

FEBRUARY MONTHLY THEME: RISK
BALANCING COMFORT AND FEAR

By definition, taking a risk involves exposure to possible danger, harm, or loss. And yet, taking a risk is also what often opens up new possibilities. In our lives, we all face situations that ask us to take some kind of risk, moving us out of a place of comfort and inviting in a degree of fear. Experiences of risk-taking can be painful, but they can also be places of growth, wisdom, and meaning. How do we decide when to take a risk or when to hold back? What emotions or ideas help us respond to the inevitable encounters with risk in our lives? The theme of risk this month asks us to consider how to balance comfort and fear, loss and possibility in our choices, actions, and attitudes.

For Reflection and Discussion:

1. What does the word "risk" mean to you?
2. How do you feel about taking risks? How do you calculate or assess risk?
3. Do you respond differently to various kinds of risk (eg. physical, emotional, professional, financial)?
4. What is one piece of advice you would give about taking risks in life?
5. If you have children, how do you decide how much risk to allow them?
6. What are the risks you have taken in your life to open yourself to some new adventure, challenge, or deeper spiritual growth?
7. What risks have you avoided or retreated from? Why?

Wise Words:

- The practice of love offers no place of safety. We risk loss, hurt, pain. We risk being acted upon by forces outside our control. *bell hooks*
- Being safe doesn't mean you won't be sorry.
Katerina Stoykova Klemer
- Each moment is a leap forwards from the brink of an invisible cliff, where time's keen edges are constantly renewed. We lift our foot from the solid ground of all our life lived thus far, and take that perilous step out into the empty air. Not because we can claim any particular courage, but because there is no other way. *Han Kang*
- Pearls don't lie on the seashore.
If you want one, you must dive for it. *Chinese proverb*
- Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.
Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Curiosity will conquer fear even more than bravery will.
James Stephens
- When you take risks you learn that there will be times when you succeed and there will be times when you fail, and both are equally important.
Ellen DeGeneres
- The willingness to show up changes us, It makes us a little braver each time.
Brené Brown
- And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.
Anais Nin

OUR VISION

To be a vibrant, multigenerational community and a sanctuary for diverse beliefs and passions, joyfully offering our hearts and hands to foster a more just, compassionate, and sustainable world.

OUR MISSION

TO BUILD COMMUNITY *by forging caring connections and supporting one another through the joys, sorrows, and mysteries of life.*

TO SEARCH FOR MEANING *by creating opportunities for all ages to explore values and principles that orient and guide us through life.*

TO DEEPEN OUR SPIRITUALITY *by gathering to share words and music, by nurturing private moments of reflection, and by cultivating reverence.*

TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD *by engaging in compassionate service and promoting social justice.*

First Parish, officially designated as a Welcoming Congregation in 1996, is proud to celebrate and support the lives of all who come to our church, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and transsexual persons.



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