

FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

Sunday, March 25, 2018

Ringing of the Church Bell

Rebecca Pike, First Parish Bell Ringer,  
with Molly McGinty and Sofia Santoro

**A Thought as the Service Begins** Owen Benedict, Henry Mayer  
Svarczkopf, Lena Donovan, Molly McGinty, Valerie Preslavska, Abigail  
Kramer, Meredith Hill, Amelia Leuning, Martina Smyth

We would like the world to awaken to:

- ✦ Science
- ✦ Vulnerability
- ✦ Imagination
- ✦ Nature
- ✦ Self-love
- ✦ Human rights
- ✦ Acceptance
- ✦ Sharing
- ✦ Being yourself
- ✦ Nonbinary gender
- ✦ Equal rights
- ✦ Environmentalism
- ✦ Love in all its forms
- ✦ Diversity
- ✦ Attaining your dreams
- ✦ Interdependency
- ✦ Rainbows.

*(We ask that you turn off the ringer on your cell phones as well as the flash on your cameras. Please sing along with the choir during the prelude if you would like. The words are on the insert.)*

**Prelude** Wake Me Up (Bergling, Blacc, Einziger)  
Youth Choir

**Call to Worship** Blackbird (Lennon, McCartney)  
Youth Choir

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*Join the Youth downstairs for an exceptional, treat-filled Fellowship Hour. There will be wonderful food, great conversation and, of course, coffee!*

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The art in the sanctuary this morning was conceptualized and created by the Middle Matters and Senior High Youth and coordinated and hung by the Middle Matters Art Committee: Abigail Kramer, Martina Smyth, and Valerie Preslavska.

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Greeters: Henry Mayer Svarczkopf and Owen Benedict and their families

Ushers: Meredith Hill, Lena Donovan, and Sofia Santoro

Fellowship Hour hosts: Amelia Leuning, Henry Mayer Svarczkopf, Meredith Hill, Owen Benedict

Middle Matters Worship Committee: Lena Donovan, Martina Smyth, Molly McGinty

Middle Matters Music Committee: Amelia Leuning, Lena Donovan

*Special thanks to all who helped with this service:*

- ♥ **Liz Davis-Chaffin, Religious Education Director**, for her unending support in RE and Youth Groups and her "Let's do it!" attitude.
- ♥ **Shawn McCann, Director of Music**, for his flexibility and hard work getting sheet music, wrangling musicians and singers, and directing the very enthusiastic Youth Choir in just a few weeks!
- ♥ **Sherry Spaulding, Lindy Hanninen, Krista Ingram, and Brenna Mayer** for their gentle guidance in facilitating Middle Matters Youth Service preparations.
- ♥ **Marisa Benson, Jon Frey, Tim Svarczkopf, and Brenna Mayer** for all the fun in Youth Group facilitating activities for service preparation.
- ♥ **Haley Watson, Lara Hill, and Sara Woods and Nick Maciel** for all that they have given to First Parish since they were the little ones! We love you! Nick will be sharing his reflections later this spring.

# FIRST PARISH CHURCH

Groton, Massachusetts

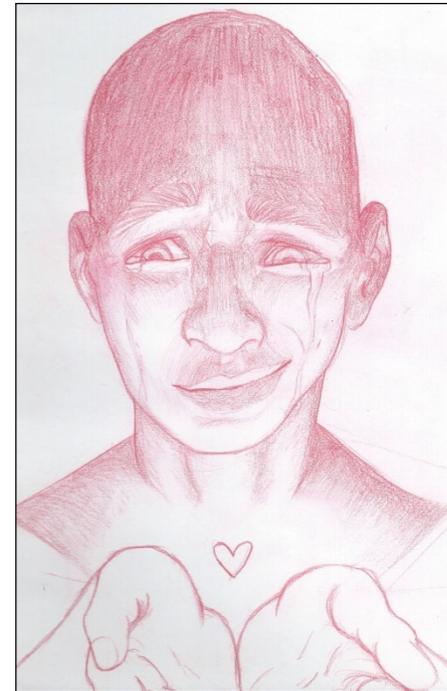
## PLEASE TAKE A PALM ON YOUR WAY OUT OF CHURCH TODAY

Today is Palm Sunday in the Christian calendar and it is our practice to offer palms to the congregation. According to the story told in the Gospels, when Jesus returned to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, crowds gathered in the street to see him and they cut palm fronds from nearby trees and lay them down in the road to protect Jesus from the dust, as would have been done for a King. The Gospels say the people yelled "Hosanna," which means Save us! They were recognizing Jesus as their hoped-for savior or messiah. This is what the palms symbolize in traditional Christian theology. But less than a week later, those same crowds were witnessing Jesus' crucifixion, angry that the person they thought was going to be their savior was now being killed as a political rebel, an instigator of trouble, and seemingly without power enough to save himself, much less them. For us, the palms can be a reminder of our human vulnerability and the yearning to want simple answers when there are none. It is easy to want others to fix things for us, but the work of healing and justice belong to us all. The palms can be a reminder to stay faithful and to remember that things are not always what they seem. Jesus' story did not end with death after all. It ended with the mystery of the empty tomb on Easter morning and all that means - rebirth, rising and love as the last word. And the palms are green, tender, living things, a reminder of the reality of spring in these last long days of cold. So, you are welcome to take a palm away from church with you today and with it a blessing for strength, patience and hope until Easter morning comes. (EJK)

**THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON** was gathered as the town church in 1664. The congregation worships in its fourth Meeting House which was completed in 1755. A town clock and Revere-cast bell rings out our call to service every Sunday. The congregation is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a liberal faith that affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth; a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

**WELCOME ALL VISITORS.** We are so glad you are here. Join us for coffee and conversation after the service where you can meet our minister, Elea. Everyone here is happy to speak with you and answer any questions you may have. Please sign one of the Guest Books on the tables near the front and back entrances so we can know who you are. Be sure to indicate if you want to get emails or newsletters about events in and related to First Parish.

*"First Parish is a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation. We warmly welcome members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community."*



*Artwork by Sam Mayer Svarczkopf*

We are a community seeking to deepen spiritually, to take care of one another, and to be a blessing to the world.

*For more information, please visit our website: [www.uugroton.org](http://www.uugroton.org) and our Facebook page at First Parish Church of Groton, MA.*

### **A Warm Welcome to All!**

There is childcare for infants and toddlers through age three years beginning at 9:50 AM on the second floor of the East Wing and you are welcome to take children there at any time during the service. There are quiet toys in the soft, multicolored fabric pouches and picture books in each pew. The service is also broadcast downstairs in the large room beneath us if anyone needs to take a break.

**Welcome and Announcements** Dmitri Foster, Worship Leader

**\*Hymn** Roar (Perry, Gottwald, Martin, McKee, Walter)  
(see insert)

**Chalice Lighting** Amelia Leuning

**Response Hymn** (please remain seated) #123  
Spanish trans. Rev. Lilia Cuervo and Ervin Barrios

Fuente de Amor, ven hacia mí.  
Y al corazón, cántale tu compasión.  
Sopla al volar, sube en la mar;  
Hasta moldear la justicia de la vida.  
Arráigame, libérame,  
Fuente de amor, ven a mí, ven a mí.

Spirit of Life, come unto me.  
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.  
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;  
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.  
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;  
Spirit of life, come to me, come to me.

**Reading** Sofia Santoro

**Time for All Generations** Musical Mystery Lazy Lights  
with Jai Santoro on Ukelele

**Singing the Children and Teachers to Religious Education**

Children's Blessing (First UU Nashville Youth Choir)

May your mind be open to new learning  
May your lips bring truth into the world  
May your heart know love,  
and your hands do the work of justice  
As you go your way in peace  
As you go your way in peace

**Reflection** Haley Watson

**Anthem** Defying Gravity (Schwartz) Martina Smyth

**Reading** Maddy Premru

**Spoken Candles of Celebration and Concern** Molly McGinty

*You are invited to come forward, introduce yourself, share a personal and heartfelt joy or sorrow in a sentence or two, light your candle from the chalice and place it on the candle table. Please take a moment to gather your thoughts into one or two sentences.*

**Reflection** Lara Hill

**Prayer** Henry Mayer Svarczkopf

**Open Meditation** Valerie Preslavaska and Sara Woods

**Offertory** Funny (Tori Kelly) Lara Hill

**Offertory Response** (Barbara Rich, Joshua Rich)

Today we give our time  
Our compassion wit and song  
Every day, we can choose  
To begin again in love.

We give what we can  
Generous as we can  
Opening the doors  
To begin again in love.

**Reflection** Sara Woods

**\*Hymn** Man in the Mirror (Ballard, Garrett) (see insert)

**\*Sung Benediction** Carry the Flame (Patricia Pavey)

Carry the flame of peace and love until we meet again.  
Oh, carry the flame of peace and love until we meet again.

**\*Spoken Benediction** Lena Donovan

**Postlude** You're It! (Wookiefoot) Youth Choir  
*(Instead of remaining seated and quiet during the Postlude, the youth request that, today, you sing along [words on insert] and get up and dance or stay seated and dance as the spirit moves you!)*

**\*Please stand as you are able.**

*Large Print Hymnals, Sunday Bulletins, and Assisted Listening Devices are available at the sanctuary doors. If you don't wish to keep your Sunday Bulletin, please place it in one of the recycle baskets at the sanctuary exits.*