

THE HERALD

FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM NEWSLETTER

[QUICK LINKS](#)[CALENDAR](#)[PLEDGING](#)

When I was little, we used to love “the coming of the May,” as my mother sometimes called it.

She taught us to gather little flowers from the garden—it was still early spring in New England so the flowers were very small, perhaps a crocus, or a purple violet, or some other tiny blossom—

We’d make “May baskets” out of simple things, maybe a paper cup with some tissue paper wrapped around it and a handle improvised.

We’d put water in the cup, put the flowers, and off, we’d go, scouring the neighborhood for friendly doors we might visit.

Placing the little May basket carefully on the doorstep, we’d ring the bell, and then run and hide! (the best part) usually behind some nearby bushes so we could wait and watch the look on the person’s face when they opened the door, looked around, saw no one, were puzzled, and then noticed the fragile little offering of flowers at their feet. Isn’t it funny how the smallest of things, the tiniest of traditions, can stay with a person, year after year? I imagine you may have your own memories of how, as Thoreau said, you ‘watched the spring come in’ in the place where you lived.

Maybe it was May baskets, maybe something else, or maybe no tradition at all you can remember but a stray sight or a sound or a smell that comes to you from that early spring season of the year.

As we move towards June, your annual meeting, and the end of our second year together, thank you for your continued presence and participation in the life of this gathered community. YOU are the heart of the church and your spirit and presence here makes all the difference, however you choose to participate. That could be sitting in a pew on Sunday and drinking it all in, enjoying a service from home on zoom, or raising your hand to volunteer in some capacity. All are welcome.

Thank you to the 52 of you who showed up to help dream and imagine a future here on Blue Sky Sunday! The church was buzzing with energy and small groups after church on April 28; you can see what you said by looking at the easels in the Cleveland Room. Also, if you missed the April 7 worship service on “Shared Ministry,” you can read the [entire text of the worship service on the website here.](#)

In faith,
Jenny

2024-5-3

>>> May 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6pm Tai Chi	2	3 5pm Henny Penny Art Show	4 10am Pysanky Egg Decorating
5 8am Serving Sunday 10:30am Worship Service	6 6pm Finding Your Voice on the Page	7	8 12pm Staff & Worship Meeting 6pm Tai Chi	9 Church Office Closed	10 Church Office Closed	11 10am Mother's Day Crafting 12pm Tai Chi
12 10:30am Worship Service & Flower Communion 11:45am Budget Open House	13 6pm Finding Your Voice on the Page 7pm Zoom Budget Open House	14 10:30am Community Coffee 12pm Staff & Worship Meeting	15 6pm Tai Chi 7pm Standing Committee Mtg	16 7:30am Zoom Budget Open House 6pm Zoom Budget Open House	17	18 12pm Tai Chi 3pm Indoor Drive-In
19 10:30am Worship Service 11:45am Sundaes Sunday 12:30pm Soul Matters	20 6pm Finding Your Voice on the Page	21 12pm Staff & Worship Meeting	22 6pm Tai Chi	23 11:30am Third Age Book Club	24	25 12pm Tai Chi
26 10:30am Worship Service	27 Memorial Day 6pm Finding Your Voice on the Page	28 12pm Staff & Worship Meeting	29 6pm Tai Chi	30	31	

FOR OUR CONTINUOUSLY UPDATED
 CALENDAR YOU CAN GO TO
 FIRSTCHURCHINSALEM.ORG AND
 CLICK ON THE CALENDAR TAB OR
[CLICK HERE!](#)

Lifespan Religious Education

Last month, our children and youth began an exploration of different types of spiritual nourishment, including prayer, meditation, and mindfulness. They also had a chance to do some service work for the Salem Food Pantry, and Helen Jacoby led them in a workshop to make kites and use them as a metaphor for spirituality.

Our lifespan programming involved a wide array of events, including a celebration of National Poetry Month and the start of our 6 week Tai Chi course. The course had so many sign-ups that we began to offer it on a second day! On April 21, I led a service on the topic of “Wrought Faith”. My sermon touched on Lifespan Learning, and why I feel that it’s an important part of our journey as UUs. If you weren’t at the service, [you can read the sermon here.](#)

This month, the children and youth will continue their unit on spiritual nourishment. We will learn about the importance of community and creativity for feeling spiritually “full”.

On Sunday, May 19, the children and youth will host their annual Sundae Sunday! This is a beloved tradition, and will once again serve as a fundraiser for their charity of choice this year, the International Rescue Committee. [You can help by signing up to donate an item.](#)

The 19th will also be the graduation ceremony for our 7th and 8th grade OWL class. Congratulations to our youth Thomas and Jackie on their hard work this year, and a huge thank you to our OWL facilitator, Rex Krajewski, along with the volunteers and staff at the UU Church of Greater Lynn.

Over the month of May, we are seeking handmade flowers from anyone in our congregation or the wider community! Flowers can be knit, crocheted, or made using felt (just be sure that any glue you use is not water soluble), and can be any color of the rainbow. At the start of June, we will hang them all up on our fence to create a Rainbow Garden in celebration of Pride Month. Not crafty? We would also love ribbons or small flags in any rainbow color with positive messages.

In Faith,
Theo Burbank (she/her)
Director of Lifespan Religious Education

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Mother's Day Gift Making, Sat 5/11, 10am-12pm: Nothing expresses a child's love like a handmade gift! Join us to make a gift and card to give to Mom (or any other Mothering figure) for Mother's Day. This event is aimed at children 2-9, but children of all ages are welcome. Please note that this is not a drop-off event: a parent or other adult will need to stay with all children.

This event is free and open to all! When registering, please reserve tickets for the number of children attending, you do not have to include the number of adults. Registration is not necessary to attend the event, but it helps us have an idea of how many participants we will have and how much we need for supplies.

[You can sign up here](#)



Indoor Drive-In, Sat 5/18, 3-6 pm: We're bringing back the indoor drive in! Join us for a movie on the big screen, right at our church. Kids will get to make their own "car" to enjoy the movie from, and get some popcorn and a drink at our snack bar. Bring some blankets and pillows and park yourselves in the Cleveland room for an afternoon of fun. Friends are welcome to come along for the ride! *The movie will be announced in the next few weeks.*



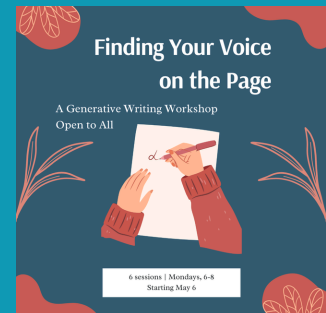
ADULT AND INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Finding Your Voice on the Page: A Generative Writing Workshop

6 weekly sessions starting Monday, May 6, 6-8pm: Are you sometimes afraid that you don't have anything to say or that no one is interested? In these generative writing sessions, participants find ways to tap into things they've forgotten. Join us to hear from a part of yourself that may have been buried beneath the demands, stresses of life, or expectations of others. Join us to begin finding your own unique ways of expressing your thoughts. Discover what is strong about the ways you express yourself. In these generative writing sessions, you'll surprise yourself with new ways of looking at old ideas.

This is a six-week series of generative writing workshops based on Pat Schneider's Amherst Writers and Artists method. These are generative workshops focused on the craft of writing. The method is designed to achieve authentic expression of what is unique and genuine about the way we express ourselves. All are welcome. No experience necessary. Develop your literary craft. Uncover, probe, and honor what is authentic and true in what you have to say and how you say it on the page.

[You can learn more and sign up here](#), or contact Theo with any questions.



Our Pysanky workshop for May 4 is full! If you are interested in doing this and were not able to sign up for the workshop, please reach out and let me know. This will help us learn if we should plan more workshops like this for the future.

MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Serving Sunday, 5/5, 8-10am:** bring donations or helping hands for Clothing Connection before the service.
- **Silent Reading Party, 5/9, 7-9pm:** bring a book of your choosing and join others to read
- **Soul Matters, 5/19 @ 12:30pm:** small group ministry discussion. The theme for May is Pluralism
- **Third Age Book Club, 5/23, 11:30-1pm:** discussing an excerpt from "Counterclockwise", which will be available in the church
-

From your Stewardship Committee

Greetings from the Stewardship Committee! As you have probably heard, our annual Pledge Drive for our upcoming fiscal year, "Together Our Flame Burns Brighter", is underway. I hope you were able to join us for the kickoff luncheon on the 17th; it was great to see so many people there, we had a lot of fun and got to talk a bit about what First Church means to each of us.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will be reaching out and inviting you to make a financial pledge for the fiscal year starting in July. This is an important year for First Church; not only has the church invested heavily over the past two years in developing our Lifespan Religious Education program and in hiring Reverend Jenny to help guide us through our ministerial transition, but we are also looking at starting a search for our next minister. Because of this, your pledge is more important than ever. Strong participation in this year's pledge campaign is needed not only to help the church get back to a balanced budget but also to help us attract the sort of minister we want to help guide us to a growing and vibrant future. Your pledge is always important, but this year it's even more important than usual.

You should have received an email this past week with more information about this year's drive including a link to pledge. If you missed it **[here you go!](#)** And if you need to update contact information you can also do that in the pledge link.

Feel free, also, to reach out to any of us on the Stewardship Committee if you have questions or would like to discuss your pledge in person. We are hoping to wrap this up by April 15 so that church leadership can accurately plan next year's budget, and we can all enjoy being part of our community.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

-Your Stewardship Committee:

Charlie Hildebrand
Anna Brandenburg
Mike Giaouque
Nicole McLaughlin
Neil Alsip



From the Standing Committee

Rev. Jenny Returns

On behalf of your Standing Committee, I am delighted to share that, at our April meeting, we voted to offer Rev. Jenny a contract extension for a third year as our Interim Minister. It is with even more delight that we can announce that she is pleased to accept!

During her tenure with us, Rev. Jenny has shared her insight, her experience and sound judgment, and her authentic voice. She has counseled us wisely as we progress on our journey, and we look forward to more walking together with her.

You Need to Know: Budget Challenges

As previously announced, the Standing Committee is changing the way First Church does budgeting. We are seeking full transparency with respect to the management of church affairs, and we are hoping to create a culture in which all members expect to be informed and to participate in major decisions.

Toward this goal, we plan to adopt the practice of presenting a budget for approval by the full congregation at our annual meeting in June. To accomplish this, we need to provide several opportunities for members to see proposals, ask questions and make suggestions. **We have planned an in-person session on Sunday, May 12th, following the service, to present a first draft of the 2024-25 budget. We will follow up with three zoom sessions in the following week.** We strongly encourage members to attend one of the sessions to learn about the budget process and expense plans, as well as ask questions.

In the meantime, it is important to share that we are facing significant challenges arising from a basic structural deficit. That is, while income has been stable with modest growth over the last couple of decades, expenses have risen at a faster rate over this period. Your Standing Committee, Treasurer, Trustees, and Finance Committee are looking at all aspects of income and expenditure to resolve this gap and create the basis for sustainable finance going forward. We are looking for a deep conversation with the congregation about priorities, needs, and opportunities to inform financial plans that reflect our values and are sustainable.

We hope you will welcome this opportunity to share your thoughts and to participate in forming the future of First Church. Please look for or ask about the budget sessions.

With gratitude, on behalf of your Standing Committee,
Steve

From the Fellowship Committee

Coffee Hour 101

We don't like to brag, but our coffee hour is legendary.

Each week after Sunday service, we have a coffee hour in our Cleveland and Barnard Rooms, located through the doors on either side of the pulpit. The church provides coffee and tea, and our community provides snacks. We look for coffee hour hosts, and we have a sign up board in the Cleveland Room, and also online. On Fridays, when the email newsletter hits your inbox, please click on the Fellowship link to see who is hosting, to sign up, or to find out if it's a Community Fellowship. Every month, we have one Sunday that is a Community Fellowship, and everyone is asked to bring a snack to share. Any kind of food is welcome, but we ask that you label your food if it has common allergens, such as nuts, wheat, or eggs.

Coffee hour is a time to get to know one another better, to discuss the day's theme, and have relaxed conversation in an elegant setting. Fellowship Committee would like to warmly acknowledge our hosts for 2023-24, and mention that it's been a joy to serve with you. We would also like to thank our intrepid sexton Billy McCarthy for all of his hard work and impressive coffee brewing abilities. This past year, getting sign-ups was the easiest it's been in years, and that is to be celebrated. As we head to our last Sunday of this church year (June 16), we hope to have our beloved Church Picnic, and information about that is forthcoming. If you have never hosted, or it's been a while, we are happy to help.

If you have any questions or suggestions for Fellowship, please contact Alicia Diozzi at msdiozzi@yahoo.com

Yours in Fellowship,
Alicia Diozzi & Mark Nichols

ANNUAL REPORT TIMELINE

The Annual Meeting approaches! It will take place on **Sunday, June 2**. As we head into Easter we are just about 10 weeks out from the Annual Meeting. Below is a timeline to help guide all of us through the process.

As staff, officer, or chair (or key person) of a committee of the First Church in Salem, we will be looking to you and your co-members for a written description of the activities for the church year spanning Spring (May) 2023-(April) 2024.

KEY DATES [noted in red below]:

- Wednesday, May 1: Content due to the office
- Sunday, May 19: First Draft available to congregation
- Sunday, May 26: Second Draft available to congregation
- Wednesday, May 29: No more edits will be received
- Sunday, June 2: Annual Meeting; Final copy of reports will be available.



First Church Communications

Connect with Members and Friends

To connect with members of committees or leadership at First Church please use our online Directory. This can be accessed through your Breeze account: firstchurchinsalem.breezechms.com

Under 'Tags' you will find "Online Directory". Updated printed Directories will be made available quarterly.

Please feel free to contact Catherine at firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com as well.

First Church in Salem can also be found on social media!

FirstChurchinSalemUnitarian



Contact the Staff

Rev. Jenny Rankin, Interim Minister: jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org

Catherine Bertrand, Congregational Administrator: firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com

Theo Burbank, Director of Lifespan Education: fcreligioused@gmail.com

Michael Kraft, Music Director: music@firstchurchinsalem.org

Get the Word Out!

We want all of our events and meetings at First Church to be well attended and successful. The First Church staff is here to help you get the word out about your ministry event or need! We strive to reflect the heart of your event while maintaining the best practices to ensure effectiveness, clarity, and consistency.

All communications for publication must be submitted via email to firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com.

Monthly Newsletter: The Herald

We have a monthly newsletter that is sent either on the first of every month or the Friday before the first Sunday of each month.

- Publication Dates: Around the 1st of each month
- Materials Deadline for publication: The 21st of each month

Weekly Newsletter: e-Herald

We have a weekly email newsletter that is sent by 2:00pm on Fridays.

- Deadline for publication: Every Thursday by 10:00am.
- Articles about church related items or events are welcome. Photos and other images are welcome, however, those that are blurry, out of focus, or may violate copyrights may be excluded.
- Things to include as necessary:
 - Contact name and info for committee/team or an individual if your article asks readers to take an action. Consider that many people no longer have house phone lines; it's good to indicate if texting is preferred. Phone numbers should also include area codes.
 - Date and time of event.
 - Location.

Order of Service & Sunday Verbal Announcements

- Print Deadline: Every Thursday by 10:00am
- In-Person Announcement Deadline: Every Friday by 10:00am
- Announcements submissions are 75 words or less (three brief sentences) - not including the title, and date and time, if needed.

Verbal announcements should follow print guidelines regarding length. If your news is a repeat announcement or something longer than a few sentences, please reach out to discuss the possibility of a pulpit editorial or offertory reflection.

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CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR: [CATHERINE BERTRAND](#)

DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN EDUCATION: [THEO BURBANK](#)

SEXTON: BILLY MCCARTHY

CHAIR OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE: STEVE PALMER

CHAIR OF THE DEACONS: LYNN TAGGART

DIRECTOR OF HENNY PENNY: [TRICIA PINI](#)



First Church in Salem, Unitarian Universalist