



first parish, hingham
old ship church
unitarian universalist

14 Main Street
Hingham, MA 02043
(781) 749-1679

office@oldshipchurch.org
www.oldshipchurch.org

April 2026 Monthly Newsletter

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Deadline for May's newsletter: Tuesday, April 21, 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!](#)



April Newsletter Embracing Possibilities

April 5th Spring Celebrations– Easter Egg Hunt for All Ages
Rev. Carie Johnsen, Christopher Nickelson-Mann, Spiritual Exploration Team

Join us as we welcome the joy and renewal of spring with a festive celebration for the whole community! Come enjoy: a community-wide Easter egg hunt, time to connect across generations, the beauty and promise of spring. Bring your family, friends, neighbors, grandchildren and your sense of joy—we can't wait to celebrate with you!

April 12th Building the Possible
Rev. Carie Johnsen, Christopher Nickelson-Mann, Stewardship Campaign

“The future is not simply a place we are going, but a place we are creating.”
(John Schaar) Today, we embrace possibilities as we close the Stewardship campaign and celebrate the generosity of Old Shippers.

April 19th Imagining End-of-Life Possibilities

Rev. Carie Johnsen, Crhristopher Nickelson-Mann

Join us to learn about local advocates collaborating with MA legislators on the End-of-Life Options Act. Old Ship members will share brief personal experiences supporting compassionate choices.

Sara Elkins from [Compassion and Choices](#) will lead a community forum following the service.

April 26th

Catherine Mayes, Karen Churchill, Christopher Nickelson-Mann

We welcome Catherine Mayes as our special guest. Stay tuned for more about her visit.

Everyday Ordinary Theologies...

On Thursday, I attended the de-hooding ceremony for my friend Benny, a monk at Wat Nawamintarachutis Buddhist Meditation Center in Raynham. Our friendship began during my chaplaincy at Taunton State Hospital, where Benny offered weekly meditation sessions for individuals living with chronic, complex behavioral health challenges. Benny’s life in the monastery exemplified for me the practice of *getting proximate*. In addition to his meditation classes at the state hospital, he extended his outreach to people who were unhoused, veterans, prisons, senior centers, and schools.



This practice of *getting proximate*, a core philosophy from Bryon Stevenson, encourages us to cultivate deeper relationships with people who are marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded. Rather than working for justice from a distance or privileged positions, we are called to move beyond our familiar rhythms, patterns, and habits, which keep us closely connected to like-minded people.

Getting proximate means moving beyond familiar groups and comfort zones. This process challenges us, fosters growth, and helps us build understanding, empathy, and community for effective advocacy and action.

Our April theme, embracing possibilities, invites us to consider how we might deepen our connections by practicing proximity. As you ponder possibilities, I offer a few options:

- **Join Rev. Carie Johnsen and Davalene Cooper at the UU Urban Ministry** for their upcoming workshop [Bridges of Understanding](#)

Saturday, April 4th from 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Participants will engage in guided conversations exploring identity, lived experience, and relationships across differences. The workshop creates space for thoughtful dialogue while encouraging deeper listening and understanding.

- **Join Rev. Carie, Ellie Handleman, and Nancy Bettinger** virtually for the **UU Mass Action, Advocacy Day** – Thursday, April 16, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 pm. Join UUs from across the state to build power for our movement. Meet with legislators about key areas: Immigrant Justice, Climate & Environmental Justice, Economic & Housing Justice, Indigenous Justice, and Decarceration & Ending Solitary Confinement.
- If you are already on the **Father Bill's** cooking team, commit to serving the meals you prepare. If you're not on a team, volunteer to serve the meals. You can do this by reaching out to Brenda Black at blackpollara@verizon.net.

May deeper relationship form with new practices of getting proximate.

In faith,
Rev. Carie

Next Chapter Musings *from the desk of the minister emeritus*

Carie kindly suggested I share a “Musing” with you every now and then – perhaps a couple of times a year. So here I am, writing from the perspective of this “next chapter” of life.

Earlier chapters? Childhood, young adulthood, middle years, and so on. Which I suppose suggests that another way of putting this stage of life is that I, like some of you, am in the “and so on” chapter. But by whatever name, it followed the thirty-five-year chapter as Old Ship’s parish minister, during which Susan and I raised our three children... and by the time I retired, were enjoying grandchildren too.

Yet rich and wonderful and satisfying as my active ministry with you was, at age 70 it felt to me that it was time for a new chapter – for me and also for you. As for you, I am grateful for Carie’s graceful and wise leadership during this transitional time; and grateful too, from my observations at a bit of a distance, for your continued dedication and embrace of the challenges you face, along with your continued care and love for each other and for Old Ship.

As for my mostly slower-paced “next chapter,” two of my volunteer activities are as co-chair of the interfaith “Listening to Other Voices” lecture series at Glastonbury Abbey, and as a member of the team which creates the twice-monthly bulletin for Elders Climate Action (eldersclimataction.org) – doing what I can to play a small part in creating a future we’d like our grandchildren and all the children of the world to be able live into.

Finally, for now, I hardly need remind you that all of us, in whatever chapter of life we find ourselves, are living through a distressing and often disheartening time in our nation’s history. Among the various ways I try to keep my spirits up these days, I’ve been reading the new book by historian Jon Meacham, “American Struggle: Democracy, Dissent, and the Pursuit of a More Perfect Union.” It is a documentary history of the many times we’ve experienced and survived pretty extreme polarization in our history. In his introduction, Meacham reminds us that though there are no guarantees we’ll make it through this time, there are lessons to be drawn from the past, and, as



he writes on the final page of the book, the odds are better if we “stay in the game” – each of us doing what we can, however modest, to reclaim our democracy, with gratitude for the still abundant beauty and goodness and love in the world and in our lives.

Sending many good wishes and blessings to each and every one of you at Old Ship.

--Ken



***Historical and Land Acknowledgement
First Parish in Hingham (Old Ship)
~ adopted by the Board of Trustees, March 11, 2026***

First Parish in Hingham, following the Social Justice Council's guidance, officially adopted a historical and land acknowledgment. On March 22, 2026, council members presented the statement to the congregation in a service title Acknowledgements and Aspirations. See also: [Slavery at Old Ship Final Report 3-18-2025](#)

As a people committed to justice, equity, and interdependence, we pause each week to remember our history. This land was once occupied by the Indigenous people whose descendants still live throughout the region and are now known as the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag. We acknowledge that our church continues to benefit from past injustices, including slavery. We remember that history, and imagine the world that is possible, and will become, as we act in solidarity with Indigenous People, Black People, and Other People of Color for our human liberation.

April Board of Trustees Update

On Wednesday March 11, the Board met for its monthly meeting. Here are items of note from that meeting:



Spiritual Exploration Team: (SET) members Nina Wellford and Judi Flaherty presented a proposal to hire a Religious Education Teacher 24 hours per month starting in September, 2026. Addie Handleman has resigned effective the end of the church year and the SET seeks to develop a more professional teacher position and a more aspirational program as they pursue an expanded outreach to the community and families. The position requires a budget of \$6000 for 10 months which they would like

included in the Annual Budget presented at the Annual Meeting. **The board agreed this should be a prospective budget item and if funding isn't available the initiative would be reconsidered.**

Stewardship / Capital Campaign discussion:

Janice & Nina will host a discussion at 14 Main on 3/22 with a brief presentation and Q & A. Emphasis will be on the need to separate the two distinctive fundraising efforts.

Membership Committee update:

The Membership Committee plans to send letters to inactive, non-pledging members. The membership committee has drafted a letter which invites distant members to re-engage or if no longer inclined to let us know that they do not wish to be maintained on the membership roles. The Committee will send the letters after the Annual Meeting in May.

Community Space Team update:

Dennis Hogan reported that final construction drawings are now being developed by the architect. There are 4 contractors interested in submitting bids on the project. Once the drawings are ready, the process of applying for permits will begin.

Treasurer's report:

Jack Gomez shared a profit/loss report as of December. The new bookkeeper, Lisa Ryan, is working out well. There will be a preliminary budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year presented at the April meeting. The Torrey family is working with our music director, Christopher, to review the use of the funds they donate every year through the Torrey Music Fund.

Circle dinners or community potluck dinner in April:

Janice McPhillips proposed circle dinners or congregation potluck in April. She will speak to a potential host home.

Other issues:

Several Listening Circles organized by the Shared Ministry Committee have been held regarding the Thanksgiving Community service and participation by OS. One had 13 people attending; one had 1 person attending; 1 person spoke to Carie directly; one more Listening Circle is scheduled.

Carie reported that in the second year of shared ministry a review is appropriate and guidelines will be organized by June. It is important to consider these questions: What have we accomplished? What are we working on? What do we want to accomplish in the next two years?

If you have any further questions, please contact BOT President Trish McAleer at president@oldshipchurch.org.

Community Space Team

With the congregation's approval, the Community Space Team is working with our architect, Torrey Associates, to finalize the design of the new Parish House. This process will take another month, at which point the finished design will be sent to builders for fixed bids. Builders will take 3-4 weeks to submit their bids

(approximately by late May), at which point the team will vet the bids and select the builder. The team is also preparing for the permitting process that follows and for communicating with our neighbors, and will provide regular updates to the congregation.



“Old Ship, New Future” - Our 2026 Stewardship Campaign

March and April are our stewardship months at Old Ship. Our theme for 2026-2027 is “**Old Ship, New Future**”. This theme honors the historic nature of our Meeting House and congregation while also noting our commitment to a vibrant future. Through your generosity in making a financial commitment to Old Ship, we can turn our commitment into a reality.



As our church is completely self-supporting, we look to our members and friends to give as generously as possible. Your financial support will allow us to continue our transition ministry process, sponsor more community events, growing our SET/RE program, fund our music program and caring for our beloved Meeting House. We can pay our staff fairly, fund our Social Justice initiatives, offer Lifelong Learning courses, and continue to be inspired every week by our worship service. Of course, this all requires the necessary resources only we provide. You should have received a giving guide and pledge card by mail. Please return your pledge card or go online to pledge by visiting www.oldshipchurch.org/giving.

Our Stewardship Team this year includes Pia Young, Janice McPhillips and Trish McAleer.

On **Sunday, April 12th**, Fellowship Hour will be held at the **Hingham Community Center**. It will be a **PIZZA** lunch. Salad or dessert contributions would be welcomed and greatly appreciated. These items can be dropped off at HCC before the service and head to the Meeting House. Please join us to celebrate the generosity, abundance and enthusiasm present in our Old Ship community. Hope to see you there!

Nominating Committee Seeking Candidates for Several Leadership Positions

The Old Ship Nominating Committee identifies and nominates candidates within the congregation to fill vacancies in elected positions. This year's committee consists of Joan Wilson, Claire Petrie, and Dana Kintigh.



This is an exciting time for our congregation, as we shape our vision for the future. It's an ideal time to get more involved in leadership! The work has

begun to identify candidates for the 2026/2027 church year. The following positions will be open as of July 1, 2026:

At-Large Member, Board of Trustees

Two members needed to join the seven-member Board of Trustees

(Term = three years; maximum of two consecutive terms)

Serve on the Board of Trustees in a non-Officer role. If you have ever considered getting more involved in leadership at Old Ship, this is a perfect opportunity to ease in and learn the ropes.

Member, Nominating Committee Member

One member needed to join the three-member Nominating Committee

(Term = three years)

Help to identify candidates for elected positions in the church and assist with orientation and training for newly elected individuals.

Member, Trustees of Invested Funds

Two members are needed to join a five-member committee

(Term = five years)

Help to oversee Old Ship's investment manager in the sound management of the church's investment portfolio.

Treasurer, Board of Trustees

One member to serve as Treasurer

(Term = one year; maximum of two additional successive terms)

The Treasurer receives and disburses the funds of the Parish, keeps appropriate books of accounts and other necessary records of receipts and expenditures, performs all other duties normally pertaining to the office, and is a voting member of the Finance Committee.

President, Board of Trustees

One member to serve as President

(Term = one year; maximum of two additional successive terms)

Serve as the lay leader of the congregation and liaison between the Board of Trustees and the Minister; preside at meetings of the Board of Trustees and at meetings of the Parish; and represent the Parish on all appropriate occasions. The President is an ex-officio member of all standing committees, except the Committee on Ministry.

If you would like more information about any of the vacant positions, please contact **Joan Wilson** (joanielw@verizon.net).

Transitional Ministry Team

The TMT continues to meet and discuss topics raised at our January workshop. This process work continues to look at the big picture of "Who is Old Ship". Our mission is to raise conversations concerning where we are now while we also consider our growing edges. This work will culminate in a final report to be presented to the congregation before the end of the church year.



Sunday, March 15th Service is viewable on YouTube this week!

NEWS! We will be providing a link to the previous week's service for a 1-week time period so that anyone who missed the service can view it. The video will only be available for that one week. Please [click this link](#) for the Sunday, March 15, 2026 Service.



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.

March 29th: In accordance with with the 6th principle of our UU faith we will be constructing individual chalices for children to take home so they have a daily reminder of our pledge to “ work together to be mindful about creating a world that is peaceful and just.

Here is the plan for April:

April 5: Easter Sunday will be an intergenerational Service celebrating the Earth's Awakening April.

April 12: Exploring the 7th UU principle of "the interdependent web of all existence with Corey

April 19: Addy leads the morning

April 26: Making bag lunches for Father Bill's shelter with Nina

Please encourage friends with children to come discover who we are as UUs and as a growing congregation!

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, March 29th

Fellowship Hour will be held at 14 Main Street. **Last names beginning I - P** are asked to bring a snack on **Sunday, March 29th** 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.

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

Debbie Squire-Lee

Auri Fitz-Marquez

[Elaine Gomez](#) 781 820 4077

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

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

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

Musical Notes

Dear Old Ship Church,

April is National Poetry Month, a time to celebrate the deep meaning of language and how it connects us all. As Unitarian Universalists, it's important to remember that poetry can amplify voices that might otherwise go unheard. Some of the most meaningful and transformative contributions to the world of poetry were written from the margins—poets of color, women, LGBTQ+ writers, and others whose perspectives deepen our shared understanding of the world. Their work invites us not only to be present and reflect, but most importantly, to be changed.



From folk to pop, poetry's connection to music is inseparable. Many choral works begin first as poems. The music is drawn from the rhythms of the words, the images they evoke, and the meaning behind them. Expression, tone, breath, and many other factors can deepen the meaning of the words. As we celebrate National Poetry Month, we might look for poetry not only on the page but also in song, recognizing how both art forms elevate each other.

Musically,
Christopher

Wisdom of the Poets

GUSTY AND WARM

I saw the season's first bluebird
this morning, one month ahead
of its scheduled arrival. Lucky I am

to go off to my cancer appointment having been given a bluebird, and, for a lifetime, having been given this world.

- Ted Kooser, Nebraska poet, and former United States Poet Laureate



Responses always welcome - [Elizabeth Torrey](#)

2nd Annual Old Ship Pot Luck Dinner Saturday, April 18th at 5:00 P.M. Nina Wellford's Home

Everyone is invited to the 2nd Annual Old Ship Community Pot Luck Dinner on Saturday April 18 at 5pm at Nina Wellford's home located at 231 South Main Street, Cohasset. That's Cohasset, NOT Hingham! Please bring a pot luck item to share and a card listing the ingredients. We are starting this event early in the evening so those who prefer to not drive after dark can be part of the fun and still get home safely. There will be several options for after-dinner activities such as charades, card games, small group discussion and maybe even karaoke, TBD. This event was a lot of fun last year so please come join us this year. For questions or more information reach out to [Janice McPhillips](#) or [Nina Wellford](#).



SHARING FOOD + TELLING STORIES

Welcome Newcomers! Join Us for a Monthly Newcomers Coffee Sunday, April 19, 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, April 19th 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, April 16th 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.



Poetry: A Lifetime's Golden Thread **Elizabeth Torrey** **Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M.** **April 8th, 15th and 29th** **14 Main Street Parlor & Zoom**



Honoring National Poetry Month in April, this three-week session we will share favorite poems from childhood, adulthood and elderhood. For the first session, bring some poems you may remember from your childhood. Thinking back over our lives, entering “the kingdom of remembrance” in Mary Oliver’s words, via meaningful poems, will give us a deeper appreciation of the many golden gifts that poetry offers. For further information, contact [Elizabeth](#).



Life Learning
at Old Ship
2025 – 2026



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

The Gathering will meet **every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.** in the 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, April 26th**. 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 April 7th at 7:00 p.m.** We are currently planning to gather in the Parlor. Email [Eric Cornetta](#) with any questions about Ceilidh.

Sacred Texts Meditation Group

Next gathering: Thursday, March 26th

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](#).

HINGHAM NO KINGS RALLY
THIS SATURDAY, March 28, from
9:30-11:00 a.m.

The Social Justice Council invites any Old Shippers who would like to stand together at the No Kings Rally to gather by the gazebo at the Hingham beach. Louise Smith will be there with the Old Ship banner.

For anyone going into Boston, UU Mass Action members will gather with allies across our movement at No Kings Boston. On Boston Common, they are planning to meet up at the yellow star- near the Charles St. entrance.



News from the Social Justice Council (SJC)

April Outreach/Share the Plate for the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB)

This month, we have designated the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB) as the recipient of our outreach offering. As the oldest urban Indian center in Massachusetts, the mission of NAICOB is to empower the Native American community with the goal of improving the quality of life of Indigenous peoples. NAICOB was originally established in 1969 as the Boston Indian Council (BIC) when it served as the hub of social and civil rights activities for the American Indian/Alaska Native and First Nations urban Indian community in Boston. In 1976, Governor Dukakis signed Executive Order No. 126 recognizing the Boston Indian Council as the state's liaison with resident members of tribes with whom the state holds Treaties and other agreements. The BIC reorganized as the North American Indian Center of Boston in 1991 and offered innovative programs such as a drop-in recovery facility, Native American head start, and on-site job training. NAICOB continues to provide a wide range of cultural, social, educational, and professional services to Native peoples in the Commonwealth, guided by the express needs of our community members. For more information, go to [NAICOB - Home](#).

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



Hingham Food Pantry

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

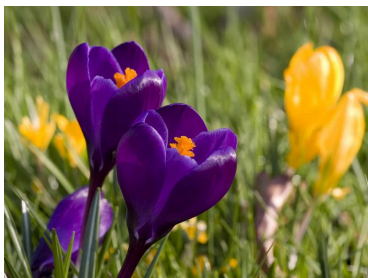
If you have an upcoming event or meeting and you want to see it on the calendar, please email [Lisa](#) in the office.

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



Upcoming Committee Meetings

- **Choir Rehearsal** - Sunday, March 29, 9:00 a.m., Meeting House
- **Board of Trustees** - Wednesday, April 8, 6:30 p.m. Zoom/Parlor [Click here for the zoom link](#) The agenda will be sent out the week of the meeting



Happy Spring from your friends at Old Ship Church!

First Parish, Old Ship Church | 14 Main Street | Hingham, MA 02043 US

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