

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish,

Greetings! Such a glorious time of year... luscious green heart energy emerging. Rain and sunshine feed the flowers yet to blossom in our hearts. Buds pop out of the bare arms of trees, seeds anticipate plunging into the darkness, earthworms silently chant under our feet, as once again the mystery of spring unfolds.

This time of renewal may bring us the hope of safety and connection. As more people are vaccinated and more of us can spend time with family and friends, gratitude has a different color. The earth is a strange and beautiful place to be right now, amidst the pain and fear that has clouded our spirits over the past year. Although many of us have experienced significant losses, we still rise to the hope of spring. I love Joy Harjo's poem *For Keeps*, as it reminds me I need to stay present to experience the mystery.

*Sun makes the day new.*

*Tiny green plants emerge from earth.*

*Birds are singing the sky into place.*

*There is nowhere else I want to be but here...*

*We know ourselves to be part of mystery.*

*It is unspeakable.*

*It is everlasting.*

*It is for keeps.*

It is into this mystery I am being called... to do nothing and be no-one for a while, to discern my next vocation. My ministry at First Parish is complete, and I will be leaving at the end of June.

This leaving is bittersweet. I love First Parish, the community, and all we have created over the years. I love our faith and believe it can help save the world. I am simply being called in another direction, not away from you, but into me.

First Parish is a strong, vibrant, healthy congregation with committed and competent staff and lay leaders. There are many opportunities for those seeking spiritual growth, a caring community, and justice work. A search for a two year interim minister is underway, and they will begin in August. Until then, all worship services and programming will continue via Zoom as recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association and our Safe Congregation Team.

Together we have planted and chanted and nourished one another, while witnessing the flowering of many things in our beloved community. First Parish reminds me of all that is good and true in this world. I wish we could communicate like the flowers do because then we would all see who we really are and perhaps our fear would melt away forever.

So as we move towards summer, there will be sweat and tears, prayers and laughter, as the garden of the church is planted again as it has been for hundreds of years. Flowers will bloom and die in our hearts. We simply must remember each one of us is part of an unspeakable and everlasting mystery which is for keeps.

With a deep bow of gratitude and blessings of love and light,

Rev. Christina