

FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives



May 13, 2021

Worship this Sunday, May 16

This Sunday, May 16, is the 7th Sunday in Easter. The reading from Acts of the Apostles (1:15-17, 21-26) is the story of filling the vacancy created by the death of Judas "who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus."

From the church's earliest days, leadership has been a challenge. Indeed, one of the first tasks -- when the church was on its own -- was replacing one of the Twelve Apostles.

The criteria for identifying leadership, then and now, clergy or lay, was simply

- (1) who could witness to Jesus' resurrection (or be worthy guides for those truly seeking Jesus) and
- (2) the prayers of the church community.



Join us for worship this Sunday morning via the church's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716>.

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.

Remember on May 23, Pentecost Sunday, we will resume gathering in-person. See the guidelines for ***Life Together ... in a Time of Covid*** also in this newsletter.

In faith,
Richard & Jill Edens
Richard & Jill Edens

PATIO DISCUSSION: Christian Formation beginning Fall 2021 Sunday, May 16, 11:30am



For the past 12 months, Christian formation has been primarily a home activity. Just as our public schools have reopened this month, First Parish will continue the conversation for reopening our church school, youth and adult programs in the fall. Like the public schools we can anticipate the protocols of wearing masks, staying socially distanced, washing hands, being well and having good ventilation will continue until everyone including children are vaccinated. **This Sunday, May 16**, you are invited to gather with our Moderator, Sharon Hobbs, and our Interim Pastors, Jill & Richard Edens, to continue the conversation about Christian Education for next fall. If you came in April, join us again! If you were unable to come in April, please join us!

Strengthen the Church Offering

On Pentecost Sunday, May 23, you are invited to make a special gift to

STRENGTHEN THE

CHURCH, one of the special offerings of the wider church. The **STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH** offering is typically received on Pentecost Sunday and it is used primarily to strengthen the Discipleship Ministries of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.



Southern New England Conference

United Church of Christ

Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Your gift will be used for:

- (1) **Outdoor Ministries** such as the Silver Lake Conference Center in Connecticut and the Edwards House Retreat Center.
- (2) **Faith Formation Ministries** for equipping leaders and congregations *for ministry in a new day*.
- (3) **New! The Center for Transformational Leadership** is a new initiative of the SNEUCC Conference to develop innovation and transformation with programs on conflict transformation, church vitality assessment, discerning a new futures, technology & worship, and leadership training.

For additional information from the Conference on this offering, please [**click here**](#).

Please give generously on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, the day we celebrate the birth of the church!

There will be a Memorial Service for Shirley DeFeo (November 3, 1927 – March 11, 2021) at 11am on Saturday, May 22.

In addition to our guidelines for ***Life Together ... in a Time of Covid*** published below in this e-news, we will be abiding by the state guidelines which limits the number of people that can be in an indoor room together. Once the family is seated, we may only be able to seat another 35 persons. If you are planning to attend, please email Richard Edens, rjrichardedens@gmail.com, so we can then add names of people from the church to be seated to the names of those from the family. People who are on the family list will be seated first, those who have registered with First Parish will be seated next. Those who come who are not on either list will be seated if there is availability.

We are making plans to livestream the service over Facebook so it should be possible to see the service in other rooms in the church or on the patio or on your cellphone. More information to follow.

Life Together...in a Time of Covid

As we begin meeting again for worship these are guidelines for our *Life Together ... in a Time of Covid*. Our sanctuary's capacity is approximately 60 persons according to the current Massachusetts regulations for indoor space. This number will change in July or August as the vaccination rate continues to increase and the rate of infection continues to decrease.



1. Sign in as you enter

There will be a table for you to sign in with your name and phone number or email address should we need to “contact trace.”

2. Wear masks.

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

3. 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.

4. Be well.

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

5. 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.

6. 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 and a lovely patio.

7. 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.

8. Shorten worship.

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

9. Limit singing.

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

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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!

If you have concerns, please contact the church office(781-326-5344 or office@firstparishwestwood.org) or one of the pastors.

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 or jrichardedens@gmail.com).

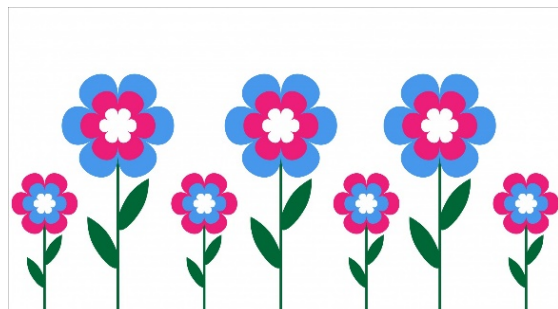


First Parish Landscaping Fund

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**.

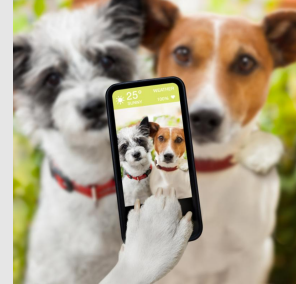
Questions? Contact Jim Worth at jworth@opentext.com or Nancy Hyde at nancy.c.hyde@gmail.com.

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**.

Feel free to get creative!



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. Please submit completed videos to Doug Hyde at dkhydema@gmail.com.

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STAY CONNECTED

