



First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Medfield

**26 North Street, Medfield, MA
(508) 359-4594**

www.firstparishmedfield.org



December Newsletter 2013

From the Minister

Dear First Parish friends,

Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, and then New Year's... These celebrations are tumbling toward us at quite a rate! Church this morning was a wonderful oasis, as I trust it will be throughout the season.

I want to share with you today an invitation to give, an announcement for those in some pain, and a blessing.

The invitation:

If you would like to give something to someone else --- please consider joining me and other FPUU folks in volunteering at the NewLife Home Refurnishings project here in Medfield. Wouldn't it be great to be part of a group of six to eight of us, under the leadership of a regular crew chief, accepting household furnishing donations, organizing them, and helping clients select what they need, all on one Saturday a month? Different people can rotate in on different Saturdays so many of us could take part in this good work over time.

If this appeals to you, please email me at minister@firstparishmedfield.org, to let me know you would be interested. Youth and older kids can take part in it as well. If you want to volunteer at other times, let me know that too and I'll pass your name on to the organizers.

The announcement:

On December 15 at 3:00 pm I will be leading an extra service -- called "When the Holidays Hurt" -- especially for those for whom the holidays are bittersweet or painful, perhaps because they've suffered the loss of someone they love, or a job, or for many other reasons. It will be more like a vespers service, with readings and story, but no sermon. All are welcome.

And the blessing is this:

"Your life will have a kind of perfection, although you will not be a saint. The perfection will consist in this: you will be very weak and you will make many mistakes; you will be awkward, for you will be poor in spirit and hunger and thirst for justice. You will not be perfect, but you will love. This is the gate and the way. There is nothing greater than love. There is nothing more true than love, nothing more real. So let us hand our lives over to love and seal the bond of love."

Eberhard Arnold from *the Daily Dig*.

Your life does have a kind of perfection. And knowing this, knowing that the core of a good life is loving, can be an anchor during busy times wrapped in expectations that are far too high. Whether you are giving to someone else who can use your help, receiving love and care from your faith community, or enjoying today with your family and friends, may we all remember that our lives do indeed have a kind of perfection, for we love.

Many blessings,
Rev. Meg

Office hours:

Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 – 2:30

And by appointment

Work cell: 781-767-7663

Pastoral emergencies: 781-850-3307

Lunch Bunch meets on Tuesday, December 10th. Bring a brown bag lunch and meet at the church office building for lunch with Rev. Meg on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.



From the Director of Religious Education



It's getting to be a dark, cold time of year in our part of the world, and in RE we've been turning our

The living and the dead, the light and the darkness, the summer and the winter - these are thought of as "opposites," like "good" and "bad." But in fact the cycles of our lives, the changing of the seasons, the turning of the earth, our best selves and our shadow selves, are all interconnected and

attention to Samhain, Day of the Dead, and the December solstice, appropriately!

The evening of October 31 is Samhain (pronounced SAH-win), a Gaelic festival celebrating the end of the harvest and the beginning of the darker half of the year. Wiccans also celebrate Samhain as the "Witches' New Year," when the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead is thin.



interdependent. We cannot have one without the other. We can understand them only in relation to one another.

Since the RE year started, we've been focusing on "gifts." The gift of kindness, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of friendship. This time of year is also a gift; it's the opportunity to connect with and through the dark, the cold, and yes, the dead. So we can light our lights and make hot tea make music and enjoy being with one other, but we can also embrace the dark,

November 1 is Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a Mexican



celebration of our connections to those who have come before us. You may have seen the decorated skulls on display in the FPUU vestry. Skull

decorating was one of several activities Chris Conley did with the children to honor Dia de los Muertos.

nestle into it, slow down, go inside ourselves, reflect, let go of what has left us--whether it's a person or a time of life or the warm weather or the long days-- and appreciate the beauty and necessity of this part of the cycle of our individual, collective, and planetary lives.



December 21 this year is the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere; it's the summer solstice in the Southern! In the North, it's the day when there's the least amount of sunlight all year. We will be tilted as far away from the sun as we can be.

"Namaste" is the Sanskrit greeting that means "The light in me sees the light in you." And it's wonderful to acknowledge the light in one another. We might do well to acknowledge the dark in one another too.

Alison Streit Baron

Coming of Age

Our Coming of Age group is in the process of choosing their mentors for their spiritual exploration. The journey is lifelong, but this year is a time to explore - a time we refer to as "OWL for the spirit". A special thank you to Gaby Harrison, who joined our recent discussion on death, grief, and caring for others.



Some of our Coming of Agers are visible every Sunday - they are taking care of our children in Little Lights, and welcoming us at the beginning of the service. There's a total of 8; how many can you spot?!

Executive Board Notes

An Executive Board meeting was held on November 21, 2013

Financial Update for FY 14

Pledges: \$60K (54%) out of \$111,063 (budget) collected

Fundraising: \$6K (60.6%) out of \$9.9K (budget) raised

Rentals: \$3.1K (21%) out of \$15K (budget) collected

Cash on hand (Rockland Trust Account): \$53.1K

U-House Oil Burner conversion: The board voted to support converting the U-House oil burner to a gas burner, which would save both on the expenses of repairs to the oil burner, and on the cost of oil compared to gas.

New Life Home Refurnishings: Rev. Meg is working on setting one Saturday a month for FPUU to staff the Refurnishing site in Medfield.

Fund Raising: Fritz Fleischmann presented the results of the Viridian Green Energy Program: Over 16 FPUU households have signed up for Viridian, so First Parish will receive the \$750 sign-up bonus. Also, for each participating household, FPUU will receive \$2.00 per month.

Semi-Annual Parish Meeting: scheduled for Sunday December 8, starting at 11:15 am after an abbreviated coffee "hour". The status of the church including a Treasurer's report will be presented. There will also be a presentation by the New Education Center Committee and by architect David Sharff.

Margaret Rolph
Executive Board Co-Chair

If the Weather Outside is Frightful...

Should it become necessary to postpone Sunday morning services, an announcement will be made on WBZ AM/1030 TV-4 (also available online and on news apps.) by 9:00 am. To keep you informed on any closings or delays, there will also be an announcement on the church website at www.firstparishmedfield.org. An email blast will also go out to those that are on the mailing list.



Historical Stewardship: Buildings and Grounds



First Parish is blessed to own a beautiful historic Church and office centrally located in this charming New England town. All of us should be proud of the important role First Parish played in the history of Medfield. With our new sign, some recent painting and clean up, First Parish makes a great first impression.

It is the responsibility of ALL of us to keep up that good impression. Please do not just "let it go" if you see something that needs attention. The Building and Grounds Committee tries to attend to the maintenance needs of the Church, but we need YOUR help in communicating what needs to be done.

PLEASE let us know:

- Call Fred, David or Eve or leave a message on the church phone.
- Send Fred, David, Eve or Sandra an e-mail.
- Put a note in the Work List Book kept in the drawer nearest the entry to the vestry kitchen.
- Catch us after Church.

A committee of three is not enough. We would welcome help, so please volunteer and work with us.

Thank You
Buildings and Grounds Committee;
Fred Bungler
David Maxson
Eve Potts

A Message from the Transition Team



We are pleased to report that, as charged by the Board, we have been researching how to establish the **First Parish Medfield Committee on Ministry**. The key functions of the CoM will be to support, nurture and monitor our **Shared Ministry**. In her November 7th message, Rev. Meg describes Shared Ministry as “everything we do to live out the mission of the church, guided by the policies adopted by the church through its legal representative, the executive board.”

A Committee on Ministry is different from a Ministerial Relations Committee – a CoM is neither an advocate for the minister nor a buffer between the minister and the congregation. Healthy congregations are characterized by direct dealings

between people, so it is best if the minister deals directly with congregation members and the various committees. The CoM’s job is to evaluate and support the church’s shared ministry in all dimensions, both the minister’s work and that of the congregation, in light of the church’s mission.

The Transition Team will provide timely updates as the CoM selection and construction process unfolds.

Jenifer Bartle, Dan Bibel, Kirsten D’Abate, John Kornet, Louise Rachin, David Temple

First Parish Medfield Transition Team Committee

News from Family Promise Metrowest

In the five years that Family Promise has served the Metrowest Area, it has touched and transformed the lives of 132 children and their parents.



- **The average age of the homeless person in the U.S. is 9 years old!**
- **There are 3000 homeless families in Mass.--hundreds housed in hotel rooms in Metrowest.**
- **A parent working full time at twice the minimum wage cannot find affordable housing in our area.**
- **For these working families, affordable housing does not exist.**

As a Support Congregation for Family Promise, I want to update you on some recent successes of this amazing organization.

Family Promise has moved into the area of funding transitional housing to families as they leave the security of residing at the various churches before they are able to secure their own permanent housing. To date they have raised sufficient funds to assist three to four families transition into this program.

More than 300 people participated in the fundraiser "Tee-Off to End Homelessness" which raised over \$25,000 and increased awareness to supporters of Family Promise Metrowest.

Programs offered to help families include: Financial Literacy, Anti-Discrimination, Parenting Workshops and tutoring.

First Parish Medfield provided support to UUAC Sherborn during the week of Nov. 10th when they housed 2 Families from Family Promise Metrowest.

Upcoming Family Promise Events

Legislative Breakfast--Join us **Friday, Feb. 14, 2014** from 8-9:30am at Family Promise Metrowest's day center, Natick. Speak directly to your legislators about family poverty and homelessness in the Metrowest area.

5th Annual Walk Away Homelessness Event on **Saturday, April 12, 2014!** Mark your calendars and watch for more information in the coming months.

To learn more about Family Promise, check out their website <www.familypromisemetrowest.org.

First Parish Medfield contacts: Barbara Bunger. Volunteers: Debbie Gaines, Alison Galley, Arnold Kalmbach

The Holbrook Bell

By David Temple

The Holbrook bell high up in the tower of the old meetinghouse, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, is several feet across and weighs upwards of a ton, and its dominant tone is F-sharp above Middle C. (Holbrook bells were acclaimed world-wide for their superior musical tone.)



For a century the bell was attached to the town clock and pealed each hour. But when the clock was electrified in 1968 to reduce maintenance and improve its accuracy, there wasn't enough money in the budget to adapt the old striking mechanism to the more modern drive.

Thus this splendid bell is now silent except for special occasions and for calling people to church on Sunday morning.

The bell was cast and installed in 1868 by Holbrook & Sons Foundry, at the corner of Main and Spring Streets, East Medway (now Millis). It is one of over 11,000 bells turned out by this company over its long history.

Harvard (seven), Yale, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Brown, and Trinity all have Holbrook bells in their clock towers. A significant number were shipped around Cape Horn at the bottom of South America and sold in California and Hawaii.

George Holbrook (1767-1846), after an apprenticeship with Paul Revere, opened a foundry and blast furnace in Brookfield, Mass., in 1797. He stayed there until 1812, when he was rendered destitute: he had cosigned a loan for a "friend," and when the other man defaulted, creditors seized Holbrook's business, home, and all his assets.

Holbrook received a chilly reception when he returned to his native Wrentham; the townspeople did not want another pauper on their alms rolls.

But Holbrook luckily won the contract to supply a bell for the new meetinghouse in East Medway. He improvised his blast furnace and casting equipment near the construction site, and, with a showman's flair, attracted a large audience who watched the casting of the 1,200-pound bell. The \$535 he received from this successful project enabled him to restart his business, in which he was joined by his son, George Handel Holbrook (1798-1875).

The son also became a prominent local musician who numbered among his friends Lowell Mason and Jonas Chickering, the famed piano manufacturer. George Handel Holbrook is credited with refining the bells to produce superior musical tones.

The company prospered, and other family members established the Holbrook Organ Company and the Holbrook Tower Clock Works. After George Handel Holbrook died in 1875, the bell company went into decline. His grandson, Edwin Handel Holbrook, sold the plans and patterns for the bells to a company in San Francisco in 1882. He took a government job in Washington, D.C. and died in 1915.

Please join us for the decorating of the church on **Saturday, December 7th** at 10:30.
Please come to the main church door as the Garden Club will be downstairs.



The Medfield Garden Club will host its Annual Greens' Sale At The First Parish UU of Medfield On Saturday, December 7th 10 a.m. until noon

The sale features fresh greens in wreaths, swags, large and small table arrangements as well as boxwood trees and kissing balls. For best selections customers should be there early as the sale is usually a sell-out of favorite items.



Let's Relax! This time of year can get too rushed, so linger with us after the **December 15th** service, drink some hot cider and cocoa, and decorate some sugar and gingerbread cookies to bring home. We are all invited!

Guest At Your Table

Jars to be collected on Sunday, December 22nd

The Guest at Your Table program is under way! We still have extra jars for you to take home and use for collecting donations to the program. You can find more information about this year's guests, or the human rights work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or you can donate online, at www.uusc.org. *Bring your cash or checks (made out to UUSC) to the Solstice Service on December 22.* Any amount is appreciated in support of this work.

Welcome a Guest at Your Table uusc.org/guest Welcome a Guest at Your Table
come a Guest at Your Table uusc.org/guest Welcome a Guest at Your Table

Speaking out to protect women

UUSC Guest at Your Table 689 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA 02139-3302 uusc.org/guest



Advancing civil liberties and democratic processes

UUSC Guest at Your Table 689 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA 02139-3302 uusc.org/guest



Promoting workers' rights and a living wage

UUSC Guest at Your Table 689 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA 02139-3302 uusc.org/guest



Rebuilding sustainable communities

UUSC Guest at Your Table 689 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA 02139-3302 uusc.org/guest

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SAVE THE DATE!!
**2nd First Parish Family
Potluck Dinner**



Friday, January 10, 2014

Plus

**We'll be spinning your favorite tunes during the
meal and after**

Sponsored by the Membership Committee
More details to follow.



WISHES: ANGELS NEEDED

E-bay expert needed: Several valuable items remain unsold from last year's indoor yard sale. Antique glass and dinnerware, mahogany gate-leg table, maple rope bed frame, very old child's cane bottom chair, etc.. Is there someone who could take the time to put the items on e-bay or deliver to consignment sale?

Buildings and Grounds volunteer: Seeking able-bodied, dedicated person to help care for historic Church buildings and grounds. No experience necessary, will teach.

Marketing/Publicity volunteer: Work with Rev. Meg and Sara Drumm to publicize the upcoming series of evening events at FPUU to the communities around us. The series will be great – starting with Mark Samels on January 27th presenting and talking about his upcoming American Experience documentary on the Amish and their practice of shunning. Another event will be Parenting With Cancer, and another will be on making meaning at the end of life and well before then. Please contact Rev. Meg (minister@firstparishmedfield.org) or Sara Drumm if you can help. Parents, if you think one of your teenagers might be willing and good at this, let me know.

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.

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

Email: admin@firstparishmedfield.org

Sandra Andreassi-Administrator

Supporting FPUU through Amazon.com



With the holidays quickly approaching, please remember to use Amazon.com to help support First Parish. Just go to Firstparishmedfield.org and click on the link at the bottom of any page!



MARKETING/PUBLICITY TASK FORCE

The Executive Board seeks to form a task force to develop and implement procedures for effectively publicizing events at First Parish and informing residents of Medfield and surrounding communities what's happening in our Congregation. Newspapers, the FPUU website and other on-line sites, email chains, community bulletin boards, signs and sandwich boards. How do we get the message out in a timely manner, accurately, and attractively? How to review and approve the content of a message (for accuracy, grammar, consistent with our principles, and marketing effectiveness)? Who to contact within our congregation in order to publicize an event?

The Executive Board welcomes your ideas and suggestions for establishing policies and procedures for publicizing FPUU events. If you would like to be part of the task force, please contact reverend Meg or Duncan Glover (duncanglover@comcast.net).

Thank you.
Executive Board

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



Juice - bottle or boxes !!!!!
Raisins
Applesauce cups
Peanut butter
Jelly (no grape please)
Cereal
Rice
Canned pasta
and more juice - bottle or boxes !!!!!

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

Special thanks to Evan Springer who is the coordinator for our church this year.

FPUU Calendar of Events

Sunday, December 1	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary
Saturday, December 7	Medfield Garden Club Greens Sale/10-12
Sunday, December 8	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary Semi-Annual Meeting/Sanctuary/11:15 Coming of Age/7-9pm/Vestry
Tuesday, December 10	Lunch Bunch/12:00 pm/Church Offices Membership Meeting/7:15 pm/Vestry
Thursday, December 12	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:30 pm/Vestry
Sunday, December 15	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary Cookie Decorating/11:00/Vestry Coming of Age/7-9pm/Vestry Newsletter Deadline
Thursday, December 19	Executive Board Meeting/7:30 pm/U-House
Sunday, December 22	Choir Rehearsal/9:00 am/Sanctuary Solstice Coming of Age/7-9:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, December 24	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service/5:30 pm
Wednesday, December 25	Christmas Day



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