



First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

The Meeting House News

REVeries

*"It matters not what the clocks say," Henry David Thoreau wrote in Walden.
"Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me."*

If there was one thing Thoreau loved, it was the morning. For him, morning wasn't a certain time of day; it was a metaphor. It stood for the promise and potential of a day and of the person who lives that day. Many are awake for physical labor, he said, but only "one in a hundred million" are awake to the "poetic or divine life" that we *all* could be living, if we wanted, but that most of us sleep right through. "To be awake is to be alive," he says, and from its first to its last line, *Walden* is Thoreau's cry to us to wake up! To awaken spiritually, and so be able to touch, at last, Life in all its "everlasting vigor and fertility."

* * *

I like getting up early in the morning. I like to sit in a chair by the window — with a cup of coffee, and watch the day come in. There is magic in this liminal time — magic as the dusky gray around the window shades turns to pink or gold. I like to watch the birds come, their small gray bodies sturdy against the morning's coldness. Sometimes I knit or write or pray; often I just sit. I like to wake up early but I can't say I do it that often. Too often, these early morning moments get squeezed out by all else the day demands: family, work, e-mails, life. It becomes a casualty to my need to "get things done," check them off the list. I know that there is something here at the beginning of the day that can feed me, spiritually feed me, but I let other things get in the way and know my life is the poorer for it.

*"We are determined to be starved before we are hungry,"
writes Thoreau. "Why do we live in such a hurry and waste of time."*

These weeks before Easter, in the Christian tradition the season called Lent, have traditionally been a time to think about how we are living our lives. Is there something we are missing out on? Have we slipped away from those spiritual disciplines that could ground and center us? Have we, as Emerson once said, "gotten wide from God"? We know that we are human and that we don't always get it right. Perfection is not the goal. What matters is that we try and try again, always reaching toward that fully alive state Thoreau described so well. As a religious community, we affirm our human desire to be better and at the same time, we confess our human shortcomings, flaws and failures. In our free religious tradition, we invite one another both to accountability and forgiveness.

Our souls have wintered enough, mourned enough, been oppressed enough, as it says in one of our responsive readings. May these early spring days be a time of honesty, promise and spiritual awakening.

—Jenny Rankin

Sunday Worship Schedule

April 1

Jenny Rankin, preaching
9:00 – Handbell Choir, Martha Goodman, director
March Triumphale – Helman
The Holy City – Adams, arr. Wagner
11:00 – Adult Choir
Shehecheyanu – Steinberg
Sanctus – Fauré

April 8 – EASTER SUNDAY

Jenny Rankin, preaching
9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir, organ and brass
Easter – Vaughan Williams
The Call – Vaughan Williams
Hallelujah Chorus – Handel

April 15

Carl Scovel, preaching
9:00 & 11:00 – Pamela Schweppe and Tamasin Foote, sopranos
Spring Carol – Britten
Flower Duet from Lakme – Delibes

April 22

Sally Hamlin, preaching
9:00 – Lauren Bedau Evans, alto
11:00 – Adult Choir
Selections from *Songs of Nature* – Dvorák

April 29

Margie King Saphier, preaching
9:00 – Adult Choir and Junior Choir
Open the Door – Poley
Prayer – Frackenpohl
11:00 – Gospel Choir and Chalice Choir
You Are the Light of the World – Schwartz

COME BUILD A DREAM!



See the insert for the latest update on the Capital Campaign.

In This Issue...

- Page 1 REVeries
Sunday Worship Schedule
- Page 2 In This Issue
Our Meeting House Family
Blood Drive
- Page 3 Sunday Forum
Parish Notes
- Page 4 Money Matters
Pastoral Care News
- Page 5 Standing Committee
Call for GA Delegates
Musings
- Page 6 SAC News and Events
- Page 7 Membership Corner
Pledge-2007 Information
- Page 8 Reflections
and RE News
- Page 9 Senior Youth News
RE News, continued
Deep REVeries
- Page 10 Parish Notes, continued
Women's News
Classifieds
- Page 11 April 2007 Calendar
- Page 12 First Parish Staff
Ferry Beach Retreat

There are two inserts with this newsletter:
Wright Tavern Center Programs
Capital Campaign and
Partner Church (two-sided)

The Meeting House News, the newsletter of First Parish in Concord, is published monthly September to June, to provide parishioners and friends with information about our congregation and our larger community.

Please send address changes to:
First Parish in Concord
20 Lexington Road
Concord, MA 01742

Noon Deadline	Mailing Date
Friday, Apr. 13	Wednesday, Apr. 25
Monday, May 21	Wednesday, May 30
Monday, Aug. 20	Thursday, Aug. 30

Newsletter items should be limited to 100 words and may be delivered, faxed or e-mailed to the church office.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON APRIL 28!

Come and donate blood at the sixth Annual Nick Ressler Blood Drive and/or become part of a growing database for marrow screening. Over 300 blood donors stepped up to make a difference to Nick before he died at age fourteen in 2001, and now others need the same help. Mass. General's bloodmobile will be at First Parish on Saturday, April 28, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. If you are between the ages of seventeen and sixty-five you may be eligible to donate. Call **Pam Ressler** (978-369-0869) or **Cindy Tenner** (978-371-0306) for an appointment to donate, or sign up at coffee hour on April 1, April 15 or April 22.

To raise awareness in our communities for the extensive need to increase the database of marrow donor matches, **Roselyn Romberg** has organized a quick and painless way to be screened for possible inclusion in a database for marrow donation. Representatives will be available to answer questions, as well as to provide screening at First Parish on April 28 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For questions concerning marrow screening, call **Roselyn Romberg** (978-287-5766).

Sunday Forum

Forums are held Sunday morning from 10:10 a.m. to 10:55 a.m. in the Parlor. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please contact **Dian Pekin** if you wish to recommend a topic or speaker.

APRIL 1

The Common Life

Bill Seaver and **Vivian Walworth**

In this second of humanist Forums, join **Bill** and **Vivian** for a discussion about what guides them and others in living their lives. Is it work, family, the Bible, or something else? Are we living to get to heaven, to achieve fame and/or fortune, to leave a heritage, to serve our community, or to make our lives as productive and enjoyable as possible? Join in on the lively discussion.

APRIL 8

No Forum

EASTER SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

APRIL 15

Poetry as a Path To Self-Reflection

Patti Russo, M.S., Certified Poetry Therapist

Patti will give an introduction to her Wright Tavern Center course. For hundreds of years poetry has been used intentionally to help us see the intricate layers of ourselves more clearly. This Forum will focus on individual and collective responses to particular poems rather than analyzing the style or message of the selected poems. Come and enjoy the reflections and revelations. You do not need to be a poet to benefit from this Forum!

APRIL 22

Awakening the Dreamer,

Changing the Dream

Mary Anne Cleary

This Forum is an introduction to a Wright Tavern course that Mary Anne will conduct on May 5. It will explore the link between three of humanity's most critical concerns: environmental sustainability, social justice and spiritual fulfillment. Participants will gain new insight into the very nature of our time and the opportunities we have to shape and impact the direction of our world with our everyday choices and actions.

APRIL 29

Death and Dying

First Parish Humanists

Come explore this difficult topic with non-theistic fellow UU's. How do agnostics and other humanists view the end of life?

Parish Notes

RESERVED STAFF PARKING REMINDER

Please remember that reserved parking places for staff need to be respected both days and evenings during the week and on weekends. Our staff members arrive at various times of the day and evening throughout the week, and their spaces should be available for them when they do. Also, please note that **Gary Smith's** parking place was "sold" to a parishioner at the fall auction for the duration of his sabbatical, so the Senior Minister Reserved sign should continue to be respected as well.

ARTWORK ON DISPLAY IN THE SUE ALTSHULER GALLERY

Be sure to see the new artwork on display in the Sue Altshuler Gallery. Katherine Thompson is an artist and teacher, and has been part of the First Parish community since moving to Concord with her family in 1993. She attended Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where she graduated with honors in Studio Art. She has taught drawing, painting and printmaking at the elementary and high school level, and is currently working with first and second graders at Williams Elementary School in Newton. Significant themes in her work include identity, natural and unnatural environments, and the passage of time. Although the majority of work consists of large scale oils, she is also an avid watercolorist, and a selection of these works is on display. Any inquiries regarding the works may be addressed to katherinelizabeth@gmail.com.

THE FIRST PARISH BOOK FAIR RAISED \$1,500

Many thanks to all who contributed books to the First Parish book fair, and to those who attended and bought books on the day! The event raised over \$1,500, which will all go toward annual church activities. There were a few leftovers, which were distributed to various nonprofits — the children's books are being shipped to the Philippines to supply schools and libraries, and the rest of the books were picked up by representatives from www.gotbooks.com. Special thanks to the Special Events Committee, who worked tirelessly to make the day a great success: **Art Croke, Mary Lou Toussaint, Lillian Anderson, Dee Truluck-Williams, Suzanne Foley** and **Jon Sirotof**. And thanks to special volunteers on the day: **Francine Amari-Faulkner, John Atkins, Steve Graham, Donna Peterson, Sara Ballard, Kate** and **Kel Keleher**, and **Dave Elwood**. —**Jason Truluck-Williams**

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE AND CHOWDER SUPPER — APRIL 5

First Parish's annual observance of "The Last Supper" is on Maundy Thursday, prior to Easter Sunday. A service of Communion in the Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m. is followed by the traditional Chowder Supper in the Parish Hall. Tickets for the Chowder Supper are \$10, and are available at coffee hours and in the church office prior to the dinner. (Seating is limited and tickets must be purchased prior to the event.) **Caroline McCloy** will be making the traditional fish chowder that day and will need help in the kitchen. Please contact her at 978-369-9602, ext. 450, or Member FP@aol.com.

FIRST PARISH SEDER — SATURDAY, APRIL 7

Tickets will be on sale at coffee hour on April 1 and in the office during the week. Space is limited and tickets will not be sold after Tuesday, April 3. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children ages 6 to 12.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT HUMANISM?

If so, consider joining fellow First Parishioners at an important April 20-22 conference in Cambridge called "The New Humanism." Sponsored by the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard and being held in Harvard Yard and the

PARISH NOTES continued on page 10

Money Matters

As you know, each year at the Annual Meeting in June, a budget for the upcoming year is presented to the congregation. This month, I thought I would talk to you about the budget and how it is put together. At First Parish the budget is very much a collaborative effort, with staff and many others providing input. By “input,” I don’t just mean a forecast of the dollars program areas expect to spend or bring in. The more important inputs come in the form of insights and expectations contributed by both the staff and Standing Committee. Although you may not realize it, the congregation plays an important part in this as well. The discussions you have with staff and Standing Committee members, as well as the things you don’t say but tell us through the activities you support and the ways you get involved, help us to know what is important to you at the church. This information helps create a vision for our church, and the budget reflects a strategy for working toward our goals in fulfilling our vision.

At the Standing Committee meeting in March, a preliminary budget for FY’08 was presented and discussed. The work on this budget began in January when staff members were asked to provide inputs for income and spending in their program areas. We put this information together with projections of income and goals regarding salary increases. At First Parish we are required to have a balanced budget; we therefore can budget to spend only as much as we expect to receive in income. The biggest part of our income comes in the form of pledges. At this point in the year, we do not know our total pledges for FY’08, so our preliminary budget may require some revisions if our pledge total comes in differently from what we projected. If you have not pledged yet, please help us out by doing so. This will enable us to determine our total pledges for next year and finalize our budget. Thank you.

—*Lisa Cole*

Business Manager

Pastoral Care News

In her meditation on “Passover,” Lynn Ungar writes:

*“But the promise, from those first
naked days outside the garden,
is that there is no safety,
only the terrible blessing
of the journey. You were born
through a doorway marked in blood.
We are, all of us, passed over,
brushed in the night by terrible wings.”*

What is this “terrible blessing,” these “terrible wings?” The wings are terrible because they eventually bring death to all of us. The blessing is terrible because those whom we love do die; but the blessing is that we loved and were loved, and we can love again. The blessing is also the hope that our grief can lead us on a journey that over time brings healing and even transcendence.

If you are in the throes of grief, I highly recommend two books: *Threads of Hope: An Offering for Those Who Grieve*, by Beth Rotondo, and *Transcending Loss: Understanding the Lifelong Impact of Grief and How to Make It Meaningful*, by Ashley Davis Prend. *Threads of Hope* is a little book — 4 x 6 inches, and it is short — 100 pages. I met Beth when she spoke at a meeting for hospice chaplains. She explained when her teenage son died years ago, she had questions about life without her son and the resultant cavernous hole in her heart. This book explores some of these questions with the hope they will offer some reassurance and companionship during the journey of grieving. For those individuals who want a deeper exploration of grief, *Transcending Loss* is a comprehensive exploration providing understanding of how loss can be integrated into your life, as well as how it will continue to be part of your existence through the years.

Both of these books can be found in the Pastoral Care Library, which is in the Parlor on the shelves to the left of the fireplace. There are many excellent books, tapes and CD’s on a wide range of pastoral issues: spirituality, illness and health, relationships, child development, addiction, mental health; and the list goes on. The books are there for your enlightenment. If you take out a book, please sign it out and remember to return it.

Communicating with Compassion will be shown and discussed on Saturday, May 5, from 10:00 to noon. This excellent film has been shown before at First Parish but it is worth seeing again. A 40-minute video provides a step-by-step method of communicating with people who are ill, injured, isolated or in distress. Using real situations, four key communication skills that empower, encourage, bring hope and lift the spirit. Following a discussion of the video, participants will have the opportunity to practice these skills. I invite anyone who wants to deepen their listening skills, and/or who are interested in becoming a Parish Visitor, to come to this class. This video has been shown and discussed in previous years at First Parish — always to “rave reviews.”

In faith,

—*Margie King Saphier*

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee (SC) met on March 12. **Lou Fackert** reported for the Trustees that because one of the cottages needed extensive renovation before it could be rented out, the Trustees will not be able to increase their contribution to the church's operating budget for the coming year. **Jenny Rankin** presented the first draft of the proposed budget for next year, which brought up a discussion of our desire to bring our ministers and staff up to UUA guidelines. The SC requested that the staff do some strategic planning for future staff positions. The Social Action Task Force recommendations will be available online and in paper form on the table near the office — please look for them and give us your input. We are looking for someone to help with Building a Dream celebration coffee hours on April 29. Please contact **Sue Beck** if you are interested. On March 2 and 3, the SC met to talk about the future of First Parish — what could our community be like in the year 2017? We came away energized, excited, and determined to move towards more effective policy governance. The remainder of our March 12 meeting was spent planning ways to begin to implement some of the ideas that came out of the retreat. The Capital Campaign is helping us to prepare our building for the future, and the SC wants to help prepare our programs and services for the future as well.

Submitted,

— *Sue Beck*, Clerk

CALL FOR DELEGATES TO THE 2007 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Denominational Affairs Committee is in the process of selecting GA delegates. This year's General Assembly of UUA member organizations will take place June 20-24, 2007, in Portland, Oregon. If you would like to be a delegate, contact **Holli Jones-White** at hjoneswhite@aol.com or 978-371-1964 right away. Don't miss out on this opportunity to participate with thousands of other UU's in exciting workshops, inspiring worship services, and history-making plenary sessions! All First Parish members are eligible to be delegates.

MUSings

As Easter comes again this month, I have been looking forward to our traditional singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* at the close of the services that Sunday. I treasure this tradition. I love to look into the congregation during the final hymn on Easter Sunday and see people making their way to the balcony, some clutching well-thumbed *Messiah* scores, to join the choir in the loft. I also love hearing the voices behind me as well as those in front of me, when we sing that chorus. Ours may not be the most polished performance of this work, but I think it ranks right up there with the most joyous.

The "Hallelujah Chorus" is surrounded by tradition and legend. Most people have learned that the audience should stand for this chorus whenever it is sung. The origins of this tradition are not documented historically. But one story goes that during an early performance of the *Messiah*, King George II stood for the "Hallelujah Chorus" and; since custom dictated that when the king stood, everyone stood, the audience followed suit. The reasons for George II's actions have been variously attributed: he might have been arriving late, as was evidently his custom, and all rose to greet him; he might have been standing to relieve his gout; or he might have been so moved that he stood to honor the music. It doesn't matter so much why he stood — or even if he stood. The tradition remains strong.

It is a matter of some debate among conductors whether this tradition is one to be endorsed or discouraged. Some feel it is part of the *Messiah* tradition and that each audience deserves this chance to be part of the tradition. Others feel it is disruptive to the performance. For several seasons, I sang an annual *Messiah* performance in New York with a conductor who would actually turn to the audience as the "Hallelujah Chorus" began and motion them — quite adamantly — to be seated. Hard to say which part of that tradition would be more distracting!

Standing or seated, the "Hallelujah Chorus" is one of the great expressions of joy and triumph in Western music. I am glad that it is part of our Easter celebration and that we are all able to join in the tradition.

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

DUST OFF THOSE "MESSIAH" SCORES — EASTER IS COMING!

Singers from the congregation are invited to come to the choir loft during the final hymn on Easter Sunday, April 8, and join the choir in their traditional Easter benediction response, G. F. Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus". If you have a copy of the *Messiah*, please bring it with you. If not, there will be some extra music available, and choir members are always willing to share. Even if you don't wish to make the climb to the balcony, feel free to join in this joyous chorus on Easter morning.

THANK YOU, SIRI AND SUE!

The Women's Parish Association and all who attended this year's spring recital and tea extend heartfelt thanks to **Siri Smedvig** and **Susan Minor** for another extraordinary performance! Their music carried everyone to a place of joy and beauty — a wonderful way to begin the season of spring. We are very grateful to them for sharing their musical gifts with us.

THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL ACTION

I am writing this in the middle of March — a month I have always considered long and uneventful. But this has been an amazingly busy month for the Social Action

Community at First Parish! First Parish members met our SAC cochairs, **Claudia Nimar** and **Eric Van Loon**, at the Marvelous

Monday dinner on March 12, which was prepared and sponsored by SAC. Our first



Biloxi Youth Mission trip was finalized, with six youth and three chaperones set to depart on April 14. The Concord Prison Outreach training occurred over the March 11 weekend. Families benefited from Open Table's pantry and meal program on Thursdays at First Parish, youth programs at the Urban Ministry grew stronger, and Amnesty International's letter campaigns progressed. And this all happened by mid-March!

The end of the month included a busy March 18, with a Forum by the Peace Alliance and a roundtable luncheon with our guest preacher, Charlie Clements, president of the UUSC and advocate of the UUSC's Drumbeat for Darfur program. The Global Warming team played a key role in the Global Warming Symposium on March 24, and Jericho Road volunteers celebrated at a March 28 recognition dinner.

First Parish provides you with opportunities to act on your faith. April will be another busy month. Take a chance, try one of our programs, or come talk about your new ideas. Stay tuned to the *Sunday News*, check out our website, FirstParish.org, and stay informed on the opportunities available to you. I look forward to talking with you all!

— *Faith Bade*

Social Action Associate

JOIN THE UUSC'S DRUMBEAT FOR DARFUR

A recent UN human rights report accused major nations of letting Sudan obstruct efforts to stop ethnic fighting that has killed 200,000 people and displaced over 2.5 million. You can join the UU Service Committee's Drumbeat for Darfur. Its goals are to protect civilians, especially women, from the ongoing violence; promote a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict; and hold perpetrators of the genocide accountable for crimes against humanity. Visit

uus.org and sign up for the Darfur list-serv to help pressure Congress and world leaders to take action. Please consider making a donation to the UUSC to provide aid to the victims of this crisis. Contact **Sue Beck** at sbeck345@comcast.net for more information.

CAN YOU HELP PROGRAMS OF THE UU URBAN MINISTRY?

The UUUM is an organization created over 100 years ago to foster connections between suburban and urban UU churches. Roxbury Youth Program, an after-school academic and enrichment program, and Renewal House, a shelter of safety and hope, are two very successful programs the UUUM runs. Members of First Parish can help by collecting shampoo, conditioner and laundry soap for Renewal House, and resupplying the snack pantry for the Roxbury Youth Program. Favorites are individual serving sizes of Cheetos, onion rings, Doritos, sour cream and onion chips, soft chocolate chip cookies; and apple juice, fruit punch and lemonade juice boxes. Leave donations in the marked boxes in the coatroom. Financial donations to UUUM are always welcome. Contact **Patricia Waters** (978-369-1992) with questions. Thank you for supporting these excellent programs.

GLOBAL WARMING RALLY TO BE HELD APRIL 14 IN LEXINGTON

Saturday, April 14, at noon is your chance to take part in a national protest against global warming — while staying close to home. More than 1,000 rallies in all 50 states will call on Congress that day to “Step It Up” on concrete action this year. Lexington's Hastings Park at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Worthen Road is the place, rain or shine. Come for music and speakers, both political and scientific. More information is at lexgwac.org, or contact **Bob Andrews** at bobandrews3@verizon.net.

PATRIOTS' DAY IN ROXBURY — APRIL 16

Celebrate Patriots' Day in Roxbury from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at First Church in John Eliot Square with a William Dawes ride reenactment by the National Lancers. There will also be historic talks and free historic trolley tours of Roxbury, leaving at 11:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Cosponsored by the Roxbury Collaborative, including the UU Urban Ministry and Discover Roxbury. For questions, call 617-541-4644 or 617-427-1006.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MOVIE ON TUESDAY, APRIL 10

The Diversity Committee will present the film *Boys Don't Cry* at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10. Admission is free and refreshments will be provided. Hillary Swank won an Oscar for her portrayal of a transgender teen in this thought-provoking and fascinating movie. The film is rated R. For more information, contact **Sara Ballard** at 978-371-0723.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS RECYCLING MINISTRY, INC. (HGRM)

A SAC grant to HGRM helped this Acton-based agency distribute 17,220 pieces of furniture and 6,086 boxes of household goods to 2,895 families. We hope for increased interest in HGRM and are scheduling tours for parishioners. Experiences with HGRM come as close to living the mission of First Parish as any. For more information or to schedule a tour, contact **Deb Dormitzer** at 978-264-9047 or debbie@lhlogic.com.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIAL ACTION AT FIRST PARISH?

The First Parish Social Action Community (SAC) helps parishioners connect with a diverse and exciting range of social action projects. To find out more about what is going on, join our e-mail list by sending a blank e-mail to SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org, see our website, www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/97/70/, e-mail our Social Action Associate **Faith Bade** at FBade@firstparish.org, or check out information on the SAC bulletin board downstairs in the church.

Membership Corner

At the beginning of March, I spent two days at a retreat put on by the UUA on Unitarian Universalist Identity. Four of my colleagues, from the Religious Education program at First Parish, were there as well. As so often happens, I was struck by how hardworking and thoughtful this group of 21 educators from all over New England were, but I was especially proud to be part of the team that was from Concord. No other church had sent more than one person, so there was no chance for them to collaborate as we did. About halfway through the retreat, it dawned on the group that we had all come together from the same church. You could hear a collective gasp and sound of disbelief, then a big jealous, "Wow." It was such a valuable time for the five of us. It seems as though our time at work is spent on the computer and telephone and in meetings, and we rarely get a chance to reflect about what we are doing here and ways to do it better. I want to say "thank you" to this congregation for making it possible for us to have a budget that includes professional development. It really makes a difference.

—*Caroline McCloy*

IS THERE AN AFFINITY GROUP FOR YOU?

If you are a runner and would like company for those long 10-milers (not very fast), join the Running Group. If you would like a slower pace, join the Walking Group; we do now have a contact person. Can we get the Bicycling Group started? There is a large sign-up, but a contact person is needed. Don't forget about Kayaking which is ready to start paddling this spring.

Are you a Bridge player? This group would like more players. Interested in playing games? **Peter Lowitt** is currently organizing a Games Affinity Group. Do you enjoy seeing movies but can't make plans in advance? Would you like to have a list of people who are willing to be called at the last minute? Then join Spur-of-the-Moment Moviegoers. Or sign up for Women and Money, a discussion group using ideas from the book *Overcoming Underearning*, by Barbara Stanny.

Perhaps you would like to join a currently functioning Affinity Group — Dancing, French Conversation, Jewish Awareness, Needleworkers, Photography, Spanish Discussion/Social or Writing Down the Bones (creative writing). Stop by the Affinity Groups table at coffee hour on Sunday, April 15, or contact **Judy Dembsey** at 978-263-3272 or dembsey@surfglobal.net.

PLEDGE • 2007

\$186,000 STILL OUTSTANDING IN ANNUAL PLEDGES

Many thanks to all in the congregation who have pledged to the annual campaign. At the Celebration Sunday services on March 4, parishioners pledged a grand total of \$79,000. It was a great morning at First Parish. As of March 22, we are \$186,000 from this year's goal to raise \$1,020,000.

There are still more than 100 First Parish households who have not yet pledged. Please make First Parish your priority and pledge now, if you have not already. Additional pledge forms are in the church office and online at www.firstparish.org. You may request that a form be mailed to your home by calling the church office at 978-369-9602.

We are in the midst of follow-up — that is, calling parishioners to ask them to make their pledge now, so we can close out the 2007 annual campaign season. Each and every pledge makes a difference in providing the financial support to pay salaries for the ministers and staff, to provide programs and to cover the day-to-day operational costs of our beautiful Meeting House.

Thank you for your generosity. And many thanks to the 130+ parishioners who have helped the campaign effort — from affinity group participants to those who presented testimonials, hosted a gathering, or volunteered time to create posters/pledge materials and food for Celebration Sunday. We appreciate your volunteer time and your commitment to our UU community. Pledging is an annual tradition at First Parish.

There is so much to be grateful for!
In appreciation of our congregation,

—**Dave Dawson** and **Cynthia Ellis**, cochairs, and
the Pledge•2007 Committee:

**Margaret Adams, Mary Ellen Connell, George Gagliardi,
Susan Galford, Jennifer Jacoby, Kate Keleher, David
Knauss, David Quimby, John Sheffield; Jenny Rankin,
Ex Officio**



Reflections and RE News

Registration for all of next year's religious education programs is about to begin. We will have open registration during coffee hour after both services on April 29 and May 6. All registrations must be received by May 20. RE assignments and registration for the 11:00 a.m. service will be done on a 'first come, first served' basis.

This year we experienced a serious imbalance in our programming. Our 11:00 a.m. program was overcrowded and our 9:00 a.m. program needed to adjust to the smaller numbers by combining classes. This was not only a problem for our children, but it turned out to create difficulties in staffing parent teachers for our 9:00 a.m. program as well.

The ministers, the RE Council and the RE staff wish to maintain safe and productive class sizes. As a result, we may need to limit class size to 25 students. If a class is full, the student will need to attend class at the other service. If this would be inconvenient for your family, please be certain to register early in order to secure a spot at your preferred worship time.

In April, you will receive a mailing containing a summary of the different teaching opportunities, next year's RE calendar and the proposed workshops for our Workshop Rotation program. These materials will help you become better informed about your teaching opportunities for next year. We will need each and every one of you to make these programs a success.

The RE Council has worked hard this year to create a variety of teaching options. We are hoping that each of you reflects upon how you can best support our RE program. There is a tendency to pick your own child's grade level instead of thinking of RE as a personal ministry for you, the adult. What special talents could you bring to our program? Do you love art? Music? Drama? Are you a storyteller? Are you great at relating to teens?

When choosing an RE assignment this year, please think about you, first. Where do you fit best? Which program might you see yourself doing for several years, not just one. The "learning curve" each year is the hardest part. By choosing something you love to do, you can do it year after year, and it becomes easier and easier.

It takes each one of us to create a vibrant religious learning community. Thank you for bringing your talents to our program at First Parish.

— Pam Howell

RE APRIL CALENDAR

Sunday, April 1	Regular RE for 0-6th Graders 7th Grade Islamic Center Visit, 11:00 – 2:30 8th Grade OWL, 4:00–7:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 8	Easter Sunday, Child Care for 0-4 Years only No RE for K-6th Graders 7th Grade Off 8th Grade Off
Thursday, April 15	Regular RE for 0-6th Graders 7th Grade Off 8th Grade Off
Sunday, April 22	Regular RE for 0-4 Years Craft Activity for K-6th Graders 7th Grade Off 8th Grade Off
Wednesday, April 25	7th Grade Neighboring Faiths Visit, First Church of Christ Science at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 29	Regular RE for 0-6th Graders 9th Grade Coming of Age, 4:30–6:30 p.m. RE Registration Sunday, after both Services

REGISTRATION DATES AND TIMES

(PLEASE BRING YOUR CHECKBOOK FOR THE MATERIALS FEE)

Tuesday, April 24, from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 29, at both coffee hours

Sunday, May 6, at both coffee hours

Please have your children registered by May 20. This helps us plan our program in a way that uses all of our resources wisely.

FINAL WORKSHOP ROTATION

We will soon begin our final rotation, focusing on our First Parish Meeting House and the staff at First Parish. Children will be sketching the building in Art, making a model of the building in Real Stuff, exploring our Unitarian Universalist hymns in Music, creating their own worship service in Worship, and learning about our staff in Games. A special thanks to **Liz Davis-Chaffin**, our Workshop Rotation Coordinator, for truly bringing the program together this year. From her vibrant bulletin boards to the detailed curriculum and supplies she prepares for each workshop, Liz brings her special gifts to our RE program.

SPIRIT PLAY

Spirit Play has come a long way. Last year we were just starting out with this new way of delivering stories to young children. Thanks to the leadership of **Carol Duane**, our Young Children's Program Coordinator, we have accrued over 30 Spirit Play baskets and scripts. Each one is carefully inventoried and prepared in order to make your teaching responsibility as easy and meaningful as possible. We hope our teachers are enjoying this program as much as our children seem to be enjoying it.

RE NEWS continued on page 9

Senior Youth News

Every year the youth have the opportunity to create their own worship service for the greater First Parish community. This is an incredibly rewarding experience for our youth to pick a theme (this year the theme was “leaving your mark”), discuss that theme, write reflections, choose readings, perform music, and come together as a group. The Friday before the service we sleep over at the church and rehearse until the a.m. hours. This year we had a record number of youth participate, which is very exciting for me. I am so proud of the heartfelt effort all of our youth put into the service. It is a highpoint of the year for all of us.

Because of Easter and April school vacation, we have a funny schedule for April:

- April 1 Yin/Yang Game – a big hit with our youth group every year
- April 8 No YRUU – Easter
- April 15 No YRUU – Public school vacation
- April 22 Vespers – Bring any joys and concerns, an instrument, reading, quote, etc.
- April 29 Outdoor Games – Rain or shine

The YAC is getting ready to go on retreat to Boston, where we will spend the night at the First Church of Boston in the Back Bay. It will be a good opportunity to think about the 2007-2008 year. We are looking to get more youth involved so let me or a youth leader know if you would like to join our leadership retreat.

Registration for Religious Education will take place on April 29 and May 6. We will have a table set up at coffee hour to register youth and answer any questions you might have. It is important that you register youth, even if they will only participate intermittently, so that we have critical information like allergies and emergency phone numbers on file. This year there is no registration fee for YRUU. The greater program costs are paid for by the annual pledges of our generous congregation during the annual campaign.

April can be the calm before the storm for youth. May and June are crazy with concerts, proms, graduation parties, spring sports, etc. It is my hope that First Parish continues to be an oasis of peace and welcoming place for our youth in these busy times.

—*Mary-Wren vanderWilden*

RE NEWS continued from page 8

8TH GRADE OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL) PROGRAM

This week we are wrapping up our final OWL class. This year our dedicated parent leaders have worked with over 20 8th graders. This ministry to our youth is an important step toward educating our First Parish youth in a way that will encourage them to make safe and responsible choices as young adults. Please thank **Jim Reynolds, Jan Bergstrom, Susannah Elliott** and **Del Friedman** for this important work with our youth.

Deep REVeries

Dear Friends,

Now these many weeks into my sabbatical, I write to thank you all for this renewal time. I am putting the time to good use: resting, walking, reading, writing. Our new granddaughter, Anita Rose Liberty, was born on the 19th of January, and I have been able to snuggle with her often. Her parents named her for my mother, a gesture that took my breath away. We take care of our grandsons regularly, and I laugh, knowing I can go home. A sun room has been constructed on the side of our house, and, even in late winter, we have been able to enjoy it.

I have a regular walk near our home that I follow routinely, helped by an iPod I received for Christmas. I listen to some of my favorite NPR shows, leaving me laughing out loud some days as I walk neighborhood streets. I thank all of you who have seen me and not reported my behavior. I thank all of you who have crossed paths with me in stores and not walked the other way.

I have now read fifteen books in my time away, five of them wonderful mysteries by favorite authors: Martha Grimes, Tony Hillerman, James Lee Burke, etc. I have read my brother Earl's new history of Colby College, *Mayflower Hill*, a social history evocative of my own days growing up there in Waterville. I have read Bill Bryson's autobiography *Thunderbolt Kid*, a chronicle of the Midwest in the 1950's, not so different from my own boyhood. I have read, among others, Ron McLarty's *Traveler*, Wendell Berry's *Andy Catchett*, Andy Gopnick's *Through the Children's Gate*, Erik Larson's *Thunderstruck*. But my favorite, above all, has been Nicole Krauss's novel *The History of Love*.

I finished that novel over the skies of Santa Fe one February night, en route from Houston to Santa Barbara, doing Unitarian Universalist business in both places. I am now the President/Convener of the Senior Ministers of Large UU churches, a group that gathers twice yearly to revitalize our particular ministry.

I have two major writing projects in progress: the first is a piece on Spiritual Discipline that I intend to share with you in the fall, suggesting an easy process of taking a regular route you follow and transforming places along the way into places of spiritual depth in your lives. The other very big piece is a memoir for my children and grandchildren, weaving in work I'm doing in family genealogy and new skills my daughter is teaching me in electronically scanning old photographs and slides.

In April, my brother Earl and his wife will join me and Eliz in northern California as we return to the Pacific Coast Highway and then the Napa Valley, to be followed by a first-time exploration of Yosemite National Park.

Thanks to Jenny and the staff, to all the lay leadership, to those of you who have contributed generously to the Annual Campaign and to the silent phase of the Capital Campaign. My e-mail in-box is empty most days, and I rejoice.

—*Gary Smith*

Hyatt Regency Cambridge, the conference will be a unique worldwide gathering of leading Humanist thinkers. Panel discussions will cover Humanist thinking from many world faith traditions (including a UU Humanist minister's) and what Humanism might look like in the future. First Parish Humanists are coordinating the Friday, April 20, dessert reception for the conference; volunteers welcomed! For information on Humanism, the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard, and the conference program and registration, consult thenewhumansim.org. For updates from FP Humanists during April, including possible carpooling, consult gatheringvoices.org. For more information, contact **Laura Bernstein**, laurabern@comcast.net or 781 259-1779.

PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB EXHIBIT OPENING AND RECEPTION

Come join us for the fifth annual First Parish Fine Art Photography Club Exhibit opening and reception on Sunday, April 22, from 3:00 to 6:30 p.m. Save the time to see fantastic images taken by your fellow parishioners and friends; slide shows, large and small; cards and calendars, bookmarks and tags. Talk to the club members about the cameras they use, and about how they managed to shoot "that picture" and where there are places to find great "photo ops" in the area. There will be "experts" tables. Bring your favorite photo, one that needs fixing (for example, take out that telephone pole!); ask about cameras, software, and all things photography. Quench your thirst and find wonderful food to nibble on as well. We look forward to welcoming you all at this picturesque opening!

PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE UPDATE AND NOTES

An Evening in Transylvania, choir concert, March 10, was a great success. Many thanks to all who helped us add \$4,000 to our fund to help defray some of the expenses for our August Choir pilgrimage to our partner church in Székelykeresztúr, Transylvania.

Transylvania Unitarian Radio (TUR) is now broadcasting on the Internet 24/7! Music and talk shows in Hungarian, Romanian and English. Join the TURadio yahoo group at groups.yahoo.com/group/TURadio/ (it's free and quick) or, for more information, contact **Rodger Mattlage** at rmattlage@yahoo.com.

Transylvanian Culture Night — As part of the preparation for the choir pilgrimage to Transylvania (and beyond), **Rodger Mattlage** will lead a multimedia presentation and discussion introducing the history, geography, religion and culture of this complex and fascinating area of Eastern Europe. All members of the First Parish community are welcome to join Rodger in the Sanctuary on Thursday, April 26, at 7:30 p.m.

Please refer to the separate insert in this newsletter for follow-up information about the Thanksgiving visit of our friends from Keresztúr and how we decided they should apply the leftover travel funds.

Women's News

WPA MEETING—CELEBRATING OUR JOYFUL SELVES!

Join old and new friends at noon on Tuesday, April 24, for lunch, a little business and a few laughs. A brief business meeting with election of officers will be followed by some fun. Do you know how some WPA ladies caused a little suspicion as they were delivering Christmas gifts to the Concord Prison? Do you know what it's like to be a child growing up in the First Parish parsonage? Members of the WPA will share a few stories of their lives that are sure to amuse. If you like, bring a few stories of your own to share as well! Bring your own sandwich — drinks and dessert will be provided. All are welcome. Please call **Becky Blodgett** at 978-369-2564 by April 20 if you need transportation or child care.

THE WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

The April sessions of the Women's AM/PM Book Group will be held Monday evening, April 23, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and Tuesday morning, April 24, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. The book is *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, by Anne Fadiman. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join one or both of these discussions. If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group e-mail list, please contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com.

For the remainder of 2006-2007:

May 21 (p.m.) and 22 (a.m.) *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, Lisa Sees

June (date TBD) — Potluck dinner gathering for both AM and PM groups to discuss books for next year

Classifieds

CHILD CARE NEEDED

I am Kerem Shalom's cantor here in Concord and need child care for my almost six-year-old while I work during the evenings. Someone mentioned to me that trying to find a grandmother who would like to take care of my little girl might be just the thing. I was wondering if there might be someone at First Parish who would like to help out. This is, of course, a paid position. Thank you very much. Rosalie Gerut (978-579-2161)

RELAX FOR A WEEK IN GEORGETOWN, MAINE, BY THE BAY

A "dream" cottage, well-known by a number of First Parish members. Ten minutes from Reid State Park. All amenities provided except food and clothes. Includes fireplace and cordwood. Rents from Friday to Friday for \$1,200. Sleeps 10 or 12 very comfortably. Available weeks of July 13 and August 3. See photos posted on bulletin board. Contact Cindy (978-371-1057, cindybin@verizon.net); or Penny (978-352-4491, pelwell@townerschool.org).

April 2007 Calendar

*Listings in italics represent classes offered through
the Wright Tavern Center for Spiritual Renewal.*

Every Week...

Morning Meditation	Monday-Friday	7:15 a.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m.
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
Bell Choir	Wednesday	1:00 p.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m.
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:00 p.m.
<i>Kripalu Yoga</i>	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:30 a.m.
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.
Gospel Choir	Sunday	10:00 a.m.
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 p.m. (not 4/8 or 4/15)

<p>Sun Apr 1 12:15 Nominating Committee 4:00 OWL Dinner</p> <p>Mon Apr 2 7:00 Jericho Road Meeting</p> <p>Tue Apr 3 9:00 WPA Board Meeting 7:30 Transition Team</p> <p>Wed Apr 4 2:00 <i>Poetry as a Path to Self-Reflection</i> 7:00 Youth Advisory Committee 7:00 <i>Stress Reduction Drop-In</i> 7:15 RE Council 7:30 Special Events Committee</p> <p>Thu Apr 5 9:30 <i>InterPlay</i> 6:30 Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 Maundy Thursday Chowder Supper 7:00 Human Resources Committee</p> <p>Sat Apr 7 5:30 Passover Seder</p> <p>Mon Apr 9 7:00 Standing Committee</p> <p>Tue Apr 10 7:00 Diversity Committee Movie</p> <p>Wed Apr 11 12:00 <i>Chaos Theology</i> 2:00 <i>Poetry as a Path to Self-Reflection</i> 6:30 Partner Church Committee 7:30 <i>InterPlay</i></p> <p>Thu Apr 12 9:30 <i>InterPlay</i> 7:30 Green Sanctuary</p> <p>Fri Apr 13 12:00 Newsletter Deadline</p> <p>Sat Apr 14 9:00 Photo Club</p> <p>Mon Apr 16 Holiday—Office Closed</p> <p>Tue Apr 17 7:00 Amnesty Meeting 7:00 Denominational Affairs</p> <p>Wed Apr 18 12:15 <i>Listening for God</i> 6:00 <i>Raga</i></p>	<p>Thu Apr 19 7:30 Green Sanctuary 6:30 <i>Raga</i></p> <p>Fri Apr 20 11:30 <i>T'ai Ji</i> 5:00 Sixth Grade Youth</p> <p>Sat Apr 21 9:00 Kripalu Yoga Retreat</p> <p>Sun Apr 22 3:00 Photo Club Reception</p> <p>Mon Apr 23 7:30 <i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i></p> <p>Tue Apr 24 9:30 <i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i> 12:00 WPA Luncheon 7:00 <i>Stress Reduction</i></p> <p>Wed Apr 25 9:15 Newsletter Mailing 9:30 <i>Aging with Spirit and Grace</i></p> <p>Thu Apr 26 11:30 Emerson House Tour 6:00 <i>Raga</i> 7:30 <i>Finding Your Calling</i> 7:30 Transylvania Culture Night</p> <p>Fri Apr 27 9:30 <i>Stress Reduction</i> 6:30 New Members Dinner 7:30 <i>Rise Up Singing</i></p> <p>Sat Apr 28 7:30 Nick Ressler Memorial Blood Drive 7:00 YRUU Dance</p> <p>Sun Apr 29 1:00 Emerson Luncheon and Reading 2:30 Department of Peace 4:30 Coming of Age 5:30 Youth Service Project</p> <p>Mon Apr 30 12:00 <i>Poetry as a Path</i> 2:00 <i>Poetry as a Path</i> 7:00 <i>Clutter Clarity</i> 7:00 <i>World Meditations</i></p>
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First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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APRIL 2007 NEWSLETTER

The May Newsletter deadline is **Friday, April 13**, at noon.

The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, April 25.

News items should be limited to 100 words.

Don't Miss...

MAUNDY THURSDAY — APRIL 5

*Communion Service at 6:30 p.m.
Chowder Supper at 7:00 p.m.
(Tickets must be purchased in advance.)*

EASTER SUNDAY — APRIL 8

*Services at 9:00 and 11:00
Jenny Rankin, preaching
First Parish Choir, Organ and Brass*

First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Staff

Gary E. Smith, Senior Minister (*on sabbatical January–June 2007*)

Jenny M. Rankin, Minister

Margie King Saphier, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care

Rebecca M. Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care

Sally Hamlin, Ministerial Intern

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education

Jane Barnes, Religious Education Administrator

Liz Davis-Chaffin, Workshop Rotation Coordinator

Carol Duane, Program Coordinator for Young Children

Mary-Wren vanderWilden, Youth Program Director

Debra Dunnington, Young Teen Program Coordinator

Elizabeth Norton, Music Director

Eric Huenneke, Organist

Martha Goodman, Handbell Choir Director

Judy Burrows, Children's Choir Director

Anderson Manuel, Music/RE Associate

Mary Elizabeth Wheeler, Wright Tavern Center Director

Dan Holin, Jericho Road Executive Director

Leslie Koplou, Assistant to Executive Director, Jericho Road

A. Bigay, Assistant to the Ministers

Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator

Jane Johnson, Office Manager

Peggy Gallo, Financial Secretary and Collector

Lisa Cole, Business Manager

Caroline McCloy, Director of Member Services

Faith Bade, Social Action Associate

Kate Keleher, Newsletter Editor

Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson, Newsletter Staff

FERRY BEACH REGISTRATION IS COMING!

Mark your calendar now for the annual Ferry Beach Retreat Weekend, May 25-28 (Memorial Day Weekend). Join families from our own congregation and First Parish in Lexington for a relaxed weekend on the beach at the UU Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center in Saco, Maine. Registrations for the weekend will be taken at coffee hours on April 29 and May 6. Look for the Ferry Beach information table in the Parish Hall beginning Sunday, April 22. For questions before then, contact **Darien Smith** (darien@smithquest.com, 978-369-1471). Also, check out the excellent summer camps and conferences for all ages at Ferry Beach, at ferrybeach.org.

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 to 4:00

Phone: 978-369-9602

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