



FRIDAY, JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2022



Halo Moon ~ photo credit: Linda Hossfeld

Dear Ones,

On Wednesday night, a hearty group of us did a beautiful walking meditation in the Public Garden, under the rising (astonishing!) full moon. We were joined by a smaller group who stayed cozy in the Zoom room. I've loved these opportunities to be hybrid outside, keeping us safe from evil Omicron.

Earlier this week, the Pru (our elected board, the Prudential Committee) met with our COVID Response Team (CRT) to discuss reopening the sanctuary for hybrid worship. As always, the conversation was grounded in science, thoughtful, and respectful. The vote carried to reopen on Sunday, January 30th (one week from this Sunday), with several abstentions from leaders who feel the positivity rate in Boston is still too high to gather safely (on January 8th, it was 32%! ). The Pru's majority decision was based on two important factors: The positivity rate is now falling, mirroring the steep rise and fall of Omicron first documented in South Africa; and there are those for whom the risk of contracting COVID-19 from attending Sunday services in person are outweighed by the risks to their emotional and spiritual health.

Each of us is being entrusted with weighing those risks for ourselves; please know that the Pru and the CRT are in no way signaling that it is a risk-free choice to attend services in person. Should you make that choice, on the advice of the doctors on the COVID Response Team, we will require that you are both double-vaxxed and boosted (if eligible). They also recommend that, instead of a cloth mask, you wear a mask that offers better protection — preferably an N95, N94, KN95, or KN94 (or similar). I'll have more information for you next week! I am eternally grateful to our Tech Team, with Art Nava in the lead, who makes the alternative to in-person worship so vibrant; and to Mark David Buckles, our Director of Music, and Rev. Beth Robbins, our Executive Minister, for their unstinting devotion to our beloved spiritual community.

This coming Sunday's highlights (still all virtual!): Pianist Cheng Cheng plays *Winter Sky*, *I Love to Tell the Story*, *Friends* (from *Encore*), and *You've Got a Friend in Me* (from *Toy Story*), and accompanies Hannah Shanefield singing *Count on Me*. Mark David and Julie Metcalf sing *Lean On Me* and The Beatles' *With a Little Help from My Friends*. Mark David conducts our quartet in singing MaMuse's *We Shall Be Known* and Carole King's *You've Got a Friend*. Darrell Waters is our worship coordinator. My sermon is called *Good Friends*.

Finally, I'm excited to tell you about an Arlington Street service trip that Kem & I have been dreaming about for a long, long time. As many of you know, we make an annual pilgrimage to Kanab, Utah, to volunteer at [Best Friends Animal Sanctuary](#) — a 3,700+ acre refuge to 1,600 abandoned, abused, and unsheltered animals. Would you like to join us there between July 28th - August 1st? You can choose to work with bunnies, cats, dogs, goats, horses, pigs, wild birds (and more!), and spend time in the beautiful red rock desert with Arlington Street friends from across the country. Best Friends is committed to accessibility for all; there's something for everyone to do. Your costs will include plane flights in and out of Las Vegas, transportation to and from the Sanctuary, lodging, and food. We'll see what we can do about some financial aid. If you're curious to learn more, please join Kem & me in [her Zoom room](#) for an introduction to all things Best Friends this Sunday evening, January 23rd, at 6:00.

To warm up for this Sunday, here are the words to *We Shall Be Known*:

We shall be known by the company we keep  
By the ones who circle round to tend these fires  
We shall be known by the ones who sow and reap  
The seeds of change, alive from deep within the earth  
It is time now, it is time now that we thrive  
It is time we lead ourselves into the well  
It is time now, and what a time to be alive  
In this Great Turning we shall learn to lead in love

*I am so grateful to be in your company!*

*Faithfully yours, with love*  
*Kim*

