

AT-A-GLANCE: Small Group Engagement Opportunities at First Parish

“Church” at First Parish in Brookline is much more than the Sunday Service! Below are descriptions of 20 ways to try something new or pursue longtime interests and passions - all the while developing ever deepening relationships with others.

Interested? Please reach out to a convener or any of the sample of regular participants named. They would love to let you know what they most appreciate about what the group does and how it builds a strong sense of community among its members.

You can get contact information from the First Parish Directory or from Parish Administrator Ebiere Omergie at ebiere@firstparishinbrookline.org

Two notes:

- You may also be interested in learning about and joining one of the boards or committees responsible for First Parish governance, operations, and programs. See [At-a-Glance: Committees at First Parish](#) for more information about what they do, how they work, and how you might get involved!
- If you have updates to this information, including any groups we’ve missed, please contact Parish Administrator Ebiere Omergie so she can help the Board keep the Directory up-to-date.

<p>Auction Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Plans and organizes our annual online auction. → Be a Writer - Dream up exciting descriptions of donations for the auction catalog to entice buyers and please donors. → Be a Photographer - Take pictures, get pictures or find pictures on the net to show off donations, and build our dazzling catalog. → Be a Techie - Master the <i>Auctria</i> Virtual Auction software → Get into Marketing - Create weekly updates to generate and maintain excitement and keep the congregation informed. → Be a Movie Producer - Help create an auction theme and promotional videos, photos, skits, etc. → Be a Solicitor - Charm donations from members and friends → Open to all 	<p>Debba Andree, organizer Jeff Cadow, Nathan Freitas, Whit Larrabee</p>
<p>Book Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Meets monthly to read an eclectic selection of books chosen by the group and participate in thought-provoking and entertaining discussions. Books are chosen by the group a year in advance, giving participants the benefit of being exposed to literature they may not have chosen to read on their own: upcoming selections include Tara Westover’s <u>Educated</u> (4/3), Mary Renault’s <u>The</u> 	<p>Julie Horvath, convener Margaret Cain, Eleanor Clarkson, Sue Davis, Madeline Fine, Julie Horvath, John Mignano, Darlene Millman, Sally Moore, Julie Flood Page,</p>

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<p><u>Mask of Apollo</u> (5/1), Sam Kean’s <u>The Disappearing Spoon</u> (6/5), and Anthony Doerr’s <u>Cloud Cuckoo Land</u> (7/17)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Meets via Zoom Sundays at 7:30, generally the first Sunday of the month; when safety permits, the Book Club anticipates the option to participate in-person and online → Open to all on a drop in or regular basis 	<p>Sarah Pearl, Bruce Perry, Kevin Ruderman</p>
<p>Chancel Choir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provides music for Sunday worship. → A closely-knit community of singers who share the experience of making music together, regularly engaging in social events, sharing meals, and supporting each other through life's highs and lows. → Building community grows the trust that helps us share the personal vulnerability of singing and helps supply the courage to stand in front of a congregation → Sings every other Sunday with a rehearsal at 9:30am → Meets every Wednesday from 6:30-8:00pm → Attendance on Wednesday is required for singing on Sunday → Open to all, regardless of musical background 	<p>Keith Kirchoff, Music Director Lisa Barrone, Adrian Jones & Elizabeth McIntire, section leaders</p>
<p>Climate Justice Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supports our congregation to know about and take action on climate issues affecting First Parish, our local community, and the world → Supports a path to achieve environmental and financial sustainability of our church property, and supports our members’ efforts to personally live in a more sustainable manner. → Supports “Earth Defenders” around the world. → Works closely with the Religious Education teachers to assist them in teaching our children about Nature and caring for our living Earth. → Welcomes anyone concerned about a livable climate for future generations and willing to take action. 	<p>Alfred Brownell & Deane Coady, co-chairs Nancy Clark, Betsy Coons, Marga Dieter, Ann Gilmore, Perry Grossman, Jody Leader, Ed Loechler, Ann Eldridge Malone, Tai Melendy, Clint Richmond, Elena Rippell, Prilla Smith, Carol Spitzer, Mia Szymkowicz, Bob Williamson</p>

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<p>Common Hope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → One social justice effort at First Parish involves a long-term relationship with Common Hope, an organization working to end the cycle of poverty in Guatemala through education, health care, housing and family development (www.commonhope.org). → Since 2009, four First Parish Vision Teams (including many parent-teen teams) have traveled to Antigua for one -week immersion experiences of service, education, sharing and reflection. Consider joining the Vision 2023 Team planning a February 2023 trip. → First Parish has also collectively sponsored two children, supporting them and their families until they graduate from high school. → First Parish members contribute in various ways, large and small: sponsor a child, translate letters between children and their sponsors, donate school supplies, write occasional letters to First Parish’s sponsored child, or supporting a Vision Team. 	<p>Anne Copeland, Steve Davis, Susan Larrabee, Melinda Maryniuk, and Landon Rose (Also, learn more the First Parish website, under Social Justice/Guatemala)</p>
<p>Conversations to Restore Hope in the Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A monthly small group ministry focused on “Conversations to Restore Hope in the Future”, based on the book, <u>Turning to One Another</u>, by Margaret Wheatley. → Using the UUA’s small group ministry format, participants take time to connect, share deeply, and restore our spirits together. → Meets via Zoom; hopes to meet in person by agreement of the group → Third Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30pm → All are welcome to join for one or more sessions 	<p>Rev Lisa and the Pastoral Care Associates</p>
<p>Dinner Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A monthly, family-friendly, structured worship experience at First Parish built around planning and sharing an evening meal. → Will meet First Fridays at 6:00pm, starting in June → Open to all on a drop in or regular basis 	<p>Susan & Whit Larrabee, Debba & Fred Andree, & Karla Baehr & Ann Dinsmoor, co-conveners</p>

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<p>Immigration Justice - <i>Hearts Without Borders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Takes action in solidarity with community partner organizations and in interfaith collaborations to raise consciousness and encourage action at First Parish → Operates from our guiding principle of seeking to be in relationship with people who are directly impacted by immigration - either working directly with them or with those who serve them → Seeks to raise consciousness, encourage solidarity actions, and mobilize resources at FPB through partnering opportunities, educational events, crowdfunding efforts, and outreach to legislators, elected officials and decision makers → Meets via Zoom the third Thursday of every month. → Open to all on a regular or drop in basis 	<p>Ellen Blaney, co-chair Ann Gilmore, Julie Horvath, Sue Kalt, Jody Leader, Martha Leader, James Shillaber, Laura Walters</p>
<p>Justice Seekers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Meet together for one hour each week to connect with one another, learn about, and take action on racial, immigration and environmental justice issues → Participants compose and send texts and emails, make calls, and sign and send petitions on issues aligned with the First Parish mission and identified each week by its conveners → Our recent focus has been on Policing, Prisons, Climate, Immigration, and Indigenous Solidarity → Meets via Zoom every Thursday from 1:00-2:00 → Open to all on a drop in or regular basis 	<p>Martha Leader & Jami Jordan, co-conveners Regular participants include: Suzette Abbott (FPB friend), Debba Andree, Betsy Coons, Marga Dieter, Jami Jordan, Jody Leader, Martha Leader, Sally Moore</p>
<p>Male-identified Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Meets remotely every other Sunday from 1:00-2:30 to discuss together topics related to male identity after taking time to check in → Open to all identifying as male on a drop in or regular basis 	<p>Robson Goulart, Jeff Cadow & Paul McLean, tri-conveners</p>
<p>Meditation Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A welcoming sangha*/community focused on meditation, conversation, and connection. Meets every Thursday from 5:15-6:15 → Open to all, on a regular or drop in basis. <p><i>*Sangha is a Sanskrit word used in many Indian languages meaning "association", "assembly", "company" or "community"</i></p>	<p>Rev Lisa, convener</p>

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<p>Pastoral Care Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Team members connect with congregation members in need of support, to provide a compassionate listening ear or companionship. → Some members coordinate help with meals, rides, and chores for members who need assistance. → Some members assist with candles of joys and sorrows at Sunday services, organize small group ministries, and provide care coverage in the minister's absence. → Meets monthly, and as needed. → Open to all, with agreement from Rev Lisa. 	<p>Rev Lisa Alfred Brownell, Jeff Cadow, Marga Dieter, Anna Eisengart, Madeline Fine, Wendy Grossman, Tanya Gurian, Jami Jordan, Kristen McIntire</p>
<p>Poetry Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Meets monthly to dive deeply into poetry, discussing the work of one poet each time, with participants submitting a favorite by that poet for discussion. Twice a year volunteers present their own original poetry for discussion → Meets via Zoom second Tuesday at 3:00pm → Open to all, on a drop-in or regular basis 	<p>Sue Andrews, convener Regular participants include: Eliza Blanchard, Betsy Coons, Madeline Fine, Ann Gilmore and others</p>
<p>Racial Justice Action Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supports the congregation in our commitment – embodied in our mission statement – to become a multicultural, anti-racist <i>Beloved Community</i> → A focus of our work this year and next is developing our own and the congregation’s understanding of First Parish connections with land dispossession and enslavement and an exploration of the implications of those connections for us now as individuals and a congregation → Partners with other UU congregations and BIPOC-led organizations to learn and leverage action → Meets third Thursday of the month, 6:30-8:30 via Zoom and in person → A covenantal group, open to all volunteers who commit to the covenant which requires that people make themselves vulnerable and learning builds as conversations deepen over time through regular participation 	<p><i>Rotating Leadership</i> Karla Baehr, Alfred Brownell, Almas Dossa, Ann Gilmore, Robson Goulart, Jami Jordan, Kathryn Kirschner, Jody Leader, Martha Leader, Michael Luke, Ann Eldridge Malone, Ron Wilkinson</p>
<p>Seasoned Souls 2</p>	<p>Christine Rossell, organizer</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Explores selections from the book of essays, <i>The Seasoned Soul: Reflections on Growing Older</i>, compiled by UU minister and First Parish member, Eliza Blanchard → Each session's reading is chosen by the host of that month's meeting → Meets monthly, currently first Tuesdays from 7:00-8:30pm → Open to all on an on-going or drop-in basis 	<p>Eleanor Clarkson, Betsy Coons, Madeline Fine, Johanna and Mike Kobran, Maureen Giovannini</p>
<p>Small Group Ministry Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 6-8 participants use a structured format designed by the national UU Association (UUA) to nurture deep connections ("intimacy") and exploration of significant life questions ("ultimacy"). → Facilitated by a lay leader, each session offers participants the opportunity to listen deeply and share their experiences, perspectives, and insights. Sessions include chalice lighting, centering readings, and time for quiet reflection as well as sharing → Groups typically meet monthly for a year or more. → Opportunities to join small group ministry groups are made available each fall 	<p>Pastoral Care Team, organizers</p>
<p>Spirit of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A monthly early evening participatory workshop adapted from the UUA program, <i>Spirit of Life</i>. Each session offers participants space, time, and community in which to explore their UU spirituality, framed by Carolyn McDade's song, <i>Spirit of Life</i>. → Meets online last Sunday each month, September - May 7:00-8:30pm, starting September 2022 → Open to all, consistent attendance encouraged 	<p>Karla Baehr, Elena Garofoli & Maureen Giovannini, co-conveners</p>
<p>Vespers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A reflective and contemplative moment of community, following a very simple Order of Service, with readings on that month's church theme, candles, meditation, discussion, and simple music. → Attendees are invited to bring a reading to share; all are welcome to join in our reflection and discussion. → Our hybrid model has allowed some FP members who have moved away to join us, so we plan to continue that even when we begin to meet in person at the church again. → Meets second Sunday every month from 7:00-8:00pm → All are welcome, on a regular or drop-in basis. 	<p>Anne Copeland, convener Regular participants include: Jon & Pat Bartels, Sam Dennis & Diane Shannon, Susan & Whit Larrabee, George & Melinda Maryniuk, Jack and Linda Smith, Jim Womack, and many other friends coming occasionally</p>

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<p>Walkie Talkies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ The “walkie talkies” meet several times a week in and around Brookline for hour-long walks. Participants vote via email each week to identify the days and meetup locations. Occasional adventures take us via carpool for longer walks in places like Mt. Misery (Lincoln), Castle Island, and the Arboretum.→ Typically twice a week at 9:30 or 1:30 in the summer and 11:30 or 1:30 in the winter→ All are welcome on a regular or dop-in basis	<p>Madeline Fine, organizer</p> <p>Some regular participants include: Suzanne Federspiel and Jami Jordan</p>
<p>Willing Hands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ A “fellowship of doers” who work together on an as-needed basis to undertake unique maintenance projects, move stuff, and make small repairs to the church.→ Open to all	<p>Bob Williamson, convener</p> <p>Fred Andree, Alfred Brownell, Eleanor Clarkson, Tim Daley, Mike Luke, Ed Page, Charles Sandmel and others</p>