

First Parish Medfield Newsletter

December 2009

Upcoming Events:

Hanging of the Greens

*Saturday December 5th, 1pm– 3pm
Sanctuary*

Semi-Annual Meeting

*Sunday December 6th, 11:30am –
12:30pm*

Executive Board Meeting

*Thursday December 17th, 7:30pm
Vestry*

**The Winter Solstice
Worship Service**

*Sunday December 20th
Sanctuary*

Christmas Eve Service

*Thursday December 24th
5:30pm
Sanctuary*

Exciting 2010 Auction

Saturday February 27th



From the Minister

Dear Friends:

As we are now in the season of shorter days just when it seems there is more to do, I share with you this Gilbert meditation which is one of my favorites.
May you find quiet moments in these days that require so much of our energy.
May you experience the “dark” season in ways that nourish you as you “move into the deeper places of your being.”

In faith,
Bob

“The Nourishing Dark” by Richard Gilbert

We pause in holy quiet of the nourishing dark.
In winter's embrace, the nights are long and dark.
We miss the sparkling daylight hours,
the long days of brightness and activity.
We yearn for their swift return, and wonder if we can wait,
Or if our patience will at last give out.

We forget the nourishing dark at our peril.
There is mystery in the dark to be probed.
There is the adventure of that which cannot be known,
Cannot be seen, can only be experienced in the soul.

There is deepness in the dark, impenetrable and inviting.
In the darkness we rest our bodies and our souls;
we escape that which distracts and confuses.
We come face to face with ourselves.
We come into the deep places of our being.

Darkness is not mere absence of light.
Darkness is not simply an interval between days.
Darkness is the softness of things,
the blessed quiet of the night.

May we not bemoan the dark, but relish it.
May we feel its powerful presence
and rejoice in its mystical embrace.
May we celebrate the deep and nourishing dark.

A Message from The Membership Committee

As we enter the Holiday Season we want to highlight a positive beginning to the church year. As many of you have noted, we have had quite a surge in visitors to First Parish this fall. It has been a pleasure to see so many new faces sitting among us. It has been energizing and affirms our belief that if we get our message out more people will want to experience what our faith has to offer. Our congregation can be proud of the warmth and hospitality it shows to newcomers.

A huge thank you goes to our generous and welcoming congregation for making the family pancake breakfast to support Medway House a success as well as a lot of fun. We collected almost 1000 diapers and wipes, as well as \$55 for the family shelter in Medway. The Membership and Social Action Committees sponsored the breakfast.

Have you ever thought about your “elevator speech”, how you’d respond to specific theological questions about our U.U. faith? Well, we have, and many times we’re at a loss about what to say. To help us, newcomers and perhaps, some of you, we decided to purchase some U.U. pamphlets that might help explain some of these difficult questions. We now have on hand the following:

Unitarian Universalist Views of:

**The Bible
The Church
Evil
God**

**Jesus
Prayer
The Sacred
Faith in the Workplace**

In addition we also purchased two lovely brochures: **Discovering Unitarian Universalism from Catholic and Jewish Perspectives** and **Family Prayers**.

If you would like to see any of these resources, and you don’t see them on the Welcome Table or in the Vestry, please ask a member of the Membership Committee.

Blessings for the Holiday Season.

The Membership Committee

Nancy Kingsbury, Margaret Rolph, Jim Stetson, Barbara Bunger, Chair

Around First Parish...Around Medfield...Around the UUA

In preparation for Christmas Eve....

I would like to be in touch with all college age students whose families are part of our congregation. Specifically, I am going to invite them to participate in First Parish's Christmas Eve service. Please consider submitting an address or e-mail address to Bob for those individuals who make up this vital and sometimes forgotten part of our church family. Submissions may be made to Bob directly at: uuketch@gmail.com. If you gave him this information last year please re-submit it. Many people change their internet providers or dormitory addresses over the course of a calendar year. Thank you.

Rev. Bob

Christmas Eve Charity Collection

Each year First Parish splits the proceeds from the collection at the Christmas Eve service with a selected charity. This year we are going to donate half of the Christmas Eve collection to Habitat for Humanity. Specifically, our donation will go to a local group –The Tri-Valley Local Partnership Committee, part of South Shore Habitat for Humanity, which represents Millis, Medfield and Medway. Its current project, just getting started, is the building of a Habitat home in Medway, with volunteers recruited from community churches, as well as from other community groups. It takes over 1000 volunteers to build a Habitat home! Funds donated will be used for the building and materials for this project.

For further information, see <http://www.sshabitat.org/> or speak to Margaret Rolph. Margaret is the First Parish liaison to Habitat and is working on this project. She will be publicizing more opportunities to get involved.

Hanging of the Greens

'Tis the season, once again...The Chancel committee hopes you can join us on **SATURDAY Dec 5th, between 1pm and 3pm in the sanctuary**, to decorate for the Holiday season. All are invited- bring children and friends. Hang a few ornaments on our Christmas tree, or secure some swags to the pews.

Refreshments and Christmas music will be provided, as we 'deck the halls with boughs of holly'.

Kindly reply to Kirsten D'Abate if you can stop by to lend a hand. kk@dab8.net

Exciting 2010 Auction

Mark the date on your calendars: Saturday, February 27 will be the EXCITING FIRST PARISH AUCTION.

Help First Parish raise funds for the maintenance of the historic Meeting House, for supporting the work of the Church and for a selected social action project.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED! Besides donating items and bidding wildly on the night, there are several ways that you can help with the auction.

- Planning and serving the food and refreshments
- Creating and printing an enticing Auction Program
- Setting up and running the Silent Auction
- Hosting and conducting the Live Auction

- Creating and selling tickets
- Developing the invitation and RSVP list
- Decorating the Vestry
- Handling the Check-In, Check-out and payment
- Soliciting local merchants and contractors for donations
- Publicity
- (Your creative idea goes here:)

I am looking for ways to make this event fun, exciting and raise money for worthy causes. Ideas on a theme? Ideas on a worthy charity? What can you do to help?

I extend a hearty thank you to all those that helped with the 2009 "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" auction. I hope you can help again, and I hope we can entice new people to help us. Many hands make light work.

Think up a catchy theme for the Auction and win a prize! The prize for the winning theme is 2 free tickets to the event. The rules are simple. Entries (1/member or friend): state the theme/title and include a promo piece in 25 words or less saying why the theme should be chosen. Now is the time to get in on the planning. Call or e-mail Fred Bunger today.

Guest at your table boxes are available now!

If you have not already picked up your G.A.Y.T. stop by the church and pick one up! Bring it home, and join with the Unitarian Universalist Service committee in making dreams come true for those working so hard to make their world a better, brighter place in which to live, grow and prosper. To learn more about G.A.Y.T., log on to www.uusc.org and click on "Guest at your table".

FPUU and Amazon.com

Help support First Parish! If you shop at Amazon, every purchase you make can help support First Parish. To do this, go our website (www.firstparishmedfield.org) and click on the "Support First Parish - Amazon & Equal Exchange" button on the right. That will open up a new page with a link to Amazon on it. Click the link to go to the Amazon site, select and order any merchandise as you ordinarily do - and that's it - you have now helped First Parish! About 6% of all your purchases are paid to First Parish, and last year we raised about \$200 that way.

Remember, you must go to the FPUU web site first, then click on the link to go to Amazon for us to get credit for your purchases.

Executive Board Meetings 2009-10

All meetings are open to members and begin at 7:30PM in the Vestry:

December 17	January 21
January 21	February 11
February 11	March 18
March 18	

Semi Annual Meeting

The Semi Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday December 6th, 11:30am – 12:30pm. This will be an informational meeting and all are invited to attend. Please note that we will need a quorum (approximately 30 members) to vote on the minutes of the annual meeting, which took place in June.

UUSC Rights Night

On Thursday, December 10, 2009, UUSC will be honoring pioneering activist Mel King at our annual Rights Night. A crusader, educator, organizer, and entrepreneur, King has devoted his life to organizing and advocacy for anti-poverty and urban renewal causes.

King will be honored with UUSC's Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award for his commitment to social justice and human rights. Afterwards, stay for drinks and light refreshments, and join activists from across Boston's many communities in conversation about carrying the legacy of King's work forward.

Date and time: Thursday, December 10 (International Human Rights Day), at 7 p.m.

Location: Media Arts Center of Roxbury Community College, conveniently located across the street from the Roxbury Crossing T Stop. Free parking is also available.

All are welcome! The event is free, but RSVPs are recommended. RSVP by e-mailing rsvp@uuscs.org or calling 617-301-4381.

[Download a flyer](#) for the event to pass along or post in your congregation or community space.

From the D.R.E.

The word "worship" is thought to have originated from the Old English word for "worthy." With the suffix of "ship" (originally "scipe") meaning to create or appoint, we can think of worship as being what we find to have *worth* for us. Our annual Winter Solstice Worship Service traditionally reflects the hope, faith, and wonders of the winter season as worthy of our attention. The Winter Solstice Worship Service, coming up on Dec. 20, is not a show or performance, as I explained to the children during our planning luncheon in November. Children *do* perform all kinds of tasks to contribute to the service; this is often a significant accomplishment for them in their development. Much community building can take place as well, across the ages. I always say to the children the solstice service is their gift to the congregation. It is also a gift to themselves, though they may not recognize it as such.

Beginning on Sunday Nov. 29, and then on Dec. 6 and 13, children's religious education will consist of group activities focused on the winter solstice and the meanings behind some of the winter holiday traditions. I will be looking for just a few volunteers to assist with these three Sundays and at the solstice service. If you are interested in helping, please let me know.

This year, the Winter Solstice Worship Service will include some new and varied pieces of music. Also, there will be adults participating as readers. It truly will be a multi-generational experience.

Workshop Rotations

Children in RE, 6th grade and younger, have completed the two fall workshop rotations. The second one, with the theme of Wisdom From World Religions, finished in November. Children explored an Islamic folktale from Turkey by learning about calligraphy as an art form (and in Arabic too!), how to make rope, and various games from Turkey and the Mediterranean area. Interwoven in all of that were ideas about hope, faith, and taking action. Unfortunately, I do not have any photos from this rotation, so you must use your imagination. *If anyone would like to be an official RE photographer, let me know!* You could do this for as many Sundays as you like.

Our volunteers for the fall rotations were: Jen Bartle, Michelle Bergland, Jean Bousquet, Chris Conley, Kirsten D'Abate, Joyce Fetteroll, Alison Galley, John Kornet, Sally Rose, Steve Rose, and Clayton Springer. THANK YOU!

Faith In Action Sundays

Our second Faith In Action Sunday was on Nov. 15 when we learned more about the Guest At Your Table boxes. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee provides stories about real people who benefit from its active support of human rights. Children invited these guests into our vestry, so to speak (see photo), and helped prepare to launch this fund-raising project at First Parish. Adult volunteers for this were Don Bowden-Texera and Kirsten D'Abate. THANK YOU!



During the RE Faith In Action Sunday on Nov. 15, children heard some "Stories of Hope" from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee about who benefits from the Guest At Your Table (GAYT) program. The colorful boxes were handed out to the congregation on Nov. 22. If you did not get one, more are available at church.

Looking Ahead

Winterim, our winter peace and justice RE session, will begin on Jan. 3 and continue through February. Look for more information in the near future.

The RE Committee is going to host a fun night of BINGO for all ages on Saturday Jan. 30. This will be a fund-raiser to sponsor a Unitarian high school student in India through the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (as noted in the Oct. '09 newsletter). The REC will keep you posted.

May you feel hope, faith, and love throughout the darkness and in the light of this season.

Jeanette Ruyle

Director of Religious Education

2009-10 First Parish Calendar
Thematic Sunday mornings
and
Events outside of Sunday morning

Dec.

- 5 Hanging of Greens 1 - 3
- 6 Semi-annual Meeting 11:30 - 12:30
- 20 *Winter Solstice Worship Service* – inter-generational
- 24 Christmas Eve Service 5:30

Jan.

- 17 *Music Sunday*
- 30* Bingo Night for all ages – RE fund raiser for UU Partner Church student

Feb.

- 6 Coffee House
- 7 *Social Action Sunday* – UU Urban Ministry, Kate Wilkinson
- 27 Auction

Mar.

- 20 Yard Sale
- 27 Canvass Dinner

April

- 2* Seder Meal
- 3 Coffee House
- 4 *Easter Worship Service* – inter-generational
- 25 *Earth Day worship service* – 40th anniversary

May

- 1 Coffee House
- 2 Walk for Hunger/ Little Red Wagon Walk for Hunger
- 9* *Poetry and Prose Sunday worship*
- 23 *Coming of Age Worship Service* – inter-generational

June

- 13* *Bridging Service & last service* – inter-generational

*Needs confirmation

Services (All Services Begin at 10:00AM)

November 29th "Creative Goodness: Grace Found In Community"

Today we invite the Rev. Fayre Stephenson, Program Director of the Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center to First Parish.

December 06th "Essentialism"

Essentialism is the spontaneous tendency to assume your group shares characteristics such as niceness, and intelligence. Today's sermon will look at the results of recent studies regarding children and race, and the role of adults in the formation of healthy attitudes about race in their children.

December 13th "Claiming the Right to Question"

Many of us grew up learning to equate faith with doctrine. One memorizes the doctrine, espouses the doctrine, lives the doctrine and in so doing becomes a person of faith. Often the word faith troubles us because it seems linked to narrow-minded belief systems, lack of intelligent examination, or pain at having our questions silenced. Today's sermon explores the concept of faith as an inner quality that unfolds as we learn to trust our own deepest experience and frees us to claim the right to question.

December 20th "Solstice Service"

"An Old Story of Hope, Darkness, and Light." This service is Inter-generational, led by the children of our Religious Education Program and coordinated by Jeanette Ruyle, DRE.

December 24th Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5:30 p.m.

December 27th "Life Lessons I Have Learned From Cancer"

Few would argue that a cancer diagnosis is a gift. But can it offer gifts to the patient? In this service, we explore some of the life lessons learned during a year with cancer -- lessons that can help us all, whether we're dealing with disease or not.

January 03rd "Winter: A Spiritual Season"

In spite of the dark, cold, and winter snow, today's sermon will explore how winter, the season of dormancy and difficulty, can be a time of spiritual preparation for the days to come.

In Our Church Family

Henry Masters 1984-2009

Henry Masters, 25 years old, the son of Lucy and Jeff Masters, brother of Anne and Charlie, passed away on Saturday November 21, 2009 after a brief illness at the Dartmouth –Hitchcock Medical Center. With deepest sorrow, we express our condolences to the Masters' family. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the Masters Family at 55 Spring St., Medfield, MA 02052. Details of the arrangements are forthcoming.