



The Shooting Star

April 2026

the monthly newsletter of

First Parish Chelmsford UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

2 Westford St. Chelmsford, MA 01824

Uuchelmsford.org

Office Info & Deadlines

Sunday Announcements:

Weekly, Wed. by 7pm

Newsletter: Fourth Sunday of the month, April 26

To receive the newsletter via email, please contact the church office at (978) 256-5133 or office@uuchelmsford.org

Worship Service: Every Sunday at 10am

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/UuchelmsfordOrg

LiveStream: www.uuchelmsford.org/worship-service

From Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

Minister • (978) 256-5555 • minister@uuchelmsford.org

April Soul Matters Worship Theme: *Embracing Possibility*

April 2

6:30pm - Maundy
Thursday Communion
7pm - Tenebrae Service

April 5

Intergenerational
Celebration of Spring,
Passover, and Easter

April 12

The Lowell Litter Krewe
– Ami Hughes & Rev. Ellen

April 19

"Biomimicry"
– Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

April 26

Earth Day Service hosted
by the Green Committee

Dear First Parishers,

I recently came across these words by Parker Palmer, from his book, *Let Your Life Speak*: "In the human world, abundance does not happen automatically. It is created when we have the sense to choose community, to come together to celebrate and share our common store. Whether the scarce resource is money or love or power... the true law of life is that we generate more of whatever seems scarce by trusting its supply and passing it around. Authentic abundance is not found in secured stockpiles of food or cash or influence or affection but in belonging to a community where we can give those goods to others who need them - and receive them from others when we are in need.... Community doesn't just create abundance - community is abundance. If we could learn that equation from the world of nature, the human world might be transformed."

We speak of "community" as the reason why we come to and why we stay at First Parish, so I appreciate Palmer's fleshing out what community means and how it works. It is something we choose to participate in, to give to and receive from, in trust that when we do so, we create a sense of belonging that can be transformative. It pushes back against our larger culture's emphasis on the accumulation of individual wealth and power. And it shifts us from fear to gratitude, from scarcity to abundance.

Because of all the troubles in our country and our world, our First Parish community feels especially energetic and abundant. Within and beyond our congregation, we are reaching out to create networks of care and compassion, and to deepen bonds of trust

and hope. We recognize that we need authentic community now more than ever, and we are engaged in bringing that to life.

Another aspect of community is its ability to make possible things we could not accomplish on our own and in ways that we cannot fully imagine. This is particularly true for a community of faith where we live between what is and what we hope can be. We are in a literal and metaphorical season of change as we move out of what has been a tough winter and into spring. We do not know what lies ahead but as we witness life renewing itself all around us, we can help one another put our trust in community to liberate us from fear, and in love to help us rise out of despair.

The abundance of community happens because we invest in it—and because generations before us did the same. Our participation is cumulative and transformative. I am grateful for all of you and all the ways you choose to make First Parish happen abundantly!

In faith,
Rev. Ellen

Standing Around – News and Notes from the SC (Standing Committee) **John Schneider, Standing Committee Chair**

We made it! It's officially spring. As I write this, the songbirds are singing their happy songs, it's good to have them back, and it's not too cold outside. Our house is south facing so our snow melts quickly, revealing the next project – yard work (but that beats snow shoveling).

Speaking of next projects, the Standing Committee has started work on the FY27 (July 2026-June 2027) budget. Between now and our annual meeting in June, you'll have an opportunity to learn more details about next year's budget through our April budget hearings, periodic updates from the Standing Committee, and the voter's guide we publish prior to the annual meeting. We will vote on the budget in June. What will next year's investments look like? As the Stewardship team wrote recently, "our plans for next year involve investing in worship - hiring a music director and improving our audio-visual capabilities. We also are investing in our capacity for new programs and outreach focused on social justice and building community - additional staff hours to support our volunteers who lead teams and facilitate small groups."

Stewardship and the spiritual practice of generosity are acts of faith. And we are a generous Congregation—revenue from pledges for this year is on track, we raised over \$20,000 for the Carlene Merrill Fund which made us eligible for a \$20,000 match for financial resources that help us support staff through expanded hours and providing a living wage and benefits, and we have had several robust fundraising events during the year. Our endowment is healthy and well managed, and we have funds set aside for addressing the long range needs for the maintenance of our sanctuary, chapel, the Carlene Merrill Kitchen, and gathering and classroom spaces and offices.

Many of you completed "why I pledge" cards at our March 15 stewardship service and we will be sharing your whys and stories during the stewardship campaign which runs through early May (Ok, I can't miss an opportunity – you can pledge by visiting <https://fpchelmsford.breezechms.com/form/stewardship2680> or stop by the table during social hour) . All of us on the SC are grateful that you choose to **Light the Lantern and Be the Signal Light** at a time when the practice of Unitarian Universalism is so needed in today's world.

Thank you for your generosity and the love you share with us. Have mercy,
John Schneider



Lifespan Faith Formation

Shooting Star April 2026

Connect, Engage, Belong

Happy Spring!

April Soul Matters Theme:

Embrace the Possibilities... of yoUU!

We are part of this living tradition. Through it, we become whole, and through us, our tradition becomes whole.

Intentional UU Sessions

begin April 12th, 2026, 1pm to 3pm

1st Introductory Session

"Worship & YoUU!"

Led by Rev. Ellen Rowse-Spero

Intentional UU is a series of monthly sessions to explore, discover and yes - learn, and live being a

Unitarian Universalist ... Intentionally.

Please RSVP: dre@uuchelmsford.org

Attendance to all sessions is optional...

Inspiration to be an Intentional UU

-FIVE STONES OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM-

Based on James Luther Adams' essay "Guiding Principles for a Free Faith" in *On Becoming Human Religiously*:

We gather as Unitarian Universalists to understand, articulate, and live our liberal religion.

David brought down the giant Goliath with five smooth stones.

We use these as a symbol of the stones to build a more just, loving, and free world.

- **Introduction/Worship Session: April 12th**
Our first stone reminds us that we are part of a living tradition in which revelation is continuous.
Together we engage in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Following Intentional UU Sessions & themes are in the works...

Interested in participating or facilitating?

please contact: dre@uuchelmsford.org

- **Covenant Session:** (May '26, date TBD)
Our second stone reminds us that we freely choose to enter into relationship and community with one another.
Together as people of conscience, we build relationships of justice, equity, and compassion that further the wholeness of the interdependent web of all existence.
- **UU Identity/ UU -FPCC Congregational Structure Session:** (Sept, date TBD)
Our third stone reminds us that we have a moral obligation to work toward establishing a just and loving community.
Together we speak and act prophetically with the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- **Ethics/Virtue Session:** (Oct, date TBD)
Our fourth stone reminds us that good things happen as a result of human effort.
Together, as beings with inherent worth and dignity, we create goodness and virtue.
- **Spiritual/Faith Session:** (Nov, date TBD)
Our fifth stone reminds us that the divine and human capacities for achieving meaningful change are reason for optimism.
Together we may be hopeful that change will occur toward a more just, loving, and free world.
- **UU History Session** (date TBD)
The roots of our living tradition have been developed over centuries, but new ideas and understandings are still being revealed.



Some UU
Faith Formation...
**Lifespan Faith Formation
is higher yoUU education**



It connects us from childhood to old age, to understand how & why & what & whom and where? To strengthen, to nourish, to communicate, to support, to serve, to treasure, to flourish ~ to worship, to pray. And even tackle those mysterious k-nots... Thank you

For more information, questions or your ideas:

**Contact: Dolores GHeredia Wood, LFFD
dre@uuchelmsford.org; 978-690-8333**

<https://www.uuchelmsford.org/faith-formation/>

FPCC offers a variety of Small Groups:

- Women's Groups
- Two Men's Groups (one 55+)
- Sacred Circle Spiritual Group
 - 4th Tuesday at 6pm
- Retirees, 70's plus Group
 - 2nd/3rd Sunday at 11:30ish
- Friday Night Families Game Night 7pm
- All Ages Family Jam Band, 2nd & 4th Sundays 1pm.
- Families Small Group Potluck Gatherings



**Retirees, 70's +
"Better-Yearred" Group
Meet & Greet - April 19th
11:30ish (note earlier time)
Topic: Friendships 'Matter'**

**RETIRING, 70'S, 80'S BEYOND...
(OR YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE?)**

Let's Chat About It...The purpose of the group is to connect, participate, engage, support each other and others with the gifts, *that we are*. Tell your story...Meet & Greets will be 2nd, or 3rd Sunday every month. An email to share group related events will be distributed per request. contact dre@uuchelmsford.org



ATTENTION: Possible New Small Group

If you are interested in being part of a
Queer/LGBTQ+ Small Group

We are looking to provide a sacred space where participants can express themselves and support one another.

If you are interested in being a facilitator (training required & provided,)

or in being a participant...

contact Dolores, LFFD at dre@uuchelmsford.org



**April 5th
EGG HUNT!
Meet in Vestry
following
10am Easter Service
Ages 1 to 102**

☞ REFF Youth Faith Formation:

For more information or to get on REFF family email list contact dre@uuchelmsford.org

**REFF will be entering
Earth-Heart Series!**

- ❖ April 5: Happy Spring! Happy Easter!
- ❖ April 12th: UU's 7th Principal Practices
 - Reduce/Reuse/Recycle
 - OWL 2-6:30 in Acton/Stow
- ❖ April 19: UU's 7th Principal Practices-We Care!
 - Earth& Wind & Water
 - Spring Break..
 - Families Gathering (TBD)
- ❖ April 26th:
 - Earth Day! Prep For Earth Day Fair!
 - OWL 2-5:30 in TBD



UU Common Read Workshop (RETREAT) Part 2

May 31, 3pm to 6

Refreshments and Eat & Chat
Dinner optional 6pm-7

Books can be provided as needed; Please
RSVP dre@uuchelmsford.org

Rev. Ellen and Dolores, LFFD invite you to a deeper dive on part 2 of the UU Common Read. We will be building on March 15th, FPCC Healthy Ecosystem Workshop.

Key Points: Reflection and Connection:

Agency- This Workshop will be mainly a Retreat with focus on being intentional on what our roles are, as Individuals, as UU', as part of FPCC.

- Emphasizing self-reflection of values and building connection through support systems
- Empowering us through efficacy, optimism, and proactive choices, fostering resilience and a sense of responsibility, to have the ability to exert control over thoughts, actions, and achieve goals for our lives & community.

If you weren't able to join us on March 15th, and are interested in attending, please contact Dolores, LFFD dre@uuchelmsford.org

Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection by Deepa Iyer.

This book provides a framework for individuals and organizations to engage in exploring/discovering their role in their community by introducing the "social change ecosystem" with ten roles (like builder, storyteller, disrupter) to help people find their place and strengthen their efforts. Deepening commitment offering practical tools for reflection and action.

Key Concepts: Social Change Ecosystem: A framework that maps out various roles within social movements, showing there isn't one "right" way to contribute.



Church Council*

COMMUNICATION!!!

Meeting on May 3rd, 11:30am

What is the Church Council?

- Church Council is made up of Representative of Committee/Team/FPCC Groups-YoUU!
- Representatives share member and Committee/Team/FPCC Group needs
- Communicate, Review, Update Current Activities
- Promote Committee/Team Affairs, e.g. Volunteer Team/Committee Fair
- Offer trainings reinforcing communication, governance and congregational structure
- Maintain Church Event Calendar Updated and Accessible
- Review and Approval of Faith in Action Grants
- And...

*The Standing Committee approved on Feb. 17th, 2026, the relaunching of the Church Council to establish Connection and Communication at FPCC. We look forward to having all committees/teams/groups participate. The Church Council will meet regularly and establish best communication formats to meet the needs of Council, Committee/Teams/Congregation. Meetings TBD at the discretion of Church Council once it is established. Oversight: provided by Dolores~, Life Span Faith Formation Director (LFFD) to provide organizational continuity. For more information: dre@uuchelmsford.org

Church Announcements

Annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace: May 10, 2026

Save the Date: The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute's 30th Annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace will be held on **Sunday, May 10, 2025** at Town Field Park in Dorchester, MA 02122. If you would like to register to walk with the First Parish team, or donate to the Peace Institute, you can do so at www.mothersdaywalk4peace.org/Team/View/223566/First-Parish-of-Chelmsford

Please contact Susan Woodmansee at susan.woodmansee@gmail.com for more information.

A Request from your Collector

Several of you have been making payments towards your pledge in cash in an envelope in the collection plate and we thank you for that. It would be helpful if you included a slip of paper inside the envelope with your name, date, and the amount enclosed as it leaves a better audit trail. Thank you.

As always your generosity is greatly appreciated! - Carla, collector@uuchelmsford.org

See Something, Say Something!

Your Building Committee now has an email address so that you can let us know what needs our attention. You can contact us at buildingmanager@uuchelmsford.org

Thanks,

–Walter, Tip, Ron, and Tom

Community Announcements

A Day of LGBTQIA+ Understanding: Identity and Language

Sunday, April 26, 2026 | 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church | 170 Old Westford Rd. Chelmsford, MA

You are invited by the Trinity Lutheran Church's "Reconciling in Christ" (RIC) team to attend this multigenerational panel to explore the diversity of lived experiences and the common threads through personal stories and shared reflections of identity, labels, and language.

Day Includes: Lunch, Speaker, and Panel Discussion

*This workshop is free and open to the public. Those of different faiths or no faith affiliations are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

**TRINITY
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CHURCH**



www.tlc-chelmsford.org

