



First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

February 27, 2008
Volume 44, No. 7

The Meeting House News

REVeries

In these weeks leading to spring, in these days that are lengthening — the word “lengthening” giving birth to the word “Lent,” — in these days of “not quite,” there is hard work to be done. Sometime before the new growth, how shall we clear away what is dead, those last brown and dried plants that must be cleared if the green beneath is to break through. This is the task, Nora Gallagher writes: *“to discern what is fantasy and what is reality, what is dead and what is alive, what is a narcotic and what is food. It is dangerous [work], wrenching, and unavoidable.”*

I was drawn to Frederick Buechner years ago through a little book called *Wishful Thinking: An Alphabet of Grace* and his clear and funny and right-to-the-target definitions of words theological. Here is, in part, his definition of “Lent,” and it contains some suggestions for the hard work we are invited to do. He asks five questions, not Christian questions, not Jewish or Hindu questions, but five human questions:

“When you look at your face in the mirror, what do you see in it that you most like and what do you see in it that you most deplore?”

If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in twenty-five words or less?

Of all the things you have done in your life, which is the one you would most like to undo? Which is the one that makes you happiest to remember?

Is there any person in the world, or any cause, that, if circumstances called for it, you would be willing to die for?

If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?”

I invite you to wrestle with any or all of these questions or to make up some of your own questions. And, if you want to share some of the answers and struggles with me, I’d be honored. You can e-mail me, you can write me, you can call me, you can come in and visit with me over the next several weeks. This is the season for such questions, a season of introspection, a season of inventory, a season of cleaning out and making way.

Buechner says that *“to hear yourself try to answer questions like these is to begin to hear something not only of who you are but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become. It can be a pretty depressing business all in all, but if sack-cloth and ashes are at the start of it, something like Easter may be at the end.”* I invite your engagement this lengthening season. I invite your stretching, inwardly and also outwardly, toward those who need you. We go deeper. We go out into the world.

—Gary E. Smith

Sunday Worship Schedule

March 2 – CELEBRATION SUNDAY

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – Adult Choir, Gospel Choir and Children’s Choirs

My Soul Is a River – Allway

March 9

Jenny Rankin, preaching

9:00 – Chalice Choir and John Hayes, tenor

11:00 – Junior Choir and Adult Choir

Zum Gali Gali – Traditional

Shehecheyanu – Steinberg

March 16

Carl Scovel, preaching

9:00 – Adult Choir, Martha Goodman, Guest Conductor

Sanctus and Benedictus from Missa Sancti Johannes De Deo – Haydn

11:00 – Handbell Choir,

Martha Goodman, Director

Hosanna – Gregor, arr. Garee

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

– arr. Sherman

March 23 – EASTER SUNDAY

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir and First Parish Festival Brass

Easter Anthem – Billings

Alleluia – Thompson

March 30

Margie King Saphier, preaching

9:00 Handbell Choir

Song of the Morning – Burswald

There Is a Balm in Gilead

– arr. Helman

11:00 Adult Choir

Healing Prayer – Page

Loving Hands – Ratcliffe

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There is one insert with this newsletter:

- Wright Tavern Center

The Meeting House News, the newsletter of First Parish in Concord, is published monthly — in print and online — 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
Monday, Mar. 17	Wednesday, Mar. 26
Friday, Apr. 18	Wednesday, Apr. 30
Monday, May 19	Wednesday, May. 28

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

ACOUSTICS, CARPETING AND THE SANCTUARY

As part of the upcoming capital improvements to the First Parish Meeting House, the carpeting in the Sanctuary is scheduled to be removed. It will either be replaced with new carpeting, a new hard surface, or a combination of new carpeting and a new hard surface.

A full range of options will be considered when we begin an experiment at the end of April (while our regular services are continuing) by removing the carpeting completely. This will allow us to observe how removal of the carpeting will impact the acoustics in the Sanctuary and affect our worship experience, including hearing the spoken word, our congregational singing and the wonderful music that is so important to our worship services. You as parishioners, the ministers and the staff will have a chance to weigh in on how much of the carpeting should be replaced, or whether it should be replaced at all.

The removal of the carpeting will also assist in the process of refinishing the pews over this coming summer. With the carpeting completely up, the refinishing will proceed faster and we will be able to refinish more of each pew.

This experiment will begin by removing the carpeting during the week of April 21 (school vacation week), and will run through the month of May and into the summer. By September we will have our new floor surface chosen and installed.

We realize that when the carpeting is removed, the aesthetics of the Sanctuary will definitely be affected, and we hope for your patience and thoughtful response to this experiment.

— Gary Smith, Beth Norton and Doug Baker

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 **Robert Hilsinger** or **Charles Lowell** if you wish to recommend a topic or a speaker.

MARCH 2

No Forum

MARCH 9

Engaging in Civil Disobedience

Rebecca Johnson,

Jericho Road Ministerial Intern

Engaging in civil disobedience to protect a group of people or to communicate a point of view to promote peace and/or justice is not an easy task. Becky once made a life-changing personal decision to take the route of civil disobedience to call attention to what she considered a very serious situation. She will talk about the reasons for that decision and the results of it, including spending time in a federal prison.

MARCH 16

No Forum

MARCH 23

No Forum

MARCH 30

Low Carbon Diet Initiative

Members of the Green Sanctuary Committee, who are also on the steering committee of Concord Climate Action Network, will present information about Concord Climate Action Network's Low Carbon Diet Initiative, which offers a structured way to reduce your household greenhouse gas emissions.

Standing Committee Information

The Standing Committee will not have a regular meeting at First Parish in March. Instead, they will be on a retreat off site on March 7 and 8.

Parish Notes

PHOTO EXHIBIT

Vera Kaufman's photographs are on display at First Parish until April 14. Vera is a resident of Chelmsford, and received her photography education at the Manchester Institute of Arts and Science in New Hampshire. She is a member of the First Parish Fine Art Photo Club and the Chelmsford Art Society. Vera's nature photos were on display in 2007 at the Bedford Public Library for a juried exhibit, and the Chelmsford Art Society chose one of her photographs for a special calendar published this year. Be sure to look for her photographs on the stage and in the Altshuler Gallery.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR POSITION OPEN

Are you looking for a new challenge for the new year? We are looking for just the right person to be our Membership Director at First Parish. We want someone with high energy, great people skills, the ability to recruit and manage a volunteer team, good organizational skills, a vision for First Parish, and appreciation of Unitarian Universalism, and someone who is a team player. Join our staff team and play an integral role in welcoming people to our community. Contact abigay@firstparish.org for a job description. The position is 12 hours per week/10 months per year. Questions? E-mail **Jenny Rankin** at revjenny@comcast.net.

SEEKING PART-TIME DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

First Parish is seeking a part-time consultant to jump-start our Development Office. Do you have experience in fundraising for a faith community or nonprofit? If so, we would like to talk with you! If you know of anyone who might be interested in this opportunity who is not a member of First Parish, we would be interested in talking with him or her as well. Please contact **Melissa Perdue Gallo** at mp.gallo@verizon.net for more information on job specifics and salary.

BOOK SALE SUCCESS!

Thanks to all who donated books and media to the book sale. Through your donations and the efforts of the Special Events Committee, \$2,300 was raised for church programs. Special thanks to **Suzanne Foley, Jon Sirotof, Art Crooke, Mary Lou Toussaint, Dee Truluck-Williams, Dave Elwood, John Atkins, Tracy Hurd, Richard and Anne Fortier, Steve and Marcia Schloss, Tom and Sue Beck**, and everyone else who volunteered time and effort to make this event a success. The unsold children's books went to open a library in the Philippines, and the rest went to the Concord Library.

SUNDAY FLOWERS FOR YOU?

If you would like to provide the Sunday flowers as a memorial for a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion, please leave your name at the office to arrange a date.

FLOWER POWER WORKSHOP

What might you imagine arranging in front of the pulpit for our services? There are many in our Parish who enjoy nature and horticulture, and a workshop is planned to share these interests and to beautify the Sanctuary. Join **Barbara Wheeler** on Saturday, March 1, at 9:30 a.m. for flower talk and arranging branches and flowers in that special space to beautify the church for Celebration Sunday. Call Barbara at 978-369-9518 to join this "think spring" workshop.

PARISH NOTES continued on page 5

Money Matters

I arrived raring to go on January 2, and I haven't looked back since! I spent most of January acquainting myself with budgets and procedures, which prompted me to send out what I hope was a helpful message about your Annual Statement.

We are not extravagant in our spending here at First Parish. We often find ourselves living by the old Yankee saying, "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without." This is not necessarily a bad thing (except when it's your computer that dies in the midst of creating RE curriculum), because it makes us careful about how we use the money you give to First Parish.

Mindful that some income sources will be lost next year (e.g., the Milldam Nursery School) and others will be reduced somewhat (our contribution from the Trustees), we are planning only conservative increases in next year's budget. Your pledge dollars provide about 72 percent of our income. Here in the midst of our Pledge•2008 drive, I ask that you please pledge generously this year so that we can make up for anticipated losses and modest increases. And also please pledge in a timely way so that we can plan effectively.

I am very grateful to be in this position as your Business Manager, and I hope that if you are at the church during the week that you will stop by the Wright Tavern and say hello.

—*Melissa Perdue Gallo*

PLEDGE•2008

The Annual Campaign is half over (as of this writing) and First Parish would like to thank all members who have gotten your pledges in! For those who haven't returned your pledges yet, please remember that we need your pledge by Celebration Sunday on March 2. Your pledges make the continuation of our programs, staffing and operations possible. Our beloved church needs all members to step up and pledge as generously as they possibly can.

If you have any questions about the campaign, please feel free to contact cochair **Dave Dawson** (978-369-8540) or **Mary Ellen Connell** (978-369-5306).

The First Parish website has a preliminary copy of the 2008 budget as well as an online pledge form and a Suggested Annual Giving Table. You can find this information at <http://www.firstparish.org>. Follow the links to Church Life and Pledge•2008.

Please make this year a success by getting your pledges in by March 2. Thanks!

—**Dave Dawson** and **Mary Ellen Connell**,
Annual Campaign cochairs

Pastoral Care News

Like the popular adage "It takes a village to raise a child," it could also be said, "It takes a congregation to create a healing community." I believe a healing community is one that supports us to grow in having compassion for each other, the larger community and the world, while it simultaneously cultivates the growth of wisdom. Ideally a congregation can be forgiving of individual mistakes and foibles, so that each of us can feel free to take leaps of faith, and know if we fall flat on our faces or are hurt, sick or down, we will not be abandoned. A congregation, with all its strengths, as well as its warts, is a microcosm of the world. How we care for each other reflects how we care for the greater world. So in recognition of the many, many intentional acts of kindness, as well as the random acts of kindness we do for one another, First Parish will celebrate Pastoral Care Sunday on March 30. During the service the new and returning Pastoral Care Lay Ministers will be commissioned. Also *all* those who have contributed to making First Parish a healing community will be recognized. Please come to this service of celebration and thanks.

Following the 11:00 o'clock service, there will be an Appreciation Luncheon for the First Parish Pastoral Care Volunteers, celebrating the many gifts of caring each brings to members of First Parish. There are more than 50 volunteers who help to cook or bring a meal, provide transportation, visit, send notes and cards, welcome babies — the list goes on. Over the past year I have received many thank-you notes expressing gratitude for the delicious meal delivered or the caring note received. If you want to express your gratitude, please e-mail me or write a note so I may share it with the volunteers.

Sunday, March 23, is Easter. Traditionally, after the 11:00 o'clock service, the Easter lilies, which are given in memory of loved ones, are delivered to parishioners whom we hold in our hearts. If you would like to participate, e-mail me at mksaphier@comcast.net, or sign up at coffee hour on Sunday, March 16.

—*Margie King Saphier*

SUPPORT GROUP ORGANIZING FOR PARISHIONERS LIVING WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS

The Pastoral Care Ministry is organizing a support group for parishioners living with chronic conditions. With guidance from the ministers, **Peter Nobile**, who has lived with multiple sclerosis for several years, will facilitate the group in a variety of possible venues — including phone support, small gatherings, and advice from speakers on subjects ranging from pain management to the spiritual awakening that may result from living with a chronic condition. If you are interested in participating in this group, or if you have a specific idea for how you might best be supported, please e-mail Peter at peter.nobile@gmail.com, or call him at 978-369-5857.

PARISH NOTES continued from page 3**FIRST PARISH QUILT NOTE CARDS FOR SALE**

Judy Dembsey has kindly consented to let us put her World Systems of Beliefs quilt on a 4" x 6" note card. The front features a full-color photo of the quilt, and the back has an explanation of the symbols. A package of eight cards (blank inside) with envelopes is \$10.00. All proceeds go to the church's operating budget. Look for the cards at coffee hours or contact **Sue Beck**, sbeck345@comcast.net or 978-369-8445, to place an order.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER—MARCH 7

World Day of Prayer, an event of informed prayer and social justice action, has taken place in almost all nations for decades. Concord area faith communities will hold their World Day of Prayer 2008 Interfaith Service this year at the West Concord Union Church at 1317 Main Street, Concord, on Friday, March 7, at 11 a.m., followed by a festive luncheon at noon. All are invited. Reservations are not required. This year's service was written by the WDP Women of Guyana, whose interesting arts and cultures will be celebrated.

CELEBRATE SPRING WITH MUSIC AND TEA

After a long, cold winter, the Women's Parish Association invites you to celebrate spring on Tuesday, March 18. **Siri Smedvig** and Friends will entertain us with a special music program at 3 p.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by a festive tea at 4 p.m. in the Parlor and Parish Hall. All men, women and youth of First Parish and their friends are welcome. There is no charge and reservations are not required. Contact **Dian Pekin** by March 14, at 978-263-0426 or pekindc@comcast.net for child care or transportation.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE AND CHOWDER SUPPER — MARCH 20

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 \$12, and are available at coffee hours and in the church 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 MemberFP@aol.com.

SAVE SATURDAY, APRIL 12, FOR THE FIRST PARISH SEDER

What makes this activity so special is that everyone has a part — shopping, cooking, table setting, serving, sign making or cleaning up. It's the participation that is half the fun. (The other half is eating and being part of the service.) Call or e-mail **Rhoda Miller** at 978-369-6639 or rhodamill@aol.com if interested.

MUSings

Easter comes so early this year! As I write this in mid-February, the snow seems like a permanent frosting on the ground and the temperatures have been at their most frigid.



It is hard to believe that in only a month we will be celebrating spring, renewal and resurrection. And even as we do, that perma-snow may still be with us! Such is the irony of Eastertide in New England.

Our choral music for this Easter Sunday will be by Boston-based composers of two very different eras who most certainly knew the paradox of springtime in New England. William Billings (1746-1800) was the most important American composer of the 18th century. Born in Boston, he was trained as a tanner and worked widely as a singing master, most notably at the Brattle Street Church and the Old South Church. He was self-taught as a composer, often eschewing the stylistic conventions of the day. Billings published six collections of hymns, anthems, Psalm tunes and fuguing tunes. His *Easter Anthem*, written in 1787, was the mostly widely printed and beloved "Yankee" anthem of its time. The text — by Billings himself, and presumably reflecting his own theological perspective — is a series of questions and statements concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

Randall Thompson (1899-1984) was born in New York just 100 years after Billings' death. He was educated at Harvard and taught at Wellesley College, the University of California at Berkeley, the Curtis Institute and Princeton before coming back to Harvard in 1948, where he stayed until his retirement. Thompson's compositions included symphonic literature and instrumental chamber music, but his favorite medium was choral music. The *Alleluia*, was written for the opening of the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood and was first performed by the student body there in July of 1940. It has since become a mainstay of American choral literature. The text is only one celebratory word, "Alleluia," but in five minutes Thompson uses it to express a full range of joy, from intimate awe to full-throated jubilation.

Yes, Easter could easily be grey and wintry this year. But with our voices and with the help of these two "Yankee" composers, we will sing out the promise that this season holds.

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Social Action Community News and Events

THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL ACTION

A recent Social Action event illustrates the power of “connections” in raising awareness and opening doors. First Parish hosted a wonderful Urban Ministry weekend on February 1–3, organized by **Loretta Ho Sherblom, Mark Richards, Claudia Nimar** and **Patricia Waters**. The Poetry Blast and



Funderburg Scholars dinner were opportunities for us to meet here at First Parish and share of

ourselves, while our Sunday services guests, Rev. John Hickey and Director Sam Williams, educated us on the realities and mission of the UUUM.

Most important, Sam Williams spoke in the “talk back” session about how our connection should move both ways and how important it is for urban youth to feel capable and comfortable in an environment such as Concord. This Urban Ministry weekend created a bridge from Roxbury to First Parish. Many already walk across that bridge to Roxbury, but we need to welcome the UM to us, here at First Parish. I look forward to more opportunities to bridge our two communities, creating a larger community together.

Our connections are local, national and international! The Youth Service Trip to New Orleans this April is oversubscribed, and our next meeting for the April 2009 El Salvador Service Trip is on March 9. I hope to see you there. As always, please contact me with your causes and concerns at FBade@firstparish.org.

— *Faith Bade*

Social Action Associate

THIS SPRING, HELP REBUILD NEW ORLEANS WITH GULF COAST WORKS!

Volunteers are needed at certain times during the months of March, April, May and June. In partnership with NENA, a grassroots lower Ninth Ward organization, Gulf Coast Works is rebuilding the home of Linda Jackson and her family. A willingness to work hard and learn on the job is the only requirement! Those skilled in home construction are also extremely welcome. Please learn more about these opportunities at GulfCoastWorks.org.

SAVE THE DATE! MEET CYNTHIA FROM GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI, ON SATURDAY MARCH 29

Please join us as we welcome Cynthia from Gulfport, Mississippi, whose home was rebuilt through Gulf Coast Works. We are honored to have her visiting us, and are preparing wonderful food and music to celebrate on Saturday, March 29, at First Parish. Cynthia will share informal

reflections on surviving Hurricane Katrina and what it was like for her family to have their home rebuilt by volunteers. Everyone is welcome to come, enjoy food, meet Cynthia, and learn about the human side of rebuilding the Gulf. Questions? Please contact **Katharine Roberts** at katharine_roberts@msn.com or **Tracey Hurd** at thurd@aol.com.

RIGHTS ADVOCATE TO SPEAK ON UYGHURS — CHINESE MUSLIMS PERSECUTED IN CHINA, IMPRISONED AT GUANTÁNAMO

Rebiya Kadeer, Chinese former political prisoner and internationally known human rights advocate, will address a community meeting at First Parish, sponsored by Amnesty International Group 15 and the First Parish Social Action Community, on Wednesday, March 26, at 7 p.m. A Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Ms. Kadeer was imprisoned in China for activism on behalf of the Muslim Uyghurs in northwest China. Currently, Group 15 is working to help 17 Uyghur noncombatants held in solitary confinement at Guantánamo Bay. Free, all welcome. Questions? Call 978-371-7118 or visit www.aigroup15.org.

MORE DONATIONS NEEDED FOR WORKING, STRUGGLING FAMILIES IN LOWELL

When I delivered the most recent vanload of clothing and household goods to Lowell, the people were most appreciative, and I was told the sheets were needed for someone moving that day. Although you have already given quite a bit, the need continues. Donations of gently used pots, pans and other small kitchen items plus linens and children's clothes are particularly needed, but anything in good condition is welcome. Please leave items for Lowell on my porch at 294 The Valley Road, Concord. — **Bill Seaver**, 978-369-7318

SOCIAL ACTION GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE APRIL 1

The deadline for submitting a grant application for funds from First Parish's Social Action Giving committee is approaching; applications are due April 1, 2008. We are particularly interested in funding programs that address issues of poverty, homelessness and domestic violence. If you are active with a nonprofit organization in need of project funds, see the social action Web page (www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/205/96) for instructions on applying and to download the application, or contact **Alane Wallis** at awallis@nutter.com or 978-369-1114. Thanks to your donations, First Parish funded nearly \$30,000 this past fall for aid and social programs in the United States, Africa, Cambodia and Argentina. Check the website for a full list of the fall grants.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMUNITY continued on page 8

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.

Special UUA Field Test Program – Register Now! (978) 369-9602

10 week series begins March 10th



Wright Tavern Center for Spiritual Renewal

presents

Spirit in Practice

for *Spiritual* Renewal

A Tapestry of Faith lifespan religious education series
by Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom

facilitated by

First Parish staff and lay leaders

10 Mondays, March 10 – June 9

(no class March 24, April 21, April 28 & May 26)

7:00-8:30 p.m.

(Session #1 only 7:30-9:00 following *Marvelous Monday* dinner & vespers)

\$50 First Parish members / \$10 drop-in

\$100 non-members / \$15 drop-in

First Parish in Concord
20 Lexington Road, Concord, MA 01742

Please register early through the First Parish office.

Child care will be provided. Advance registration is requested and *greatly* appreciated.

Information & Registration forms: <http://www.wrighttavern.org/2008-01/>

Contact: Mary Elizabeth Wheeler, Director - (978) 369-9602 x 421 OR FPTavern@aol.com

Developed in response to many Unitarian Universalist adults' desire to engage in life-giving spiritual practices, the ten workshops of *Spirit in Practice* invites a congregation to reflect, share, and grow together, exploring ways to nurture their connections with the sacred in everyday life. *Spirit in Practice* weaves Unitarian Universalist values, principles, and sources with four "strands" of development: spiritual, ethical, Unitarian Universalist identity, and faith.

Spirit in Practice was created to help Unitarian Universalists develop regular disciplines that support connection with the sacred, however they understand it. The program affirms religious diversity while seeking unity in our communal quest for meaning and wholeness. Whether participants follow a path they identify as Humanist, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, Theist, Atheist, Agnostic, Mystic, and/or any of the other paths we follow in our diverse congregations, the *Spirit in Practice* workshops offer a forum for learning that can enrich their faith journeys and deepen their spiritual growth.

Spirit in Practice focuses on eight spheres of holistic and wholehearted spiritual practices:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1) Personal spiritual practices – March 17 | 5) Body practices – May 5 |
| 2) Communal worship practices – March 31 | 6) Soul practices – May 12 |
| 3) Spiritual partnerships – April 7 | 7) Life practices – May 19 |
| 4) Mind practices – April 14 | 8) Justice practices – June 2 |

Sessions are 90 minutes in length and designed for flexibility. Session 1 (March 10) introduces this eight-sphere concept; 2 - 9 examine each of the spheres in turn; 10 (June 9) is designed to review and integrate the others. The spheres can be explored as a complete series or as individual sessions. *Spirit in Practice* is offered as an integrated educational series at a discounted rate, but individual sessions can be attended on a stand-alone basis at the drop-in fee.

"I'm so glad that First Parish is going to be a test site for this new curriculum. If you have been wanting to work on adding a daily spiritual practice to your life, or just have been interested in taking another look at that complex and sometimes confusing word "spirituality," join me, Gary and other members of the First Parish staff and congregation for *Spirit in Practice* this spring." – Rev. Jenny Rankin

Spirit in Practice web site: www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/spiritpractice/index.shtml

Reflection and RE News

The renovation at First Parish will be starting soon and will be in full swing by next fall when we all return to our regular RE programming. You may be wondering what is in store for RE during this transitional year. What will RE look like without our regular classrooms?

We are very excited about our preliminary plans for next year. It is going to be a real opportunity to build community with each other. Because the reconstruction will require us to use our space creatively, we are looking forward to exploring different ways of bringing Religious Education to our children. I am looking forward to our working together to create something wonderful for our children.

Want to help? Want to be involved in planning something great for our kids? Please give **Jane Barnes** a call at 978-369-9602.

— *Pam Howell*

WORKSHOP ROTATION

We will be starting our last rotation of workshops on Sunday, March 9. This rotation will focus on the pillar Faith around the World, and will be specifically exploring the Jewish faith through the Book of Esther. We will have mask making, talking about the spirit of giving, puppet shows and baking *hamantaschen*. It should be lots of fun for all who are involved.

We still need two leaders for our 9:00 o'clock service, one for Art and one for Real Stuff. Could you help? Please call **Jane Barnes** at 978-369-9602.

SURPRISE VISITOR ON CELEBRATION SUNDAY, MARCH 2

On Sunday, March 2, we will have another Surprise Visitor. This time we will have a storyteller who will use music and dance to tell the story of Queen Esther, one of the few women heroines from the Hebrew Scriptures. Our children have truly enjoyed our last two visitors, so I encourage you to remember to attend on this special day.

MARCH RE CALENDAR

- Sun., Mar. 2 Regular RE, Babies–1st Grade, 9 and 11 a.m.
Surprise Visitor, 2nd–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, 11 a.m.
- Fri., Mar. 7 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, 4:30 p.m.
- Sun., Mar. 9 Regular RE, Babies–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, 11 a.m.
- Sun., Mar. 16 Regular RE, Babies–Pre-K, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, 7:45 a.m.
- Sun., Mar. 23 Child Care, Babies–Pre-K, 9 and 11 a.m.
Easter — Intergenerational Service, 9 and 11 a.m.
- Sun., Mar. 30 Regular RE, Babies–6th Grade, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, 9:45 a.m.
8th Grade Pre-COA Gathering (off-site), 4 p.m.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMUNITY

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UU URBAN MINISTRY THANK-YOU

Thanks to all who helped make the UU Urban Ministry weekend on Feb. 1–3 a success! More than 40 participated and attended the Poetry Blast, including 20 from Roxbury; and about 50 attended the Funderburg Scholars dinner, including seven Roxbury youth, raising \$4,000. Thanks to **Loretta Ho Sherblom, Claudia Nimar, Patricia Waters, Mark Richards, Caroline** and **Jim McCloy** and **Art Crooke**.

EL SALVADOR SERVICE TRIP PRESENTATION, SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Join us at 12:15 p.m. on Sunday, March 9, for a slide show presentation by **Margie King Saphier**. Slides will include the Art Center for Peace, San Salvador, and some historic sites. This presentation will give possible trip participants a better understanding of where they are going to live and work, and where they may go sightseeing. General information about the trip is available. Contact **Jim Reynolds** at jim.reynolds.wg95@wharton.upenn.edu, or **Faith Bade** at fbade@firstparish.org, with questions. All are welcome — both possible participants and interested First Parish members.

Membership Corner

NEW DIRECTORY IN THE WORKS

As many of you probably know, we are working on a new directory. If you have had a change in your contact information — including address, telephone number or e-mail address — since the last directory, please contact **Jane Johnson** in the office with your new information. Jane can be reached at 978-369-9602 or FPConcord@aol.com.

WHAT'S YOUR AFFINITY?

Would you like to become acquainted with others at First Parish who have similar interests? You can connect at First Parish easily by being part of an Affinity Group. These are groups of various activities and are based on interests or hobbies. Join a current Affinity Group: Bridge, French Conversation, Jewish Awareness, Needleworkers, Photography, Spanish Discussion/Social, Honor All Beings, or the newest group, Travel. In addition, there are some groups that need a contact person to get started. They include Theological Discussion, Walking, Hiking, Kayaking and Bicycling (adult). Stop by the Affinity Table at coffee hour on Sunday, March 16, contact **Nita Chase** at anichase123@yahoo.com or **Steph Chiha** at steph@pierre.com or see **Linda Benua**.

IS THE NEW U FOR YOU?

Are you a newcomer who is interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism? Are you considering joining First Parish? Have you recently joined the church and are interested in deepening your knowledge of Unitarian Universalism? Are you a seasoned member who would like to revitalize your interest or renew your commitment to our faith community?

Then sign up for The New U — a three-week program that presents an overview of our liberal religious tradition, as it is manifested both at First Parish and nationally in the Unitarian Universalist Association. You will learn what First Parish has to offer you, as you meet church leaders from Religious Education, Social Action, and other significant aspects of our faith community. The program will take place in the Wright Tavern from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on the following three Sundays: March 9, March 16 and March 30. Child care is available if requested in advance. To sign up, please e-mail **Caroline McCloy** at MemberFP@aol.com or visit the Newcomer's Table during coffee hour.

Senior Youth News

March is a great month with the youth. We know each other well after two retreats and several Sundays together and we can explore deeper connections. On March 16, the Youth Group will join a few of the people from Common Cathedral to take a tour of Boston as seen through the eyes of homeless people. This will be a very moving and educational trip for our youth. We will also begin the month planning our youth service scheduled for April 13, and end the month with one of our favorite games that allows us to connect more deeply — the Yin Yang game. It is a full calendar, and I hope all youth feel welcome to drop in whenever it works for them.

Mar. 2 Plan Youth Service (If youth want to participate but cannot come, then let a youth leader or Mary-Wren know.)

Mar. 9 Texas Hold 'Em Night

Mar. 16 Boston Homeless Tour, 12:30–4:00 p.m.

Mar. 23 No YRUU — Easter

Mar. 30 Yin Yang Game

As Youth Director, it warms my heart to see me fade into the background as the youth grow into strong leaders. This spring we will plan our leadership retreat to prepare the next group of youth leaders. Our youth program succeeds because of the wonderful leadership our youth provide, and I happily try to be an engine of support.

— *Mary-Wren vanderWilden*

From Our Intern Minister

This past month, I spent a week out sick with the flu. It seems like almost everyone got sick this February, and if you weren't sick, you were taking care of someone who was. In that time at home, becoming annoyed with daytime TV and wanting more than anything to get out of my bed, I realized that I am not a very good patient. I always want to *do*, and it is very frustrating for me to simply *be* for a while. This is an attitude that makes me frantic, when I cannot get things done, and it is an attitude that leads me to judge others by their level of efficiency. What a terrible measure of another human! This measure can lead to ableism, perfectionism, and a generally hurried life where projects matter more than relationships. So this month, recovered from that flu, but with its memory still firmly in my mind, I will practice being in the world without the judgment that comes from focusing solely on results. Churches run because of right relationships *and* good projects. Perhaps I will learn to find a better balance. Will you join me in this journey?

— *Becky Johnson*

Jericho Road Intern Minister

Women's News

VERNAL EQUINOX CELEBRATION

Please join the Women's Circle in welcoming Spring's arrival! A Vernal Equinox Full Moon celebration will be held in the Chapel on Friday, March 21 at 7:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

The March selection for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*, by Kim Edwards. The evening session will be held Monday, March 24, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning session on Tuesday, March 25, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current 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.

The books and dates for 2008:

April 28 (p.m.), 29 (a.m.)

One Thousand White Women,
Jim Fergus

May 19 (p.m.), 20 (a.m.)

The Year of Magical Thinking,
Joan Didion

WHAT IS THIS CHURCH GROUP CALLED THE W.P.A.?

This is the first in a series of articles about the W.P.A., because newer First Parish people may not know who we are, and our own participants keep a quiet profile. The Women's Parish Association was founded in 1881 and is still going strong, with support mainly from a small group of dedicated older members and associates. Before many women went back to work in the 1970's, the W.P.A. was the foundation of all women's activities and most fundraising outside of the annual campaign. We raise funds in addition to the church budget and contribute gifts to support urgent needs. The following are highlights from a long list of items contributed to the church by the W.P.A., items that have become very familiar and useful to us all. Next month we will tell how we raise this money.

Pew cushions: \$17,075

Hymn books: \$420

Dishwasher: \$6,220

Oriental Parlor rug: \$4,000

Choir robes 1997: \$2,584

Kitchen steel table: \$1,370

Partner Church Committee Notes

Spring is around the corner and we're gearing up for our summer work trip to Székelykeresztúr and the fall visit from our friends in Székelykeresztúr. For an update on these two initiatives, see the PCC Web page at www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/140/88.

Summer 2008 Projects: Plans are proceeding for our two renovation projects, the Memorial House in Bözödújfalú, Rev. József Szombatfalvi's home village; and the Unitarian Community House in Székelykeresztúr. Our schedule will include sightseeing trips and discussion sessions, as well as an opportunity for hands-on work.

Week 1: Bözödújfalú Memorial House: **Rosie Nevins**, who attends Earlham College, has applied for a grant from the Davis Projects for Peace to fund the project.

Week 2: Kerestúr Unitarian Community House: We are raising money to help with the considerable costs of renovations to the historic building that will become the new Community House. Images of the building, the initial work and the architectural plans can be found on the First Parish photo gallery at <http://firstparish.org.photos/gallery2/v/PCC-pics/>.

We'll spend a week on each project, tentatively August 2–17. People can join us for either or both projects, so you can fit this in with other travel plans.

Fall 2008 Visit: We will host a delegation of eight to twelve youth and adults from Székelykeresztúr this fall, culminating with worship services in our Sanctuary on their thanksgiving, Sunday, September 28. **Dana Booth, Peter Fischelis, Bill Seaver** and **Winslow Pettingell** are coordinating these arrangements. For more information, please contact them directly and look for upcoming announcements.

Fundraising: To help support these initiatives we are looking at multiple funding sources — the UUPCC, our Social Action Council, individual donors and travelers, the Davis Foundation and two spring fundraising events. For more information, please contact those mentioned above or the PCC cochairs, **Lillian Anderson** and **Rodger Matlage**. *Minden jót!* (Best wishes!)

UU News

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008 IN FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

The Denominational Affairs Committee reminds everyone that this year's General Assembly will be held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, from June 25 through June 29. If you would like to be a delegate, contact **Holli Jones-White** right away at 978-371-1964. Registration opens on March 1, and the best hotel rooms go fast; so register early! Also contact Holli to gain further information about special leadership classes.



UNIVERSALIST CONVOCATION

Universalist Convocation — May 2-4, at the Barton Center in Oxford, Mass. Complete information will be available by March 1, at www.nmuc.org/Convo.

Classified

DO YOU NEED A HOUSE-SITTER?

Do you need a house-sitter for the first three weeks of August? The family who rented the Fisher-Treitman house in 2005/2006 wants to come back for a visit. Call **Leslie Fisher** or **Bob Treitman** at 978-287-0456 for a referral.

March 2008 Calendar

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

Every Week...

<i>Spirit in Practice: Ten Workshops for UU Adults</i>	Monday	7:00 p.m. (not 3/3 or 3/24)
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 p.m. (not 3/25)
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.
<i>Stress Reduction</i>	Tuesday	7:00 (not 3/25)
Gulf Coast Works	Wednesday	8:00 a.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>Gentle Kripalu Yoga</i>	Wednesday	5:30 p.m. (not 3/26)
<i>Kripalu Yoga</i>	Wednesday	7:30 p.m. (not 3/26)
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:30 a.m. (not 3/27)
<i>Transcendental Awakenings</i>	Thursday	12:00 noon
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.
Men's Group	Saturday	7:30 a.m.
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 p.m. (12:30-4:00 3/16; not 3/23)

Sun Mar 2	<i>Celebration Sunday!</i> 12:30 Nominating Committee	Fri Mar 14	9:30 Parish Visitors 11:30 <i>T'ai Ji</i>
Mon Mar 3	6:30 Marvelous Monday Dinner and Vespers 7:00 <i>Stress Reduction Maintenance</i> 7:00 Jericho Road Board Meeting 7:30 <i>Tough Texts: Lenten Season Studies</i> 7:30 RE Council		7:00 <i>Kripala Partner Yoga/Date Night</i>
Wed Mar 5	7:00 Youth Advisory Committee 7:30 Special Events Committee	Sun Mar 16	4:00 New U
Fri Mar 7	9:30 Pastoral Care Lay Ministers 7:00 <i>Kripala Partner Yoga/Date Night</i>	Mon Mar 17	12:00 Newsletter Deadline
Sat Mar 8	9:00 Photo Club	Tue Mar 18	1:30 Denominational Affairs Committee 3:00 WPA Spring Concert and Tea 7:30 Diversity Committee Movie 7:00 Amnesty Chapter Meeting
Sun Mar 9	12:15 El Salvador Slides 4:00 New U 7:00 SAC Board Meeting	Wed Mar 19	9:00 Pastoral Care Council
Mon Mar 10	6:30 Marvelous Monday	Thu Mar 20	6:30 Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 Maundy Thursday Chowder Supper
Tue Mar 11	9:00 WPA Board Meeting 3:00 <i>Tea and Poetry</i>	Sat Mar 22	10:00 Brass Rehearsal
Wed Mar 12	12:15 <i>Listening for God</i> 6:30 Partner Church Committee	Sun Mar 23	<i>Easter Sunday</i>
Thu Mar 13	10:00 <i>InterPlay</i> 7:00 Human Resources Committee	Mon Mar 24	7:30 <i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
		Tue Mar 25	9:30 <i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
		Wed Mar 26	9:15 Newsletter Mailing 7:00 Amnesty International
		Thu Mar 27	10:00 <i>InterPlay</i>
		Fri Mar 28	7:30 <i>Rise Up Singing</i>
		Sat Mar 29	6:00 Seasonal Dinner Parties (off-site)
		Sun Mar 30	12:30 Pastoral Care Luncheon 4:00 New U



First Parish in Concord
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MARCH 2008 NEWSLETTER

The **April Newsletter deadline** is **Monday, March 17**, at noon.
The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, March 26.
News items should be limited to 100 words.

Don't Miss...

WPA SPRING CONCERT AND TEA

Tuesday, March 18
3:00 p.m.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE
AND CHOWDER SUPPER**

Thursday, March 20
6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

FLEA MARKET/RECYCLE SALE

Saturday, April 5
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Staff**

- Gary E. Smith**, Senior Minister
- Jenny M. Rankin**, Minister
- Margie King Saphier**, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care
- Rebecca M. Blodgett**, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care
- 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
- Elizabeth Norton**, Music Director
- Eric Huenneke**, Organist
- Martha Goodman**, Handbell Choir Director
- Judy Burrows**, Children's Choir Director
- Anderson Manuel**, Music/RE Associate
- David Huston**, Music Director Emeritus
- Mary Elizabeth Wheeler**, Wright Tavern Center Director
- Dan Holin**, Jericho Road Executive Director
- Leslie Koplou**, Assistant to Executive Director, Jericho Road
- Rebecca Johnson**, Jericho Road Ministerial Intern
- A. Bigay**, Assistant to the Ministers
- Douglas Baker**, Sacristan and Curator
- Jane Johnson**, Office Manager
- Melissa Perdue Gallo**, Business Manager
- Peggy Gallo**, Financial Secretary and Collector
- Caroline McCloy**, Director of Member Services
- Faith Bade**, Social Action Associate
- Kate Keleher**, Newsletter Editor
- Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson**, Newsletter Staff

**REMEMBER! FLEA MARKET AND RECYCLE SALE AT
FIRST PARISH — SATURDAY, APRIL 5**

Get your treasures ready to donate to the WPA Flea Market/Recycle Sale, which will take place on Saturday, April 5, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine. Gently used furniture, antiques, lamps, kitchen stuff, artwork, jewelry, clean toys are all welcome. No books, magazines, clothing, plants, sports or exercise equipment, or electronics can be accepted. Items can be dropped off at the church the day before the sale between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Bring yourself and your friends to this fun event to search for your own treasures! To volunteer, call **Pat Kane** at 978-369-8418. This is a major fundraiser as well as a great opportunity to recycle items that you no longer need.

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 to 3:00

Phone: 978-369-9602

Fax: 978-369-8701

E-Mail: fpconcord@aol.com

Website: firstparish.org

Ministers' E-Mail:

Gary E. Smith: garyesmith@firstparish.org

Jenny M. Rankin: revjenny@comcast.net

Margie King Saphier: mksaphier@comcast.net