

January 2018



LIFE TOGETHER

The Monthly Newsletter of the
West Parish Church of Andover
United Church of Christ

WEST PARISH CHURCH

United Church of Christ
129 Reservation Road
Andover, MA 01810-3430
(978) 475-3528
westparishchurch@verizon.net
www.westparishchurch.org

Sundays 9:00 AM

Adult Education

Sundays 10:00 AM

Worship & Sunday School

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JANUARY HI-LIGHTS

WORSHIP

December 31 ~ 10:00 am

New Year's Eve

Rev. Katrina Preaching

January 7 ~ 10:00 am Epiphany

Celebration/First Sunday/Communion

Rev. Katrina Preaching

January 14 ~ 10:00 am

Rev. Katrina Preaching

January 21 ~ 10:00 am MLK Jr Sunday

Victoria Gaisford Preaching

January 28 ~ 10:00 am

Rev. Katrina Preaching

February 4 ~ 10:00 am

Rev. Katrina Preaching

ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 28, 2018

11:30 AM

FELLOWSHIP HALL



ANNUAL REPORTS

As the end of 2017 nears, Ministries, Committees and Commissions should begin preparing their 2017 annual reports. The deadline for submitting annual reports to the office will be Tuesday, January 9, 2018, to allow time to consolidate all the reports into a final report of the church for 2016 in time for the Annual Meeting. All reports **must be emailed** to the church office, westparishchurch@verizon.net. This allows us to consolidate and present a uniform report to the congregation.

Please decide who will prepare your report during your December meeting.

Thank You
Governing Board

WPC EVENTS

January 20 ~ Roast Pork Dinner
Fellowship Hall (see pg. 5 for details)

January 28 ~ WPC Annual
Meeting in Fellowship Hall





FROM THE DESK OF
Rev. Katrina Wuensch

Good People of West Parish,

It is almost a new year! 2018! WHOA. The years roll by, as do loss and change and joy. What a gift are these lives of ours! Unfortunately, New Year's Eve is not a liturgical day in the church calendar. In fact, in our liturgical calendar we began the new church year on the First Sunday of Advent! But the New Year always feels somewhat holy to me, as do all rituals that mark our days, because we will be forced to stop and recognize that another year has passed – what did it hold for us? We will have layers of memory etched onto January 1 – what feelings arise? There are the cultural expectations and “self-help” schemes – do we feel any “unholy” pressure? New Year's can be a wonderful time to reflect on the year past and the year ahead, both to give thanks to God for what is good, and to resolve to act for what needs more goodness.

Indeed, Christians have been gathering for “Watch Night Services” to usher in the New Year since the 18th century. It's believed to have originated with the Moravians in Germany! And then John Wesley instituted such a service around 1750. People gathered to review the year, make confession, and ensure that their souls were right with God. Watch Night became a special tradition in African-American churches beginning with the eve before the Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863.

While we won't be holding our service close to midnight, but rather at the regular (and reasonable) hour of 10:00am, we will still call upon some of these traditions of reflecting and praying and celebrating. Join us!

Katrina

NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP

December 31 is a Sunday! What fun! On this Sunday when we continue to celebrate the Christmas season, we will also reflect on entering a new year and a new time. Resolutions to “improve ourselves” abound in our culture. What might a spiritual New Years' resolution look like? What might God be calling you to let go from the past year or take up in the new year? Join us and join in!

CONTACTING KATRINA

Katrina is at the church Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. Monday is her day off, and Friday she works at home. You can **reach her by email:** revkatrina@yahoo.com or through the church phone (978-475-3528 x201). If you leave a voicemail, she is notified immediately via email, so can respond as soon as possible to a pastoral emergency.

JANUARY 7: EPIPHANY WORSHIP

You know the song: “On the the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me...” Because there are twelve days in the Christmas season! From December 25 to January 5, we keep celebrating Christmas! January 6 ends this season with Epiphany, or El Dia de Los Tres Reyes (Three Kings Day). This is the day that we celebrate the arrival of the magi and the guiding star. So don't miss Sunday, January 7, when we'll have our own Epiphany celebration, complete with a glowing star and a gift for everyone! (This service will be our “First Sunday Worship”, a service for all ages with music by Eunhye Jeong.)

FIRST SUNDAY SINGERS

First Sunday Worship needs your joyful voice! All interested singers of all ages are invited to arrive at 9:00 am on January 7, and gather at the piano with Eunhye. Learn the new songs and help to lead them in the service. You do not need to be in the choir to participate; just show up and have fun! Please speak with Katrina if you have any questions or suggestions.

FIRST SUNDAY WORSHIP PLANNING

We will again gather to brainstorm our First Sunday worship services! Everyone – kids, too! – are welcome to join us as we imagine how we might celebrate the first Sunday in March and the Sunday after Easter. Do you have creative ideas? A favorite song? An idea for engaging all ages in worship? Come and be creative with Katrina and Eunhye after church on February 4!



VICTORIA GAISFORD
DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

Christian Education Update

The modern world is a scary place to raise teenagers, even though American teenagers are physically safer than they've ever been. According to the article by Jean M. Twenge in September's Atlantic, teenage depression has skyrocketed since the introduction of the smartphone, and it is due to one main thing: our kids are spending less time with people in real life. Their social life is lived on their phones, despite clear evidence that "all screen activities are linked to less happiness, and all nonscreen activities are linked to more happiness." This fact is fundamentally connected to what we do at West Parish Church. "Eighth-graders who are heavy users of social media increase their risk of depression by 27 percent, while those who play sports, go to religious services, or even do homework more than the average teen cut their risk significantly." I see it as my job to get people together in real life: gathering in Adult Education, Sunday School, family events, and Youth Group. I sense the church struggling with the cultural currents going in the opposite direction, currents that are driven by companies profiting while our children suffer. But bringing kids to church doesn't seem as straightforward as sending them to school. As a mom of a teenager, I feel myself being pulled by the same thing that makes my job at church challenging: it is very hard to prioritize something that doesn't seem to be connected to an achievement. I try to remember that very central Christian message: we don't live by bread (or anything immediately satisfying) alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (the sacred intangibles). Remembering our spiritual nature, and prioritizing our time to honor those sacred intangibles will make us and our children much happier.

SUNDAY SCHOOL



December wrapped up the stories of the Bible that led up to the birth of Jesus. We will now begin to hear stories that Jesus told, focusing especially on the parables. Godly Play with Susan is a truly special class on Sunday mornings, and the young

children of Andover deserve to know about it! We invite children to bring their friends on Sunday morning to hear sacred stories told in a wonderful, magical way. Come see for yourself! We are in need of teachers and assistants! Please email vgaisford@gmail.com if you can volunteer.

FAMILY EVENTS

Family Ski Day

January 14
Families and youth are invited to play hooky from church and ski together at Crotched Mountain in New Hampshire. This is a tradition that has been going for years! Email vgaisford@gmail.com for information.

Family Craft and Parenting Circle

January 21, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Come be creative with your family and then have a discussion with other caregivers about our most important job. Food and childcare provided.



**YOUTH GROUP YANKEE SWAP
JANUARY 7, FROM 4:30 - 6:00 PM**

Bring a friend and wrapped gift for this Yankee Swap! Maybe the sweater you got from Aunt Mildred? Epiphany is the next day, when we remember the Magi bringing Jesus gifts. Youth Group meets the first Sunday of the month.



**JANUARY ADULT EDUCATION
SUNDAYS AT 9:00 AM IN THE PARLOR**

Practicing Prayer. Prayer can focus on a repetition of a phrase, simply listening to God, confession, visualization, or adoration. We will read about how many different ways people practice prayer, focusing on some "masters" or prayer, and try some out ourselves. We will always take time to pray for each other.

We do not meet the first Sunday of the month.

Childcare is provided upon request by emailing vgaisford@gmail.com.



**CHILDREN'S CHOIR
JANUARY 28, 11:15 - 11:45 AM**

All kids welcome to join – we meet every 2nd and 4th Sunday after church in the music room with Victoria. No meeting January 14, 2018.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEEDBACK CIRCLES ARE COMING!

Things are underway to get our Feedback Circle process in place! Six West Parish folks who've agreed to be facilitators, as well as some members of the Pastoral Relations Committee and Governing Board, will gather on January 20 for a training on conducting the circles. "Feedback Circles?", you ask, "What's that?!" Well, it's a UCC recommended process for getting information about how we're doing with our ministries, programs, worship, and life together. You'll be invited to attend a circle in the spring, and asked to share your experience of life at West Parish. We'll listen to another, learn about what is important to each other, and learn how we can strengthen our ministries and keep on growing! This process models healthy and direct communication, and will also offer invaluable information for staff and lay leaders. Stay tuned!

**THANK YOU!**

December was a wonderful and BUSY season at West Parish! So many of you contributed in so many ways to make our Advent and Christmas celebrations beautiful and meaningful. Many thanks to all of you who... decorated the sanctuary and front of the church, arranged for Betsy's celebration, decorated or ran a table at Advent Workshop, set up or baked or acted in the Pageant, donated gifts to Lazarus House clients, ushered or greeted on Sundays, put on costumes, served communion, sang in the choir, knit prayer shawls, assisted with Sunday School, collected offerings, managed coffee hour, added up pledges, provided rides, served as lay reader... what are we forgetting?! Well, THANK YOU for all that you do to make our community amazing!

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Our community conversations on race continue! And there are three exciting events coming up in February that are free and open to everyone. Courageous Conversations and Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) have partnered to put together these community forums. (All events are at the Memorial Hall Library in Andover.) Please mark your calendars for these events:

EXAMINING WHITENESS WORKSHOP

Thursday, February 1, 2018, 6:30-8:30 pm

Recent events from Charlottesville to the NFL to the White House have raised awareness about white supremacy and how it operates in today's society. It has raised an opportunity to examine what it means to be white, and to participate in a system that supports white supremacy. This workshop will explore the history and construction of whiteness, what it means to be white in today's world, and how people who are white can disrupt racism and whiteness personally, interpersonally, and systemically.

**FILM SCREENING OF
ALICE'S ORDINARY PEOPLE**

Thursday, February 8, 2018, 7:00 pm

Alice's Ordinary People is a documentary by filmmaker Craig Dudnick who will lead a discussion after the screening. The film is about Alice Tregay, an unsung heroine of the Civil Rights Movement. Her remarkable story spans the marches of Dr. King to the election of Barack Obama. Her great contribution in the field of politics is the thread which connects the two.

**PANEL DISCUSSION OF BETWEEN
THE WORLD AND ME,
BY TA-NEHISI COATES**

Thursday, February 8, 2018, 7:00 pm

Panelists will be: Michael Eatmen, Director of Community Life at Pike School), Linda Carter Griffith (Phillips Academy, Assistant Head of School for Equity, Inclusion and Wellness), Shaunielle McDonald (Brooks School, Director of Diversity Initiatives), and Martin Henson (Black Lives Matter, Boston).



UPCOMING EVENTS

**IMMIGRANT TRAUMA
AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT**

Please join us after church on Sunday, January 7, for an informative session on immigrant trauma and how to deal with it. Many of us have been disheartened and dismayed by the policies and rhetoric of the Trump administration about immigrants in the U.S. but don't know actions to take. In this session, we will view a webinar from the Public Education Institute at the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden, led by Marcia Hohn, retired director of the Institute. The webinar recorded this November covers:

- strategies to support immigrant, including families in a time of fear;
- the psychological effects of current immigration policy and sentiment;
- actions, words and impact: Trump-era policies and rule changes and who they are impacting.

Please join us on January 7, 2018.



GATHERING TO LEARN MORE

Join Katrina after church in the Parlor on Sunday, February 11, to learn more about West Parish, including how to become a member.



**WOMEN'S EVENING CIRCLE
JANUARY**

There will be no Women's Evening Circle in January. We look forward to seeing you at the February 8th meeting where we will "Try Painting" with Pam Denney.

ROAST PORK DINNER

**JANUARY 20- 5:00—7:00 PM
IN FELLOWSHIP HALL**

The menu will be roast pork, gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, butternut squash, applesauce, coffee, drinks and desserts.

All proceeds from this dinner benefit the West Parish Men's Group Scholarship Fund for the Lawrence Boys and Girls Club.

Adults \$15 - Child (12 and under) \$10.



CALL TO CARE

Please contact the West Parish Church office, 978 475-3528, with the names of any church member experiencing a life event in which church members may assist, i.e. Birth, funeral receptions, cards, meals, etc.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM MINISTRY OF OUTREACH

On behalf of Lazarus House staff, the Outreach Ministry would like to thank those of you who participated in the Lazarus House Giving Tree gift program again this year. Your generosity resulted in the delivery of over sixty gifts to Lazarus House for distribution to local families in need during the holiday season.

Thank you very much for taking part in this annual holiday gift program.



AFTER WORSHIP FELLOWSHIP HOUR

After Worship fellowship hour will be sponsored by

Ministry of Christian Education

for the month of January. Please join us!



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE



January 22 is the deadline for the February Newsletter. Please email your articles or notices to: www.westparishchurch@verizon.net.

JANUARY OUTREACH MISSION

Neighbors In Need, Food Pantry



Food Pantry Donations Needed

Neighbors in Need has fed the poor and Hungry of Greater Lawrence for over 30 years. We give food to those in need without judgment, respecting the dignity of each individual. All food, formula, diapers, and infant clothing are provided free of charge to those who request them. Access to good food is a

challenge to many of the poor and hungry in the greater Lawrence area.

Neighbors in Need feeds over 600 families each week at our 12 Food Pantries strategically located in the neighborhoods, providing food to most Lawrence residents within walking distance of their homes. Our Elder Pantries provide food in the common rooms of two low-income elder housing projects--Valebrook and 65 Union in the North Common area. We deliver to 21 disabled homebound residents of Windsor House (a rooming house operated by the Commonwealth Land Trust) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH); and to the YWCA Fina House providing food to 26 teen mothers and families with a history of domestic violence. In 2016, NIN provided 370,000 pounds of food to the poor and hungry of Greater Lawrence--500,000 meals to over 3,000 different families. Since 1983 Neighbors in Need has distributed over 8 million pounds of food.



FILL THE YELLOW BIN!

Though our Thanksgiving Meal collection was very successful this fall, over the year as a whole we have noticed a definite decline in the quantity of non-perishable food left in the yellow bin, across from the Nursery, for donation to Neighbors in Need.

Winter is a particularly difficult time of the year for Neighbors in Need food inventories. Let's see if we can fill the bin over this difficult period. Lists of needed items can be found on the Outreach Bulletin Board.

Some of you may now use your own reusable grocery bags and have given up use of paper and plastic shopping bags. Good for you! You do not need to leave your donation in a paper or plastic grocery bag—just place your donated items in the bin.

Thank you for your contributions to this very important local program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMPLETING YOUR 2017 PLEDGES AND DONATIONS

Late pledges: We hope everyone will complete their 2017 pledges by Christmas Eve, December 24. However, we will consider any 2017 pledges received by Sunday, January 7, as donated in 2017. They will be listed on the record of your 2017 donations, which you will receive at the end of January.

2018 pledge envelopes: Pledge envelopes for 2018 should be available at the church Sundays during coffee hour beginning on January 7. If you can't pick them up, contact me and I will be happy to mail them to you.

Art Clark, Collector



FROM THE WEST PARISH OFFICE

My Dear West Parish Family,

My send off from West Parish will be a day never to forget. I am humbled and grateful for all of your generosity, planning and thoughtfulness. From the kind words said during worship and fellowship hours, to the beautiful words written in my book, the generous gifts and delicious luncheon, you are all truly remarkable.

My time at West Parish will always be remembered with fondness and love. As I said in my message to the congregation that Sunday, while I am no longer an employee of West Parish, I am forever and always a part of the West Parish Community.

Betsy Collins



COMPLETING YOUR 2017 FORMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

For accounting purposes, should you have any receipts for reimbursement for 2017 costs for West Parish Church, please submit them no later than December 31, with the receipts attached to the expense form and please be sure to have the expense form countersigned/approved by the head of the committee for which you have costs for.

Expense forms are located on the bulletin board in the copy room. Please leave your completed form in the Office Administrator's mailbox in the copy room.



NEIGHBORS IN NEED FOOD COLLECTION AND BLESSING



West Parish Church collects non-perishable food items the first Sunday of the month for donation to Neighbors In Need. Food donations may also be left in the yellow bin, across from the Nursery, at any time during the month. Thank You all for your contributions.



SAVE THE DATE

- Chili Cook off – February 3
• Ash Wednesday – February 14
• Maundy Thursday Service - March 29
• Easter Sunday - April 1

2017/2018 CHAIRPERSONS/OFFICERS

GOVERNING BOARD

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Governing Board Chair | John Pearson |
| Governing Board Vice Chair | Deb Schroeder |
| Acting Clerk | Deb Schroeder |
| Treasurer | Jerry Greer |
| Moderator | Blake Martin |

MINISTRIES

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Education | Fitz Granger |
| Fellowship | Ed Pass |
| Outreach | Pat Greer |
| Stewardship | Chris Swain |
| Worship | Jill Sergeant |

COMMISSIONS

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Investments | David Bertetti |
| Operations | Blake Martin |
| Collector | Art Clark |

COMMITTEES

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Flowers | Abby Martin |
| Music | Ed Pass |
| Nominating | Heather Gaspar |
| Planned Giving | Frank Hopkins |
| Smith Purdon | Lisa Doucett |
| Women's Evening Circle | Pam Denny & Pat Greer |

CHURCH STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Senior Minister | Rev. Katrina Wuensch |
| Director of Music | Yoo-Kyung Kim |
| Church Administrator | Larisa Henderson |
| Dir. of Christian Ed. | Victoria Gaisford |
| Sunday School Teacher | Susan Berube |
| Sexton | Ed Pass |
| Wedding Coordinator | Kathy Vano |
| Cemetery Superintendent | Mark Atwood |

WEST PARISH CHURCH, U.C.C.

129 Reservation Road
Andover, MASS 01810-3430
Address service requested

