



First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

The Meeting House News

REVeries

Dear Friends,

When I meditate at home, I use a cobalt blue glass chalice. The bowl of the chalice spreads out in the shape of a spider's web, reminding me of the interdependent web of existence. Inside the web I have placed a candleholder that is in the shape of two humans, whose extended arms form a circle with their bodies continuing the circle by gracefully leaning to the right. At the base is a votive candle, whose flame creates the perception that the figures are dancing.

These symbols represent my theology. When we come together with a willingness to hear another without judgment, the encounter becomes more than the two of us. The energy or the spirit of the encounter spreads through us and beyond us, as it freely ripples along the invisible filaments of the universe. The flame represents the light we can each bring to one another and to the world.

This chalice also represents three of my passions in ministry — covenant groups, spiritual direction and pastoral care — because each creates opportunities to experience the warm glow of spiritual connection and deeper meaning. In covenant groups, the spirit is nourished through the experience of mutually sharing with and listening to one another as different topics are explored. These explorations honor the inner wisdom within each of us, while simultaneously deepening the bonds of relationship. If you are interested in joining a group, contact me at mksaphier@comcast.net. New groups are starting in March.

Each spiritual direction session is a mystery as I companion another. Again as we get in touch with our inner wisdom, we experience a deeper meaning and begin to apprehend a larger reality.

Pastoral care is like a dance of giver and receiver, in which the giver becomes the receiver, and the receiver, the giver, and back again. Recently **Bev Bringle** delivered corn chowder, stew and apple-cranberry crisp to a parishioner. Not long after, Pastoral Care received a thank-you note saying, "How can I thank you enough? It was so delicious and lifted both spirits and strength. Truly this was a luxury in time of need. The Caring Connection has real meaning — a bridge — from you. As I opened the door, there you stood with a smile and packages of goodies. Just the memory of it gives me another uplift of spirit! I didn't know how much I needed this! Blessing to you all."

Yes, I agree, "Blessings to you all!"

— *Margie King Saphier*

Please see page 7 for information about our ongoing monthly series.

GOING DEEPER SPIRITUALLY: Monthly Thematic and Theological Queries for the People of First Parish in Concord

Sunday Worship Schedule

March 1

Jenny Rankin, preaching
9:00 – First Parish Choir
11:00 – Children's Choirs
and Gospel Choir

March 8

Gary Smith, preaching
9:00 – First Parish Choir
11:00 – *La Jouissance*

March 15

Angela Herrera, preaching
9:00 – Handbell Choir
11:00 – First Parish Choir

March 22

Gary Smith, preaching
9:00 & 11:00 – Jazz!

March 29

9:00 & 11:00 – Youth Service

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There are two inserts with this newsletter:

- Wright Tavern Center courses
- Rock 'n' Roll Bingo

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. 16	Wednesday, Mar. 25
Friday, Apr. 17	Wednesday, Apr. 29
Monday, May 18	Wednesday, Mar. 27

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

MINISTERS' DISCRETIONARY FUND

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the ministers have access to a discretionary account that is intended to help people of our congregation and of the town when they are in need. We have helped with medical bills, rent and mortgage payments, and the purchase of a furnace; the list is impressive. In these uncertain days, I ask of you two things. One, if you or someone you know is in need of some modest financial help, please let me know. And second, if you can help supplement this fund, I would be grateful. A check to the "Ministers' Discretionary Fund" slipped into my pocket would be gratefully received. I tell people the money is "Pennies from Heaven."

—Gary Smith

FIRST PARISH "COMMONPLACE BOOK"

Thank you to all who have sent me "words that matter to you" for the First Parish Commonplace Book. (See February *Meeting House News* "REVeries.") Keep the contributions coming! You can e-mail them to me at revjenny@comcast.net. I expect to be collecting words all spring and will try to put the book into some kind of publishable form for next fall.

—Jenny Rankin

Standing Committee Information

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held off-site on Monday evening, March 9. Please look for the monthly minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log in), or on the Parish News bulletin board.

From the Intern Minister

Not so long ago, on a warmer afternoon, I was waiting for my kids at their bus stop when I saw one of our most interesting neighborhood characters, a disheveled older fellow who walks his dog every day. The man forms a circle with his thumb and middle finger and holds both hands in front of him that way, tap, tap, tapping, as he shuffles down the sidewalk. He doesn't talk unless you say hello, and then it's hard to understand his monosyllabic reply. He follows the scraggly little white dog — some kind of long-haired terrier with a potbelly — down the sidewalk. He never scoops. We try to be patient. That day I watched them at an intersection. The man caught up with the dog at the curb — or did the dog wait for him? — and the man swooped him up. He muttered something in an affectionate tone. Then he carried the dog to the other side of the crosswalk, and set him down again. The dog picked up his few-steps-ahead-of-the-man pace, and they continued down the street. Up until then I'd been thinking the man was distracted in some kind of vast interior world. Seeing him protect his little dog with such attention surprised me. Why does he do the tapping thing? I wondered.

There is so little we can learn about one another in passing. I am reminded of this fact whenever I make a pastoral visit and hear the stories and perspectives of a parishioner for the first time. The personal experiences that formed who we each are and that motivate our involvement at First Parish are diverse. The joys, concerns, intentions and hopes we bring with us each Sunday (or Monday, or whichever days of the week we gather with the First Parish community) can also be so much more than is apparent on the surface.

Here's an experiment for you to try: find someone at coffee hour whose name you have a hard time remembering — maybe even a person you have never spoken with before — and ask that person what brought her or him to church. What is she/he passionate about? What waits for her or him when they get home on Sundays? If the answer surprises you, ask for more information. Share a little in return. See what happens!

In faith,

— *Angela Herrera*

Sunday Forums

Because of the ongoing renovations, Forums have been suspended for now. Please call **Charles Lowell** or **Robert Hilsinger** about future topics.

Parish Notes

CASINO NIGHTS — SAVE THE DATES!

Don't miss the second First Parish Casino Nights — Friday and Saturday, May 1 and 2. Mark your calendars now!

HUMANIST GROUP IS OFF AND RUNNING

The Concord Area Humanist Group held its founding meeting on a snowy day in January, attended by 48 people interested in finding out more about humanism. The group now has a steering committee working on developing events, including potluck dinners and small discussion groups as well as larger public forums. More information can be found at <http://groups.google.com/group/CAHumanists>, where you can also sign up to receive announcements; or contact **Maria Cox** at mc2cox@comcast.net to be included on the mailing list or to find out about getting involved.

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY—JUNE 24-28

The Denominational Affairs Committee reminds you that this year's GA will be in Salt Lake City, June 24-28. Contact **Holli Jones-White** at hjoneswhite@aol.com if you would like to be a delegate. Housing and meeting registration begin March 2. Refer to the UUA website for further details. *Note:* A new President of the UUA will be elected at this GA; and Melissa Harris-Lacewell of Princeton University, who is an expert on race and politics, will give the Ware Lecture.

NETWORKING GROUP AT FIRST PARISH AND BEYOND

In the last few months, a number of companies have experienced downsizing. The pain of these actions is felt by all — whether you are laid off yourself, had to make the difficult announcement, fear that the announcement may come, or are even struggling with the guilt of having survived a layoff.

A number of our parishioners, friends and neighbors have recently experienced these feelings firsthand. There is a group at First Parish interested in starting a networking group for people in transition, fearing transition, or affected in some way by the changes in our economy.

We think our community can be a valuable resource because of the "I-know-someone-who-knows-someone" networking factor, because we have parishioners with skills in resume writing, and networking, and because we are a community that cares about each person.

Other faith communities in town are collaborating with us in this endeavor. I am trying to get a better idea of interest in this group. Perhaps it would be a resource for you or someone you know. Perhaps you have a skill you can offer. Or potentially, both. E-mail me and let me know (revjenny@comcast.net). The first meeting will be Tuesday, March 3, at 9 a.m. in the Wright Tavern.

— *Jenny Rankin*

TRIVIA NIGHT FUN!

Over 60 parishioners enjoyed a fabulous Trivia Night at First Parish on January 31, while raising over \$1000 for the church. Congratulations to the winning team of **Marion Kerr, Patty Popov, Chris Popov, Kate Svrcek, Flavia Perugini** and **Heather MacPhee**. Thanks to **Mary Lou Toussaint, Art Croke** and the Special Events team for all of their hard work and effort in making

PARISH NOTES continued on page 10

Pastoral Care News

Did you know that five million Americans have Alzheimer's disease and 360,000 new cases will be diagnosed this year? On Saturday, April 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., the Wright Tavern is offering the Healing Power of "Yes": Communicating Effectively with Persons with Alzheimer's. This program is for caregivers whose loved one has Alzheimer's, as well as healthcare professionals. This dynamic workshop will teach participants to develop a relationship with loved ones with Alzheimer's that promotes compassion and self-esteem for all. Space is limited to 20 so be sure to register early.

It is not necessary to do any reading prior to the workshop, but I have recently read several books about Alzheimer's that I recommend. *Still Alice* is a novel by Lisa Genova, who has her Ph.D. in neuroscience and is an online columnist for the National Alzheimer's Association. Genova tells the fictional story of Alice Howland, who is a world-renowned professor of cognitive psychology at Harvard. When she becomes increasingly disoriented and forgetful, she receives the diagnosis of early-stage Alzheimer's. *Still Alice* is a moving and vivid depiction of life with early-onset Alzheimer's.

Learning to Speak Alzheimer's, by Joanne Koenig Coste, offers a practical approach to the emotional well-being of both patients and caregivers that emphasizes relating to patients in their own reality. Coste's husband developed Alzheimer's in his forties. Her wisdom and compassion comes from her personal experience plus interviews with hundreds of other caregivers.

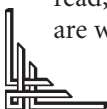
The Majesty of Your Loving: A Couple's Journey through Alzheimer's, by Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle, is a beautiful and loving account of living with Alzheimer's. Two words guided Olivia and her husband Hob: consciously and lovingly. To the degree possible, Olivia and Hob lovingly and consciously traveled this journey together. To help the reader do the same, at the end of each chapter are reflections, suggestions and seed thoughts which highlight psychological and spiritual perspectives and illuminate the process of caring for a loved one with dementia.

—Margie King Saphier



WOMEN'S CIRCLE SPRING EQUINOX CELEBRATION

Everyone in the congregation is invited as we celebrate the first day of spring in the Parish Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 19. We will sing, read, plant seeds and share this time together. All are welcome.



Money Matters

When **Jenny Rankin** asked us to cochair the Annual Appeal this year, we had to think it over, knowing that it would be a challenge in this economic environment. But we both said "yes." Why? We realized that this will be a year when we would need our "beloved community" more than ever, and it will be especially important to maintain the warm, inviting, and constant presence that this place offers to us all. Whether it is the peace and joy of Sunday morning worship, the personal counsel of our ministers, the support of our pastoral team in times of need, the extensive RE program for our children, or any of the many other ways that First Parish touches our lives, we knew it was important to keep our doors wide open.

March marks the beginning of our Annual Appeal at First Parish. It is the time of year when we ask everyone to make a pledge for the coming fiscal year. Pledges support the annual budget of the parish, which provides worship and music, religious education, social justice programs, pastoral care, community events, and more. Pledge income pays for the salaries of our ministers and staff, and for the operation and maintenance of our facilities.

This year, we have a simple and straightforward goal for our Annual Appeal: to raise \$924,000, which is what we raised last year before the "Close the Gap" gifts. We know that family budgets will be especially tight this year, which is why we aren't increasing our fundraising target. Even so, at \$924,000 we are making some substantial cuts in our budget because we face increases in some costs (like health insurance), and a decrease in our income, as the Trustees must reduce their annual contribution by \$60,000. This will mean a 9 percent cut in First Parish's budget, even if we reach our goal.

Please think about your values and what First Parish means to you and your family, and pledge an amount that reflects your commitment to our community and our mission. An average pledge of \$1680 per family is necessary in order for us to maintain our basic operations and programs. Please plan to pledge before the end of March, as we need to create a realistic budget in time for the Annual Meeting in June.

Thank you for all the ways in which you give back to First Parish. Together, we can maintain the vibrancy of this congregation, and continue the work we do within our community and in the wider world.

—Caroline McCloy
George Gagliardi

Wright Tavern Center

The Wright Tavern Center offers a wealth of great programming in March, continuing our themes: the creative art of improvisation, leadership, and the spiritual journey in community.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sean Kavanagh, First Parish member and CEO of The Ariel Group, offers *Authentic Leadership Presence for Lay Leaders*, a unique opportunity for experienced and emerging lay leaders at First Parish; Saturday, March 7, 1–5 p.m. Free and fun — FP members only.

STORIES FROM THE HEART:

A BENEFIT FOR WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER

Support the work of Wright Tavern Center and have a great time doing it! Saturday, March 14, 7–10 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Featuring Louis Arnold in Concert: a classical guitar recital; and True Story Theater: a Playback theater performance. Hear beautiful music and see this unique company of improvisational actors “play back” stories from the audience. We’ll also raffle off a True Story Theater performance for the organization of your choice. \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. Online registration available. Volunteers to support this event are welcome. Contact **Mary Elizabeth** at FPtavern@aol.com. See the Wright Tavern website for details about these local performers and Playback theater.

Ministerial Intern **Angela Herrera** will teach a five-week *Spiritual Autobiography* course which begins Sunday, March 8, 6:30–9:30 p.m.

Rev. Carl Scovel returns to First Parish during Lent with a four-week course entitled *Parables: Christian Koans* beginning Monday, March 9, 7:30–9:00 p.m.

Wright Tavern and the Social Action Committee will collaborate to present *Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream Symposium* on Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Join us for this inspiring day of inquiry into our individual and collective relationship to environmental sustainability, social justice, and spiritual fulfillment. Led by the Metro West Pachamama Alliance team. A delicious sustainable lunch is included in the workshop fee.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Visiting presenter Rev. Jade Angelica and her team will bring *The Healing Power of YES: Communicating Effectively with Persons with Alzheimer’s* to First Parish on April 4, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Merrill Comeau will offer *Making Art Out of Life*, beginning Monday, April 6, 7:00–9:30 p.m. This is a “hands on” spiritual autobiography course.

WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER continued on page 7

MUSings

John Cage, the 20th century American composer famously wrote *4’33”*, a controversial piece of aleatoric or chance music that is performed without a single note being played. Though *4’33”* is essentially a period of silence, Cage intended it to be an aural experience incorporating the environmental sounds of the venue in which it is being performed.

Borrowing from John Cage, I would call the current aural experience in the First Parish music office *Eight Months and Counting*. In September, I quipped that I might write a



trio for jackhammer, table saw and electric drill. Certainly this construction period has provided a diverse palate of sounds, one that I have

come to treat as “white noise.” A recent visitor to the office found the hammering sound distracting; I confess I had ceased to notice it!

But when I do pay attention to the noise coming from our future RE wing, I appreciate the rich array of sounds and sensations that have marked each stage of our progress. In the fall, I was “serenaded” with the groan of earth-moving machines. I will never forget the day I looked out the window and found myself “eye to eye” with the business end of an excavator!

Jackhammers, I have discovered, come in different sizes, each with its own voice and distinctive rhythm. Smaller drills sing in a persistent tenor and quicken one’s pulse with their staccato rhythm. The largest of the drills that visited us this year, was a deep basso profundo that sent vibrations through the whole building. I went home to work the day that the stapler and tape dispenser began to dance across my desk.

These days, the sounds are more intermittent and subdued: sometimes I hear the retort of a nail gun, but more often, my work is accompanied by the irregular beat of hammer strokes, as workers raise the walls of our future classrooms and offices. An electric saw sings over this rough rhythm.

John Cage and his contemporaries challenged the assumptions of the concert audience. They invited us to pay attention to our sound environments. Not all sounds are pleasing, but they are distinctive and evocative. In a year, I will hear the voices of the Milldam nursery school children at play, and maybe the beat of their rhythm band instruments. And I will remember the symphony of sound that prepared the space for them.

Blessings,

— Beth Norton

Social Action Community News and Events

The UUSC has partnered with Tents of Hope to raise awareness of their Drumbeat for Darfur program and thanks to **Sue Beck**, **Leslie Fisher**; and our RE staff, First Parish will participate in this wonderful community program on March 8 and 15. We will decorate a tent and ship it to Darfur to be used to house



displaced people, but we will do so much more. We will learn about the UUSC's work in protecting the rights of women and girls in Darfur and we will appreciate the ease of our lives as we examine the solar cooker, the limited cooking utensils, and the constricted space inhabited by a family. Programs like these happen here at First Parish because of people like you. Call me to get involved.

— *Faith Bade*

Social Action Program Director

INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL ACTION SERVICE ON MARCH 15

Individuals, families, and all ages, please share your stories with us and participate in this very special service. It is your actions that inspire us to reach out and make a difference. Contact **Faith Bade** at FBade@firstparish.org or **Pam Howell** at fpdre_pamhowell@mac.com.

SAC CANDLELIGHTING

Is social action part of your spiritual practice? Would you like to share with the congregation what motivates you to participate in or support social action? Families and individuals are invited to light the Social Action candle on any given Sunday, describing their spiritual inspiration in a few sentences. Please contact **Faith Bade**, Social Action Program Director, at FBade@firstparish.org to discuss participation.

JOIN A FIRST PARISH TEAM FOR A COMMUNITY SERVICE AFTERNOON

We have strong interest in the Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries Day of Interfaith Youth Service on Sunday, March 29, so we would like to form a First Parish team to go into Boston and work. The afternoon involves a brown bag lunch at 12:30 p.m., work from 2-5 p.m., and dinner and celebration at 5:30 p.m. We are looking for adult chaperones and youth to join. Contact **Faith Bade**, FBade@firstparish.org, to volunteer.

HONDURAS YOUTH SERVICE TRIP — FEBRUARY 2010

Stay tuned for a preliminary planning meeting in March for this amazing trip to southern Honduras. We are looking for adult chaperones and high school youth. Learn more about Heifer International trips at www.heifer.org. Contact **Mary-Wren vanderWilden** at vanderwilden@verizon.net, or **Faith Bade** at Fbade@firstparish.org, with questions.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAY FOR YOUTH — APRIL 21 IN BOSTON

Youth, parents, youth leaders, Coming of Age groups, and friends are invited to join together at First Church in Boston (66 Marlborough Street) Tuesday, April 21, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 pm. Sponsored by First Church, the UUSC, and Promise the Children, the day includes a presentation of two issues and how to lobby for them, followed by a trip to the State House to lobby. Breakfast, lunch and sundaes served at a cost of \$10/person. Call Meryl at 978-356-4403 by April 15 to register.

COMMUNITY FORUM ON THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Changes and Choices: A Community Forum will be held on Saturday, March 28, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Concord-Carlisle High School. This event is free and open to the community. Speakers, workshops, films and food will focus on the global and local changes and personal choices that we face. Learn what is happening in local homes, farms, businesses, organizations and government to connect economic solutions and environmental imperatives. There will be events and activities for adults, students and families. For more information about how you can contribute, please contact Concord-Carlisle Community Education, 978-318-1540, www.ace.colonial.net or ace@colonial.net.

EATING ORGANIC AND LOCAL AND LOVING IT

First Parish member **Enid Boasberg** will be giving a talk on the personal and environmental benefits of eating organically, locally and seasonally at Kerem Shalom on March 8 at 12:15 p.m.

APRIL 1 — DEADLINE FOR SOCIAL ACTION GRANT REQUESTS

The SAC Grants Committee will be accepting requests for funding now through April 1. We have extended the deadline from March 1. Please visit the First Parish website Social Action Grants section for full information. The contact person is **Alane Harrington Wallis**, awallis@nutter.com. *Circular 230 Disclosure:* To ensure compliance with IRS Circular 230, we inform you that any federal tax advice included in this communication (including attachments) is not intended or written to be used, and it cannot be used, for the purpose of (i) avoiding the imposition of federal tax penalties or (ii) promoting, marketing or recommending to another party any transaction or matter addressed herein.

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/; visit the Social Action bulletin board; or e-mail our Social Action Program Director, **Faith Bade**, at FBade@firstparish.org.

Going Deeper Spiritually

Monthly Thematic and Theological Queries
for the People of First Parish in Concord

SERIES VII, 2008-2009

Note: following the lead of All Souls Unitarian in Tulsa, Unity Church in St. Paul and the First Parish in Weston, we continue this month a series of reflections, each month in the year focusing on a particular theological concept. Worship during that month will include at least one Sunday where this concept is explored. We hope the suggested topic for the month will find its way into our small group gatherings and into our conversations, even at home.

March 2009: **PRAYER** — In the Christian church, February 25 is the beginning of Lent this year, a time of solemn preparation for Easter. It is a time of sacrifice and introspection, making way for miracle and joy. Though we as Unitarian Universalists may not approach Lent with this degree of spiritual discipline, March can still be a time when we consider the place of meditation and prayer in our lives. Prayer, spoken and silent, is a part of most of the world's religions. We've heard prayer described here at First Parish as falling into one of four categories: Oops. Gimme. Wow. Thanks. **Gary Smith** will preach on March 8 on the subject of prayer.

Prayers are not predictions. They are hardly contracts binding gods and events to the tether of our will. They are wild horses... As we near them they raise their heads, catching our scent of desire, deciding whether to run, whether to await us.

—William Ramsey

You ask me how to pray to someone who is not. All I know is that prayer constructs a velvet bridge and walking it we are aloft, as on a springboard, above landscapes the color of ripe gold...

—Czelaw Milosz

Prayer is nothing if not paying attention.

—Lindsey Crittenden

Questions:

- How do you think the meaning of prayer has changed for you in the course of your lifetime? What did you once think prayer was? What do you think now?
- In our worship each Sunday, do you have a discipline you follow during the time of silence? Do you carry the words and tune of "Spirit of Life" into the rest of your week? Do you close your eyes?
- Is there a uniquely Unitarian Universalist understanding of prayer? What would it be?

APRIL 2009: Salvation

Senior Youth News

February and April seem so short for youth because of school vacations. However, for public school youth, March is one long month with nary a holiday. (St. Patrick's Day doesn't count because you still have to go to school!) So the YAC has planned an exciting month for Youth Group, as we hope to be an oasis of peace and a welcoming place for youth to take a break from the routines of school life.

Mar. 1: Yin Yang Game

Mar. 8: Plan Youth Service (If youth want to participate but cannot come, then let a youth leader or Mary-Wren know.)

Mar. 15: Bake Pizza and Cookies in the new kitchen

Mar. 22: Snowballs

Mar. 27/28: Lock-In: karaoke, movies, games and rehearse youth service

Mar. 29: Youth Service at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

The Transylvania Youth Pilgrims will be hosting our annual Rock 'n' Roll Bingo Night for families on March 13, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. as a fundraiser. The youth running the night have as much fun as the families that come!

Each year the youth look forward to our annual Yin Yang Game (March 1 this year), as it is a powerful way to break down barriers and get to know each other better. Our youth leadership is always looking for ways to strip off the masks we put on and get to each other's essence. When youth come away from Youth Group with a sense of knowing themselves better — having made deeper connections with others beyond their usual cliques and a sense of what is truly important in their lives — then we have succeeded.

—*Mary-Wren vanderWilden*

WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER

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Rich and Antra Borofsky return to Wright Tavern Center to offer a one-day version of their popular *Intimacy as a Spiritual Path* workshop on Saturday, April 18, 1–4 p.m.

Visit The Wright Tavern Center website at www.wrighttavern.org for in-depth descriptions of courses and presenter bios. Contact us at FPTavern@aol.com or 978-369-9602. Please check out our online registration and let us hear your feedback. For short course descriptions, please see the Wright Tavern Center insert in this *Meeting House News*.

In service,

—*Mary Elizabeth Wheeler*

Director

Reflection and RE News

Kids can spot *fake-ness* a mile a way. Once so labeled, there is no convincing kids otherwise. Kids revel in the real, in the now and in the mystery of self-discovery. This year we have brought the natural world into our religious education program. We have been working with food and herbs, with stones, branches and sound. We have created beautiful altars out of pussy willows, out of lentils, out of rock. When children enter this sacred space, they slow themselves. You do not need to tell children to notice the holy; they do so naturally because they have not yet unlearned the feelings that bring them in touch with their inner spirit.

We have been calling our program “religious education.” but truly we have not been educating our children about religion at all. We are not using words to hopelessly try to describe what it means to experience something sacred, something holy. Instead, we have been taking this year to actually experience and encounter that which is spiritual within each of us. We have been touching much more than our intellectual selves. We have made room for wonder, mystery and inner peace.

One Sunday in February, **Kate Crosby** created a beautiful altar around a centerpiece of snow. “Wow! Is that real snow?” Why, yes! Of course it is. If there is one thing children are hungry for in this increasingly virtual world, it is that which is true and that which is real. We hope to fill this need each Sunday when we gather together in our circle of worship.

— *Pam Howell*

SURPRISE VISITOR ON MARCH 8

Who will the Surprise Visitor be this time? Well...not who, but what! A *tent* will be visiting our 2nd-to 6th-grade children. Thanks to **Leslie Fisher** and **Sue Beck**, we have ordered a tent for our RE children to decorate with messages of peace and hope. The tent will be packaged and shipped to Darfur to house a family in need. We will be looking at how people are living in Darfur, making solar stoves, and marveling at the resourcefulness of the human spirit even in times of crisis and oppression. By providing shelter for these women, we are giving our children the opportunity to express their care in a very real and physical way. Don't miss it and don't wear your best clothes! We will be painting and getting messy.

SPRING TERM FOR 2ND-6TH GRADERS

March will be an interesting and dynamic month in RE. We will be finishing our Spring

MARCH RE CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Sun., Mar. 1 | Regular RE for Babies – 6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Union Baptist Church, 7:45 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
8th Grade OWL, Parlor and Wright Tavern, 3:00–7:00 p.m. |
| Sun., Mar. 8 | Regular RE for Babies – 6th Grade, Surprise Visitor, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Quaker Meeting House, 9:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
8th Grade OWL, Parlor and Wright Tavern, 2:00–5:00 p.m. |
| Sun., Mar. 15 | Regular RE for Babies – 1st Grade, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Grace Chapel, 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
8th Grade OWL, Parlor and Wright Tavern, 3:00–6:00 p.m. |
| Sun., Mar. 22 | Regular RE for Babies – 6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. |
| Sun., Mar. 29 | Regular RE for Babies – 4 years, 9 and 11 a.m.
Intergenerational Youth Service K–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m.
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Attend YRUU Service at 11 a.m.
8th Grade, Attend YRUU Service at 11 a.m. |

Term with **Kate Crosby** leading our March 1 class, “Spring Is Hiding.” We will be exploring signs of spring within trees, looking for maple sap, and creating spiles out of sumac.

Our kids have loved participating in an RE program that has been very physical this year, and our spring term will continue this theme. We will explore the importance of water in our lives and how water connects us to our neighbors upstream and downstream. We will weave in some of the powerful traditions of our town's Musquetaquid celebration, as well as honoring the call of Earth Day, to become involved in caring for our environment.

For our first two weeks in this term, children will look at their own character, their strengths and weaknesses, and find animals to describe their inner self. **CC King**, who is a local artist and “play” expert, will lead us in exploring these themes. We will make small altars out of natural materials for our inner animals, and then rest these altars on a wooden raft to float down the Concord River.

We will also explore these inner animals through the art of T'ai Chi. **Andrea Sheffield**, from Wah Lum Kung Fu in West Concord, will teach our children various animal poses and physical expressions of our hidden animal nature.

Last, we will work with **Brenda Fingold**, First Parish member and holistic health consultant, for our last formal RE class. This class will close our year-long theme of honoring the earth. In this class, we will celebrate both Mother's Day and Earth Day, for the Earth who is also our Mother.

RE NEWS continued on page 9

The dates for the Keresztúr Community House dedication have been proclaimed, and a program for the ceremonies on September 18, 19 and 20 is being drawn up now. Those who wish to attend will be received with joy and gratitude.

“Dear Brothers and Sisters,” writes Rev. József Szombatfalvi in a letter too long to include in its entirety here. “I suppose that you, over the ocean, are in the same situation: the time passes very quickly. Especially when a lot of problems have to be solved day by day. And now we have a lot. Fortunately God helps us with the mild winter weather and we can work on the community house...”

“With fixing the date the dice is cast (*alea iacta est*),” he continues. “Here everybody tries to work hard to welcome the guests among whom you are the dearest. That is why we are waiting for you with love, to come as many as you can to this important ceremony of our community.”

Travel to Transylvania is simpler and more reasonably priced these days (with flights to Koloszvar/Cluj). In addition to the Community House dedication we still seek someone to represent First Parish at this year’s Keresztúr high school graduation on June 11.

We would also like to remind everyone of this year’s Rock ‘n’ Roll Bingo at 6 p.m. on Friday, March 13. The proceeds will help to fund the Youth Service Pilgrimage to Székelykeresztúr. (See the flyer in this edition of the *Meeting House News*.)

To help fund the reconstruction, a community house sponsorship program has been set up, with naming rights, for doors, windows and stairways, etc. More information will be provided later in the spring.

As József concludes... “[We] would like to thank you for the all-time support, which besides the money is an enormous spiritual joy and an encouragement to love, to take care of each other, to cultivate our relationship and to wait for meeting you and being together.”

With love,
József and the Unitarians of Székelykeresztúr.

Minden jót mindenkinek! (Best wishes to everyone!)
—**Lillian Anderson** and **Winslow Pettingell**
Cochairs, Partner Church Committee

Week 5 of Winter Term, March 1: Spring Is Hiding

March 8, Surprise Visitor: The Making of a Darfur Tent

March 15, Intergenerational Service for 2nd-6th Graders, Telling our Social Action Stories

Week 1 of Spring Term, March 22, Water: We Are All Upstream from Someone.

March 29, Intergenerational Youth Service

Week 2 of Spring Term, April 5, Water: Honoring the Animal Within Us All

TELLING OUR SOCIAL ACTION STORIES — A WORSHIP SERVICE ON MARCH 15

So often at First Parish we hear stories of some of the interesting things our parishioners are doing outside the walls of our church. Some are big, but many are small acts of kindness that make a difference in the everyday lives of people around us. We have been celebrating several of these stories in our religious education program this year. We have also included some of these stories in our message to children. Perhaps some of you will remember the Wheelchair Mission with **Nico Calabria** and Emmanuel, or the Aley family and their work for the Heifer Project, or our Youth Service trip to New Orleans.

Faith Bade, our Social Action Program Director, and I were talking last year and thought it would be interesting to offer the congregation an opportunity to share some of their personal stories of their own social action work and its impact on others and themselves. Stories can be from children or adults. They can be in the form of music, poetry, pictures or story. We are open to your ideas. This is an intergenerational service, so stories would need to be suitable for all ages.

If you have something to share, please contact **Pam Howell** (fpdre_pamhowell@mac.com) or **Faith Bade** (fbade@first-parish.org). Our greatest strength is the inspiration we give each other. When I tell a story, the first question a child asks is, “Is this story true?” Real stories from real people are the best of all.

CAREGIVING FOR OUR BABIES AND 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS

Can you help care for our youngest First Parish members? We have a shortage of teachers at the 9:00 a.m. service. This is very gentle work, which will certainly feed your spirit. Please call **Jane Barnes** if you could help us out for even one week.

ORIENTATION FOR 2ND- TO 6TH-GRADE TEACHERS IN THE WRIGHT TAVERN

Orientation for 2nd–6th Grades Spring Term 4 is Thursday, March 12, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Women's News

WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

The March book for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is *The Witch of Portobello*, by Paulo Coelho. The evening session will be held Monday, March 30, 7:30-9:00 p.m.; and the morning session, on Tuesday, March 31, 9:30-11:00 a.m. Please note that due to construction at First Parish, the discussions will be held at the following homes:

Evening Session: March 30, 7:30 p.m., at the home of **Siri Smedvig**, 85 Westford Road, Concord

Morning Session: March 31, 9:30 a.m., at the home of **Darien Smith**, 124 Hill Street, Concord

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 or 978-369-1471.

Dates and books for 2009 are as follows:

- Apr. 27, 28 *Grandmother's Secrets: The Ancient Rituals and Healing Powers of Belly Dancing*, by Rosina-Fawzia B. Al-Raw
- May 18, 19 *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver

June (TBD) Potluck and suggestions for next year

Community News

FIRST PARISH MEMBERS PERFORM IN PLAY

First Parish members, **Lillian Anderson**, **Cory Atkins**, **Rebecca Curzon** and **Alec Walker** will be performing in the play *A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant and A Prayer: Writings to Stop Violence against Women and Girls*, compiled by Eve Ensler. The dramatic reading will be performed on Saturday, March 7, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, March 8, at 4:00 p.m., at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Tickets are \$15 in advance and may be purchased at Debra's Natural Gourmet, online at networkforwomenslives.org, or by contacting **Lillian Anderson** at 978-369-1468.

Classified

NEED A BABYSITTER?

Babysitter available through March. Currently on a gap year, so available school nights and weekends. Nineteen years old, driver, nonsmoker, three years' experience with First Parish toddlers, speaks Portuguese, French and Spanish. Call Lydia at 978-369-8269.

PARISH NOTES

continued from page 3

this a fabulous success. Also, we need energetic, fun people to help us plan more events in the future — so contact anyone on the committee for more information.

—**Jason Truluck-Williams**, Chair, Special Events Committee

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER IN CONCORD—MARCH 6

World Day of Prayer, an event of informed prayer and social justice action, has taken place in nearly every nation for decades. Concord area faith communities will hold their 2009 World Day of Prayer service at the Trinitarian Congregational Church, 54 Walden Street, on Friday, March 6, at 11 a.m., followed by a luncheon at noon. All are invited. Reservations are not required. This year's service was written by the WDP women of Papua New Guinea, whose arts and cultures will be celebrated and whose social needs will be highlighted. Marion Thornton, Concord's 2008 Honored Citizen, who has visited Papua New Guinea, will talk about life there.

MARVELOUS MONDAYS ARE BACK!

Remember the days of the old-fashioned "church supper"? Well, they are back. Gather together with friends to eat, talk, laugh and relax. Bring your kids, your friends or neighbors, and join in a long-standing First Parish tradition of community suppers during Lent. Marvelous Mondays will be three Mondays in March. Dinner will be at 6 p.m., and vespers at 7 p.m. will be led by the ministers.

March 9: Dinner hosted by the Standing Committee; vespers led by **Margie King Saphier**

March 16: Dinner hosted by the Choir; vespers led by **Angela Herrera** and **Beth Norton**

March 23: Dinner hosted by the Religious Education Council; vespers led by **Gary Smith**

The suggested donation is \$5 a person, \$20 per family. This affordable, community-wide event is not to be missed. RSVP to FPCConcord@aol.com, including number of attendees and ages of children. We need to know ahead of time how many are coming so we have enough food and enough babysitters.

WPA LUNCHEON MEETING—MARCH 17

Everyone is a little bit Irish on Saint Patrick's day, so join old and new friends on Tuesday, March 17, for lunch and a special program with students of the Bremer School of Irish Dance. A sandwich and dessert buffet will be served. Lunch will be at noon in the Parish Hall. All First Parish women and men and their friends are welcome. The charge is eight dollars. So don a bit o' the green and join the festivities! Contact **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net, or 978-263-0426, by March 14 for reservations, child care or transportation arrangements.

UUA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Depending on the number of First Parish delegates at this year's GA in Salt Lake City, there will be a number of absentee ballot delegates selected, whose role will be to vote for the new UUA president. If you would like to do research, are not attending GA in Salt Lake City, and wish to be considered as an absentee ballot delegate, please contact **Holli Jones-White**, chair of the Denominational Affairs Committee, at hjoneswhite@aol.com. The two UUA presidential candidates are Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman and Rev. Peter Morales.

March 2009 Calendar

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

Every Week...

Men's Group	Saturday	7:30 a.m.
Gospel Choir	Sunday	10:00 a.m.
<i>Spiritual Autobiography</i>	Sunday	6:30 p.m. (off-site) (not 3/1)
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 p.m.
<i>Parables: Christian Koans</i>	Monday	7:30 p.m. (not 3/2)
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m. (First Parish in Weston) (not 3/24)
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.
Bell Choir	Wednesday	1:00 p.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:25 p.m.
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.

ALL EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT FIRST PARISH UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Sun Mar 1	11:00	Neighboring Faiths	Sun Mar 15	11:00	Neighboring Faiths
	3:00	Our Whole Lives		3:00	Our Whole Lives
	5:00	New Orleans Trip Meeting	Mon Mar 16	12:00	Newsletter Deadline
Mon Mar 2	7:00	<i>Margaret Fuller in Italy</i>		6:00	Marvelous Monday
Tue Mar 3	7:00	Emergency Preparedness	Thu Mar 19	7:30	Spring Equinox Celebration
Wed Mar 4	7:00	Youth Advisory Committee	Sat Mar 21	10:00	<i>Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream Symposium</i>
Sat Mar 7	1:00	<i>Leadership Presence</i>	Sun Mar 22	4:00	New U
Sun Mar 8	11:00	Neighboring Faiths		5:30	Honduras Meeting
	12:15	Nominating Committee	Mon Mar 23	6:00	Marvelous Monday
	12:15	Green Sanctuary Meeting	Wed Mar 25	9:15	Newsletter Mailing
	2:00	Our Whole Lives	Fri Mar 27	5:30	YRUU Lock-In
	4:00	New U		7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing</i>
Mon Mar 9	6:00	Marvelous Monday	Sat Mar 28		YRUU Lock-In
Tue Mar 10	3:00	<i>Tea & Poetry</i>	Sun Mar 29	11:00	Neighboring Faiths
	6:00	Cancer Support Group		4:00	New U
	7:00	Pastoral Care Lay Ministers		5:30	New Orleans Trip Meeting
Wed Mar 11	12:15	<i>Listening for God</i>		7:00	El Salvador Meeting
Fri Mar 13	12:30	<i>T'ai Ji</i>	Mon Mar 30	6:00	Marvelous Monday
	6:00	Rock 'n' Roll Bingo		7:30	Women's AM/PM Book Group (off-site)
Sat Mar 14	9:00	Photo Club	Tue Mar 31	9:30	Women's AM/PM Book Group (off-site)
	7:00	<i>Stories from the Heart: Music & PlayBack Theater</i>			



First Parish in Concord

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MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER

The April Newsletter deadline is Monday, March 16, at noon.
The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, March 25.
News items should be limited to 100 words.

Don't Miss...

ROCK 'N' ROLL BINGO!

Friday, March 13, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Hosted by the Transylvania Youth Pilgrims
\$10/person, \$30/family

MARVELOUS MONDAYS!

March 9, 16 and 23
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Vespers at 7:00 p.m.

First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Staff

Gary E. Smith, Senior Minister
Jenny M. Rankin, Minister
Melissa Perdue Gallo, Business Manager

Margie King Saphier, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care
Rebecca M. Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care
Angela Herrera, 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

Elizabeth Norton, Music Director
Eric Huenneke, Organist
Martha Goodman, Handbell Choir Director
Anderson Manuel, Youth Gospel Choir Director
Gail Carey, Children's Choir Director
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

A. Bigay, Assistant to the Ministers
Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator
Jane Johnson, Office Manager
Peggy Gallo, Financial Secretary and Collector
Faith Bade, Social Action Program Director
Kate Keleher, Newsletter Editor
Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson, Newsletter Staff



MAY 30 RECYCLE AND PLANT SALE



Save the date! On Saturday, May 30, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., there will be a multi-vendor recycle/flea market and plant sale at First Parish. Due to limited space this year, we will **not** be collecting household item donations from First Parish members. Vendors will be selling from rented tables. If you would like to rent a table for \$35, call **Pat Kane** at 978-369-8418. Table rentals sell out fast, so contact her as soon as possible. We will be collecting donations of perennial plants from First Parish members, so start planning which treasures from your garden you would like to donate.



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:

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Jenny M. Rankin: revjenny@comcast.net
Margie King Saphier: mksaphier@comcast.net
Angela Herrera: aherrera@hds.harvard.edu