

The Bell-Ringer

FIRST PARISH CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
P.O. Box 1764, Duxbury, MA 02331



FEBRUARY 2022



OUR ALL CHURCH THEME THIS MONTH IS **"WIDENING THE CIRCLE"**.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

February 6th – "The Black Canvas" -- Black has often been equated with negative qualities. But whether the night sky or an artist's canvas, black is not only beautiful but can show us where beauty is.

February 13th – "Love, Life and All That Jazz" -- There's much we can learn about loving the world from jazz and its pioneers. Even if you don't like the music, the message behind jazz is very UU. Stay tuned.

February 20th – "The Quilt of Disquiet" -- Inspired by the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge, we'll hear a 'quilt of words' and explore what Buddhists call right action—ways we can become more effective partners in the quest for equity and justice.

February 27th – "Widening the Circle" -- We'll be welcoming a guest speaker who will explore our February theme: how we as a denomination can increase inclusivity and be better at decentering whiteness and white privilege in our congregational life.

COMING EVENTS

THURSDAY FEB. 3

Book Club 9:00am - Zoom

Worship/Music 7:00p.m. - Zoom

SUNDAY FEB 6

Worship 10:00 a.m.

THURSDAY FEB. 10

Book Club 9:00am - Zoom

FRIDAY FEB. 11

Yoga 11:00am

SUNDAY FEB 13

Worship 10:00 a.m.

MONDAY FEB 14

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

SSHAGLY 7:00pm

THURSDAY FEB. 17

Book Club 9:00 – Zoom

Governing Board 7:00pm - Zoom



(Continued on page 10)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MINISTER...

While I'm away on sabbatical, I leave you with these wise & wonderful words! — Catherine

*Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all,
and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world.
And while I stood there, I saw more than I can tell and I understood
more than I saw;
for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the
spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one
being.*

*And I say the sacred hoop of my people was one of the many hoops
that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight,
and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the
children of one mother and one father.
And I saw that it was holy...-----Black Elk*

First Parish Church

Unitarian Universalist, Duxbury, Massachusetts

P.O. Box 1764, Duxbury, Massachusetts 02331

842 Tremont St. (Route 3A)

Email: uuduxbury@verizon.net

Telephone: 781-934-6532

Website: www.duxburyuu.org



A liberal religious community dedicated to nurturing individual spiritual development, promoting understanding and working for social justice.

We welcome people of all races, backgrounds and sexual orientations.

Rev. Dr. Catherine Cullen, Minister
Edwin Swanborn, Music Director
Lenore O'Malley, Church Administrator
Elaine Stephansky, Bell Choir Director

Dr. Kate Sullivan, Acting Director of Community Life & Learning
Jackie Smith-Miller, Dir. of Religious Education, Emerita
Sunsue Fleming, Director of Religious Education, Emerita

Governing Board

From the Governing Board: The President's Report

There were few votes but much discussion at the January Governing Board meeting. As usual, we heard updates on DARI (the Duxbury Afghani Resettlement Initiative). Early in January the board also received the recommendation from the Safe Congregations committee that church services move to virtual only. Our hope is that we will be able to resume hybrid services this month.

Regarding the parsonage, Lester Lloyd reported that the heating system had been replaced. (The Governing Board approved that expense at its December meeting.) Follow-up continues on securing the de-leading certification following an inspection recommended by the board last month.

Committee chairs have likely heard from their Governing Board liaisons about submitting their policies and procedures to Past President Mary Flanagan. If your committee intends to submit materials for this effort, please respond as soon as possible.

The board spent a portion of its meeting discussing the Christmas Eve service and the performance by the Snug Harbor chorus, which unfortunately did not follow our Safe Congregations Covid protocols. I write about that topic in greater depth elsewhere in this Bell Ringer.

The church received two large donations recently. The descendants of the late James A. Anderson (a former church member whose name you may recognize from the bookplates in the hymnals) have made a donation to the church from their grandmother's trust fund in the amount of \$3,585. This money will go to the trust fund responsible for paying for ministerial interns. Also, an anonymous donor made a \$10,000 unrestricted donation to the church in a letter sent to Catherine. If this sum is considered to be a non-pledge donation, then it could be used to offset a portion of our 2021-2022 budget deficit. I await a final decision from the treasurers and the Finance Committee regarding that decision.

The Pandemic Fundraising working group, of which I am a member is hopeful that a drop in Omicron infection rates will allow us to do a hybrid Service Auction event sometime late in March. More news on that to follow.

Elsewhere in the Bell Ringer you will see an update from the Envisioning the Meeting House in the 21st Century working group. Keep an eye out for information on a questionnaire from that group.

The monthly 'Talk with the Governing Board' session will take place on Sunday February 23rd. I will be joined with Governing Board Finance Liaison Pat Slechta to take questions after church both in-person and by Zoom.

All the best,

Jim Hamilton, Governing Board President
781-724-6456, jim@greenharbor.com



Envisioning the Meeting House in the 21st Century **February 2022 Survey**

Over the next three months, the Envisioning the Meeting House in the 21st Century working group will be reaching out and seeking input on a variety of topics. For February, the focus will be on our historic tablets and the wording on the crown molding above the pulpit.

At our meeting with consultant Scott Tayler in November, there was a clear consensus that the historic tablets should be moved or covered. With the survey we are looking to narrow down the various possibilities that arise based on that consensus. You can access the survey at this link:
<https://forms.gle/4vmPja2gP61YhSBEA>

We will also be holding churchwide discussions on this topic in February (details to follow) and covering additional topics such as technology use, the pulpit, family & LGBTQ friendliness, and color scheme in March and April. It is our intent to hold a churchwide special meeting in the spring to vote on steps forward.

All the best,

Jim Hamilton for the Envisioning the Meeting House in the 21st Century working group
 The other members of the working group are: Elaine Bryant, Rev. Dr. Catherine Cullen (on sabbatical), Caroline Mitchell, Dorothy Pilla, Carol Robison, Emily Simeone, and Tracy Wagner

Special Message from the President about the Christmas Eve Worship Service

As you know from my December Bell Ringer message, after the Christmas Eve service I heard from several church members who expressed grave concerns that the performance by the Snug Harbor chorus did not follow our own Safe Congregations Covid protocols. In response I reached out to our Safe Congregations committee and our Worship-Music committee for their counsel. Both of those groups provided reports to the Governing Board, which we reviewed at our January meeting. Several members of the congregation and our Music Director, Edwin Swanborn, attended the January Governing Board meeting to express their concern.

To summarize, I will quote from the Safe Congregations report to the Governing Board:

- The Safe Congregation Task Force unanimously feel the decision by the minister to invite members of Snug Harbor Chorale to sing carols in the sanctuary during the Christmas Eve service violated the policy adopted by the board and guidance issued by the task force. This decision unnecessarily and thoughtlessly put members of the church and the community, as well as their children, at risk of COVID infection. We are concerned that the minister made this decision without discussing it with the task force, despite the fact that she is a member of the task force and participated in our meeting only days before she announced this “surprise.” We are concerned that church members relied on our assurances that the service would be conducted in a safe manner and now are confused about what our policy is.

The Safe Congregations committee also underscored the existing Covid policy:

- Our recommended policy remains that there be no congregational singing until further notice, that everyone must be masked in the sanctuary, except musicians in the loft under the direction of the music director while actually performing or children under the age of three, and that everyone in the sanctuary must observe social distancing. Following recent guidance from the CDC, the task force has reduced the recommended distancing to three feet instead of six feet, and the minister participated in that decision, but even that distancing was not observed by the Snug Harbor singers.

The report from the Worship-Music committee expressed similar concern and made a number of recommendations to the Governing Board. Among these are the following:

- Write letters of appreciation and apology letter to all of the musicians who were in the loft. (They followed the Covid protocols under the direction of our Music Director.)
- Prepare a statement for the February Bell Ringer about reinforcing adherence to safety guidelines and expressing regret for the incident (This is that message.)

At the end of the Governing Board meeting, as President I agreed to take on these action items. In addition, the Governing Board recommends that upon her return from sabbatical that the Committee on Ministry meet with Catherine to discuss this issue and any further follow-ups. I have sent the chair of the Committee on Ministry the Safe Congregations and Worship-Music reports as well as additional statements.

In closing, I offer my apologies to the congregation and the Music Director regarding this issue and will work with the associated committees to assure that such breaches do not occur again.

All the best,

Jim Hamilton, Governing Board President
 781-724-6456, jim@greenharbor.com



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Ahhhhh, February, the month of love! After spending the gloomy month of January restricted to virtual gathering, I think we are all looking forward to being able to gather in-person again as we make our way to February. I know that the kids are eager to see their church friends again in their cozy RE spaces, reconnecting and learning about what it means to be a part of a Blessed community.

This month is all about LOVE and Widening our Circle. We'll be spending time in RE talking about just that -- caring for those we love and planning ways to let those that we don't see very often know that they matter.

Youth Group has been meeting weekly on Zoom, and though we are all tired of gathering virtually, we are all grateful for the technology that allows us to be together. Last week we did an interesting exercise called "The Collective" during which we each shared responses to a set of provocative questions. Our discussion centered on what we each bring to the circle, our unique gifts and concerns, and the ways each of us contribute beyond our small circle.



February's monthly theme is **Widening the Circle**. How are you drawing your own circle wider this month?

Peace & Blessings, Kate





Ring Out Justice!



News of Social Justice Activities at First Parish Church

Social / Racial / Environmental Justice at First Parish Church

The mission of the Social Justice Committee is to provide opportunities for First Parish Church members to promote justice through service, education, and advocacy.

The memberships of Social, Racial and Environmental Justice have merged into a “leaderful” coalition. Jeanne Penvenne and Carrie Meier co-chair the overarching Social Justice Committee. Donna Savicki and Cindy Ladd Fiorini lead various initiatives in racial and environmental justice. All First Parish members and friends are welcome to join and participate in these activities. If you are interested in joining us please contact Donna Savicki (781-585-8041 or dsavicki@comcast.net) or just attend any of our meetings. We meet at 9 AM the second Sunday of the month. Depending upon COVID protocols we meet in person in the Harvey Assembly Hall with hybrid ZOOM coverage or just on ZOOM. Please come!



Become A Pen Pal With An Incarcerated Person - Training February 3

UU Mass Action will hold a training session (via Zoom) on February 3 at 6pm for people interested in becoming a pen pal with an incarcerated person. To register, please email Hale Powell at mascpenpal@uumassaction.org. If you decide you'd like to sign-on, he will send you a spreadsheet listing incarcerated people who've expressed interest in having a pen pal.

I have been exchanging letters and emails since November with a woman incarcerated at MCI Framingham and recommend the program highly.

Donna Savicki



CALL FOR WINTER WEAR

Hats, Gloves, Scarves, Mittens, Socks

The Massachusetts Annual Census of people experiencing homelessness in the City of Brockton has been postponed until **22 February**.

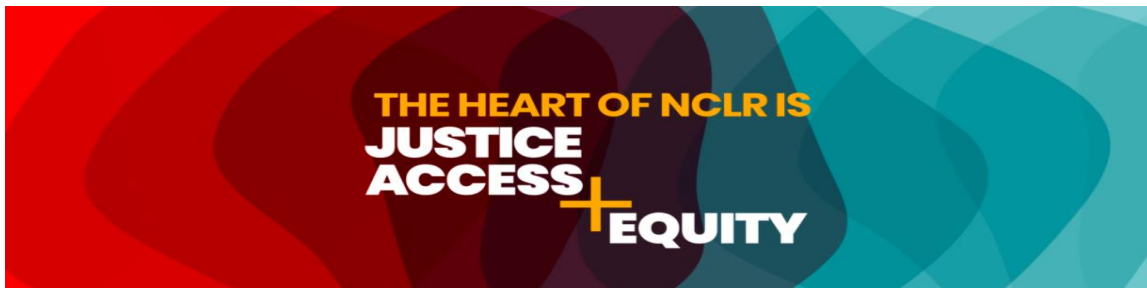
The census provides an opportunity to distribute winter weather gear to those in need. Please drop off small items in the box inside the Parking Lot Door by 21 February.

Bob Hughes and his colleagues will see that they are put to good use.

Thanks everyone!

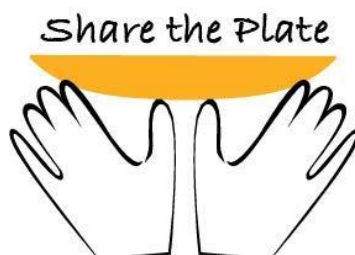


The Boston Globe's Black History Month Film Festival 2022
Virtual Screenings and Discussions
February 1-28, 2022



NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS

Our Share the Plate recipient for this next month will be National Center for Lesbian Rights, nominated by Mary Flanagan.



Share the Plate on February 13

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is the first national LGBTQ legal organization founded by women and brings a fierce, longstanding commitment to racial and economic justice and our community's most vulnerable.

Since 1977, NCLR has been at the forefront of advancing the civil and human rights of our full LGBTQ community and their families through impact litigation, public policy, and public education. Decades ago, NCLR led the way by establishing the first LGBTQ Immigration Project, Transgender Rights Project, Youth Project, Elder Law Project, and began working to end conversion therapy through what is now the Born Perfect campaign.

Please help this organization to fulfill its mission. For more information you can visit them at [National Center for Lesbian Rights \(nclrights.org\)](http://NationalCenterforLesbianRights(nclrights.org)). For the two weeks after the service you may go to uudux.org and click on the "Make a Donation to FPC Here!" button, or just click here [Home | First Parish Church Duxbury Giving \(myvanco.com\)](http://Home | First Parish Church Duxbury Giving (myvanco.com)) to donate directly to the charity, or you may mail a check made out First Parish Church, P.O. Box 1764, Duxbury, MA 02331, with the name of charity in the memo field. Thank you for your generosity!

One Sunday each month we Share the Plate by donating our entire non-pledge offering to a charity or justice organization. By reaching out and giving to the broader community, we are showing who we are and for what we stand, while cultivating a habit of generosity.

If you know of an organization that could use our donation, you can obtain a nomination form from the church office. Or you can find the online form by clicking [Make A Difference - First Parish Church Duxbury \(uudux.org\)](http://Make A Difference - First Parish Church Duxbury (uudux.org)) with the form link under the Share the Plate heading. You may then return the completed form to the church office, or email to uuduxbury@verizon.net.



21 Day Racial Equity Challenge

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/labor_law/membership/equal_opportunity/

In January, the Social and Racial Justice Committee challenged members to read and watch a rich syllabus of essays, podcasts, TED talks, poems, interviews and concerts. Although we were mindful of the admonition: “There is a long tradition of white people thinking they can read their way out of trouble,” we dove into the challenge to reveal the sources of trouble and figure out how best to acknowledge their dimensions and prepare ourselves to become allies and advocates. In essentially every register black people experience discrimination and must navigate the “norms” of white expectation. Attorney Bryan Stevenson insists that well-meaning white people must know and acknowledge the racial trauma and violence at the root of the trouble. Black people should not have to ask: “Why can I not have the space to be me, and to live fully as me?” The challenge was a revealing and generative exercise.

Jeanne Penvenne & Carrie Meier, Co-Chairs



(Continued from page 1)

FRIDAY FEB. 18

Bay Players Performance

8:00pm –

“The Fantasticks”

SATURDAY FEB. 19

Bay Players Performance

8:00pm – “The Fantasticks”

SUNDAY FEB. 20

Worship 10:00 a.m.

Bay Players Performance

3:00pm – “The Fantasticks”

MONDAY FEB. 21

PRESIDENT’S DAY

OFFICE CLOSED

WEDNESDAY FEB. 23

March Bellringer Due Date

THURSDAY FEB. 24

Book Club 9:00am – Zoom

FRIDAY FEB. 25

Bay Players Performance

8:00pm – “The Fantasticks”

SATURDAY FEB. 26

Bay Players Performance

8:00pm – “The Fantasticks”

SUNDAY FEB. 27

Worship 10:00 a.m.

MONDAY FEB 28

RE Meeting 7:00pm – Zoom

PFLAG 7:00pm - Zoom

SSHAGLY 7:00pm



CARING CONNECTION:

There are many caring members of our church community who are willing to lend a hand to those having a difficult time! The Caring Connection can coordinate meals, transportation, babysitting or visits to shut-ins. For the month of **FEBRUARY**, please contact, **DEB WORSH** at 781-837-9030, DEBORAHWORSH@GMAIL.COM.



Minister’s Office Hours:

Rev. Dr. Catherine Cullen is currently on sabbatical. For pastoral or other concerns please contact our **Sabbatical Committee Chair, Michael Gardner** at 617-833-9606, sgmgardner4746@gmail.com.

Church Office Hours

The FPC church office is open **Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** and **Tuesdays 8:30-11:30am**. Please call Lenore, 781-934-6532 or email at uuduxbury@verizon.net if you need anything.



March Bell-Ringer Deadline:
Wednesday, February 23rd

ON-GOING CHURCH MEETINGS**SUNDAYS –**

Family/Child Sunday (1st Sun. each month)
 Joys & Concerns (2nd Sun. each month)
 Announcement Sunday (1st & 3rd Sun. each month)
 Silent Joys & Concerns (4th Sun. each month)
 Membership 9:00am (3rd Sun. each month)
 Music Committee (1st Sun. each month) 12 p.m.
 Social Justice 9 a.m. (2nd Sun. each month)

MONDAYS –

Building Use 10 a.m.
 (4th Mon. each month)
 Historical Committee 10:30a.m.
 (1st Monday of each month)
 Finance Committee 7 p.m. (2nd Mon. each month)
 Welcoming Congregation 7:00pm
 (2nd Monday of each month)
 PFLAG – 7:30-9:00pm
 (4th Monday of each month)
 RE Committee 7:00pm (4th Mon. each month)

TUESDAYS –

Hand Bells 3:30 p.m.
 Communications 7:00pm
 (2nd Tuesday of every month)

WEDNESDAYS –

Staff meeting 11:30 a.m. (weekly)
 Buildings & Grounds 9-11 a.m.
 (1st Wed. each month)
 “Kindred Spirits” 10:00 -11:30 a.m.
 (2nd Wed. each month)

THURSDAYS –

Book Group 9 a.m.
 Worship Committee 7:00 p.m.
 (1st Thurs. each month)
 Agenda Setting 7-8 p.m.
 (2nd Thurs. each month)
 Governing Board 7 p.m.
 (3rd Thurs. each month)

FRIDAYS - Committee on Ministry
 5 p.m. (1st Fri. each month)

SATURDAYS – Community Table
 9:15 a.m. (4th Sat. each month)

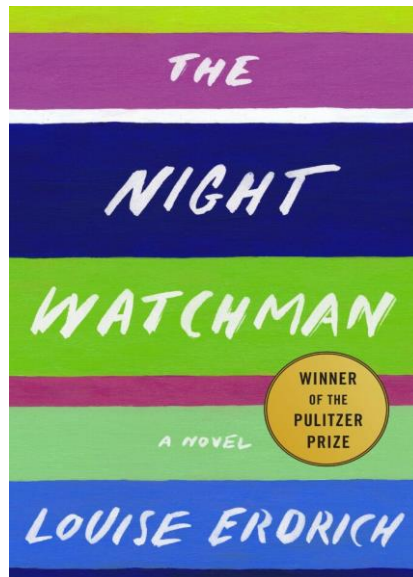


Many thanks to all for your generous donations to the Box Project his Holiday Season.

Here are some words of thanks from 2 of the thankful recipients.

- Thank you for your generous gifts! As a single mom, life gets hard, especially around the holidays. You have lifted a heavy burden an way I can't explain. I appreciate each and every one of you. God bless and Happy New Year.
- Thank you very much for your generous gifts. This really helps me and my family in this hard time. God bless.





Reading with a Purpose

Feb 2022 Read:

The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich,

A Pulitzer-prize winning novel about opposing the 1953 Indian termination bill.

Join us on **Monday, February 28th, 2022, at 12:00pm via zoom**, for our book discussion.

Zoom link will be posted on uudux.org

All welcome! Come even if you have had time to finish the book.

About the book.

“Based on events from the life of Erdrich’s grandfather, **The Night Watchman** is about tribal chairman Thomas Wazhashk’s efforts to fight against the push for Indian termination in 1953, which would have ignored prior U.S.-Native American treaties and resulted in the dispossession of Native American lands. Erdrich also tells a story about a variety of other characters in and involved with the tribe.”

Review

“Erdrich delivers a magisterial epic that brings her power of witness to every page...We are grateful to be allowed into this world...I walked away from the Turtle Mountain clan feeling deeply moved, missing these characters as if they were real people known to me. In this era of modern termination assailing us, the book feels like a call to arms. A call to humanity. A banquet prepared for us by hungry people.” — **Luis Alberto Urrea, *New York Times Book Review***



UPDATE ON PARSONAGE USE BY DARI

As most of you know, our parsonage is now housing a good-sized family who had fled from Afghanistan. Due to ongoing security issues, specific information about the family needs to stay fairly confidential but there are certain things we can tell you. The mom and dad are bright and engaging and eager to learn English and to extend their education beyond that. Dad has already been out working but is taking a short break. The children are smart and polite and funny. Two have started in the Duxbury Public Schools. Two will be started soon in a pre-K program.

Enormous thanks to First Parish folks who are helping to make this transition work. Meredith Lehman for leading the ESL program, Kathy Bray for leading all the childcare, Eleanor McGonagle for babysitting, Catherine Cullen for helping with housing concerns, Hannah Bolton for setting up the house with me, Selden Tearse for raising all sorts of money and setting up a donation site for goods, Jon Lehman, Andrea Brandeis, Bob Hughes for all the various jobs they do. Also to Lester Lloyd for overseeing various large building needs and to Pat Slechta and Larry Nourse for checking out the building ahead of time, and to Jon Lehman who is looking at play yard fencing. I just know that I am forgetting people - and these are just the folks who are FPC members.

This is a HUGE town wide effort. We will be providing this lovely family with the skills they need to succeed in this country. Kudos and thank you to all who donated their skills, time, treasure or good will in any way. Please contact me if you want to become more involved. Blessings to this beloved community.

Cindy Fiorini



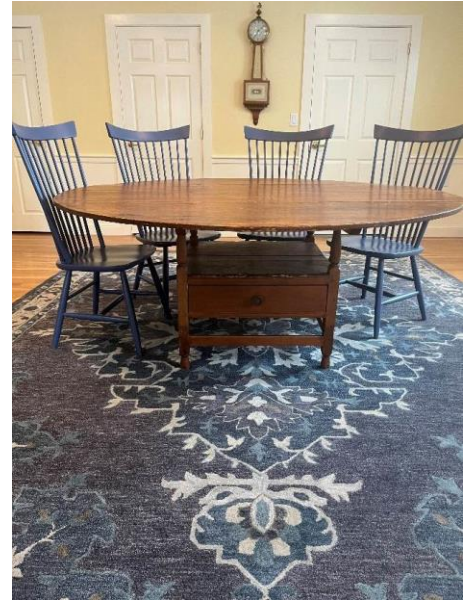


History Matters

Seth Sprague's Table **By Cindy Wilson**

We are all familiar with the big, round table in the parlor that we sit around for meetings then fold up and store against the wall. Did you know it came from the farm house of the Hon. Seth Sprague of Duxbury? Seth Sprague was not only an early member of First Parish, he was a highly honored citizen of the Town, served 27 years in the State Legislature, was twice chosen to be a member of the Electoral College, and served as a justice of the peace for 40 years. ("Reminiscences of the Old Colony Town" by William Bradford Weston 1915)

In "Reminiscences" it was recorded that Seth Sprague was born on July 4, 1760 the only son of Phineas Sprague and Mercy Chandler. When Seth was 15 years old, Phineas died and he took over the farm situated on Harrison Street. He turned 16 on July 4th, 1776 and in 1777, enlisted as a private in the Continental Army. After returning home he engaged in shore fishing, married Deborah Sampson, had 15 children and eventually became a successful shipbuilder.



According to Town Archivist and Historian Carolyn Ravenscroft, in his older age Seth became an antislavery activist. During the disestablishment of the church in 1815, he established the Methodist Episcopal Church on Washington Street, in part, as he and others found the teachings of the Methodist circuit rider, Father Taylor, to be to their liking, and in part, to provide a space where abolitionists could freely lecture (including the Grimke sisters in 1837.) When the Methodists decided nationally to no longer allow such a divisive topic in the church, Sprague, along with others, formed the Methodist Wesleyan Church, which today is Pilgrim Congregational Church.

Sprague's son, Seth Sprague Jr., was active with the New England Antislavery Society and worked in association with abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Like his father, he was a local politician who also served in the State Legislature, was an active member of the Whig Party and, in 1840, made an unsuccessful run for U.S. Senator. (Final Report Town of Duxbury Local Historic District Study Committee, 12/07/2010)

Check out the table, perhaps the oldest piece of furniture in the Church, the next time you are in our beautifully redecorated parlor. Imagine it painted, as it originally was, with a family of 15 children around it. Oh, the stories it could tell.

The Bay Players of Duxbury are incredibly pleased to announce the supremely talented cast of **THE FANTASTICKS**, opening February 18th, 2022 at First Parish Church!

Our **FPC member, Ted Lillys** will be playing **Hucklebee!**

The Fantasticks

February 18 - 26, 2022

Daniel Goldstone *as* EL GALLO

Samantha Antoniewicz *as* LUISA

Ethan Child *as* MATT

Magnolia Kunselman *as* THE MUTE

Ted Lillys *as* HUCKLEBEE

Theresa Chiasson *as* BELLOMY

Geoff Campbell *as* HENRY

Bill Houldcroft *as* MORTIMER

Director: Matthew Sherman • Producer: Ricki Bowser
Music Director: Kelley DePasqua • Stage Manager: Tara Brennan