

The *Meeting House* News

REVERIES

Dear Friends,

Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Holidays!
Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever this season brings you, whether it be joy or sorrow, I wish you some moments of blessing in the midst of it all. I hope you can exchange gifts of unexpected kindness, the surprise of forgiveness, and enough love. Take a moment to look into someone's eyes and be grateful. Listen to the music with new ears. Be a gift to those who love you.

I thank all of you who send Eliz and me greetings this month, especially the cards and letters that fill our mailbox. I am like a child each day now as I walk down the driveway to the mailbox. And I love the pictures! I save them. Come in to my office someday and look at the red picture album on my coffee table. It is filled with all your holiday pictures, and your wedding and child dedication pictures too! I love to browse through them.



On Sunday, January 3, there will be one service at 11:00. As last year, it will be for all ages, it will be informal; we will sing carols and hear new and familiar readings. And I will also invite people to write on a card (cards and pencils provided) one thing you might wish to release from the past year, and on the other side of the card, one wish, one prayer, one resolution for the new year. I will read many of these aloud, no name attached! We did this last year, and it was very moving for many of us to hear how much we have in common.

So, love to you all, our greeting card to you, and love to your families. And may you know peace and love in these days and in those to come.

—*Gary Smith*

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 3

One service at 11:00 o'clock

Gary Smith, preaching

New Year Family Choir – all are invited!

(see page 5)

January 10

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 – First Parish Choir

11:00 – Silver Bass Trio

January 17

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – Intergenerational

Gospel Choir (see page 5)

January 24

Jenny Rankin, preaching

9:00 – Robert Castillo, guitar

11:00 – First Parish Choir

January 31

Helen Cohen, preaching

9:00 – Joan Esch, cello

11:00 – First Parish Choir

Don't Miss...

WPA LUNCHEON!

January 19

11:30 Social Hour, 12:00 p.m. Lunch

Presentation by Dick Shohet

First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ♦ Gathered in 1636

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There are three inserts with this newsletter:

- ◆ Wright Tavern Center Programs
- ◆ Women's Retreat Form
- ◆ Personal Information Form

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, January 25
Monday, February 22
Monday, March 22

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

PARISH NOTES

Transylvania Troubadours Concert

The Transylvania Troubadours, an a cappella quintet, present a free concert in the Parish Hall on Monday, December 28, at 2 p.m. The repertoire will be a mix of barbershop, classical and Christmas music. Families are welcome. For information, e-mail troubadours@rgood.net.

It's Spicy Bouillon Season!

Winter is upon us and it is time to think Bouillon! **Kel Keleher** is soliciting volunteers to help one Sunday a month, by either buying, preparing and serving for the 9:00 o'clock service, or serving and cleaning up at the 11:00 o'clock service. Please e-mail him at kel@rkeleher.com or call 978-944-2734 if you are interested in helping with this delicious First Parish tradition.

First Parish Theatre Project, January 8 at 7:00 p.m., "Two Shakespearean Actors"

We have many people interested in exploring and reading plays at First Parish. We meet on the first Friday of the month at First Parish. This month, due to New Year's, we will be meeting on January 8, at 7 p.m. Our play this month is *Two Shakespearean Actors*, by Richard Nelson. It is a contemporary play about two historic performances of *Macbeth* in New York in 1849, a rivalry and a riot. It also deals with the acting life and actors real relationships. The script is easily available so we are expecting that everyone who attends will be bringing a copy of the play. If you have any difficulty with this, please contact **Claudia Nimar** at cnimar@aol.com or **Lillian Anderson** at Lillianand@comcast.net.

WPA Luncheon Meeting — Tuesday, January 19

The Women's Parish Association cordially invites you to join old and new friends for a buffet luncheon followed by a presentation by **Dick Shohet** of First Parish, who will talk about Mill Iron Farm in Carlisle, where he and his wife **Carolyn Shohet** raise beef cattle that feed on organically grown grass. Social time: 11:30 a.m. Buffet Lunch: Noon sharp. All men and women are invited. Charge: Eight dollars. Contact the church office at 978-369-9602 or **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net by January 15 for reservations, child care or transportation requests.

Emerson Forum Meeting

The Emerson Forum will meet on Monday night, February 22, to discuss Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Friendship." The meeting will be held from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Wright Tavern. The Forum is a lively, thought-provoking discussion group that meets quarterly to examine individual essays of Emerson's and where they fit into his overall thinking.

World Day of Prayer — Save the Date, March 5

This year's local World Day of Prayer service and luncheon will take place on Friday, March 5, at 11 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, Concord. Women of Cameroon have written this year's service. In order to celebrate their culture and stand in solidarity with them in their struggles, we like to have decorations, art objects, musical instruments, clothing, etc., on display during the event. Please contact **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net if you can lend such items for the day.

MONEY MATTERS

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying the holiday season! Thanksgiving and Christmas are past, and soon it will be 2010! Two thousand and nine was quite a year for First Parish, culminating in the completion of our building project and with it, the return of all the wonderful activities and programming that make First Parish our spiritual home. I've been working in the main building for a few months now, and I still feel happy about this major accomplishment for our community.

And with the end of the year in sight, I hope you are considering a donation to First Parish's "Hold On To What Is Good" appeal, now in its second year. Your financial gifts to First Parish help our community to flourish, and allow us to provide the kinds of programs that help us "go out into the world" to help make this world a better place. If you are able, please make a contribution, and if you so desire, make it in honor or memory of someone you hold close to your heart.

Best wishes to you for a wonderful 2010!

—*Melissa Perdue Gallo*

Business Manager

SUNDAY FORUMS

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

PASTORAL CARE NEWS

Throughout my early childhood, I often thought about the next millennium. Would I be alive? How would I celebrate? What would I be doing in 2010? I'd be 65! It all seemed so far away. I thought I would be very, very old! Well, here I am. I no longer picture myself as very, very old, even though I will qualify for Medicare in 2010.

Although it seemed to take forever for me to reach my 21st birthday, it seems like the next 44 years went by much too quickly! Carlos Castaneda teaches us to live with death at our shoulder so we are awake to the moments, people and beauty of our lives. In actuality we do live with death at our shoulders, since none of us know when we will die; it's just that most of us choose not to live in this awareness. But it is important to make certain preparations for our final exit. In February, I will be offering *The Rest of Your Life and Beyond*, a four-session class to prepare for this final event. This program is the same as the one offered two years ago, except I changed a session to explore ways of talking with our loved ones about our wishes at the end of life. For more details, please check the Wright Tavern Center website.

It is also helpful to think about your memorial service. Is there a reading you want included or a hymn? Over the years **Gary Smith** has distributed the Personal Information Record Form, which helps parishioners make their wishes for their service known to the ministers. The form includes additional information, such as who is your health care proxy, who should be notified in case of an emergency, etc. This information is kept in a confidential file. At the end of life, this form can help your family to respect your wishes as well as in planning your memorial service. The Personal Record Form is included in this newsletter as well as in the Orders of Service for the month of January. You can also pick up a copy on the brochure rack outside the office door. No matter your age, we hope you will take time to fill out this form and return it to the office, with attention to: **Rev. Gary Smith**, **Rev. Jenny Rankin** or **Rev. Margie King Saphier**.

I give a big heartfelt thanks to **Peter Nobile** and **Tony Rodriguez**. Tony and Peter have retired from pastoral care lay ministry. I thank them for their support and for their compassionate presence to those whom they visited and called. They will be missed. We welcome **Ross Harris**, **Carolyn Shohet** and **Lois Suarez**. Ross, Carolyn and Lois have served as parish visitors for several years and will now serve as pastoral care lay ministers.

—*Margie King Saphier*

Associate Minister for Pastoral Care

Covenant Groups and Food for Thought

Here are three quotes about perception and what we are able to see:

What you see in yourself is what you see in the world.
— Afghani proverb

He who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality. —Anwar Sadat

We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are. —Anais Nin

Do you agree or disagree with these statements? What determines how you see the world?

PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE

Don't forget to join us for a special evening with Balázs scholar, Rev. Róbert Bálint. Each year the Balázs scholarship program invites an exceptional young Unitarian Transylvanian minister to study at the Starr King UU Graduate School in Berkeley, California and we at First Parish are honored to host Róbert on Friday 8 January. For more information about Róbert, his family and the Balázs Scholars program, see <http://tinyurl.com/yee6wfw>.

The evening's festivities will begin at 6:00 p.m., and will include a short Vesper service at 6:30, followed by a potluck supper and what promises to be a riveting group discussion. Sign-up sheets are available during Sunday coffee hours in December or you can reserve a spot by contacting pcc co-chair, **Winslow Pettingell** (e-mail LondonSW11@aol.com, phone: 978-369-6593). Bring your curiosity, your favorite dish and beverage, and a healthy appetite.

In other news we are pleased to announce that we have eleven new sponsors for our Keresztúr student sponsorship program, offering essential support for those pursuing a high school or college education. Many thanks to **Sue Beck** and **Ivan Kristoffy** for this program's continued success!

- A number of our own young adults will be traveling to Transylvania over the next few months. **Elena Siani** is planning to visit the Hegyi family in Keresztúr for the New Year, **Marisa Welch** will visit Réka Gagy in Keresztúr and Kolozsvár in February (she has offered to carry any messages you might have for your Keresztúri friends) and **Gaby Chiha** will travel in July, to help out with the oddie English camp and other activities.
- We are pleased to announce that First Parish will host the (national) Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council winter board meeting, March 4 to 6, as it prepares to celebrate its 20th anniversary. A dinner and informal discussion, open to all, will be held on the evening of Friday, March 5.
- Your First Parish Partner Church Committee always welcomes new members. Our next supper meeting will be held at the home of **Winslow** and **Linda Pettingell** on Thursday, January 14, at 6:30 p.m. For further information drop Winslow a line (at LondonSW11@aol.com). For our latest pcc news and information, including more about Rev. Bálint and the Balázs Scholar Program, see <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/partner-church>. ♦
- *Minden jól!* "Best wishes!" — **Lillian Anderson** and **Winslow Pettingell**, PCC cochairs

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Images from the 2009 Berde Mózes Unitarian High School Graduation in Székelykeresztúr. Left, the graduating seniors process singing; and right, Elena Siani (with Emese Timea Nagy), representing First Parish and bringing greetings on our behalf.

MUSINGS AND MUSIC NOTES

A few weeks ago, when Pam asked our children what a “carol” was, they answered, “a Christmas song.” This is our modern understanding of the genre. The word “carol” originated with the French *carole*, an early pagan dance song performed during the Winter Solstice celebration. It is easy to see how the *carole* became the “Christmas carol.”

As the First Parish Choir prepares Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols* (Opus. 28) for our worship services on December 20, I’ve grown increasingly aware that we are standing on the

“holy ground” of ancient Christian orthodoxies as well as the pagan rituals that predated them in Europe. The Old English texts selected and set by Britten for this unusual work reflect customs and beliefs of medieval European Christianity that have largely been lost in secular American culture. What are the “Twelve Days of Christmas”? What does the Nativity story have to do with Adam and Eve?



Is it a coincidence that the Christian festival of Candelmas (February 2) falls at the midpoint between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox, a time celebrated through many ancient pagan rituals? *The Ceremony of Carols* is a rich musical reminder of our many-layered religious and cultural heritage.

Benjamin Britten [1913-1976] composed *A Ceremony of Carols* in the spring of 1942, on a trans-Atlantic voyage aboard the *M.S. Axel Johnson* — a dangerous passage, due to German U-Boat activity. Most of the texts are Old English poems that Britten discovered in *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, a volume he picked up during his ship’s stopover in Nova Scotia. These poems are steeped in a medieval understanding of God, the world and humankind. The work was originally scored for treble choir and harp. But due to its great popularity, Britten’s publishing house, Boosey and Hawkes, commissioned a setting for mixed chorus by Julius Harrison. *A Ceremony of Carols* is an unusual composition that it hard to define. It is neither an oratorio nor a pageant nor even a simple medley of Christmas carols. But through it, Britten has created a musical ritual that connects us to the ancient origins of our Yuletide celebrations.

We will welcome Judith Ross as our harpist on December 20. She will provide accompaniment for *A Ceremony of Carols*, as well as the annual entrance of our littlest angels on this special music Sunday.

— Beth Norton

Sing in the New Year!

On Sunday, January 3, the music for our one service, at 11:00 o’clock, will be provided by an ad hoc “New Year Family Choir.” The group will rehearse at 10:00 and learn two songs celebrating the New Year to sing during the service. The choir is open to all, and families are encouraged to come and sing together. Please contact **Beth Norton** at music@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602, ext. 420 for more information.

Intergenerational Gospel Choir

On Sunday, January 17, to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday, we will assemble our annual Intergenerational Gospel Choir to sing at both services. The choir, which will be co-led by **Anderson Manuel, Gail Carey and Beth Norton**, will sing powerful, easy-to-learn gospel songs.

In addition to the Sunday commitment, there will be one rehearsal on Wednesday evening, January 13, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. This group is open to singers of all ages, and you do not have to read music to join. We ask that singers who decide to join commit to singing both services on January 17. Anyone who would like to gather for pizza before the Wednesday rehearsal is welcome! Just let us know in advance so we can order enough for all. We will ask for donations to cover the cost of the pizza. For more information or to sign up for the choir and pizza, contact **Beth Norton** by e-mail at bnorton@firstparish.org, or call 978-369-9602, ext. 420.

Progress on the Organ Project

Steady progress is being made on the rebuilding of our wonderful organ. Updated information will come in February’s *Meeting House News*.



The organ console in its new location

REFLECTION AND RE NEWS

There was that very tense moment. You know the kind. You are watching the 8th graders in the play *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, and there is suddenly ... silence. One

second, two, five ... everyone knows there is a problem.

The audience is on the edge of their seats. Little kids' eyes start popping as they watch their idols, 8th graders, face the reality of an unplanned silence in a play. And then

I notice it. The 8th graders look at each other, they make

eye contact, they say no words, but they are communicating in some language that only develops over months of working on something together, as a team. Suddenly, out of nowhere, they seem to agree, and someone says a line. There is a slight smile between them, and the play carries on, as if nothing has happened at all.

This is the stuff of stories, of memories. After the play, they are together, laughing, talking about that shared moment. A moment where they were simply in it together and got through it together. That is why I love this place. That is why I love being in this real-life play with all of you. ♦

— Pam Howell

OWL Begins

Our first OWL class begins on January 24. We are lucky to have fantastic parent leaders this year: **Mark Russell-Prior, Peter Nobile, Lora Venesy** and **Laura Warner**.

We will also have a concurrent gathering of OWL parents. If you are a parent and would like to be part of this discussion about your child and this ever-changing culture, feel free to stop in. Parents will explore questions about how to share values, improve communication, and recognize signs of concern. Ultimately, we must each develop our own language around the issues that surface during the teenage years, but it is always an opportunity to share this journey with other parents. Our first gathering will be on the second OWL class January 24, at 3:30 p.m. (1 hour before pickup).

January 2010 RE Calendar

Sun., Jan. 3	Regular RE for Babies – 4 years No RE
Sun., Jan. 10	Regular RE for Babies – 4 years Regular RE for K–6th Grades No RE for 7th or 8th Grades 9th Grade Coming of Age with Parents, 4 to 6 p.m.
Sun., Jan. 17	Regular RE for Babies – 4 years No RE
Sun., Jan. 24	Regular RE for Babies – 4 years Regular RE for K–6th Grades 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths begins, 11 a.m. 8th Grade OWL begins, 2 p.m.
Sun., Jan. 31	Regular RE for Babies – 4 years Regular RE for K–6th Grades 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths 11a.m. 8th Grade OWL, 2 p.m.

Second–Sixth Grade Workshop Rotation Judeo-Christian Teachings: Love Thy Neighbor

January 3	No RE for 2nd-6th Grades
January 10	Week 7 of the Holiday Term: The Golden Rule — A Celebration of the end of the Holiday Term
January 17	No RE for 2nd-6th Grades
January 24	Week 1 of Winter Term – We Are UU: Direct Experience with the Transcendent
January 31	Week 2 of Winter Term – Communal Spiritual Practices: Chinese New Year, Why do we go to Church? Experiencing Noble Silence

RE Orientation Dates

These orientations are for the leaders and teachers of each of these programs.

Second-Sixth Grade Workshop Rotation Dates

Orientation for Term 3: Wednesday, January 6, 7:30–9:00 p.m.

Orientation for Term 4: Wednesday, March 17, 7:30–9:00 p.m.

Orientation Schedule for 7th Grade Teachers

Orientation for 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Spring
Thursday, January 7, 7:30–9:00 p.m.

RE News continued on page 7

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

I would like to give a special thanks to Brenda Fingold and Victoria Rizzi for directing this humorous and magical play with our 8th graders. This dramatic RE program provided our youth with the opportunity to take on healthy risks that challenge them, that hold them accountable to others and that require commitment. Personal challenge, accountability and commitment are all important goals of this program. We are lucky to have such leaders, who not only work well with our young teens, but who also help them realize their potential. Being in a play is all about commitment — showing up, learning your lines, not letting your peers down. This spirit was evident in their heart-warming performance. Thank you to both Brenda and Victoria for making this a great success.

The Holiday Craft Workshop

Our craft workshop was just amazing. The children, the elves, the din of busy craft makers. Story after story, table after table, community was being built — with hammers, with beads, with sculpey clay. We needed everyone to show up to make this happen, and you all did. It was a gift to our First Parish Community.

But who was the giver? Who was the life force behind all of the organization and crafting and purchasing? Who was the Head Elf? Susan Ward! Without her steadfast commitment, this simply would not have happened. If you are looking to tell a story about the day or just give a hug for the joy you received from this First Parish tradition, then Susan is the person to receive it. Thank you, Susan.

STANDING COMMITTEE

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held at First Parish on Monday evening, January 11, at 6:30 p.m. Please look for the monthly minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log in) or on the church bulletin board. ♦

At our December session of Coming of Age, Jenny Rankin led a UU-101 session, culminating in the 9th graders writing their “elevator speech.” That is, a short, concise way to explain Unitarian Universalism, should someone on an elevator ask you — and you have six floors to do it, all of 45 seconds. Although each speech was different, a few themes kept coming up: acceptance, community and freedom. Later that night at Youth Group I asked a few upperclassmen what their elevator speech might include and the same themes kept coming up. I realized that although our noncreedal faith isn’t always easy to explain, our youth are drawn to a community that is welcoming, accepting, gives them a sense of belonging, and allows for the freedom to search for personal meaning.

The YAC (Youth Advisory Committee) has planned a terrific January with something for everyone!

Sun., Jan. 3: Movie Night, Food, Inc.

Sun., Jan. 10: Improv Night

Mon., Jan. 17: No YRUU for MLK Weekend

Sun., Jan. 24: Paint the Icy Cave

Fri.-Sun., Jan. 29-31: Winter Retreat; forms on the website

For the past three years, the Youth Group has sponsored a student from Transylvania. The YAC decided that this year we’d ask each youth to donate \$10-\$20 that he or she would personally earn to fund our student. Our youth can feel proud that they are making it possible for Hunor Zsigmond to attend school.

For most of our youth, final exams are at the end of January. It is a stressful time as they try to remember/relearn/cram in everything they learned from the fall. Our seniors are in the dark, never-ending days of January/February, waiting to hear back from colleges. It is our hope that the Youth Group can be a place of acceptance, community and freedom.

May you have a wonderful 2010! ♦

— Mary-Wren vanderWilden

SOCIAL ACTION COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

What is a home? How do you make a home? The Social Action Community chose the theme of Home this year as an organizing concept because it resonates with most of us. We all want to have a home where we feel safe and comforted, especially in these difficult times. SAC is working on a number of initiatives, highlighted below, based on the concept of “home.”



Our Environmental Leadership initiative involves protecting our home, the earth. Our Holiday “Organizations in Need” program helps so many who don’t have a home, or are trying to stay in their home. SAC also invites all First Parish members to attend and contribute to a big event on January 30. More details are presented below but the HGRM/C2C donation drive is a huge opportunity for our entire congregation to gather together as a community of activists and provide the essentials of “home” for needy individuals and families in Massachusetts. We act out our benediction every day; and when we join together, we make an even bigger difference. Thank you for all that you have done during this holiday season.

— Faith Bade

Social Action Program Director

Thank You — You Have Made a Huge Difference!

The First Parish “Organization in Need 2009” program is ongoing as of this writing, but here is a sense of what our community has done so far. We have contributed over 50 bags of food to Open Table, 10 towels to HGRM, and 2 blankets to Renewal House. The sixth graders made a Mitten Tree in RE and also made scarves; the tree is now overflowing. Sixty-five names were adopted through our Secret Santa program, and Concord Prison Outreach prison bag donations came through both RE and our congregation. UUSC Guest at Your Table boxes have not been returned yet, but we hope to surpass last year’s donations, and donations for Lowell continue to appear on Bill Seaver’s porch. Wow!

HGRM/C2C Donation Drive Saturday, January 30

SAC has two new programs, Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts

(www.HGRM.org) and Cradles to Crayons (www.cradlestocrayons.org), and their new leaders are combining efforts for one big fun-filled community donation drive on Saturday, January 30, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. More details will follow, but there will be music and food for the many workers of all ages who will be on hand to sort through donated items. There will be a truck from HGRM to collect larger household donations and strong backs ready to take items from your vehicles. Get on their websites! Start identifying items from your home that you can donate — clothing and toys for children, linens and towels, lamps, pots and pans, rugs and furniture. To help with this big day, contact **Abby White** (abbywhite@comcast.net) for C2C or **Diana Page** (dianapage@hotmail.com) for HGRM; or see them during coffee hour on January 10 and January 24.

SAC Grants Awarded in December

The SAC Grants Committee finalized their awards in December. The details are not available at this time but will be posted shortly. The next funding round is March 1, and details on applying can be found at www.firstparish.org under Social Action, Grants. Please contact **Wendy Holt**, chair, with any questions at wendyholt48@yahoo.com.

Young Activist Grants Program

SAC is reintroducing a Young Activist Program here at First Parish, run by SAC lay leaders. The first phase is a Young Activist Grants program, and all 6th, 7th and 8th graders are invited to participate. The group will meet four times to research their chosen grant organization, and then teams will present their proposals. The award is a \$750 grant given to the chosen organization. As of this writing, the tentative dates of the program will be Sundays, January 24 and 31, and February 7 and 28 from 10 to 11 a.m., with final presentations at 1 p.m. on February 28. Please contact **Claudia Nimar** if interested in joining at cnimar@aol.com.

Getting Involved in Environmental Leadership

We continue to refine our plan for a new environmental program at First Parish. Stay tuned for the next meeting dates as we continue to question what role First Parish, as a faith community, can and should have in the many environmental issues of today. Please contact **Faith Bade** if you are interested in joining this discussion at FBade@firstparish.org.

Mass. Campaign for a U.S. Department of Peace

On Sunday, December 6, *Soldiers of Peace: Stories from 14 Countries around the World* was screened following coffee hour. Contrary to what we believe from the focus of daily news, many people and governments are dealing with conflict differently. “There is a wave in all corners of the world showing us that peace is not a utopia, but rather at arm’s length.” Seeing the change unfold is hopeful and inspiring! More good news is found at Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace. For additional screening, contact **Pat Simon** at 781-373-1410. ♦

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.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

I just finished reading a great publication written by the UUA about membership, called, simply, *The Membership Journey*. While reading, I was brought along the path of membership, from a congregation's preparedness for new members, to moving beyond the welcome mat, to deepening the connections, to joining the congregation, and lastly, to the lifelong journey of membership. With each chapter, I acquired a greater understanding of the work of membership — for me as Membership



Director and for the congregation as a whole — which should be undertaken in order to sustain and deepen the membership ministry at First Parish.

For example, did you know that ...

... membership is a dynamic process rather than a single act? It begins when one makes the conscious choice to formally affiliate themselves with a particular congregation — yet that decision marks the beginning of the membership journey rather than its end.

... the people who make up our congregations often find themselves so comfortable that it is hard to take a step back and see what they might look like to a visitor? Take a fresh look at the congregation, as if you were coming to church for the first time, to find out how well the congregation is taking care of visitors and members.

... Unitarian Universalism is one of the religious world's best-kept secrets? (Of course you knew that!) To ensure that as many people benefit from the healing messages and community that mark Unitarian

Universalist congregations, as well as to ensure the inflow of fresh perspectives and energy needed to maintain a vital congregation, practice intentional (some say radical) welcoming and outreach.

... providing a range of opportunities for people to experience the richness of congregational life is essential to expanding membership that is sustainable? Committees that provide these opportunities should be open and welcoming to the energy, enthusiasm and ideas that new committee members can bring to the group.

Please take a moment to think about where you are on your "Membership Journey" at First Parish.

- *Are you a newcomer*, exploring First Parish to see if it is the right fit for you?
- *Have you been coming for a while* but have not signed the membership book?
- *Are you a longtime member* looking to deepen your membership ministry?

Wherever you are on your journey, First Parish is here to support you. If you have questions about membership, please contact someone on the Membership Committee or me. ♦

—Jane Foley

Membership Director

Denominational News on the Website

The Denominational Affairs Committee has a Web page on the First Parish in Concord website. Among other news items, it contains important information about the Draft Peacemaking Statement of



Conscience to be brought to the General Assembly this June. It also contains a survey related to this Draft Peacemaking Statement of Conscience that members of First Parish are asked to respond to by mid-

January. The address of the Denominational Affairs Web page on the First Parish Website is:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/denominational-affairs-committee>. ♦

Women's Retreat—Time to Register!

Please join us for a weekend of fun, introspection and connection with other First Parish women of all ages. This year we'll explore aspects of laughter and joy through the decades of our lives. Join us for this annual getaway to Senexet House in Woodstock, Connecticut (about 90 minutes from Concord), on one of two available weekends: Friday evening, January 22, to Sunday afternoon, January 24; or Friday evening, January 29, to Sunday afternoon, January 31. Bedrooms sleep one to five guests, and the meals are fresh, delicious, and prepared by someone else! The registration form is available at the end of this newsletter, in the church office, or online at firstparish.org/forms. Contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471 with questions.

New Year, New Book! Women's AM/PM Book Group

The first book of the New Year for the Women's Book Group is *Infidel*, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The evening discussion will be Monday, January 25, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning discussion, on Tuesday, January 26, 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 or 978-369-1471. ♦

Books and Dates for 2010:

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

JANUARY 2010 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. (not 1/17)
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Monday	6:30 p.m.
Networking Group	Tuesday	9:00 a.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m.
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m.
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	5:00 p.m.
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:15 a.m.
<i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>	Thursday	7:00 p.m. (not 1/7)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.

Fri Jan 1	Holiday—Office Closed	• Tue Jan 19	11:30 WPA Luncheon
Mon Jan 4	5:30 Photo Tutorial	• Thu Jan 21	7:00 <i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>
	6:30 <i>T'ai Chi</i>	•	7:30 Threshold Choir
	7:00 RE Council	• Fri Jan 22	9:30 <i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>
Wed Jan 6	9:30 WPA Board Meeting	•	7:30 <i>Rise Up Singing</i>
	7:00 Youth Advisory Committee	• Sat Jan 23	9:00 SAC Symposium
	7:30 RE Orientation, Teachers Grades 2-6	• Sun Jan 24	11:00 Neighboring Faiths
Thu Jan 7	7:30 Neighboring Faiths RE Orientation	•	12:15 Nominating Committee
	7:30 Threshold Choir	• Mon Jan 25	2:00 Our Whole Lives (OWL)
Fri Jan 8	9:30 Pastoral Care Lay Ministers	•	12:00 Newsletter Deadline
	12:30 <i>T'ai Ji</i>	•	5:30 Photo Tutorial
	6:00 Vespers and Discussion/Potluck	•	7:30 <i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
	7:00 Theater Meeting	• Tue Jan 26	9:30 <i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
Sat Jan 9	9:00 Photo Club	• Wed Jan 27	6:30 Membership Committee
Mon Jan 11	6:30 <i>T'ai Chi</i>	• Thu Jan 28	7:00 <i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>
	7:00 Jericho Road Board Meeting	•	7:30 Transcendentalism Council
Tue Jan 12	3:00 <i>Tea and Poetry</i>	• Fri Jan 29	9:00 <i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>
Wed Jan 13	12:15 <i>Sandwiches & Short Stories</i>	• Sat Jan 30	9:00 Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts
	7:00 <i>Spiritual Practice Workshop</i>	• Sun Jan 31	8:00 Neighboring Faiths
Thu Jan 14	6:30 Partner Church Committee	•	2:00 Our Whole Lives (OWL)
Mon Jan 18	Holiday—Office Closed	•	4:00 Sarasa Concert
	7:00 YRUU	•	
	7:00 Jericho Road Board Meeting	•	

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 to 3:00
Phone: 978-369-9602
Fax: 978-369-8701
E-Mail: FPConcord@firstparish.org
Website: firstparish.org

Ministers' E-Mail:

Gary E. Smith: garyesmith@firstparish.org
Jenny M. Rankin: revjenny@comcast.net
Margie King Saphier: mksaphier@comcast.net

First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Staff

Gary E. Smith, Senior Minister
Jenny M. Rankin, Minister
Melissa Perdue Gallo, Business Manager
Cassy Bosworth, Assistant to the Ministers
Jane Foley, Membership Director

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

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education
Jane Barnes, Religious Education Administrator
Carol Duane, Program Coordinator for Young Children
Mary-Wren vanderWilden, Youth Program Director

FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER

The February Newsletter deadline is Monday, January 25, at noon. The Newsletter will be published the last week in January.

News items should be limited to 100 words.

Elizabeth Norton, Music Director
Eric Huenneke, Organist
Anderson Manuel, Youth Gospel Choir Director
Gail Carey, Children's Choir Director
David Huston, Music Director Emeritus

Dan Holin, Jericho Road Executive Director
Leslie Koplou, Operations Manager, Jericho Road

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



Lighten Up: *The Days of Our Lives*

First Parish Women's Retreats- 2010

(I) Friday evening, January 22- Sunday afternoon, January 24

(II) Friday evening, January 29- Sunday afternoon, January 31

Lighten Up – This year's retreats will explore intentional ways to create a more joyous life. We will hold up laughter and find space to bring simplicity and peace into our days. All the women of First Parish are invited to join one of these low-key weekends of fun, conversation, and getting better acquainted, as we consider the silly and self-preserving aspects of humor.

Women's Retreats are held at Senexet House (senexethouse.org), a comfortable old vacation home overlooking Roseland Lake in northeastern Connecticut, about an hour and a half from Concord. The bedrooms sleep one to five guests, and meals are fresh, delicious, and prepared by someone else! The two retreat weekends will be as similar as possible, and as unique as any group will be.

Registrations are available online at firstparish.org/forms or in the FP office. The cost of the weekend is \$175 which covers two nights and six meals, as well as a gratuity for the staff at Senexet House. Registered participants will receive an email by mid-January, with more details and directions. If you have questions about the retreats please email Barb Chase at: bbc0117@aol.com. To enquire about funding assistance, call one of the ministers or our retreat registrar, Darien Smith at: darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

REGISTRATION FORM - FIRST PARISH WOMEN'S RETREATS:

Choose: _____ (I) Jan. 22 – 24 _____ (II) Jan. 29 - 31

Name: _____ Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: Name and Ph: _____

Food restrictions? _____

Room Mate Preference? _____

Wish to contribute to retreat scholarships? \$ _____

Please return this form to the church office by Jan. 15, with your check for \$175 made payable to First Parish in Concord, Noted "Women's Retreat".

First Parish address: 20 Lexington Rd., Concord, MA 01742.



The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • January 2010

Welcome to the Wright Tavern Center. Online registration is available for all courses. Check our website at wrighttavern.org for schedule, course descriptions, presenter bios, registration information and policies. Questions? Contact Cassy Bosworth at cbosworth@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602. Please check the board in the lower church entryway for course locations..

I. Growing Your Spirit

T'ai Chi and Chai Tea

Join **Sue Wood** for a Tai Chi Open House on January 4, 6:30–8:00 p.m. This is open to everyone at no charge. We will enjoy tea, watch some videos of Master Li and David Zucker, and do a little bit of t'ai chi practice.

Monday, January 4 6:30-8:00 p.m. Free

T'ai Chi

T'ai Chi is often called meditation in motion. In this class, we will learn the Hwa Yu form of T'ai Chi. The benefits of T'ai Chi are many — relaxation, improved immune response, better balance and stability, and lower blood pressure. The evening session includes some standing meditation, and practice with the Hwa Yu T'ai Chi form. This is an ongoing class that includes new and returning students. Instructor: **Sue Wood**

Mondays, January 11; February 1, 8 & 22; March 1, 8, 15 & 22
6:30–8:00 p.m. \$120/8 classes or \$20/drop-in

Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini yoga is yoga for the mind, body, and spirit. It uses breath, yogic postures and meditation to help you to build and maintain a healthy body, increase your vitality, train your mind to be strong and flexible, and to facilitate change emotionally and spiritually. At its heart Kundalini yoga is about developing awareness; an awareness of self and others that allows you to live your life with compassion, and act with excellence. Instructor: **Dharm Singh**

Tuesdays, January 5–March 9 9:30–11:00 a.m. \$150/10 sessions

Child and Teen Yoga

Playful and serious at the same time, this class will help children and teens practice yoga Asanas that follow the traditions of Hatha and Iyengar yoga. Each class is different, with stories and animal poses, and is best suited for ages 7–15; capacity 12. Instructor: **Ori Kilner-Munson**

Wednesdays, January 6–March 10 4:15–5:00 p.m.
\$120/10 sessions or \$15/class drop-in

Yoga for Women in Midlife

This Yoga for Women in Midlife series is designed to help develop stability, strength, flexibility. The class is a moving meditation, with the intention that each woman set her own pace and honor her body's ability. It integrates breath, movement and postures for hormone balance, a healthy heart, strong bones, core strength and stress reduction. It also provides a nurturing

- environment for the spirit so that inner strength and higher awareness may flourish. Participants need to bring their own mat. A cushion and blanket is recommended. Instructor: **Lee Courtemanche** Please contact Lee at Lee.Courtemanche@verizon.net for further information.

• Class capacity:15 students \$192/12 classes

- Wednesdays, January 6-March 31 (no class 3/17)
- Choose either 5:00–6:15 p.m. or 6:45-8:00 p.m.

Hatha Vinyasa Yoga

- This adult class is a flowing mixture of Hatha, Iyengar, Somatics, and Vinyasa yoga. It focuses on alignment and movement with breath. You will leave with your body stretched and strengthened, your mind relaxed and focused, your intellect sparked with new concepts to consider, and your inner being attended to. Instructor: **Ori Kilner-Munson**

• Thursdays, January 7-March 25 9:15–10:30 a.m.
• \$192/12 sessions or \$18/drop-in

Power Vinyasa Yoga

- Designed to build strength, increase endurance, release tension, and increase flexibility, these classes are a powerful combination of deep breathing and specifically sequenced sets of classic yoga poses that will leave students feeling stronger and healthier, with a deeper knowledge and connection to their own bodies. Men, women and teens are all welcome to attend this physical class. Pam Howell has been taking Janine's yoga class for years and is excited about attending this class at First Parish. Instructor: **Janine Holley**

• Thursdays, January 7-March 25 6:30–8:00 p.m. \$180/12 sessions

Meditation, the Truly Final Frontier

- Advaita Vendanya, or Non-Dual Awareness,, is an approach that guides us to our true nature by placing our attention on the present moment and not focusing on an object, such as breath or awareness of thoughts, feelings, sensations or a repetitive word or mantra. We will explore and learn the experience of awakening by identifying with the body-mind-personality and the connection to the universal truth of who and what we are — Buddha nature. It is only the attachments to our identity, ideas, beliefs and concepts that obscure this path. Classes are open to everyone regardless of prior experience. Instructor: **Nina Carmel**

• Wednesdays, January 20–March 24 6:30–8:00 p.m.
• \$150/10 sessions or \$18/drop-in

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR)

Cultivating mindfulness, or awareness of the present moment, creates the framework for this popular course modeled after the internationally recognized program established by Jon Kabat-Zinn at UMass Medical School. Research continues to suggest positive benefits from the practice of mindfulness-based stress reduction to the immune system, chronic illness, hypertension and chronic pain, as well as to the daily stresses of our busy lives. This interactive course consists of eight weekly two-hour group classes, where participants will be introduced to and practice guided mindfulness meditation, relaxation techniques, gentle yoga stretches, and self-inquiry exercises. Participants commonly report a reduction of stress-related symptoms, increased awareness and concentration, and improvement of positive coping skills at home and in the workplace. Instructor: **Pamela Katz Ressler**

Tuition: \$290, plus \$75 materials fee (including text, CD's and manual). Visit www.stressresources.com for more information.

Enrollment is limited to 15 Thursday (7:00–9:00 p.m.), January 21–March 11; or Friday (9:30–11:30 a.m.), January 22–March 12.

II. Creativity As A Spiritual Path

Sandwiches and Short Story

Formerly known as “Listening for God,” this informal group meets with **Gary Smith** once a month to explore a story's meaning. Bring a sandwich and beverage and join us once a month on Wednesday at 12:15 p.m. The story for January 13 is “Child's Play,” by Alice Munro, found in *Best American Short Stories 2008*, Salmon Rushdie, editor, pb \$14.00, a collection to be used throughout the year.

Women's AM/PM Book Group

The January book is *Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Come to either the Monday evening meeting, 7:30–9:00 p.m.; or the Tuesday morning meeting, 9:30–11:00 a.m. Drop-ins welcome. Contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com for details or questions.

III. Sources of Unitarian Universalism

Humanists

Come socialize, meet the steering committee, share your suggestions for the group, and discuss programming for the coming months. Rev. David Miller, humanist, Minister Emeritus of the Worcester UU Church, and a founding leader of the Greater Worcester Humanists, will relate some of his experiences in helping that group grow into its present success. He will then join our discussion. Learn about David by Googling “*David Miller Worcester Humanist*.” Coffee and cookies. RSVP for more details to Patrick Everett, pne@aol.com. First Monday of the month, 7:30 p.m.

Monday, January 4, 7:30 p.m. Donation of \$5 is appreciated.

Spiritual Practice Workshop

Jenny Rankin and Tom Bird will each spend about 15 minutes sharing thoughts and frameworks on spiritual practices from their different perspectives, and then the group will spend some structured time reacting to the presentations. Finally, there will be time left for others to share practices of their own. Leaders: **Rev. Jenny Rankin** and **Tom Bird**

Wednesday, January 13 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Personal Information Record

First Parish in Concord

20 Lexington Road, Concord, Massachusetts 01742

As religious persons, we celebrate life and seek full, lengthy and healthy lives. We also recognize that only change is constant, and that in the event of serious accident, illness or death, when immediate family members are not nearby, the church is often expected to serve as an information resource.

To meet this need, the ministers provide a service for members who wish to have vital information kept in a confidential file at the church, available to the ministers and the parish administrator.

Members are urged to keep this information current; the following report form is provided for this purpose.

Some items on the following list are merely “memory joggers” and may remind you to review documents you have in your own files; other items constitute the vital information kept in the ministers’ confidential file. Please complete this form to any extent you wish, and return it to the church office, to the attention of Rev. Gary Smith, Rev. Jenny Rankin or Rev. Margie King Saphier.

Name(s) _____ Phone(s) _____

Address _____

Birthdate(s) _____ E-mail address _____

Who should be notified in case of emergency or death?

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Address and Phone</u>
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Name of your physician _____	Phone _____
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Name of your attorney _____	Phone _____
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Name of your trust officer _____	Phone _____
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Have you signed a health care proxy and/or a Living Will? _____

Where are they filed? _____

Have you chosen a health care agent? _____

Who is your healthy care agent? _____

Address and phone number for your health care agent? _____

Have you discussed your health care and end-of-life wishes with your assigned health care agent? _____

Have you arranged for any medical use of your body?

Briefly state any plans or preferences you have for a memorial service, burial or cremation:

Are there any readings or special music you wish to have included in a memorial service?

If there are to be memorial gifts, whom do you wish to designate as a recipient(s)
(e.g. group or organization)?

Have you prepared written instructions elsewhere? Have friends or family been informed, and do they know where these instructions and other important documents such as wills and insurance policies are kept?

In case of a town side emergency during which there is a prolonged power outage, will you need assistance to evacuate because of special needs, i.e. age or disabilities or medical equipment requiring power?

If yes, please explain:

Signed _____ Date _____

