

# THE HERALD

FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM NEWSLETTER



First  
Church  
in  
Salem,  
Unitarian  
Universalist

Dear Friends

I am writing this in the waning days of February, as winter begins to wane (although in New England we never know whether it will be warm or cold, wet or dry). We are moving, once again, into a liminal season—that in-between place, not quite winter, not quite spring.

Nature reminds us once again of the liminal spaces and places in our own lives. Times of transition. Beginnings, endings, and the middle place “in between.” We are walking through our second year of interim ministry together, a liminal place if there ever was one. Sometimes, at church, and in our lives, these liminal spaces can hold discomfort, anxiety, and are not always “what we might choose.” Yet I think they also offer us sometimes opportunities we didn’t expect, there are twists and turns in the road we hadn’t expected, and new hope and new life can emerge in very unexpected places. When I remind myself of that, the journey can start to feel a bit more like an “adventure,” a bit less like a “slog through.”

I wonder how you, the congregation, are doing in these weeks and months. Both in your personal lives. And in your life as a member or friend of this community. Please know I’m always interested in hearing from you! You can reach out by emailing me at [jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org](mailto:jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org). If you want, we can “chat” by email or set up a time to talk on phone, zoom or in person. Let’s continue to share a bit of the story of our own journeys with one another. That’s part of what it means to be in community together.

I’ll leave you with this poem called “Late February” written by a modern-day poet, Barbara Crooker who I love (full disclosure: she is my cousin by marriage!)

“Late February” by Barbara Crooker

And light begins to soften  
Around the edges. Snow’s flannel  
Sheets recede, fold back, and look,  
The grass is still there,  
A fresh green quilt waiting  
To be hung on the line.  
Crocus cut their teeth  
In perennial beds  
Spring holds her breath.  
White-throated sparrows  
Whistle up the sun.  
Every day, another cup of light.

In faith, Jenny

## &gt;&gt;&gt; March 2024

March is Women's History Month.

[Learn more about it here!](#)

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Daylight Savings this Month! Spring Ahead and enjoy more hours of sunlight!</b><br><b>Don't forget to turn the clock ahead one hour before bed on Saturday night.</b> |  |  |   |   |   | 1   | 2 |
| 3<br>8am Serving Sunday<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>11:30am Finance Open House<br>11:30am Change Expo Mtg  | 4  | 5<br>9am Staff & Worship Meeting                         | 6<br>6pm Transition Team Meeting                                | 7   | 8   | 9<br>9am Choir Rehearsal<br>10am Pysanky Egg Decorating |   |
| <b>Daylight Savings 10</b><br>9am Choir Rehearsal<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>11:30am Change Expo Mtg  | 11   | 12<br>12pm Staff & Worship Meeting                       | 13  | 14<br>7pm Silent Reading Party  | 15<br>4pm Finance Committee Mtg   | 16  |   |
| 17<br>10:30am Worship Service with Matt Meyer<br>11:30am Change Expo Mtg   | 18   | 19<br>12pm Staff & Worship Meeting<br>6pm Sit-and-Stitch | 20<br>6pm Transition Team Meeting<br>7pm Standing Committee Mtg | 21  | 22  | 23<br>9am Choir Rehearsal                               |   |
| <b>Palm Sunday 24</b><br>9am Choir Rehearsal<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>12pm Kids Easter Egg Dying  | 25   | 26<br>12pm Staff & Worship Meeting<br>6pm Sit-and-Stitch | 27  | <b>Maundy Thursday 28</b><br>11:30am Third Age Book Club<br>7pm Maundy Thursday | <b>Good Friday 29</b><br>12pm-3pm Good Friday Meeting House for reflection. | 30<br>9am Choir Rehearsal                               |   |
| <b>Easter 31</b><br>9am Choir Rehearsal<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>12pm Easter Egg Hunt   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>"Feminism isn't about making women stronger, women are already strong, it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength." – G.D. Anderson</b></p> |  |   |   |   |   |   |

# March 2024



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

|   |           |   |           |  |  |   |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|--|--|---|
|   |           |   |           |  | <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>                                    |
| <b>5</b><br>Serving<br>Sunday, 8-10am                             | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b>   | <b>9</b><br>Pysanky<br>Workshop,<br>10am-12 |
| <b>10</b>   | <b>11</b> | <b>12</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>14</b><br>Silent Reading<br>Party, 7-9pm          | <b>15</b>  | <b>16</b>                                   |
| <b>17</b><br>Soul Matters<br>@12:30                               | <b>18</b> | <b>19</b><br>Sit and Stitch<br>Sweater Club,<br>6-8pm | <b>20</b> | <b>21</b>  | <b>22</b><br>Spring Equinox<br>Celebration,<br>6:30-8:30pm | <b>25</b>                                   |
| <b>24</b><br>Egg dying<br>@12<br><b>51</b><br>Egg hunt<br>@ 11:45 | <b>25</b> | <b>26</b><br>Sit and Stitch<br>Sweater Club,<br>6-8pm | <b>27</b> | <b>28</b><br>Third Age Book<br>Club, 11:30am-<br>1pm | <b>29</b>  | <b>50</b>                                   |

## *Lifespan Religious Education*

February was a busy month for our children and youth! After much deliberation, they decided that they wanted to spend the year fundraising for the International Rescue Committee, an organization that provides humanitarian aid to people in crisis around the world and support to refugees here in the US. Chocolate Sunday raised a record-breaking \$1075! We are so grateful for the hard work of our children, youth, and volunteers, and the generosity of everyone who made a donation.

As we enter the month of March, we find ourselves in the middle of Lent. This is a time that is of deep spiritual importance to some UUs, but not all. This year, we introduced the idea of Simplifying for Lent for those who want to find a different type of practice for the season. Rather than focusing on what we are giving up, the focus is on what we are doing to live life in a more simple manner for the season. There are challenge booklets in the Barnard Room that you are welcome to take.

At the end of the month, we will celebrate Easter. That means the Easter Egg hunt, which means that we need your help filling Easter eggs! You can drop off filled plastic eggs at the front of the church any Sunday morning starting March 10. The egg hunt is open to all children, but we ask that those participating bring in a dozen filled eggs per child if they can, and that the eggs are filled with nut-free, egg-free candy. Of course, we appreciate eggs from those who will not be participating in the hunt as well. We have plenty of empty eggs that you can pick up to recycle.

We are also coming towards Spring, with the days slowly (perhaps slower than we would hope) getting warmer and longer. As we enter this new season, we have a wide range of Lifespan RE events for people of all ages. I hope to see you at some of them!

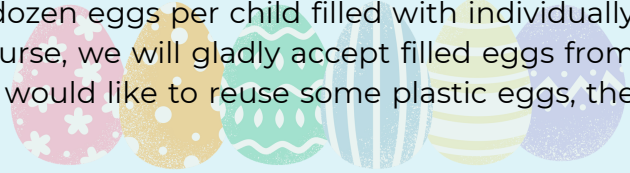
This month, there will also be an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on Lifespan RE by completing this survey. The survey will only take a couple of minutes to complete, and will be a huge help in understanding what kinds of programming our church community is most interested in, and when people are available.

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

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING

**Egg Dying and Decorating, Sunday March 24 @ Noon:** This is a fun, casual family event and we would love to see you there. Please bring in hard boiled, white eggs for your children to dye—we will provide everything else. We know that eggs are expensive right now, so if this would keep you from participating please let Theo know and she will secure some for you. We will also have an activity with plastic eggs to decorate.

**Easter Egg Hunt, Sunday March 31, After the Service:** Every year we have special Easter activities for the kids and host an egg hunt directly after the service. If you would like to participate, we encourage you to bring in a dozen eggs per child filled with individually wrapped, nut-free and egg-free candy. Of course, we will gladly accept filled eggs from anyone who isn't participating as well. If you would like to reuse some plastic eggs, the church has plenty! Just ask Theo.



## ADULT AND INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

### MONTHLY EVENTS

**Soul Matters, 3/17 @ 12:30pm:** The theme for March is Transformation

**Third Age Book Club, 3/28, 11:30-1pm:** Discussing *The Swedish Art of Aging Exuberantly* by Margareth Magnussen, Chapter 8

**Introducing: Serving Sunday! Sunday, March 3, 8-10am:** Let's come together before church to serve our community. This effort will be led by Marlene Warner. This month, we will be helping out Clothing Connection by organizing some of their donations. Meet at 8 (or whenever you can arrive) downstairs in Wilson Hall.

**Silent Reading Party, Thursday, March 14, 7-9pm:** The Silent Reading Party is back this month! Silent Reading Parties started in Seattle in 2009, and have grown in popularity across the country (and internationally) in the last few years. The format is simple: show up at 7pm with anything that you would like to read. There will be about a half hour of time to chat before everyone finds a spot and settles in with a book. Enjoy an hour to read with quiet music, snacks, and no interruptions or other responsibilities. At the end of the hour, we'll all come together again, and hear about what everyone is reading.

This event is great for everyone from the avid reader to the person who wants to read but never has the time. Feel free to show up with a hardcover, paperback, library book, e-reader, or a pair of headphones and an audio book. We will read in our beautiful historic Cleveland Room, which will provide the perfect ambiance. There's plenty of seating, but you're welcome to bring a cushion, pillow, or throw blanket if it would add to your reading experience.

**Sit-and-Stitch Sweater Club, Starting Tuesday, March 19, 6-8pm:** Come spend your evenings knitting in our beautiful, historical Cleveland room! You are welcome to bring in any project that you are working on and knit in company, or join in our "Sweater Club" and make your own sweater.

This six-session workshop will be led by Alexa Ogno, a skilled knitter who loves teaching in a group setting. Alexa will instruct us in how to make a top-down pullover sweater. This pattern is highly customizable, so you can choose any size, material, and color that you would like.

In the first week, we will go over the pattern and sizing it to fit each knitter's needs, as well as customization options to add stripes and/or cables. By the end of the first week, everyone should have a gauge swatch finished and a sweater started. By the end of the six weeks, you can finish a simple baby sweater (larger and more complex projects will require more time on your own).

This workshop series is open to knitters of all levels who have foundational knitting skills. Those who are comfortable knitting in the round will learn how to make a sweater of any size from newborn to adult, and more experienced knitters can adapt this pattern to make it more complex. Those who are not comfortable knitting in the round can learn to make a baby sweater using a historic pattern from the Women's Friend Society.

Please bring for custom sweater knit in the round:

- Yarn in a color of your choosing (amount necessary will depend on the size of your sweater)
- 1 pair circular needles in the size recommended for your yarn
- 1 pair circular needles 2 sizes smaller than the size recommended for your yarn
- For Woman's Friend Society "Jiffy Sweaters for Salem Babies"
- A pair of size 9 needles
- 1 ounce ball of yarn

Sit and Stitch drop-ins are welcome to join in for free. For those taking the Sweater workshop, a donation on a sliding scale is recommended.

**Spring Equinox Celebration, Friday, March 22, 6:30-8:30pm:** The weather is starting to get warmer and the days will soon be longer than the nights. Let's gather to celebrate the arrival of Spring! We will start off with a few different Springtime activities, and then come together to celebrate what we have created with song and an earth-centered ritual.

All ages are welcome.

## *From Your Standing Committee*

### **Clarity and Transparency in First Church Finance and Budgeting**

As we prepare to enter the Ministerial Search process, we continually ask ourselves how we look to candidates for settled ministry. To truly live up to our ideals of congregational polity, trust, and transparency, we plan to change several financial practices. Most notable is a plan to make the budget process fully visible and require congregational approval of the budget for the coming church year at our Annual Meeting on June 2nd.

This represents a change from the long-standing practice of requiring the Standing Committee to approve the budget at its convenience. While there are many practical benefits from adopting this approach, which is quite common among UU congregations, the primary reason is to reflect the values of transparent communication and congregational participation. In parallel, we hope to raise expectations among members for their own awareness of church finance and for their participation in decision-making.

To implement this change, we need to follow a disciplined and well scheduled process in order to collect budget inputs, share drafts with the congregation, and surface and resolve any questions that arise. We plan the following schedule:

**Sunday, March 3rd:** Finance Open House following service and fellowship. We'll schedule a subsequent zoom session and record it.

**Sunday, March 17th:** First draft budget submitted to Standing Committee for its review. Treasurer Marlene Warner is leading this project.

**Wednesday, March 20th:** Standing Committee meeting at which we will review the first draft and identify open questions.

**Sunday, April 7th:** Open House at which the draft budget will be shared with the congregation. Subsequent zoom sessions and email communications will be planned.

**April 7th to May 7th:** Congregational consultation and discussion leading to final draft.

**May 8th to June 2nd:** Final draft shared with congregation.

**Sunday, June 2nd:** Annual Meeting, at which the 2024-25 budget will be voted on by the congregation.

We hope you all will welcome the opportunity to participate in this critical aspect of the health of our congregation. Please plan to join the discussion by attending the in-person or virtual open houses, or by asking questions via phone, text, email, or visit.

And thanks very much for your support of First Church!

Anna Brandenburg      Holly Chase      Chris Granniss

Helen Jacoby      Jim LaRue      John Newhall

John Ninneman      Steve Palmer, Chair      Kathleen Salas

## *From the Stewardship Committee*

Greetings from the Stewardship Committee! With budget time rapidly approaching for the upcoming fiscal year starting in June, we are currently planning our pledge drive for the new year. Our budget is funded by several sources including income from our invested funds, tuition from the Henny Penny Preschool, and most importantly, pledges from church members and friends. If you are ready to pledge now, you can do so here (insert link). If not, please talk with us; we will be reaching out over the next few weeks and are planning a kickoff gathering after church on March 17. Hint: this may involve corned beef and cabbage (and a vegan alternative) along with community and conversation.

Also, if you haven't done so, it's a good time to check on your current pledge. The fiscal year ends on June 30, and your pledge makes a huge difference in the life of our church. If you have questions, please reach out to one of us.

While financial pledges are the traditional focus of the Stewardship committee, we are looking beyond this, at what stewardship means in the larger context of our church. In a very real way, we are all stewards of the legacy and future of First Church, and our personal stewardship is what brings life and vitality to our community. We hope to keep this conversation alive throughout the year in looking at the ways we all participate, contribute, and are contributed to in our community. Please feel free to grab one of us and share your thoughts, as well.

Yours,

The Stewardship Committee

Charles Hildebrand

Anna Brandenburg

Nicole McLaughlin

Neil Alsip

Mike Giaouque



## *Transition Team News*

Greetings from the Transition Team! During March we will be assessing what we learned from the Leadership Retreat with members of the Standing Committee and the Deacons which we held on February 28. We will also be planning for a worship service on Shared Ministry in April and an Envisioning Our Future brainstorming session led by Patti Roka after church on Sunday April 28 which will be an opportunity to imagine directions in which First Church can grow.

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## *Pastoral Care Team*

In the spirit of supporting our community, sometimes what is needed is a simple phone call to check in on someone who is struggling, a ride to a medical appointment or a meal. These small tasks are what the Care Team provides. We are a group of volunteers who help with these tasks when needed.

This past month, we have been asked to help with rides to medical appointments. We are grateful to all who have offered these services to our community.

If you know anyone who would like a call, a card of cheer, a meal or ride to medical appointment, please reach out to Sharon Corrigan 802-236-0054 or Sally Millice 978-745-1632 or notify the church office. The Pastoral Care team wants to support all in our community who are in need.

### *Easter Flower Orders*

Easter is fast approaching, and we are counting on our generous congregation to help make our meetinghouse a place of hope and joy. We will use the potted flowers you order to decorate our church, and you will be able to take them with you to brighten your own home or to share with loved ones. Our order deadline is Friday, March 16. [You can use our online order form here.](#)



| <b>EASTER FLOWER ORDER 2024</b>  |               |                         |                       |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Flower</b>  | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Number of Plants</b> | <b>TOTAL FOR EACH</b> |
| Yellow Daffodils 6.5" pot  | \$10.00       |                         |                       |
| Yellow Daffodils 10" pot   | \$25.00       |                         |                       |
| Blue Hydrangea 8" pot  | \$35.00       |                         |                       |
| Pink Azalea (tender) 8" pot  | \$27.00       |                         |                       |
| <b>BALANCE DUE:</b>  |               |                         |                       |
| <p><b>MESSAGING FOR ORDER OF SERVICE</b></p> <p><b>GIVEN BY:</b></p> <p><b>IN HONOR OF/IN MEMORY OF:</b></p> |               |                         |                       |

# FIRST CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS

## Connect with Members and Friends

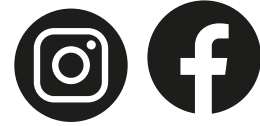
To connect with members of committees or leadership at First Church please use our online Directory. This can be accessed through your Breeze account: [firstchurchinsalem.breezechms.com](http://firstchurchinsalem.breezechms.com)

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.

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

FirstChurchinSalemUnitarian



## CONTACT THE STAFF

REV. JENNY RANKIN, INTERIM MINISTER: [JRankin@firstchurchinsalem.org](mailto:JRankin@firstchurchinsalem.org)

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THEO BURBANK, DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN EDUCATION: [FCReligiousEd@gmail.com](mailto:FCReligiousEd@gmail.com)

MICHAEL KRAFT, MUSIC DIRECTOR: [Music@firstchurchinsalem.org](mailto: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 [firstchurchcomm@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchcomm@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 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.

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CHAIR OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE: STEVE PALMER  
CHAIR OF THE DEACONS: LYNN TAGGART  
DIRECTOR OF HENNY PENNY: TRICIA PINI



# EASTER AT FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM

All Ages Welcome!

Sunday, March 24  
Palm Sunday

9am Choir Rehearsal  
10:30am Service & Sunday School  
12pm Easter Egg Dyeing

Thursday, March 28  
Maundy Thursday

7pm Communion Service

Friday, March 29  
Good Friday

Meeting House Open 12pm-3pm for quiet reflection.

Sunday, March 31  
Easter Sunday

9am Choir Rehearsal  
10:30am Service & Sunday School  
12pm Easter Egg Hunt

316 Essex Street, Salem | [firstchurchinsalem.org](http://firstchurchinsalem.org) | (978)744-1551

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