

FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives



We are an Open & Affirming Church

First Parish of Westwood affirms the dignity and worth of every person regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, family structure, education level, economic circumstance and faith or religious tradition.

December 19, 2021

Join us today at 10am. First Parish Church is holding an in-person worship service on this **Fourth Sunday in Advent**. We continue to live stream worship services every Sunday in addition to having in-person worship.

The service will also be live streamed on our Facebook page. To access the Facebook page, please [click here](#).

Note: To view the Order of Service for this



morning's service, please [click here](#).

Sunday School will be held outside if possible. We will pursue alternative plans if the weather isn't suitable for outdoor activities.

See COVID protocols below.

Image | Dances for Joy

By Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Seeking Sanctuary (Love)
Luke 1:39-55
Come On Home

The following poem will serve as an opening reflection for today's worship service.

We all know the feeling—
the shaky ground,
sinking sand,
water-is-rising,
sun-is-fading feeling
that makes steady breathing
an entire miracle,
and holding back tears
a marvel in and of itself.

And when those days come,
I call my parents.
And I call my church,
and I call my friends,
and they say in unison
what God has said
from the very beginning,
which is, "Come on home."

Is there anything more healing
than an open door?
If you're seeking sanctuary,
if the waters are rising—
listen.
It may be hard to hear,
but God is always saying,
"Come on home."

Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

- Christmas Fund

Today, First Parish is collecting for the UCC Christmas Fund. This fund provides Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks for retirees and those facing unforeseen financial hardship.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund bring relief and hope to those who have dedicated their lives to serving our churches. By supporting the Christmas Fund, you make a huge difference and bring great joy!



Longest Night Service Tuesday, December 21 @ 7pm

This service is an opportunity to recognize that the holiday season can sometimes be difficult. Please join us for a service of prayer, reflection and remembrance amidst the holiday hustle and bustle. In this pandemic season of life, we know that grief and loss is magnified and nearly universal. We hope this worship service can be a gift providing a space of calm, quiet and healing.

December 26 – 1st Sunday After Christmas

There will be no in person worship on Sunday, December 26th, the 1st Sunday after Christmas.

Copies of a self-guided, at home worship service for December 26th are available in the church lobby. Please take a copy home with you today.

Image by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Christmas Eve Services Campfire Christmas and Virtual Lessons and Carols

The first service on Christmas Eve will be at 5 PM, an in-person family-oriented worship service we are calling **Campfire Christmas**, designed as a more informal gathering that will



be outside and shorter. This service will include a few Christmas carols to sing, a family-friendly reading of the Christmas story, an opportunity to end our service in candlelight, and, of course, a campfire with marshmallows to roast and carols to sing. **Please RSVP to the church office at office@firstparishwestwood.org if you plan on attending.**

Our second **Christmas Eve** service will be fully virtual and pre-recorded, posted to Facebook and YouTube for everyone to participate with in their own time. This service will be a full **Lessons and Carols** service, with readers for the various scriptures, a lighting of the Advent wreath, music from the choir and guest musicians, words for the Christmas carols so you can sing at home, a short sermon from Pastor JT, and an opportunity to end our service in candlelight.

by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittmany | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



1st Annual Caroling Outing a Success

The First Parish carolers had a great time Sunday caroling at the home of Thelma Bruno, the Westwood Police Station and the Westwood Fire Station.

Thelma sent along the following thank you -

The Carolers were wonderful, so many singers, so many songs. It was wonderful that children could join the outing as well. We shall always remember how blessed we were to have you come to our home to sing all those Christmas tunes for us. Hope no one got too cold, it was quite breezy. Enjoy the pizza.

*Merry Christmas to all,
Nick and Thelma Bruno*

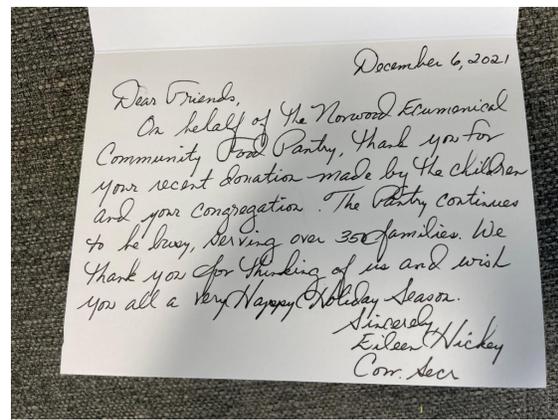


Food Drive Thank you!

The Norwood Food Pantry sent along this thank you note in response to the food items donated by First Parish.

On behalf of the Norwood Ecumenical Community Food Pantry, thank you for your recent donation made by the children and your congregation. The Pantry continues to be busy, serving over 350 families. We thank you for thinking of us and wish you all a very Happy Holiday Season.

*Sincerely,
Eileen Hickey, Corr Sec.*



Lost and Found

This Yeti mug was left behind at the church fair. Please let the church office know if it is yours.

First Parish is a supported charity on AmazonSmile!

You can now support First Parish of Westwood when you shop at smile.amazon.com at no extra cost to you. Simply go to your Amazon account; on the bar on the left - go to **Programs and Features** to find AmazonSmile. There you can choose the charity of your choice (hopefully First Parish of Westwood). 1/2% of your purchase amount will come to First Parish.



Electronic Giving - So Easy!

As many of you know, First Parish uses Vanco to implement our electronic giving. It is safe, reliable and flexible and it provides the church with a reliable monthly cash flow. It also helps to avoid the year end rush to find out how much is outstanding on your pledge!

During the month of December, we will be introducing laminated cards in the pews so electronic givers can put a card in the offering plate to indicate they give electronically. If you are not currently an electronic giver, please indicate on your pledge card if you would like



to start. The Assistant Treasurer, Barb Delisle, will send you information to make this happen.



Important Dates at a Glance

December

- Tuesday, Dec. 21 - Longest Night Service
- Friday, Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Services
5PM - In person, outdoor Campfire
Christmas
2nd service online - Lessons & Carols
- Saturday, Dec. 25 - Christmas Day
- Sunday, Dec. 26 - Self guided, at home
worship. There will be no in person
worship.
- Monday - Friday, Dec. 27 - 31 - Office
Closed

January (2022)

- Saturday, Jan. 1 - New Year's Day
- Sunday, Jan. 2 - Return to in-person
worship

COVID Protocols

COVID Protocols:

****We are continuing to open windows in the sanctuary during Sunday services as long as temperatures allow. We have blankets available for anyone who needs one. We also encourage people to dress warmly as we head into late fall/winter.****

Everyone who attends in-person worship should wear a mask and will be asked to sign-in upon arrival. Should it be too cold to have windows open during service, seating in pews will be spaced. The balcony is also available to anyone who would like to be seated there.



Office Hours

Monday 9 am - 1 pm

Tuesday 1 pm - 3 pm

Wednesday 9 am - 1 pm

In order to have everything ready for Sunday's service bulletin each week, all information should be submitted to the church office by Tuesday morning.

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STAY CONNECTED

