



Dec. 19, 2024

LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD

*The gloom of the world is but a shadow.
Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy.
There is radiance and glory in darkness,
could we but see. And to see, we have
only to look. I beseech you to look!*

Fra Giovanni Giocondo (c.1435–1515)



The daughter and granddaughter of a church member light the first candle on Christmas Eve last year while Patrick Conner plays a carol.

Photo by Paul Beach

“Unboxing Presence”

Worship Service, Dec. 22, 2024, 10 a.m.

Intergenerational service: Children welcome

Worship Leader: Rev. Tori Rosati with Jacky Peters and Susie Desantis

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

Holiday Services

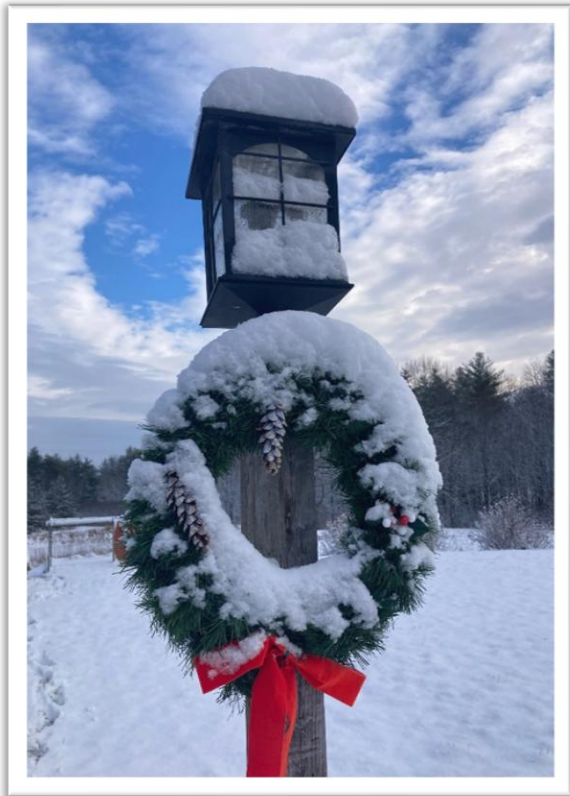


Photo by Al Adams

- ❖ Sat. Dec. 21, 7 p.m. Winter Solstice Celebration
- ❖ Sun. Dec. 22, 10 a.m. Holiday Intergenerational service
- ❖ Tue., Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
- ❖ Sun. Dec. 29, 10 a.m. Sunday Service: Preparation for the New Year
with Mark Gallup and Mary Gelfand
- ❖ Wed., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. & midnight, Annual Blueberry Ball drop

Zoom link for **all** holiday services:

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

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

Poinsettias for the Holiday

If you would like to drop off a poinsettia at the church in honor of a loved one, we will have them displayed during our holiday services and your loved one's names included in the Christmas Eve Order of Service. Please email Allison at uukenebunkoffice@gmail.com or call her at 207-985-3700 and let her know the names to be included.



Sunday Service: Unboxing Presence



Our monthly theme, *The Practice of Presence*, invites us to embrace the unexpected and be fully present to each moment as it unfolds—often in surprising and meaningful ways. This Sunday, join us as we (literally!) unwrap this intergenerational service of readings, stories, and songs. Together, we'll open ourselves, present by present, to the joys and delights of the season! Rev. Tori leading worship with Jacky Peters, Susie Desantis and music by Chris Staknys, Jaylene Summers, Crow Lowry, and Paul Beach.

Winter Solstice Celebration

As the longest night of the year, Dec. 21, gives way to the promise of dawn, we gather to honor the darkness and celebrate the return of the light.



"Embracing the Dark, Welcoming the Light" invites you into a sacred space of story, music, and ritual as we journey through the turning of the wheel. Through shared ritual and song, we will honor the comfort and deep presence of the dark from which the Light emerges. Let us prepare our hearts for the return of the sun, awakening the light within ourselves and our world. All are welcome to this meaningful celebration of the

solstice Sat. Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. Come as you are and join us as we mark this ancient ritual with hope, joy, and connection.

“Christmas Presence”

This year’s Christmas Eve service, journeys through the nativity story told from the point of view of Mary, Joseph, an innkeeper, shepherd, donkey and wise man. Inspired by the accounts of Matthew and Luke, Al Adams wrote a brief monologue for each



character. A Homily will be given by Rev. Tori Rosati, carols led by Music Director Christopher Staknys, and our traditional candle lighting will complete the service. Our special collection this year will be shared with “New Beginnings,” an organization that supports at-risk and homeless youth in Maine. All are welcome to this service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 5 p.m.

10th Annual Wild Maine Blueberry Drop

Join us family friendly New Years Eve as we countdown to 2025! The Blueberry countdown drop is at 9 p.m. and midnight. Other activities include ice skating at the Waterhouse Center and admission to the Brick Store Museum is free from 6-9 p.m.



A Conversation on Belief

Presented by Rev. Tori Rosati and Allegra Highsmith Sunday, Dec. 15

Tori – We knew the theme for December was Presence, and we already had this idea about a *Ted Lasso* service around Belief. This theme of belief is all over the holiday season—we are being called in movies, holidays cards, scripture, everywhere—to believe in the impossible, in the magic, the presence of the holy, and the hope of liberation.

And this can feel, particularly in these days of political upheaval and uncertainty, so very hard. Not only that, but maybe even inadequate? So how can we hold fast and true to our beliefs? Is it all more than just magical thinking? How can we be present for this time we are all living through in a way that captures the magic of what might be, regardless of external factors, and then hold ourselves accountable to living that that way in the world? And, maybe most importantly, how do we do this together?

Allegra – We also started talking about togetherness, and how we don't do it alone. Presence is all about showing up. Being present. Being counted. When you show up, you bring your belief and your hope with you. Showing up = Believing, Showing Up = Hope, Showing Up = Being there for each other, Showing Up = Being Present. Thank you all for showing up here today, by the way.

Tori – Yeah, I love this—the showing up part of belief—that it's not just a passive thing. What we believe in calls us to be present to the world around us—to remember that our actions matter.

And this beautiful and at times heartbreaking world offers us a glimpse of this, affirms our deepest beliefs, every day. I love how the readings, meditations, and songs that we've heard today remind us of that—that we need to be connected, be present, to what is already all around us.

Sometimes we need only pause and look around to notice the everyday reminders of this. The woman at the counter serving soup with care, the drops of rain on parched earth, the flicker of a candle's light in the dark. These small things call us back to belief, reminding us that thirst can be quenched, light can

come, and kindness still matters. These moments whisper to us: 'Don't give up. Stay the course.'"

And these moments also remind us that we can't do this alone. We can't create the world we long for in isolation. When our belief falters, when our faith feels thin, we need others to remind us of what's possible. We can't believe alone—the magic of belief happens when someone sits with us, encourages us, helps us to see the world we dream of can be real.

Allegra – In *Ted Lasso*, at the beginning of the series, the lead character puts a sign up in the locker room of his soccer team that says "BELIEVE." It's a big yellow sign with blue writing, and it becomes a through line of the plot. At a few junctures, during some moments of disbelief, the sign gets taken down and torn up. Each time, members of the team come together to piece it back together. It's a reminder that whenever we are in doubt or having a moment where we are questioning our belief, we have those around us to help us piece things together again.

What do you believe in?

Write a paragraph or two for *First Parish News*, and send it to our office:

uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com

Spreading the Holiday Cheer

Ornaments made by the children in our Religious Exploration program were taken to our fellow parishioner Ann Livermore at Atria for herself and for her to give to others.



A Message from your Board Chair

Last night the Board of Directors met with the Minister's Transition Team and the Finance Committee to review the 2025 budget proposal prepared by the Finance Committee. Following an excellent discussion the Board voted unanimously to submit this budget to the Congregation for final approval. It is important to note that it supports a Full Time Minister.

The Congregation will vote on this proposed budget at our Semi-annual Meeting on January 12, 2025. Please put this meeting into your calendar. The official Warrant will be sent out on December 27th. It will include the Board-approved budget proposal.

The Board has scheduled a budget information session for Sunday January 5th, immediately after the Church service. At that time questions about the position of our current Minister can also be addressed.

Our current contract with Rev. Tori expires on June 30, 2025. In this contract, the Board is required to indicate to her by January 15 2025 its intention about any possible new contract with us. We want everyone to know that the Board has indicated to Rev. Tori that we would like her to stay another year and that she has stated she is willing.

Happy Holidays from all the Board
Ted Trainer, Chair

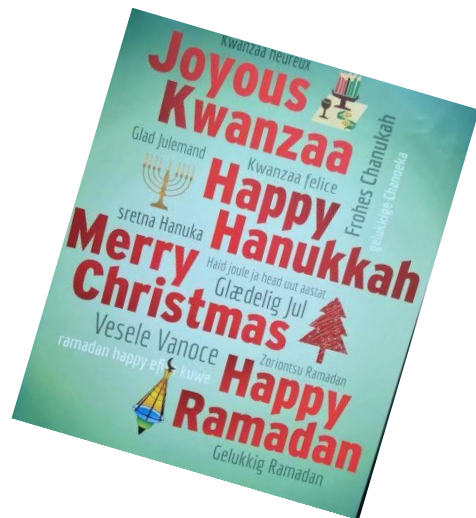


Childcare position is open

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. A background check will be required. Join the fun in the nursery as you earn a modest stipend. Inquire at the FPUU office.

“Happy Holidays” seen on FaceBook

When someone says, "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas," remember they're not doing it because of political correctness. They do it out of respect, because from November 20 to January 24, there are at least 14 different religious holidays. So, when someone says “Happy Holidays” to you, thank them. They respect whatever it is that you believe.



Church Directory

The office is in the process of updating the church directory for the new year. Please let Allison know if you would **NOT** like to be included in the revised church directory or if you have any changes to your information. Email: uukennebunkoffice@gmail.com or call 985-3700. Thank you!

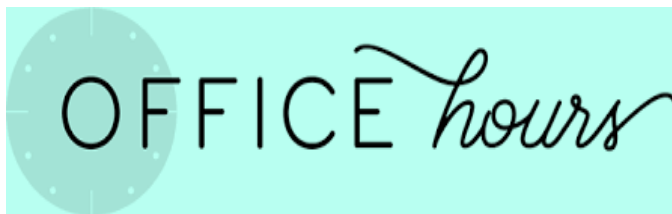
Year End Financial Housekeeping!

This year we were able to exceed expectations on our pledged amounts — amazing news! However, we're still about \$14,000 behind on *collecting* some of those pledges! If you have an outstanding amount of money, please get that to us as soon as you're able! If you have any questions about what you owe on your 2024 pledge, you can email uukennebunkbookkeeper@gmail.com to receive an up-to-date statement.

Sunday Morning Bookcase



- *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*, by Terry Tempest Williams
- *Jesus and the Disinherited*, by Howard Thurman
- *Meditations of the Heart*, by Howard Thurman
- UUA Actions of Immediate Witness: click [HERE](#).
- *See No Stranger, A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*, by Valerie Kaur



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.

The Office will be closed on the following dates: Dec. 25, Dec. 26 and Jan. 1st.

The FPUU Newsletter will be on holiday next week, we'll be back in your inboxes in the New Year!

Happy Holidays!

First Parish UU Church Kennebunk

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Rev. Tori Rosati "Indwelling Star" New Member Ceremony	2	3 10:30 a.m. RE Comm. meeting 5:15 p.m. Sangha 7 p.m. Properties Committee	4 6:30 p.m. Worship Committee 7 p.m. Evening Discussion	5 3:30 p.m. Choir	6	7
8 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Chris Wells "Meeting the Moment"	9	10 10 a.m. Member. Comm. Meeting 5:15 p.m. Sangha 6:30 a.m. WFAS 6:30 p.m. Men's Open Group	11 4:00 p.m. Soul Mat- ters Creative Team 6:30 p.m. Vespers "Blue Christmas"	12 3:30 p.m. Choir	13 6:30 p.m. Song Swap	14
15 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Allegra Smith w/ Rev. Tori Rosati "The Practice of Belief"	16	17 10 a.m. Small Group Ministry 5:30 p.m. Small Group Ministry 5:15 p.m. Sangha	18 5:30 p.m. B.O.D. Meeting 7 p.m. Evening Discussion	19 3:30 p.m. Choir	20	21 7 p.m. Winter Sol- stice Service
22 10 a.m. Worship Service "Unboxing Presence" led by Rev. Tori Rosati	23	24 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Service	25	26 3:30 p.m. Choir	27	28
29 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Mary Gelfand & Mark Gallup	30	31 5:15 p.m. Sangha				

First Parish UU Church Kennebunk

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:30 p.m. Worship Committee 7 p.m. Evening Discussion	2 3:30 p.m. Choir	3	4
5 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Rev. Alix Klingenberger 11:15 a.m. Budget info session	6	7 10:30 a.m. R.E. Team Meeting 5:15 p.m. Sangha 7 p.m. Properties	8 5:30 p.m. Soul Matters Creative Team 7 p.m. Evening Discussion	9 3:30 p.m. Choir	10 6:30 p.m. Song Swop	11
12 9 a.m. Semi-Annual Meeting 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Rev. Tori Rosati "The Story of Us" 11:30 a.m. Reflection Circle	13 7 p.m. Finance Committee	14 10 a.m. Member- ship Committee 5:15 p.m. Sangha 6:30 p.m. WFAS 6:30 p.m. Men's Group	15 5:30 p.m. B.O.D. Meeting	16 3:30 p.m. Choir	17	18
19 10 a.m. Worship Service "Planetary Chaplain" led by Mark Gallup	20	21 5:15 p.m. Sangha	22 5:30 p.m. Small Group Ministry 7 p.m. Evening Discussion	23 3:30 p.m. Choir	24	25
26 10 a.m. Worship Service led by Kathe Wright & Mary Gelfand 11:30 a.m. RE Open House gathering for families	27	28 10 a.m. Sm. Group Ministry 5:15 p.m. Sangha 6:30 p.m. WFAS 6:30 p.m. Men's Grp.	29 6 p.m. Vespers "Wintering"	30 3:30 p.m. Choir	31	