us to coordinate ministries for our young people and their families. These two part-time positions cover responsibilities during the program year. Becky accepted the position of Children's Ministries Coordinator a couple of months ago and Mandy has just joined us. Mandy, as Youth Ministries Coordinator, will be assisting with the confirmation program for next year by helping in the youth class and by coordinating the communications and logistics related to the program. She will also be working with Pastor Geoff in developing the Youth Group program for next year. As many of you already know, Becky is responsible for the coordination of the Church School program. She also assists the Children and Families Ministries Team with their intergenerational events.

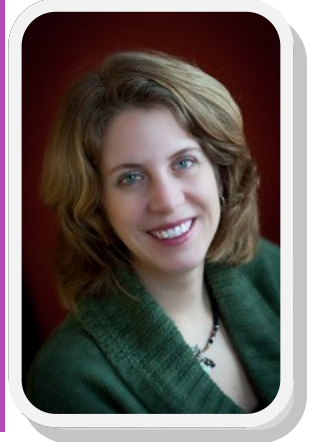


### **Becky Wilkoff** Children's Ministries Coordinator

Becky is a member of First Parish Church, has taught Sunday School and has served on the Church Council. She earned a B.A. in American Literature and French from Middlebury College, where she met her husband Nick. They decided to raise a family in Nick's hometown of Brunswick, where they now have two children in the Brunswick schools. In her spare time Becky enjoys volunteering in the schools, teaching French at Learning Land Nursery School and in the after school program at Harriet Beecher Stowe School, and participating in outdoor sports and activities with her family.

### **Amanda (Mandy) Similien** Youth Ministries Coordinator

has been a member of First Parish Church since 1983 when her parents relocated to Brunswick. She grew up attending First Parish Church school, confirmation, youth groups and sang in the youth choirs through high school. After attending college at the University of Puget Sound and spending two and a half years in Haiti in the Peace Corps, she returned to Brunswick. Mandy and her husband Harold have made Brunswick their home and enjoy raising their two boys amongst all their sports and activities. She is also a catering chef with 111Maine Catering and owns her own Rodan + Fields Skin Care business. Mandy is very excited to be working with the confirmation students this fall and the Senior High Youth Group this fall.



### **Elizabeth Webster** Labyrinth

Liz Webster lives in Bowdoinham and manages commercial real estate in Brunswick and Topsham. She has a Masters of Psychology and



Counselling. She has loved coming to the First Parish Church Labyrinth since its creation and is very happy to be helping keep the Labyrinth ministry thriving. In other parts of her life, she sings, weaves, and loves time outdoors.

### **Thank You!**

**Our time with our brave sabbatical interims is officially over on Easter Sunday.** Our thanks go to Harold Stover (Organist and Music Director), Cassie McKarns (Cherub, Junior, Westminster and Chamber Choir), and Trevor Lavenbein (Parish Ringers). We are grateful for your talents and patience!

**Ray Cornils returns from sabbatical on April 7. (Welcome back, Ray!)**



## A Message from the Facilities Team

Please join the Church Council and Facilities Team on **Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> in the music room directly after worship** for an update on the improvements to our facilities that are under consideration.

Our Strategic Plan directs us to “[a]ssess our present facilities and determine a comprehensive approach to facilities modifications.” The Council set out the following considerations to guide this work: (a) accessibility, (b) intergenerational needs, (c) worship facilitation, and (d) connectedness. The Council has held several meetings on the topic, and made a presentation to the Ministry Forum in April, 2014. (The Ministry Forum is made up of the Chairs of all Teams and Committees, program staff, and the Church Council.) The Ministry Forum voted to prioritize these four projects for further work (listed here in order of most votes to least):

- Tear down Pilgrim House and build a new structure
- Remove the elevator and build a ramp from the vestry to the sanctuary to enhance accessibility
- Remodel the front of the sanctuary to facilitate worship
- Rebuild the choir loft railing so that the choir and the congregation can see one another.

The Council has continued to work toward a facilities plan, forming a facilities team to investigate these projects. Scott Simon Architects has provided us with some options for the ramp, and we have received advice from several knowledgeable members of our congregation on costs and construction options. Most recently, we engaged consultants Peter Heinrichs and Susan Lewis to conduct a feasibility study for these projects. Through this process we hope to better understand how much support in the congregation there is for the modifications to the sanctuary; and whether the congregation agrees with the Ministry Forum, and is financially ready and able, to tear down Pilgrim House and build a new structure.

Members of the Facilities Group are Len Westra, Chair of Property Committee; John Pearson, Chair of Stewardship Committee; Kevin Hart, Chair of Finance Committee; and three representatives of Church Council: Bill Ferdinand, Kristi Hatrick, and Mark Patrick.



## From The Church Council Chair



### *So, what have we done in your name lately?*

Two key elements of the work of Church Council captured most of our attention at the March meeting. Progress on developing a plan for improvements to our facilities was front and center. (See article above.) We hope to see you there!

We encouraged the Finance Committee’s plan to continue the long-standing efforts to clarify the use of First Parish’s Memorial Funds and Non-Restricted Endowment Funds. As they now exist, there is often uncertainty surrounding these decisions. Resolving questions of the proper use of and accounting for these funds will

bring a more orderly approach to supporting and sustaining our programs and activities enabling all involved to act with confidence.

In the January Newsletter, we mentioned that there are many opportunities for service in First Parish. Assuming you have given that some thought, if you would like to serve on a particular committee or team, time is running out for getting your name before the Congregation at the next semiannual meeting! Act now or you may be sitting on your hands until next year.

Peace, Grace and Love to all,

*Ken Thorson*

For the Church Council

# We Welcomed New Members March 22, 2015

**Connie Basket** Now living at The Highlands in Topsham, Connie is a retired elementary teacher with experience in teaching the learning disabled. Her special interests include music and family.



**Elizabeth Davis** Elizabeth lives with her husband, Jack, and daughter, Rose, in Harpswell. She serves as a volunteer EMT and chaplain for Harpswell Neck Fire and Rescue and also works at Bowdoin Library part-time. She has a home studio for her interest in fiber art.

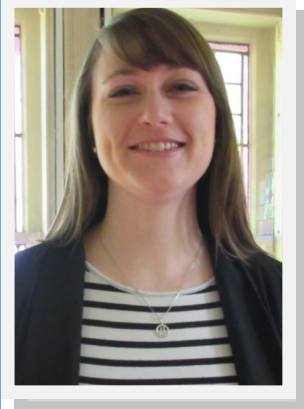
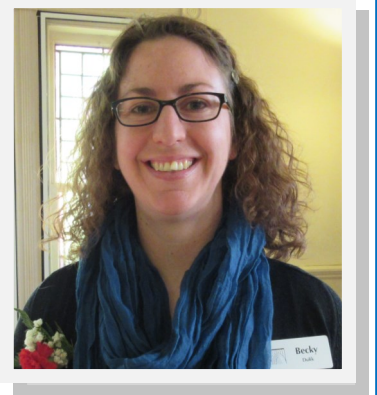


**Marty and Steve Dome** Marty grew up in Illinois and has special interests in the arts, history and nature activities, and especially their two grandchildren. Steve has worked in investment banking and as a trained spiritual director. He is a fisherman who likes to tie flies. He is also a raptor handler who is presently training with Wind Over Wings.



**Laurie Doran** Laurie has a life-long interest in art, which she presently expresses through knitting. She has published several short stories and is an experienced hiker.

**Becky Dulik** Becky is just beginning a new career with the American Red Cross. She has served on the Adult Education and *Windows On...* committees here at First Parish.



**Cassie McKarns** Moving to Maine two years ago from Ohio, Cassie is a music teacher in Lewiston. She is also serving as director of the Junior, Cherub and Westminster Choirs, as well as the Chamber Choir during Ray's sabbatical.

**Elizabeth Lee and Elliott Miller** Elizabeth was born in Scotland and grew up in England. A retired Radiology Technologist, she is an avid birder, loves to cook, walk and read. She is also a substitute for the Parish Ringers. Elliott is a retired physician who has volunteered in Newfoundland, Labrador, and Tanzania with ongoing connections in Newfoundland and Labrador. He enjoys baking bread, woodworking and watercolors.





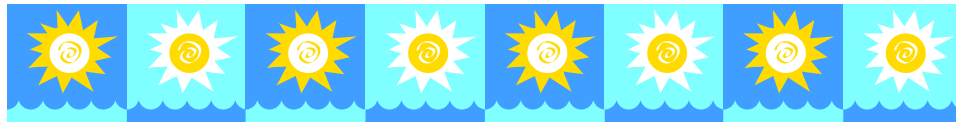
**Sheri and Paul Nadell** Sheri has held various teaching positions and experiences. She is presently an administrator at Brentwood Center for Health and Rehab in Yarmouth. Paul is an IT consultant and math teacher. They have three sons.

**Fred Pease** Now living at Thornton Oaks, Fred is a retired UCC minister whose ministries have included serving as a US Navy Chaplain at Phillips Academy, churches in MA and NH and as a interim minister.



**Andy Rudalevige** Andy is a Bowdoin College professor with various teaching experiences both in the US and overseas. He and his wife Christine's children, Owen and Eliza, were confirmed here at First Parish in 2014.

**Lisa Stricklett** Lisa moved here with her husband and two teenage children a few years ago from Salt Lake City. She works as a clinical pharmacist at the Togus VA Center. She joined the First Parish Handbell Ringers over three years ago.



## Adult Education



### ***Our Whole Lives (OWL) Program Offered*** **March 29 at 11:30 a.m.**

***Our Whole Lives Adult Sexuality Education Series*** will have an informational session on March 29th at 11:30 in Fellowship Hall after the worship service. Come and learn about the *Our Whole Lives* program that models and teaches caring, compassion, respect and justice. It helps adults address their attitudes, values and feelings about themselves, their sexuality and others' sexuality. After

the meeting there will be an opportunity to sign up for a month long *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education series on Sundays, 4:00 - 5:30 PM, April 12 through May 3. Maddy Magnuson and Robbie Harrison will lead this four week series that will address attitudes, values and feelings about ourselves, our sexuality and others' sexuality.



# Information Session for Confirmation Program



Youth entering **7th grade** or higher (and their families) are welcome to an information session after worship on **Sunday, April 12th in Fellowship Hall** to learn more about participating in next year's confirmation program. This program offers a chance for those who have been baptized as children to explore the faith that the church has supported them in. For others, confirmation preparation offers them a chance to decide to be baptized along the way, before joining with the rest of the class in saying yes to their baptisms.

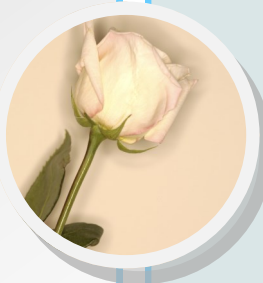
Along with pastors, adult mentors, parents, and classmates, confirmands will work to:

- Learn about themselves, and where they see God in their lives.
- Think about what they believe, and what questions they have for their faith journeys to come.
- Discover what special blessings and gifts of service God is calling them to...for themselves and the world around them.

## Planned Giving Corner

### Special Program May 3

On Sunday, May 3, after worship, we will have the opportunity to hear all about the project to find historic documents from church closets, bank vaults and town clerk offices across New England. The Congregational Library and Archives (Boston) is doing a search and rescue mission to preserve 17th and 18th Century church records. First Parish loaned them boxfuls this past fall for digitization. Dr. Margaret Bendroth, Executive Director, will share some of their discoveries with us. Please join us!



### Planned Giving Message

Stewardship...means being good managers of the resources that we have earned and that life has given us. As good stewards we know that when we choose to spend our time or money, there are always opportunities foregone. We consider our choices and we use our resources in keeping with our values and life mission.

The way we plan for distribution of our assets at the end of life is a part of stewardship. The Planned Giving Committee urges you to consider how you can nurture future generations in First Parish Church.

## From the Treasurer

February income was a bit below budget but so were expenses. We ended the month with less than \$5,000 on hand. We are approximately \$10,000 behind our budgeted pledge and regular giving so far this year. It would be helpful if we got back on budget to have a bit more breathing room in our cash flow. March income is looking good to budget but likely won't make up any of January's deficit.

To help restore some breathing room, please consider joining the Birthday Club this year! Envelopes for this purpose are in each pew. Just include \$1 for each of your years (or whatever amount is comfortable for you). Or have family members give you a Birthday Club membership as a birthday present! This supports our Church community as well as our wider community by supporting the full budget of the Church. In April we'll have a Birthday Club birthday cake at coffee hour to celebrate all of our Birthday Club members. Join now and have your name on that cake!

Enjoy the tiny glimmers of Spring we're seeing!

*Wendy Suehrstedt*, Treasurer



# 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cookbook Committee Report

Plans keep moving forward for the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cookbook. The committee has spent the past few months collecting ideas, gaining insight from those who have experience with this kind of project, and refining our timeline, but we can use your help now.

Our goal is to produce a book that celebrates our history through those special dishes that we enjoy and use to nurture us and others. Have you enjoyed taking part in a fellowship dinner, a baked bean supper, a fellowship breakfast, or a choir family dinner? Have you prepared a tasty dish for Tedford Housing? Do you have a favorite recipe that you want to share? Or a recipe that you want to request? (I heard lots of compliments for the blueberry French toast casserole that we served at the March fellowship breakfast!)

The Committee has recipe collection baskets in Pilgrim House and at Sunday coffee hour in the vestry and you might see them pop up at other FPC gatherings. Just drop your recipes or requests in the basket. We'll also have recipe forms that you can take to fill out. Soon, we plan to have an online site so that you can submit them electronically.

And, if submitting things on paper is not tasty enough for you, **please come to our first Cookbook potluck on Saturday, May 2, at 5:00 in Fellowship Hall.** Bring a dish to share along with a copy of the recipe. We'll have fun tasting and celebrating our fellowship. Stay tuned to the weekly emails and Sunday bulletins for more details. Or just ask one of us.

Cindy Girardin, Nancy Hoffman, Margo Knight, Connie Rose, Ruth Thibodeau, Lois Widmer



## Habitat for Humanity/7 Rivers Walk to Build May 3

Packets are available in the church office and after worship in the Vestry for this year's walk, which takes place on Sunday May 3 at 2 PM. The four-mile route will begin and end at St. Charles Church in Brunswick. At the halfway point, they will pause for the Faith Build Groundbreaking ceremony on Hope Lane.



## Cancer Society's Relay for Life May 15-16

It is time to think about Spring and with Spring comes The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. The dates this year are May 15-16. First Parish is forming a team called "A Caring Spirit," and we want YOU! We have lots of fun and have been extremely successful in the past. For more information as to what is involved in being a member of "A Caring Spirit," look for a table during fellowship time after worship in the Vestry, or you may call co-captains Ruth Thibodeau (729-3190) and Janet Roberts (729-8967).





# PARISH NOTES

- ◆ Prayers for: Susan Fitzgerald, Gil Schneidewind, Sally Twine, Janet Leland, Nancy Olson, Dot Huebner, Joan Hall
- ◆ The **Caregivers' Support Group** meets each Monday at 2:00 pm in Pilgrim House Parlor. FMI, please call the church office at 729-7331.
- ◆ The **Grief Support Group** will meet on Wednesdays at 2 PM in the Parlor. FMI, please call the church office at 729-7331.
- ◆ The **Advanced Cancer Support Group** meets twice a month. If you are interested in more information, please call the church office or Jeanne Tuttle at 721-0721.
- ◆ A reminder: sermons, our Weekly Email, and the monthly newsletter (*Pilgrims' Progress*) can be accessed via our website: <http://www.firstparish.net>.
- ◆ **Jan York will be 95 on Easter Sunday, April 5!** She is not able to get to church these days, and we are sure she would love to get some cards: 15 Goodwin Lane Orr's Island 04066.

I am planning my second pancake breakfast to benefit Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program, May 30, 2015. Would you please volunteer? Volunteers will help me set-up, cook and clean-up. Donations are welcome! Please contact me, Max Keller, at 725-6548 or my Mom, Danielle, at [keller\\_danijoy@yahoo.com](mailto:keller_danijoy@yahoo.com)

Do you like to do unusual crafts with silverware? Mark and Melon Patrick have silver plated silverware pieces that can be made into chimes. They are happy to donate them. Perhaps you could make some for the Halls of Holly Fair!! Mark and Melon: [mpatricks@comcast.net](mailto:mpatricks@comcast.net)

## Attention Stitchers and Craftspeople

We are looking for folks who embroider, needlepoint, quilt, and do other crafts to contribute materials to a table for the Halls of Holy Christmas Fair. If you are spring cleaning, or just want to check for unused supplies, we are interested in frames, hoops, needles, thread, counted cross-stitch or wool for needlepoint. Used or unwanted patterns and fabric are also welcome. FMI: Rosemary Roberts 725-7232 or Donna Thompson 725-7430.



## Inquiring Minds Book Group

Inquiring Minds Book Group invites you to meet on April 20th at 7 PM in the Parlor to discuss "The Lowland" by Jhumpa Lahiri. At the May 18th meeting, we will discuss "The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster" by Jonathan M. Katz. We hope you can join us for these discussions.

## Earth Care Tip for April

Those single-serve coffee capsules can be recycled, at least the plastic parts can. Tear off the paper part and make sure all the coffee is emptied out. Then recycle the plastic part along with the other plastic from your household.



## Earth Hour

Earth Hour began in 2007 as a lights-off event to raise awareness about climate change. Please join people worldwide on Saturday, March 28 at 8:30 PM and turn off your lights for one hour.

**FIRST PARISH CHURCH  
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Our buildings are accessible to the physically challenged.  
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM