



The Shooting Star

November 2025

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, November 23

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

November Soul Matters Theme: *Nurturing Gratitude*

November 2

All Souls Service
- Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

November 9

Guest Preacher Erin Scott,
Intern Minister at First
Parish in Groton (Rev. Ellen
away)

November 16

"The Gift Economy"
- Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

November 23

Intergen. Thanksgiving
Bread Communion and
Collection for Open Pantry
- Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero &
Dolores Heredia-Wood

November 30

Gratitude Postcards
- Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

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,

What a joy and honor it was to celebrate the ordination of our own Brian Snow this past Sunday! The sanctuary was filled with joyful spirit and heartfelt blessing as we witnessed and affirmed his call to ministry. Thank you to everyone who helped make the service so meaningful — those who planned, spoke, played, shopped, set up, greeted, sewed the stole, took pictures, served food, and cleaned up, and to all who simply showed up in love and support. The list is long! I would like to offer special thanks to Brian's ordination team: Bonnie Rankin, Beth Benoit, Joan Coyne, Erin Clifford, Carrie Ives-Fisher, John Schneider and Stephen Fisher (a colleague from Brian's work in chaplaincy/community ministry) who worked with Brian over several months to plan this service and reception.

Several of you said a version of this to me after the service, "I was surprised how deeply moved I was that we as a congregation were the ones to ordain Brian!". It is a powerful, sacred responsibility that our congregation was given, to walk him across the threshold as he became the Reverend Brian Snow. Here is an excerpt from my charge to us as we prepared for this act of ordination:

Whenever I have been asked to do a charge at an ordination, I think of this quote by Annie Dillard: "Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god

may draw us out to where we can never return.”

Her words are a reminder of the true power and nature of what we are doing when we invite and invoke the Larger Spirit of Love, the Holy within, among and beyond us, to be present as we task a new minister with this sacred trust, this sacred charge. For we are part of it too.

With this in mind I charge you, Members of this beloved Congregation of the First Parish of Chelmsford: Support this ministry of the Reverend Brian Snow not only with your words today, but with your continuing care. Hold Brian in the prayers and meditations of your hearts. Offer him your companionship, your understanding, your steadfast love. Speak truth with love, with clarity and with compassion to help him grow more skilled and faithful in his ministry. Listen to what truth he might offer us with a similar spirit. Let our covenant and our congregation be a well Brian can return to when his own spirit runs dry.

And remember: this calling belongs not to Brian alone. His ministry of presence is also ours — a living expression of our faith in the worth and dignity of every human being, our trust that compassion has the power to heal, and that love is stronger than fear.

May our partnership in this ministry deepen our faith, widen our hearts, and strengthen our commitment to bring more hope, more joy, more peace, more love to all the souls and all the places where it is needed most. In gratitude for Brian ministry and for yours, I say Amen.

With deep gratitude,
Rev. Ellen

Standing Around – News and Notes from the SC (Standing Committee)

John Schneider, Standing Committee Chair

I have been to Atlanta, and I have seen the future! During a recent trip to ATL Mary and I rode in a Waymo – a driverless car providing ride services offered by Uber. The Waymo pulls up to the curb, a Jaguar no less with high-tech attachments inside and out, you touch your phone to the door, you're in, and off you go.

It was all a bit strange. But for me, it wasn't scary that nobody was in the driver's seat turning the steering wheel as we drove through the Atlanta streets for our 10-minute ride to the hotel. Given the season, maybe it was a ghost? IDK. But Waymo had no travel tips for us and remained silent. During our other Uber rides around town our drivers asked us about our day, where we were from, and gave us some great tips about attractions and restaurants to visit. It was real, it was human.

While Waymo's technology is remarkable I couldn't help but think that, once again, we are losing another chance of having a relationship with a real person. And that's too bad.

It's relationships and community that drive First Parish. When we gathered for the State of the Society meeting, we gathered in relationship to advance the governance of our congregation. When we gathered to ordain Brian Snow, we gathered in relationship to establish a covenant with Rev. Snow and the members of First Parish. And when we gather for worship, we gather in relationship for spiritual sustenance that makes First Parish, and us, UUs. It's real people in relationships with each other that makes First Parish special and so very necessary in today's world.

Speaking of the “world”, if you are interested in helping First Parish expand our relationships with the greater community, please join us on November 16 after the service for a discussion about how we Build Bridges to carry our message of love and service to others. This discussion is a continuation of the Spirit of Life work we did last year and the strong interest in getting the word out about First Parish. It is now time to figure out how we do it.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions.”

Have mercy. You can reach me at 617-620-4758 or at jrs.gateway@gmail.com. Thank you.



Lifespan Faith Formation ~ November 2025

[Lifespan Faith Formation Webpage](#)

Nurturing Gratitude

Lifespan Faith Formation Director, Dolores GH. Wood; LFFD dre@uuchelmsford.org;

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...

FPCC Families united by the gift of love, hope and the Practice of our UU faith.

Lifespan Faith Formation Connections- Connect, Engage, Belong

"Because of the social nature of humans... from birth to adulthood, the need for love and belonging is closely linked to the need for survival"

(so we can all flourish) -Lisbeth K, ref. Abraham Maslow

Small Group Gatherings- are the sacred spaces in between, where we take a moment to reflect, connect with others & ourselves. There are many ways to engage at FPCC there are Small Groups: FPCC Women's Groups; Two Men's Groups (one 55+) Young Adults; REFF Families; Sacred Circle Spiritual Group All Ages Family Jam Band, 2nd & 4th Sunday at 1pm Bettered Year-Retirees, 70's Plus Group...



One Day Workshop/Retreats...And?

For more information, to get on a groups email list, or if you are interested in volunteering to facilitate/co-facilitate, *or if you know of someone* who might be interested in joining or starting a small group event.

Upcoming Workshops: Blessing Stones; Rule of Life/Intention Setting; Fostering Resilience; UU Ethic's Toolbox; UU Refresher Session; Tracing Your Spiritual Heritage...



whole church re looks like...



Bettered Year-Retirees, 70's Plus Group!

November 9th 12 noon, Meet & Greet Thanksgiving Potluck!

Save the Dates!

December 21st Meet & Greet 12 noon Yankee/Elephant Gift Swap

January 11th Meet & Greet 12 noon

For more information, or to get on groups email list contact dre@uuchelmsford.org

UU RE YOUTH Faith Formation (REFF): November, Nurturing-is UU!

This year we will be exploring "all about "UU" Including Soul Matters, Flourishing Congregation Resources, UU Faith Practices and wherever our Imaginations and our stories may take us... For more program information; to be added to REFF family email list, or are interested in volunteering, and/or share your story/talent...

Please contact dre@uuchelmsford.org

>>More Information will be sent directly to families

- ❖ November 2; To yoUU I give...Holiday Project Planning
... Alternative Housing Organization
- ❖ November 9; From yoUU I receive...Holiday Project Planning
- ❖ November 16; 10am REFF Thanks-giving Favorite Foods Potluck
 - 5:30 REFF Families & Friends Thanksgiving Potluck
- ❖ November 23; Thanksgiving Ingathering Intergeren
- ❖ November 30; Holiday Festivities/Christmas Eve Planning





November 23rd, 2025

10am Intergenerational Ingathering Worship Service

First Parish will be collecting food, cash and checks
during the worship service for

The Open Pantry of Greater Lowell

They have been serving hungry people since 1981.
First Parish was one of the original initial supporters.

Hunger is always present...

It is a blessing to share your blessings!

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OUT TO OPEN PANTRY -NO

ITEM OR AMOUNT IS TOO SMALL.

Nutritious, non-perishable, unexpired, packaged food items are welcome.

Examples include - but are not limited to - canned fruits, vegetables, beef, turkey and chicken, as well as tuna, pasta, soups, stews, cereals, powdered milk, mac n cheese, rice, peanut butter and beans. In addition, they distribute toiletries including: *soap, toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, toothpaste, and shampoo*. They may also provide *diapers, wipes, baby formula, baby food, and cat/dog food* when available.

Open Pantry has a very informative website: www.theopenpantry.org.

If you have questions about the collection, please contact Dolores, dre@uuchelmsford.org

Church Announcements

Snow Brigade 2025 – 2026

Winter is with us now, and we are looking for volunteers to come to church early on Sundays IF it snowed Saturday night or Sunday morning. We have contracted with a company to plow the parking lot and shovel the walks. The company may come early, so there is a chance of more snow on the walks and steps before church. We need at least 6 people to sign up. This means each person will have 3 Sundays to cover during the winter. More is Less! Please contact Walter Cole (wcole17@gmail.com or 978-758-4420) if you are willing and able to be a member of the Snow Brigade. Thank you, Your Building Committee - Ron Cook, Tom Coffey, Tip Rawding, and Walter Cole

Wondering What to Do with Your Extra Reusable Water Bottles?

Consider donating them to the International Institute of New England (IINE). IINE has begun encouraging their clients, who are new to this country, to use reusable water bottles rather than purchase single use water bottles. IINE is asking for donations of reusable water bottles to give to their clients. This is a win win! Your reusable water bottles will get repurposed, while our new neighbors will save money and also waste less plastic. Please bring any water bottles you'd like to donate to this cause to church. There is a plastic bin in the main entrance for them. Diana Keohane will get them to IINE.

Prayer Shawls Update

Thank you to all our knitters and crocheters who donated 13 beautiful prayer shawls that we were happy to bless at a recent service. But they go quickly and we are always in need of more. So many have expressed gratitude for these symbols of deep care and the importance of this ministry. If you have any questions about this ministry they can be directed to Kathy Deschenes at springersrus@comcast.net

Caroline Snow to be Honored by the Merrimack Valley Project

Caroline Snow will be honored with the Ministry in Community Action Honoree (M.I.C.A.H.) award from the Merrimack Valley Project (MVP) on Sunday, November 9th. MVP was the Share the Plate organization for September and Tom Raiche spoke about MVP at coffee hour. The awards ceremony and dinner starts at 6pm at the Methuen Sons of Italy Lodge 902 at 459 Merrimack Street, Methuen, MA 01844. Visit <https://www.merrimackvalleyproject.org/micah> to purchase tickets.

Welcoming Congregation Committee Asking For Help With TDOR

The Welcoming Congregation Committee is preparing for our annual Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) Vigil on Saturday, November 15, at 6pm at the CCA.

The committee is looking for volunteers to help with the following tasks:

- **Readers:** We need volunteer readers to record themselves on their phones reading the names of the transgender people who have died in the past year. Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered! We will distribute lists of names, and the readers will record themselves and return the files by email to Deirdre Heck. Instructions will be sent with your list of names. Our TDOR vigil is early this year, so recording names in a quick, timely fashion is crucial. Audio Readings deadline is November 1, so we have time to create our slide show.
- **Greeters:** Up to 5 greeters at different places in the building to direct attendees.
- **Luminaria Bag Painting:** Paint watercolor butterflies (symbols of transformation) on white bags, which we use as luminarias to decorate the pathways to the building entrance. Be on the lookout for upcoming opportunities during Sunday social hours and at the upcoming Fall Committee Fair on November 2nd.
- **Luminaria Set-up:** The bags are filled with a little sand to keep them in place and then lit with a tea light. We need help setting out the bags in advance and picking them up after the vigil.

If you would like to volunteer, please email the Welcoming Congregation Committee at welcoming@uuchelmsford.org.

Procession and Vigil

Remember and honor the individual names of those transgender people who lost their lives to violence in the past year.

As members and allies of the transgender community, we will listen and sing together, mourn and be inspired.



For more information
Please email:
welcoming@uuchelmsford.org

Hosted by



In Collaboration with
The Town of Chelmsford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Committee

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Saturday
November 15
6:00 PM

Chelmsford
Center
for the Arts
Chelmsford, MA

Out of Church Announcements

Town of Chelmsford Offering First Aid Training on 11/17/25 9am-1pm

First Parish members are invited to attend! Chelmsford residency not required, but space is limited, so preference given to town residents. The church will reimburse the \$25 for the certification.

The Chelmsford Health Department

CPR Training

Participants who complete this 4-hour training will obtain an American Heart Association Heartsaver® CPR AED First Aid Certificate that is valid for 2 years.

The cost of this training is \$25 per person.
Chelmsford Residents Only

CLASS IS LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS

Please call the Chelmsford Health Department at 978-250-5241 or scan here to reserve your spot!



Presented by:

Darcy Beall, RN

Public Health Nurse

Taryn Angel

Health & Wellness Coordinator

Where:

Chelmsford Town Hall
50 Billerica Rd., **ROOM LL06**

When:

Monday, November 17, 2025
9:00 am - 1:00 pm



ANNUAL INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING *Gathering*

Theme: "...and yet we will give thanks."



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025
4:00 PM

Donations for the Open Pantry will be gratefully accepted
<https://theopenpantry.org/>

In Person: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:
421 Princeton Blvd, Lowell, MA 01851
(Accessible Venue)

Via Zoom: For the Zoom link, contact: Imogene_Stulken@uml.edu

Sponsored by GLILA (Greater Lowell Interfaith Leadership Alliance)