



first parish, hingham
old ship church
unitarian universalist

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January 2026 Monthly Newsletter

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Deadline for February's newsletter: Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Multi-Platform:

**Join us in-person in the Meeting House
or on Zoom**

Zoom link opens at 10:15 a.m.

[Click here to join Sunday Worship!](#)

**Wednesday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Service
Rev. Carie Johnsen & Christopher
Nickelson-Mann**

As in past years, Old Ship's Christmas Eve service will continue the beloved tradition not only for those of us who regularly worship here, but for many others in the wider community. All are warmly welcomed to the Meeting House for traditional carols and readings.



All attendees are encouraged to bring an LED battery candle to this year's service.

**The Meeting House fills early; wise ones plan to arrive before
4:30**



Choosing Hope December Worship

Dec 28th

New Year's Sharing Service

Meeting House

Karen Churchill

Our New Year's tradition of having a Sharing Service to welcome in the New Year continues! We will start with a shorter lay run Sunday service followed by attendees sharing readings, poetry, or maybe just some wonderful thoughts with each other. Please come with an open heart, a comfy outfit, *and a reading to share with fellow congregants* in peace and warmth. Our Sharing Service is one of our yearly favorites. There will be hot chocolate afterwards!



Practicing Resilience January Worship

January 4th Rest, Restore, Reset

Rev. Carie Johnsen, Jennie Mulqueen & Carlos Zalduondo

As a new year begins, many of us carry fatigue in the body, mind, spirit. This service invites us to pause and listen to what our weariness is asking of us. We will explore rest as a spiritual practice, restoration as an act of courage, and reset as a hopeful re-orientation toward what truly matters. Together, we make space for gentleness, renewal, and possibility

January 11th Love at the Center: Liberating Love

Rev. Carie Johnsen & Christopher Nickelson-Mann

Drawing on the ministry of Martin Luther King, Jr., we explore his criticism of white privileged moderates. Sitting with the discomfort of his message, we ask, "How shall we move through resistance and turn toward each other to build communities of resistance?"

January 18th Shared Ministry as Spiritual Practice

**Rev. Carie Johnsen & Christopher Nickelson-Mann
& Transitional Ministry Team**

In this service, we will continue the conversation on the spiritual practice of shared ministry—nurturing hope, trusting in unseen growth, and recommitting ourselves to the future of Old Ship.

January 25th Resist the Urge.....

Jennie Mulqueen & Christopher Nickelson-Mann

Following up on the theme of human birthrights, in this service we will ponder what it means to resist the urge to turn away from pain and suffering in the world, when human rights are ignored, denied, and even trampled.

Everyday Ordinary Theologies

In my [November newsletter](#) I reflected on the work for *transitional ministry*. Here is a short recap:

Transitional ministry invites us to pause—to look back with gratitude, access spiritual strengths, and identify areas for growth. It is a time for listening, discernment, and discovery. We keep asking: Who are we now? What do we value most about our shared life? What hopes and hungers call us toward our future?



Last year, fifty-four members gathered and embarked on a journey of understanding the past and discerning the future. We explored the shared history of First Parish in Hingham (Old Ship) through storytelling and creating a 390-year timeline of events, milestones, community. We laughed, we cried, we honored those who have gone before us, and remembered the ones who loved this community and gave so much.

This year, on January 17th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm, we will continue the conversation as we ***Celebrate and Illuminate Shared Ministry***. Again, I offer you a recap from the November Newsletter:

The heart of the congregation is not in a building or one minister, but the collective life we create together. ***We, each and everyone of us, are the living heartbeat of shared ministry. Ministry belongs to all of us!*** It is how we embody our covenant with one another in times of joy and concern. It is the weaving together of our varied gifts, passions, and commitments in service to Love.

Shared ministry asks us to see First Parish in Hingham not as a place where a few lead and the rest follow, but as a dynamic community of mutual care and co-creation. The sacred work of this church—welcoming the stranger, nurturing the young, comforting the grieving, challenging injustice—is sustained not by one person or a few, but by the shared love and labor of many.

In this spirit, I encourage you to attend ***Celebrate and Illuminate Shared Ministry***. This all-congregational retreat will continue the exploration and discernment of identity, guiding values, and aspirations through the illumination of long-standing, emerging, and waning ministries. Come be a part of shaping the collective future of this beloved community.

Please sign up early, so your Transitional Ministry Team and the Green Sanctuary Committee can plan accordingly. Please [click here to RSVP](#) to Lisa in the office.

In faith,
Rev. Carie

January Board of Trustees Update

On Wednesday, December 3rd, the BOT met for its monthly meeting. Here are items of note;

Thanksgiving follow up discussion. This year Rev. Carie, with the Board's support, withdrew from the Hingham Hull Religious Leaders Association Thanksgiving service due to the lack of inclusion of Indigenous representatives and an inconsistency with our UU values. Rev. Carie encouraged the Board to consider if the congregation should determine church participation in future events. Board members agreed that this is a larger topic for the entire congregation. It was suggested that listening circles could be organized by the Committee on Shared Ministry. Follow up was organized and this issue will be reconsidered next month.



CST Update - Dennis Hogan, liaison for the Community Space Team, offered the following; On Sunday, December 7 the team will present an update to the congregation on the work done by the team and information on build estimates for the new parish house. This is a preliminary to the Board reviewing the estimates when received and assessing recommendations. Dennis presented the slides for the session: While the first design was too expensive- \$5 million., the second design meets chief criteria and retains the potential for ADA access to the second floor and is estimated at 3.2 million. This building is considerably smaller than design one but can expand to the rear as well as basement. The walkway would be eligible for historic grants because they would be providing access to meetinghouse. Design three is a one story building that could fit the budget, but the final cost has not been determined yet. It is smaller square footage, but footprint is larger. This size accommodates 75 people – to which we must adhere unless we install another bathroom (code for required bathrooms ratio 1:25 people); has an unfinished basement. No parking though without considerable excavation into the hillside – which is exorbitantly expensive. At this point the totals are only estimates – not bids. The congregation will need to consider all the options and vote on the building design and budget at a congregational meeting to be determined.

Lincoln Chair - Discussion ensued regarding the merits of selling the chair as it was appraised a number of years ago at over 300K. Vice President Janice McPhillips offered the following background information; The Lincoln Chair is jointly owned by the Town of Hingham and Old Ship. Built by the son of the man who built General Lincoln's home. Currently the Hingham Historical Society (HHS) is the custodian. It was determined that due to the joint ownership with the town and the unknown current value of the chair no further action would be taken at this time.

New Bookkeeper Hire - Acting Treasurer Jack Gomez advised the following; Peg Mullaney, who started as bookkeeper in July, and has unfortunately given notice because the job is not as remote as she hoped and is a time conflict. There is another potential candidate – Lisa Ryan is willing to take the position. The Board voted unanimously to offer the position to Lisa Ryan, who has since accepted. Welcome Lisa!

Stewardship Analysis and Team Update - Board President Trish McAleer shared the results of an analysis of our last three Stewardship Campaigns. See the pledge analysis results [here](#). Campaign totals have been largely consistent with the average pledge increasing slightly. However, there is concern that approximately a third of contributions come from large pledges made a small number of congregants. This is concerning for future financial solvency as the loss of a few of these donor contributions would have a great impact on church finances. With regards to the 26/27 campaign, Stewardship

Team recruitment has been underway with three members accepting an invitation to serve on the team. Trish noted the new team will be mentor by Trish and Janice. This year's campaign will likely kick off in February or March with sufficient time to wrap up before a budget is created.

Spiritual Exploration Team (SET) Update - SET Co-chair and Trustee Cory Fitz-Marquez submitted the following excerpt from their written report; we are pleased to offer Sunday morning SE activities every week for interested children during regular Sunday services. We are at 14 Main and it is our intent to continue as such throughout December, into the New year, and beyond. In that spirit we would earnestly like to thank the 7 willing volunteers who will act as teaching assistants and have been cleared to work with Addie Handleman, Nina Wellford, and Judy Flaherty. We are deeply grateful for your willingness and your contributions. To ensure our success each Sunday we have need for about 3 or 4 additional souls once a month to do the same. Corey and Nina continue working from the sourcebook "Everybody is Important : A kids Guide to the 7 Principles" by Jennifer Dant and Addie is working from "Soul Matters " A UU curriculum resource focused on Nurturing Gratitude. There is much intentional overlap in these approaches and the children are encouraged by this to consider and implement these concepts in their daily lives. Any further thoughts concerns or suggestions feel free to contact Nina, Corey or Addie.

The Board welcomes your comments and suggestions by emailing us at President@oldshipchurch.com.

Green Sanctuary – Save the date:

January 10th

Watching the Documentary "Eating for Tomorrow"

Resolving to choose more plant-based meals? That would be a daily way to "do one right thing." Please come to the Congregational Church on Saturday, January 10th, 9-11 a.m. to watch the hard-hitting documentary "Eating for Tomorrow" followed by Rev. Carie's pastoral moments. She'll help us face facts compassionately and courageously. Or, if you're really brave, watch it at home on YouTube.



Then on January 17th during the Transitional Ministry event graze at a vegetarian pot luck buffet (eggs and dairy are ok). You could bring baked good, deviled eggs, a cheese plate, a salad, quiche, spanakopita, veggie "sausages", spring rolls etc.

Please respond as soon as possible!

Save the Date!

Celebrating & Illuminating Shared Ministry

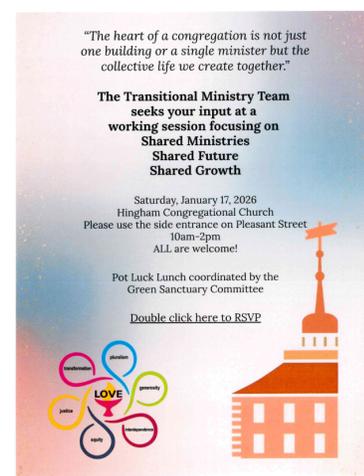
Saturday, January 17, 2026

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Hingham Congregational Church

Join the Transitional Ministry Team for next year's big event - Celebrating & Illuminating Shared Ministry. This retreat style workshop will include a time of lifting up the strengths and gifts of this community and illuminating the living ministry of Old Ship. We will weave together our passions and projects as we

keep walking together in a ministry of love and community. The Green Sanctuary Team will host a potluck brunch and encourages meatless contributions. Please [click here to RSVP](#) to Lisa in the office. Click [here to see flyer](#).



Sunday, December 14th Service is viewable on YouTube this week!

To maintain privacy for families at Old Ship, the Interactive Nativity will not be publicly available. Participating families and members may reach out to Office@OldShipChurch.org to access the link. The video will only be available for one week.



Attention Families! Join us for Children's Spiritual Exploration (formerly known as RE)!



Each Sunday, children and families begin in the Meeting House before heading down to 14 Main Street with at least two adults for activities that explore our UU values. Parents are welcome to stay in the Meeting House or join their children.

Please note: families with children of all ages are also welcome to stay in the Meeting House for the complete service.

Fellowship Hour & Snacks Sunday, December 28th

Fellowship Hour will be held at 14 Main Street. **Last names beginning Q - Z** are asked to bring a snack on **Sunday, December 28th**. Some type of finger or toothpick food that can be placed on a napkin is best. We don't have volunteers to hand wash dishes and are going to keep things simple. Please bring your food item ready to go. Food can be left in its box or served on a paper plate. Thanks everyone.



Pastoral Care Leadership Team

We are all on the pastoral care team, but our "Pastoral Care Leadership Team" meets each month to share any concerns about parishioners who are ill, in the hospital, or facing other significant challenges, and to coordinate responses. If

you have a pastoral concern to share with our Team, please feel free to contact any member of the group listed below.



Ministerial Discretionary Fund

Have you encountered unanticipated medical bills? Are you experiencing financial strain from loss of employment or rising energy and food costs? Rev. Carie has modest ministerial discretionary funds to assist people in times of financial stress. Please reach out to her directly and/or encourage others to call to request assistance.

[Ralph Brown](#)

[Liz Flint](#) 508-560-1572

[Elaine Gomez](#) 781 820 4077.

[Fan Leonard](#) 781-749-2852

[Claire Petrie](#) 617-642-2438

[Joan Wilson](#) 617-947-4664

[Louise Smith](#) 781-690-1165

[Rev. Carie Johnson](#) 508-221-5295

Musical Notes

Dear Old Ship Church,

December is coming to a close and our holiday activities are winding down. What a wonderful opportunity to reflect, reset, and recharge. I know that I, personally, am looking forward to taking some time to slow down and just breathe; I imagine many of you feel similarly. As you take time to pause in this darkest part of the year, give yourself the space to just be, to just exist. The music I'm sharing with you today is reflective and contemplative, simultaneously evoking comfort through repetition and interest through variety. "[Peace Piece](#)" is an improvisation by jazz pianist Bill Evans, meaning that he created this music on the spot without much planning or preconceived notions of what will happen next. The performer has to both remain present to the moment and yet also plan what is coming next -- such an interesting paradox! It's moments like this that make me feel like music mirrors life as a whole.



I wish you the best in 2026 and as we take a daily step back towards the light of spring.

Musically,
Christopher

Wisdom of the Poets

THOSE WINTER SUNDAYS by Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor from the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When rooms were warm he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

Responses always welcome - [Elizabeth Torrey](#)



Welcome Newcomers!
Join Us for a
Monthly Newcomers Coffee
Sunday, January 18, 2026

Are you new to our congregation and are wondering what we are all about? Do you have questions about Unitarian Universalism, Old Ship Church or are looking for a warm place to connect? We invite you to join us for our Monthly Newcomers Coffee Hour! It's a relaxed and friendly space where you can meet fellow newcomers, chat with long-time members, and learn more about the life and spirit of our community. Grab a cup of coffee or tea and come as you are – we look forward to welcoming you! The Newcomer Coffee Hour is held following the service on the third Sunday of each month.. Please join us on Sunday, January 18th at our church office and meeting space located at 14 Main Street, entrance on South Street. If you have any questions, please reach out to [Elaine Cusker](#), [Diane Elliott](#), [Teri Lillis](#) or our Minister, [Rev. Carie Johnsen](#)



Trans Parent and Caregiver Support Group
Thursday, January 15th at 6:30 P.M.
14 Main Street, Hingham

Gather with others who share your experience of being a transgender parent or caregiver. Come join us as we tell our stories in a safe and supportive environment. This group will continue to meet on the third Thursday of each month. Please contact Bob Caravana at bobcaravana@gmail.com.



Life Learning Offerings

Our Life Learning Committee has completed the schedule of classes and groups for 2025-2026.

[Please click here for the schedule.](#)

The Gathering

NO GATHERING ON 12/24/25, this Wednesday!

The Gathering will meet **every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.** in 14 Main Street Parlor. All women are welcome! For info contact [Diane Elliott](#).

Men's Breakfast – Meets on the Fourth Sunday morning of each month at **8:30 a.m.** in 14 Main St. Parlor and on Zoom. Our next gathering will meet on **Sunday, December 28th**. Contact [Eric Espinosa](#) or [Rubin Marquez](#) for information and a Zoom link.

Bodhisattva Study Group - Every **Sunday morning, 8:30 AM**. Zoom only. Twenty minutes of sitting meditation followed by discussion of a Buddhist or related text, facilitated by members of the group. For questions and Zoom link, email [Lisa Sawyer](#).

Ceilidh! – Gathers on the first Tuesday of each month. This means our next monthly song/poem circle will be on **Tuesday evening, January 6th at 7:00 p.m.** We are currently planning to gather in the Parlor as well as on Zoom. Email [Eric Cornetta](#) with any questions about Ceilidh. The zoom link is: <https://zoom.us/j/92888235659>

Sacred Texts Meditation Group

Next gathering: Thursday, January 8th

4:00 - 5:30 p.m., Zoom Second and fourth Thursday afternoons

Each session will have a reading, a 15-minute meditation, and exploration of one chapter from the Tao Te Ching (including its meaning to each of us), as well as related writings, poetry or art. Newcomers are welcome. Gatherings will be Zoom only. For information and the Zoom link, contact [Rich Elliott](#).

Religion in America

Dennis Hogan

**Tuesdays at 4:00 P.M. January 20 – February 24
at 14 Main Street/Zoom**

This class will be a topical survey of religion in the United States from the time of colonization to the present. We'll look at specific topics such as early foundations, belief systems and myths, impact on the U.S. Constitution and laws, role in westward expansion, political dynamics, relationship to slavery and indigenous life, demographics, current trends and potential implications for the future. There will be six classes over an eight week period. Readings will be provided digitally or through internet links. For information and to sign up, contact [Dennis](#).

News from the Social Justice Council (SJC)

Our next meeting is Saturday, January 24 at 9 a.m. on Zoom. Here is the Zoom

link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84444553939?pwd=tu7RnT75RuGouAfprXEShdQkrBRzsJ.1>



January Special Plate/Outreach Collection: Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry's Renewal House Shelter for Domestic Violence

Victims — Renewal House operates within a network of organizations providing safe, confidential shelter and healing services to those fleeing violence. Residents of the shelter receive counseling and support services

throughout their stay at the shelter. Additionally, staff help those residents who are looking for permanent housing. Renewal House is unique in that it continues to support former residents long after they move on from shelter through individual services and group events. We at Old Ship have supported Renewal House for many years. In operation since 1980, Renewal House was one of the first domestic violence shelters in the state to provide shelter for male survivors, and now works closely with programs across Greater Boston to bring culturally-responsive and LGBTQ-inclusive advocacy and counseling to those it serves.

Donations can be made as part of the special plate collection in the Meeting House, date TBA, or at anytime throughout the month through the Old Ship website. Click the donate button and then designate your donation for the Outreach Offering: Renewal House. Thanks in advance for your support of this important work that puts our values out into the world.

In October, we donated \$1183.81 to the Weetumuw School in Mashpee, serving Wampanoag children on the Cape. Thanks to everyone who donated to support our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Hingham Food Pantry — Each week during the service, we collect food for the Hingham Food Pantry. We also collect food at 14 Main whenever the office is open or whenever there is a meeting or other event there. Although the federal government has reopened and SNAP benefits are being paid, there is still a need for us to support the food pantry as much as we can. Many people are facing difficult times financially and being able to use the food pantry may permit someone to keep their home and pay other expenses. In November, we donated 141 pounds of food to the food pantry. ***The food pantry is currently in need of the following items: Regular Ground Coffee, Decaf Ground Coffee, Canned Healthy Soups, Cranberry Juice, Pasta Sauce, Healthy Cold Cereals, Crackers, and Cookies.***

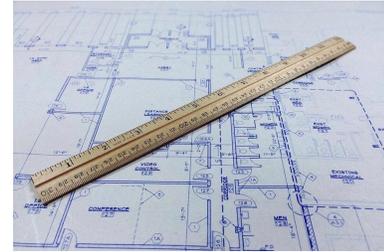
Antiracism/Social Justice Drop in Book Group Discussing a Book about Keeping Our Democracy — Our next book group meeting will be on January 18, 2026. We will be discussing *Giving Up is Unforgivable: A Manual for Keeping a Democracy* by Joyce Vance. This book puts our current crisis in historical context and offers a hopeful vision for the future while acknowledging the real challenges we currently face. She empowers readers to do something both individually and collectively to keep our democracy. The Zoom link is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87637841227?pwd=LVEbQGUtuRZIB83OZ5U9atbNmfgAHN.1>. Contact Patti Smith if you have any questions.

News from the UU Urban Ministry — *The Ties That Bind: A concert honoring the life of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* on Monday, January 19, 2026, from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm at 10 Putnam St, Roxbury, MA 02119. The event is free (although donations are accepted), and refreshments will be served following the music. Seats are limited. Please RSVP at [The Ties that Bind | UUUM - Boston, MA](#).

Join UUSC's Resistance Network: Building Power to Defend Human Rights and Democracy — UUSC's rapid response hub mobilizes people of faith and conscience to defend freedoms and protect communities facing injustice. Whether resisting civil society crackdowns, defending trans and non-binary communities, supporting people in migration, or countering climate regression, our network acts with urgency and solidarity. Click here to join the network: [Join UUSC's Resistance Network – UUSC](#).

Community Space Team Update

The Community Space Team provided a status update of their work on a new Parish House at a church meeting after service on Sunday, December 7. The team presented the key issues and developments that have led them to settle on two designs as options for Old Ship: a two-story and a one-story building. The team is currently engaged in evaluating and pricing both designs for a presentation to the Board and the Congregation and an eventual vote in early 2026. Because of that work, regular open meetings will not resume until the new year



The Old Ship Calendar

The Old Ship Church calendar is available on our website by clicking [here](#).

If you have an upcoming event or meeting and you want to see it on the calendar, please email [Lisa](#) in the office.

Additionally, if you contact information has changed, please email [Lisa](#) so she can update the Old Ship database.



Upcoming Committee Meetings

- **Christmas Choir Rehearsal** - Wednesday, December 24, 3:00 p.m. Meeting House
- **Transitional Ministry Team** - Tuesday, December 30, 3:00 p.m. 14 Main Parlor
- **SET/RE Meeting** - Tuesday, January 6, 6:00 p.m. 14 Main St Parlor
- **Board of Trustees** - Wednesday, January 7, 6:30 p.m. Zoom/Parlor
[Click here for the zoom link](#) The agenda will be sent out the week of the meeting

Out of Office

Lisa will be out of the office Friday, December 26th. She will return on Monday, December 29th at 9:00 A.M.



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