



*First Parish Unitarian
Universalist of Medfield*
26 North Street, Medfield, MA
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December Newsletter 2011

Ministerial MUUsings...

Beverly Gaventa, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, tells the story of what happened to her one Sunday in early December. After the service, members of her church gathered in the parish hall for some cider and cookies. One member of the church smiled radiantly at her and said, "I envy your work this time of year. Teaching New Testament must make you feel especially close to the meaning of Christmas. That's where I'd like to be." Just a few minutes later, Professor Gaventa's friend, the pastor, came up to her and quietly confided, "God, I'm sick of this season already, and its just started."

These reactions speak to the ambivalence many of us feel about Christmas. It speaks to the conflict we have over the way to celebrate the holiday season. It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore our conflicted feelings, what with decorations up and Christmas music being played on radio stations around Halloween. "Black Friday" has taken on a life of its own and often brings out the worst in us. Dignity isn't bought with a discount. And then we are hard on ourselves as we get caught up in the hustle and bustle.

As a Unitarian Universalist, I don't totally accept the position of the "Keep Christ in Christmas" adherents, but I understand the impulse. For me, Christmas, as much as Hanukah, is about faith and hope. Hanukah, which overlaps with Christmas this year, also celebrates the cause of

religious freedom. The focus should not be on presents or material things. Both holidays celebrate light being brought into the world at the darkest time of the year. Light amidst the darkness. This is something to contemplate.

Again, Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of a flame burning for eight days and nights from oil that should have lasted only one day. Jesus, a child born of ordinary parents in an ordinary way led an extraordinary life. He was born as all children are born, in innocence and with great hope. Some say he was the Son of God, or a teacher, a martyr, a healer, a revolutionary. But first and foremost this child was a prophet, as all children are prophets; for, as the prophets of the ancient Israelites did, children hold all of us adults accountable for the successes and failures of our community. All children are prophets because, by their mere presence, they hold us accountable for their world. And yet why, in so many places around the world, including the United States, why are children on the margins? Why are millions malnourished and without clear water or good health care? Why are children ignored or abused or even worse, enslaved?

This past Sunday "Guest at Your Table" boxes were distributed and will be available for those of you who didn't get one over the next several

weeks. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has among its many projects those that directly help children. In this season of celebration of the birth of a child, let us dedicate ourselves to bringing children out of the darkness and despair they face. Please be generous with your contribution.

We are called to hope in a time of hopelessness. We are called to act on that hope and to use our gifts and abilities – intellectual, spiritual and physical – to turn the tide of dismay into a river of promise.



The Stower family extends its best wishes to you all for a happy, healthy, fun and safe holiday season.

Peace,

Rich Stower

Rev. Richard M. Stower's Office hours are Tuesdays and Thursday from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm and by appointment.

Hanging of the Greens

On Sunday, December 4, 2011 there will be a "Hanging of the greens" gathering immediately following the church service. Pizza will be served. We will listen to Christmas music while we decorate the sanctuary for the holiday season. All are welcome.



Executive Board Notes for November

- RE Director: Joyce Fetterol has stepped in to provide continuity for the RE Program through the end of the Church year. The RE Committee and Rev. Stower decided not to search for an Interim RE Director. The search for RE Director will begin in the spring, so that a new RE Director can be on board for next year.
- Wireless Update: The Town ZBA approved T-Mobile's application for wireless antenna in First Parish spire on November 2. T-Mobile has indicated that they will wait until January to proceed. MetroPCS is considering the FPUU contract proposal and we are awaiting further contact. The Massachusetts State Historical Commission and the Town Historical District Commission have been notified that FPUU intends to modify the spire and provide for wireless equipment installation. They are required to respond within 90 days.
- Planning Retreat: The FPUU Executive Board, Committee Chairs and interested Church members met Saturday October 29. Rev. Stower facilitated a discussion of the 5 developmental tasks in preparing FPUU to be successful in calling a new minister:
 1. Coming to terms with the history of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Medfield.
 2. Illuminating the congregation's unique

identity and culture, its strengths, needs and challenges.

3. Clarifying the multiple layers of leadership in the congregation and navigating the shifts in leadership that happen in a time of transition.
4. Renewing and strengthening connections with the UUA and beyond.
5. Renewing the congregation's vision, strengthen its stewardship, prepare for new professional leadership and look toward the future with anticipation and zest.

Richard Stower will be leading more sessions the Church development over the next year. If you would like to participate, please contact Rev. Stower.

- Mid-Year Meeting: The Board decided to defer the mid-year meeting until January. Currently, there is no congregational business to conduct and wireless and financial status should be clearer after the first of the year.
- Fundraising and Calendar: Either the last Saturday of February or the First Saturday in March have been reserved for an as-yet determined fundraising event to replace the Auction held the last 3 years. The Board is seeking creative ideas for an evening of fun, friends and fundraising. Who would like to help?

REMINDER: Make your donations and pledges before the end of December to qualify for 2011 tax deduction.





The children of RE preparing for dia de los muertos

After the surprise of Shelley's early departure, Children's Worship program is running smoothly, working through the UU principles. The big pieces -- volunteers, activities and stories -- had already been set up by Shelley. The details of creating weekly children's services and activities have been filled in by the amazing RE Committee, willing volunteer and enthusiastic kids from the Neighboring Faiths program. One highlight of the program was the construction of an ofrenda, a shrine to the year's lost loved ones and a celebration of their lives led by Fran Kingsbury.

Joyce Fetteroll, acting DRE

Metrowest Pet Pantry



FPUU now has a donation box set up for the Metrowest Pet Pantry. The pet pantry, located in Millis, provides a variety of pet food and supplies for families in need, some of whom would have to surrender their pets to shelters without the pet pantry's assistance. Donations of opened or unopened food are accepted, as well as all manner of supplies. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the pet pantry feel free to talk to Brianna Cusanno, who is working with the pet pantry to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award.



Welcoming a Guest at Your Table

Each year at this time, friends and families in our congregation participate in Guest at Your Table — a UU tradition for decades. By bringing home a beautiful Guest at Your Table box and a *Stories of Hope* booklet, families and individuals learn about how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee puts our shared values into action in the United States and around the world. Through a potent combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots human-rights leaders, UUSC promotes economic rights, advances environmental justice, defends civil liberties, and preserves the rights of people in times of humanitarian crisis.

Through the *Stories of Hope* booklet, we connect with people throughout the world who have shared their personal struggles and are working hard for human rights in partnership with UUSC. In each household, the Guest at Your Table box is placed in a prominent spot, often at the family dinner table. When family and friends gather to enjoy their blessings, they can reflect on the contributions of their “guests” to the movement for universal human rights — and share generously. Each week, we can choose a

different story to read, bringing our guests to life and helping celebrate our own rights.

Sharing our blessings through Guest at Your Table ensures that UUSC’s human-rights work continues. Please consider making a contribution that meets membership levels. Since UUSC is an independent organization that receives no funding from government or the UUA, your support and membership are vitally important.

If you would prefer not to bring home a box, you can take a donation envelope or support UUSC directly online at uus.org/givetoguest. Guest At Your Table boxes are available in the back of the Sanctuary.

-From the Social Action Committee



MESSAGE FROM MEMBERSHIP

The Holidays are upon us!! We hope you take the time to enjoy the blessings of the season.

- The October Pancake Breakfast was a great success. We had a good crowd who found warmth, conversation and tasty food after the snowstorm. \$400 was raised for Metrowest Interfaith Hospitality Network. Thanks all!
- Bring a friend to church!!
 - >R.E. is going strong.
 - >Rev. Stower is giving great sermons.
- Congratulations to newcomers Megan and Mary Calo Tufts on the birth of their second child, Dylan, who was born on Nov. 1.

Save the Date: Saturday, January 7, 2012----
Family Pot Luck and Movie Night, 6PM.

-Membership Committee, Barbara Bunger, Mike Donovan, Nancy Kingsbury, Margaret Rolph.

Medfield Food Pantry Christmas Wish List



Dear Church members and friends,
Thank you to everyone that chose to participate in the Food Pantry Wishes! Please bring the presents to the church by DECEMBER 11th and I will deliver them to Beth Eby after the church service that morning.
The presents should NOT be wrapped.

I will bring a container to church tomorrow and place it near the other food pantry boxes and you may place your gifts there. Please attach the number of your wish to the present.

Again, thank you for your generosity.

Please call or email me if you have any questions.

Best,
Debra Carbarnes

FPUU and Amazon.com

With the holidays quickly approaching, please remember that if you are using Amazon.com, you can help support First Parish!



To do this, go to our website www.firstparishmedfield.org and click on the "Support First Parish-Amazon & Equal Exchange" link on the left. Click on the tab for "Amazon" and this will open a page with a link to Amazon.com on it. Just go on to the Amazon site, select and order any merchandise as you ordinarily do – and that's it – you have now helped First Parish! First Parish receives a portion (between 2 and 5%) of every dollar you spend online at Amazon.com! It won't cost you any more and will help support First Parish.



So – go to our website - use the link to go to the Amazon site - make your selections - purchase - that's it! Please refer your friends and neighbors to this link too!

Let's Laugh Today on Monday, December 26th!

Trade all that holiday stress for laughter at Let's Laugh Today on Monday, December 26th at 7:15pm to 8:30pm at the Meetinghouse of the First Universalist Society in Franklin, 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. Come and enjoy this unique exercise of simulated laughter combined with gentle breathing that brings more oxygen to the body's cells. This oxygen boost gives enhanced vitality, energy and a feeling of real well-being. Any age and any level of physical ability can participate in this uplifting experience! \$5 donation to the church, \$10 maximum per family. Please bring your water bottle because laughing is dehydrating. Led by Certified Laughter Yoga Teachers, Linda and Bill Hamaker. www.letslaughtoday.com If you have any questions, just call them at 508-660-2223 or e-mail letslaughtoday@verizon.net.



Sunday, January 1st: The first Worship Service of 2012 will occur on Sunday 1/1/12. As in the past, the Worship & Music Committee will facilitate an open book discussion: classics or current releases, fiction or non-fiction -- come prepared to share a favorite book and learn about others.



FPUU YARD SALE

We are in the planning stages for the 7th annual FPUU Indoor Yard Sale! Date to be announced (usually in mid-late March). Meanwhile, please start putting aside items that you can donate. Good sellers include books, games, toys in good condition, kitchenware, knick knacks, and small appliances. Stay tuned!

The Medfield Food Cupboard has requested the following from our church for the month of December: Cookies, crackers, juice, cereal, canned pasta, canned chicken, white tuna in water, pasta sauce, jelly and beef stew.



Thanks for your efforts. The Food Cupboard tries to be specific so that people know what they really need, but as always, any donations are greatly appreciated and can be placed in the basket in the narthex.

Special thanks to Sam Flaherty who will be delivering all the donations from the FPUU to the Food Cupboard.

Among Ourselves

Our condolences go to Robert Luttman and his family upon the death of his father Robert Luttman, Sr.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS

October 24, 2011

Board of Trustees
First Parish UU
PO Box 215
Medfield, MA 02052-0215

Dear First Parish UU Leaders,

We are writing to offer a warm and heartfelt message of appreciation and gratitude for your congregation's full financial support of our Unitarian Universalist faith through your contributions to the UUA Annual Program Fund in 2010-2011. We are pleased to recognize yours as one of our esteemed APF Honor Congregations.

Even with the lingering effects of recent economic recession still felt, your APF contributing conveys the commitment to fulfilling our mission of support to your covenantal partners, our 1,050 member congregations. In turn, our Association funds the programs, resources, and services designed to help congregations to fulfill their missions at the local level.

We know that fully funding APF and district contributions through your annual budget takes leadership, hard work, and generosity on the part of many. Your contributions support the good works of Unitarian Universalism in your community and extend the reach of our ministry in the wider world.

Together, we can do more and be more than we can alone. Together, we stand on the side of love and justice, actively working on behalf of those seeking advocacy and support. Together, we give voice in opposition to the forces of oppression that are barriers to freedom and peaceful relations. Together, we educate our children, empower our youth, and provide nurturing and healing ministry for all ages and life stages.

The Annual Program Fund is essential to sustaining our most vital UUA programs and services. We trust your stewardship efforts and circumstances enable your congregation to sustain full funding once again this year.

We are honored to serve our Unitarian Universalist Association and want to be of support and encouragement to all our member congregations throughout the year. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments you may have about the Annual Program Fund, or how best to work with the Annual Program Fund Committee Representative who works in your district.

Sincerely,

Laurel Amabile
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Upcoming Services (All Services Begin at 10:00 AM)

December 4

"As Night Follows Day"

Rev. Richard M. Stower

Darkness has had a spiritual quality since the beginning of human existence. Religious ceremonies were created as people tried to ward off the cold of winter and the fear that often comes from darkness. All the world's religions have rituals and holidays that, in the bleakest winter days, bring light into the world.

December 11

"Watching and Waiting"

Rev. Richard M. Stower

Have you ever thought about the connection between preparing a meal and Christmas? All the work, the energy, the preparation; the hours and its gone in a flash. Like eating a good meal, the holiday season should be savored by going slow.

December 18

Winter Solstice Pageant

The children of First Parish present a very special gift to the whole congregation.

December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Rev. Richard M. Stower

At 5:30 pm on Saturday, Dec 24th we will gather for our traditional Christmas Eve Service of music and readings and candlelight. Come with your families and bring your friends!

December 25

NO SERVICE - MERRY CHRISTMAS!



FPUU Calendar of Events

Saturday, December 3	Medfield Garden Club Greens Sale/Vestry
Sunday, December 4	Choir Rehearsal/9:00am/Sanctuary Hanging of the Greens/11:30am/Sanctuary Coming of Age/7-9:00pm/Vestry
Tuesday, December 6	Social Action Committee Meeting/7-8:30pm/Vestry
Sunday, December 11	Choir Rehearsal/9:00am/Sanctuary
Tuesday, December 13	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:30pm/Vestry
Thursday, December 15	Executive Board Meeting/7:30pm/U-House
Sunday, December 18	Choir Rehearsal/9:00am/Sanctuary Coming of Age/7-9:00 pm/Vestry
Wednesday, December 21	Choir Practice/7:00 pm/Sanctuary
Saturday, December 24	Choir Practice/4:00 pm/Sanctuary Christmas Eve Service 5:30 pm/Sanctuary
Sunday, December 25	Christmas Day/No Services Held
Tuesday, December 27	Pastoral Care Committee Meeting/6:30 pm/U-House
Sunday, January 1	New Years Day
Saturday, January 7	Potluck Dinner & Movie Night/5:00 pm/Vestry
Sunday, January 8	Coming of Age/7-9:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, January 10	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:30- 9:00pm/Vestry
Wednesday, January 11	Membership Committee Meeting/7:15pm/Bunger's
Monday, January 16	Martin Luther King Holiday/Office Closed
Thursday, January 19	Executive Board Meeting/7:30 pm/U-House
Sunday, January 22	Coming of Age/7-9:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, January 24	Pastoral Care Committee Meeting/6:30 pm/U-House