



The Shooting Star

October 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, October 25

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,

"Community cannot take root in a divided life. Long before community assumes external shape and form, it must be present as seed in the undivided self: only as we are in communion with ourselves can we find community with others. Community is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, the flowing of personal identity and integrity into the world of relationships." – Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*

I used this quote as our centering thought last Sunday for my sermon, "Doing Our Inner Work." To create, sustain, and model authentic community, we need to tend our own souls and one another's, embracing the light, the shadow, and everything in between in each of us. That is how we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and care for the interdependent web of relationships in which we live.

So how do we do this? There are many practices, big and small. Committee meetings can begin by asking how people are really doing and then listening to the answers. Social Hour conversations can go past the weather, holding a silence long enough for someone to speak from the heart. Worship can connect us beyond words to the Holy, renewing our hope and healing our souls. And we can build trust through honest sharing in faith formation groups like the Sacred Circle and Small Group Ministry for adults, and Our Whole Lives (OWL) and Coming of Age (COA) for our youth.

One curriculum I especially love is "A Geography of Grace."

October Soul Matters Worship Theme: *Courage*

October 4

"Faithful Risking"

– Rev. Ellen Rowse Spero

October 11

Intergenerational Service
with Guest Worship Leader
and Drummer, Matt Meyer

October 18

The Safety Committee

October 18

Annual Halloween Parade
"Stepping into the
Unknown" – Rev. Ellen
Rowse Spero

Rooted in Parker Palmer's work, it pairs listening to our own souls with deepening trust in one another through exploring the natural world. Dolores and I led it almost ten years ago and have long wanted to offer it again but couldn't make weekly or monthly sessions work. So, we are trying a different format: four seasonal Saturday retreats, each a full day to step away and truly listen to our souls and to one another.

- **Autumn – Sat. October 17:** Vista Points, Spirit Guides, & Holy Wells
- **Winter – Sat. January 9 (Epiphany):** The Sea & Release, & Primal Wonder & the Night Sky
- **Spring – Sat. March 20 (Lent):** Deserts, Boundaries, & Marshlands
- **Late Spring – Sat. May 1:** Mountain Edges, Forest Community, & Garden Spaces

The October, March and May retreats run from 10 am to 3 pm. The January retreat times are TBD. The retreats are free with lunch provided. We do ask that you do your best to attend all four as they build on one another.

"A Geography of Grace" is a real commitment, but I believe it is a worthy one. Dolores and I are making the commitment to lead it because several First Parishers have told us they long to go deeper, in exploring their own spirituality with one another. "A Geography of Grace" invites you to take spiritual risks as you are ready as you develop practices for growing trust in community. If that longing resonates with you, please join us. To sign up or for more information, reach out to Dolores, our Lifespan Faith Formation Director, dre@uuchelmsford.org.

In faith,
Rev. Ellen

Church Announcements

An Invitation to Light our Chalice

The worship committee is lining up chalice lighters for the next few months and we would love to have a range of voices offering a few words at the beginning of our time together on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in signing up please contact us at worship@uuchelmsford.org. The guidelines are listed below and we are also happy to answer questions. Thank you!

Chalice Lightings: » 3 minutes maximum » Readings with/without personal comment
» Thoughts/stories/observations personal to presenter
» Personal thoughts about the worship theme

From the Green Committee: New Bike Rack!

The Green Committee is glad to share that the church has installed a new bike rack over the summer, and would like to thank Walter Cole for installation. It is currently in the yard facing Westford St, next to the arbor and the door to the vestry. We invite members to take a look at coffee hour and consider biking to church, carpooling, walking, or other car-alternatives. Talk to Matt Zimmermann or other members of the green committee for more information, as well as bike routes around Chelmsford and greater Lowell like the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the Lowell Connector Trail.

Interested in Helping Out at Community Table?

Community Table has been serving 35-50 people at the Salvation Army on a monthly basis. On the third Saturday of each month, a team of 6-8 church members prepare, deliver and serve the lunch in Lowell. For more info or to volunteer, contact co-chairs Frances Killam or Nancy Kaelin.



Lifespan Faith Formation ~ October 2026

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

Lifespan Faith Formation Director (LFFD), Dolores GH. Wood

dre@uuchelmsford.org

[Lifespan Faith Formation Webpage](#)

Lifespan Faith Formation is higher yoUU education 😊 It connects us from childhood to old age, 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

Please contact me/Dolores~, LFFD

dre@uuchelmsford.org

Beyond all the ways to engage at FPCC there are:

- FPCC Women's Groups,
New Women's group, 1st Sunday at 4pm
- Two Men's Groups (one 55+)
- Sacred Circle Spiritual Group:
4th Tuesday's of the month 6pm;
- Bettered Year-Retirees, 70's Plus Monthly
Group - October 11th, 11:30ish
- Queer/LGBTQ+ Family/ Friends: October 11th
6pm on the 2nd Sunday of the month
- Intentional UU Course Series (dates tbd)
- And?



Small Group Gatherings:

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

New FPCC Women's Small Group!

First Meeting October 4th at 4pm

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...



Youth UU 'RE' Faith Formation (REFF)

This year we will be exploring "all about US" (reach out program based on UU Principles/Values) 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

- Sunday mornings: (Youth K-HS) Varies depending on Worship Dates and Events
- HS Youth/Coming of Age '26-27 Program

- **October 4; REFF will meet in Chapel for... UU Courage & Safety!**
- **October 11; Intergeren - Matt Myers Drumming Intergenerational**
- **October 18; REFF will meet in Chapel: UU Pumpkin Carving for...get ready, set, go! Contest Oct. 25th!**
- **October 25; Spooky Parade and Spooky Fun Day! *No Gory or Violent costumes please.***
Everyone (All Ages) are welcome to join in the fun-That means yoUU!



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 in nursery room to listen to the worship service



Geography of Grace Course 2026-27

Workshop 1 of 4 Begins October 17, 10am to 3

Geography of Grace Workshops with Rev. Ellen. This is an Adult Faith Formation Course. It uses the landscapes of the natural world for both soul work and community building.

The Course will be held in four separate Workshops, two correlating with retreats*
January 9 (*Epiphany) time: to tbd; March 20 (*Lent) 10am to 3; May 1, 10am to 3

Lunch will be provided

Please R.S.V.P. to attend workshops/retreats or information

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

Note: Additional Optional Monthly Small Group to Be Announced



In the Spirit of the Season:

Please let me know if you are interested...

The All Souls and Ancestors Workshop **November 1st, 5pm to 8pm**

This workshop is meant to create a shared space for participants to honor their ancestors and enliven our souls by sharing stories.

Communal Dinner Included

please contact me/Dolores~, LFFD dre@uuchelmsford.org

Community Announcements

Invitation from Temple Emanuel in Andover: Grief Ministry/Interfaith Dialogue on the Israeli/Palestinian War.

Monday, October 19, 6pm–8pm | 7 Haggetts Pond Road, Andover MA

Advance registration required: <https://templemanuel.net/urj-events/pcff/>

Admission is free for Temple members, \$18 for non-members.

Photo identification must be presented upon arrival for admission.

Temple Emanuel will present ***“Turning Grief Into Hope: An Evening with the Parents Circle – Families Forum”*** on Monday, October 19 as part of its Social Action Committee Guest Speaker Series. The evening includes sandwiches, drinks and desserts served beginning at 6pm. The program begins at 6:30pm with an inspiring conversation featuring two members of the Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF): Sima Awad, a Palestinian peace educator whose brother was killed in the conflict, and Maayan Inon, an Israeli whose parents were killed on October 7, 2023. Together, they will share the personal journeys that brought them to this moment and the experiences that shaped their commitment to dialogue, reconciliation and a different future, followed by a Q&A.

PCFF is a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization of over 800 bereaved Israelis and Palestinians – each of whom has lost an immediate family member to the conflict, and has chosen the courageous work of reconciliation, dialogue and peace – to share their personal experiences, learn about one another’s narratives and recognize the humanity of the “other.”

This program is made possible in part through the generous support of the Hacker Fund for Lifelong Learning and presented by Temple Emanuel’s Social Action Committee.

From the First Parish Green Committee: October Community Events

Something for everyone this October! Whether you want to plant natives, learn about clean water, share a community meal, watch migrating birds, reduce household waste, support local agriculture, advocate for climate solutions, or simply gather under the full moon, we hope you’ll find a way to connect with our community and the Earth this month. Everyone is welcome – please share these opportunities with friends and neighbors. Have a local environmental, sustainability, resilience, or nature event we should share next month? Send it our way!

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust Events

Visit lowelllandtrust.org/category/events to find details and registration info for each event.

Tuesday, October 13 • 6:30–8:30pm | LPCT + Massachusetts Water Environment Association

Film Screening: “Unless Something Goes Terribly Wrong” | FREE. Ticket reservation required.

What actually happens after water goes down the drain? This documentary goes behind the scenes of a wastewater treatment facility. Stay afterward for a discussion with clean water experts.

Sunday, October 18 • 2–4pm

LPCT Spalding House Open House:

Flax – From Plant to Cloth

FREE. RSVP encouraged but not required.

How does a plant become clothing? Visit one of Lowell’s oldest homes for a hands-on demo following flax from harvested plant to prepared fiber, thread, cloth, and clothing.

Saturday, October 24 • 8–10am

Fall Birding Along the Concord River Greenway

FREE. Pre-registration required. Bring

binoculars if you have them. Enjoy a crisp

fall morning exploring the Concord River

Greenway with expert birder Mike Baird. All

experience levels are welcome, and the walk is

suitable for people with limited mobility.

Mill City Grows Events in Lowell

Visit www.millcitygrows.org/events to find details and registration info for each event.

All Month – Outdoor Mobile Farmers Markets

October is the last month of MCG's outdoor market season, so there are still plenty of opportunities to support Lowell's local food system and bring home fresh produce. Visit www.millcitygrows.org/markets for the full market schedule.

Saturday, October 3 • 11am–2pm | *Friends on the Farm at MCG's Big Urban Farm*
FREE and no RSVP required: Fresh crop tastings, farm exploration, activities, and more.

Tuesday, October 6 • 4–5:30pm
Seed Saving Workshop with Mill City Grows + Massachusetts Farm to School
FREE. Registration required. Learn hands-on techniques for collecting, cleaning, processing, and storing seeds from all kinds of plants/fruits.

Saturday, October 17 • 11am–1pm
Invasive Plants Management with Mill City Grows + Green Abundance by Design
FREE and open to all. Registration required. Learn how to recognize invasive species and explore safer, practical ways to manage or eliminate them while protecting the surrounding landscape.

Thursday, October 22 • 6:30–8pm
MCG Supper Club at ROOT Community Space
FREE. Reservations required; space limited to 15 guests. Come take a seat at the community table! Mill City Grows invites a small group of neighbors to share a complimentary full-course dinner prepared by a local guest Meal Host.

Tuesday, October 27 • 6–7:30pm
Shrubs-Making with Urban Pharm and MCG
FREE and open to all. Registration required and expected to open soon. Learn how to make traditional drinking vinegars, sweet-and-tart syrups created with fruit, botanicals, honey, and raw apple cider vinegar.

Other Local and Online Events

Monday, October 5 • 7–8pm
350 Mass: Save Money with Clean Heat 2.0 Brainstorm | Online via Zoom. Interested in making clean heating more affordable and accessible? Learn more and RSVP: 350mass.betterfutureproject.org/save_money_with_clean_heat_2_brainstorm

Wednesday, October 7 • 9am–3pm
Bulb & Battery Drop-Off | Chelmsford Town Hall
Have fluorescent bulbs, batteries, or other hard-to-dispose-of household items collecting dust? Chelmsford recycling event information: www.chelmsfordrecycles.com/upcoming-events

Saturday, October 17 • 10am–3pm
Grow Native Mass. Fall Native Plant Market
7 Harrington Road, Lexington | Grow Native Massachusetts is holding its first annual Fall Native Plant Market, bringing together a wonderful collection of specialist native-plant nurseries and plant experts. Details: grownativemass.org/Our-Programs/Native-Plant-Pop-Up-Markets

Saturday, October 17 • 9am–12:30pm
Tyngsborough Department of Public Works Household Hazardous Waste Day
Information: www.tyngsboroughma.gov/239/Household-Hazardous-Material-Disposal

Saturday, October 24 • 9am–1pm
Chelmsford Zero Waste Day at McCarthy Middle School | Give useful things another life instead of sending them to the landfill! Chelmsford residents can bring usable donations for multiple nonprofit organizations. Paper shredding for Chelmsford residents will also be available during the event. Details: www.chelmsfordrecycles.com/upcoming-events/zero-waste-day-2024-bxf2j

Sunday, October 25 • 8pm
UU Ministry for Earth Blood Moon Online Full Moon Gathering | Join the UUMFE for a peaceful evening of grounding, reflection, and connection around the October Blood Moon. Learn more and sign up: www.uumfe.org/spiritual-gatherings/full-moon-gatherings