

# The Herald

## First Church in Salem Newsletter

Dear Friends:

When I was a little girl, in the days right after Thanksgiving, I would watch for the mail. At last it would come, a flat package, wrapped up in brown paper and tied with string. Aunt Hatsy never failed us. We would open the package to find a beautiful new Advent calendar inside. Each year, the “scene” was different. A snow-covered village, Santa Claus in his workshop, elves and animals in a winter forest. Whatever they were, we loved them. Loved the ritual of opening a new door each day.

I have loved the season of Advent ever since. Advent is the time before the main event. In the Christian tradition, it is the four weeks before Christmas, weeks that were intended to be ones of spiritual preparation—prayer, penance and almsgiving--which helped people ready themselves—internally-- for what was to come.

It is an invitation to consider your inner life, to spend some time in meditation or silence, to pick up a spiritual book you’ve been meaning to read, to return to a spiritual practice that has dropped by the wayside. I have some special “Advent books” I like to read every year, early in the morning, with a candle and an icon nearby.

This will be my first December with you and I’m looking forward to experiencing your special traditions like the Christmas Pageant! And of course, Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve! I hope to see you in church. I have a new email address and always like it when you get in touch. ( [jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org](mailto:jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org) ).

I have a few notes for you on the Transition Team (see inside)

In faith,  
Jenny



## Newsletter Highlights

December & January Calendars

Holiday Flower Order Form

Religious Ed Updates

Holiday Happenings

Transition Team Details

Get Involved

Communication Updates

Soul Matters

Transition Team Details

First Church  
in Salem,  
Unitarian  
Universalist

# >>> December 2022

See Back Page for Staff and Office Hours

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	2 10am Sunday Announcements Due	3 9am Choir Rehearsal
4 <i>Advent II</i> 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 12pm Pageant Rehearsal	5 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	6 9am Staff Meeting 10am Worship Planning 10am Pastoral Care	7	8 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	9 10am Sunday Announcements Due	10
11 <i>Advent III</i> 10:30am Worship Service 12pm Pageant Rehearsal	12 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	13	14 12pm Staff Meeting 1pm Worship Planning 4:30pm HR Meeting 7pm Standing Committee	15 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	16 10am Sunday Announcements Due	17 9am Choir Rehearsal TBD Pageant Rehearsal
18 <i>Advent IV &amp; Pageant</i> 9am Pageant Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Holiday Party	19 6pm First Church Christmas Caroling <i>Church Office Closed</i>	20 12pm Staff Meeting 1pm Worship Planning	21 7pm Winter Solstice Vespers	22 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	23	24 6pm Choir Arrival/Warm-Up 7pm Lessons & Carols Service
25 <i>No Sunday Service</i> <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	27 12pm Staff Meeting 1pm Worship Planning	28	29	30	31

## HELP CREATE A FESTIVE MEETING HOUSE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

Once again this year we are offering flower options for decorating the Meeting House: large red poinsettias or small red or white poinsettias as well as white cyclamen with variegated leaves and white azaleas. Additionally, you can make a contribution of any amount to help fund decorating for the holidays. Any of this can be done in memory or honor of a loved one or to commemorate a special event. . All pricing details are below. All orders are due no later than Friday, December 2. Please click the button to the right to order online or download the form <https://bit.ly/2022xmasflowers>. You can also email your order to Catherine Bertrand, Church Administrator, at [firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com).



[Order Flowers](#)



The Fellowship Committee is looking for church members and friends to help host coffee hour on Sundays. You can sign up as an individual or as a partnership or group to handle the snacks for any given Sunday. Sometimes, committees choose to host, or someone will host in honor or remembrance of someone. It's up to you! To learn more and sign up use this link:

<https://bit.ly/fcfellowship2022>

## >>> January 2023

See Back Page for Staff and Office Hours

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	3 9am Staff Meeting 10am Worship Planning 10am Pastoral Care	4	5 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	6 10am Sunday Announcements Due	7
8 10:30am Worship Service	9 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	10 12pm Staff Meeting 1pm Worship Planning	11	12 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	13 10am Sunday Announcements Due	14
15 10:30am Worship Service	16 <i>M L King Day Church Office Closed</i>	17 <b>Herald Submissions Due</b> 12pm Staff Retreat	18 7pm Standing Committee	19 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	20 10am Sunday Announcements Due	21
22 10:30am Worship Service	23 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	24 12pm Staff Meeting 1pm Worship Planning	25	26 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	27 10am Sunday Announcements Due	28
29 10:30am Worship Service	30 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	31 12pm Staff Meeting 1pm Worship Planning	1	2 12pm e-Herald & OOS submissions due	3 10am Sunday Announcements Due	4

## Transition Team Formation: A Note from Rev. Jenny

On November 20, in worship, Standing Committee Chair, Steve Palmer, announced the names of the people whom the Standing Committee has appointed to serve on the Transition Team. Perhaps you are wondering just what that is! So here's some background.

One of the "regular" parts of an interim ministry is the formation of a Transition Team. You have chosen to do an intentional interim ministry and for that piece of reflective work, there are 5 developmental tasks or goals. These have been developed over many years of experience with congregations in transition by the UUA and also the Interim Ministry Network, which comprises a wide range of religious traditions and denominations. Although the list is "standard," each congregation chooses what it wants to focus on and adapts it in their own way.

The Transition Team is a group of lay leaders that works closely with the Interim Minister to guide the congregation through these 5 tasks. Although I bring to you years of experience as an interim, you know your congregation best. Your transition team members will be the best judge of how to guide the congregation in effective ways as we work together to address these 5 core issues.

Often, a Transition Team chooses to start with the "Coming to terms with history" task. Another way to think about this is "Who have you been?" That includes reflecting on how the church was founded, your roots in Salem, your identity and mission over the years, as well as your more recent past. It includes "engaging and acknowledging any grief or conflict." This can be tender territory, and needs to be approached with the gentleness and respect it deserves. I know from listening to you in these first few months, that the last several years have not been easy ones. How can we "unpack" that experience together, reflect on it, and learn in ways that will help guide the congregation going forward?

In the next few weeks, the Transition Team and I will be meeting for the first time and beginning to plan the work ahead for the winter and spring. I am looking forward to it.

In faith,  
Jenny

## Updates in Religious Education

October and November were busy months for Religious Education at First Church! We had our first Family Fun Night since 2019, a visit to the Peabody Essex museum, and a successful Thanksgiving donation drive for It Starts With Me!, a local nonprofit providing Thanksgiving dinners to over 600 households on the North Shore.

Recently, our Sunday School classes have focused on what our UU values are, and how they can influence our everyday lives. We talked about creating sacred spaces at home and making ethical food choices. We had fun discussing superheroes—both real and imaginary—and making starfish cards for people inspired by the story of the starfish on the beach. As we move into December and January, we will start to broaden our scope and look at how we express our values in our church and our local community. Towards the end of January, we will also start to plan our year-long service project. The children will choose a charity that they want to learn about and raise money for through our Chocolate Sunday and Sundae Sunday fundraisers.

As we reach the end of November, we are moving into the Advent season. This is another busy time for RE at First Church. In Sunday School, we are focusing on the weekly advent themes and making ornaments that can either be hung on a family tree or given to a friend. The children and youth have been hard at work rehearsing their Christmas pageant. It's been a few years since we've had an in-person pageant, and they are so excited to show the congregation what they've been working on! Our pageant will take place during the service on December 18. Following the pageant, we will have our annual RE Christmas party. There will be stories, caroling, and a special visit from Santa with a gift for each child. Please let us know whether or not you plan to attend the party, and how many children will be with you.

RE is in the process of hiring, and in the next few months, we plan to open up our nursery with a childcare provider and split into three classes. The Explorers will be our youngest learners, from grades K-4. They will have stories, active games, and crafts that will help them shape their UU identities. The Navigators, grades 5-7, will dig deep into UU values through discussion, media exploration, and activities, and be leaders for social justice projects. The Coming of Age class, for grades 8-10, will give our youth the tools to form and articulate their own beliefs. Each youth will be paired with an adult mentor from the congregation, and in the spring they will all present a Faith Statement: an expression of their spiritual beliefs at this point in time.

There are many opportunities to volunteer with RE, both in the Sunday School classroom and at special events, like the Christmas party. If you are interested in volunteering with us, please send me an email at [fcreligioused@gmail.com](mailto:fcreligioused@gmail.com).

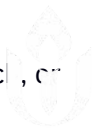
Theo Burbank  
Religious Education Coordinator

## FIRST CHURCH FY23 BUDGET APPROVED

At our November 16th meeting your Standing Committee unanimously approved an operating budget for the current church year (July 1st, 2022, to June 30th, 2023). Normally we would expect to pass a budget earlier in the fiscal year; however, in this year we experienced some significant events that required a more deliberate pace of analysis and discussion. For next and subsequent years, we expect to return to a budget cycle that would lead to approval early in the Fall.

### Highlights of the FY23 budget:

- Total planned expenditures are \$562,968.68
- Total expected revenues are \$522,386.42
- This budget projects a deficit of about \$40K, which can be covered by reserves. The Standing Committee sees this as an exceptional circumstance driven by recent events.
- Significant elements:
  - Income:
    - Member giving is projected at \$100K, which is below pre-pandemic levels but conservatively estimated based on current pledge activity.
    - Contribution from the Endowment will be \$234K according to the formula established by the Trustees.
    - Henny Penny operations have been a net contributor to income and are projected to provide approximately \$10K net in FY23. These contributions help to offset costs such as heating and other building maintenance.
  - Expenditures:
    - Total cost of ministry at \$162K. This is our largest single expense category, and this year's number reflects the calling of an experienced interim minister.
    - Total non-ministerial Staff payroll is approximately \$140K, which is in line with recent experience but reflects appropriate increases and a commitment to reinvestment in our Religious Education program.
    - Building and grounds expenses are \$56K, which is in line with recent and pre-pandemic levels.
- Additional key points:
  - We incurred approximately \$40K of expenses in the current year in compensation per our contract with Reverend Ide. This is a one-time event.
  - Proposals for maintenance of our Hook & Hastings organ have been removed from this operating budget. A specific plan for a more complete renovation is in the works and will be part of a capital plan that we expect to begin in the coming Spring.
  - We added an expense line for Member Retreats & Scholarships, at \$10K, which is intended to enable members to participate in programming through the UUA, at Star Island or Ferry Beach, or other resources. The SC will follow with a plan to publicize such opportunities.



## FIRST CHURCH FY23 BUDGET APPROVED (CONT.)

### Additional Plans

To help members become more familiar with First Church financial processes, budgeting, member giving, the endowment, and other financial matters, we are planning or executing some additional reporting steps:

- Treasurers Brenda Marean and Marlene Warner are diligently updating and documenting finance processes to align with current best practices identified for organizations like ours.
- We will be reinstating the Finance Committee as an ad hoc sub-committee to the SC. This group will include Trustee representation, the Treasurer(s), the Chairperson of the SC, and the Chair of the Stewardship Committee, and will assist the Treasurers and SC in all financial matters.
- The Trustees are organizing a presentation by Cabot Wealth Network, who manage First Church endowment funds. We are hoping to do a live event in late Winter.
- The Standing Committee will publish a report in January providing details related to the Edith (“Betty”) Nichols bequest and expenses made to date in fulfillment of the bequest.
- In early April, the Standing Committee will host an open house “preview” of the Treasurers’ annual report in draft form to allow for questions and discussion in advance of the Annual Meeting.

It is our fervent hope that members are fully aware of the financial matters of the First Church, and that all feel free to ask and learn more. Please do reach out to any member of your Standing Committee if you have questions.





You are invited to join our small group ministry Soul Matters which gathers to share reflections on a specific theme each month. Participating in a small group that encourages mindful engagement is a way to deepen your personal spiritual practice and your connection with others in the church community. To help get you started thinking about the monthly theme there is a booklet full of exercises, meditations, questions to ponder, and music and readings to inspire and engage you. Click on the link for Wonder to open the packet and begin your journey.

The Soul Matters theme for December is Wonder. The meeting will take place in person on Sunday, December 11 at 12:15pm in Willson Hall.

Drop-ins are welcomed. Come to the meetings when you can. If you have questions or would like a reminder email, contact Melody Lee at leemelody071@gmail.com.

Joy is the gift of love. Grief is the price of love.

Anger protects that which is loved.

And when we think we have reached our limit,  
wonder is the act that returns us to love.

~Valerie Kaur





## GET INVOLVED

Chase the Chill will be looking for help in the coming weeks as we begin putting out the hats, mittens and scarves that have been collected so far on cold days. It is simple. Take a few items that have Chase the Chill tags on them and place them on the iron fence at the entrance to First Church. Additionally, we'll be looking to collect the mentioned winter items. Please stay tuned for more details!

New attendees are welcome every Sunday! Those who are interested in joining First Church as a member should please reach out to Eric Kenney, Chair of the Membership Committee, at 978-578-6656 or yennek76@comcast.net.

For reference, we hold a New Member Sunday twice a year: the first Sunday in December and the first Sunday in May during our Annual Meeting. Between those two dates we encourage folks to join us at Sunday services and coffee hours, sign up for our newsletters by contacting Catherine at firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com, and feel free to attend events and meetings as they are announced!

For any questions please don't hesitate to contact Catherine in the Church Office with any questions at firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com

Our team supports members and friends of First Church who are ill or in need of comfort. We provide meals, rides, condolence cards, phone calls and visits to hospitals, nursing homes or at their home. A group of volunteers called Care Angels offers these services. We are always looking for additional volunteers. This is a helpful way to be of service. Our pastoral care work does not require meetings, but rather the opportunity to reach out to those in need one on one. If you are interested in learning more or in volunteering please contact Sally Millice 978-745-1632 or Sharon Corrigan 802-236-0054.

In the past months we have provided meals and rides to Jim Ognibene and Lynn Taggart following their surgeries. We use the Meal Train web site to help us organize the meals and anyone can participate. When you see the link in our newsletter you may select a date to bring a meal. We are grateful to all who have participated.

Presently some of the Care Angels are preparing goodie bags with small gifts for shut ins during the holidays. First Church is a kind and caring church. We all have the opportunity to offer acts of kindness each day. It is this practice that binds us together in beloved community.

Sally Millice

Pastoral Care

## Chase the Chill

## Become A Member

## Pastoral Care

The First Church Staff are looking for one or two volunteers on Sunday mornings to assist with the running of services. Catherine and Michael need an extra pair of hands before and during the service to help some simple tech set up the tech previous to the start of service and to keep track of the sound levels during the service.

Arrival would be at 9:30 to help Catherine get the iPads set up for the zoom service and then meet with Michael to check sound levels. During the service we would need that person, or a second person, to keep an ear on the levels and use a simple app on an iPad provided by the church to adjust them as needed.

Our goal is to find a group of people who become familiar with the tech tasks and are able and willing to help on the mornings they plan to attend service. Please reach out to Catherine at [firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com) if you're interested.

Hello from Lifebridge! First Church continues to serve one dinner per month at Lifebridge, on the Fourth Saturday of each month. We are so very thankful to the volunteers of the past year, who have provided groceries, cooked and served meals both to-go and in-house. I have to shout out our three most dedicated volunteers: Wolfgang Koch, Diane Smith and John Pydynkowski. They are almost always in the kitchen, cooking and chatting, serving meals with a smile. Lifebridge guests enjoy our baked ziti, Caesar salad and dessert. This December, the Fourth Saturday is Christmas Eve! While a holiday meal will be provided by others, the Lifebridge Center would be happy to have volunteers to help serve the meal. You can sign up for that, or future Lifebridge dinners for the 2023 year, here: <http://bit.ly/3gsncIq> Any questions can be sent to Jessica Kane, [jesskane07@gmail.com](mailto:jesskane07@gmail.com)

Or scan this QR code:



## Sunday Tech Volunteer

## Lifebridge Dinner Volunteers

# 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](http://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](mailto:firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com) as well.

## NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR JENNY

The church leadership decided for a number of reasons it was best for Jenny to have a brand new email address, so it is: [jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org](mailto:jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org). If by mistake, you use the old one ([minister@firstchurchinsalem.org](mailto:minister@firstchurchinsalem.org)) all those emails will be forwarded to her new email address so she will get them. If you have any questions about this, please contact our parish administrator, Catherine Bertrand at [firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com)

## 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 [firstchurchcomm@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchcomm@gmail.com).

### BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: THE HERALD

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

- **Publication Dates:** Dec. 2 | Feb. 3 | Mar. 31 | June 2
- **Materials Deadline for publication:** Jan. 17 | Mar. 14 | May 16

### WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: E-HERALD

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

- **Deadline for publication:** Every Thursday by 10am.
- 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 10am
- **In-Person Announcement Deadline:** Every Friday by 10am
- 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.



FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM

# CHRISTMAS

**18 DEC 10:30AM**

*Pageant and Party*

**FUN AND FRIENDS!**


PAGEANT DURING THE SERVICE  
 PARTY FOLLOWING FELLOWSHIP  
 MUSIC, FOOD, AND A VISIT FROM SANTA!  
 contact fcreligioused@gmail.com with questions

316 ESSEX STREET, SALEM MA




JOIN US!

# CHRISTMAS




Monday Dec. 19

6:00pm

# CAROLING

Followed by Hot Cocoa and Cookies  
 at First Church  
 316 Essex Street



JOIN US FOR AN ADVENT SEASON  
 FULL OF LIGHT AND MUSIC.

# The Holidays at First Church

316 Essex Street, Salem Ma


CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE  
 OF LESSONS & CAROLS  
 7:00PM

FEATURING A BRASS BAND  
 &  
 THE FIRST CHURCH CHOIR



First Church  
 Salem,  
 Unitarian  
 Universalist

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30AM



## Winter Solstice Evening Vespers: Bring Back the Light

This is an evening potluck of brief readings, poems, or songs to share about the Winter season. Bring one of these to share if you can, along with a bell and candle. Join us as we joyously gather to honor the growth of the Sun's light returning.

Please email Jerrie Hildebrand at [ceremonies@comcast.net](mailto:ceremonies@comcast.net) with any questions.  
All are welcome.

First Church Salem, Unitarian Universalist  
Cleveland Room  
Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 7 pm

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 THE FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM,  
 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
 316 ESSEX STREET  
 SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970

PHONE: 978-744-1551  
 EMAIL: OFFICE@FIRSTCHURCHINSALEM.ORG  
 PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS:  
 FIRSTCHURCHCOMM@GMAIL.COM  
 WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINSALEM.ORG



INTERIM MINISTER: REVEREND JENNY RANKIN  
 DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: MICHAEL KRAFT  
 CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR: CATHERINE BERTRAND  
 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR: THEO BURBANK  
 SEXTON: BILLY MCCARTHY  
 CHAIR OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE: STEVE PALMER  
 CHAIR OF THE DEACONS: LYNN TAGGART  
 DIRECTOR OF HENNY PENNY: LISA CHAREST  
 LEAD TEACHER, HENNY PENNY: TRICIA PINI

**STAFF AND CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**

<b>Rev. Jenny Rankin</b> <i>Minister</i>	jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org 978-741-1629	Rev. Jenny works in Salem two days a week (usually Tues/Thurs) plus Sunday, and remotely on Monday and Wed. It's best to email her directly to set up an appointment in person or on Zoom.
<b>Catherine Bertrand</b> <i>Congregational Administrator</i>	firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com 978-744-1551	Unless noted, The Church Office is open from 9am-3pm Tuesday-Friday and Sundays from 9am-12pm. Folks are encouraged to call before stopping by in the event Catherine has stepped out or is in a meeting.
<b>Theo Burbank</b> <i>Religious Ed Coordinator</i>	fcreligioused@gmail.com	Theo works remotely Tuesday-Friday from 3p-6p and is available for phone calls and zoom appointments during these hours. Please email her to make an appointment. Additionally she is available Sundays after church for brief check-ins.
<b>Michael Kraft</b> <i>Music Director</i>	music@firstchurchinsalem.org	Michael Kraft is in available Sunday mornings at church and via email for any questions.