



FIRST PARISH CHURCH IN WESTON

JOURNEYS OF FAITH

A SPIRITUAL LEARNING COMMUNITY AT
FIRST PARISH CHURCH IN WESTON



*Whoever you are,
wherever you find yourself
on your journey of faith,
you are welcome here at
First Parish Church in Weston.*



349 Boston Post Road | Weston, Massachusetts 02493
On the Town Green at School and Church Streets since 1698
781-893-7798 | www.firstparishweston.org

WHY CHURCH?!

Experience tells us that people often start going to church for one of three reasons: to get closer to God, to transform our imperfect lives, or to make the world better. Sometimes it's more than just one reason, maybe two; eventually they may keep coming because of all three.

To get closer to God. Sometimes it is a matter of wanting to find a definition of God that makes sense to us, our own definition, not our parents' or ancestors' conceptions. Often it comes out of a feeling that "something is missing in my life" and wanting a more profound sense of relationship and belonging. That is what worship and prayer and a spiritual life is all about.

To transform our imperfect lives. Oh perhaps we might prefer using other words like "self-improvement," "education," or even "faith development." We want opportunities to acknowledge our limitations, to grow, to learn, to serve others.

To make the world better. Parts of our world are just magnificent blessings. Some parts are broken, in pain, hurting. There is a wonderful Hebrew phrase – *Tikkun olam* – meaning "to repair the world." We need opportunities to help, perhaps not the whole world at once, but to do our part.

Come join us in the journey of faith.



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HOW WE “DO CHURCH” AT FIRST PARISH

Our Welcome:

Gathered in 1698 by the Puritan settlers of Weston, First Parish was founded to serve all the residents in our neighborhood and was known as the “parish” or town church. This town church identity still guides us, for we seek to be a vibrant community church:

“Whoever you are, wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, you are welcome here at First Parish.”

Our Covenant:

We worship and educate ourselves and our children in ways formed by the Puritans and reformed by the Unitarians, and guided by our covenant:

“In the love of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of humankind.”

Our Aspiration:

“You will be cared for, and you will be asked to care for others.”



TO GET CLOSER TO GOD – WORSHIP AT FIRST PARISH

Sunday mornings at 10:30 (and other times, too), we gather to sing, to give thanks, to listen to the great stories of the Bible. We offer the three traditional kinds of prayer – petition, confession and praise, aka gimme, oops and wow! We listen to stories for children and sermons for adults. The Senior Choir and two children’s choirs offer music chosen to enhance the worship experience.



Children are involved in three kinds of worship services:

Family Sundays – Children begin in the sanctuary with their families for the first 15 minutes and hear a “story for all ages.” Then they go to their Church School classes.

ALLGEN Sundays – Children stay in worship with their families for the whole service.

Chapel Sundays – Children have their own worship services in our magnificent Sears Chapel in conjunction with their church school classes.

SPECIAL SERVICES:

- September 8 – Homecoming Sunday and Welcome Back Reception
- October 6 – Worldwide Communion Sunday
- November 3 – All Saints / All Souls Sunday
- November 24 – ALLGEN Thanksgiving Sunday
- December 1 – First Sunday in Advent
- December 8 – All-Music Sunday: Britten’s *Ceremony of Carols*
- December 11 – Quiet Christmas (*Wednesday - 7:00 pm*)
- December 15 – Christmas Pageant (*Sunday - 10:30 am*)
- December 15 – Christmas Vespers (*Sunday - 4:00 pm*)
- December 22 – ALLGEN Christmas Sunday
- December 24 – Candlelight Christmas Eve Services (*Tuesday - 4:00, 5:30, & 7:45 pm*)
- March 9 – First Sunday in Lent
- April 13 – Palm / Passion Sunday
- April 17 – Maundy Thursday (*Thursday at 7:00 pm in Sears Chapel*)
- April 18 – Good Friday Tenebrae (*Friday at 7:00 pm in Sears Chapel*)
- April 20 – ALLGEN Easter Sunday and Easter Egg Hunt
- May 18 – Covenanting Year Recognition Sunday
- June 1 – Church School Sunday with Children’s Choirs Music Ministry, followed by annual church picnic

FAITH DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN

The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds upon the young, but to stir up their own. – William Ellery Channing

We want our children to learn to think for themselves about religious matters, and to be well-equipped to do so with knowledge about the great religious questions and traditions. We want them to have a sense of belonging to a church family that cares about them. We want them to know how to worship and how to pray. We want them to learn habits of reverence – to learn and practice reverence for life, our world, our fellow creatures and ourselves. We want them to develop a sense of commitment toward creating a better world. We want them to know they are loved – by the church and by God.



iPads were introduced to church school last spring and will be fully utilized in this year's revised curricula – Welcome to Internet Church School. As children progress through the Middle School years, we acknowledge and celebrate their passage from childhood to young adulthood. We strive to equip them with tools they can use as they begin to make more of their own decisions, with guidance from adults who know and care for them. Our Grade 7 *Neighboring Faiths* curriculum explores churches in Weston and other world religions. Students in the 8th grade are invited to participate in the special *Covenanting Year* program with DFM Bristol Huffman. Explore the great spiritual questions and find your own voice! The program meets for one Sunday class from 4 to 6 pm and one outreach/social event during the month, and culminates in their presentation of faith statements in church in May.

Church school classes are held for each grade level from pre-school through seventh grade, beginning Sunday, September 8, at 10:30. See the prospectus and on-line registration form at www.firstparishweston.org/school. For more information contact DRE Beverly Dillaway at dre@firstparishweston.org or 781-893-7798 x 103.



Church School Outreach Projects :

Grade 8: Covenanting Year Class: Winter Walk for Hearth, Inc., Weston Council on Aging Pantry (Thanksgiving food drive), The Outdoor Church (toiletries, socks, sandwiches)

Grade 7: Hunger Banquet to benefit *Promise the Children*

Grade 6: Christmas Gift Drive for Bristol Lodge's *Mary's House*

Grades 4 & 5: Torda Church Pen Pals

Grade 3: Cooking dinner for Bristol Lodge Soup Kitchen

Grade 2: Weston Council on Aging (Thanksgiving food drive)

Grade 1: Weston Council on Aging (Thanksgiving greetings and fall wreaths)

PreK & Kindergarten: Weston Council on Aging (gifts of flower bulbs and greeting cards for seniors and veterans)

FAITH DEVELOPMENT FOR ADULTS

The lessons we learned in Sunday School are not adequate for a mature faith. Educational opportunities this year include:

Bible 101 – *Introducing the New Testament*

Jesus is the central character of the New Testament and we will look at him in three distinct ways: a man like other men, a Jewish rabbi, and the Christ of Christian faith. Then it's on to the cantankerous Paul, the other New Testament authors, and the wild and baffling book called Revelation. Learn what Nazareth was like in the first century, see what scholars know and don't know about Jesus as a historical figure, and decide for yourself whether Paul deserves either the stature or the censure that he so often receives from Christians.

Begins Sunday, Oct. 6, for six sessions, ending Sunday, Dec. 8; meets at noon in the Library.

Bible 101 – *God, The Bible and Human Suffering*

We will explore perhaps the greatest religious and philosophical issue with which anyone can grapple: the problem of suffering, paying particular attention to the Bible's viewpoint on the subject.

- Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God: Suffering as Punishment
- Suffering Infused with Meaning
- The Last Word Belongs to God
- The Mysteries of the Universe: Suffering as an Inexplicable Problem

Begins Sunday, Jan. 5, for four sessions ending Sunday, Feb. 9; meets at noon in the Library.

Bible 101 – *The Bible in Context*

We will look at the culture and historical events surrounding the various times of the biblical narrative. Looking into biblical professions, economies, and politics as well as the ways in which events, invasions, science, and culture in other parts of the world have had an impact on the biblical texts.

Begins Sunday, Mar. 9, for six sessions ending Sunday, Apr. 13; meets at noon in the Library.

Last Lecture Series: An adult education series by members of First Parish who were asked to “Imagine that you will give your last lecture ever – what would you say? It can be the most important message from your own field of study or from outside your field. What do you really want to say to the world? It can even be about ‘the meaning of it all.’”

Sun., Sept. 29 – Donald Pierson, “A Serendipitous Journey: Lessons Learned Along the Way”

Sun., Oct. 27 – John Fiske and Martie Fiske, “Robert Frost’s Poem, ‘Home Burial,’ and Marriage Musings”

Sun., Nov. 17 – William Sano, “Remembering Judy Garland – Beyond the Rainbow”

All lectures take place in the First Parish Parlor at 7:00 pm. All are welcome!

Parish Library: Our collection of books, available for borrowing, concentrates topics of religion and personal development and also includes a children's section.

MAKE THE WORLD BETTER – OUTREACH AT FIRST PARISH

All-Parish Project:

Each year since 2003-2004, The First Parish Church in Weston has had the custom of finding, funding, and finishing a special project that has the potential to change us and change the world. "All-Parish" means all of us – children as well as adults.

Outreach Efforts:

First Parish provides almost \$50,000 annually in financial grants and volunteer support for many outside organizations in three distinct areas:

- *Victims of violence*: Partakers, Inc., The Second Step, UU Urban Ministry's Renewal House
- *Development needs of infants & children*: Stand High/Stand United, Roxbury Youth Program, Kasiisi School (Uganda), Mather Elementary School Foundation, Land's Sake, UU Service Committee,
- *Homelessness and affordable housing*: Waltham's Bristol Lodge, NWW Committee for Community Living, WATCH CDC, Community Day Center of Waltham, and HEARTH, Inc.

Share-the-Plate: One Sunday per month, we choose an outside organization with which to share half the collection plate. This allows us to provide unbudgeted funds to worthy efforts, especially important at times of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Bristol Lodge Suppers: On the fourth Wednesday of each month, dedicated volunteers gather in First Parish's kitchen to prepare dinner for clients of Bristol Lodge's soup kitchen. They then go to Waltham to serve their prepared meal. This presents a great opportunity for multiple generations to work together to make the world a better place.

Knitters & Stitchers Prayer Shawl Ministry: First Parishioners and friends gather at noon in the parlor most Mondays for conversation and creative handwork, including the knitting of prayer shawls given to others in times of stress that they may be surrounded by the love of God and of First Parish. They also create many items for children in need.

Beyond Shelter Party: First Parishioners of all ages will host a luncheon party for current and past clients of the U. U. Urban Ministry's Renewal House, a shelter for mothers and children who have experienced domestic violence. This year's party will be held on Sat., March 1st at First Church in Roxbury.

Roxbury-Weston Programs, Inc. Preschool: Housed at First Parish since 1966, the school is committed to bringing families together in a learning community dedicated to celebrating diversity and excellence in early care and education.

Attic Treasures Room: The Attic Treasures Room provides a valuable community service, giving new life to usable items instead of consigning them to landfills. Our "thrift shop" offers household, jewelry, and accessory items at bargain prices. Donations are welcome during Church Office hours. Buyers and donors welcomes!

BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

You will be cared for, and you will be asked to care for others.

Pastoral Callers and Caring Network

The mission of the Pastoral Callers committee is to work with ministers, responding to calls for help, coordinating and providing assistance, as needed, to all members of the church. We also invite parishioners to participate in this ministry of caring by becoming a member of our "Caring Network," providing occasional assistance like a meal, a ride to the doctor, reading, or delivering flowers.

FIRST FRIDAY POTLUCK SUPPERS

Bring the family to share food, fellowship and fun!

Parish Hall, 6:00 pm

September 6	February 1
October 4	March 7
November 1	April 4
January 3	May 2

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

Meets in the Parlor;

Participants choose books as a group – all welcome!

Fourth Tuesdays at 7:30 pm

Fourth Thursdays at 9:30 am

Dinner Connections Monthly Suppers

Parishioners participating are assigned to a group that will meet about once a month at group members' homes for dinner and socializing; then all groups gather at the church on Saturday, May 3, for a gala potluck.

Intergenerational Pancake Breakfast

The Committee for Children's & Youth Ministry (CCYM)

sponsors this annual pancake breakfast for one and all before worship on Sunday, November 3.

Building International Community

First Parish has nurtured a partner church relationship with the 400-year-old Unitarian church of Torda, Romania, since 1992, sending pilgrims to visit them and bringing their ministers to Weston. Another visit to Torda is planned for spring, 2014.

SENIOR MEN'S LUNCH

Bring a bag lunch to the First Parish Library for stimulating conversation and camaraderie

First Tuesdays at noon (September – June)

All-Church Picnic – June 1, 2014. The Committee for Adult Ministries & Programs (CAMP) sponsors this annual event for all ages. They provide the burgers and hotdogs with all the fixings and beverages. Parishioners bring their favorite picnic sides and desserts.

THE MARY JO RINES GALLERY AT FIRST PARISH

The mission of The Gallery At First Parish is to add another dimension to the spiritual fabric of our lives by exhibiting the work of visual artists who seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of the human condition. It is intended to be a service to the parish, the artist and the wider community.

Open to the public without charge 9:00 am – 4:00 pm weekdays, and 9:00 am – 12:30 pm Sundays.

Interested parties may also call the Church Office (781-893-7798) for other viewing times.

Sept. 13 – Oct. 18	–	Pastels by Westonian Larry Grob
Oct. 18 – Nov. 22	–	3-D Abstract Wood Panels by Westonian Rosemary Broton Boyle
Nov. 22 – Jan 10	–	Landscape paintings by Bruce Bauman
Jan. 10 – Feb. 21	–	Watercolor paintings of the Arctic by Lisa Goren
Feb. 21 – Apr. 4	–	Paintings and sculptures by Afeefi (Fi) Saad
Apr. 4 – May 16	–	Abstract oil paintings by Diane Novetsky

“Religion is ethics, of course, and dedicated social action. It is reason and rationality and the scientific search for truth. It is philosophy, certainly, and perpetual questions and tentative conclusions. It is unending concern for freedom and justice and human welfare.

“But religion is far, far more than these alone. It is a hunger for beauty and love and glory. It is wonder and awe, majesty and mystery, passion and ecstasy. It is emotion as well as mind, feeling as well as knowing, the subjective as well as the objective. Religion is the heart soaring to heights the head alone will never know; it is the apprehension of meaning science alone will never find; it is the awareness of values ethics alone will never reveal. Religion is the human spirit yearning for, and finding, something infinitely greater than itself – some meaning or value or reason for being – which it calls God.”

– Waldemar Argow

