DIGNITY
BOSTON

www.dignityboston.org dignityboston@gmail.com

BULLETIN – September 30, 2026

Marianne Duddy-Burke Steps Down from Role as Executive Director of DignityUSA

- For Marianne's letter and a video, click here.
- For the press release, click here.

Our Liturgies

Upcoming Liturgies

Please join us for our in-person and remote liturgies. We continue with our Ordinary Time liturgies. Our in-person liturgies are always live streamed as well.

Sunday, 10/4
In-Person
Eucharistic Liturgy
@ St. Stephen's
Live Streaming via Zoom
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
5:00 p.m. EDT

Sunday, 10/11
Remote
Liturgy of the Word
Zoom Only
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Solidarity Sunday
5:00 p.m. EDT

Sunday, 10/18
In-Person
Eucharistic Liturgy
@ St. Stephen's
Healing Service
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
5:00 p.m. EDT

Sunday, 10/25
Remote
Liturgy of the Word
Zoom Only
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
5:00 p.m. EDT

Our President's Message

From the Desk of Ron, Dignity Boston President

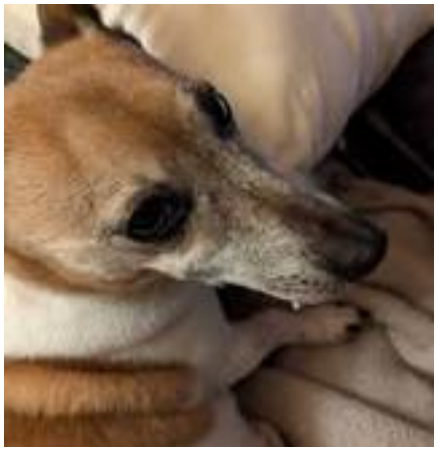
"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." For most of my childhood, our representative in Congress was Patsy Takemoto Mink (pictured on the top of p. 3). She was born in Maui, Hawaii, in 1927, the granddaughter of Japanese immigrants. She was a brilliant honors student in high school and college. Forced to live in racially segregated housing at

the University of Nebraska, she formed a coalition which eventually pressured the university to end their segregation policy. She dreamed of becoming a physician but was rejected by 12 medical schools because of her gender and race. She was accepted into the University of Chicago Law School only by administrative error. She applied from Hawaii, then a U.S. territory with the surname Takemoto, and the school assumed she was an international applicant and admitted her under their foreign student quota. She was one of only two women in her class. She graduated and passed the bar but no law firm in America would hire her. The white firms wouldn't hire a Japanese woman, and the Japanese firms wouldn't hire a woman married to a white man. She opened her own practice and eventually won a seat in Congress in 1964, the first woman of color ever elected to the United States House of Representatives. In the 1970's she drafted the 37 words that would change America forever: "No person in the United States, shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX vastly increased opportunities for women in education and sports. Before Title IX, only 1 in 27 girls played high school sports, compared to 2 in 5 today. American medical schools were 95% male; today it's nearly 50:50. After her death in 2002, Congress officially renamed Title IX the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act. "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

Some of my favorite quotations:
Gloria Steinem: "Whenever one person stands up and says, 'Wait a minute, this is wrong,' it helps other people do the same."
Pope Leo XIV: "Walking together means ensuring that no one is marginalized, isolated, excluded, or rejected. Be builders of bridges between peoples, cultures, and religions… Be witnesses of love, justice, and peace."

Our Socials

Blessing of the Animals



Our next Dignity Boston social is the Blessing of the Animals. Please join us as we offer blessings for your precious pet or pets. This is an online event which, hopefully, makes it easy for you and your pet(s) to attend the event. There are three parts to this event: (1) there will be a brief introduction to the event and a prayer service, (2) you and your pet(s) will be introduced, share a little tidbit about them, and offered a blessing, and (3) we will remember and offer stories about our pets from the past as well as remember our original presider and longtime Dignity Boston member and presider, Gene Clegg. There will be a special start time of 6:30 p.m. EDT on Thursday, 10/1 which will allow Dignity Boston board members to attend before their 7:30 meeting. Pictured above is Mark and Brian's dog, Shadow. Also, check out our latest "Did You Know?" article in this Bulletin as Lourdes brings us through the history of the Blessing of the Animals. It's on p.10, p. 11, and p.12. We hope to see you at this special Blessing! You don't need to have a pet to attend! Pet lovers are welcome!

Someone Who Believed in You

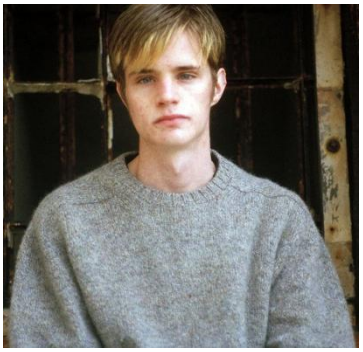
Many of us have had someone in our lives who believed in us or helped us believe in ourselves. On Thursday,10/29 at 7:00 p.m. EDT we will be meeting to share our stories around this topic, or maybe just to listen. Hope to see everyone there! Thank you, Robin for hosting!

Coffee Angels Needed for November and December

Are you interested in providing treats and beverages after liturgy? We are looking for 'Coffee Angels', essentially someone to provide a beverage and treats, for our in-person liturgies on 11/1 and 12/20. Please contact Alice, alicemknowles@gmail.com, if you are interested.

Our Remembrances

We Remember Matthew



Matthew Shepard was a student at the University of Wyoming who was beaten, tortured, and left to die near Laramie on 10/6/1998. He was transported by rescuers to Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he died six days later (10/12/98) from severe head injuries sustained during the attack. We remember Matthew and all those who died from LGBTQI+ violence.

Request for Names for Book of Remembrance

The Liturgy of Remembrance will be on Sunday, 11/1. We request that you send the names of loved ones who have died over the last year to dbbookofremembrance@gmail.com so that they can be read aloud at this service.

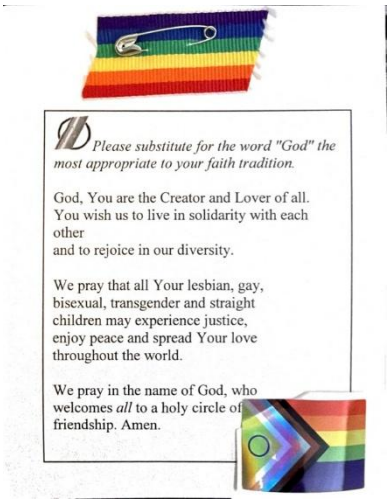
Our Elections

Serve as a Member of the Dignity Boston Board

Consider running for the board! There are four open positions for our 2027 board! You must be a dues-paying member of Dignity for six months before you can run. Our Nominations Night Membership Meeting is on Sunday, 10/25 online after liturgy. Ballots will be sent out during the week of 10/25 but no later than 11/1. Ballots must be received by 12/5. On Sunday evening 11/8, there will be a Candidates Night where candidates will talk about why they decided to run for the Executive Board and you'll be able to ask questions of the candidates. During the day on Saturday, 12/5 after the election committee meets, candidates will be informed as to whether or not they were elected to the board. The 2027 board will be announced at liturgy on Sunday, 12/6.

Our Social Justice

Solidarity Sunday



Solidarity Sunday is Sunday, 10/11 and coincides with National Coming Out Day. Prayer cards, with a rainbow ribbon and sticker, will be available for participants at our 10/4 eucharistic liturgy to be used for our remote Liturgy of the Word next week (10/11). We also encourage people to wear rainbow ribbons if possible. Solidarity Sunday is dedicated to the memory of the many who lost their lives through violence because of who they were or who they were perceived to be. May their deaths not have been in vain. Let us work together to end verbal and physical violence against anyone including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people. The prayer on the back of the card reads as follows: *I pledge I will work for civil and human rights for all people including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender. Civil rights are not special rights. I will seek to stop jokes and unkind language about anyone including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and the transgender when spoken in my presence. Words that hurt and bigotry are not funny. I will speak out against slander, debasement, lies, or dehumanization of anyone including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and the transgender, including when spoken by political or religious leaders. Violent speech leads to physical violence. I will work to stop physical violence against anyone, including violence against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and the transgender. Violence against any person is violence against all people.*

Our Bulletin

An Update on Our Bulletin

There will be no Bulletin on Thursday, 10/15. Our next Bulletin is Friday,10/30. In-between we'll keep you updated with announcements via our listserv.

Our Collaborations

Catholic Collective

The Greater Boston LGBTQIA Catholic Collective, of which Dignity Boston is a part, will be hosting a discussion on the Synod Study Group 9's document which partially covers LGBTQ people and the Church. It will be held at 1:00 p.m. at St. Cecilia's Church on 18 Belvidere St. in Boston on this Sunday, 10/4. All are welcome! We hope you can attend. Validated parking is available at the 50 Dalton St. garage (next to Bukowski's Tavern). Pick up a parking voucher at the meeting.

Our Celebrations

Save the Date

Please save Sunday, 11/22, immediately following liturgy, for Dignity Boston's Thanksgiving potluck celebration at St. Stephen's. Please plan to attend and celebrate our Catholic LGBTQIA+ joy, community, and gratitude. All are welcome. This is a tradition dating back many decades interrupted only by the pandemic. Please start thinking about what you would like to bring to contribute to the feast -- signups will begin in October. If you would like to serve on the committee that organizes the celebration, please talk to Peggy H. at church or consider sending a note to info@dignityboston.org with Thanksgiving in the subject line.

Our Meetings

Upcoming Board and Liturgy Committee Meetings

Dignity Boston Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, 10/1
7:30 p.m. EDT **PLEASE NOTE THIS SPECIAL START TIME**
To attend a board meeting as a guest, email dignityboston@gmail.com.
Meeting minutes and treasury reports are available per request.

Dignity Boston Liturgy Committee Meeting
Sunday, 10/25
following our Remote Liturgy of the Word service
All are welcome at both the board and Liturgy Committee Meetings!

Our Parent DignityUSA

40th Anniversary Conversations on the Halloween Letter

Our Community

Arts Collaboratiove Medford Auction and Small Works Sale

Dignity member Carl T. wants you to know that Arts Collaborative Medford is doing a silent auction and small works sale this Thursday evening. Details are here. To purchase tickets, click here.

Our Partnerships

Dignity Boston Sponsors "GALA 2026: Sacred Rebels"

Dignity Boston has partnered with the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network to sponsor "GALA 2026: Sacred Rebels". This online event celebrates 25 years of preserving LGBTQ+ religious history. More information and free registration can be found here.

Our Collections

September Collection

Our September Collection benefits the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden. This organization is strongly supported by K.A. and Alice and the Dignity Boston community. Its mission is to optimize the quality of life for adults affected by cancer in Massachusetts. To donate, please click here.

October Collection

Our October collection benefits BAGLY, the Boston Alliance of LGBTQ+ Youth, which has been a youth-led, adult-supported social support organization, committed to social justice and creating, sustaining, and advocating for programs, policies, and services for the LGBTQ+ youth community in Massachusetts for over 50 years. To donate, click here. The collection basket is passed around for our Second Collections during the first Sunday that we meet in-person each month. Additional in-person liturgies will have a basket labeled and available at the back of the church during church and moved to the Information Table during the post-liturgy social hour for Second Collection donations. At our remote Liturgy of the Word, the Second Collection link will be put into the chat at the start of service.

Our History

Did You Know?

Kate's cats Beastie (l) and Sophie

.. that Dignity Boston has been celebrating a Blessing of the Animals gathering since 2001? David H. and Mike S. were the proponents and organizers since the very beginning, and continue to lead us in this important ministry today. Dave says that the idea came to them while visiting Provincetown and attending a Blessing of God's Creatures held at St Mary's, the local Episcopal Church. They left there, with their dog Popeye, wishing that Dignity Boston could do something similar. Dave, who was on the Dignity Boston Executive Board at the time, brought the idea forward but found some initial pushback from some members, mostly concerned that pets could mess up St. John, the Episcopal church where Dignity Boston was meeting at the time. With some good thinking and support from some, a solution was found.

Our first Blessing of the Animals was held at the Arboretum in Jamaica Plain. A very enthusiastic supporter from the start was the late Gene C, one of our presiders, who, with his then partner and later husband Leslie, had a couple dogs at home. He offered to help and lead the service. For many years, many of us brought our pets, in person and in photo, to the Arboretum to receive a blessing and also have the opportunity to celebrate in community and in nature the joy of God's creation. Chris L himself said it best: "a wonderful way of combining our pet family with our faith community in a beautiful, spiritual service." Many of us remember with fondness those Saturday mornings at the Arboretum when we gathered together for this event. Many brought their dogs, or pictures of their dogs, cats, and others. Marianne D.-B. remembers bringing "photos of Radcliffe and Carter because they got nervous and unruly around other dogs." Jane P and Peggy H brought their dog Reilly, who received an individual blessing and a gentle pat on the head from Gene along with our collective prayer and gratitude for the animals in our lives. Kanga and Derry were often left at home, represented by a photo or collar. Jane P. says, "they were blessed in their absence and then blessed by us when we got home." Diane S. says that five of her and Lourdes R.'s pets were at some point blessed in the Arboretum. Her most memorable moment, Diane recalls, is the blessing of their cat Noel who came in a carrier. "Noel loved people, so I took him out of the carrier and held him for the occasion as he was keen of registering those around him through smell. Noel put out his paw forward towards Gene's face wanting to smell him. Gene leaned in, and Noel got blessed", says Diane. And who can forget the blessing of Emily's and Finn's guinea pigs!

When we moved to St Stephen's in the South End, the blessings continued, this time in the Blackstone Square Park across the street on the first Sunday in October at 3:00 p.m. before our liturgy at 5:00 p.m. Our blessing ritual consisted of a prayer service including a history of St Francis and his love of and ministry to animals. There was a prayer blessing for each pet present, and even a remembrance of pets we had lost. Dave uses the phrase "warming of the heart" when he remembers our many Blessing of the Animals gatherings. Mike S. admits that he, like most, prefers meeting in person, or in animal, for this ritual and experiences it as an "important ministry to God's creation".

By 2020, we were forced, by COVID to use Zoom for our blessing and started doing them on the first Thursday night in October as part of our online weekly socials. We had the opportunity to talk about our pets and show them on camera! "What we gained by doing it on line", Dave says, "is that more people could participate with even different animals who some chose not to bring outdoors (birds, cats, and hamsters) to name a few. Many of us met Carl T.'s cute hamster at one of those zooms. Every pet is welcome! We still do the Blessing online with the next one being this Thursday, 10/1 at 6:30 as you may have already read in our article on p. 4. Maybe someday we will think of a way to return to the outdoors.

We celebrate this ministry and thank Mike, Dave and Gene for their commitment to this prayerful event. It is a true gift to all of us who have beloved pets. As Abdel S. says, "this is a wonderful Dignity tradition that reminds me how creation reflects God's joy, love and grace. My dogs offer me a deep connection to the Divine mystery of God's unconditional love." AMEN.

"Did You Know" is a frequent feature of the Dignity Boston Bulletin and is written by Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues.

Our Ongoing Announcements

A New Way to Donate

You can donate to Dignity Boston right here. That link can also be found on our Dignity Boston web site at http://www.dignityboston.org/donate. You can also donate via the QR code image to the left of this article. As an alternative, consider supporting Dignity Boston by contributing at our in-person liturgies or by sending donations to Dignity Boston, P.O. Box 262, Belmont, MA 02478. Please make your checks payable to "Dignity Boston". If it is for one of our Second Collections, please write "Second Collection" in the memo field. We thank you for the consideration of any donation to our chapter!

Monthly Social: Ideas and Hosting Needed

Monthly socials bring our community together online. Have an idea for a topic or a social? Perhaps you'd like to lead an event. If so, please contact Ron, Peggy B., or Robin at dignityboston@gmail.com.

Subscribe to the DignityUSA Monthly Newsletter

We hope you are enjoying the "Our Parent DignityUSA" section of the Dignity Boston Bulletin. For even more DignityUSA information, subscribe to the DignityUSA newsletter, Dateline. Please click here to subscribe to Dateline.

Contact Us!

Our Dignity Boston mailing address is: Dignity Boston, P.O. Box 262, Belmont, MA 02478. For questions, contact dignityboston@gmail.com . Please note that DignityUSA's address is: DignityUSA, 51 Pleasant St. #1107, Malden, MA 02148. The phone number is 781-309-7686.

Check Out Our Information Table

We have lots of information vehicles including, but not limited to, Dateline (the DignityUSA newsletter), emails through our listserv, the semi-monthly Bulletin, and our Information Table in our social hall at St. Stephen's where you'll find printed copies of our latest Bulletin as well as other materials. Please consider checking it out when you visit Dignity Boston in person next time around.

Please contact dignityboston@gmail.com if you have any items that you would like to suggest for our next Bulletin (10/30/26) by Noon on Wednesday, 10/28/26.