

*First Parish of Sudbury UU  
2010 Collegium:  
Sharing our Odysseys*

*Exploring our own  
spiritual journeys...  
Together*



*January 10, 24\*, and 31  
11:45 to 1:30*

*~soup & bread lunch included~*

*\*subject to change: see section 3*

**What?** It's our annual First Parish Collegium, a covenanted circle of equals – formed to support one another as we explore how we human beings create meanings to make sense of the human condition.

*This year the focus of  
our conversations will be our own stories  
about our personal religious experiences  
and spiritual development.*

The idea grows from the theme for our worship program this year: “exploring spiritual and religious odysseys.”

It is human nature to strive to make sense of what are often unanswerable questions. This process of seeking answers (or at least our own understandings) is what often spurs a person to begin a spiritual quest, a journey, a pilgrimage. It might be a trek or a rambling meander. It might be a purposeful voyage or what seems at the time like aimless wandering. For many of us it is not a single journey with an end in sight, it is a series of wanderings, with pauses, twists and turns, and unexpected events that redirect us.

During this year we are sharing our personal odysseys and those of others. We will ask what motivates such journeys, what causes us to change directions, what sometimes propels us, what happens when we feel lost, and what occasionally forces us to stop for rest, for direction, for nourishment.

You will be invited to share some part of your own story, but you will not be required to do so. Those who do volunteer to share something of their own stories will be given guidelines and support.

Together, we will agree to a covenant of behavior that ensures that everyone's story will be heard and held with great respect and confidence. Our task is not to analyze another's story but to encourage the telling of it, and discover whether another's story can help us better understand our own.

**When & Where?** Three Sunday afternoons in January: 1/10, 1/24\* and 1/31 from 11:45 am to 1:30 pm in the Brackett Room at First Parish. A simple soup and bread lunch is included. This is a First Parish program; there will be no fee.

**Why?** Because “encouragement to spiritual growth” is one of our valued principles and there are so few opportunities to share some of the substance of our own stories with one another.

*\* It is likely that there will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 24 and that we will need to reschedule this session. Rather than propose a different date now, the group will select a date together.*

**How?** There are many ways you can share your story. You can give an overview, you can go from beginning to now, or just tell a particular part of your story. You can tell how a person, a place, an experience, an event or something unexpected led to something you might call a spiritual “milestone.”

Either our minister, Katie Lee, or our ministerial candidate, Bev, will be happy to meet privately with you to help you tease out the part of your story you’d like to tell. We can also suggest some options for how you share your story with others.

Of course not everyone will choose to tell her or his story. There will always be a community of witnesses who listen and learn both from what they hear and what meanings they make of what they hear.



## *Our Group Covenant*

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*We will have a covenant with one another... about how we will share what are “sacred stories” with reverence and respect.*

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We will covenant with one another about how to be in dialogue with the story-teller and with each other. Through this we will create and maintain a safe space in which people can share.

Some elements of our covenant:

- ⌘ Each story belongs to its teller. The rest of us are witnesses to the storyteller’s experience. We hear it and hold it with reverence and in confidence.
- ⌘ We do not critique, give advice, or suggest changes to a person’s story. We listen with respect and then, in conversation, we speak only of our own experiences.
- ⌘ Every person is entitled to voice an opinion; every person deserves to feel heard.
- ⌘ We share when we wish; we have the option not to share if we prefer
- ⌘ We speak from our own experience. Others have the right to disagree, but not to judge, attack, or otherwise criticize/ostracize a person for an opinion.

*The collegium is one of many programs for adults at First Parish of Sudbury, for the exploration and benefit of our friends and members. There is no fee, but there is the expectation of attendance at all sessions, barring an emergency or illness.*

**To register or for more information, contact:**

**Rev. Katie Lee Crane**

*minister*

minister@fpsudbury.org

978/443-2043 x 2

or

**Ms. Beverly Waring**

*ministerial candidate in residence*

bwaring@verizon.net

*For information about other adult programs at First Parish of Sudbury Unitarian Universalist, go to*

[www.fpsudbury.org/religious-exploration/adult-programs/collegium](http://www.fpsudbury.org/religious-exploration/adult-programs/collegium)

