



October 23, 2009  
Volume 46, No. 3

# The *Meeting House* News

## SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### November 1

**Jenny Rankin**, preaching  
**9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Children’s  
Choirs**

*How Could Anyone* – Roderick

**9:00 – First Parish Choir**

*Breaths* – Barnwell

**11:00 – Pamela Schweppe and Tamasin  
Foote, sopranos**

*Pie Jesu* – Lloyd Webber

### November 8

**Stefan Jonasson**, preaching  
**Consultant to large congregations, UUA  
Dedication Sermon**

**9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir**

*Yonder Come Day* – arr. Hardin

*You Are the New Day* – David, arr. Knight

### November 15

**Gary Smith**, preaching

**9:00 – Gospel Choir**

**11:00 – First Parish Choir**

*Hold Out Your Light* – arr. Dillworth

*To the Holy Spirit* – Dalglish

### November 22

**Jenny Rankin**, preaching

**Thanksgiving**

**9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir**

*I Thank You God* – Pfautsch

*Hymn for America* – Paulus

### November 29

**Angela Herrera**, preaching

**9:00 & 11:00 – Emily Melcher, vocalist**

## REVERIES

Dear Friends:

As we begin a new chapter in the life of First Parish, the theme of the year is “home.” What does it mean to be at home in the world? At First Parish? In our own homes? We have been uprooted and in transition for a year. We are now back in a 99 percent fully operational First Parish. Does it feel like home or will it take time to get to used to it? What does it mean to each one of us when we lose our sense of place?

The many transitions of life are precursors to the final human transition. The Unitarian Universalist minister Forrest Church, who recently died, said religion is “our human response to the dual reality of being alive and knowing we must die.” Having this awareness, Church believed: “To be fully human is to care.” We at First Parish do care for one another and the larger community.

In the same vein, John Shelby Spong, retired Episcopal bishop of Newark, New Jersey, says, “Religion ultimately becomes not an activity in which we explore the meaning of God, but an activity through which we explore the meaning of the human ... The challenge of humanity is not through the external projections of our needs onto a god, but through entering the depth dimensions of the human experience. Religion is a journey into the heart of our humanity, where we break out of our separation fears and enter the meaning of transcendence, oneness, timelessness and finally, eternity.”

First Parish invites you to journey into the heart of our humanity, sharing your gifts with First Parish and the world.

In faith,

—*Margie King Saphier*

**First Parish in Concord**

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ♦ Gathered in 1636

**Don't Miss...**

**FIRST PARISH AUCTION!**

Saturday, November 14

**WPA ARTISANS FAIR**

Saturday, November 7

## IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1	REVeries Sunday Worship Schedule
Page 2	In This Issue Parish Notes
Page 3	Sunday Forums Pastoral Care News Parish Notes, continued
Page 4	Money Matters Ordination Invitation Partner Church Committee
Page 5	MUSings and Music Notes Pipework Threshold Choir
Page 6	REflection and RE News November RE Calendar
Page 7	Senior Youth News Parish Notes, continued
Page 8	SAC News and Events
Page 9	Membership Corner Developments
Page 10	Women's News Standing Committee Classifieds
Page 11	November 2009 Calendar
Page 12	First Parish Staff UU News

There are four inserts with this newsletter:

- ◆ Auction information
- ◆ Building Dedication Invitation
- ◆ Wright Tavern Courses
- ◆ Partner Church Information

*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

Monday, November 16  
Monday, December 14  
Monday, January 25

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

## PARISH NOTES

### Don't Miss Out! — Holiday Artisans Fair!

It's time to get ready for this year's Holiday Artisans Fair, which will be held between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, November 7. With our additional facilities, we will have over 50 artists and artisans selling a wide variety of unique gift items. Food will be served throughout the day. Bring your friends and neighbors to do some great holiday shopping. This is a major fundraiser. Entrance fees: \$3 for adults; \$2 for children; children under five years of age, no charge. Contact **Dian Pekin** at [pekindc@comcast.net](mailto:pekindc@comcast.net) or the church office if you would like to help on this important, fun-filled event or donate high quality items for our regifting table. Only items suitable for holiday gifts will be accepted.

### You Can Dedicate the Flowers on Any Sunday

If you would like to contribute flowers for a memorial or a special celebration, please contact **Peg Hedstrom** at 978-369-1562.

### First Parish Auction, November 14: *Ooh la la!*

Plan now to be at the Meeting House on the evening of November 14, for the latest and best First Parish Auction. This year's auction features a Parisian theme and a fabulous French dinner, followed by the always entertaining live auction, including creative and original raffles, and an amazing Grand Prize. Tickets (\$25) are available at the coffee hours and in the church office. Watch for details of the brand new online auction as well, and don't miss out on one of the most exciting and fun events of the year, and your chance to bid on some wonderful items and events.

### Jericho Road Project Receives a Grant

The Jericho Road Project was one of 44 organizations nationally, out of hundreds of applicants, to receive a Department of Health and Human Services grant award from the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) this fall. The \$149,000 federal grant to the Jericho Road Project will greatly benefit nonprofits in the Merrimack Valley. We will need several new volunteers to help with our expanded work there. For more information, contact Jodi DeLibertis at [jdelibertis@jerichoroadproject.org](mailto:jdelibertis@jerichoroadproject.org).

### Denominational Affairs Committee News

The Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC) works as a communications liaison from First Parish in Concord, to the Mass Bay district and to the UUA in Boston. Our responsibilities include ensuring that the congregation's voice is heard by the district and by the UUA on topics that are of concern to our denomination and to the larger world. The DAC is always looking for people to join us who might enjoy working in the interfaces between the congregation and the larger UU community.

This year's study topics from the recent UUA General Assembly meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, this past summer are Ethical Eating and Peacemaking. If you are interested in getting involved in denominational affairs and/or these study topics, please contact us.

—**Mark Richards**, chair ([mark.s.richards@verizon.net](mailto:mark.s.richards@verizon.net))

Parish Notes continued on page 3

**November 8**

**Carol Dwyer** will introduce Jean Lubin, an extraordinary person who started a school in Haiti ten years ago with funds from his earnings as a nurse's aide in Norwalk, Connecticut. An excellent ten-minute DVD about the schoolchildren of Belle Vue will be "premiered" at this gathering! Jean just returned from a visit to Haiti, so we will learn the latest news from the school that First Parish supported in 2009. Young people as well as adults are welcome.

**November 15**

**Jenny Rankin** will talk about the transcendentalist trip to Italy. This was a trip to follow the footsteps of 150 years ago of people like Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, Sophia Peabody, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Louisa May Alcott.

We welcome speakers from the congregation as well as ideas for future Forums. Please contact **Charles Lowell** (chasrlo@verizon.net) or **Robert Hilsinger** (rhilsinger@verizon.net). ♦

**Parish Notes**

continued from page 2

**Henry David Thoreau's John Brown Speech Reenacted**

The First Parish Transcendentalism Council is co-sponsoring an exciting event with the Thoreau Society on Friday, October 30, at 7:30 p.m. One hundred and fifty years ago on that date, at First Parish, Henry David Thoreau gave a stirring speech defending John Brown. Then, as now, the church bell was rung to alert the town of an important event. Weaving together quotes with biographical and historical information, nationally known Thoreau reenactor Kevin Radaker will present Thoreau's defense of John Brown. The event is free and will be in the Parish Hall.

**Theater Project**

The First Parish Theater Project had its first gathering and after discussing future potential choices, read Act III of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. We will meet on the first Friday of each month; our next meeting is on November 6, at 7 p.m. We will be reading *Spoon River Anthology*, Edgar Lee Master's wonderful collection of people, adapted by Charles Aidman. It also includes music. We'll have scripts, so just come and be prepared to have a fun time reading. For more information, contact **Claudia Nimar** at cnimar@aol.com.

November is a gray month. Not only do we get more rain, but the tree limbs are bare and monochromatic. The somber tones may match our feelings as we start November with All Souls' Day. It is often a bittersweet day, remembering the joy, as well as the sorrow, of past relationships. There will be an opportunity to light a candle in memory of loved ones on November 1, during the service.

Veterans' Day is another day of remembrance. Although it was originally set aside for men and women who served in WWI, it has evolved to include all veterans. Even WWII recedes from our memories as there are fewer alive who lived in that time. It does not receive the recognition it once did; but wars continue, with men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Because families change as adult children move away, friends and relatives die, Thanksgiving can be a time of gratitude and grief rolled into one. For years my husband, Jon and I, and our children, as well as my mother, went to his parents for Thanksgiving; but the time came when Jon's mother found it too much, so we celebrated Thanksgiving at our home. Our gathering expanded when friends joined us, but it soon contracted when our parents died. Now that three of our four children have married, we have expanded again. But who knows how long this arrangement will last? I often think of Mary Oliver's poem:

*To live in the world  
you must be able  
to do three things:*

*To love what is mortal;  
to hold it  
against your bones knowing  
your life depends on it;*

*And when the time comes to let it go,  
let it go.*

*your life depends on it;*

*And when the time comes to let it go,  
let it go.*

Another time in life when we get to practice letting go is when we need to downsize our living accommodations. It is not easy to leave a home of many years. So please consider the following Caring Conversation about Housing Solutions for Seniors.

**To Move or Not: Housing Solutions for Seniors**

Senior living communities come in all shapes and sizes today. They are often identified by a bewildering array of titles. A change in living situation may be precipitated by worsening health status, a desire to be near family, or a desire to live in a more hospitable climate. This Caring Conversation offered at First Parish by Minuteman Senior Services is designed to inform seniors and their families of the wide range of housing and care options available, based on their needs and financial situation, and will offer some suggestions on seeking the right setting while recognizing quality care. Registration is required. Minimum of 10 participants. ♦

Tuesday, November 17, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Fee: \$10:00

—Margie King Saphier

## MONEY MATTERS

I'm sitting in my office, looking out the window at the terrace with the beautiful mums. I really can't believe the building project is nearly complete! We're down to a (rather extensive) "punch list" of details, some large, some small, that need doing before we consider the work completely finished. The building dedication celebration will be November 8. We've built The Dream, and it was made possible through the generosity of many parishioners. Every gift has mattered, though few were as moving as the gift from our Partner Church in Transylvania. That gift is very humbling, to say the least.

If you have yet to make a pledge or gift to the "Come Build a Dream" capital campaign, I urge you to please consider helping us pay our bills and create a building endowment. We've received pledges and gifts from nearly 66% of our annual fund contributors. That is an outstanding participation rate for a capital campaign, according to the UUA, where we learned that typically, 90% to 100% of gifts to a capital campaign come from fewer than 50% of the members. We still need about \$350,000 to avoid carrying a long-term debt; our maintenance endowment is still in the dream stage, our goal for that being \$600,000.

Whether you have made a pledge or gift to the campaign or not, I hope that all of you will come to the building dedication on Sunday, November 8, at 3:00 p.m. to celebrate this important milestone in the life of First Parish. ♦

—Melissa Purdue Gallo

First Parish in Concord  
and  
the Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
of Salem, Oregon  
*invite you to join us in celebration  
as we ordain*

Angela Marie Herrera  
*to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry*

Saturday, December 12, 2009  
at 3:00 P.M.

at First Parish in Concord  
20 Lexington Road  
Concord, Massachusetts

Reception to Follow

*Clergy and Seminarians are invited to gather  
at 2:30 p.m. to robe and process*

*To RSVP, and to request child care, contact  
Jane Johnson (978) 369-9602,  
or [jjohnson@firstparish.org](mailto:jjohnson@firstparish.org)*

## PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE

The PCC invites you to attend our next meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 13, at First Parish. Ours is a fun and active committee with a shared interest in all things Keresztúr. We meet over a light supper, as we will for this meeting, so send a quick RSVP (at [LondonSW11@aol.com](mailto:LondonSW11@aol.com)) to ensure that there are plenty of victuals. Hope to see you there!

Last month (during our September 20 Transylvanian Thanksgiving service) five members of our First Parish congregation were in Keresztúr to join in the Community House dedication. **Ivan and Ursula Kristoffy, Peggy Claybrook, Pat Brinkman and Rodger Mattlage** joined in the multiday celebrations which included a grand opening of exhibitions in the community house, a fall harvest display on the newly manicured grounds, feasts prepared by the Keresztúr Unitarian congregation and music, singing and dancing.

Rev. Bálint Benczédi Ferenc, the newly elected Unitarian bishop, was in attendance as were executive lay leaders, the district dean and other ministers from Kolozsvár and surrounding areas. For pictures of the dedication, see [www.firstparish.org/photos/gallery2/v/Dedication/](http://www.firstparish.org/photos/gallery2/v/Dedication/). Also, to thank our Székelykeresztúr friends for their astonishing donation to our First Parish capital campaign, we have designed a large "Thank You" card. All who would like to sign it can do so at the PCC table during coffee hours. A group picture of those at the dedication ceremony on Sunday, November 8, will be included with our card. This is a chance for anyone who has visited Keresztúr to write individual notes to old friends and hosts. *Minden jót!* "Best wishes!" ♦

—Lillian Anderson and Winslow Pettingell, PCC cochairs

In my previous life as a school music teacher, I led the “Chapel Choir” at a private boarding school that was affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Each week this courageous band of teenagers sang an anthem for the school’s Wednesday morning chapel service. Compulsory chapel was not exactly the high point of the week for many of the students; it took courage for these young people to dress in liturgical garb and lead worship for their peers.



Each Wednesday morning, after the anthem was sung (and regardless of how well it went), there would be polite applause for the singers from the assembled congregation. This felt odd to me, but it was the school tradition so I didn’t give it a lot of thought. Until one day, when the choir had sung a particularly beautiful anthem and there was no applause, but awed silence. When I complimented the choir on their singing, one of the young women said, “It couldn’t have been that good. They didn’t clap.” Whoa.

That day, my miniserm on about the role of a choir as worship leaders was born: Yes, choirs rehearse together week after week to “perform” anthems in a service. But that worship music, like the sermon and the readings and the prayer, is meant to take us somewhere. Sometimes the music takes us to a place where there is no other response but applause. But at other times — most times, I would assert — the music takes us to a place where silence or the beaming faces of proud adults, or tearful eyes or (my personal favorite) a gasp of astonishment is the natural response. And if we allow for that variety of response, it deepens our worship.

Our youth and children’s choirs led us in worship for the first time a few weeks ago. And our response to this was applause each time they sang. And that was OK. But I would like our young singers to understand their role as worship leaders and not just as performers. I would like them to learn that there are many meaningful ways for our congregation to express appreciation for their music ministry. Silence. Smiles. Gasps of appreciation. Tears. Compliments during coffee hour. And, yes, sometimes when the spirit moves, applause. ♦

— *Beth Norton*

### PIPEWORK

---

During October, final plans for the new organ console were refined and finalized. After many hours of careful analysis, negotiations and discussions with Russell & Company Organ Builders, we now have agreements in place to retrofit the existing organ console in the balcony with a new control system matching the one in the new console (they must be able to talk to each other) and rebuild the most critical and deficient parts of the old console. This will allow installation of the new console downstairs near the pulpit and fulfill our longtime vision of enabling the organist to actually hear the organ “in and as

part of the acoustic space in the Sanctuary.” Keeping the old console in the balcony as a secondary source enables the organ to be played upstairs for choral accompaniment and ensemble music when needed. This configuration will support the flexibility that our diverse music program increasingly demands. The new console will also be upgraded to walnut hardwood and veneers, rather than a painted shell as was originally specified in the contract.

We are grateful that with a few judicious trade-offs in pipe sourcing, these important items on our “wish list” were able to be completely financed with the remainder of the organ budget contingency fund, combined with a small allocation from the organ reserve fund and annual instrument maintenance budget.

We now look forward to the fruition of these plans and hope to hear the first parts of the new organ in the early months of 2010.

We would also like to mention that through the impassioned efforts of Jonathan Ambrosino, noted organ curator and consultant, and Jonathan Ortloff of Russell & Co. the central control unit from the original 1902 Austin organ, long dormant within the large old wind chest, was donated and accepted by the Austin Organ Company as a small piece of their history. ♦

— *Eric and Beth*

### Threshold Choir Welcomes New Singers

Partnering with the First Parish pastoral care ministry, the Threshold Choir taps into an ancient tradition of singing at the bedside of those who are struggling with illness or approaching death. At their meetings, singers learn simple and familiar healing music — such as hymns, chants, lullabies, rounds and spirituals; to support one another, and when invited, to share with parishioners in need of healing, in homes, hospitals and hospice beds. The group is open to any adult who loves to sing and longs to serve through music.

The group meets on the first and third Thursday of the month from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Our next gathering will be Thursday, November 5. For more information, contact **Laurie Corelle** at laurelcorelle@yahoo.com or Music Director **Beth Norton** at music@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602, ext. 420. ♦

**From the RE Council Chair,  
Dave Elwood**

The RE council is a group who meets monthly with the Director of Religious Education (**Pam Howell**) and other staff to discuss, advise, and help with the RE program. Some of you may not know that the RE curriculum is entirely our own, developed in-house, with the exception of the 8th grade OWL (“Our Whole Lives”) program, which originates from the UUA. We are lucky to have dedicated staff to develop curriculum and many adults to deliver it, some contributing significant time and energy outside of Sunday mornings.

This year we are happy to be in the new space as the staff completes the task of moving in and adjusts to one fewer member; in addition to **Pam Howell** (Director), we still have **Mary-Wren vanderWilden** (Youth Program Director), **Jane Barnes** (RE administrator, in the office on weekdays), and **Carol Duane** (Program Coordinator, Sunday mornings in the Milldam space). We thank the staff for their dedication and their extra efforts during the building project and budget cuts.

The RE program has multiple goals, from safe child care and education, to building a sense of spiritual community, social action and encouraging spiritual exploration. For the 6th and lower grades, the curriculum is currently deriving material from the Bible, earth-centered traditions, transcendentalism, world religions, and Unitarian principles and sources, all in age-appropriate ways (no, we have not yet started a “Transcendentalism for Toddlers” program). The 7th graders continue “Art in Action” in the fall and “Neighboring Faiths” in the spring. The 8th graders will again put on “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,” followed by OWL in the spring. Coming of Age (COA) for 9th graders is starting now, and the Youth Group for senior high youth continues to meet Sunday evenings.

Since we, the congregation, own the program, we would like to encourage you to contact us with your comments, questions, and feedback. Is what we are offering consistent with what you believe First Parish children should be learning on Sunday morning? We seek input from all members, whether or not you have children in the program. For those who have or have had children in the program, what were the biggest benefits or drawbacks of the program in your eyes? What are you hearing from your children?

**November RE Calendar**

Sun., Nov. 1	Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–8th Grades Coming of Age 4–6 p.m.
Sun., Nov. 8	Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–8th Grades Coming of Age 4–6 p.m.
Sun., Nov. 15	Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–8th Grades
Sun., Nov. 22	Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–8th Grades
Sun., Nov. 29	Regular RE for Babies–4 years No RE for K–8th Grades

The staff is always available to listen and to help, but we’d also like to encourage you to contact RE Council members directly; we have each adopted a part of the program to represent, so direct your communication to that member, otherwise to any of us. Please let us hear from you.

**RE council members for 2009-2010:**

- Kate Svrcek** (katesvrcek@hotmail.com) – RE Administration
- Amy Capofreddi** (capofreddi18@comcast.net) – Babies–1st Grade
- Dan Trinkle** (d.dantrinkle@comcast.net)
- Gianna Drew** (gianna\_drew@concordacademy.org) – 7th and 8th Grades
- Susan Ward** (susan\_ward\_mail@yahoo.com) – Workshop Rotation Program (2nd – 6th Grades)
- David Elwood** (daveelwood@hotmail.com) – 9th–12th Grades ♦

**RE Orientation Dates 2009-2010 for Leaders and Teachers**

**Orientation Schedule for 2nd–6th Grade Workshop Rotation:**

Term 3: Wednesday, Jan. 6, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Term 4: Wednesday, March 17, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

**Orientation Schedule for 7th, 8th and 9th Grade Teachers:**

7th Grade Neighboring Faiths: Thursday, Jan. 7, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

8th Grade OWL Teachers: Thursday, Nov. 19, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

**Second to Sixth Grade Workshop Rotation**

The Holiday Term will focus on the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Our focus will be on the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. One of our Unitarian Universalist sources is the inspiration we receive from the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. In this term, we are celebrating their call to us, as Unitarian Universalists, to go out into the world and help those in need. Ours is an active faith, and this unit celebrates this hands-on spiritual expression.

11/1 Week 7 of Fall Term: All Souls Day — Creating Altars of Remembrance

11/8 Week 1 of Holiday Term: Feeding Others – Preparing for our Building Dedication

11/15 Week 2 of Holiday Term: Feeding Others – Guest at Your Table and the UUSC

**RE News** continued on page 7

11/22 Week 3 of Holiday Term: Caring for Others – Concord Prison Outreach

11/29 No RE

7th Graders Are in Action Programs

Our 7th graders have worked at Gaining Ground, contributed to the Peace Crane War Memorial, created materials to be used by our younger children in workshop rotation and created a Carbon Monster for the 350.org march. These young Unitarian Universalists have been busy “giving back” to our community, our church and our world. With the leadership of Karen Economopolous, Ruth Bell, Betsy Siebert, Deb Hulihan and Margot Kimball, our children are learning how putting their faith to work can make a difference in the community.

Mark Your Calendars for December 11 and 12

Under the leadership of Brenda Fingold and Victoria Rizzi, our 8th graders have been working each Sunday to prepare the humorous play “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.” This is an intergenerational play for ages five and up. It playfully celebrates our Unitarian Universalist values of inclusion and the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Your family is sure to enjoy this heart-warming dramatic event and First Parish tradition. Come and see the play your child will be performing when they, too, are in 8th grade.

The Holiday Craft Fair Is Back!

“Oh the weather outside is frightful, but inside it’s so delightful...”

No, it can’t be that time of year again! Not quite yet, but the First Parish Elves are busy at work (listen for the tiny hammers tapping) to make sure this holiday season is magical!

The Tradition Is Back The Children’s Craft Workshop will be on Saturday, December 5, from 1:30–4:30 p.m. at First Parish.

So, bring your crafty kids, don your elf shoes and JOIN THE FUN!

Three (3) ways to have fun at the Children’s Craft Workshop:

- Be a child and make up to 16 different crafts including wood-working, ceramics, friendly plastic, jewelry making and pet care items for your family, teachers or friends.
• Be an elf and help at one of the craft stations in the craft workshop.
• Volunteer to help buy supplies, prep wood projects, set up or clean up.

Stop by the table at coffee hour, sign up to be an elf and volunteer your time before, during or after the workshop. Please join us at this wonderful workshop to watch our children with magic in their eyes and a smile on their face, and feel the joy that only making a gift for someone or some pet you love brings! ♦

SENIOR YOUTH NEWS

The youth are focusing on social action in November. Going out into the world allows our youth not only to earn precious high school community service credit, but to bond as a group through helping others. These experiences are then incorporated into the world views of our youth after we spend time reflecting on how they felt and how their perspectives have been enriched or changed. Youth naturally want to reach out and make a difference, and it is my hope that First Parish harnesses this impulse in a fun and rewarding way.

We are doing our first service retreat the first weekend of November. Thanks to Dave and Diane Clapp’s leadership, the youth group will be going to the Heifer Project’s Overlook Farm in Rutland, Massachusetts to work on their farm and learn about world poverty.

The Youth Group will also be delivering buckets of sand to seniors who signed up through the Concord Council on Aging to help them de-ice their walkways in the winter. In addition, we program VCR’s, turn mattresses, remove air conditioners, etc. I encourage youth to participate, as it is one of the most rewarding projects that we do. Youth can earn community service credit and go out to dinner at the 99 Restaurant afterward.

Our November schedule should offer something for everyone:

- Nov. 1 – Costume Dodgeball (come dressed in your Halloween costume)
• Nov. 6-8 – Heifer Service Retreat (forms online)
• Nov. 15 – Council on Aging Workday and dinner afterward, 4–7:30 p.m. (get community service credit)
• Nov. 22 – Vespers, bring musical instruments, readings, etc.
• November 29 – no YRUU — Thanksgiving holiday

November can be a difficult month for youth as they struggle with mid-term exams and college applications, not to mention the dreary weather that follows the spectacular fall weather of October. We hope that Youth Group can be an oasis of peace as well as a fun place for our young people. ♦

—Mary-Wren vanderWilden

## Prison Outreach Orientation

There will be an orientation on November 2 at 6:30 p.m. for persons over 18 years of age who are interested in volunteering at the Concord Prison Farm. The orientation will be held at Northeastern Correctional Center on Barret's Mill Road and will take about two hours. Be sure to bring a valid driver's license. To sign up, contact Lenore James 978-369-1430. For more information, contact **Don Miller**, donaldbmiller@comcast.net, or **Linda Reynolds**, lsmithreynolds@aol.com.



## UUSC Holiday Cards and Gifts Available Online

Start your holiday shopping by going to [www.UUSC.org/store](http://www.UUSC.org/store)! Ten different types of holiday cards are available, all for \$10 for a package of ten. In addition, UUSC is offering water bottles, caps, tote bags, note cards, a pewter chalice, and fair trade items. Closer to the holidays, they hope to offer fair trade gift baskets and baskets woven by women in Darfur. Consider a gift of a year's membership in UUSC, \$45 for singles and \$75 for dual membership.

## Stock the Pantry for Open Table

Come and be part of the First Parish effort to "Stock the Pantry" at Open Table the month of November. Starting on 11/1, pick up your bag at church or in the office during the week, then purchase the items on the list and deliver the bag to the Open Table pantry on Everett Street in Concord or to 37 Emerson Road, Concord. Contact **Claudia Nimar** (cnimar@aol.com) with questions.

## Guest at Your Table Boxes Available on November 15

Support the UUSC and bring a guest to your dinner table for a month. Boxes will be distributed in worship and RE on November 15, (also obtainable through the First Parish office) and should be returned by December 20. Contact **Sue Beck**, sbeck345@comcast.net, with any questions.

## Concord Prison Outreach Holiday Gift Project

Concord Prison Outreach will provide 1600 gift bags for the men at MCI Concord and Northeast Correctional Center each year. Homemade cards (8" x 5") signed with first name only and checks made out to Concord

- Prison Outreach are gratefully accepted. Also, items may be dropped off in the box in the coatroom. Each gift bag will contain the following items:
- 15-oz. bottle shampoo, bar of deodorant soap, stick deodorant, pair white socks (no tube socks), 6-oz. tube of toothpaste, writing pad 6" x 9" (no wire), opaque stick pen (nonretractable), pocket calendar (no wire). Please contact **Becky Blodgett** at 978-369-2564 with any questions.

## "Journey to Freedom" Documentary 1:00-2:30 P.M. on November 15

- Join with **Rev. Jenny Rankin** and UUSC representatives at the Q&A/screening of the post-production documentary "Journey to Freedom", produced by Artemis Joukowsky about his grandparents Waitstill & Martha Sharp.
- This is a story of moral courage and of the Sharps as role models who saw the dignity and worth of everyone and acted upon those values. View the film, provide feedback as it moves into final production, and participate in a Q & A with Artemis Joukowsky. RSVP to **Faith Bade**, fbade@first-parish.org.

## Clean Out Your House for the Homeless

- Do you have pots, pans, silverware, dishes, coffee pots, microwaves, beds, sheets, blankets, pillows, towels, TV's, kitchen tables, chairs, couches, dressers, etc., that could be used to furnish one of 49 homeless family apartments in Lowell? If you have something to donate, please call **Bill Seaver**, 978-369-7318, to arrange a pickup in early November. Bill is also still collecting bags of gently used clothes and linens on his porch at 294 The Valley Road, Concord.

## Get Ready for the Mitten Tree

- The Mitten Tree will be put up in November, and children in RE will be creating their own tree toward the end of the month. Get knitting (or purchase) mittens, hats, and scarves, as the needs are great for the coming cold winter. Contact **Joan Wesolowski**, joanwes@mail.com, with questions.

## Secret Santa Begins November 15

- Names for Secret Santa recipients will be available during coffee hours on Sunday, November 15. Please keep this tradition strong at First Parish and support Renewal House, the Eliot Center, Walden Street School for Girls and First Connections. Drop-off will be detailed with your chosen names and will end December 8. Contact **Allison Aley**, allisonaley@yahoo.com, with questions.

## November 22 Blanket and Towel Drive

- We will be offering two drives beginning on Sunday, November 22 — towels for Household Goods Recycling Ministry and blankets for the Urban Ministry's Renewal House. Please donate your new or gently used blankets or towels at First Parish on November 22. Blankets can also be dropped off at 37 Emerson Road, Concord (contact Claudia Nimar, cnimar@aol.com). A box for the towels will remain in the First Parish coatroom until December 20 (contact Diana Page, dianapage@hotmail.com).

## 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](mailto:SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org); see our website, [www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/97/70/](http://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](mailto:FBade@firstparish.org).



## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Can you remember the first time you walked through the doors of First Parish? Whether it was last week or 30 years ago, try to recall. Were you moved by the sermon? Did you go to coffee hour or back out the front door thinking, “Maybe next time”? Did it take you a month to know First Parish was your spiritual home, or did it take three years for you to sign the membership book? Are you still testing the waters? However it happened that your path brought you to First Parish, you are welcome here!

Welcoming comes in many forms. It can be a smile and nod, a handshake and a hello, or a long conversation filled with questions and understanding. However the welcome is

extended, what is most important is that each of us be present to those among us. With that in mind, I introduce...the Red Mug! Red mugs will be offered at Sunday morning coffee hours to visitors and new friends. If you see someone holding a red mug, greet them. Ask what brought them to



First Parish. Tell them about your experience here. If they are interested in a program or event, steer them in the right direction. It is quite simple — this act of welcoming.

As UU minister Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell says in her prayer about hospitality: “May we be a blessing to the life of anyone who enters this sanctuary — and may this church be a true sanctuary — and may those who come as strangers in turn help us to grow in wisdom, in compassion, and in joy of living.” ♦

—Jane Foley

Membership Director

### Are U New too? The New U Is 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 and are interested in deepening your knowledge of UU-ism? Are you a seasoned member who would like to revitalize your interest or renew your commitment?

Then sign up for the New U! The New U is a three-session program that provides information on UU-ism — its beginnings, growth, legacies and aspirations — as well as an understanding about the programs, opportunities, leaders and financial situation at First Parish.

The program will take place on Sundays — November 1, 15 and 22 — from 4 to 6 p.m. If you’re interested, contact **Jane Foley**, Membership Director, at [jfoley@firstparish.org](mailto:jfoley@firstparish.org) or call the church! ♦

## DEVELOPMENTS

The crisp autumn leaves are swirling around the trees and plantings on the beautiful grounds here at First Parish, and the Milldam Nursery children are streaming past my window all bundled up as they head to their bright and cheerful new space downstairs.

This month has been a busy one as we prepare for a very important milestone in First Parish’s long history — the official dedication and celebration of the new building on November 8.

The commitment of the First Parish community to tackle the building project is commendable. The resulting improvements in terms of accessibility and functionality are parish-wide benefits that can be enjoyed now and for many years to come: deferred maintenance that was long overdue has been taken care of; new religious education classrooms and meeting spaces are in use; and the beautiful sound of the precious organ will soon be heard throughout the Sanctuary once again. These are just a few of the building project’s many accomplishments, none of which could have been undertaken without your generosity.

A priority for me has been the reconciliation of multiple databases, pledge cards, and other records to ensure that the list of capital campaign donors is accurate, that names appear according to stated preference, and that all the honorary and memorial gifts are properly noted. Another top priority has been the planning of a special recognition event for leadership-giving donors that will take place in early November.

To date, 364 families have contributed to the Come Build a Dream capital campaign for First Parish. We recently received a highly meaningful, surprise donation from our partner church in Transylvania; I’m sure you’ll agree that it truly is an extraordinary and inspiring gift for First Parish!

Please note there is still time if you would like to make a new gift or pledge to the Come Build a Dream campaign!

Be sure to hold November 8 on your calendar for the building dedication ceremony and celebration. ♦

—Janet Fletcher Hauswirth

Development Director

## WOMEN'S NEWS

### Women's AM/PM Book Group

As usual, the Women's Book Group will discuss just one book for November and December; and the selection is *Lydia Cassatt: Reading the Morning Paper*, by Harriet Scott Chessman. The evening discussion will be Monday, November 30, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning discussion, on Tuesday, December 1, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. — with both meetings at First Parish.

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](mailto:darien@smithquest.com) or 978-369-1471. ♦

### Books and Dates for 2010:

Jan 25, 26	<i>Infidel</i> , by Ayaan Hirsi Ali
Feb 22, 23	<i>Black Swan Green: A Novel</i> , by David Mitchell
Mar 29, 30	<i>She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders</i> , by Jennifer Finney Boylan
Apr 26, 27	<i>The Elegance of the Hedgehog</i> , by Muriel Barbery and Alison Anderson (translator)
May 24, 25	<i>My Life in France</i> , by Julia Child, with Alex Prud'Homme
June tbd	Potluck; suggestions for next year

### Dance Class for Women Cancer Survivors

**Caroline Ellis** would like to tell other women who have had cancer (any kind of cancer) that there is a wonderful, free, drop-in dance class for women cancer survivors at Emerson Hospital, Saturdays at 10 a.m. Just something fun and playful. No experience or special attire needed. Contact teacher Susan Osofsky-Ross at 781-961-3268.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Jon Is Looking for an Apartment

**Jonathan Keleher** is looking for an affordable one-bedroom apartment within walking distance of the train in either the Concord Depot or West Concord area. Contact **Kate** or **Richard Keleher** if you can help: [kate@rkeleher.com](mailto:kate@rkeleher.com), [kel@rkeleher.com](mailto:kel@rkeleher.com), or 978-369-4550.

### Have Your Kids Outgrown Their Jungle Gym?

Is there an unused swing set/slide/jungle gym in your backyard? I am looking for playground equipment for a number of Massachusetts child care facilities for disadvantaged kids. Contact Mindy Arbo (from the Winchester Unitarian Society) at 781-729-2888 or [mindyarbo@comcast.net](mailto:mindyarbo@comcast.net).

## STANDING COMMITTEE

Many of you participated last spring in a Congregational Conversation — and many of you have expressed interest in what the Standing Committee has done or is doing with the wide range of input we received. We wanted to share with you a quick summary of what we heard, what we've done, and what we see as some next steps. We heard a number of very strong themes: an ongoing, palpable love for this First Parish community; a desire to find ways to support and enhance that sense of community in what has become a large congregation; a desire to articulate more clearly what it means and/or should mean to be a member of First Parish; a call to find opportunities for more parishioners to serve on meaningful committees, and to clarify the roles played by staff and parishioners in those committees; a hope for greater communication and transparency in all that goes on at the church; and a clarion call for lively, food-filled coffee hours in which friends can reconnect and newcomers can feel welcomed and embraced.

These themes, together with other inputs, have generated a number of steps: **Jane Foley** was hired as membership director and is working closely with the staff and the Standing Committee to address many of the themes above; you will soon be seeing some very tangible changes at coffee hour, including creative ways to make sure that all feel welcome; the Nominating Committee just held a wonderful day-long meeting with all committee chairs and staff members to ensure that all of us know about the myriad opportunities for participation, and that all are aligned and excited about this year's goals and roles; and Sunday morning announcements are now being made by a mix of Standing Committee members and committee chairs to help us all know more about all of the activities and opportunities.

We held a Standing Committee meeting in September in which we spent a full Saturday on these themes, including three hours on the question "What does/should it mean to be a member of First Parish?" The Standing Committee task force on membership presented some extensive research into what it means to be a member at a number of faith communities in the area; we will continue to push this thinking ahead and plan on sharing/discussing it with all who are interested as we move forward.

We will schedule a follow-up Congregational Conversation in the spring, and are in the process of scheduling a Sunday Forum in which all who would like can join us for informal conversation. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to ask and/or give input to any of us about these — or other issues.

—**Don Leopold**, Chair of the Standing Committee

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held at First Parish on Monday evening, November 9, at 6:30 p.m. Please look for the monthly minutes online at [firstparish.org](http://firstparish.org) under Church Life (you must log in) or on the church bulletin board. ♦

# NOVEMBER 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.
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 p.m.
Networking Group	Tuesday	9:00 a.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:00 a.m. (not 11/24)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
<i>Yoga Basics</i>	Wednesday	10:00 a.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m.
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	5:00 p.m. (not 11/25)
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Thursday	7:00 p.m. (not 11/26)
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Stress Reduction &amp; Relaxation</i>	Thursday	7:00 p.m. (not 11/19 or 11/26)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.
<i>Stress Reduction &amp; Relaxation</i>	Friday	9:30 a.m. (not 11/20 or 11/27)

Sun	Nov 1	4:00	New U	.	Sun	Nov 15	1:00	SAC Documentary and Lunch
		4:00	Needleworkers	.			4:00	New U
		4:00	Coming of Age	.			4:00	Needleworkers
Mon	Nov 2	7:00	<i>Sheltering at Home</i>	.	Mon	Nov 16	12:00	Newsletter Deadline
		7:00	RE Council	.			7:00	<i>Making Art from Life II</i>
		7:30	<i>Introduction to Humanism</i>	.			7:30	<i>Introduction to Humanism</i>
Tue	Nov 3	12:00	<i>Being Older and Wiser</i>	.	Tue	Nov 17	2:00	Seniors' Housing Solutions
Wed	Nov 4	7:00	Youth Advisory Committee	.	Wed	Nov 18	12:15	<i>Sandwiches and Short Story</i>
Thu	Nov 5	7:00	<i>Partner Yoga</i>	.	Thu	Nov 19	6:30	Our Whole Lives RE Orientation
		7:30	Threshold Choir	.			7:30	Transcendentalist Council
Fri	Nov 6	7:00	<i>Partner Yoga</i>	.			7:30	Threshold Choir
Sat	Nov 7	10:00	Artisans Fair	.	Fri	Nov 20	7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing</i>
Sun	Nov 8	3:00	Building Dedication	.	Sat	Nov 21	9:00	Kerem Shalom Blood Drive
		4:00	<i>Cakes for the Queen of Heaven</i>	.			6:00	Brahms Concert
		4:00	Needleworkers	.	Sun	Nov 22	12:15	Nominating Committee
Mon	Nov 9	6:30	Standing Committee	.			4:00	Needleworkers
		7:00	<i>Cakes for the Queen of Heaven</i>	.			4:00	New U
Tue	Nov 10	12:00	<i>Being Older and Wiser</i>	.	Wed	Nov 25	6:30	Membership Committee
		3:00	<i>Tea and Poetry</i>	.	Thu	Nov 26		Holiday—Office Closed
Wed	Nov 11		Holiday—Office Closed	.	Fri	Nov 27		Holiday—Office Closed
		9:30	WPA Board Meeting	.	Sun	Nov 29	4:00	Needleworkers
Fri	Nov 13	12:30	<i>T'ai Ji</i>	.	Mon	Nov 30	7:30	<i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
Sat	Nov 14	9:00	Photo Club	.				
		7:00	First Parish Auction	.				



# First Parish Auction 2009 — Mastering the Art of French Bidding!

**Saturday, November 14**

Registration begins at 6:00 p.m.

French Dinner at 7:00 p.m., Auction at 8:00 p.m.

Raffles\* and a Special Grand Prize!

Tickets, \$25, at Coffee Hours and First Parish Office

\* Raffle tickets will be available at coffee hours and in the First Parish office, including a chance to own the beautiful “Sunrise in Acadia” painting by Doug Baker, now on display in the First Parish lower hall.

**Watch for the new-this-year Silent Auction Online,  
with items available beginning November 1  
at [FirstParish.org](http://FirstParish.org)!**

The First Parish auction is a great social event, an opportunity to bid on unique offerings from First Parish friends and neighbors, and an important fundraiser that’s also lots of fun! Don’t miss it!





## Covenant Groups

On Sunday, October 11, the service focused on the “Ultimacy and Intimacy” of Covenant Groups. According to James Luther Adams, the late Unitarian Universalist ethicist and theologian, we join a faith community looking for friendship (intimacy) and for meaning in our lives (ultimacy). When these two needs are met, we as individuals and as a community are more likely to broaden our horizons to work for social justice for the large world community. Thanks to everyone (**Rebecca Curzon, Susan Page, Betty King, Bill Seaver, Darien Smith, Mark Richards, Alice Kaufman**) who worked to make the service meaningful for all — whether or not you are a member of a covenant group.

At the service, **Bill Seaver** mentioned a topic, his group recently discussed: If you had all the money you needed, would you be happy? Questions often invite more questions: How does one define happiness? How much money does one think they need to not need any more? These are questions that cause us to look at what is important in our life, what gives us meaning.

If you are interested in exploring topics such as acceptance, friendship, letting go, evil, death, etc., in an intimate group, consider joining a Covenant Group. Groups of fewer than ten people meet at least once a month for one and a half hours of confidential sharing of spiritual ideas and experiences. The following groups currently have openings:

Sundays, 4:00–5:30 p.m.; contact Bill Seaver, 978-369-7318 or billseaver@earthlink.net.

First and third Sunday of the month, 7:00–8:30 p.m.; contact Mark Richards; mark.s.richards@verizon.net or 978-771-9823.

First and third Tuesday of the month, 2:00–3:30 p.m.; contact Don Miller, donaldbmiller@comcast.net or 781-646-4965.

Tuesdays, 7:00–8:30 p.m.; contact David Downing at dowdav@earthlink.net or 978-263-8454

Every other Thursday, 1:00–2:30 p.m.; contact Fred Van Deusen at fredvandeu@aol.com or 978-369-0435

## II. Creativity As A Spiritual Path

### Sandwiches and Short Story

Formerly known as “Listening for God,” this informal group meets with Rev. Gary Smith once a month to explore a story’s meaning. Bring a sandwich and beverage and join us Wednesday, November 18, at 12:15 p.m. The story for November is “Bible,” by Tobias Wolff, found in *Best American Short Stories 2008*, Salmon Rushdie, editor, pb \$14.00, a collection to be used throughout the fall. The other fall date is December 9.

### Tea and Poetry

Join Rev. Margie King Saphier and Lorraine Loviglio on the second Tuesday of the month for afternoon tea while sharing your favorite poems and listening to others share theirs (no poetic talent required). This informal monthly gathering is for you if you enjoy poetry or always thought you would if you knew where to start. Bring a poem (or two or three) to read aloud. Relaxed and inspired, we will recall poems we may have loved years ago, discover new ones, and explore the power of poetry to move us to tears or laughter.

Tuesdays, 11/10, 12/8, 1/12, 2/9, 3/9, 4/13, 5/11 3:00-4:30 p.m.

## III. Sources of Unitarian Universalism

### Introduction to Humanism

This brief survey course provides an overview of the history, philosophy, and goals of humanism, the role of humanism in history, the core principles of humanism, and what humanism offers the individual and society. The last two sessions explore the fundamentals of humanism and the humanist life stance. They review some organizational definitions of humanism, the Humanist Manifestoes and other statements of humanisms, varieties of humanism, how this life stance informs meaning and purpose in life and what it offers the individual. We will also discuss the open society, self-determination and this open-ended quest to answer the question, Are you a humanist? Led by members of the Concord Area Humanists. Contact Patrick Everett pne@aol.com, 978-369-1589, for further information.

Mondays 11/2 and 11/16 7:30-9:00 p.m. \$10/session

### Tracing the Transcendentalists in Concord

Clustering in Concord in the 1830’s and 1840’s, the Transcendentalists were a group of friends — writers, thinkers, readers, seekers — who were trying to think in new ways about the world they lived in. They questioned many things around them: church, school, university, government. They wondered about the nature of the universe, God, humanity. This fall, join Rev. Jenny Rankin as we combine in-class discussion of some of the core Transcendentalist texts along with “field trips” to trace the Transcendentalists in Concord.

Thurs., 10/29, 12–1:00 p.m. at First Parish,  
1:00–2:00 p.m. at The Wayside

Thurs., 11/5, 12–1:00 p.m. at the Concord Museum,  
1:00–2:00 p.m. at First Parish

Thurs., 11/19, 12-1:00 p.m. at First Parish for wrap up

# A Fabled Partnership

First Parish and the Unitarian Church in Székelykeresztúr (aka Keresztúr) have a fabled partnership. Unitarian since 1568, that church's origins stretch back to the 13th century in an ethnically-Hungarian region of Romania. Our Transylvanian brothers and sisters have kept their spirit alight through the centuries, often as an ethnic minority, through Communism, Facisim, famine and war.

December of 1989 brought the downfall of one of the most egregious of these destructive forces, the Ceauflescu regime. The gunsmoke had barely cleared when our own Reverend Gary Smith joined an historic UUA delegation to Transylvania. Our partnership with the Keresztúr Church began soon after, based (in UUA parlance) on: "our shared principles, a belief in freedom of conscience, the use of reason in matters of faith, and a tolerance of those with differing opinions."



*Reverend József Szombatfalvi of the Unitarian Church in Székelykeresztúr.*

It's sobering to remember that for our friends, these avowed values have often had consequences.

Although never a partnership based on charity, financial aid has been vital in helping the Keresztúr ministry to rebuild and carry out its countless responsibilities. Since 1997, our sponsorship of Székely (region) students in need has also been crucial. In conjunction with the Hungarian Society of Massachusetts, 133 students have thus far received essential support in pursuing an education.

Through the years many esteemed visitors have visited our sanctuary, including distinguished clergy, scholars, even László TCEkés, illustrious hero of the Romanian Revolution. Of course, Reverend József Szombatfalvi and his wife, Anna have become familiar faces, as have numerous members of the Keresztúri congregation. Just last year, eight dear friends were here for our Transylvanian Thanksgiving service including Réka Gagyí who, back on a college work-exchange program, contributed again to this year's service.

Conversely, many among us have been joyously welcomed in Keresztúr, with four youth service pilgrimages (YSPs) and two adult choir excursions since 2002. Independently, we have attended weddings, celebrated births and, since 2007, have represented First Parish at each Keresztúr Unitarian High School graduation. As time has flown, past-youth service pilgrims have returned on their own. For them Keresztúr is a place to go, like going home, even for the holidays.

Five members of our congregation were there "at home" during this year's Transylvanian Thanksgiving, celebrating our marvelous partnership with a two-day dedication of the newly completed community house. You know the story — built in the 19th century, the building had been neglected by the former regime. Through generous donations, SAC grants and special collections, First Parish supported its reconstruction all along. Two of our YSP groups even provided physical labor. Now it's open — with a parish hall, ministers' offices, a library for centuries-old archives, women's and youth centers along with rooms to accommodate dozens of guests and generate much needed income in a town with no hotels. To see photos, visit [www.first-parish.org/photos/gallery2/v/Dedication/](http://www.first-parish.org/photos/gallery2/v/Dedication/)

It has been nearly a generation since Ceauflescu fell and Gary and that UUA contingent rushed off to Transylvania. Yet our kindred spirits still try to recover from a history of oppression as progressive Unitarians and ethnic Hungarians, in a modern Romania that is itself experiencing unrelenting change. Clearly the years of much-needed aid have been deeply appreciated, but so have the cherished friendships formed along the way.

—Winslow Pettingell,  
Partner Church Committee Cochair,  
October 2009



# *An Astonishing Gift*

It came as a huge surprise during this year's Transylvanian Thanksgiving service when Réka Gagyí, representing the Unitarian Church of Székelykeresztúr, presented Reverend Gary Smith with an accounting of a major contribution. In the history of the UUA, this is one of only a few instances where an American church has been on the receiving end of such a financial gift from its Transylvanian partner. Accompanying the presentation was this letter from Reverend József Szombatfalvi:

Dear Brothers and Sisters from Concord!

We love you all and try to express this love whenever we meet or think of you. We have learned from the Bible, and life has taught us, that: "A friend is a loving companion at all times and a brother is born to share troubles." — Proverbs 17:17-

You are now repairing and enlarging your church. In these hard economic times this isn't an easy undertaking. Therefore we would like to give something back after all the help you have given to us, year by year. I suggested to our leading board that we organize fundraising in order to help on your project. My suggestion was greeted with joy and people asked with tears in their eyes: Can we do this?

Yes, we can. The proof is that a retired person from our board was the first to offer \$100. This is half his monthly pension. A businessman also offered \$100. Then a student who was once sponsored by your student scholarship program offered \$100. And at the time our gift was only a rumor. We (made it) official on our Thanksgiving Day.

[As noted in the accounting presented by Réka:] The leading board of our community has determined that by the end of October, \$10,500 will be collected and sent to you. Please take our offer with love. God bless your work and lives.

With love,  
József and the Congregation of Székelykeresztúr



*Réka Gagyí makes a presentation to Reverend Gary Smith on behalf of the Keresztúr congregation.*

# Come to the Dedication of First Parish and The Meeting House

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, AT 3:00 P.M.



**O**n November 8th – Please come back to church at 3:00 in the afternoon for a very special service and celebration of First Parish and the Meeting House!

The entire congregation is invited to attend!

The workers have (almost) left the premises. The din has diminished. The painters are finished, the elevator stops at all levels, the kitchen is open, RE is bustling, and the new landscaping only awaits next spring to reveal its beauty. The church is looking lovely and in its prime again!

At 3:00 p.m., we will gather in the Sanctuary to dedicate and celebrate the completion of our new Religious Education wing and renovation of the Fourth Meeting House — a dream that began more than ten years ago and is now a reality — thanks to the amazing support of our ministers and staff, and the generosity of this congregation.

As a faith community, we will reflect on our rich Unitarian Universalist heritage and the legacy of this Fourth Meeting House in Concord.

After the service, there will be a ribbon cutting and then a fun, joyful (and perhaps noisy!) procession through the new space, where there will be some stories to hear about UU history and the building project. Light refreshments will be served in Parish Hall.

See you November 8!

Cynthia Ellis  
First Parish Dedication Committee

