



The Shooting Star

May 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, May 24

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

Dear First Parishers,

On Saturday evening, Josh and I attended the annual fundraising gala at Fitchburg State University. Fitchburg State has a new president—the first woman—Dr. Donna Hodge who is an energetic, smart and skilled leader. In almost two years, she has revitalized the campus, bringing a sense of joy and possibility to the students, faculty and staff. The gala was her brainchild—a way to bring together not only the members of the Fitchburg State community and city of Fitchburg, as well as members across North Central Massachusetts, as she said in her speech, to build trust, articulate their educational mission, and invest in both their students and the city. She talked about staying true to their purpose and values, while also adapting to a changing world: trying new ideas and letting go of traditions and practices that were no longer working. An example of this was offering all high school students in Fitchburg free tuition and fees to attend the university, if they maintained the necessary academic standards. To make visible this commitment, the university has set up an admission center in Fitchburg High School and a welcoming center for families in downtown Fitchburg, making the process accessible and supported. I thought it was brilliant. It is already starting to work and President Hodge and the administration's willingness to take the risk was inspiring.

As I listened to President Hodge speak, I was struck by parallels with First Parish. We too are an institution that serves communities within and beyond our walls, with a commitment to

May Soul Matters Worship Theme: *Awakening Curiosity*

May 3

Membership Sunday

– Membership Committee &
Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

May 10

Intergen. Mother's Day

– Dolores Heredia-Wood &
Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

May 17

Guest Minister Wendy Bell

May 24

"Nones, Dones and
Spiritual Seekers"

– Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

May 31

Music Sunday

– Rev. Brian Snow & Rev.
Ellen Rowse Spero

a set of values that we embody through a mission to serve both our larger world and our vision of what is possible. Obviously, our values, mission and vision are grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith rather than education but there are a lot of similarities.

This past year has been a mix of positives and challenges. On the one hand, we finally seem fully back from COVID. The participation, energy and engagement are back to the pre-pandemic levels so as to feel that chapter receding. At the same time, the country and the world are in increasing chaos and turmoil. The economic, political, technological and environmental future feel uncertain and fragile. It is an uneasy and frightening time.

It is natural in the face of uncertainty to want to turn inward, stay in our comfort zone, and protect our resources. However, if we are true to our mission as a community of faith, then we are called to do the opposite. To share and proclaim our values. To invest and engage in hospitality, service and generosity. To be visible in making the Spirit of Love manifest in our larger community and to be accessible and creative in meeting the spiritual needs of a new generation of seekers. As a consequence of COVID, people, particularly young people, are battling loneliness, looking for spiritual meaning and belonging. Rather than turning inward, I believe our congregational health depends upon us being willing to turn outward and to invest in the values and mission we claim, to take some faithful risks. In a time when trust has been broken in so many places by the failure of leaders and institutions to live up to their responsibilities, we have an opportunity and a call to help heal that trust, in our local corner of the world.

In faith,
Rev. Ellen

An Update from the FY27 Stewardship Team

Over 80 members and families are investing in First Parish for the next fiscal year! **Thank you for your generosity!** If you haven't yet done so, it's not too late to submit your pledge for July 2026-June 2027.

You can make your 2026-2027 Pledge here: <https://fpchelmsford.breezechms.com/form/stewardship2680> or email stewardship@uuchelmsford.org.

We are working toward a 16% increase in our annual budget, so **we need everyone's participation** to support our staff, outreach, facilities, community building, worship, and social justice activities next year.





Lifespan Faith Formation Shooting Star May 2026 Connect, Engage, Belong

Happy May Holidays!

May Soul Matters Theme: Awakening Curiosity



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:
These are meant to be sacred spaces offering a space for expression & support within the context of our UU Values/Beliefs

- Women's Groups
 - New Women's group soon...
- 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-Yeared" Group**
Meet & Greet - May 24th
11:30ish (note earlier time)
Topic: "Great Vacation"

**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



New Small Group
Meet & Greet June 21st at 11:30
Queer/LGBTQ+ Family & Friends
Small Group

At this gathering we will set the date for regular monthly meetings. We are looking to provide a sacred space where participants can express themselves and support one another.

For more information please contact Dolores, LFFD at dre@uuchelmsford.org

☞ REFF Youth Faith Formation:

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

- ❖ **May 1st: May Celebration!**
 - **Special Chapel Guest & Creations with Frances Killam**
- ❖ **May 10: Happy Mother's Day Interger!**
Blessing to everyone that fulfills that role!
- ❖ **March 17th: We are UU's -Inside & out...**
- ❖ **March 24: Movie Day! Happy Memorial Day!**
 - **6pm REFF Families Gathering (not a potluck...)**
- ❖ **March 31st: REFF Wrapping Up...**
- ❖ **June 7th Field Day! REFF Family Picnic Day!**
- ❖ **June 14th REFF Celebration Worship Service**

Intentional UU

We are part of this living tradition.

Through it, we become whole, and through us, our tradition becomes whole.

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

*Attendance to all sessions is optional; Please RSVP, Dolores,
dre@uuchelmsford.org*

Next Session: Covenant & YoUU!

May 17th, 6pm to 8; Dinner Included ☺

Led by Sarah Manning

(Part of FPCC Covenant Committee)

**What, When, Why, Where and Who of shared Promises
Together as people of conscience, we build relationships Unitarian
Universalist beliefs and values based on love.**

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

Interested in participating or facilitating? please contact: dre@uuchelmsford.org

UU Identity/ UU -FPCC Congregational Structure Session: (Sept, date TBD) Together 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)

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)

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.



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



Membership-Hospitality Team Invites yoUU...

May 3rd...

Member Recognition & Celebration 10am Worship Service

Afterwards, please join us for cupcakes during Social Hour!

~Members Being Honored~

New Members:

Steven Davis, Ron Peacetree; Kathleen Talbot

Alan Sloan; Mathew Zimmermann

Teri Ralbovsky!

Ten Years: Brian Snow

Twenty-Five Years

Sally Seekings

Rebecca Gore; Warren Flewellen

Thank you to all FPCC Members and Friends...for your Dedication to our beloved
First Parish Community with your... Time, Talent, Treasure and Love!



May 31st, 11:30

Newcomer Meet and Greet!

And FPCC Tour with Bonnie Rankin
(everyone is invited to FPCC Tour)

We'll begin in the Vestry

~Membership-Hospitality Committee ~John Fisher, Leslie Yauckoes, Carla
Corey; Chris Sweetnam; Elaine Mahoney; Frans Janssen; Amanda MacLean

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, 2026**, with a program starting at 8am and the walk starting at 9am from Town Field in Dorchester, MA 02122.



Funds raised from the Walk support families of homicide victims through the programs and services of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, including immediate and long-term care for survivors, youth and multigenerational arts/education programming, advocacy for survivor-centered policies, and reentry support for formerly incarcerated people. This is the 30th anniversary of the event. You can join the First Parish of Chelmsford team or donate at www.mothersdaywalk4peace.org.

www.mothersdaywalk4peace.org/Team/View/223566/First-Parish-of-Chelmsford

Contact Susan Woodmansee for information: susan.woodmansee@gmail.com or 617-216-8032.

First Parish Talent Show and Potluck: Saturday, May 16th

Please join us for this year's First Parish Talent Show and Potluck, on Saturday, May 16th from 6 - 9 PM! Bring your talent - spoken word, sung word, danced word or no word - we want to celebrate you! Text or email Frances for info, or if you'd like some instrumental backup, the Jam Band is available, and we do better if we know what's coming! Compostable plates, etc, will be provided - we'd like to keep the kitchen clean. Frances' contact info: 978.502.9708 / franceskillam@yahoo.com



Jolene Dubner Park Clean-Up Day

Mark Your Calendar! **After church on May 31** we hope you and your family can join us for a clean-up day at the Jolene Dubner Park in Lowell. The park is named after Jolene, who was a member of First Parish and was passionate about environmental protection. She was one a founder of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust. First Parish honors her legacy with an annual financial gift to LP&CT and by sprucing up the park. Plan to bring gardening gloves and a rake.

Prayer Shawls

As we head into spring and the end of our church year in June we would love to stock up on prayer shawls before we break. We're hoping to bless enough to get us through the summer. Thank you to all the wonderful knitters and crocheters who put their love and care into their beautiful creations. If you have any questions about the prayer shawl ministry please see Kathy Deschenes at social hour or email her at springersrus@comcast.net

CFAM Art Supply Drive

CFAM will be collecting new and gently used arts and crafts supplies for Wright's Tenant Union, a resident-led organization at Lowell Transitional Living Center. Stop by the CFAM table during Social Hour for more details!

Community Announcements

Invitation from FP Members Rachel and Cay: Spring Acapella Concert

First Parish members Rachel and Cay are having their spring concert featuring a one-act musical this month! Come see "Expedition Five: A Barbershop Acapella Space Opera" on Sunday, May 31st at 2pm in Somerville! Tickets will be available soon at [www.eventbrite.com/e/](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/expedition-five-a-barbershop-a-cappella-space-opera-tickets-1986996795905)
[expedition-five-a-barbershop-a-cappella-space-opera-tickets-1986996795905](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/expedition-five-a-barbershop-a-cappella-space-opera-tickets-1986996795905)



"Pub Theology" – Invitation from Central Congregational Church

Central Cong. Church in Chelmsford invites you to join us for our Pub Theology: pull up a chair, grab your favorite beverage, and join us for open, honest conversation in a relaxed pubsetting. Open to ALL – spiritual but not religious, church-goers, curious minds. Food and drinks available for purchase.

Our next gathering will be Saturday, May 30th, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the 110 Grill in Chelmsford. Free Childcare is provided from 6:15pm - 8:15pm at Central Congregational Church, 1 Worthen St. by a CORI adult. Questions? Please contact Samantha, the Christian Education Chair at: Samantha.Shields@cccChelmsford.org.



Please RSVP here for May: docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd4AQTeUh3ieiC_3nUUJrsy2Hs_tJRhc5AvideldW4u12Tlcbg/viewform

Chelmsford Community Gardens

Chelmsford Community Gardens has over 120 garden plots in town! We want to get the word out about our NEW Accessible raised garden beds. Want to join? Visit <https://www.chelmsfordma.gov/1083/Community-Gardens> for info and to apply

Annual Interfaith Spring Gathering for Peace

Sunday, May 3, 2026

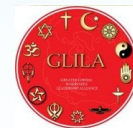
2:45 PM (ET) – Check-in & Greetings

3:00 – 4:30 PM (ET) – Story, Reflection, & Song

(4:30 PM – In-Person: Refreshments)



The USA at 250:
Liberty & Justice
for All?



Sponsored by
GLILA – Greater Lowell
Interfaith Leadership Alliance

This is a hybrid event; masks are optional in person.

In Person: **Central Congregational Church**
1 Worthen Street, Chelmsford, MA 01824

Via Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/3mpwyydu>
Meeting ID: 871 6361 1825 Passcode: Spring

Please note: This event may be recorded.

