

FIRST PARISH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST



Canton
MASSACHUSETTS

A NEPONSET RIVER UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY



Unitarian Universalists and the “Black Empowerment Controversary”

February 23, 2025

Order of Service

**Unitarian Universalists and the
“Black Empowerment Controversary”
Led by Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh
February 23, 2025**

Gathering Music James Chubet

Centering Bell Rev. Michelle

Prelude *Come Sunday (Duke Ellington)*
James Chubet

Welcome & Announcements Millie Haroutunian

Shared Call to Worship Rev. Michelle & Congregation
written by Rev. Richard S. Gilbert

We bid you welcome, who come with weary spirit seeking rest.

Who come with troubles that are too much with you,
Who come hurt and afraid.

We bid you welcome, who come with hope in your heart.

Who come with anticipation in your step,
Who come proud and joyous.

We bid you welcome, who are seekers of a new faith.

Who come to probe and explore.
Who come to learn.

We bid you welcome, who enter this hall as a homecoming,

Who have found here room for your spirit.

Who find in this people a family.

Whoever you are, whatever you are,

Wherever you are on your journey,

We bid you welcome.

Unison Chalice Lighting

Rev. Michelle & Congregation
written by Rev. Tara Humphries (excerpt)

...Whether you were born into this faith, found it, or it found you...
Whether you feel at home or are still trying to find your place...
Whether you believe in God, are open to mystery,
or still have no idea...
Whether you are holding anxiety, grief, confusion, anger, hope,
restlessness, or deep peace...
Unitarian Universalism has a place for you...
And this chalice is lit for you.

Covenant

Millie Haroutunian & Congregation

Love is the doctrine of this congregation. The quest for truth is its sacrament, and service is its prayer. To dwell together in peace with respect and understanding; to seek knowledge in freedom; to serve our fellows and humankind to the end that all souls shall grow together in harmony. Thus do we covenant with each other and with our God, by whatsoever name we worship.

***Opening Hymn**

#153 – *Oh, I Woke Up This Morning*
First Parish Choir & Congregation

World Wisdom Story

“A Longer Lasting Light:
The Story of Lewis Howard Latimer”
from *A Lamp in Every Corner: Our UU Storybook*
written by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer
as read by Rev. Michelle

Invitation to the Offering

Millie Haroutunian

Offertory

#155 – *Circle ‘Round for Freedom*
First Parish Choir

Membership Recognition led by Rev. Michelle Walsh, Kitty McGregor,
Debbie Radovsky and Membership Ministry

Over 40 Years Members:

David Bryant (5/19/79)
Alice Earle (11/10/74)
Charlie Earle (11/10/74)
Rev. Anita Farber-Robertson (1/4/81)
Barbara (Forté) Foley (4/18/83)
Ruth Johnstone (11/1/80)
Elaine Lowry (11/3/74)
Carol Munson (11/3/74)
Deborah (Lee Hamilton) Radovsky (10/30/77)
Carol (Staples) Seaman (3/18/81)
Don Seaman (5/1/78)
Mollie Seaman (11/25/74)
Ralph Staples (12/5/74)
Clare Young (11/3/74)

New Members:

Camille (Millie) Haroutunian (12/22/24)
Thomas Howell (2/16/25)
Ashton Krasnow (12/22/24)
Lisa Palermo (1/11/25)

Joys & Sorrows

Rev. Michelle & Millie Haroutunian

Meditation & Prayer

Rev. Michelle

Musical Interlude

#149 – Lift Every Voice and Sing (Verse 1)
First Parish Choir

Homily

Unitarian Universalists &
“The Black Empowerment Controversary”
Rev. Michelle

***Closing Hymn**

#30 – Over My Head
First Parish Choir & Congregation

***Shared Benediction**

Rev. Michelle & Congregation
written by Rev. William F. Schulz

This is the mission of our faith:
To teach the fragile art of hospitality;
To revere both the critical mind and the generous heart;
To prove that diversity need not mean divisiveness;
And to witness to all that we must hold the whole world in our
hands.

***Unison Chalice Extinguishing**

Millie Haroutunian & Congregation
Written By Rev. Elizabeth Selle Jones

We extinguish this flame,
but not the light of truth,
the warmth of community,
or the fire of commitment.
These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Postlude

Ripple (Robert Hunter – Jerry Garcia)
Tom Hanold, with James Chubet

***Please rise in body and/or in spirit**

Please join us for coffee hour after the Service

February Faith in Action: UU Mass Action

Since 2006 UU Mass Action (<https://www.uumassaction.org>) has been organizing and mobilizing the 20,000 Unitarian Universalists and 142 congregations in Massachusetts to confront oppression. Their pathways to justice are selected by identifying the priorities in which our congregations are engaged, engaging in our coalition partners' shared priorities, assessing legislative momentum, and identifying who are the most vulnerable people in our Commonwealth. Current legislative campaigns include climate and environmental justice; decarceration and end solitary; housing and economic justice; immigrant justice; and indigenous justice. On February 16th, our special guest speaker was Karl Claire Müller from UU Mass Action, and they gave a powerful sermon again with an invitation to become involved in their UU Mass Action State House Advocacy Day on Tuesday, April 8th!

To donate, please use the envelopes in the pews for your checks, with contributions payable to FPUU Canton, and tell us in the memo line or otherwise note that your contribution is for the Faith In Action (FIA). You also can use the Donation button on the FPUU website for PayPal or credit cards. Please give as generously as you are able. Thank you!

Ongoing Events at FPUU

Sunday Brunch Potluck! First Sunday of the month – **March 2**. We are holding a Brunch Potluck after the Sunday service. A few food items, coffee and tea will be provided. We are asking everyone attending to bring the rest! See Barbara Foley for more info.

The Bible – What Is It and Why?: Second Sunday of the month – **March 9** from 12:15pm to 1:15pm with Rev. Dr. Clyde Grubbs, Affiliate Community Minister. Please read Genesis & Exodus.

Parish Committee Board Meetings: Second Wednesday of the month – **March 12** at 7:15pm via Zoom. See Kitty McGregor, President during coffee social hours for more information.

Exploring Your Spirituality/Soul Matters: Third Sunday of the month – **March 16** from 12:15pm to 1:15pm. March Theme: "Trust".

Lunch With Friends: Third Thursday of the month – **March 20** at noon in the parish hall. Under new leadership with Barbara Foley, bring a bag lunch and share a meal time with FPUU friends!

**FPUU Coffeehouse Coming in March on Saturday, March 15th!
SAVE THE DATE!! More Information Coming Soon!!
(see Dave Biggers if you'd like to perform!)**

**Neponset River Mind-Body-Spirit Center
(a program of FPUU as the Neponset River UU Community)**

Zen Buddhist Meditation Group: Second and Fourth Thursday of the month – **February 27 and March 13** from 1 to 2pm in the FPUU Chapel, in Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist tradition.

Get Your Body Groove On!: First Thursday of the month – **March 6** from 1 to 2pm in the FPUU Chapel. Come have fun and dance your stress away! This program accommodates all body types and abilities, and sitting while dancing is fine!

Exploring Your Spirituality: Third Thursday of the month – **March 20** from 1:30pm to 2:30pm in the Chapel, following 'Lunch with Friends'. March Soul Matters Theme: "Trust."

Inspirational Fun Friday Movie: Third Friday of the month – **March 21** from 3pm to 5:30pm at First Parish, Chapel. For Women's History month, we'll watch and have a conversation about "On The Basis of Sex" film, a film about the early life of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg; pizza and popcorn provided.

Highlighted Neponset Region or Five Points Cluster Events

Connection Circles: All Souls Braintree invites all interested to join their weekly Wednesday Connection Circles on Zoom from 2:30-4pm. Contact Mary Mitchell, CC Coordinator, at 781-864-7743 for more information.

UU Mass Action Indigenous Campaign Team Meeting. Theme: Footprints Along the Path to Truth-Telling, Relationship, and Repair. THIS Monday, Feb. 24, 7-8:15PM on Zoom. Go to UU Mass Action website to sign up: <https://www.uumassaction.org>.

CDEI Celebrates Black History Month. Theme: African American & Labor. Keynote Speaker: Carlene McNair, LICSW and PMH-C. THIS Wednesday, Feb. 26, 6-8PM. Location: TopGolf (777 Dedham Street, Canton).

UU Mass Action Virtual Legislative Advocacy Day: Tuesday, April 8th. Save the date and pre-register by March 25th on the UU Mass Action website: <https://www.uumassaction.org>

**See the next page for a very important statement from the Canton
Diversity Equity and Inclusion (CDEI) Committee of the Town of Canton!
We at First Parish are very proud to be an ally of the CDEI!**

2/15/25 Statement by the Canton Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee

We as citizens of this nation must learn and share our history both the good and the bad.

These are a few examples of the unfortunate events that have occurred in our history.

CDEI stands in support of the urgent release of hostages in the Middle East and beyond. The hostages are innocent men, women and children from Israel, and many other countries. They have been held for almost 500 days in horrific and inhumane conditions. We hope for their safe return home to their families.

We must learn to talk about the treatment of Indigenous people who have had to endure the torture and trauma of their native land being stolen from them. We must acknowledge the systemic disadvantages of ultimately displacing these indigenous peoples to reservations, all the while thinking this was a good idea for others.

Slavery was prevalent in our country and forced us into a Civil War. This brought the loss of so many American soldiers and the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

The plight of enslaved African Americans has led to racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Slavery has left an intergenerational legacy of trauma in Black communities.

During World War 2, we forced the rounding up of the American Asian population which then led to forced detainment because our government assumed their loyalty was with Japan.

High ranking government officials knew that the slaughter of Jews was going on in Europe. We waited so long to enter the war which resulted in over six millions Jews being murdered for the sake of their religious beliefs.

In the 1980's when the AIDS crisis took place, President Ronald Regan first discussed the virus only after four years, by which point the virus had spread throughout communities and ultimately became a pandemic. Tens of thousands of Americans were infected with the AIDS virus with no treatment, no education and no compassion, which lead to a generations of men and women losing their lives.

This current administration is now trying to wipe out all DEI programs which allows us as a nation to learn, to heal, and to never allow history repeat itself. In Canton this will NOT be the case. We are not going away. We are determined and we will go before the select board to request for funds in support of our causes and initiatives.

As noted in our mission statement, EVERYONE is welcome in this town. We will continue to do the work through quality events that showcase our diversity as an integral part of who we are.

History has shown us the disastrous consequences of ignorance and silence. We are determined as a committee never to accept or allow this happen in our town. History will never be repeated in Canton.

CDEI Committee Members

Naomi Akan
Nichola Gallagher
Desmond Sumrall
Matthew Masciarelli
William Wilson
Melanie Martin
Alan Rapoport
Jestin King
Joan Schottenfeld
Sherry Herzog
Helena Rafferty

Land and Labor Acknowledgement

The First Parish Unitarian Universalist-Canton, MA
[Adopted at the FPUU Annual Meeting on 6/4/24]

The First Parish Unitarian Universalist-Canton is proud to be a major historical church of Canton, representing a consolidation of two of Canton's oldest churches – the First Parish Unitarian, founded in the 18th century and the First Universalist Church, founded in the 19th century. We recognize that our church's history is complicated by the combined legacies of colonialism and slavery in the United States context. We acknowledge the history of Indigenous peoples and the dispossession of their lands, including that these original lands in Canton and neighboring towns were named Ponkapoag by indigenous peoples. We pay our respects to the Neponset Band, among other bands, of the Massachusetts Tribe, who have stewarded this land throughout generations. We honor their continued presence here and throughout their diaspora. We also acknowledge that we in Canton do not exist independently from centuries of forced labor and economic extraction from enslaved and indentured Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), including children, as well as poor white immigrants/residents suffering abusive child labor and economic exploitation. And we want to affirm that although we cannot change history, we can and will work for justice, and that justice first begins in direct relationship with mutual recognition and acknowledgment of our shared history, experiences, and interactions. We celebrate and work in solidarity with BIPOC organizations leading the movement for our collective liberation, and we choose to build a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community casting out racism and oppression in ourselves and our institutions.

Our Vision and Purpose

FPUU Canton is a welcoming, caring, and diverse faith community that seeks to nurture and inspire each person's spiritual journey while serving others in our commitment to peace and justice.

Minister & Staff

The Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh, *Lead Minister*
The Rev. Dr. Clyde Grubbs, *Affiliate Community Minister*
The Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson, *Minister Emerita*
James Chubet, *Music Director*
Carol Smith, *Office Administrator*

Parish Committee 2024-2025

Kitty McGregor, *President*
Dave Williams, *Vice President, Administration*
Debbie Radovsky, *Vice President, Member Services*
Larry Cotton, *Treasurer*
Jonette Nagai, *Clerk*
Bette Wells, *Member-at-Large*
Don Seaman, *Member-at-Large*

Contact Us

Phone: 781-828-0296 / Office Email: office@fpuucanton.org
Ministers' Email: minister@fpuucanton.org



<https://fpuucanton.org>