

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



Sunday, March 9, 2025

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

**Rev. Susan  
Suchocki Brown**  
Sabbatical 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](http://fpc-stow-acton.org) and on Facebook.

**First Parish Church of Stow and Acton (Unitarian Universalist)**

**March 9, 2025: 10:00 a.m.**

**Gathering**

**Prelude** “Šće ne vmerla Ukrainy” (National anthem of Ukraine) Trevor Berens,  
Pavlo Chubynskyi and Mykhailo Verbytskyi organ

**Welcome & Announcements** Meg Rivers-Wright  
Administration and Membership

**Opening Words** Zen Master Seung Sahn “Matta” Mathew Haide Zheng

**Chalice Lighting** Words by Eric Hepburn “Matta” Mathew Haide Zheng

**\* Hymn** “May I Be Empty” Chris Hossfeld  
Batya Levine Music Director

May I be empty and open to receive the light.

May I be empty and open to receive.

May I be full and open to receive the light.

May I be full and open to receive.

**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** June McKnight

**A Time for All Ages** Rayla D. Baldwin-Mattson  
Director of Religious Education

**Going Forth With the Light** Chris Hossfeld Congregation sings

Our love surrounds you. Here joy has found you.

Let hope abound freely. Go in peace!

*\* Please rise in body or in spirit*

## 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](mailto:caring@fpc-stow-acton.org).

## Prayer or Meditation

Words by Parker J. Palmer

June McKnight

### \* Hymn #1009

“Meditation on Breathing”

Trevor Berens,

Sarah Dan Jones

piano

## Exploring

## Reading

“Hopping over the Surface of Life”

Dave Sansone

Doug Kraft

## Sharing Our Gifts

This month we share our weekly offering with **RIA House**.

You may donate by check made out to First Parish Church, at

[fpc-stow-acton.org/donate](http://fpc-stow-acton.org/donate), or text (978) 310-3309.

## Anthem

“We Walk in Love”

FPC Choir

Deanna Witkowski

Chris Hossfeld,

Music Director

We walk in love united in purpose  
We join our hands and lift up one voice  
We speak the truth with strength and compassion  
Resounding with hope, with courage and joy.

We cry for peace and rights for all people  
We welcome friends from far and near  
We fight for those whose voices are silenced  
Resisting in faith until all are free.

We dream a world of justice and kindness  
We build a bridge creating new paths  
We march with pride as all walk together  
Embracing each one, we boldly stand.

## Sermon

“Becoming Nobody: Decolonizing the Liberation of Buddhism”

“Matta” Mathew Haide Zheng

## Returning

\* **Hymn #1017**

“Building a New Way”  
Martha Sandefer

Trevor Berens,  
piano

\* **Benediction**

All the great Buddhas; the queer Buddhas, the trans Buddhas, the deviant Buddhas, the celestial Buddhas, the hell-realm Buddhas, the Buddhas with form, the Buddhas without form, and the Buddhas neither with form nor without form! May they be with me, with us, with all those seen and unseen, guiding all beings in all lifetimes and all realms towards full and final awakening.

Namo amitufo  
Namo amitufo  
Namo amitufo

\* **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**

Improvisation

Trevor Berens, piano

**Greet Your Neighbor**

\* *Please rise in body or in spirit*

## Scriptural Readings Related to the Sermon

### *SECTION 3 OF THE DIAMOND SUTRA*

The Buddha said [...], “All [...] who undertake the practice of meditation, should cherish one thought only: ‘When I attain perfect wisdom, I will liberate all sentient beings in every realm of the universe, whether they be egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born, or miraculously born; those with form, those without form, those with perception, those without perception, and those with neither perception nor non-perception. So long as any form of being is conceived, I must allow it to pass into the eternal peace of nirvana, into that realm of nirvana that leaves nothing behind, and to attain final awakening.’

“And yet although immeasurable, innumerable, and unlimited beings have been liberated, truly no being has been liberated. Why? Because no bodhisattva who is a true bodhisattva entertains such concepts as a self, a person, a being, or a living soul. Thus there are no sentient beings to be liberated and no self to attain perfect wisdom.”

### *I NOW TURN TO SECTION 17 OF THE DIAMOND SUTRA:*

[...] All dharmas [...] have been taught by the [Buddha] as no-dharmas. Therefore all dharmas are expediently called the Buddha’s own and special Dharmas.

“[...] furthermore, if [an aspiring Buddha] were to say, ‘I will create harmonious buddha fields,’ he or she likewise should not be called a [Buddha] being. Why? The [Buddha] has taught that the harmonious buddha fields are not in fact harmonious buddha fields. Such is merely a name. It is thus that he speaks of truly harmonious buddha fields.

“[... an aspiring Buddha] who thoroughly understands the principle of no-self and no-dharma as the true self and the true Dharma is to be considered an authentic [aspirant].”

### *AS THE DIAMOND SUTRA CONCLUDES, SO SHALL WE – SECTION 31:*

So you should see [view] all of the fleeting world:

A star at dawn, a bubble in the stream;  
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud;  
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.

When the Buddha had finished [speaking], [...] the monks and nuns, the pious lay men and women, the bodhisattvas, and the whole world with its gods, ashuras, and gandharvas were filled with joy at the teaching, and, taking it to heart, they went their separate ways.