

FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW & ACTON

Unitarian Universalist



Sunday, June 8, 2025
A Vision Unfolding

**The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L.
Landrum**
Minister

**Rayla D.
Baldwin-Mattson**
Director of Religious
Education

Meg Rivers-Wright
Administration, Publicity,
Membership

Chris Hossfeld
Music Director

Trevor Berens
Accompanist

Felix Freeman
Tech Assistant

Mike Silkonis
Sexton

Justin Marble
Nursery Care Coordinator

Brendon Chetwynd
President

Trisha Guditiz
Vice President

Bill Froberg
Treasurer

Johanna Pyle
Clerk

*First Parish is a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation.
We warmly welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people into our community.*

Large print orders of service and hymnals are available from an usher.
Assisted Listening Devices are available when worship is in the Sanctuary.

FPC currently has a masks-optional policy throughout the church.
In the Sanctuary, several back rows with accessible seating are "mask-required."

FPC is on the web at fpc-stow-acton.org and on Facebook.

June 8, 2025: 10:00 a.m.

Gathering

Prelude	Prologue, <i>A Vision Unfolding</i> Music: Kyle Pederson	Trevor Berens Accompanist
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Welcome & Announcements

Opening Words	Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum, reader
and Chalice Lighting	Trevor Berens, piano
	Prologue 1, <i>A Vision Unfolding</i>
	Music: Kyle Pederson
	Text: Shanelle Gabriel, alt.

Anthem	1. "Reach Down, Lord," <i>A Vision Unfolding</i>	FPC Choir
	Music: Kyle Pederson	Chris Hossfeld, Music Director
	Lyrics: Robert Bode	Emmeline Jones and Katy Weeks, soloists

Centering

* Covenant and Affirmation

Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law.	From all that dwell below the skies let words of love and peace arise.
This is our great covenant:	Let joyful songs of praise be sung.
To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.	through every land, by every tongue.

Land Acknowledgement

Anthem	Prologue 2, <i>A Vision Unfolding</i>	Katy Weeks, reader
	Music: Kyle Pederson	Trevor Berens, piano
	Text: Shanelle Gabriel	Todd Rhodes, snare drum
	2. "Beat! Drums!" <i>A Vision Unfolding</i>	FPC Choir
	Music: Kyle Pederson	Ken Langer, trumpet
	Lyrics: Walt Whitman	Todd Rhodes, snare drum

* Please rise in body or in spirit

Reprise: "Reach Down, Lord"
Music: Kyle Pederson
Text: Shanelle Gabriel

Spencer Morfit, reader
Caitlin McIntyre, soloist
Trevor Berens, piano

Please join in singing:

**Reach down, Lord, reach your justice down,
when we walk on the broken road.**

Joys and Sorrows

Ann Wickham, Lay Minister

Joys and Sorrows is a time for the things on our hearts and minds to be heard by the gathered community. If you would like a follow-up call by a lay minister or the minister, email caring@fpc-stow-acton.org.

Prayer

Prologue 3, *A Vision Unfolding*
Music: Kyle Pederson
Text: Shanelle Gabriel

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
Trevor Berens, piano

Meditation 3. "All of Me," *A Vision Unfolding*

Music and Lyrics: Kyle Pederson

FPC Choir

Elena Spencer, violin
Pat Sorn and Lisa Fagerstrom, soloists

Exploring

New Members Book Signing

Joanna Hawryluk & Brandon Drake
Morgan Kane Wilson

Sharing Our Gifts

This month we share our weekly offering with **OUT Metro West**.

You may donate by check made out to First Parish Church, at
fpc-stow-acton.org/donate, or text (978) 310-3309.

Anthem

Prologue 4, *A Vision Unfolding*
Music: Kyle Pederson
Text: Shanelle Gabriel

Spencer Morfit, reader
Trevor Berens, piano

4. "Light Transforms the Darkness," *A Vision Unfolding* FPC Choir

Music: Kyle Pederson

Ken Langer, trumpet

Lyrics: Shanelle Gabriel

Todd Rhodes, snare drum

Homily

"Be That Light"

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Returning

Anthem Prologue 5, *A Vision Unfolding* Dave Kay, reader
Music: Kyle Pederson Trevor Berens, piano
Text: Shanelle Gabriel

5. "I Dream a World," *A Vision Unfolding* FPC Choir
Music: Kyle Pederson Elena Spencer, violin
Lyrics: Langston Hughes Ken Langer, trumpet
Todd Rhodes, snare drum

*** Benediction** Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

*** Closing Song**

Peace be with you 'til we meet again!
As life lays its task before you,
keep love's banner floating o'er you.
Peace be with you 'til we meet again.

Postlude Reprise: "Reach Down, Lord" Trevor Berens, piano
Music: Kyle Pederson

Greet Your Neighbor

* * *

Thank you to:

Sharon Brownfield, Zoom Host
Jamison House and Rick Lent, Ushers
Kate Imhoff and Jeff Brown, Coffee Hosts

FPC Choir, Chris Hossfeld, Music Director
Trevor Berens, Accompanist
Elena Spencer, violin
Ken Langer, trumpet
Todd Rhodes, snare drum

Our staff and leadership

** Please rise in body or in spirit*

Composer's Notes About a *A Vision Unfolding* – Kyle Pederson

In 2021, seven choirs around the country commissioned me to write an extended work, centered broadly around themes of social justice. I didn't want to write a big work around these themes merely from my own perspective, so I reached out to Shanelle Gabriel, an African American poet, spoken word artist, singer/songwriter from NYC. Our conversations turned to "what sort of vision do we want to cast for the audience and the singers?"

We determined that, at the core, we hoped to re-articulate and explore what our country has stood for in its best moments. In our foundational texts and speeches, we find powerful declarations of a nation rooted in equality, freedom, justice, and inclusion. Shanelle and I wanted this whole work to be invitational – to be reminded of the compelling vision that we live into in our best moments, and to be invited to say "yes" to more of that.

It is my hope that we lean into the invitation that the choir offers – that each of us might reach out beyond our comfort zone and seek to build bridges of care and connection, finding a better way of being in community. That we might stand in solidarity with those whose voices are too often dismissed, regardless of their skin color, sexual orientation, faith background, or other characteristic. That we might not dismiss, disdain, and judge those whose politics are different from ours, but that we might make the uncomfortable effort to see them as people just as worthy of respect and dignity.

I'm grateful to Shanelle Gabriel, whose beautiful and challenging text is threaded throughout this work. You can read more about Shanelle and her work at ShanelleGabriel.com.

Special thanks to Kevin Fenton, who provided the initial vision and encouragement for this project, and who coordinated the consortium of choirs who commissioned this work.

Texts from *A Vision Unfolding* by Kyle Pederson

Prologue 1 – Shanelle Gabriel (*alt.**)

Take my hand	One that WE
Join me	Breathed
As we press forward	And forged
Take	Together
My	A place where all
Hand	Are welcomed
As we move with unrelenting speed	A true community
Towards a new world	Take my hand

Join me as we infuse freedom
Weave compassion
Embody the brilliance
See this is what happens
When we fashion
A world centered in love
This is not a walk in the park
Nor for the faint of heart
This is a journey
All are invited to take part
Where we reach down deep
Reach down
Past comfortable
Reach down past what's superficial

Reach down where past and present
 pain overflows
Reach past the temporary
To bring hope and healing that
 will endure
We will reach back to light this chalice
Each of us a spark
But together a flame
That roars
Take my hand
And then take another's
For this is what you are called for
To walk down this broken road
To demand that every voice is heard
To forge a world where justice is assured

1. "Reach Down, Lord" – Robert Bode

Reach down, Lord.
Reach your justice down.
When we walk on the broken road,
Reach your justice down.

If we stumble into the pit
And the dark is all we see,
Reach below and lift us up;
Reach your justice down.

Reach down, Lord.
Reach your justice down.
When we walk in the shadow of death,
Reach your justice down.

Prologue 2 – Shanelle Gabriel

Shhhhhh
We begin with a reverent silence
A stillness
Only heartbeats echo
This quiet calls us to interrupt it
It is time
Let's take a collective breath
Lungs swell
To tremor brass with breath
Collect the wooden extension of hands

To beat snares
Each bang and clang
An alarm to awaken us to
The history of injustice
To the oppression of today
This collision of sound
Awakening the sleepers
Teachers
Bargainers
Preachers

There is no place for pillows and
prayers alone
This is a battle cry
A beacon for communities
Transformation from passivity
to activity

Transition from dream to reality
From unjust peace to one earned for all
This war for justice is continuous
With none of us untouched
So all of us should be drawn to the fight
All join in on this battle cry

2. "Beat! Drums!" – Walt Whitman

Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows – through doors – burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying,
Leave not the bridegroom quiet – no happiness must he have now
with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmers any peace, ploughing their field or
gathering grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums –
so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities – over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses?
no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day – no brokers or speculators –
would they continue?
Would the talkers by talking? would the singers attempt to sing?
Would the lawyers rise in the court to state their case before
the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums – you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley – stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid – mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting
the hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums – so loud you bugles blow.

Reprise – Shanelle Gabriel

Beat...Beat...Blow...Blow...
Through the windows
Through doors
Beat...Beat...Blow...Blow...
There is no place for pillows
and prayers alone
We have opened our eyes
And cannot return to slumber
After hearing the cries of the oppressed
and marginalized
We have sounded the alarm
Now we march forward
Beat...Beat...Blow...Blow...
We walk down this broken road

Broken nations
Broken patience
We feel the need for reconstruction
in our core
It is time for us to march
towards mending
Bringing love and labor
So what's broken can be transformed
Pressing forward
Looking to the sky
We say
Reach down, Lord
Reach your justice down
When we walk on the broken road

Prologue 3 – Shanelle Gabriel (*alt.**)

Each of us...
We are mirrors
Who we are
A reflection of how we treat each other
Each word exchanged
Echos our frame of mind
Displays who we cut out
Of humanity's portrait
When you look at me
What do you see?
Do you see someone
Who has a right to simply be
Or a body
Undeserving of the right
To live freely?
Our differences
Should not threaten your identity
Our sameness shouldn't
Make me more worthy
When you look in the mirror

Please
See me
Mind and soul
See me and see your own
flesh and bone
Regardless of how I embody
skin tone, gender, fatness
Regardless of who I love
and where I call home
Party and political positions
The possessions I hold
See me for who I am and still listen
Find me in your reflection
And my right to thrive
Worthy of your protection
Because if you truly
Love your neighbor as yourself
You would recognize your divine
Connection to everyone

3. "All of Me" – Kyle Pederson

Look at my skin.
Do you see only skin,
or the soul within...
do you see what's true?

Look who I love.
Do you view me as less,
like none of the rest of me
matters to you?

Turn off the talk on the air,
and the voices who seem to just care
about dividing and hiding us where
you won't see.

Look at my faith.
Do you see my creed,
and choose to believe
that's all of me?

Look at my vote.
On that alone are you likely to show
contempt for me?

You don't have to see.
But if you take the time to look at me,
you'll see the same fears
and a good heart,

and the same tears that tear you apart.
See the same love, the same hope,
the same need, the same joy.

So look at my skin.
See the skin and the soul within.
See what's true.

Look who I love.
And see my faith and my vote,
but not those alone,
seek to know me, too.

Turn up the voices of truth.
Learn to let mercy through.
Love will guide us to
a world where we see.
All of me.

Turn and see.
Will you see?
All of me.

Prologue 4 – Shanelle Gabriel

Your heart is open
Now it's your time to shine
Not for you to live in the spotlight
But so that others can thrive
This is a call
That cannot be ignored
This fight is within you

This light cannot be diffused
So illuminate through the hate
Gleam while renewed by MLK's dream
Let the marginalized be equalized
Through love and action
Go and transform this world
Be the light we need

4. "Light Transforms the Darkness" – Shanelle Gabriel

Light transforms the darkness, so go...
go and let your light out.

Love is what we harness, so go...
go and live your love out.

We are all unified by the way
our heart beats

What you feel, I feel

Different palettes and hues and variety

The Creator's tapestry

We need to see the light

Don't let the darkness hide
our humanity

This is a calling.

We've been blinded by hate we were
taught to believe

That's not how it should be

If my brother or sister is chained

There's no way I can say I'm free

We are the change we need

So that equality can be reality

Calling you to set your heart ablaze

Raise the torch, pave the way

So all can say I am free

Calling for all to have the ability
to dream

To see ourselves in every being

I want you to be free

For all to find home

Wherever they may go

Step into action, words no longer hollow

We will fight for you to be free

Called to stand for all

races, abilities,

religions, identities

No matter who you love

You are worthy

You deserve to be free

I will fight for you to be free

This is our calling

We are invited into each other's life

We are called to live love

Called to be that light

Prologue 5 – Shanelle Gabriel

While this musical work
may be finished

Know that OUR work is
nowhere complete

In a world where oppression remains
hidden behind tradition

We refuse to allow prejudice to be
justified by laws and religion

No longer will we use differences

As ammunition for division

Because we know

That passivity is the enemy of
advancement

We're on the path to equity

We are part of the process

Of breaking chains,

Cycles rooted in pain,

United under one aim:

Freedom for ALL

Embracing courage over comfort

Using our privilege to be advocates

No longer silent

This spirit of activism

Actively flows within us

This is where we tap in

Everyone,

All in
Each step
Each act
Each vote
Each time we push back
We reimagine and rebuild
the world we know

To one where love overflows
We must persevere and believe
That Justice for all can be made real
You and I
We
Have the power to achieve what
Langston Hughes once dreamed

5. “I Dream a World” —Langston Hughes

I dream a world where one
No other one will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn

I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom’s way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.

A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every one is free,

Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all humankind —
Of such I dream, my world!

To our visitors, thank you for coming! ♥

We hope you found what you’re looking for and that you’ll return. Here’s how to keep connecting with our people and programs:

- Fill out a Visitor Card in your pew or online (QR code)
- Watch these pages for newcomer events:
 - **Newcomer Coffees** - Meet the minister and other newcomers
 - **UU Journey classes** - Learn about UU history, spirituality, mission, and traditions
- Check out our website, www.fpc-stow-acton.org
There is so much happening at FPC! Our homepage and “Church Life” tab detail our events and programs.
- Subscribe to our e-newsletters & email groups (QR code)



Visitor Card



E-Newsletters

Announcements

Today at FPC

11 am - Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall

➤ **Bake Sale** by FPC's Supporting Asylum Seekers Task Force to raise funds for immigrants facing an increasing number of urgent needs. We will accept cash, check or Venmo.

➤ **Free Beer!** The Assabet Craft Beer and Food Truck Festival organizers are really grateful to everyone who has already signed up to help out FPC with the festival this year. We have a few more shifts to fill, and would love your help. Sign up and get a complimentary bottle of Unitarian Special Bitter (USB) that has been brewed for us by Amory's Tomb in Maynard!

➤ **Lost & Found** - Last day to claim items before they are donated. Several nice coats.

12-1 pm - Confronting the History of Housing Discrimination, Fellowship Hall

As Stow and other Massachusetts communities work to reform local zoning to allow multifamily housing, this session offers a primer on the 20th century history of housing discrimination, both nationally and here in the Commonwealth. This history and these policies produced our divided and unequal region and we are still living with that legacy. We'll also explore what can be done to redress this history.

Next Sunday, June 15

"Poetry 101 - Spiritual Conversations thru Poetry" - Fellowship Hall, in-person only - Hector Constantzos - Remember studying poetry in high school and wondering what the poets were thinking when they wrote their stuff? Here's the chance to discuss that. Join us to read a poem, reflect on what you think of it, and then discuss - "What was the poet thinking?"

Plate Sharing for June

OUTMetroWest is a non-profit organization that offers free programs for LGBTQ+ young



people from pre-K through high school, including specific programs for trans and gender expansive children and youth. OUT MetroWest offers a safe and welcoming physical space for youth and their families to find friends and support so they can be themselves and thrive. Our trans and non-binary youth need all the support they can get right now. OUT MetroWest offers nearly 20 programs each month at 6 locations including their center in Framingham and satellite locations in Acton, Medway, Needham, Waltham and Westborough. For more information see [OUTMetrowest.org](https://outmetrowest.org).

This Week at FPC

FPC Book Group Wed, 6/11, 7-8 pm, on Zoom - Our last book for the church year is *The Backyard Bird Chronicles*, written and illustrated by Amy Tan. sharonbrownfield@gmail.com for the link

Guest Table Fri, 6/13, 5:30-6:30pm, Fellowship Hall - Our free community dinner. All are Welcome ~ No Charge! Menu: Salad, Veggie Lasagna, Cornbread, Desserts ~ Gluten-free options & Allergen Aware policy

Friday Friends 6/13, 5:30-6:30pm, Hall-Vestry-Youth Room - Youth ages 4-11 Games, snacks, and fun. Drop off at Vestry.