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January 2010 Newsletter

Upcoming Events:

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| January 3rd | Solstice Service |
| January 10th | Introduction to Unitarian
Universalism – Session 1 |
| January 24th | Introduction to Unitarian
Universalism – Session 2 |
| January 30th | BINGO Night For All Ages |
| January 31st | Introduction to Unitarian
Universalism – Session 3 |
| February 6th | North Street Coffee House featuring
Howie Newman |

From the Minister

“There is solitude, to be sure: the hush of the madding crowd. But winter also pulls us back to the hearth, side by side with our beloved.” Yun Sondo

Dear Friends:

In 2006 I wrote a sermon about Jane Kenyon, the wonderful late poet from New Hampshire, introducing her to some of you for the first time. Today, I invite you to see the following work as a meditation. This can be fun and relaxing to do with another person. You close your eyes and the other softly reads. This is not about interpreting Kenyon’s words. It is more about envisioning her images, slowing your breathing and relaxing. The poem, *“This Morning”* seems to present a Currier and Ives print in our minds, an idyllic vision of the world of wintertime, with just a few words.

“This Morning”

The barn bears the weight
of the first heavy snow
without complaint.

White breath of cows
rises in the tie-up, a man
wearing a frayed winter jacket
reaches for his milking stool
in the dark.

The cows have gone into the ground,
and the man,
his wife beside him now.

A nuthatch drops to the ground, feeding
on sunflower seed and bits of bread
I scattered on the snow.

The cats doze near the stove.
They lift their heads

as the plow goes down the road,
making the house
tremble as it passes.

As the New Year begins no doubt many of you will begin again with promises you make to yourself. I wish for you in this new year as many new beginnings as you need, and no more than you can handle. May they not come at a particular turn of the calendar page or striking of the clock, but just when you need them.

In this new year may you remember old acquaintances, and may peace break out, even if only a little bit, in the world, and in your life.

Bob

Le Bistro du Monde



Save the date, Saturday February 27 for an evening of food, fun and fundraising.



The 2010 First Parish Charity Auction, “Le Bistro du Monde”, will raise money to continue the work of the Church, maintain our historic building and support the Food Pantries in Medfield, Millis, Medway, Norfolk and Walpole. The “Bistro” will have food, drink, entertainment, a LARGE silent auction and, the main event, a live auction for the most sought-after items like sports tickets, cases of wine, vacation stays, etc.. It will be an evening of fun. Plan to come, bring friends and family for a great night out.

All members of FPUU are asked to provide items for the auction. Perhaps you would want to donate your time (home- organizing, tutoring, tax advice, etc.), your talent (playing the piano, painting a picture, cooking for a dinner party, etc.), or your treasure (time at your vacation home, antique china platter, cash, etc.). Be thinking about what you can contribute. If you can, follow the international theme of Le Bistro du Monde. In January, we will be sending out letters asking for your help.

We will be soliciting our local businesses for items to contribute to the auction. If you have a favorite merchant or contractor, let us know so that they can be added to the solicitation list. Last year, the local businesses contributed 58 items which helped raise almost \$9000.

If you want to help with the auction, call Fred Bunger 508-359-4058 or e-mail fbunger@verizon.net.



Canvass 2010 – 2011

Nurture Your Spirit Help Heal Our World

In the spirit of the banner now hanging on the church exterior, the new theme for Canvass 2010 – 2011 will be **Nurture Your Spirit Help Heal Our World**. Canvass will kick off on Saturday evening March 27 with our **Nurture Your Spirit Help Heal Our World 2010-2011** Canvass Dinner, followed by the Canvass Sunday Service on March 28.

First Parish Medfield is blessed to have generous members and friends who understand that First Parish needs our financial support every year at canvass time, in addition to the many hours of volunteer work we contribute. Our collective generosity is evidenced by last year's Canvass, where in the midst of a severe economic downturn our total pledges exceeded one hundred thousand dollars.

Our 2009-2010 budget is approximately \$152,000 per year to run the church, and approximately 70% of the funding for the budget is realized through the generous financial pledges made by us during our annual canvass. Over the next few months, the Canvass Committee will provide more information about First Parish finances so we all know why our pledges are important and how they work for us.

The Canvass Committee is responsible for planning and conducting the annual canvass each spring. Together with volunteer canvassers, the Canvass Committee contacts every member and friend in the church to ask for a pledge. If you would like to canvass with us, please contact any member of the Canvass Committee.

Whether you value First Parish for the Sunday worship services, the religious education programs, the social events, the opportunity for social action, or because it is important to you to have a home for liberal religious thought in the Medfield area and in this country – or for all of the above reasons – your support is very important.

The Canvass Committee: Jeanne Capachin, Marshall Sugarman, and Duncan Glover, Chair

Message From Membership

As I write this, the holidays are coming to a close. We hope that you have found special moments to share with your family and loved ones and that you have created new memories of the season. Let's hope that the New Year will herald a brighter time for all; esp. for those who have struggled during this past difficult year.

A First Step to Membership

As 2010 commences at First Parish, Rev. Bob will be offering the Introduction to Unitarian Universalism class. This class is particularly recommended for those individuals contemplating membership at First Parish Medfield. It's a great program. It introduces you to the history, ideas and people of our faith. And, Rev. Bob integrates the history and theology in a wonderful and engaging way. The class is, also, open to all members of the congregation.

The 3 session class will run on Sunday, Jan. 10th, Jan. 24th, and 31st at noon in the Vestry of the church. A light lunch and childcare will be provided.

Please contact Rev. Bob or a member of the Membership Committee if you're interested in attending.

Coffee Hour Hospitality

Thanks to all who have so generously volunteered to provide coffee and refreshments for "Coffee Hour" during the first half of the church year. With each person taking a turn we share the responsibility and no one feels overwhelmed .

Happy New Year!!

The Membership Committee

Barbara Bunker, Nancy Kingsbury, Margaret Rolph, Jim Stetson

North Street Coffee House

Save the date: The next North Street Coffeehouse will be held on February 6, when our feature performer will be local singer/songwriter/humorist Howie Newman.

News from the Social Action Committee

Dinner at Medway House – On December 10th Pat Clark and Margaret Rolph organized a dinner for the residents of Medway House. With help from those who prepared food - Eve Potts, Becca Kornet, Jen Bartle, Joanne Cooke, and those who helped to serve the meal – Ann Cunningham and her daughter Katy, we provided a much appreciated ham and turkey dinner complete with vegetables, potatoes, baked apples and cupcakes. If you are interested in participating, we will provide another dinner for Medway House in the spring.

HABITAT For Humanity – Building begins in Medway

The Trivalley Local Partnership Committee (LPC) is part of South Shore Habitat for Humanity and operates in Medway, Millis and Medfield. A Habitat house at 9 Walker St in Medway is now under construction on land donated by the town. There is an opportunity for volunteers from First Parish to participate in building and/or preparing food (lunch & snacks) for the volunteers on **SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 8am – 5pm**. They could use up to ten volunteers from First Parish. Anyone age 16 or older can participate. Please contact Margaret Rolph at merolph@verizon.net or 508-668-1392 if you would like to participate. .

There is also an opportunity for a group of individuals who would be available to work mid-week and thus speed construction. Typically South Shore Habitat for Humanity does a mid-week work day on Wednesdays. This would be a weekly commitment. If you are interested in this, contact Margaret Rolph who can put you in touch with the construction coordinator.

Rev. Kate Wilkinson to Lead Our Service on February 7

Rev. Kate Wilkinson is Coordinator of Congregational Outreach and Volunteers for the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry. In addition to supporting volunteers on site in Roxbury, she helps area congregations to connect to the social justice work of the UU Urban Ministry. A lifelong UU, Kate sees social justice work as a spiritual practice and a core part of her faith and ministry.

The sermon topic will be “Almost All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” Rev. Wilkinson hopes the sermon will get us all thinking about those basic lessons about fairness that we learned in Kindergarten. Although sharing gets more complicated as we get older, a lot of the same lessons apply. Let’s talk about why and how.

The February 7th offering will go to the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry for their “summer camperships.” Last year, the UU Urban Ministry was able to send 30 children to camp, more than ever before. The children are matched up with camps that are a good fit for them—Nature camps, Art camps, Outdoor Activity camps— and the UU Urban Ministry provides the children with transportation. Working closely with each camp, the UU Urban Ministry negotiates rates for children in their programs who would otherwise never get the opportunity to go to summer camp. Although the cost of each camp varies depending on the length and type of camp, the average cost to send one child to summer camp for two weeks is just \$325. Please consider making a donation that will keep children from Roxbury and Dorchester safe, happy, and active this summer. It’s an experience they never forget. Thank you.

Recycle Your Old Cell Phones

Did you get a new cell phone for a holiday gift? Bring your old phones to First Parish to recycle. Your phones will be sold to CollectiveGood and refurbished for use as a pre-paid phone in overseas markets. These phones are often the first phone of any kind a family has. Phones that cannot be refurbished will be dismantled for parts or recycled responsibly. All proceeds benefit FPUU, so it is a clear win-win! The collection box is located in the narthax by the front doors just outside the sanctuary. Please call Janet McKetchnie at 508-429-3150 with any questions. Thank you and happy new year!

Anti-oppression, Anti-racism, Children, and Peace

In a little less than three weeks, our winter session for children's religious education begins on January 10. It will be one week later than usual due to the snowstorm that postponed the original date of the Winter Solstice Service and moved it to Jan. 3.

"Winterim," as the made-up word implies, happens during the winter interim months of January and February between the RE workshop rotations of fall and spring. Seven years ago it was conceived as an opportunity for children to be together in one common space as a community, where relationship is encouraged through small and large group activities for mixed ages. After a couple of years, it became clear that the Winterim provided a near-perfect time for children to take part in social action/social justice types of projects. Having the project unfold over several weeks meant that everyone had a chance to participate despite any absence due to family trips or winter colds. Recently, Winterim has become a time of intentional focus on *peace* and *peacemaking*. I would like to share how this came about.

Late in 2006, I attended a district RE professionals' workshop presenting a challenge that has stayed in my mind ever since. Paula Cole Jones, an independent anti-racism consultant for the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association), led a workshop on growing anti-oppressive, anti-racist, multicultural community. She stressed that anti-oppression work is imperatively inter-generational work, that we have a responsibility to our young people to step fully into this work, and to "hope that it becomes a way of life, not a workshop." Around this same time, I became involved in the Peacemaking Congregational Study/Action Issue of the UUA, exploring questions around how to teach peace. The confluence of these experiences led me to see a distinct connection between anti-oppression/anti-racism work and peacemaking. Learning about peace, in the broadest sense of the word, should include learning how to recognize and respond to oppressions of various kinds— all of this to be carried out through developmentally appropriate and engaging ways.

This is indeed inter-generational work; it is family work and work of the church. Our eight Sundays of RE Winterim, which amount to about 5 hours of time if a child attends every week, is a rich yet tiny serving of educational effort. We can and need to work together for peace and anti-oppression to become part of our lives and our children's lives.

Peace,

Jeanette Ruyle, *Director of Religious Education*

More RE News

2010 Children's Religious Education Winterim – “Building Peace”

Basic information

- For children in 6th grade and younger
- Held in the vestry (large room downstairs from sanctuary) Sundays Jan. 10 - Feb. 21.
- Takes place after children leave the main worship service. (During Winterim there is no Moment with the Children so that we may have a bit more time for the RE program.)
- Exception to the above is on Jan. 10 and Feb. 7 when there is Children's Worship Service in the vestry at 10 a.m.
- Goes until coffee hour begins around 11 a.m.
- Activities happen in small groups and sometimes with the whole group. Children will always have the option of the Book Corner and one or two other ongoing “drop in” activities.
- Volunteer “Peace Guides” and the DRE will facilitate planned activities and projects.
- Little Lights (childcare) for preschoolers and younger continues.

☺ ***Volunteers are needed – be a Peace Guide!***

☺ ***On most Sundays, it is about 40 minutes of your time.***

☺ ***Dates are Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31, Feb. 7, 14, and 21.***

☺ ***Sign up in the vestry or contact Jeanette Ruyle***

Just a few of the things we will be doing:

- Learning about how to sponsor the education of a Unitarian high school student in India through the UU Partner Church Council
- Playing Peace BINGO and planning a fund-raiser BINGO night
- Fair Trade chocolate bake and sale
- Building a UU Eiffel Tower/Peace Tower

Religious Education for Youth

7th and 8th graders involved in Neighboring Faiths and World Religions will resume their program, meeting in the U House at the usual RE time on Sunday mornings, unless there is a field trip.

Coming of Age for 9th and 10th graders continues at the usual time of 4 - 5:30 pm in the vestry unless otherwise announced.



BINGO and Potluck Night for All Ages Sponsored by the Religious Education Committee



Date: Saturday January 30, 2010

Time: 5 pm – Set-up, eat food, hear the rules

5: 30 - 6 BINGO for the younger set

6 pm – Eat some more food

6:30 - 8:30 regular BINGO

Where: First Parish vestry, a.k.a. our “Bingo Hall”

Donation: Amount per BINGO card to be determined

Purpose: To raise money for sponsoring a student in India through the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, and, to have fun!

More Information About Sponsoring a Student in India

Children and youth in our RE program have an opportunity to get to know a student in India by making the commitment to sponsor his or her education through the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC), an affiliate organization of the UUA.

The UUPCC has started a new program that makes it very easy for a small group to sponsor the education of a student in India, the Philippines, or Transylvania. All these places have congregations of Unitarian Universalists or Unitarians and the UUPCC has created relationships with these communities over the years.

The most modest cost is to sponsor a secondary student in India for 3 years at \$126 per year. This effort will be a focus of our Winterim and some of our Faith in Action Sundays. The youth (7th graders and older) may decide to join in on this effort as well. You as a congregation can be very supportive.

Anyone can become a Student Sponsor, but we designed this program with RE directors and participants in mind. RE classes, youth groups, and even families can use this simple program to get engaged internationally. For too many of our children, people in other lands seem impossibly distant and foreign. By putting a name and a face to a UU friend overseas, our UU children and youth can make a personal connection that begins to bridge these cultural differences. By choosing to sponsor a student, our UU children and youth get a chance to grow a friendship and make a real impact on the world. And by investing in other UU children’s education, our young ones can explore - in real life terms - what it means to live the 6th UU principle: world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

Rev. Ruth Gibson

Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council

2010 First Parish Calendar and Events outside of Sunday morning

Jan.

- 10 Introduction to Unitarian Universalism – Session 1
- 24 Introduction to Unitarian Universalism – Session 2
- 30* Bingo Night for all ages – RE fund raiser for UU Partner Church student
- 31 Introduction to Unitarian Universalism – Session 3

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)

January 3rd “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.

January 10th “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.

January 17th “Marketing Family Values”

Today’s sermon will explore ways in which religion shapes our economic world.

January 24th “Heaven Help Us”

Over the centuries there have been many understandings of heaven in culture. Where did they come from? How have they evolved? Today’s sermon will explore “heaven” and yes, make suggestions on how to get there someday!

January 31st “‘The Aryan Jesus”

Today’s sermon will look at the scholarship of Susannah Heschel as she explores the ambivalent place of Judaism in contemporary Christian thought, how it came about, and what it means to us.

February 7th “Almost All I Really Need to Know I learned in Kindergarten”

Rev. Kate Wilkinson, will lead us and hopes the sermon will get us all thinking about those basic lessons about fairness that we learned in Kindergarten.