

First Unitarian Church in New Bedford

News & Views



WELCOME TO THE GIFT OF LIBERATING LOVE

Love, it sits in the chest, at least at the start. It's what makes our heart beat again after being broken, and our lungs breathe again after being closed off in the dark for far too long.

We recognize love as the thing that allowed us to finally remove our masks, or that which said I don't want you to take it off, until you are ready.....

The longer I live, the more deeply I learn that love—whether we call it friendship or family or romance—is the work of mirroring and magnifying each other's light. Gentle work. Steadfast work. Life-saving work in those moments when life and shame and sorrow occlude our own light from our view but there is still a clear-eyed loving person to beam it back. In our best moments, we are that person for another.

James Baldwin



FROM THE MINISTER'S STUDIO

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“Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.” -Martin Luther King Jr.

Greetings, my friends, and a very Happy New Year with good health and luck to you. I've always been intrigued by the images in cartoons that depict the Old Year having a worn face and a long beard, passing off the New Year to a chubby little baby. It does feel like that, doesn't it? Every year newly born, another chance to start fresh, and we look forward with hope, and a healthy modicum of trepidation, for how it will grow, what it might become. Like with any newborn, we know there will be moments of joy and sorrow, excitement and fear. We just do the best we can, with all the love we can muster, to get through the change that is happening every day. So, here we are, with the wriggling baby of 2024 looking up at us and asking us how we will help in the year to come; what role will we play in the always changing universe that might make the necessary growth happen.

JANUARY SERVICES

JANUARY 7: Liberating Love, Rev. Karen LeBlanc

JANUARY 14: Long Range Planning Committee

JANUARY 21: Matt Meyer (See bio on page 7)

JANUARY 28: Social Justice Service



FROM THE MINISTER'S STUDIO, CONT.

This isn't a story about the past or the future, it's about what is going on right now, in this moment; there isn't any other. No one knows what is to come, what we might have to face together. No one can change what was in the past. We can only transform this moment, right now, with love. Love for each other, love for ourselves, love for the world. Love, when we apply it abundantly, makes more of a difference than any hateful rhetoric ever could.

We live amid so much strife in the world. It makes us angry, and that's good when that anger is put toward creating real change in our lives and in our world. But we can't let anger overwhelm love. If that happens, we are truly lost. I think that is the message I want to send as we watch the New Year grow: "Let there be LOVE!" Considering this is an election year, we need it more than ever. Most of us don't even think about that in the equation we use to elect our officials, but maybe we should. Maybe this year we should be asking questions like: "Who will love us and inspire us to love others? Who will love our country enough to preserve all the best of what we represent?" We might have to disqualify anyone who has ever been a politician, but it would be worth it!

Love and light conquers fear and hate, and we need it right now, and in the year to come. May your New Year grow strong. May you fall in love over and over with a thousand tiny things. And may all that love land where it's needed in the moment.

Bright Blessings-Karen



LIBERATING LOVE

WAY COOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

YASMIN FLEFLEH-VINCENT,
DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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What does it mean to be a people of **Liberating Love**?

January 7: Love Pulls Us

I am Love By Susan Verde

January 14: Love Pulls Us Up Stream

Long Range Planning Committee
Article II and Our UU Technology
[30 Days of Love 2024](#)

January 21: Love Pulls Us Back To The Table

Matt Meyer - Has led worship for hundreds of congregations, traveling the country sharing a message of love and justice, through rhythm and song!

January 28: Love Pulls Us Toward Beauty

Social Justice Sunday
Birthday Blessings
NB Whaling Museum National Historic Park
Walking Field Trip 10:45 am

BOOKS FOR LIBERATING LOVE

FOR ADULTS:

Klara and the Sun by
Kazuo Ishiguro

Hello Beautiful by Ann
Napolitano

A Man Called Ove by
Fredrick Backman

FOR CHILDREN:

I am Love by Susan
Verde

Swimmy by Leo Lionni

We March by Shane W.
Evans

THE GIFT OF LIBERATING LOVE

WAY COOL SUNDAY SCHOOL, CONTINUED

Have you heard of the Compass Advantage created by Roots of Action? **Empathy, Curiosity, Sociability, Resilience, Self-Awareness, Integrity, Resourcefulness, and Creativity** are the directions on the Compass. All values we wish to instill while the children are in our presence each Sunday Morning. We strive to model how the UU religion is rooted in righteousness since these values are the essence of our principles and sources, even Article II! Enjoy the fantastic article below and embark on a Journey this January by using quotes and questions to engage in conversation to build beautiful people with Love at the center of your vision. On January 1st, 1863 Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, on January 15th we celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., from January 15th to February 14th Unitarians Side with Love. If you want to participate in the UU Thirty Days of Love check out the uua.org website. Above all, be a people of Liberating Love. Happy New Year, happy January, happy everything!

The Compass Advantage by Marilyn Price-Mitchell

Integrity quotes help children recognize that standing for what they believe is important for achieving a meaningful life. Integrity is the ability to act in ways that are consistent with the **values, beliefs, and moral** principles we claim to hold. It's about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching; and about courage, honesty, and respect in one's daily interactions. Parents and **teachers help shape integrity** by treating young people with respect and dignity and listening to their feelings and concerns without judgment. When adults praise youth for demonstrating their values, beliefs, and principles through actions, young people are reminded of their value as ethical human beings, beyond external achievements like grades or test scores. Quotes about integrity that focus on believing in your own voice, doing what is right, and overcoming the fear of standing for what you believe can help children see moral behavior from new perspectives. Wise people from throughout history have talked about the importance of integrity, from Mahatma Gandhi to Malala Yousafzai. **Research shows that integrity is one of eight core abilities that drive successful kids.** When parents and teachers use integrity quotes to engage children in conversations about the big and small moral issues of our times, kids better understand themselves and others. They develop their own values and beliefs. Children see how courage, honesty, and respect are part of integrity and how these internal strengths enrich their lives.

Thirty Days of Love - Side with Love Campaign - Jan.15 - Feb.14

- WEEK 1 (January 15-21) Safety:: Decriminalization
- WEEK 2 (January 22-28) Re-Imagining:: Climate Justice
- WEEK 3 (January 29 - February 4) Possibility:: Bodily Autonomy (LGBTQIA+, reproductive, gender, and disability justice)
- WEEK 4 (February 5-11) Resilience:: Democracy & Electoral Justice
- BONUS DAYS (February 12-14) Interdependence:: Liberatory Intersections



ANNOUNCEMENTS

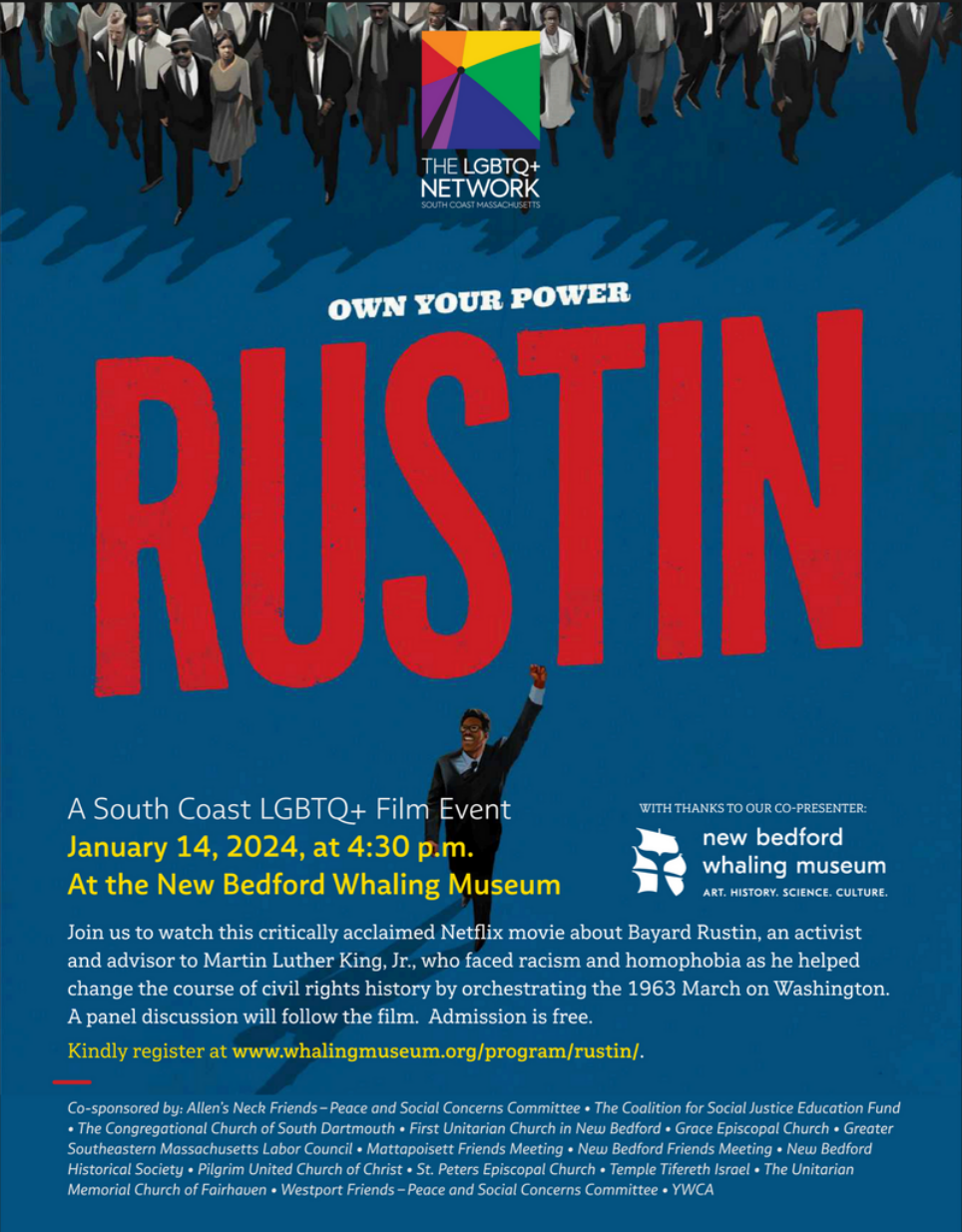
The First Unitarian Church is proud to partner with the SouthCoast LGBTQ+ Network for a screening of the Netflix movie, *Rustin*, at the New Bedford Whaling Museum on January 14, at 4:30 pm. This event is free and open to the public. Reserve a spot by visiting <https://www.whalingmuseum.org/program/rustin/>

ABOUT THE FILM

It is based on the true story of *Rustin*, who helped Martin Luther King Jr. and others organize the 1963 March on Washington.

The film tells the story of the charismatic, homosexual civil rights activist Bayard Rustin. Despite incredible odds, he managed to organize the March on Washington in 1963. This event is considered one of the high points of the civil rights movement in the United States. Over 200,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. and called for an end to racial discrimination in the USA. Martin Luther King gave his famous I Have a Dream speech at the event.

The film stars Colman Domingo in the title role, alongside Chris Rock, Glynn Turman, Aml Ameen, Gus Halper, CCH Pounder, Da'Vine Joy Randolph, Johnny Ramey, Michael Potts, Jeffrey Wright, and Audra McDonald.




THE LGBTQ+ NETWORK
SOUTH COAST MASSACHUSETTS

OWN YOUR POWER

RUSTIN

A South Coast LGBTQ+ Film Event
January 14, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.
At the New Bedford Whaling Museum

WITH THANKS TO OUR CO-PRESENTER:
 **new bedford whaling museum**
ART. HISTORY. SCIENCE. CULTURE.

Join us to watch this critically acclaimed Netflix movie about Bayard Rustin, an activist and advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., who faced racism and homophobia as he helped change the course of civil rights history by orchestrating the 1963 March on Washington. A panel discussion will follow the film. Admission is free.
[Kindly register at www.whalingmuseum.org/program/rustin/.](https://www.whalingmuseum.org/program/rustin/)

Co-sponsored by: Allen's Neck Friends - Peace and Social Concerns Committee • The Coalition for Social Justice Education Fund • The Congregational Church of South Dartmouth • First Unitarian Church in New Bedford • Grace Episcopal Church • Greater Southeastern Massachusetts Labor Council • Mattapoisett Friends Meeting • New Bedford Friends Meeting • New Bedford Historical Society • Pilgrim United Church of Christ • St. Peters Episcopal Church • Temple Tifereth Israel • The Unitarian Memorial Church of Fairhaven • Westport Friends - Peace and Social Concerns Committee • YWCA

UU RECYCLES

First Unitarian Church in New Bedford was recently awarded an “Our Business Recycles” window cling from the Greater New Bedford Facilities and Fleet Management for doing an outstanding job recycling at the church and Thrift Shop.

Jessica contacted the New Bedford Recycles team to come to the church and assess how we do with waste management and recycling. They were very impressed with the congregation's commitment to cutting down waste by using reusable dishes instead of disposables, using rags to clean rather than paper towels, recycling paper in the office, the Thrift Shop's commitment to recycling metal, and our partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation to recycle textiles that can no longer be used or sold (thank you, Pam and Brownie).

Please donate any unwanted textiles in any condition to the Thrift Shop. The church earns a small amount of money whenever we get an Epilepsy Foundation pickup. Every little bit helps!

You can follow New Bedford Recycling on [Facebook](#).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Matt Meyer Bio

Matt is a sought-after speaker wherever Unitarian Universalists gather to deepen their worship and explore their faith. He has lead worship for convocations at several seminaries and has been a worship leader and workshop presenter for national gatherings of LREDA, UUMN, UUMA and the last twelve general assemblies of the UUA.

Matt also serves as the Director of Operations for Sanctuary Boston, a community of vibrant worship and real connection.

Matt has been blessed to have performed with Ysaye Barnwell (of Sweet Honey in the Rock), Pete Seeger, Emma's Revolution, Peter Mayer, Jim Scott, Nick Page, The Halalisa Singers, Samba Tremeterra, and Bloco de Afrobrasil.

He has a degree in hand drumming from Berklee College of Music and has studied abroad in Cuba, Ghana, and Central America.

Matt has a long background of activism and organizing for social and economic justice. He is also a founding organizer of these cooperative organizations:

- Lucy Stone and Margaret Moseley Cooperatives.
- The Greater Boston Chamber of Cooperatives, a trade association of worker, consumer, and housing cooperatives.
- The Boston Cooperative Investment Club, which has invested \$50K+ in newly forming cooperatives to build a more democratic economy.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Social Justice Committee

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
IN NEW BEDFORD

Food Drive

JANUARY 2024

71 8th Street, New Bedford, MA
DROP OFF M-F, 10 AM - 1 PM

Food is a human right and is an immediate and tangible way to help someone. Every donation of food helps.

We accept donations of non-perishable food in jars, cans and sealed packets. We recommend sauces, pasta, soups, beans, vegetables in cans or jars, honey, peanut butter, canned fruit, boxed juices, long-life milk, tea, coffee, coconut cream and fish in oil.

www.uunewbedford.org



Do you want to get more involved with the church?
Why not volunteer to be on a committee?

We are currently looking for volunteers for the Finance Committee
& Outreach Committee!

Finance Committee

- Helps plan and execute the Annual Pledge Drive
- Strategizes fundraising plans for the year and more!

Outreach Committee

- Help design and distribute flyers
- Send out press releases about events
- Assist other committees with their outreach if needed and more!

To learn more, please email admin@uunwbedford, and the administrator can put you in touch with the Committee Chairs.

Why volunteer? Participation in a committee provides a sense of belonging and purpose. It's more than attending meetings; it's actively contributing to the shared vision and mission of the church. Whether involved in outreach, social justice, or community events, each committee member plays a unique role in shaping the collective identity of the First Unitarian Church. The connections formed within these committees go beyond casual interactions, evolving into deep and meaningful relationships that extend into our daily lives.

The impact of committee work reverberates far beyond the church walls, reaching into the broader community of New Bedford. By engaging in outreach programs, social initiatives, and community service projects, committees become catalysts for positive change. Whether it's organizing food drives, supporting local charities, or championing social justice causes, the collective efforts of committee members make a tangible and lasting impact on those in need. It's a reminder that our shared values translate into action, enriching the lives of individuals and families beyond our immediate congregation.

BLUE: Sanctuary
 GREEN: Tryworks
 PINK: Maja Capek Room

The Thrift Shop is open Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10 AM - 1 PM.

JANUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6 
7 Sunday Service 11 AM	8	9 Board of Trustees Meeting 6 PM  GNBCS	10 Social Justice Zoom 6:30	11 SouthCoast Lessons	12	13 
14 Sunday Service 11 AM Drum Circle 7PM	15 MLK Day Office Closed	16  GNBCS	17 Social Justice Zoom 6:30	18 SouthCoast Lessons	19	20 
21 Sunday Service 11 AM	22	23  GNBCS	24 Social Justice Zoom 6:30	25 SouthCoast Lessons	26	27 
28 Sunday Service 7 PM	29	30  GNBCS	31			

Check out the calendar on our website to see real-time updates by visiting www.uunewbedford.org/calendar

****We still need Hospitality volunteers on Sundays. There is a sign-up sheet in the kitchen; please choose a Sunday that you can help out. Thank you.