

*September
Worship
Theme:
Belonging*



Sunday, September 11, 2016

**Special Worship Service, 10am in the Parlor
REMEMBRANCE OF THE SEPTEMBER 11TH
ATTACKS**

Rev. Catie Scudera

Our Ingathering Sunday is on the same day as the fifteenth anniversary of the September 11th attacks in New York City and Washington D.C. that claimed almost 3,000 lives, including of four Needhamites and many others from Greater Boston. Join Rev. Catie and Irina for a short, reflective service in the Parlor before our Ingathering worship to remember who and what was lost on that day.

Worship at 10:30am in the Meetinghouse

**INGATHERING WORSHIP & WATER
COMMUNION: MAKING ROOM**

Rev. Catie Scudera, preaching

Welcome back, wayward First Parishioners! At our annual Ingathering Worship, the program staff is excited to see everyone who's been away for the summer months and all those who led and participated in our summer worship services. Our multigenerational Ingathering worship will ask the question, "How do we make room for those who belong in our church, but haven't found us yet?" We'll all participate in the Unitarian Universalist water communion ceremony (remember your water from your summer adventures!) and plan to stay after worship for our annual all-congregation photograph and potluck picnic sponsored by our RE Committee.

Ingathering Potluck Picnic

The Religious Exploration Committee invites you to participate in the "welcome back" potluck social hour after our ingathering service on September 11. The RE committee will provide the traditional big sandwich and some refreshing beverages. Bring your favorite potluck dish to share based on your last name:

- A - L: Bring a side dish or salad
- M - Z: Bring a dessert

We look forward to seeing you all there!

Saturday, September 17, 2016

**Memorial Service for Pat Brady
1:30pm in the Meetinghouse**

Please join Pat and Elinor's family and Reverend Catie for a memorial service celebrating Pat's life. All who would like to join in this celebration of Pat's life are welcome. In lieu of flowers, memorial charitable donations can be made in Pat's memory to Greater Boston Legal Services and Doctors Without Borders.

Sunday, September 18, 2016

**Worship at 10:30am in the Meetinghouse
COMMUNITY IS WHERE YOU WON'T
DISAPPEAR**

Rev. Catie Scudera preaching

At First Parish, we hope to co-create a community where every member, friend, and visitor feels welcomed, safe, and occasionally challenged to grow. However, many studies show that Americans are feeling lonelier than ever — despite the availability of diverse faith communities, civic and athletic organizations, and social media connections. We'll explore the problem of loneliness in our broader society, and how we can keep our personal and spiritual connections vibrant and life-giving.

A Green Sanctuary and a Welcoming Congregation

Sunday, September 25, 2016

Worship at 10:30am in the Meetinghouse

FAITH, SHIPWRECKS, AND SURVIVAL:

ECO-THEOLOGIES THAT MATTER

Rev. Michelle Walsh, preaching

In a world where climate change presses in on us and our children more closely, and on the marginalized in our shared world right now, what does our faith call forth from us? What are eco-theologies that matter?

Rev. Dr. Michelle A. Walsh, PhD, LICSW is an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister and licensed independent clinical social worker. She regards herself as a UU community minister and teaches at Boston University's School of Social Work. She and her husband, Rev. Clyde Grubbs, also share a consulting social justice community ministry, Tuckerman Creative Ministries for Justice & Healing (TCMJH), which includes a spiritual life coaching and wellness practice located in Watertown and on the South Shore. Rev. Dr. Walsh is the author of a forthcoming book: *Violent Trauma, Culture and Power: An Interdisciplinary Exploration in Lived Religion*.



Reminder about Theme-Based Ministry Trial

2016-17 is the second year of a 2-year trial of "themed ministry." The approach weaves together worship, education, small group ministry, spiritual practices and other aspects of community life around common monthly themes. Themed church, we hope, will deepen our experience together and will illuminate the shared values in our faith tradition. Themes for the year include:

- September: Belonging
- October: Democracy
- November: Abundance & Stewardship
- December: Presence
- January: Spiritual Growth & Lifelong Learning
- February: Risk
- March: Ethical Living & Integrity
- April: Balance
- May: Wellness
- June: Thinking Differently

More information about theme-based ministry can be found at <http://www.uua.org/ga/past/2014/worship>, <http://themebasedministry.org>, and <http://uuneedham.org/theme-based-ministry/>. If you have questions or feedback on this approach, please don't hesitate to share them with Reverend Catie or a member of the Worship Committee.



Rev. Catie's Column Seeking a Home to Belong

Like many of you, I spent a good deal of my August evenings watching the 2016 Summer Olympics. I was thrilled witnessing the athleticism and poise of the "Final Five" women's gymnastics team, old favorites like sprinter Usain Bolt, and new favorites like swimmer Katie Ledecky.

One athlete whose story has stayed in my heart the past month is Yusra Mardini. She's an eighteen-year-old swimmer who competed on a unique team: the Refu-



gee Olympic Team, a new "country" included in these Summer Olympics. The ten-person Refugee Olympic Team was created by Olympic organizers to highlight the worldwide refugee crisis. The team featured athletes from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Syria.

Now living in Berlin, Yusra Mardini and her sister escaped from war-torn Syria in 2015 after their family home was destroyed. Like many refugees, her destination was Europe, where a handful of countries have welcomed (some more warmly, some more coolly) those fleeing conflict areas. Like many refugees, Mardini and her sister eventually boarded a boat bound across the Aegean Sea for Greece. And, like many refugees, the transit was unreliable and treacherous — a half an hour into their voyage, the boat's motor failed.

Fortunately for all twenty people in that small boat, Mardini is one of the top swimmers in the world, having competed for Syria on the international stage. She, her sister, and two other refugees leapt into the cold water and together pushed the boat for three

hours (three hours!) before they reached land at the island of Lesbos. Everyone survived.

When I heard Yusra Mardini's story in early August, I remembered that a year ago in September, First Parish had designated a special Sunday collection plate for a fund to assist Syrian refugees, managed jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). This was the same month that Mardini and her sister successfully reached Greece. Since then, I've read dozens of articles describing the violence, trauma, and risks that come with staying in — and of leaving — Syria. Now, I know Mardini's story. I know the story of the Shalhoub family, a father separated from his family in Syria for over two years as he sought asylum status (for him and for them) in Europe. I know the stories of Omran Daqneesh and Rouwaida Hanoun, two five-year-olds severely injured in Aleppo, Syria, just this past month.

All of these people are seeking the same existential wholeness that we are in Greater Boston: security of body, spirit, and mind for themselves and their loved ones; opportunities for personal growth and for giving back; and, a sense of belonging within a caring community.

I'm sure that our plate donation last year has helped partners of the UUSC aid those who escaping war in Syria. But, I see that a year later, the violent conditions that are causing so many Syrian citizens to flee have not changed enough... Scores of desperate refugees, including children, from Syria and other war-torn countries are still drowning in the Mediterranean every month... Refugees and asylum seekers face discrimination, slander, and violence even if they succeed in escaping their once-beloved homes... In short, that there is still massive suffering.

What can we do next to aid and partner with those across the globe who are caught in this suffering?

Of course, individually and collectively we can continue to donate needed funds and supplies to organizations who are welcoming immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from all over the world. Two organizations that the local Needham Area Immigration Task Force works with are the [International Institute of New England](#) and the [Irish International Immigrant Center](#). There are also interfaith organiza-

tions like the [Boston New Sanctuary Movement](#). We can also stay attuned to language and legislation about immigration and refugees from our local, state, and federal politicians: Who is speaking about the refugee crisis with compassion, and who with fear or prejudice? What bills are coming up that make it simpler, or more complicated, for a refugee to resettle in the United States? How can our country's foreign policies promote, or trip up, the flourishing of other countries around the world?

And, I encourage all of you who have been touched by the stories of refugees like Yusra, the Shalhoub family, Omran, and Rouwaida to become active participants in our congregation's new **Immigrant Ministry social justice team**. Three newer members of our congregation — Si Si Goneconto, Will Rico, and Clark Taylor —introduced us to this new justice ministry at our Annual Meeting last May. They hope to galvanize First Parish members and friends to help give new immigrants in the United States that sense of belonging within a caring community — which all of us seek — through both friendship and material support.

After watching the Olympics, I am always in awe of the incredible talent and diversity present in our world. But, I am also always reminded that our world is deeply interconnected, and that the hardships happening thousands of miles away aren't actually so far away — and that means we can do something about it!

• *Rev. Catie*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Service and Workshop on Personal Legacies and Planned Giving

Sunday, October 16

SAVE THE DATE for a special service and workshop by the Rev. Laura Randall on October 16th sponsored by the Trustees for Invested Funds

The Sermon: "Legacies of Love": We are each the inheritors and the creators of legacies, for good and ill. What legacies do you aspire to? Struggle with? What legacies are you creating with your own life? What legacies are we, as Unitarian Universalists, creating together? The Rev. Victoria Safford says that

transformation comes from “thinking of yourself already as an ancestor, a leaver of legacies for descendants you will never meet, but whose lives are already intertwined with yours.” Join us as we explore the legacies that shape and inspire our shared ministry with the Rev. Laura Randall from the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The Workshop following the service at noon in the parlor: “Our Shared Legacy: Planned Giving for Unitarian Universalists”: The Rev. Laura Randall, Legacy Gifts Manager at the UUA, will present the planned giving basics and best practices for building a healthy planned giving program in our congregation. Come learn how simple planned giving really can be and the power it has to transform your congregation and Unitarian Universalism for generations to come.

Rev. Randall is the Legacy Gifts Manager at our Unitarian Universalist Association, helping individuals and congregations nurture the faith we love through planned giving. She is the Affiliate Community Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Area Church in Sherborn, Massachusetts, serving the broader community through ministries of stewardship and chaplaincy. Laura is a chaplain with AseraCare Hospice and serves on the board of Healing Moments Alzheimer's Ministry. Laura lives in Medford, Massachusetts with her husband, Luke, and their dogs.

If you have questions about these special programs, reach out to Nancy Simpson-Banker (Trustee of Invested Funds) at nsbanker@comcast.net

Get Your Room Requests In

Please get your regular committee meeting/ rehearsal/group meeting scheduling requests in to Susanna at office@uuneedham.org as soon as you can for a better chance of securing the room and day of the week you hope for. Thanks!

Rev. Catie Office Hours Reminder

As Rev. Catie returns from her study leave and vacation, she is restarting her weekly office hours. Unless attending a collegial meeting or responding to a pastoral emergency, Catie will be in her office at the church on Mondays from 1-3:30 pm and Wednesdays from 4-6 pm. She will also continue her “office hours out” on Thursdays from 8-10 am at Bagel's Best in Needham Center. Please book your appointment

with her in advance by emailing her at minister@uuneedham.org or leaving her a voicemail at 781-514-5464.

First Parish Office Hours

The church office hours are 9am—2pm Monday through Friday.

Musical Opportunities for Children

- **The Song Squad**

First Parish's Song Squad is ready for your children to sing with their hearts, learn with their minds and have some fun!! We welcome all levels of musicianship, grades 1-6, and we rehearse at 9:30 am before church. Typically we sing in services once a month, and have a BIG role in Festival of Lights! Take this great opportunity to have your children explore their musical interests while parents have a chance to prepare for RE, go to lyceum, or have a cup of coffee! Our 1st "rehearsal" and Welcome Back breakfast is 9:30 on Sept. 11th! Contact Kate (kidsmusic@uuneedham.org) if your child is interested in joining!



- **The UU Ringers**

The UURingers are back again!! Reading music, working together, and having fun, Kate is hoping to expand this group with more chimes- and to perform more often and accompany different musical groups at First Parish! All 5th-8th graders are welcome!! Our 1st "rehearsal" and Welcome Back meeting is 12:00pm on Sept. 11th! Contact Kate (kidsmusic@uuneedham.org) if your child is interested in joining!



Go Behind the Scenes with the Worship Committee

Are you interested in learning how a typical Sunday comes together? Members of the Worship Committee work behind the scenes to ensure high quality

services happen every Sunday, during the regular year and during the summer. We are actively recruiting new members! Church long-timers as well as folks new to First Parish are encouraged to get involved. If you'd be interested in learning more, please contact Scott McCue by email at mccue@post.harvard.edu or by phone at [\(617\) 549-8770](tel:6175498770).

FIRST PARISH PROGRAMMING

Worship at North Hill

Wednesday, September 7th, 10:30-11:30 am
Event Center, 4th Floor of Pines Edge at North Hill

North Hill residents and friends are invited to an intimate worship service led by Rev. Catie. Rev. Catie alternates leadership of monthly worship at North Hill with the minister of the UU Society of Wellesley, for members and friends of First Parish and the Wellesley Hills congregation. All are welcome!

Positively Aging: What do you do all day if you don't have a JOB?

Tuesday September 13 at 4:00 in the parlor

Our children are raised, our JOBS are done, the things we used to do in our spare time no longer excite us. NOW WHAT? What are our goals for our 60s, 70s, 80s? What projects are we starting or completing? What trips do we dream about or have plans for? What books are we reading? Are we bike riding, walking, working out at the gym, having lunch with friends, learning to knit socks, etc., etc., etc.

Do you wake up in the morning with eagerness or thankfulness for the day? Or do you wake up with a sense of emptiness and lack of purpose?

How can we help each other and learn from each other?

Our first meeting of the year will be Tuesday, September 13 at 4:00 in the parlor. Come with your thoughts and questions (and your list of books to recommend). Plan to stay for soup, salad and bread.

Parish Committee

Parish Committee meets Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 7pm in the Parlor.

Meditation Group

Do you need an hour of calm in your busy week? Are you interested in mindfulness and meditation? The **Meditation Group** at First Parish meets Thursday evenings from 7:30-8:45 in the Youth Room starting September 15th, and is open to all meditators, new and experienced. We draw inspiration from many different religious and philosophical traditions. A typical format: welcome and introductions, a short meditation, a reading or discussion, a long meditation, closing. We are informal and welcome all. Please join us.

Volunteer Sunday, September 18, 2016

Are you new to First Parish? Have you been here for a long time, but have always felt a little shy? Do you have a special skill that you want to share, but don't know who to ask? Are you interested in opportunities to become more involved in activities or causes that are close to your heart? Would it be even better with treats??

On Volunteer Sunday, September 18, you will have the chance to explore many of the options available to you here at First Parish. The Parish Committee is hosting Social Hour after the morning service, and the Program Council (chairs or contact persons for committees and task forces) will be there to highlight their group's missions and plans.

We encourage everyone to stay after the service for Social Hour. Come sample treats at every table, while learning about what our different programs offer for a chance to jump in, or just dip a toe in, the community waters of First Parish. There is room for all of us, at every level of commitment, to become more fully engaged with our First Parish community.

Get involved. It's energizing and fun!!

If you have any questions, please contact Beth Sargent at bethsargent@verizon.net

Caregivers Support Group

The **Caregiver's Support Group** is a gathering of our community members who are caring, from nearby or from afar, for loved ones of many ages, who are chronically ill or disabled, dying, suffering from dementia, struggling with alcohol or drug addiction, recovering from a long or complicated illness or surgery, or suffering in some capacity, to share their feelings in a supportive environment.

The **Caregiver's Support Group** meets the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month downstairs in the Youth Room. The meetings are confidential!

There is no need to become a "member".

Our first meeting this fall will be on Sept. 18th. Come to listen or to share. We welcome you!

Facilitator: Lyn Jekowsky lynjekowsky@comcast.net

Green Congregation Committee

The Green Congregation Committee meets Sunday, September 18 at noon in the Parlor.

Join Rev. Catie and the Lunch Bunch

Wednesday, September 28th, 12:30 pm (Parish Hall)

Kick off the church year by coming to the Lunch Bunch! Rev. Catie is again hosting members and friends of First Parish for a monthly brown-bag lunch date. In the past, this gathering has been primarily for "elders and friends" of First Parish, but the regular attendees have requested for the lunch to be advertised as open to people of all ages who are able to come! Catie will provide a sweet treat for dessert. RSVP to Catie and Buffy Duhig, particularly if you need assistance with a ride to the church.

ALSO OF INTEREST

Presentation on the history of Needham's Houses of Worship

Gloria Greis from the Needham Historical Society will give a presentation on the history of Needham's Houses of Worship on Sunday, September 18, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in Needham. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome

New Ken Burns Film Tells the Story of Unitarian Service Heroes

Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War

A new film by Ken Burns and Artemis Joukowsky, tells the untold story of Americans Waitstill and Martha Sharp who spent nearly two years on life-threatening missions in Europe to save refugees and dissidents from Nazi occupation. The film will air on September 20 at 9 pm (check local listings) on PBS. A trailer is available at www.defyingthenazis.org/.



The 90-minute film follows Waitstill, a Unitarian minister, and Martha as they leave their home in Wellesley, Massachusetts, entrusting their children to the care of their parish, and boldly commit to multiple dangerous missions in Europe. Over two dangerous years they help to save hundreds of imperiled political dissidents and Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi occupation across Europe.

"The story of Waitstill and Martha Sharp is one of the most incredible tales of compassion, sacrifice and heroism that I have ever heard," said Ken Burns. "Nearly three years before America as a nation became involved in the Second World War, these two unassuming, so-called 'ordinary' Americans gave up everything they knew and loved and risked their lives to become involved in a war 4,000 miles away because they knew there were people in grave danger who needed help."

Co-director Artemis Joukowsky is the grandson of Waitstill and Martha Sharp and has spent decades researching their story. He is the author of a companion book to the film, featuring a foreword by Ken Burns, which will be published by Beacon Press and released on September 6.

Defying the Nazis is cinematically told through the letters and journals of the Sharps, with Tom Hanks as the voice of Waitstill and Marina Goldman as the voice of Martha. It features firsthand interviews with now adult children whom the Sharps saved, as well as leading historians, authors and Holocaust scholars.

For more info, go to www.defyingthenazis.org/.

Marijuana Legalization:

Why It Matters to You

Thursday, September 22, 7-9pm

Needham Town Hall / Powers Hall

The Needham Interfaith Clergy Association and the Needham Public Health Department invite you to a presentation focusing on:

- The effects of marijuana use on youth and the developing brain
- The public health impacts of legalization in other states
- The details of MA Question #4: Recreational marijuana legalization

The presenters are some of the nation's top leaders in addiction medicine and emerging drug policy.

- Dr. John Kelly, Harvard Medical School, Director of the Addiction Recovery Management Service (ARMS) and Recovery Research Institute at the Massachusetts General Hospital.
- Kevin A. Sabet, Ph.D., Director of the Drug Policy Institute at University of Florida, Former White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) policy advisor and Co- Founder of Project SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana).
- Attorney John Sofis Scheft, Over 20 years experience in drug prevention advocacy and enforcement law. Served as an Assistant Attorney General and an Assistant District Attorney, Middlesex County.

A no-cost registration is required — go to uneedham.org, search for “marijuana legalization”, click where it says “event flier” then on “Click here to register”.

Benefit Concert for Central American Asylum

You are invited to attend a benefit concert for Central American asylum-seeking women and their children, recently arrived in the Commonwealth. The concert will be held at the First Church in Belmont UU, Saturday, Oct. 1, at 7 pm. Bev Freeman, a member of the church in Belmont, is organizing the concert in conjunction with the Needham Area Im-

migration Justice Task Force, which includes several members of First Parish UU in Needham.

We are delighted to present The Loomers with The Blood Mountain Brothers and a special guest appearance by The Yellow Room (Jon Svetkey and Heather Quay). Tickets will be \$25 at the door; buy tickets in advance: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/iiic-benefit-concert-tickets-27356408755> Donations can be made here: iiicenter.org/2016/02/case-manager/. View the event poster at <http://tinyurl.com/poster77>

The immigrant families to be helped by concert proceeds fled life-threatening danger in Central America and were incarcerated in Texas by the US government for crossing the border. Thanks to advocacy in their behalf, many are now being released (though families continue to be caught at the border and imprisoned), and 86 families have already arrived in the Commonwealth, where they have joined a friend or family member for temporary housing. The women and children are entitled to no public benefits due to their pre-refugee status. The case manager to be supported by this fundraiser will immediately extend services to them sponsored by the Irish International Immigrant Center.

Volunteer with Needham Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Program

Each year volunteers with the Needham Child Assault Prevention program (CAP), a program of Needham Community Council present approximately 60 classroom workshops to public school students in the first, third and fifth grades. Using a basic human rights framework, teams of volunteers teach that all children have the right to be Safe, Strong and Free. The classroom workshop, which consists of discussion and role-plays, focuses on recognizing and responding to verbal, physical and sexual assault.

No prior experience is needed. This year's training will be divided into two parts. Part 1 of the training will consist of 4 morning sessions: 8:45-1:00 on October 15th, 16th, 19th and 20th. Part 2 will be held on December 4th from 8:45-4:00.

The easiest and quickest way to reach us if you

need more information or have questions is by emailing us at cnemtzw@needhamcommunitycouncil.org. If you'd like to talk rather than email, please send us your phone number and we will promptly get in touch.

Volunteers needed for Needham 5th Quarter Program.

5th Quarter takes place after all NHS home football games. All high school age kids are invited to the A Gym at the high school immediately following the game to enjoy FREE pizza, soda, water and listen to or dance along with a DJ, play ping pong or shoot hoops in a safe, substance free environment. We are in our 6th year of running 5th Quarter. Our success has come thanks to many generous organizations who have stepped up to sponsor an event and you, our army of tireless volunteers who help with set up, serving, chaperoning and cleaning up. For more information contact Bob Timmerman.

FROM THE FIRST PARISH BLOG

Is First Parish a Social Justice-Oriented Church? by Clark Taylor, September 1, 2016

To What Extent? What Can We/Should We Do to Make It More So?

Let's start with the "Should We" part of the title. The Parish Committee adopted a Five-Year Plan in the spring of this year. One of its five major goals for the church reads, "Make social and environmental justice central to our identity, activities and programs." When friends or new folks to the church ask, "What does First Parish Needham feature in its life?" we might say, "We see social and environmental justice as a central part of our church life, of our very identity as a church."

As chair of the FP Social Action Committee (SAC) I am in a position to see many outreach programs that our church pursues and everyone reading this will know about some of them. And there are new ones just getting underway that you may or may not know about. There is, for example, an Anti-Human Trafficking Committee under the leadership of Peter DeMarzio that stems from FP but is reaching out to actors in the wider community, including the town

school superintendent and the police chief, who have roles to play in promoting understanding of trafficking. Another is an Immigration Ministry under the leadership of Si Si Goneconto and Will Rico, two relatively new members of our community. A third is a Climate-Justice Working Group taking shape under the leadership of Jan Galkowsii and Phil Lynes, which will work closely with the Green Congregation. And FP has a renewed version of the Welcoming Committee that seeks to provide a supportive community for everyone, including those who are LGBTQ. We know, as well, that the Continuing Education Committee provides a range of programs on social and environmental justice issues.

And we, as the SAC, have taken it as part of our vision to stimulate the consciousness of all ages to social and environmental justice. The Religious Exploration Program, for example, seeks to engage children and youth in church school in social action activities. And a major purpose of the Youth Program is to be active in social justice projects, which have a strong emphasis in their yearly mission trips.

Yet there remains the goal of moving FP to think of social and environmental justice as an even more integral part of our identity as a community of faith. In that regard, stay tuned for more blogs and notices about the lively outreach programs that are expressions of our faith as a church community. And I welcome your stories of ways in which you see your employment through a social justice lens, either in the specific activities you engage in or in the ethical decisions you make.

We, thus, seek to make the Five-Year Plan much more than a dust collector on a shelf. We invite you to come on the 18th of September on [Volunteer Sunday](#) to visit our table and volunteer for one of the action programs of the SAC.

Resettle Together – First Parish & Refugee Resettlement by Will Rico

First Parish is participating in a consortium of faith groups in Needham to support refugee resettlement and there is an opportunity for us to help in a big way during the final weeks of summer and leading into the fall.

First some background: The Needham "Resettle To-

gether" consortium, which First Parish is a part of, is one of several such consortia in the surrounding area, including towns such as Belmont, Burlington and others. We are all working together to support the IINE (International Institute of New England), a not-for-profit refugee resettlement agency based in Lowell.

IINE will be resettling 13 refugee families (70 people) between August 30th and September 15th (mostly in Lowell) and more families in the fall. To support these families, members of First Parish can help in several ways:

Fill a Bin with Household Goods

Starting Sunday, September 11, a bin will be placed at a table during social hour after services and in the lobby between services. Our goal as a church is to fill one bin this fall. Example items include a set of pots & pans, mixing/serving bowls, cooking and eating utensils, etc. Please see the full list here:

<http://tinyurl.com/bin781>

Weekday Volunteers

There will be lots of activity during the upcoming surge in resettlement activity, including setting up apartments, helping clients complete paperwork, walking families to appointments, and more. To help support our staff, we are seeking volunteers for four hour shifts from 9-1pm and 1-5pm between August 29th to September 16th.

Interpreters

During the surge, we very much need several additional Arabic, French, and Swahili speakers for the same volunteer shifts (9-1pm or 1-5pm). We may also need evening on-call interpreters in the same languages.

Trucks/vans

Especially the week of the 29th, we are seeking individuals with access to trucks and/or vans to help with apartment set ups.

If you would like to volunteer, please send an email to Will Rico (willrico@gmail.com) and/or Si Si Goncanto (snunt@yahoo.com) with your name, mobile phone number, volunteering dates/times, foreign language skills, and any additional offers

(trucks, landlord leads, etc.).

If you would like to contribute to the bin, please look for our table during social hour starting on September 11 or email Will and/or Si Si to coordinate pickup.

Combining our grassroots energy with IINE's 100+ years of administrative and social service expertise, we can make a difference for families coming from desperate situations and show that the true way to make our communities stronger is with a loving, positive spirit.

The Economics of Teardowns by George Rappolt, August 26, 2016

Many of you may have seen the [column on teardowns](#) in the Needham Times that I wrote this past summer. After the article was published, several people called me or spoke to me in person to talk about it. (The conversation with Selectman Moe Handel was particularly informative.) As a result, I now understand some aspects of the teardown problem that I hadn't been aware of – information you should have, too.

The main point of my column was that teardowns raise housing prices so much that they effectively take properties out of the pool of available housing for people at even the top end of the middle class. That's definitely true, but the question is what can be done about it. Policies that try to limit the price increase while allowing teardowns to continue simply can't work, a fact I had not appreciated when I wrote my column.

The reason is the economic situation of the developers. To do a teardown, the developer must first buy the property at its current price, then spend on the order of \$100,000 to demolish the house that's currently on the lot, and then spend what it takes to build a new house. The developer can't break even, never mind make a profit, unless the new house sells for much more than the old one did. Teardowns simply have to raise housing prices – and raise them a lot.

This economic reality has a further consequence – the idea that you will make a lot more selling to a developer than you will selling to someone who plans to live in your house is just a myth. Developers

want to pay as little for the properties they buy as they can, and almost the entire increased price they get for a teardown goes to cover their expenses and provide them with a profit. Unfortunately, the myth that you will always get more from a developer contributes to the prevalence of teardowns – and provides an excuse to some town officials to avoid doing anything to stop them.

There's a further twist to this story, and it has to do with the economic situation of realtors. A realtor who sells your house to someone who plans to live there makes one commission, based on the current price of your house. A realtor who sells your house to a developer for a teardown makes two commissions – one on the sale to the developer, based on your current house price, and another when the developer sells the new house, based on its much higher sale price. This creates a tremendous incentive for realtors to sell to developers.

This incentive to realtors seems to be a major driver of the wave of teardowns. Realtors are perpetuating the myth that homeowners can get a lot more money from developers than other buyers – I recently received a marketing letter from a realtor boasting

his ability to do this. People from our church have told stories of being forcibly steered away from houses they were interested in by their realtors – “you don't want that, it's a teardown!” (and the house just wasn't shown). Worse, I've been told stories of realtors harassing elderly homeowners very aggressively to get them to sell out. All of this may seem grossly unethical, but at least some realtors are doing it.

To actually stop the loss of middle-class housing in Needham, we'd either have to stop the teardowns altogether or allow the replacement of single family homes with duplexes (and provide incentives for that option). Either of these choices is likely to require zoning changes, which require a two-thirds vote of approval from Town Meeting. Needham is home to quite a few developers and realtors, and they have a direct interest in local ordinances. As a result, they are heavily represented in Town Meeting. The political reality is that it will be very hard to do anything meaningful about teardowns. Many of us will need to bring persistent pressure on town government, through Citizen's Petitions, active attendance of public meetings, and any other available avenues.

First Parish in Needham, Unitarian Universalist

Find the most complete and up-to-date information about worship, events, and programs at First Parish on our website, www.uuneedham.org.

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Members-at-large: Eliot Jekowsky, Geoff Austrian, Katie Edwards, Kristen Neff, Joan Mecsas, Suzanne Smart.

Bellman Information: The deadline for the **September Bellman** will be **Sunday, September 18**. Please send all website, *Bellman* and *Bell Note* items to bellman@uuneedham.org.

This issue compiled, edited and produced by David Mecsas.

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