



Jan. 16, 2025

LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD

A big thank you to Sally Ashley for the wonderful hand lettering and quotation choices each month on our Wayside Pulpit.



“Planetary Chaplain”

Worship Service, Jan. 19, 2025, 10 a.m.
Worship Leader: Mark Gallup

Religious Exploration welcomes children ages 4-13.

Come in person or click below to join the service!

<https://uukennebunk.org/Sunday-Service-Access>

Or by cell phone (audio only) 929-205-6099, meeting ID 734 887 010,
Password:02448

upcoming EVENTS

- This Sunday, Jan. 19, at 4 p.m. MLK Concert: Music of Stevie Wonder
- Sun. Jan. 26, 11:30 a.m. Religious Exploration Open House
- Wed. Jan. 29, 6 p.m. Evening Vespers

This week's sermon: Who Is Your Planetary Chaplain?

On Monday, January 20, we celebrate the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King., Jr. Through his work and influence, he brought the divine into service to alleviate suffering, bring joy to others, and strengthen their personal worth and spiritual well-being. His story is the very definition of what one calls a "Planetary Chaplain".

This coming Sunday Mark Gallup, the service's worship leader, will ask: who is your planetary chaplain? What story do you have to offer about this person? Your planetary chaplain could be a friend or relative, a teacher or professor, a media personality, an organizational founder, an author or artist. Better it be someone you know and have interacted with personally.



In the first half of his reflection Mark will tell the story of his planetary chaplain. Then he will walk about the sanctuary with a microphone asking people to tell the story of their planetary chaplains. The reflection will conclude with recognizing the work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King.

Our 22nd annual MLK celebration



Featuring the music of Stevie Wonder & MLK readings by KHS students.

**Reception following
Sun. Jan. 19, 4-6 p.m.**

This year, we are offering an all-new celebration for the Martin Luther King Holiday. The event features a full-length concert of Stevie Wonder's music by Higher Ground and writings by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. read by students from Kennebunk High School. Everyone will congregate in the Parish Hall for a reception following the concert.

Rev. Tori Rosati will introduce the program, which will take place in the Sanctuary. Higher Ground is made up of 14 terrific singers and musicians from the Portland area. It will be a tribute to MLK and to Stevie Wonder, who has been very active in the Civil Rights movement championed by MLK. Stevie advocated for the MLK Holiday as well as many social justice issues through his music. Some of the songs to be included are: *Uptight*, *Signed Sealed Delivered*,

Living for the City, You Haven't Done Nothing, and Higher Ground, as well as his early love songs. The band will conclude with *Happy Birthday*, a song that promoted the establishment of the holiday.

Notice that this year's event will be on Sunday afternoon before the holiday – a change from our former timing the morning of the holiday itself. We hope this time will be more convenient for working people to attend.

We are expecting this concert to sell out. If you do not want to buy your tickets online, there will most likely be some tickets available at the door.

Suggested donations are \$25 adults, \$10 children and teens.

Use this link to make your reservations:

<https://www.uukennebunk.org/mlk25>

Members decide “Yes” on full-time minister

At our semi-annual meeting last Sunday, members voted unanimously to raise enough money to fund a full-time minister's position. Rev. Tori Rosati is now serving $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and this decision will enable her to spend more time with us. Her new contract will go from July 2025 to July 2026.

Happy New Year from all the Board

“Once Upon a Time (Unfolding)”

Excerpts from Rev. Tori Rosati's sermon Jan. 12

Writing has always been a central and creative presence in my life. ... My best friend from childhood, Lindsey and I used to spend countless hours sitting on the ... basement stairs drinking coffee and writing, ... chronicling our childhood in spiral bound notebooks thick with ink and now dusty with age.

One continuous feature of my writing from that time, was how I would begin each story or poem ... with the word, “and.” “And” linked them together in a way that my teenage self-found that deep and profound—that they were all related. ... Each piece, each reflection, each story only existed in relationship to what came before, and what would one day come ... true of all stories.

Stories have power in how they connect us to our past and future. ... Some of the earliest words we heard as children were, “Once upon a time.” ... Those

stories existed beyond time. They unfolded, like my teenage journals, without ever really ending—they were in process, always changing, adjusting, and growing. ...

As storytellers, humans have been passing down stories since the dawn of our time—stories that helped us make sense of the world and find meaning, stories that bonded whole communities and civilizations together, connected us to our ancestors and passed down sacred wisdom ... We see this dynamic process at work in how many of our world's sacred texts were formed. ... They were dynamic and open, inviting each generation to engage with them anew.

But alongside this tradition emerged the practice of canonizing stories, ... The advent of the printing press further solidified this practice—stories once told and retold were now set in place for all time. ... I often wonder how these ancient sacred texts might have evolved if they had continued to unfold over time, free from the constraints of fixed interpretation.

And this is true of our larger cultural and societal stories as well. Our world is overflowing with competing narrative stories fueling conflict and war, hate, oppression, and exclusion. Stories attempting to rewrite or erase entire swaths of history to serve someone's agenda. Stories centering the perspectives of a few simply because they had the power to tell them. And, in this way, our stories risk becoming static, they risk losing the fluidity and responsiveness they once had. They risk losing their magic.

This month we are reflecting on story as practice - how we might engage with storytelling in a way that brings life, nurtures our spiritual lives, and connects us to each other. ... How might our own stories grow and change if we, too, allow them to remain alive and responsive to our present moment? ...

Susan Beaumont (see Sunday Bookcase) makes a distinction between thin and thick narratives. "A thin narrative" she tells us, "glides over ambiguity and conflict. It flattens the story down to an easily digestible sound bite. ... A thick narrative on the other hand, is one that presents a more comprehensive and richer storyline. It incorporates more detail, ... competing commitments, and tensions between values."

... Since I joined you all a year ago, I've been listening to so many of your beautiful stories. The stories of your personal lives, trials and tribulations, joys and sorrows, the stories of how you have responded as a community to the wider challenges going on in the world—wars you spoke out against, a pandemic

you endured, ministerial transitions you navigated, and justice initiatives you led the way on in the community. ...

I'm reminded of the story of your *Black Lives Matter* flag when it was torn down in 2022. As the story was told to me, you didn't let that act of vandalism be the story. Instead, you gathered as a community on a cold February day, no less, to hold a vigil, to proclaim your values of equity and justice, and to raise another flag in its place. The theft and destruction of that flag could have been the end of the story, but you chose to write an "and." ...

As we move into the year ahead, we will be fighting for many of the same things that prompted you all to raising that flag in the first place. ... A story that we are still interpreting, is still unfolding as a tale of resilience, of shared courage, of a hope that refuses to back down. A thick story that we are part of as we write together what chapter comes next. ... Each one of you holds a piece of this congregation's story. ... So, as we tell our stories, let's imagine an "and" at the beginning and one at the end. ... What would happen if we added more layers and points of view even if that means we have to complicate and trouble our own version of things.

We do all this because ... "Once upon a time, unfolding" a group of people of different ages and backgrounds, different life experiences and cultures—they came to together in challenging times, in joyful times to retell and co-create, to thicken and interpret, to recognize and remember that the story continues ... and ...

Evening Vespers

Through these winter months and amidst the many storms raging in our world, finding space for quiet, reflection and the presence of companions around us can be a nourishing and sustaining practice. Join us **Wednesday, January 29th at 6pm** for evening Vespers - a simple service of silence, readings, meditation, and music. This service will provide a sacred space, as evening draws near, to lean into the solace and peace that community brings, as we nourish our spirits for all that lies ahead. **Please join us after for a simple supper of soup and bread. You are welcome to bring a pot of soup to share.** Rev. Tori will be leading with music by Ginny Lawrence. All are welcome.

Reach out to Rev. Tori with any questions (uukennebunkminister@gmail.com). Hope to see you there!

MUUSAN focuses on Justice

At the December meeting of Maine UU State Action Network, 60 UU's from all over Maine came up with areas of deep interest to focus on this year. In order to hone the focus topics, we developed the survey below and will have a Network Meeting 2 Saturday, January 25 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on Zoom. You are invited! Register by going to

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Q1USipg7RrufKZMkPH0lrA>

Please take the survey to help us focus even if you do not go to the meeting. If any of these topics are passionate interests of yours, use the following link to let us know what you think.



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdBJ8NgOq1MIJuBwk0BT8QNaaHph6y7LlimLqEosGKIBrL9Ag/viewform>

Survey the topics of interest:

- 1. Protecting Vulnerable People:** LGBTQA++, incarcerated, new Mainers/immigrants, families (access to health and childcare), reproductive rights
- 2. Housing Protection:** ordinances/regulations, rental issues, voucher system, homelessness
- 3. Protecting Our Environment:** carbon emissions, habitat protection, air and water quality, sustainable energy
- 4. Protecting Our Democracy:** voter suppression, money in politics
- 5. Wabanaki Sovereignty**
- 6. Gun Safety**

Letters:

Our Sunday services this fall and winter have been wonderful. I have loved the combination of joy, spirituality and out of the box Sundays, like the presents and the hymn singing. Thank you Rev Tori and the Worship Committee for your inspiration and imagination and all you do to make our community strong and full of love.

Marylyn Wentworth

Concerned about hunger in our community?

First Parish is searching for a new liaison to keep us in touch with COS (Community Outreach Services). This is a very special organization that offers many services including a Food Pantry with nonperishable foods as well as produce, other household necessities, assistance with energy expenses, and other special needs for residents of Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Arundel. Our liaison will help organize food drives and encourage members to volunteer in the work of COS. It is also important to inform members of our own community how we can benefit from the services COS offers.



Childcare position is open

One of our caregivers has stepped aside, leaving a Sunday morning childcare position open. The church has funds budgeted for childcare - two hours per Sunday. All ages and genders are welcome to apply, perhaps you know a

high school student that may be interested?. A background check will be required. Join the fun in the nursery as you earn a modest stipend. Inquire at the FPUU office.

Sunday Morning Bookcase



- *How to Lead When You Don't know Where You're Going*, by Susan Beaumont
- *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*, by Terry Tempest Williams
- *Jesus and the Disinherited*, by Howard Thurman
- *Meditations of the Heart*, by Howard Thurman
- ***Black Liturgies: Prayer, Poems and Meditation for Staying Human*, Cole Arthur Riley**
- ***How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*, Susan Beaumont**
- ***Essay: "ripe conditions," adrienne maree brown***

OFFICE hours

Rev. Tori's office hours are mostly Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the church.

Due to other obligations her schedule may change. Please email the office to

set a time if you wish to speak with her.

One of the important duties of a minister is pastoral care for those in need. Our minister, Tori Rosati, is available to any congregant in need. Tori can best be reached at uukennebunkminister@gmail.com. For pastoral emergencies, please use Tori's cell: (978) 238-8210.