

# FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

*Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives*



**April 29, 2021**

## Pastors' Word

### Radical Inclusion

The Acts of the Apostles is the story of the early church's radical inclusion. Bearing witness to Jesus stepping over boundaries including the boundary of death, empowers this early community of faith to become radically inclusive of people of differing ethnicities, races, cultures, sexual identities, names, and families. In the Acts of the Apostles, we can see the excitement and the resistance to such inclusion.



The dynamic of inclusion, of stepping over boundaries and barriers, continues to this day with the church's inclusion of Christians with differing sexual orientations, abilities, races, cultures, immigration statuses, economic means and, yes, political affiliations. It is out of such a holy mess that the new creation we are called to be emerges.

Worship with First Parish of Westwood on Sunday as we hear anew the encounter of a man from Jerusalem with a Greek name serving the risen Jesus and a nameless man from

Ethiopia serving the Ethiopian Queen (Acts 8:26-40).

We are worshipping virtually using the congregation's Facebook page. Even if you are not a Facebook member, when you click on <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716> you should be taken to the church's Facebook page. And while on Facebook, please "share" the church's post on your Facebook page.

Zoom Communion will be held as part of worship at 10:30 this Sunday, May 2nd. A link to join will be sent in the Sunday morning email.

Again, to worship with First Parish on Sunday morning click on <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716>.

In faith,  
**Richard & Jill Edens**

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## Pastoral Care

We are so grateful that our Faith Community Nurse, Margery Eramo, is home from the hospital! When we asked how we may support her she requested meals consistent with a bland diet. If you are willing to provide a meal please email ([jillredens@gmail.com](mailto:jillredens@gmail.com)) or call (919-357-3914) Jill Edens. I will then be in touch with Marge to schedule meals. Thank you!

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## Patio Discussion: Mission & Service in 2021-2022



**SUNDAY, MAY 2  
11:30AM**

It has been said that the church "*exists for mission as fire for burning.*" As we begin discerning God's calling to First Parish to engage beyond ourselves in mission & service next year, please gather for a Patio Discussion on Mission & Service this Sunday, May 2, at 11:30am.

Our Patio Discussions promote our living-with-Covid protocols: wearing masks, staying socially distanced, washing hands, being well and having good ventilation that will continue until everyone including children are vaccinated. Gather with us for a Patio Discussion this spring.

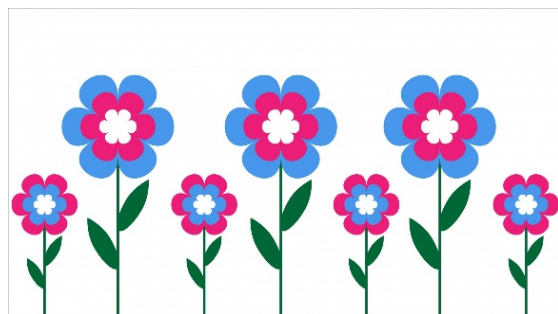
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## First Parish Landscaping Fund

Friends of First Parish -

Spring has arrived and planning is underway for cleaning up and maintaining our church property!

After some discussion amongst a few of us who have been volunteering to clean-up and plant garden beds, fertilize and prune shrubs, it is time to hire a landscaper to help us with several of the bigger jobs.



In order to have the necessary financial resources, we need to "grow" and sustain the landscaping and grounds fund. To start, we have set a fundraising goal for this first year of \$5,000.

How can you help? Donations to this fund should be made payable to First Parish of

Westwood with a note on the memo line (Landscaping Fund). While donations are welcome year-round, we would like to jump start the fund with donations made by **May 15th**.

Questions? Contact Jim Worth at [jworth@opentext.com](mailto:jworth@opentext.com) or Nancy Hyde at [nancy.c.hyde@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.c.hyde@gmail.com).

## Seeking Volunteers to Lead Worship this Summer

### While the Edens are away . . .

It has been the tradition at First Parish to provide lay-led worship while the pastor is on vacation.

Thank you as we now have volunteers for:

- **June 13** (the Edens will be at the celebration of the life of Jill's brother-in-law in Ann Arbor, MI. Robert Dylenski died in November so the family gathering had to be postponed because of the pandemic).
- **July 4, 11, 18, 25**

We are still seeking a volunteer for

- **August 22** (Jill Edens will be preaching for the Homecoming service at the church of Richard's grandparents in Rowland, NC)

If you are interested, please be in touch with Jill and Richard Edens ([jillredens@gmail.com](mailto:jillredens@gmail.com) or [jrichardedens@gmail.com](mailto:jrichardedens@gmail.com)).



## What to Expect When We Worship at First Parish on May 23

### Love of God

Thanksgiving and praise will rise to heaven as we begin coming out from the Covid-19 pandemic. It will be a joyous time to be with one another and to worship God together.

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### Love of Neighbor

One of the practices of our faith is loving our neighbor. Prioritizing the life and health of our neighbors during this next phase of the Covid pandemic means we will:

#### 1. Wear masks.

Wear your Sunday best. If you forget, we will also have masks for you as you enter.

#### 2. Stay physically distanced.

Yes, St. Paul said, "... greet one another with a holy kiss" ... but not yet! As vaccines for children are not anticipated until 2022 handshakes, hugs, and kisses will need to wait. We will also need to space ourselves in the pews.

#### 3. Be well.

When we are not well, we should love our neighbors and stay home.

#### 4. Wash hands.

Handwashing combined with socially distancing and wearing masks has pushed the rate of



flu infections and the common cold to unheard of lows this year. It is simple and effective.

**5. Worship outdoors or in a ventilated space .**

Covid-19 is most infectious in enclosed spaces over a long time. Fortunately, we have a Meeting House with two stories of windows that can be opened and a lovely patio.

**6. Socialize outside.**

Increasingly we are learning that transmission of the virus is minuscule when outside and distanced. So, catch up with friends and family outside on the patio, the lawn, or a walkway.

**7. Shorten worship.**

We will be minimizing risk and possible exposure over time by shortening our worship.

**8. Limit singing.**

Due to the respiratory nature of the virus, congregational singing will be postponed.

**9. Family friendly and inter-generational.**

Worship will be designed to be family friendly. With physical distancing, families are encouraged to sit together. Initially we will not have a staffed nursery though it will be open for parents to use as needed.

**10. Be vaccinated.**

If you have not yet been vaccinated and need assistance signing up or finding a vaccination site, please speak with our Faith Community Nurse, Marge Eramo.

**11. Be flexible.**

Covid-19 has been a surprising virus. We have learned much since the early days of wiping down groceries so our practices to promote safety and minimize risk will change over time. As the rates of vaccinations increase and of infections decreases, we will gratefully continue to adapt!

*Hope to see you on May 23. If you have particular concerns, please contact the church office (781-326-5344 or [office@firstparishwestwood.org](mailto:office@firstparishwestwood.org)).*

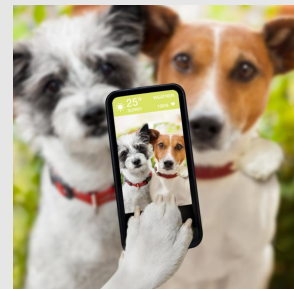
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## Send a Selfie!

During the year, Meg will be working on compiling a "homemade" pictorial directory as a gift for our new settled Pastor.

Pastors Rick and Jill Edens invite you to email Meg a "selfie" of you/your family. Please send all pictures to:  
**[office@firstparishwestwood.org](mailto:office@firstparishwestwood.org)**.

Feel free to get creative!



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## Welcome Videos Requested



We are currently seeking volunteers to do a "Welcome to service at First Parish" video. We encourage you to get creative and have fun.

If you have questions, contact Amie Colcord at [amiecolcord@gmail.com](mailto:amiecolcord@gmail.com). Please submit completed videos to Doug Hyde at [dkhydema@gmail.com](mailto:dkhydema@gmail.com).

To read our March/April 2021 Spire Newsletter, please [click here](#).

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