

# FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

*Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives*



**March 18, 2021**

## **This Sunday, March 21**

Last year there were 2,210 heart transplants in the United States and twice that many on the waiting list. To receive a new heart one must be younger than 69, have no evidence of active infections or any disease that may affect long-term survival, psychologically stable and committed to taking the prescribed medications, participating in rehabilitation, not smoking or drinking, and keeping your weight down. And during the time of transplant the patient must eat a special diet, accept a temporary restriction in mobility, ask family and friends with illnesses not to visit and while you are in the hospital to have your home thoroughly cleaned and washed before returning.



If you are asking for a scarce resource – and a new heart whether from a hospital or from God is a scarce resource – you need to be prepared to participate in the creation of new heart. Commitment is required for this new beginning.

A new heart is wasted if we cannot let go of the past and let ourselves be transformed. The alcoholic cannot rebuild a life if she is still drinking. The unfaithful husband cannot rebuild a marriage if he is still unfaithful. We cannot rebuild our lives and still hang on to old ways, hurts, grudges, and the *I-told-you-so's* that keep us in bondage. If we trust death to hide the past or to get rid of something or someone undesirable more than we trust grace to transform then a new heart will be wasted.

When we hear, as we will on Sunday, that God will create a new heart within us, our gratitude should empower our commitment to change and live now by the gift we have been given.

Join us on Sunday via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716> as we hear from the prophet Jeremiah about our promised new heart and commit to a new life.

This Sunday **Jesse Aguilar**, assisted by **Fina**, will ring the hour, **Jill Edens** will welcome you, **Richard Edens** will have a children's message based on the book, *The Invisible String*, **Mary Masi-Phelps** will read the lessons, **Sarah Tocco** will offer music, **One Voice**, our women's ensemble will sing, and **Richard Edens** will preach.

Peace,  
**Richard & Jill**

### CHILDREN'S MESSAGE IN WORSHIP DURING LENT

Revs. Richard and Jill Edens are including a children's component in worship during Lent. As the Hebrew Scriptures in Lent follow various covenants made between God and God's people, our hope is to find a fresh expression of those familiar covenants for each Sunday.

### In Our Thoughts and Prayers



- We are saddened to share that longtime First Parish member **Shirley Defeo** passed away last week. Shirley joined the church in April 1965 and served in many roles during her time here including Flower Chairperson, Deacon, Church Clerk, Assistant Collector and Collector. While in her '80's, Shirley adopted our transition to utilizing an online financial system and only retired from her role as Collector in the summer of 2017. Additional information regarding a Spring memorial service in celebration of Shirley's life will be shared soon. Please [click here](#) to read Shirley's obituary.
- Please keep **Marge Eramo** and her family in your prayers as her brother, Richard Howe, died early Friday morning, March 12. Richard lived in Florida. Plans for a funeral have been postponed until later in the year when the family is able to gather.
- Sending prayers for the loved ones of the victims killed in the spa shootings in Atlanta this week.

## Holy Week 2021

First Parish of Westwood, UCC  
252 Nahatan Street, Westwood, MA 02090  
781-326-5344  
[www.firstparishwestwood.org](http://www.firstparishwestwood.org)

### Palm Sunday – March 28

Join us as we enter Jerusalem with Jesus and his disciples. Rev. Jill Edens preaching. Worship is on-line via Facebook (at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716> ).



### **Maundy Thursday – April 1, 7:00 pm**

Come and gather around the Table as we remember the night Jesus last supper with his disciples. Worship is on-line via a Facebook livestream (at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716> ). Please have a cup of wine or juice and bread near by as you gather for worship. Following the observance of the Last Supper, members of First Parish will read Mark's account of Jesus' suffering, death and burial.

### **Good Friday – April 2, 12 Noon to 3 pm**

The sanctuary will be open for you to enter for prayer and meditation. The windows will be open for ventilation, please wear a mask and remain socially distanced.

### **Easter – April 4**

Celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the rebirth of hope with us on Easter morning. Worship begins on-line via Facebook (at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716> ).

At 10:30 join us on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/97776095457> ) for communion. Please have a cup of wine or juice and bread nearby as you gather for worship.

Following communion, we will receive new members. If you have been intending to join First Parish and have not yet spoken to our pastors, please speak with Revs. Jill or Richard Edens (Jill : 919-357-3914; [jillredens@gmail.com](mailto:jillredens@gmail.com); Richard: 919-357-3913; [rjrichardedens@gmail.com](mailto:rjrichardedens@gmail.com)).

*Invite your family and friends to worship with you this Holy Week.*

## **Southern New England UCC Conference Minister Response**



### **Southern New England Conference**

United Church of Christ

*Living the Love & Justice of Jesus*

Rev. Darrell Goodwin, our new Executive Conference Minister for the Southern New England Conference of the UCC, responded on Monday to the Vatican statement over the weekend condemning same gender marriage. You may watch his message on Facebook at:

<https://fb.watch/4gASGhFqGZ/>

He recommends that our sisters and brothers in the LGBTQ community seek out UCC churches and pastors to find a welcoming place to worship, get married and nurture their families. Please imagine with us ways in which we may identify First Parish as a place of welcome for all people.

## **One Great Hour of Sharing**



### ***Let Your Love Flow***

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING – March 21, 2021**

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is an all-church offering within the United Church of Christ, but it is also an offering received in multiple denominations. A portion of the offering is held used to address emergencies (floods, hurricanes, war, famine, etc.) and a portion is used for development that can help break the cycle of poverty and misfortune.

This year's theme is **Let Love Flow** as water projects are stressed. Over the next several weeks stories will be shared, and you are invited to send a offering to First Parish, 252 Nahatan St., Westwood, MA 02090 before Sunday, March 21. Please write *OGHS* in the memo line of your check.

## Family Service Project Opportunity: Cradles to Crayons

This Lent our family wanted to find a way of practicing our faith through a family service project. We found an opportunity with Cradles to Crayons, a Boston-based organization that provides clothing to children and their families who need it, including families in homeless situations.



On Monday we picked up a large bag of clothing, which had been quarantined. Together, we sorted clothes by type and made sure they were of quality, getting them ready for the next step of creating packages for individual children. We returned the sorted bags for Cradles to Crayons the next Monday for them to quarantine before the next step. We found this to be a small but meaningful way that we could be helping hands for others, and for us to remember that we are all held by hands we do not see. As Ellis and Silas said:

- *"It felt good to think about how they would feel when they received the cloths and to do something for other people." (Ellis)*
- *"It felt like doing a chore for God and I was happy afterwards." (Silas)*

We are hoping to participate again soon. If you are interested in doing so too, please feel free to contact Juliana for more information or for possibly coordinating pickup and dropoff of materials. (Juliana Belding at [jvbean27@hotmail.com](mailto:jvbean27@hotmail.com)) Or contact Cradles to Crayons directly by [clicking here](#).

The Belding Rifenburg Family: Juliana, Leanne, Ellis and Silas

## LAST Lenten Bible Study March 23, 7:30pm



**LENTEN BIBLE STUDY**  
**TUESDAY, March 23, 7:30pm**  
**Zoom Bible Study,**  
**( <https://zoom.us/j/95721703863> )**

Join your pastors and other church friends for Bible study on **Tuesday, March 23**

**at 7:30pm via Zoom ( <https://zoom.us/j/95721703863> ).** We will look at the lectionary readings for Palm Sunday and Easter.

- **Palm Sunday, March 28, Mark 11:1-11** – Jerusalem was an occupied city. Its people were oppressed and needy. Jesus humble entry into Jerusalem is a sign that their salvation is coming through one who identifies with those who are oppressed and needy. The solitary individual on a donkey, leafy branches marking the way and shouts of “Hosanna” by the crowds is an intentional contrast to the powerful entrance one would expect from Imperial Rome – a ruler on horseback, a military display of soldiers, the blowing of trumpets and crowds scurrying to get out of the

way.

- **Easter Sunday, April 4** – There is only one place we can ‘see’ the Risen Jesus. The angel at the empty tomb told the women (and us), *“He is going before you to Galilee.”* The gospel narrative closes with the women (and us) fleeing from this tomb with the question of whether, in the light of resurrection we will live by our faith or by our fear; we will follow the risen Jesus who is going before us.

Prepare for worship by joining us as we converse about these texts for our Lenten worship via **Zoom ( <https://zoom.us/j/95721703863> ).**

## Mark Your Calendar - Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd

If the Covid count continues to decrease and the Vaccination rate continues to increase, the Worship Ministry is preparing to re-gather for worship beginning May 23, Pentecost Sunday. It still means people will need to wear masks, be socially distanced and feel well. We will open the windows in the Meeting House so it is well ventilated and have the pews marked. People will be encouraged to socialize before or after worship while outdoors. We will follow the CDC guidelines as we plan to gather in-person.



We want you to know that we have a goal – May 23rd. With the drop in Covid cases and accelerating vaccinations, we think this is a modest or cautious goal. If this goal needs to be adjusted, you will be informed. If you have concerns or questions, please be in contact with Roger Christian, Chair of Worship Ministry or one of our Pastors.

Pentecost Sunday is remembered as the day when the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to be the church with “tongues, as of fire, resting on each of them,” so observe the day by wearing red.

## Welcome Videos Requested



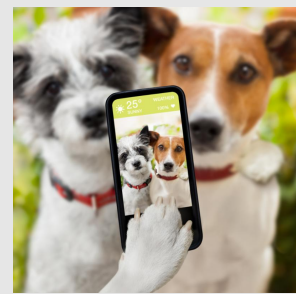
We are currently seeking volunteers to do a "Welcome to service at First Parish" video. We encourage you to get creative and have fun.

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).

## 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!

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

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STAY CONNECTED

