



UNITED PARISH IN BROOKLINE

April 26, 2026

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Often, as we begin our opening prayer in worship, I ask us to check in about why we're at church, what we need to let go of, or what we need to take with us. It's an acknowledgement that we've stepped into **a holy space**, where we can be **present and authentic with God and with one another**. A place where we can ask for what we need.

I invite you to check in right now about **your connection to this community**.

I make the invitation because there are always a wide variety of experiences in our pews: hope, grief, joy, anxiety, fear, love, stress, questions, re-commitment, exploration, big decisions. Many of us come for **a calm, centering, encouraging, inspiring place to refresh our souls**, to step aside from the to-do lists and the nonstop news cycle to reframe what is going on in the world and what's most important to us. We come to find a place where we can receive spiritual nourishment, re-ground ourselves in God's presence, and move forward with a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

I'm grateful for all the ways our worship and community life provide this **soulful refreshment** — not only for those of us who've been coming regularly for years, but also for those who've come in the door for the first time. Our pews have become a refuge for people who are directly affected by the headlines: war, uncertainty about immigration status, food and housing insecurity. We are truly **a sanctuary for all**, affirmed each Sunday morning in worship and continuing through all the good work happening in our hallways all week long.

Recently, in the intimacy and conviviality of our Lenten Dinner Church worship, a newcomer spoke about how he's found **welcome without judgment** in our midst. As he anxiously awaits work visa authorization, our congregation has provided him a spiritual landing-place. Another newcomer, who met United Parish as a guest at our annual Thanksgiving meal, recently read scripture aloud for the first time in worship. She said she had felt a similar welcome and wanted to find out more. Carrying forward **the inclusive hospitality of Jesus** is central to our mission.

Just as we pray in concentric circles in our Prayers of the People, United Parish has **positive, rippling effects all around us**. We continue to be a valued host to 35 community groups, including the Brookline Food Pantry, Artbarn Community Theater, the Brookline Community Development Corporation, our own Thrifty Threads shop, and numerous arts organizations and recovery groups. In our recent application for a Community Preservation Act grant, our building users described United Parish as:

“a critical hub for community-building in Brookline”

“foundational to the wellbeing of the community”

“standing strong on its principles”

“measurably impacting and strengthening Brookline.”

United Parish clearly makes a difference for our wider community.

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In this season of United Parish's ministry, we are taking important next steps to ensure that this church **remains a vibrant, inclusive, and faithful presence** in Coolidge Corner for generations to come. We are clarifying our mission so that we can move forward with purpose. We are caring for our historic building—repairing the steeple so it continues to stand as a visible sign of welcome. And we are working toward a fully accessible sanctuary that reflects our deepest values of inclusion and belonging.

With all that is happening through our congregational life, we can feel that **the Holy Spirit is working in our midst**, helping us live out the ministry of Jesus Christ in ever new, creative, and dynamic ways. It's a privilege and a gift. For this, we say "Thanks be to God!"

In this Stewardship Season, I hope that you will make both a financial and service pledge to United Parish. Your pledge means that you say "Thanks be to God!" to all this great, missional work and that you will actively participate in carrying it into the future to make a joyful, hopeful difference in the world around us.

If you've never made a pledge before, this is a meaningful time to begin.

A pledge is simply an intention—a way of saying, "This community matters to me, and I want to help sustain it." There is no expectation of a certain amount, only an invitation to participate in a way that feels thoughtful and genuine for you.

Your presence already matters. A pledge is one more way to make that connection visible and impactful.

In faith and gratitude,

Kent French
Senior Pastor

Stewardship Ministry Team

Chelsea Hathaway, Mark Jones, Karl Klaussen,
Emily Reed, *Convener*, Tyler Smith, *Treasurer*,
Sarah Fitzpatrick, *Parish Administrator*
Amy Norton-Benfield, *Associate Pastor*
Kent French, *Senior Pastor*

