



*First Parish Unitarian
Universalist of Medfield*
26 North Street, Medfield, MA
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www.firstparishmedfield.org



December Newsletter 2012

Ministerial MUUsings...

We have entered the holiday season when families gather around the table. Family stories are passed down from Grandma and Grandpa, Mom and Dad, Aunts and Uncles and older cousins. Having grown up Jewish, the biggest family gathering was at the Passover Sedar, when over twenty of us gathered in a small apartment in the Bronx where my Uncle Jack and Aunt Carrie presided over the holiday meal. It usually was a raucous evening.

But what was unusual was that we rarely talked about family – or at least I have no recollection of the conversations. My grandmother had six siblings, five, including her, were born in Krakow,

Poland. Two of my grandmother's sisters had died before I was born and a brother, my godfather, died when I was five. The odd thing is the surviving brothers and sisters never talked about their mother and father who, in a most courageous decision, left Poland and arrived in the United States in 1901. Such a momentous family event and we knew no details. It is only by researching through the Internet and U.S. Census information that I learned that my maternal great-grandfather was a peddler of produce roaming the streets of New York. And my maternal grandfather is a total mystery.

I share this with you because I think it is very important that we learn as much as we can about our family's history. Yes, we know the personalities and the quirks, but what of the history? What did your great and grandparents do? Why is your family living where it does? Why were your parents born where they were? When did your family come to the New World?

When you gather together this holiday season, talk with your family and learn about your history. And most importantly share these stories with your

children for the oral history is much richer than census records and property deeds.

Nancy and I wish you the most joyous of holidays.

Peace

Rich

News and Views from the RE Desk

Patricia Hatch, Interim Director of Religious Education

One of my favorite sayings is: "Drink As You Pour!" RE facilitators help inspire others to learn and often learn new things themselves in the process.

We are currently recruiting guides for winter and spring sessions for our wonderful multi-age group of young people. There will be approximately five, four-week sessions. We need primary guides who will share stories and discussions, and helpers to lead games and crafts. Themes will include UU Identity, UU History, and UU Principles and Sources. We also need people to volunteer for special events and projects.

We have a cooperative RE program here at First Parish, and we need volunteers to help give our children a quality religious education program.

How can you help? Please let me or an RE Committee member know what you can do.

If you can read a story or play a game, you can help.

I look forward to a fun and inspiring winter and spring working together with many of you. In the meantime, have blessed and merry holidays!

Warmly,
Patricia



Executive Board Notes

BOARD NOTES NOVEMBER 2012

❖ Mid-Year Parish Meeting set for December 16th

The semi-annual Parish Meeting will be held at 11:30 AM Sunday December 16. The financial situation will be reviewed and the congregation will be asked to approve a Welcoming Statement and consider the proposal for a new Church sign and relocation of the Wayside Pulpit.

❖ "Town Meeting"

The Town Meeting to discuss the First Parish Welcoming Statement was held Sunday, November 11. Rev. Stower facilitated the meeting of about 30 people to insure that everyone was heard. The lively and thoughtful discussion will be condensed into a recommended welcoming statement by Bill Wians, Don Bowden-Texera, Mark Samels and Fran Kingsbury. Their recommended statement will be voted on by the Congregation at the mid-year Parish Meeting.

❖ Capital Campaign

Duncan Glover reported on Capital Campaign status. About \$6000 has been donated, so the architect will proceed with preliminary study. See article elsewhere in Newsletter.

❖ Wireless Antenna Update

Metro PCS made application to the Town ZBA to install an antenna in the First Parish steeple under the new wireless by-law. The ZBA must reply by the first week of February. Metro PCS and T-Mobile are merging, which may effect timing of actual implementation.

Also, the application by FPUU to replace the existing steeple with a new fiberglass steeple similar in height and design to the original 1800's steeple was approved by the Historic District Commission.

❖ Financial Status

Fiscal year to date income is \$40,112 against expenses of \$43,696.

Pledge year 2013 status: received \$49,126 in donations against the pledged \$117,515 (30%).

REMINDER, GET YOUR DONATIONS IN BEFORE DECEMBER 31 TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF 2012 TAX YEAR.

Committees will be asked to begin preparing their 2014 program and spending plans so that the 2014 Budget preparation can start.

❖ Lowell Mason Service

With the busy Sunday schedule this year due to the Ministerial Search, the Lowell Mason Sunday has been moved to September 22, 2013.



Ministerial Search Committee News

The Ministerial Search Committee has created the “packet,” a description of First Parish and of what we are looking for in a minister. Ministerial candidates have also been creating their own packets, and in December the committee will receive a list of interested candidates and decide with whom to exchange packets. After that, the committee will be interviewing candidates and going to see them give sermons in the New Year. We will watch the candidates in “neutral pulpits,” nearby churches without connection either to us or to the candidate. So if you don’t see the committee in church too often, that is where we are! Keep watching your email and reading the newsletter for future Ministerial Search Committee updates in the New Year.



In Praise of Clara Barton and Mass Bay Districts Of UU Congregations Workshops

On Saturday, November 10th, Jeanette Ruyle, Dan Bibel and I attended **Revitalizing Your Congregation**, a Learning Congregation Event, lead by Rev. Gordon Dragt at the Harvard UU Church.

I must admit that when my alarm went off at 6:00 that morning I did have a “why did I sign up for this... how about revitalizing without me?” moment.

It took the ‘be a responsible adult’ self lecture combined with two cups of coffee for the moment to eventually pass; and I am so glad that it did because in addition to spending time with two of my favorite UUs, the workshop turned out to be quite worthwhile.

During the workshop Rev. Dragt shared ways to refresh, transform and jump-start declining congregations or congregations stuck on a plateau. Although not all of the examples or strategies discussed seemed particularly applicable to First Parish Medfield, many of Rev. Dragt’s strategies for growth, diversity and sustainability seem possible in all congregational settings and circumstances including ours. Based on level of interest, Dan and I would be happy to share the salient points of the workshop during coffee hour or in a more formal, scheduled venue.

This workshop was the first Clara Barton and Mass Bay District workshop that I **voluntarily** attended. Previously, I attended a Pastoral Care workshop but not exactly under my own free will. Rev. Bob McKetchnie registered me and told me after the fact that ‘I felt like going.’ On each occasion I initially felt conflicted about attending. However, in both cases spending a portion of my down time, surrounded by like-minded people turned out to be wonderfully energizing, grounding and fulfilling experience that I highly recommend!

Louise Rachin

Message from Membership

As we come together this holiday season, let us think about what our hopes and dreams are for the First Parish community. There has been much talk about wanting to grow the congregation, replace the U-house and attract young families. I'm wondering if, along with these desires, there has been much reflection about how to attain these goals, other than hiring the "right" settled minister.

For years, Unitarian Universalism has striven to grow, but to this day largely remains white and middle-class. Great efforts have been made to understand why we haven't been able to diversify more culturally and racially.

Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar writes in Fluent in Faith, that perhaps it's because we've become so insular "by avoiding religious vocabulary that carries depth and power for great swaths of the larger population. Many who might fully embrace our spiritual path find it to be too sterile without the religious language they have happily used all their lives. When they don't hear these familiar phrases they leave our churches on Sunday morning feeling they haven't worshipped, they haven't prayed and they haven't been spiritually nurtured."

"Even as some among us are turned away when we do use God language, others are turned away when we don't. We genuinely desire, I believe, to be open and inclusive. It may that one of the gifts of returning to this vocabulary will result in growth in diversity in our congregations. What a gift that would be."

THINK ABOUT IT. We live in very conservative communities. How are we going to really grow First Parish if we can't speak a language of faith, one that is inclusive and tolerant of others' beliefs, and one that resonates with those in the communities from which we are hoping to attract new members?

Merry Christmas to all.

Membership Committee



NEW CHURCH SIGN

The Membership Committee is moving forward with its proposal for a new church sign. The purposes for installing a new sign are to improve our visibility, to enhance the appearance of the site and to make our church look more vital in the community. The current Wayside Pulpit is in disrepair and projects the image of a foundering church. The plan is for the Wayside Pulpit to be relocated.

A proposal will be made at the Dec.16, bi-annual meeting. We hope the congregation will approve the installation of the sign. We will have pictures available in the Vestry for your review and plan to have a banner rendition of the sign ready soon. The money for the sign project will not come out of the budget. The funds are being raised separately.

SAVE THE DATE

**5th ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2013**

Bring a friend to the breakfast and to church.



Donations to Support an Urban Ministry Child's Campership

Notes from the Social Action Committee

Family Promise

Pat Clark, Social Action Chairperson

So, what is Family Promise anyway? Someone asked me at church recently about Family Promise and it occurred to me that I was just assuming that everyone knew about the program. Family Promise is the new name for Metrowest Interfaith Hospitality Network, a nationwide program providing a community response for homeless families. First Parish is a support church in providing help for these families. Churches in the Metrowest area that have large educational facilities provide housing during the week every night, and churches, such as ours, that are small and have small congregations can help by providing meals, donating items needed by the families, and occasionally staffing the Day Center in Natick. The Day Center occupies a section of First Baptist Church facing the Natick Common.

Homelessness is a growing problem in America and includes a growing number of families with children. Who are these people? You mean there are homeless people out here in the suburbs? You bet! Often, one or both parents are employed but unable to meet rising energy and housing costs. Many low income families live from paycheck to paycheck. A major illness, an apartment-condo conversion, a job lay-off or other forces beyond their control can drive these working people into homelessness. These families are basically just like yours and mine but find themselves in trouble and in need of services. If you think about it, that could be any one of us.

In our Family Promise network, a host congregation furnishes clean, safe overnight lodging and nutritious meals for three to five families for one week every two to three months. During host week, other congregations provide additional volunteers to support the host group, preparing and serving suppers or tutoring guest children.

The Family Promise staff and other human service organizations help more than 70 percent of these families to find permanent housing, and find jobs or enter job training programs.

What does this mean for us? To work with families directly it's required to have a CORI clearance, which consists of completing a form, attaching a copy of one's driver's license and mailing the form and license copy to the Director of the program. I can help with that.

Also it's required and important to participate in a 2-hour training session that helps volunteers understand the clientele and be sensitive in working directly with them. These sessions are offered frequently at various area churches. If there are a few people in the First Parish interested, I can arrange for a training session to take place at our church. Providing parts of a meal, donating items to the Day Center, setting up and taking down bedrooms doesn't require CORI clearance or training. There are many ways volunteers can help out.

If you are interested in volunteering in any way, please contact Pat Clark (508-376-5832), patclarkmillis@gmail.com or Barbara Bunger.

UHouse Capital Campaign Status: \$6,000

Goal: \$25,000

As of November 15, the Capital Campaign for start-up funds to replace the UHouse with a state-of-the-art educational center reached \$5,975. At 24% of our \$25,000 goal, we are off to a strong start.

With sufficient funds in hand, the Executive Board has given authorization for architect David Sharff to execute Phase 1 of his proposal to provide Master Planning Services for Design of the new center, as follows.

Phase 1 - \$1,800

- Prepare site plan and approximate footprint drawn to scale
- Up to 3 planning meetings with First Parish Medfield
- Draft a written/graphic program

The design will also explore the possibility of joint use with Medfield Community Cable Access ("Medfield TV"). Upon successful completion of Phase 1, it is anticipated that Phase 2 will be authorized and executed, as follows.

Phase 2 – \$5,000

- Submit floor plans and exterior renderings drawn to scale
- Review with representatives of First Parish & Medfield TV
- Prepare approximate budget
- Prepare a final Master Plan

The goal of \$25,000 for this Capital Campaign is to fund Mr. Sharff's Master Planning Services and to initiate a reserve fund for subsequent design services including a land survey and engineering (civil, structural, mechanical & plumbing, electrical & fire-alarm) services.

It is intended that our new educational center be:

- (1) Used for religious education classrooms, church offices, meetings, and events
- (2) Barrier Free in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- (3) Energy Efficient and Environmentally Green
- (4) Cost Effective
- (5) Architecturally Commensurate with the Church Building and other structures in the Historic District
- (6) A desirable rental option for nonprofit organizations and small commercial enterprises

If you have not already done so, please make your donation payable to First Parish Medfield identifying "New UHouse Start-Up Funds" on the memo line of your check.

Thank you.

Executive Board: Fred Bunger, Ann Cunningham, Glen D'Abate, Sara Drumm, Fritz Fleischmann, Duncan Glover & Cissy Hull-Allen

Yes, you can count on my support of the Capital Campaign! Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution in the amount of:

_____ \$1,000 _____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

City & State _____

Please make check payable to "First Parish Medfield" and write "New UHouse Start-Up Funds" on the comment line.

Other Announcements

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!

The Medfield Food Cupboard has requested the following from our church for the month of December:



Juice- plastic jugs and juice boxes
cereal - please no corn flakes or cheerios - kid cereal please
cookies
crackers
canned pasta

Please double check your food item to ensure that it is undented, unopened, and unexpired. Thanks for your efforts. Any donations are greatly appreciated and can be placed in the basket in the narthex.

Notes from the Church Office



Please remember the following deadlines:

Church Newsletter: Third Sunday of the month.

Order of Service: Wednesdays by 5:00 pm. If you miss this deadline but have an announcement to be made at the church service, please submit a typed announcement to the service manager for that given Sunday and send a copy to the office.

Church Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Email: admin@firstparishmedfield.org

Sandra Andreassi-Administrator

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

December 2

"The Gift of Grace"

Rev. Richard M. Stower

We are entering the season of Advent, a time in the Christian calendar of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The word Advent is from the Latin for "coming." We know what's coming. We know that this season brings all sorts of feelings. The joy in the anticipation of family gatherings and the sorrow of the absence of those we have loved but are no longer with us. We are harried by the hustle and bustle of the season and are calmed by those few moments of quiet that come in the dark night. But imagine what it must have been like in the time before Jesus' birth and during his ministry. Prophets had foretold the Messiah's coming. And, for many, Jesus filled the job description. To those early Christians Jesus was not something willed into being but his birth and his life was a gift of grace. Grace is one of those words which go beyond the bounds of language. It is a word that is easier to feel than define; easier to describe by metaphor than by fact. It is a word more poetry than prose.

December 9

"What Shall We Do Then?"

Rev. Richard M. Stower

Leo Tolstoy, one of the greatest of Russia's literary giants, wrote a book towards the end of his life with the title, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. It is a non-fiction work and was first published in Germany in 1894 after being banned in Russia because of its religious and political nature. It was the culmination of thirty years of Tolstoy's thinking and it attempts to remove the layers of dogma and authority from what Tolstoy saw as Jesus' message of love; a message that could lay the foundation for a new organization of society. It is this book that gave Tolstoy the reputation as a founder of the modern peace movement. He also deserves recognition as one of humanity's great moral and spiritual leaders. And so this morning, in this season with its expectations of peace, I want to recall the foundations of his faith.

December 16

"Solstice"

Our Religious Education program presents its annual holiday pageant.

December 23

"The Substance of Things Hoped For"

Rev. Richard M. Stower

Faith, it has been said, is our birthright, our inner potential, our spiritual heritage. Faith gives us the courage to go from the familiar to the hidden; from the known to the unknown. Having faith in something empowers us to leave our security and to reach beyond the horizon. We need faith also in order to reach toward that understanding of the existence of that which is greater than ourselves: faith that there is an underlying oneness in the diversity we perceive.

December 24

"Christmas Eve Candlelight Service"

Rev. Richard M. Stower

At 5:30 pm on Monday, 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 30

TBA

Music and Worship Committee

FPUU Calendar of Events

Saturday, Dec 1	Medfield Garden Club Greens Sale
Sunday, Dec 2	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary
Saturday, Dec 8	Hanukhah Begins
Sunday, Dec 9	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary OWL Meeting/7-9 pm/Vestry
Thursday, Dec 13	Worship & Music Committee/7:30pm/Vestry
Sunday, Dec 16	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary Semi-Annual Meeting/11:30 am/Sanctuary OWL Meeting/7-9 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, Dec 18	Membership Meeting/7:15 pm/Bunger's
Sunday, Dec 23	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary
Monday, Dec 24	Christmas Eve Service/5:30 pm/Sanctuary
Tuesday, Dec 25	Christmas Day
Tuesday, Jan 1	New Year's Day
Sunday, Jan 6	OWL Meeting/7-9 pm/Vestry
Thursday, Jan 10	Worship & Music Committee/7:30 pm/Vestry
Sunday, Jan 13	OWL Meeting/7-9 pm/Vestry
Thursday, Jan 17	Executive Board Committee/7:30 pm/U-House
Monday, Jan 21	Martin Luther King Day – Office Closed Membership Meeting/7:15 pm/Bunger's
Sunday, Jan 27	OWL Meeting/7-9 pm/Vestry

For a complete listing of events, please visit our website at www.firstparishmedfield.org. If you would like to book the Sanctuary, Vestry or U-House for an event or meeting, please check availability and then contact the church office at admin@firstparishmedfield.org