



The Shooting Star

September 2026

the monthly newsletter of

First Parish Chelmsford UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Uuchelmsford.org

2 Westford St. Chelmsford, MA 01824

Office Info & Deadlines

Sunday Announcements:

Weekly, Wed. by 7pm

Newsletter: Fourth Sunday of the month, September 27

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

September Soul Matters Worship Theme: *Beginnings*

September 13 Beginning a New Year: Interogen. Water Communion

September 20 Beginnings: "We Begin with Covenant"

September 27 Beginnings: "Doing Our Inner Work"

From Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

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

Dear First Parishers,

Well, that was a quick summer! I hope everyone had a lovely time and got through the hot days. I am so excited to see you all and begin another year together!

I am very grateful to the summer services team, worship leaders, tech volunteers and musicians for leading services, and especially to Rick Warner and Brian Snow, who organized it all. Their leadership allowed me to catch up over the summer. It was also wonderful to have Erica at her full hours; she and I were able to focus on projects we never have time for during the busyness of the regular church year.

Josh and I made our annual pilgrimage to Vermont for two weeks. And, for the first time ever without a dog, having said farewell to our beloved Fave in June. Although it felt strange, our lives were easier: no rushing home for walks, no late-night walks in the rain, no vet bills. We talked about staying dog-free.

We lasted about a month. As I write this column, we are welcoming Brando, a two-year-old pointer-terrier-and-who-knows-what-else mix. In late September we'll adopt his mother, Lavender Wren. Despite the needs and demands, we missed the unconditional love and companionship our dogs provided. As I watch Brando settle in with us, a little more comfortable and cuddly every day, it got me thinking about how love works. It is often messy, tiring, inconvenient, and demanding. It requires sacrifice, commitment, and patience — and in human relationships, often exponentially more so. And yet the depth of connection, belonging and meaning that love brings is, I believe, the source of grace and salvation for our species. What this means, and how we embody it, is the sacred work of our faith.

The *Soul Matters* Worship Theme for September is "Beginnings." On September 13, we return to the sanctuary for Sunday worship with our annual Water Communion. As we each pour a little water into our common bowl, symbolic of our beloved community re-gathering, I invite you to complete this phrase "As we begin again, I covenant..." I will also offer a blessing of water on the forehead and/or hands of anyone who wishes, adapting a ritual from my colleague, Rev. Nell Newton. For water, like love, connects us — to our own bodies, to one another, and to all life on our planet.

September 13th also begins David Morochnick's tenure as our new music director! He, Dolores, Erica and I have been planning for the fall, and David and I also met with the Worship Committee. As it is a good time to reset, we will return to our pre-COVID practice of a "For All Ages" on the non-intergenerational Sundays. We will also move some of the worship elements around to see how it feels. Note that we will start with the Welcome and Announcements at 10 am and then center with music.

Enjoy these last days of summer. I look forward to seeing everyone soon!

In faith,
Rev. Ellen

P.S. I have wanted to facilitate *A Geography of Grace* again for a while now. It is an adult faith formation course that uses the landscapes of the natural world for both soul work and community building. But it has been difficult to make the time in our congregation's increasingly busy calendar! After some discussion, Dolores and I came up with a plan to lead four seasonal retreats on Saturdays throughout the year: October 17; January 9; March 20 and May 1 (dates subject to change). More to come but I wanted to get the dates out there.

Church Announcements

A Note from your Collector

On 9/4/26 Tax statements were mailed out to all contributors who had made donations (pledge or otherwise) through the Collector's Office between January 1 and June 30 of 2026. As of July 1st the church has gone from Servant Keeper to Quickbooks to track donations and pledges. So for this calendar year only (2026) you will receive two statements for Tax purposes in January 2027 - the one just sent for the first half of the year, and a second one which will cover donations made from July 1 to December 31 of 2026. Also on July 1st the Collector role changed from Carla Corey to Diana Keohane, so emails going to collector@uuchelmsford.org will be going to Diana, not to Carla. But we will communicate with each other. This transition year may be a little confusing but, come 2027, things will be smoother! Thank you for your patience and generosity. - Carla and Diana

Social Hour Volunteers Needed!

Do you appreciate coming downstairs after the service to enjoy conversation with a warm cup of coffee, tea, or a cold drink and maybe a small snack?! Do you think to yourself, "I should do this some Sunday!" and then maybe feel intimidated that you don't know how to run our kitchen? Please consider joining our brigade of volunteers in hosting social hour. We provide everything you need so it's just a matter of coming to church 30 minutes early and staying 30 minutes after social hour. We can pair you with a veteran host who will show you the ropes. Please contact Diana Keohane (dianakeohane@comcast.net or 978-866-4421) for more information. Thank you for considering.



Lifespan Faith Formation ~ September 2026

Lifespan Faith Formation Webpage

'26-'27 Theme: "Our Stories..., Are Our Legacy..."

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

Thank you FPCC for the honour of serving you another year!

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-

"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

Lifespan Faith Formation:
Inter-Connect, Engage, Belong



whole church re looks like...

Small Group Gatherings:

These are sacred spaces in between, where we take a moment to reflect and connect with others and ourselves.

Beyond all the ways to engage at FPCC there are:

- FPCC Women's Groups, a new Women's group, is beginning Oct. 4
- Two Men's Groups (one 55+)
- Sacred Circle Spiritual Group 4th Tuesday's of the month 6pm;
- Bettered Year-Retirees, 70's Plus Group - Resumes Sept 13th, 11:30ish
- Queer/LGBTQ+ Family/ Friends: Sept 13, 6pm
- Geography of Grace Workshops with Rev. Ellen: & Additional monthly Small Group
- Oct 17, 10-3; Jan 9 (Epiphany) time tbd
- March 20 (Lent) 10-3; May 1, 10-3;
- Intentional UU Course Series (dates tbd)
- And?

For more information, to get on a groups email list, or if you are interested volunteering to facilitate/co-facilitate, or if you know of someone who might be interested in joining or starting a small group Please contact me/Dolores~, LFFD dre@uuchelmsford.org

Youth UU 'RE' Faith Formation (REFF)

☛ REFF Resumes September 20th

- Youth will meet in sanctuary at 10am and go to Chapel after "For All Ages" Kindergarten through High School
- This year we will be exploring "all about US" (reach out program based on UU Principles/Values)
- Sunday mornings: (Youth K-HS) Varies depending on Worship Dates and Events After Centering: meet & greet & eat (snacks) UU conversations within age-appropriate groups.
- HS Youth/Coming of Age '26-27 Program and activities to be further developed by High School Youth; OWL offered '27-'28

UU Faith Formation Practices include 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

Nursery Room: 5 years and under.

Nursery Care givers are available (please let Dolores know if needed)

Or- Parents/Guardians can stay with children; Please do not leave the children unattended.

There is a device to listen to the worship service



Hello! Welcome!

***Membership-Hospitality Team Mission is for~
visitors, friends and members to feel welcome & connected!***

We'd also like to remind everyone at FPCC that hospitality is a gift we All can give.

Please pause a moment, look around and connect with someone.

A smile, a warm hello, my name is...., how are YoUU?

Looking forward to seeing you all at the start of our church year - just around the corner!

Ö **Greeters:** We need greeters to extend our wonderful FPCC hospitality!

Is that person yoUU? Sure it is... Just once a month... Sunday mornings-9:30 to 10:15

Thank you in advance for being part of this cheery group of volunteers!

Ö We want to make sure we reach out to everyone including those that are not able to come to church in person and join us online. Please let us know. We can also provide you with hard copies of hymnals.

Interested in joining this very special team that extends FPCC hospitality to all?

Contact Dolores~ at dre@uuchelmsford.org on behalf of Membership-Hospitality Team:

Co-Chaired Team:

Carla Corey; John Fischer; Frans Janssen; Amanda MacLean; Elaine Mahoney, Chris Sweetnam
Teri Ralbovsky; Leslie Yauckoes



Summer Circle Dinners!

Thank you to our wonderful hosts who opened their homes over the summer for one of our six Circle Dinners -

Cheryl Wilson and Jeanette Moreau, Julie Jankelson, Ami Hughes, Aggie Brennan, Amanda MacLean, and Christina Cervantes. Many participants have let us know how much they enjoyed their get-togethers. We couldn't have done this without all of you hospitality volunteers and we are very grateful!

Special Thanks to Amanda Maclean and Carla Corey for doing such a great job coordinating on behalf of Membership-Hospitality Team!

***And speaking about extending
hospitality... Mark your calendars!***

Join Us FPCC!

For the Fall...

Welcome! Potluck & Stories...

Saturday, September

6:30pm in Vestry!

**Bring YOUR favorite foods to share-
a smile... and ready to have fun!**



For more information: dre@uuchelmsford.org on behalf of the Membership- Hospitality Committee