

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 2, 2021

Join us this Sunday, December 5th at 10am. First Parish Church is holding an in-person worship service on this Second **Sunday in Advent**. We continue to live stream worship services every Sunday in addition to having in-person worship.

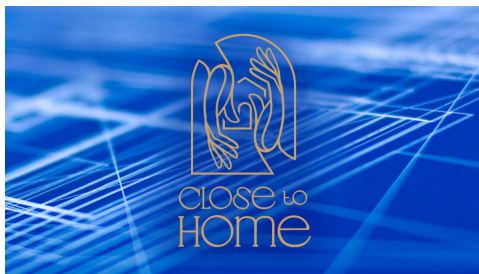
Unlike other Sundays, this Sunday the children will have Sunday School first then go back to Church to participate in communion. Depending on the weather, the children may be in the large classroom with



windows open or outside.

See COVID protocols below.

Berakah by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC |
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Advent Devotionals & Advent Calendars

The season of Advent begins Sunday and marks a time to pause, watch, wait, anticipate, and prepare for the Christ child to enter the world once again. This season, to help you prepare, we have a few resources that flow with our theme this Advent: *Close to Home*.

Our Advent devotional booklets provide an opportunity to pause every day with a reading to help you connect with your faith more deeply this season. Our Advent calendars serve as inspiration to put your faith into action as an individual or as a family every day throughout the season. Both the devotional booklets and calendars are available in the lobby.

Graphic Design by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | Original
photography by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC |
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Second Sunday of Advent Laying the Foundation (Peace) Luke 1:57-80

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

Words for the Beginning

If I could give you words for the very
beginning—
for the stretches
and the yawns,
and the opening of eyes,
for the first hiccups,
and the first smiles,
and the first purse of your lips,
I would say,
“Oh, dear child,
how you are loved.”

But the thing about love
is you can't stop there,
so I would go on to say,
“You are strong,
stronger than you think.
And you are not alone—
look at these parents who adore you
and these doctors and nurses fighting for
you.
And you are enough, already enough.

You haven't done anything yet.
You've just been here,
breathing,
sleeping,
and already, you are enough.
And then I might say,
“This world is a mess,
but it is your home,
and you can make it better,

so always try to make it better.
And maybe most important of all:
there is a love
that is bigger than my understanding,
that moves through this world,
and I call that love God.
And that love is here,
here in this room,
and that love knows
your name by heart."

Those are the words I would say to you
as you stretch and yawn and open your
eyes
on the very first morning
of your very first day.
Let that be your foundation,
like Zechariah did for John.
Let love be your beginning.

Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed I A Sanctified Art LLC
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Stewardship 2022 Update

Thank you to everyone who has already turned in their pledge cards. As of Tuesday, November 30th, the church has received 39 pledge cards, representing pledges of \$128,725.

If you have not yet returned your pledge card, please do so. You can leave your pledge card in Sunday's offering plate, or mail in to the office or email Barb Delisle at asst_treasurer@firstparishwestwood.org. Pledges of all sizes are welcome.

Stewardship is vital to our church as we navigate forward to wherever the winds of God propel us, and the initial returns of our stewardship season surely do represent a breath of fresh air present at First Parish.

Christmas Fair and Silent Auction This Saturday, December 4th 9am - 1pm *Volunteers needed!!!*

First Parish is again holding its traditional Christmas Fair and Silent Auction on Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm. This is an important fundraiser and community builder for our church.

At this point we are looking for volunteers during the fair to work shifts. The shifts run from 8:30am - 11am and 11am to 1:30pm. Please email pkane@haskellinsagency.com to sign-up.





Christmas Caroling Outing followed by pizza in the Gathering Hall Sunday, December 12th Meet at First Parish at 4:15PM

Join us for a Christmas caroling outing on Sunday, December 12th. We will meet up at First Parish Church in the parking lot at 4:15pm. The plan is to drive to three locations including the home of one of our parishioners, the Westwood Police Station and the Westwood Main Fire Station. We will have a selection of carols to sing at each stop. Then we will wind our way back to the church where we will have pizza and crafts. All (including children) are welcome to join in the fun!

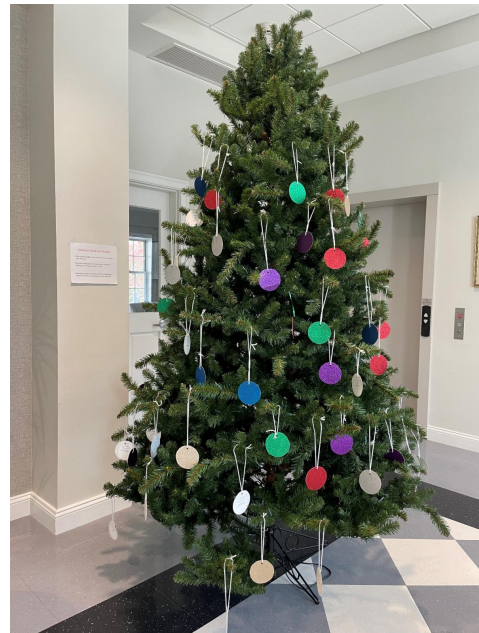
A sign-up sheet will be posted outside the church office where you can also indicate your pizza preference. Questions? Contact the church office.

Lifeworks Christmas Family Gift Tree

Please join us in our annual tradition of making Christmas brighter for families facing challenging circumstances this holiday season. We have a Christmas tree in the lobby with ornaments color coded for the six families. Each ornament represents a gift for a member of the family. There are still a few ornaments available.

Please select an ornament (or several) AND put your name on the list on the clipboard by the tree. Bring back your wrapped gift with the ornament attached to the outside of the gift by December 12th and leave it under the tree in the sanctuary.

Alternatively, if you are not able to shop, you can still donate money so our elves can do the shopping for you! Send your donations to First Parish and indicate Christmas Families on the envelope or memo line of your check.



Family/Individual Photos by Doug Hyde

Doug Hyde is offering family and individual photo sessions again this year. To schedule a photo session between Saturday, November 27th and Sunday, December 5th (including during the Christmas Fair), please email Doug at dkhphotosma@gmail.com. A typical session



lasts a half hour. The cost is \$50 with half of the proceeds going to First Parish.

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!



indicate on your pledge card if you would like to start. The Assistant Treasurer, Barb Delisle, will send you information to make this happen.

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



Important Dates at a Glance

December

- Saturday, Dec. 4 - Christmas Fair (9am - 1pm)
- Sunday, Dec. 5 - 2nd Sunday in Advent
- Sunday, Dec. 12 - 3rd Sunday in Advent
- Sunday, Dec. 12 (Meet at 4:15pm)- Fellowship Event. Churchwide caroling

outing.

- Sunday, Dec. 19 - 4th Sunday in Advent/Music Sunday. Special Christmas cookie reception following worship
- Friday, Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Services
Details to follow
- Sunday, Dec. 26 - At home 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.

First Parish of Westwood
252 Nahatan Street
Westwood, MA 02090
781-326-5344
office@firstparishwestwood.org
www.firstparishwestwood.org

STAY CONNECTED

