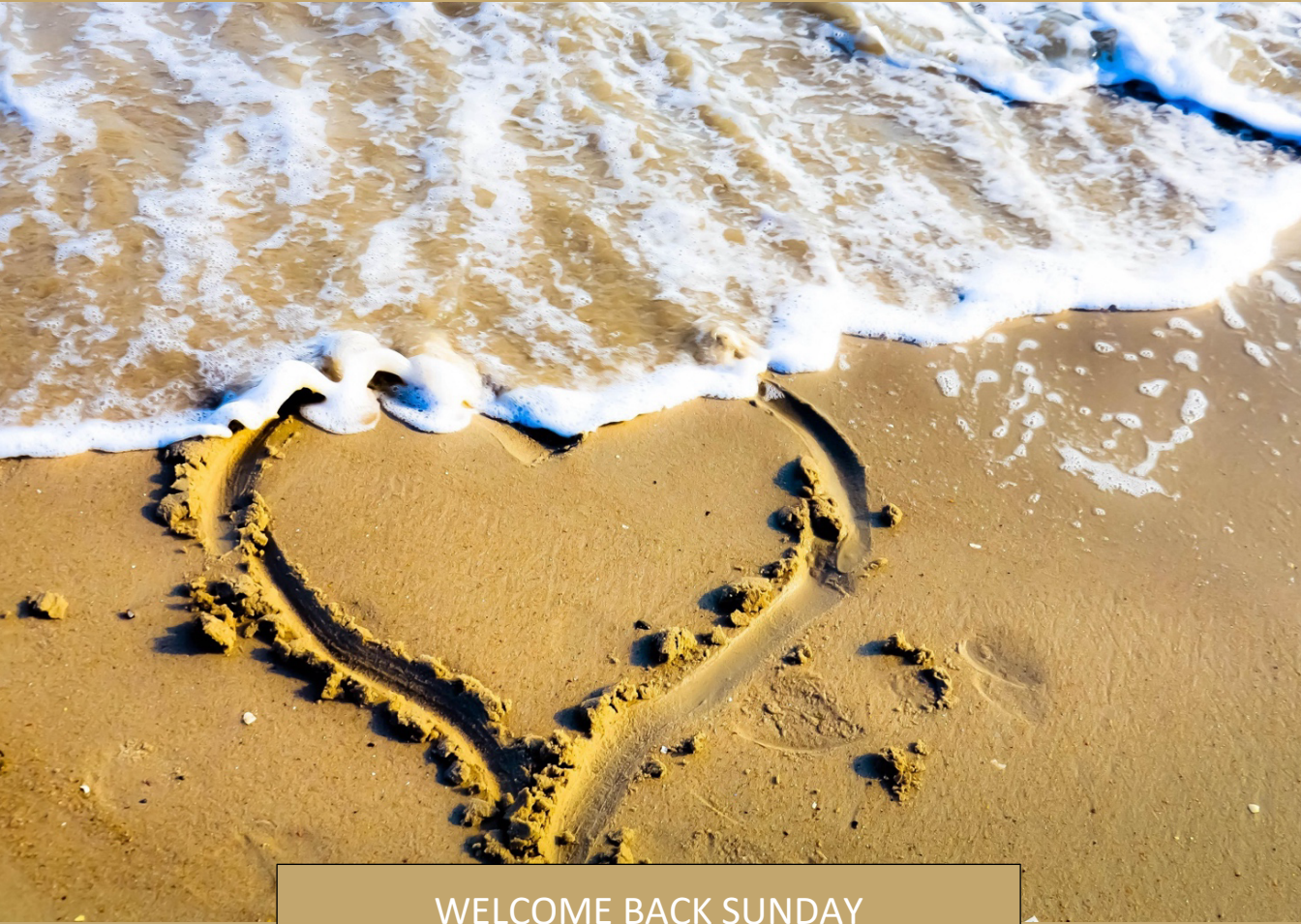




# The First Parish in Lincoln

*An open and welcoming church*



WELCOME BACK SUNDAY  
“Don’t Let Yourself Lose Me”

**Worship Theme | Bless This Mess**  
September 7, 2025 at 10am

# Welcome to First Parish

## Nurturing Spirituality | Building Community | Pursuing Justice

*We are an open and welcoming community church formed in 1942 by the union of the Congregational (1746) and Unitarian (1842) churches in Lincoln. Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

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**Land Acknowledgment.** We gather today on the unceded homelands of the Massachusetts and Nipmuc peoples. Let us strive to honor all indigenous peoples by joining their efforts to pursue justice and care for this land. *An action step is included at the back of this bulletin.*



**If you are visiting** this morning, we are so glad you are here! We hope you'll join us for Coffee Hour after worship. Tell us about yourself or sign up for our mailing list by filling out a Virtual Connect Card.

**Livestream.** You can view past services on our YouTube page. If you don't wish to have your image included in a recording, please contact the church office or a minister.

*One License #A-732063 | CCS # 15261*

**Assistive Listening Devices** are available in the narthex. Please ask an usher for assistance.



**Give Online!** Scan the QR code to contribute toward the Sunday Plate, a pledge, or a Special Offering.

**Children's Program.** Today, children are invited to bring water and backpacks to church! Younger friends aged 5 & below will head up the hill after the Blessing of the Backpacks, while grades 1 and up will stay in the sanctuary for a fun intergenerational service!

**Nursery care** for babies and toddlers up to age 3 will be available in the lower level of the Parish House starting at 9:30am.

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### We thank the following people for their contributions to today's service.

#### Deacon

Barbara O'Neil

#### Hospitality

Diana Smith  
Jennie Morris

#### Ushers

Katy Hogue  
Elaine Hawkes  
Christine Size  
Rachel Mason

#### Altar Flowers

Nancy Henderson, Lynn Uhrich Smith,  
and Elaine Hawkes  
*Given in honor of community.*

*Welcome! Please enjoy the prelude in a spirit of meditation.*

*Water Communion will be celebrated throughout this morning's service. If you're here early, please pour your water into one of the vessels up front.*

**PRELUDE**

Variations on "All Glory Be to God on High"

*James Coe (b. 1953)*

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**WELCOME**

Rev. Nate Klug

**\*OPENING WORDS**

by Rev. Molly Gordon, adapted

One: We gather this morning tenderly, like drops of dew on a blade of grass.

**All: We gather joyfully, like water rushing in a stream to the sea.**

One: We gather from every direction, for another year of growth and depth...

**All: A year of companionship and resistance, a year of building hope.**

One: We gather like the water that joins us across all of creation...

**All: The water that connects us within and without,  
merging and flowing across the entire world.**

**\*OPENING HYMN | Gray 122 (vv.1-3)**

Sound Over All Waters

*ST. DENIO*

**\*COVENANT | In Unison**

Barbara O'Neil

In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus

We unite for the worship of God and the service of all.

**TIME FOR ALL AGES & BACKPACK BLESSING** Lora Venesy, Kit Novotny, and RE Teachers  
Commissioning A New RE Model

**Dreamers** (Nursery, ages 0-3) with Debby Adams, Orly M. & Ava G.

**Explorers** (Pre K – K) with Sue Flint

**Rainbow Connection**

**Seekers** (grades 1-2) with Kathryn Walker  
*Nurturing the Spirit-Nature Connection*

**Trail Blazers** (grades 3-5) with Samantha D. & Sophie M.  
*The Magic of UU - Conjuring a Better World*

**Wayfinders** (grades 6-7) with Natalie Elmes  
*Neighboring Faiths*

## **FIRST READING**

Sarah Klockowski

From “Go To the Limits of Your Longing” | Rainer Maria Rilke, tr. Joanna Macy

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,  
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,  
go to the limits of your longing.  
Embody me.

Flare up like a flame  
and make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.  
Just keep going. No feeling is final.  
Don't let yourself lose me.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER**

Barbara O'Neil

## **PRAYER HYMN | Gray 389**

Gathered Here

*GATHERING CHANT*

## **SILENT PRAYER & MEDITATION**

## **COMMUNITY PRAYERS**

The Ministers

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

Barbara O'Neil

## **UNISON PRAYER**

Adapted from "On Children," Kahlil Gibran

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
and though they are with you yet they belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,  
for they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit,  
not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.  
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

## **OFFERTORY**

Shall We Gather at the River                      *arrangement of hymn by Robert Lowry (1826-1899)*

### **\*DOXOLOGY | In Unison**

From all that dwell below the skies Let the Creator's praise arise  
Let the Redeemers' names be sung Through every land by every tongue. Amen.

### **\*OFFERTORY PRAYER | In Unison**

We give thanks for both these gifts and the givers, and we ask that we may use  
these gifts wisely and well, both to nurture the life of this congregation and to  
further the goals of justice and peace throughout the world.

## **CHORAL ANTHEM**

I Went Down to the River to Pray                      *Spiritual arranged by Sheldon Curry*

## **SECOND READING**

Luke 10:38-42

Now as they went on their way, [Jesus] entered a certain village, where a woman  
named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who  
sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying.

But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.'

But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

## **SERMON**

Rev. Nate Klug

Don't Let Yourself Lose Me

## **WATER COMMUNION**

Spirit of the Water

*Joyce Markel*

Reverie

*Claude Debussy (1862-1918)*

**\*CLOSING HYMN |** Gray 100 (vv.1-3)

I've Got Peace Like a River

*WHITNEY*

**\*OUR CALL TO MINISTRY |** In Unison

Barbara O'Neil

We go forth from the worship of God to be faithful to the vision of Jesus  
To affirm each person's dignity and to cherish the living earth.

**\*BENEDICTION**

Rev. Nate Klug

**\*CHORAL BENEDICTION**

As We Leave This Friendly Place

*SEGNE UNS*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **POSTLUDE**

Concerto in G Major: Allegro, BWV 592

*J.S Bach/Vivaldi*

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*Feel free to depart or remain seated during our postlude. Please join us for Coffee Hour in our Stearns Room directly following worship!*



**Please recycle this program.**

Bins are available in the narthex and the Stearns Room.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ACTION STEP.** You are invited to learn about and support the legislation currently before the MA State Legislature that would benefit Indigenous Peoples. There are currently five bills being considered in the 2025-2026 session that reflect the key concerns of local tribes: Remove Racist Mascots, Honor Indigenous Peoples' Day, Celebrate and Teach Native American Cultures & History, Protect Native American Heritage, and Support the Education and Futures of Native Youth. Scan the QR code to learn more about these bills and/or write your representative to express your support.



**PURSUIING JUSTICE ACTION STEP.** Save the LUCE hotline number in your phone today! Think You SEE I.C.E. in your area? **CALL: 617-370-5023.** The hotline operates from 5am - 9pm every day of the week across multiple languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Haitian Creole, and more to be added! Volunteer for ICE watch + hotline. Trained volunteers hold shifts from 5a-9a, 9a-1p, 1p-5p and 5p-9p across multiple languages. Scan QR code to sign up.



**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE.** The First Parish Deacons are excited to announce the publication, hopefully later this month, of an anthology of 31 lay prayers, Prayers of the People 2019-2025, carefully selected from the more than 230 prayers given by lay leaders at First Parish worship services from the eve of the Covid epidemic through last spring. Edited by Deacons Larry Buell and Judy Casarella, this little book is intended as a successor to the fondly remembered Prayers of the People (2010). Copies will be available at upcoming worship services and distributed by mail to our virtual parishioners. We hope that FPL members and friends will find themselves turning to this little book not once but often for spiritual encouragement and renewal.

**RE OPEN HOUSE & PLAYGROUND CLEANUP**

TODAY, September 7 • After Service • Parish House Playground  
*Lora Venesy, lora@fplincoln.org*

**DIG DEEPER**

Monday, September 8 • 12:00pm • Twisted Tree Lincoln Station  
*Sarah Klockowski, sarah@fplincoln.org*

**SACRED TEXTS**

Tuesday, September 9 • 12:00pm • Zoom  
*Sarah Klockowski, sarah@fplincoln.org*

**MEDITATION SANGHA**

Tuesday, September 9 • 4:00pm • Stearns Room  
*Joan Kimball & Ben Wells, sangha@fplincoln.org*

**THEOLOGY GROUP**

Wednesday, September 10 • 7:00pm • Stearns Room & Zoom  
*Sarah Klockowski, sarah@fplincoln.org*

**CHOIR PRACTICE**

Thursday, September 11 • 7:00am • Stearns Room  
*Miranda Loud, miranda@fplincoln.org*

**QUIET WALKS**

Friday, September 12 • 1:30pm • Lincoln Trails  
*Andy Falender & Jackie Lenth*

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*Visit our website or sign up for weekly emails for program details: [www.fplincoln.org](http://www.fplincoln.org)*



## “FIRST PARISH IN ACTION” FAIR

Sunday, September 14 • 11:00am • Parish House

Looking to plug in, get to know your First Parish community, and give back? Join us at the First Parish in Action Fair, after church on September 14 up in the Parish House Auditorium. Treats and coffee will be served.



## BLESS THIS MESS BOOK TALK

Sunday, September 14 • 7:30pm • Stearns Room & Livestream

Calling all parents (and anyone with children in their lives!) to join us for a spiritual parenting book talk! Our hope is to encourage community conversations and resources around raising children with a wide, resilient spiritual grounding rooted in values of love and justice. This year we're hosting local author and child psychologist Dr. Ellen O'Donnell to be in conversation with Kit Novotny about *Bless This Mess*. The book includes topics like “How to Fight-and Forgive,” “How Much is Enough? How to Talk to Kids about Money and Stuff,” “Sabbath: How to Make Every Day Holy” and “The Beauty of Bodies.” All are welcome to join regardless of whether you've read the book.



## CHILDREN'S CHOIR REHEARSAL

Thursday, September 18 • 4:30pm • Stearns Room

Does your kid love to SING? Check out our NEW Children's Choir for ages 4-9 (grades PreK-3). Weekly rehearsals will be held on Thursdays from 4:30-5:10pm beginning on September 18. The plan is for monthly performances in church services. Open to community members! **Questions? Want to sign up?** Email Miranda Loud, Director of Music at [miranda@fplincn.org](mailto:miranda@fplincn.org).



## LEADERSHIP RETREAT

Sunday, September 21 • 2:00-5:00pm

Open to all Committee chairs, Parish Committee members, and Deacons. We'll learn and talk together about how FPL can thrive as a program-sized congregation.

# Values & Vision

## NURTURING SPIRITUALITY

To be a spiritual home for individuals from diverse faith backgrounds where each person can find help and inspiration to foster personal growth on their own journey while in community with others.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

To be an open and inclusive community that learns to trust and work with each other as we celebrate, grieve, grow, support, and serve together.

## PURSUING JUSTICE

To be a source of hope and positive impact in our communities, our region and beyond by affirming the dignity of all peoples and caring for the living earth.



## Open & Welcoming

First Parish is an Open and Welcoming community church, affirming the dignity of all people. We welcome all persons to full participation and belonging regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Having fulfilled the requirements to be recognized as an Open and Affirming Congregation (UCC), First Parish is intentional about celebrating the presence and participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons in all aspects of congregational life, fully and without qualification.

Contact [OandW-TF@fplincoln.org](mailto:OandW-TF@fplincoln.org) for more information.

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### FIRST PARISH IN LINCOLN

(781) 259-8118 | [www.fplincoln.org](http://www.fplincoln.org)

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**Debby Adams** (she/her)

Nursery Director

**Chris Lehmann** (he/him)

Audio/Visual Coordinator | [chris@fplincoln.org](mailto:chris@fplincoln.org)