

**FIRST PARISH
CHURCH
OF STOW & ACTON**
Unitarian Universalist



Sunday, December 22, 2024
World Religions: Paganism and Wicca

**The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L.
Landrum**
Minister

Meg Rivers-Wright
Administration, Publicity,
Membership

Rayla D. Baldwin-Mattson
Director of Religious
Education

Chris Hossfeld
Music Director

Trevor Berens
Accompanist

Justin Marble
Nursery Care Coordinator

Felix Freeman
Tech Assistant

Mike Silkonis
Sexton

Brendon Chetwynd
President

Trisha Guditz
Vice President

Bill Froberg
Treasurer

Johanna Pyle
Clerk

*First Parish is a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation.
We warmly welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people into our community.*

Large print orders of service and hymnals are available from an usher.
Assisted Listening Devices are available when worship is in the Sanctuary.

FPC currently has a masks-optional policy throughout the church.
In the Sanctuary, several back rows with accessible seating are "mask-required."

FPC is on the web at fpc-stow-acton.org and on Facebook.

December 22, 2024: 10:00

Gathering

Prelude

“Des pas sur la neige”
(Footprints in the snow)
Claude Debussy

Trevor Berens,
piano

Welcome and Announcements

Stewardship Testimony

Ruth Ann Murray

Opening Words #417

by Barbara Pescan Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Chalice Lighting

* **Hymn #58**

“Ring Out, Wild Bells”

Centering

* **Covenant and Affirmation**

Love is the spirit of this church,
and service its law.
This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
to seek the truth in love,
and to help one another.

From all that dwell below the skies
let words of love and peace arise.
Let joyful songs of praise be sung,
through every land, by every tongue.

Land Acknowledgement

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Time for All Ages

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Going Forth With the Light

Congregation sings

Our love surrounds you. Here joy has found you.
Let hope abound freely. Go in peace!

Joys and Sorrows

Ingrid Holcomb, Lay Minister

Joys and Sorrows is a time for the things on our hearts and minds to be heard by the gathered community. If you would like a follow-up call by a lay minister or the minister, email caring@fpc-stow-acton.org.

* *Please rise in body or in spirit*

Prayer or Meditation #524 by Starkhawk

* **Hymn #1063** "Winter Solstice Chant"

Exploring

Responsive Reading #517 by Starhawk

Sharing Our Gifts

This month we share our weekly offering with the **FPC Guest Table**.
You may donate by check made out to First Parish Church,
at fpc-stow-acton.org/donate, or text (978) 310-3309.

Anthem "Solstice Carole" FPC Choir & Band
Kim Baryluk of the Wyrd Sisters Trevor Berens, piano

A fire is burning,
the long night draws near.
All who need comfort
are welcome by here.

We'll dance 'neath the stars
and toast the past year
for the spirit of solstice
is still living here.

We'll count all our blessings
while the Mother lays down
with snow as her blanket
covering the ground.

Thanks to the Mother
for the life that she brings.
She'll waken to warm us
again in the spring.

The poor and the hungry,
the sick and the lost;
these are our children,
no matter the cost.

Come by the fire
the Harvest to share
for the spirit of solstice
is still living here.

Sermon Paganism and UU

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Returning

* **Hymn #235** "Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly"

* **Benediction**

* Closing Song

Peace be with you 'til we meet again!
As life lays its task before you,
keep love's banner floating o'er you.
Peace be with you 'till we meet again.

Postlude

"Snow is Falling"
Claude Debussy

Trevor Berens, piano

Greet Your Neighbor



Thank you to:

Hector Constantzos, Zoom Host
Kate Imhoff & Jamison House, Ushers
Susan and Kevin O'Brien, Coffee Hosts ☕❤
Our staff and leadership



To our visitors, thank you for coming!

We hope you find what you're looking for and that you'll come back. Here's how to keep connecting with our people and programs:

♥ Watch these pages for information about fall & winter Newcomer Coffees to meet the

minister and other newcomers, and UU Journey classes to learn about UU history, spirituality, mission, and traditions.

♥ Fill out a Visitor Card in your pew or scan the QR code to complete the same form online.

♥ Subscribe to our e-newsletters and email groups

♥ Check out our website, www.fpc-stow-acton.org

There is so much happening at FPC! Visit our homepage and the "Church Life" tab to learn about our events & programs.

* *Please rise in body or in spirit*



Visiting & Learning
about FPC



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Today at FPC

10am Guatemalan Crafts Fair, Fellowship Hall (runs until 1pm)

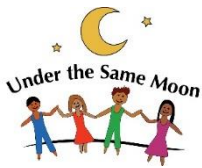
10-11am Service, Sanctuary & online

11am-12pm Kids' Christmas Eve rehearsal, Community Rm.

11am-12pm Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall:

- Donate Vitamins, Toothpaste & Photos for the Southeast India Project
- Program and Candle Prep Party! Help Meg and Rev. Cindy fold programs and prepare candles for our two Christmas Eve services
- Guatemalan Crafts Fair

Guatemalan Crafts Fair 10:00 am - 1 pm, Fellowship Hall



A sale of Guatemalan handicrafts by members of the UU Framingham church for their nonprofit organization, Under the Same Moon, which supports a school for impoverished kids in Guatemala. Under the Same Moon provides

30-40% of the school's total operating income, and one way they raise money is through the sale of fair-trade Guatemalan handicrafts. 100% of proceeds go to the school. Learn more at www.underthesamemoon.org.



Religious Education News

Today -

During the worship service in *Time for All Ages* - Rev. Cindy chats with the kids about her upcoming Sabbatical and what it means for them.

After TFAA - To the Community Room for regular RE time

When RE ends - All kids and any youth who want to join remain in the Community Room. With our Music Director, Chris Hossfeld, they'll practice the song they'll sing at our 4:00pm Christmas Eve service, "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

Religious Education News, cont'd

Tuesday, Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Family Service at 4:00pm. There will be ways for everyone who shows up to participate if they want to - lots of singing and fun as well as a take-home bag for all the kids. We hope to see you there.

Sunday, Dec. 29 - No classes this week.

This Week at FPC

Tuesday, December 24 -

4:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Family Service

Our Family Service will feature a brand-new pageant telling the age-old tale, this one based on the animals' stories of Christmas. We'll sing carols together, finishing with our traditional candle lighting and singing of "Silent Night."

9:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our Candlelight Service features traditional carols, anthems, and readings paired with the Christmas themes of hope, joy, love, and peace. Music provided by the FPC Adult Choir, under the direction of Chris Hossfeld, accompanist Trevor Berens, and guest musicians. An extended prelude of Christmas music will begin at 8:45 p.m., and we will finish with our traditional candle lighting and singing of "Silent Night."



Next Sunday

December 29, 10 am, Sanctuary/Online/Phone-

"Burning Bowl Ceremony for the New Year" June McKnight & Lay Leaders

Join worship committee members in celebrating the new year through letting go of the past in a burning bowl ceremony.

December Plate Sharing

FPC Guest Table has been offering a free monthly community dinner in Fellowship Hall since November 2015. It's a sit-down meal of salad, entree, and dessert. Volunteers plan, prep, serve, and clean up. Guests take home leftovers. It costs about \$250 a month to put on a meal, the largest expense of which is food. Our primary sources of funding are the Stow Community Chest and the plate-share from this congregation. In addition to being a resource for those with food insecurity, we are also for those who want a night off from planning and cooking, and/or for those who typically dine alone. Guest Table is a welcoming community for ALL, and we invite you to come dine with us on the second Friday of every month.



Stewardship Drive

This time of year, when we share our joy with families and friends, we often think about end-of-year giving to favorite charities. While FPC is a non-profit, it is also so much more:

A sanctuary in times of turmoil.

A fun place for our children while they learn respect, caring and joy.

A place of music and arts.

A place for making friends and finding support when needed.

Please consider what else FPC may mean to you and make a financial commitment for the coming year. We ask members and friends to do it now so we can plan for next year's budget and ensure we continue to support our great staff and programs while maintaining our buildings.



You can pledge safely online at <https://fpc-stow-acton.org/pledge> or by scanning the QR code.

You can also fill out a pledge card at the Stewardship Table during coffee hour.

Thank you so much for your generosity. ♥ Happy holidays to you and yours.

- **The FPC Stewardship Team:** Carole Feldhusen, Andy Derr, Sharon Brownfield, Russ Hart, and Rick Gentilman

Upcoming Events

Line Dancing and Potluck Dinner Sat 1/25, 5:30 pm & 7-8:30 pm, Hall
Join family and friends at FPC for a chill-busting Arts Committee-sponsored evening of Dinner and Line Dancing led by the incomparable Paul Hughes! This will be a family-friendly event, open to all ability levels and friends from the community. Admission is free but please consider a small donation to help us pay for our teacher/caller. Potluck begins at 5:30, dancing from 7-8:30.



High Tea at the New Revival Coffeehouse Sat 2/1, 7:30 pm, Hall



High Tea is a Massachusetts-based "y'alternative" folk-punk duo with a unique blend of soulful harmonies and powerful guitar riffs. Doors open at 7:00 and the concert starts at 7:30. Tickets are \$20 via [Eventbrite](#) and \$25 at the door.

Sharing Our Gifts

If you are mailing a pledge or a donation, here is the information:

Pledges:

Attn: Pledge Secretary
PO Box 215
Stow, MA 01775

Donations:

Attn: Treasurer
353 Great Rd
Stow, MA 01775