



# The Open Door

April, 2020

First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist

923 Main Street

Fitchburg, MA 01420

Wil Darcangelo, Minister

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April 12, 2020

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Sunday Services begin at 10AM through Zoom

## **From Our Minister: "A Fine Mess"**

**Greetings, friends! Well, this is a fine mess we have found ourselves in! Separated from one another during a time when we need each other most. It's frustrating, nerve-racking, and boring all at the same time.**

**But remember that it is during times such as these when we find out just how courageous, creative and compassionate we have the capacity to be. It is during times such as these when we discover who we really are. Not just as individuals but as an ekklesia, a church body.**

**We are small, but stalwart. We are loving. We actually care about one another. I've seen examples from within our congregation of tremendous care and consideration during the early days of this outbreak. I have been truly heartened to see how some people in our little spiritual family have reached out to another.**

**Let's lean into that a bit more. Call each other. Send each other emails to check in with one another. Send an email to someone on the mailing list whom you do not know well, or perhaps have never even met before. You don't have to say much. Just check in. See how they're doing. See if they need anything. See if they want to talk.**

**Some people are faring quite well under the restrictive guidelines. And others are desperately lonely. We should know who among us is the latter, as well as the former.**

**I encourage you to visit and subscribe to our Virtual Church YouTube channel. The links for it are in your weekly emails. On Sunday mornings at 10 AM we are gathering on Zoom (through the link also sent in your weekly email) along with the Lancaster congregation to watch the service for that week together and then remain afterward for open sharing of our joys and concerns. It is still a slightly awkward format for us, but will become easier as time moves forward. Give it a chance.**

**In all likelihood we will attempt to continue using Zoom once the outbreak is past to welcome those who would like to attend our services, but cannot for one reason or another. I was very encouraged last Sunday to see a few faces I haven't seen in a while in person. I think we may be onto something here.**

**Additionally, we will likely continue the Virtual Church service programming as a new offering even after the outbreak once public services resume. It appears to be an excellent opportunity for outreach and service to the wider community. So, do tune in and offer your feedback. And subscribe to the Virtual Church YouTube channel! It is still a work in development and needs all the good ideas it can attract.**

**Our meetings and administrative business must continue even as we struggle with our new daily life. Those meetings will occur on Zoom as well. And the bills still keep coming, too, so please remember to continue fulfilling your pledges. I know even Jamie and I had forgotten to send in our already-filled-out pledge form. I'm sure there are others of you who have forgotten as well. Please make a point to do that soon if you are a voting member so that your vote will count at the Annual Meeting.**

**And finally, if you would like to serve as a member of a committee or on the Executive Board, please let us know. This is going to be a challenging moment for the nominating committee to try to fill the slate without being able to attend church together in person. Do what you can to participate. We need you now more than ever if we are to survive this challenging moment. We suspect you need us as well. Let's be in this together.**

**God bless and stay safe!**

**Love, Wil...**



## ***From Trish Gerahgty, Co-Ordinator of Religious Education***

Firstly, I sincerely hope you are taking good care of yourself and your families and all are coping as well as can be expected. There have been no religious education classes or on site activities due to the trying circumstances we are all facing. I have created some art with encouraging messages to display in the windows of the nursery and the RE classroom at church. The messages state "Keep Safe", "Practice Joy", "Kindness Matters", "Keep HOPE Alive", "Look for Beauty Everywhere", and "STAY SAFE and STAY SANE". I also have placed some of the painted rocks from our "Spread the Joy" project on the steps of the church and near the church to lift the spirits of anyone who happens to pass by. Let us continue to look after ourselves and each other and to keep our own spirits up. Trish



## **April Services**

Link to church website:

<https://fitchburguu.org/>

**Near the bottom of the website's landing page, you will see "Services with Zoom" and "Streaming Archive." The first is for live access on Sunday mornings. The Archive is the place to view recorded services.**

## **IT'S NEVER BEEN EASIER TO CATCH UP ON YOUR PLEDGE!!!!!!**

I was checking out the website, and I clicked on the "Give to FPC UU Fitchburg" button. Being a curious person, I tried it out. Within seconds, I had made a donation! It works! It goes right to the church's general fund, so Alison will put it toward your pledge amount. It is a secure site.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Only money given to the general fund can be counted toward your pledge. If you make a donation and earmark it for a specific purpose, it is an extra donation. Still tax deductible, but not part of your pledge. **WHY?** Because when you pledge, the church counts on that amount for use in paying the operating expenses of the year. The Treasurer and Bookkeeper cannot use earmarked money to pay general operating expenses. That's how church budgets work!

**BEHIND ON YOUR PLEDGE?** The fiscal year ends on April 30, so you have until then. We are counting on you to honor and fulfill your pledge. Aren't those stimulus checks coming? FPC could use a little financial stimulation this far into the fiscal year!

**A HUGE THANK YOU** to those who submitted their pledge forms for 2020-2021. If you need a new copy, just email [fitchburguu@gmail.com](mailto:fitchburguu@gmail.com) Alison will be happy to get one out to you!

Laura Doell, FinanceCommChair

# Very Positive News!

We have a Treasurer! Melissa Goranson volunteered, and the Executive Board appointed her to fill the vacancy! Thank you, Melissa!!!



The Executive Board made a decision to postpone the Annual Meeting until July. Laura Doell and Melissa Goranson have proposed the creation of an interim budget. The Board will need time to determine how we can best take votes from our Voting Members if the social distancing extends past July.



## April 2020 at First Parish



**Sundays** - Online services are happening! Please keep an eye open for eBlasts and Facebook notices on our FBpage. Recording are available on our website!

**Finance Committee** - Meeting thru Zoom on Tuesday, April 14th at 6PM. ALL ARE WELCOME! To attend, just email Chair Laura Doell at [ladoell@gmail.com](mailto:ladoell@gmail.com) Ask for the details! We would love to have anyone who watched any part of the Best Financial Practices webinars. We need a group of people who have some understanding of church finance. Show support for our new Treasurer and the FinCom by attending!

**Membership Committee** - will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, April 22nd at 4:30. This is a great team to join if you are looking to help with reaching out to other FPC members and friends! Same Contact as Finance, above. If you're a "people person," this is for you!

Starting with the May edition, the Open Door will have two editors!! Welcome and THANK YOU to Bonnie Buckingham-Stone!!!

*Anyone who wishes to contribute an article, notice, or photo to the May Open Door can send their content to [ladoell@gmail.com](mailto:ladoell@gmail.com) by Saturday, April 25th. EARLIER IS WONDERFUL.. Thank you!*

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To:



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