

The *Meeting House* News



REVERIES

I want to express my respect and appreciation to the First Parish staff, Standing Committee and Parish Interim Team. They have all worked tirelessly since August, engaging in their interim roles, learning and practicing effective communication skills. They have been enthusiastically *going direct*.

Going direct is the choice to speak directly, honestly and respectfully to the person with whom you have an issue. Going direct is polite, and scary.

It takes courage, when we are absolutely certain we are right about anything, to act with integrity and maturity and intentionally choose to be in relationship rather than to be right. It takes humility to leave our small selves (the ones that love to be right and love attention) at home, and instead, put our big selves in charge of our behaviors. None of us goes direct naturally, or easily. Going direct is a practice. Practicing is choosing, as often as we are able to suck it up, swallow our fear, our pride, and our certainty, to invite discovery.

Jenny Rankin has worked honestly and directly with me to define her ministry with First Parish. She is going direct with the members of this congregation to communicate her understanding of her future here with a letter to the congregation (see page 5). The PIT is offering First Parish members and friends the opportunity to go direct during the February Blitz, so that nothing of import is lost or distorted as we move into the ministerial settlement process.

Your Standing Committee needs and wants your feedback to inform their charge to the Ministerial Search Committee to find your next senior minister. Your Senior Minister Search Committee needs and wants direct communication to fulfill their charge. Indirect or anonymous communication invites distortions and untruths. It can be misdirected, misinterpreted, or manipulated. All our communications are about what we believe and are important enough to communicate directly so that nothing of import is lost.

- Go direct whenever you are confused, disappointed, enthusiastic, dismayed or outraged.
- Listen appreciatively to anyone who is confused, disappointed, enthusiastic, dismayed or outraged.
- Believe in everyone's best intentions.
- Believe in what is important to you enough to communicate it directly, patiently and repeatedly.

We all deserve to give and receive direct communications. We all need repeated practice at being our best selves, and that is exactly what churches are for, practice.

Much metta,

— Elaine Beth Peresluha

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There are four inserts at the end of this newsletter:

- ◆ Darwin Birthday Celebration Info
- ◆ World Day of Prayer Info
- ◆ "Chicken Man" info
- ◆ Wright Tavern Center Courses

First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

Entertain Something Wonderful on February 11

“Egészségedre!” Pronounce it wrong and you’ll be cheering to one’s derrière. Say it correctly, and with feeling, and you’ll be imbibing something far more powerful than the firewater that often accompanies it. Join us on Saturday, February 11, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., when the Partner Congregation Committee (PCC) presents “An Evening in Székelykeresztúr”

In addition to old friends, we welcome all who wish to discover just what it is that drives this wonderful relationship, with dinner, music, stories and more! Part of our preparation for the September visit of a delegation of Keresztúr youths and adults, the evening will also include an introduction to our visitors along with a brief (but riveting) partnership time line.

Tickets are now on sale during Sunday coffee hours. For more information about this special evening and about our 20-year partnership, be sure to visit our PCC Web page at <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/partner-congregation> and follow out the links. (or use this short URL <http://bit.ly/x0nvc>)

Sunday Services at First Parish

9:00 and 11:00 a.m. in our Sanctuary
20 Lexington Road, Concord

Religious Education Classes

Preschool and younger
start at 8:50 and 10:50 a.m.

K-6th Graders begin in the Sanctuary
at the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services

Child care is available at all services

Sunday, February 5

Go Direct — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha, preaching

Direct communication is honest and effective. It is a spiritual discipline to speak the truth with love. Learning to go direct honors all beings and is an essential component to First Parish Listens. As we step into our February Blitz, go direct with everything you always wanted to say and couldn't.

9:00 – First Parish Choir

Take Me to the Water – Dillworth

Down in the River to Pray – arr. Shelton

11:00 – Gospel Choir

Sunday, February 12

In the Middle: The Evolution Revolution — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha, preaching

Today we celebrate Charles Darwin’s birthday with a reflection on the significance of his work. The publication of *Origin of the Species* was the culmination of Darwin’s personal religious and scientific pursuits. His work influenced the relationship between theology and our human capacity to reason and respond to life.

9:00 – Junior Choir

Garden Song – Blumberg

11:00 – Chalice Choir

Sophie’s Song – Blumberg

9:00 & 11:00 – “Split” First Parish Choir

Out of the Stars – Weston/Beaubien/Shelton

Sunday, February 19

Zora — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha, preaching

Zora Neale Hurston was born in 1903. She died in 1960. She was a novelist, folklorist, anthropologist, sister, and artist of the Harlem Renaissance. Daughter of the rural Black South, her artistic and cultural achievements reflect her commitment to Black heritage. Today we tell her story, honor her worth and follow her lead.

9:00 & 11:00 – Choir Quartet

Pamela Schweppe, soprano; Lauren Evans, alto; Rick Moore, tenor; Bob Goodearl, bass

Sunday, February 26

Fragile Nets of Meaning — Craig M. Nowak, preaching

Nachman of Bratslav wrote, “The whole world is a very narrow bridge, but the essential thing is not to be afraid, at all.” Is it possible, in a world filled with uncertainty, not to be afraid, at all? How is life different when we're able to accept uncertainty?

9:00 & 11:00 – “Split” First Parish Choir

Spiritual – Barnwell

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need – Thomson

Sunday, March 4

Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir, Children’s Choir and BELL CHOIR!!!

Circle Round for Freedom – Hirschorn/Glover
(And other musical offerings)

You Can Sponsor the Flowers Any Sunday

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

Finding Your Interim Minister

Elaine, AKA **Rev. Dr. Elaine Beth Peresluha**, can be found in her office at 20 Lexington Road, Concord, Mass.; 978-369-9602, extension 411.

- Tuesday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.
- Thursday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.

In addition to these regular office hours, Elaine makes appointments to see people at other times. Please e-mail our ministerial assistant **Christy McKellips** at cmckel-lips@firstparish.org to schedule an appointment. Monday is Elaine's day off and Friday is her sermon writing day.

Women's Dinner Series Starting Up

Enrich and extend your connections to other First Parish women through this series of small group potluck dinners. Share good food and great stories! For more information, contact **Kate Svrcek** at katesvrcek@hotmail.com.

Sign Up for February 4 Circle Suppers

The next Circle Supper is coming! On Saturday evening, February 4, members and friends of First Parish will open their homes for a potluck dinner for 8-10 people. These dinners provide a great opportunity for both newcomers and established members to sample some delicious meals while learning more about each other. Dinners start at 6:30. Sign up during coffee hour or e-mail **Caitlin Selle** at selle.caitlin5@gmail.com or **Jane Foley** at jfoley@firstparish.org. Interested in hosting a dinner at your home? Please let us know!

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

- Friday, January 20
- Friday, February 24
- Friday, March 23

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

THE FIRST PARISH AUCTION IS COMING IN MAY!

Save the date!

Saturday, May 5, 2012

Cochairs Shawna Reid and Kelly Roberts will welcome your help.

Stay tuned for more information!

Diversity Committee Screens Movie

The Diversity Committee will show the award-winning movie "The Celluloid Closet" in the Parish Hall on Thursday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m. This fascinating documentary surveys the various Hollywood screen depictions of homosexuals and the attitudes behind them throughout the history of North American film until the mid-1990's, when this was produced. A short discussion will follow, including consideration of how attitudes have changed in the following years. All are welcome, but please note that this film is rated R. Admission is free, and refreshments will be served.

Tuesday Group to Begin Meeting

We are starting a new program on Tuesday afternoons, aimed at some of our senior members, but all are welcome. We'll be listening to lectures, discussing our life stories, playing Scrabble or cribbage, and just talking with friends. Food and beverages provided.

Our first meeting will be February 28, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. The Parish Interim Team will be at this meeting and will want to hear your ideas. Jot the date on your calendar. Invitations will follow. If you have questions, get in touch with **Craig Nowak**, **Dave Dawson** or **Berni Jenkins**.

WPA Board Invites Members to Meet with the PIT — February 14

The Women's Parish Association board will meet with the Parish Interim Team (PIT) at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 14. WPA members are invited to participate in the conversation at that time to give feedback to the PIT during this scheduled FP Listening Session about their hopes for our church's future. In order to ensure that enough facilitators are available, please contact **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net by February 7 if you plan to attend this particular listening session.

Parish Notes

continued on page 4

WPA February Luncheon and Program Is Cancelled

The Women’s Parish Association’s luncheon and program that had been planned for February 21 has been cancelled due to the extraordinary busyness of many people’s schedules throughout the month. Contact **Dian Pekin** at pekinc@comcast.net if you have any questions about this.

First Parish Is Host to the Annual World Day of Prayer on March 2

Friday, March 2, is World Day of Prayer 2012. Women, men and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer this year. Women of Malaysia have written the service around the theme “Let Justice Prevail.” We will stand in solidarity with these women as we engage in prayers and songs for their health and wholeness and for a world of peace and justice. This year, First Parish will host Concord’s World Day of Prayer Service at 11:00 a.m., followed by a festive luncheon program that will celebrate the various ethnic groups and cultures of Malaysia. If anyone has art objects, decorative items, photographs, books, ethnic clothing, etc. depicting various Malaysian cultures that the planning committee can borrow for the day, please contact **Dian Pekin** at pekinc@comcast.net as soon as possible. There is no charge for the luncheon and reservations are not necessary.

Save the Date — WPA Spring Concert and Tea March 16

This year’s annual Spring Concert and Tea held by the Women’s Parish Association will be held on Friday, March 16. The concert will be in the Sanctuary at 3 p.m. followed by tea in the Parish Hall and Parlor at 4 p.m. Details of the event will be published in the March issue of the *Meeting House News*.

Concord Area Humanists February 12

Concord Area Humanists meet at First Parish on the first Wednesday each month for a social, featured speaker and discussion. We also enjoy a monthly discussion in the Concord Public Library. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life which, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

On Sunday, February 12, we recognize Charles Darwin’s birthday, starting with Humanist morning services. At 1:00 p.m., we will meet Darwin in the

Parish Hall. He will cut his cake, reminisce and mingle, while we enjoy a light finger-food lunch. Then we will watch a movie that portrays Our Great Journey — from the Big Bang through evolving Universe, our galaxy, Earth, first life, Darwinian evolution, to us. Where are we going? We will discuss the movie in small groups. See insert for more details. Direct questions to pne@aol.com.

The British Romantics and Their Influence on the American Transcendentalists — Sunday, February 12 at 7:30 p.m.

The Transcendentalism Council is pleased to have the opportunity to welcome the noted author and editor the Rev. Dr. Barry Andrews to discuss the relationships between the British Romantics, including Coleridge, Wordsworth and Carlyle, and the Transcendentalist movement in America.

These writers are key figures in a transnational movement in Europe, England and America that affected almost every area of intellectual and creative activity. In the most general terms, this movement, and Romanticism is the most encompassing name for it, was a reaction to many aspects of modern life then, and to some extent, even today — tyranny, materialism, industrialism, skepticism, conventionality, formalism, and the despoiling of the natural environment. Dr. Andrews is Minister Emeritus of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Long Island, NY, where he served for 18 years prior to his retirement in 2011. Now living on Bainbridge Island, WA, he continues his interest in the literature and spirituality of the Transcendentalist movement in America. Author and editor of five books on Emerson, Thoreau and Margaret Fuller, Andrews has also lectured extensively and led workshops on these and other writers. He currently serves on the board of the Thoreau Society.

STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Our 2012 schedule for Standing Committee/Executive Team meetings, which are being held at 33 Bradford Street in West Concord, is as follows:

- Monday, February 13, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 12, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
- Monday, April 9, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
- Monday, May 14, 6:30-9:00 p.m. (may be moved to May 7)
- Monday, June 11, 6:30-9:00 p.m.



January 20, 2012

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish:

William Wordsworth wrote of those rare moments when we are able to go deeper and see, as he put it, “into the life of things.” I had a moment like that on a recent Sunday when our Sanctuary, chock full of people, rang with a rousing chorus of “This Land Is Your Land.” I leaned over to Elaine and whispered, “*This* is First Parish!” For me, it was an image of this community at its best — strong, alive, vital, singing its heart out, caring deeply about the world.

We’ve been through a lot in the last 18 months. The process wasn’t always easy. I believe there are new and fresh winds blowing through this place. With Elaine’s leadership, the congregation is doing critical interim work — listening to one another’s voices, discerning mission, dreaming about the future.

Elaine asked me to update the Standing Committee on my goals, and I wanted to share that with you. My intention is to remain in my current role. It remains a great honor to serve as one of your ministers. I appreciate the ways you are showing up, speaking up, giving of your energy and integrity.

When the next Senior Minister is called, I look forward to building a creative and collegial ministry together. My hope and expectation is that this will be possible. If however it turns out that the skills and talents we bring are not a good fit with one another, or there is not sufficient compatibility, I will plan to remain at First Parish for the first year to help with transition and then leave in June 2014.

By June of 2012, I will have accrued 6 months of sabbatical time. In consultation with the Standing Committee, I plan to take sabbatical during the interim period: one month in July 2012, and three months in January, February and March of 2013.

This is an exciting time as you do important work to get ready to call a new leader. In my mind’s eye, I carry that picture of you in the Sanctuary — a strong and gathered community, people who are trying to be their best selves, people who are trying to give something back to this beautiful and broken world in which we live.

With great affection,

Jenny Rankin

Minister, First Parish in Concord, Unitarian Universalist

PASTORAL CARE NEWS

The pastoral care team is here for you. Need a ride, visit, meal or support? Visit First Parish's website or contact the Pastoral Care Lay Minister who is on call for this month. (See box this page.)

Reflections on the Caring Connection

The task of providing a ride for a congregation member seemed simple, so I was surprised when it wasn't. I arrived in the right place; we met, and fastened seatbelts. We drove, chatting for a while, and then entered the driveway to the medical building. It was then I realized that I didn't know what to do. Should I park and walk her into the building? Do I offer? What is supportive and what is too much? I drove slowly into the lot. I thought about my parents who are around the age of the person I was driving. What would they want? It would be hard for my mother to ask for a ride. Even in dire need she could make a case for why a two-mile walk might "do her good." If she did accept a ride, she would likely prefer a driver akin to a discreet chauffeur. That wasn't happening; I went on to imagine my father. He would want the driver to park, take his arm, walk with him into the office, and maybe even stay in the waiting room. If that person were to offer him an old candy from the bottom of her purse, he would accept it and call her a "gem." Our car was now near the entrance of the building and I was still without a plan. I glanced over at my fellow parishioner in the front seat and she said, "This is your first time doing this, isn't it, dear?" Kindly she gave me simple directions about how to proceed. I hadn't thought to just ask for her help, but was so grateful to receive it.

It can be so difficult to need help and harder still to ask for it. **Rev. Gary Smith** sometimes talked about this as an issue particularly for New Englanders, but maybe it's universal. If we've been lucky, we experienced receiving help and know how powerful simple acts of care and support can be. This fall a congregant wrote to the Caring Connection, "Each meal has been delicious, but more than that, they have been such visible reminders of First Parish, my spiritual home. I feel nourished, body and soul!" First Parish is our shared home and when one of us is in need, we help out. That is how I think about my involvement in the Caring Connection. We deliver a meal, provide a ride, or mail a note of care. It's that simple. I find it deeply comforting that our congregation is ready to offer this to anyone who comes through our doors. This puts our Unitarian Universalist principle "affirming and promoting the inherent worth of each individual" into practice, and I am honored to be a part of it. —**Tracey Hurd**, Caring Connection team leader

If you're interested in helping with the Caring Connection, please contact **Tracey Hurd** (thurd@aol.com), **Rev. Jenny Rankin** (revjenny@comcast.net) or **Judy Dembsey** (dembsey@verizon.net).

Pastoral Care Advisory Council Notes

Thank you, **Caitlin Selle**, for chairing the distribution of the Christmas poinsettias to those on the 2011 pastoral care list. The efforts of the flower deliverers is very much appreciated: **Lois Whitney, Alec Walker, Peter Mitchell, Rachel Alternative, Pat Simon, Caitlin Selle, Nicole Sheehan** and **Tricia Haut**. Thanks to **Kathleen Elcox** for stunning photographs on the caring note cards available every Sunday at coffee hour.

The Pastoral Care Advisory Council welcomes new members **Sue Dobbie, Berni Jenkins** and **Caitlin Selle**.

— **Judy Dembsey**, Pastoral Care Advisory Council, team leader

What Is a Shawl Ministry?

Shawl ministry is about creating and giving hand-knitted or crocheted shawls to others in a congregation to mark a sad or joyous occasion, or to offer ongoing support. Those who receive them feel literally wrapped in the arms of the congregation. Those who gather and work together to create the shawls are able to be part of spiritual, caring outreach to others. The shawls will be part of pastoral care outreach, supported by the Caring Connection, and lead by **Rev. Jenny Rankin**. During the Women's Retreats, some patterns and processes to create the shawls were tried. Thanks to **Holly Cratsley, Val Holt, Lillian Anderson, Darien Smith, Ginger Lang** and many others for this work! We are getting ready for a first gathering later this month. Are you interested in potentially being involved? If you haven't done so, contact **Tracey Hurd** (thurd@aol.com or 978-369-2366) and let her know. All are welcome!

The Pastoral Care Team at First Parish — Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings

The Lay Minister for February is **Dale Pfeiffer**, 978-263-0638 or dpfeiffer@berklee.edu.

Ministers: **Rev. Jenny Rankin** (revjenny@comcast.net) and **Rev. Elaine Peresluha** (uurevdoc@gmail.com)
Or call 978-369-9602.

Lay Ministers:
Contact **Diane Clapp** (d.clapp@comcast.net)

Caring Connection: Contact **Tracey Hurd** (thurd@aol.com) for meals or rides.

Pastoral Care Advisory Council:
Contact **Judy Dembsey** (dembsey@verizon.net).

PARTNER CONGREGATION COMMITTEE

As our announcement on page 2 notes, we bid you to “Entertain Something Wonderful” on Saturday, February 11, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., when the PCC presents “An Evening in Székelykeresztúr.” With dinner, music, stories and more; it’s open to anyone who is even a little curious about our special partnership. Tickets are now on sale during Sunday coffee hours. For more information, be sure to visit our PCC Web page noted below.

The dates have been slated for First Parish’s hosting of a contingent from the Keresztúr congregation, and 14 of our Transylvanian friends will be arriving on September 20 and staying through to October 1. And now we know who they are! As is their Hungarian custom, their family names precede their given (first) names:

Youths: Balogh Em , Ciocan Ágnes, Deák Tamara, Rezi Kinga, Nagy Henrietta, Tamási Dezs

Adults: Csáka (József & Gizella), Demeter Julia, Dobos (Albert & Ildikó), L rinczi László, Reverend Mikó Ferenc, Palkó Zoltán

The PCC and the Executive Team are working together to raise the funds to pay for 12 of the delegates’ airfare. The two spouses who will be joining the delegation will have their airfare paid for by their families.

We continue to look for volunteers to host Keresztúr pilgrims in their homes and for help with home-stay and activity logistics, and (especially) for assistance with fundraising activities/events. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact **Ken Estabrook** at ken.estabrook@gmail.com.

For pictures of past Keresztúri pilgrimages and for our all our latest PCC news and information, be sure to surf over to: <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/partner-congregation> and follow out the links (or use this short URL <http://bit.ly/xc0nvc>).

We would like to remind those who are sponsoring a Keresztúr student that **Dana Booth**, the Student Sponsorship Committee’s communications facilitator, is available to offer advice on how to “make the most” of your sponsorship. He can be reached at dana.a.booth@gmail.com or by phone at 978-369-5702.

As ever, we invite you to join us at our next Partner Congregation Committee supper meeting, which will be held at the home of **Dana** and **Kathy Booth** on Thursday, February 9. For further information, drop us a line. ♦

Minden jól! “Best wishes!”
— **Winslow Pettingell**, PCC chair,
LondonSW11@comcast.net

MEMBERSHIP CORNER



On Sunday, February 5, we will take a few moments during the 11:00 o’clock service to officially welcome people who have signed the Membership Book over the past six months. These new members have made the decision to become more engaged in the life of the congregation.

Whether they have been coming for ten years or ten months, their joining First Parish means many things.

In accordance with our Membership Policy, new members can:

- Vote at Annual Meetings beginning 30 days after signing the Membership Book.
- Help choose new ministers.
- Represent First Parish at regional and national events.
- Take priority over nonmembers at retreats and other activities when attendance must be limited.
- Receive a discount on adjunct services and activities. (Program fees may differ for membership categories.)
- Participate in certain special programs such as OWL, Coming of Age and service trips.

Beyond that, membership is a personal decision, different for each person, a step in his or her unique spiritual journey. Perhaps he or she has found here a community of seekers who view the world through similar glasses (rose-colored or not). Maybe our religious education program offered the right blend of UU and world religions’ history, self-exploration, creativity and fun, where the children learn and grow into spiritual seekers themselves.

First Parish has so much to offer, and however our new members were drawn to us, we are glad they are here.

Welcome! ♦

—*Jane Foley*

Membership Director

MUSINGS

In January, our choirs were invited to join in the “Hope Out Loud” concert at the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry in Roxbury, capping a day of program celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King.

We were honored to be asked back to the historic sanctuary in Roxbury where many of us had presented the UU Cantata “Sources” to benefit the Urban Ministry last January. Last year, we brought our music and our own agenda to Roxbury. This time, the program belonged to the Urban Ministry. Our children’s choirs, led by **Gail Carey**, were invited to share their



music; our adult singers went along to sing “back up” and to join with other UU singers as guests of the Boston Community Chorus, an interracial Gospel Choir based in Roxbury.

This invitation called us to stretch outside our comfort zone musically, theologically, culturally and, as it happened, physically. The heating system was not quite up to the task. It was VERY cold in that sanctuary!

During our brief rehearsal and the concert with the BCC we were challenged to listen carefully, to quickly learn by ear, to move, to sing with more “skank.” Brother Dennis Slaughter, the BCC’s amazing director taught us three new songs in no time. No time to develop competence; we would need to trust the BCC singers to support us through the performance.

For me, the defining moment of the day came during Psalm 27, a challenging setting of one of the more unsettling passages of

the psalms. Brother Dennis asked if there was a soprano who could sing a high “C” at the end of the song. I volunteered — I often add an extra high note to a chord. That felt well within my “comfort zone.” I was asked to watch for the cue.

When it came, it was instantly clear that I would sing during a grand pause — all alone in the silence, without the support of the choral harmony below me — at least not until after I’d committed to that high note. Talk about exposed!! Would I have stepped forward so cavalierly had I known what was really being asked of me? It was simultaneously terrifying and exhilarating. But it worked.

Going out in the world to work for justice and partner with diverse communities and cultures can be like singing that high “C.” We bring our resources, our skills and our own expectations, but we need to listen for what is being asked of us. We might be called to step outside of our comfort zone, relinquishing our confidence or our sense of what should be done to do what is needed.

In answering that call with grace, trust and humility, we may find ourselves capable of more than we’d imagined. ♦

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Music Director

The First Parish interim process is kicking into high gear with **First Parish Listens**, your opportunity to say what you have yet to say. The Parish Interim Team (PIT) has worked hard to understand the process and our team's objectives. The Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) has joined our efforts so they can better apply what we learn to finding the best candidate to help First Parish realize its vision. We have conducted preliminary sessions to gain a sense of the things that are important to you, the congregation. Now we are ready to dive deeper into what is on the mind of our fellow parishioners.

Share Your Innermost Thoughts

Our plan is to listen to as many of you as possible, to hear the things that you have always wanted to say but have not yet said. The hope is that by bringing our innermost thoughts into public discussion, in a way that is safe and supporting, we will be better able to connect our history to the vision for our future. We cannot do this without you.

Join a February Listening Session

In February, the PIT will be sponsoring several facilitated **Listening Sessions** that we hope you can participate in. Four of them will be in conjunction with Terrific Tuesdays. Others will be scheduled at times so that everyone will have a chance to participate. In addition, we will facilitate sessions at regularly scheduled committee and group meetings. Our expectation is that each meeting will last about two hours. *Our goal is to meet with at least three hundred of you.* Once these sessions have been completed, and all who wish to be heard have been heard, we will bring this discovery phase of the process to completion.

Won't you please make time to contribute? Sign up for a listening session either at coffee hour or during the week at the office. If you serve on a committee, invite our facilitators to your February meeting. Or invite 10-15 of your friends to your home and we will come to you. Even if you think you have nothing to say, your listening will lend support to those who do.

Take Part in the Parish-Wide Retreat

The culmination of the first phase of the interim process will be a **Parish-wide retreat** to take all that we have learned and craft a vision and a mission for First Parish in Concord. That retreat will take place from Friday evening, March 30, through Sunday, April 1. Details will become apparent as the date approaches. Your participation will be essential, so please plan to attend.

Parish Interim Team — First Parish in Concord

Rebecca Curzon rebeccacurzon@comcast.net
Katharine Esty katharinecesty@verizon.net
Sven Olson sven.a.olson@chase.com
Mark Richards markr@upriverministries.org
Susan Ryan susanryan101@comcast.net
Jim Smith JAS@foleyhoag.com

Help to Create First Parish's Future

This interim is a critical time in our church's history. As we learned in October, we have inherited a long legacy of rebellion, revolution, creativity and innovation. That legacy is the result of people like us, facing times like these, and finding the right path to follow. It takes all of us — not just the leaders, not just the "usual suspects," but all of us — to form the kind of community we can cherish into the next generation.

Please sign up for a First Parish Listens session at coffee hour or in the office. Or contact a PIT member to schedule a group of your own. The more voices involved in the conversation, the more representative our results will be. We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Parish Interim Team: **Rebecca Curzon,
Katharine Esty, Sven Olson, Mark Richards,
Susan Ryan, Jim Smith**

P.S. Feedback from the fall Meet and Greet sessions can be found at <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/transition/parish-interim-team/current-documents>.

You must be logged into the website to view them.

Friendship.

Last Wednesday evening, I left First Parish after a Parent Orientation for our youngest children’s programming. It was late, but I wanted to go over to Main Street Café and hear a young adult perform. This young lady had grown up within our parish community and I was excited to see her in action.

When I arrived, I saw so many people from our First Parish community. They were a wide range of ages and all enjoying being out with each other. As I looked around, I saw one of the immeasurable gifts that our parish provides: deep friendships, long friendships, meaningful friendships.



Friendship in many ways is a spiritual partnership. It is a relationship that understands our strengths and shortcomings. Friendship is a spiritual practice that is built upon trust and is nurtured over time, sometimes a lifetime. It is our friends who understand our cracks and it is our friends that welcome the light that shines through those cracks.

Next term in our Second- to Sixth-grade programming, we will be discussing relationships such as friendship. I want our children to understand how important these relationships will be along life’s journey. There is nothing like a trusted companion to give life the texture it deserves: laughter and tears, birth and death, love and disenchantment. Good friends sit through it all.

Count your friendships: each one, a blessing. ♦

— Pam Howell

Director of Religious Education

Job Opening at First Parish

Looking for a part-time position with real meaning? We are looking for an RE Administrator at First Parish. This position is 18 hours each week and requires someone who loves to organize things, work with people, be creative and has strong technology skills. Is this you? To learn more, visit our website for detailed information at <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/job-openings>.

February 2012 RE Calendar

- Sun., Feb. 5 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2nd–4th Grades, Emerson Room
5th and 6th Grade Youth Group, Wright Tavern
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Brooks Room
8th Grade OWL at 4:00 p.m., Emerson Room
- Sun., Feb. 12 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2nd–4th Grades, Emerson Room
5th and 6th Grade Youth Group, Wright Tavern
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Brooks Room, 9:00 a.m.
8th Grade OWL at 4:00 p.m., Emerson Room
- Sun., Feb. 19 Babies–9th Grade Welcome in the Sanctuary
- Sun., Feb. 26 Babies–9th Grade Welcome in the Sanctuary
- Fri., Mar. 2 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, 5:45 p.m.
- Sun., Mar. 4 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2nd–4th Grades, Emerson Room
5th and 6th Grade Youth Group, Wright Tavern
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, off-site
8th Grade OWL at 4:00 p.m., Emerson Room (extended session)

Orientation for Religious Education Teachers and Leaders for 2011-2012

Orientation Schedule for Second- to Sixth-Grade Teachers in the Emerson Room:

2nd-6th Grade Spring Term #4: Wed., Mar. 28, 7:30–9:30 p.m.

Parish Interim Team — Listening Sessions

This month, there will be many opportunities for you to join a Listening Session. These sessions are where you get the opportunity to say what you love about First Parish and where you would like to see it grow.



Sometimes, when we are content, we are not inclined to come out because all is well. However, even if you *are* content, we want to know what you like so we don’t change it!

Sometimes, when we are not content, we are inclined not to come out because we don’t want to trouble the

waters. However, if you are *not* content, we want to know what you believe should change!

First Parish should reflect the spirit of our congregation. How can we know what that is without your voice at the table? This is a place that wants your voice, that needs your voice. You have a sacred opportunity and responsibility to shape the mission of this great place and carry it into the future. Please take the time to show up and tell us what you think. We want to know what's on your mind. Please, sign up at coffee hour for a Listening Session that fits your schedule.

Second-Fifth Grade Workshop Rotation

This term, we are exploring aspects of what it means to be a "Good Person." One of our Unitarian Universalist principles is the inherent worth and dignity of each person. This term, we are dividing into single gender groups.

For the boys, we are building a raft for Musquetaquid. We will have all-male teachers, and we have invited some teenage

boys and some wise men to come and talk to our young boys about courage: intellectual courage, moral courage, spiritual courage and physical courage. Our boys will discuss the values that make a man a good man, while weaving and constructing a wooden raft.



For the girls, we will be talking about trusted friendships and looking at how we nurture our relationships and make good decisions. We will have some teenage girls come in and talk about their friendships, about beauty, and about navigating confusing relationships. We will have some women joining us who have seasoned friendships and talking about their journey through life together. All the while, our girls will be weaving, sewing and looming to create some kind of fabric quilt as a symbolic representation of their own budding friendships here at First Parish.

January 29 – Winter Term/Week 1 : Chinese New Year and Friendship

February 5 – Winter Term/Week 2: Physical Courage (boys), Trust and Friendship (girls)

February 12 – Winter Term/Week 3: Intellectual Courage (boys), Beauty (girls)

February 19 & 26 – Public School Vacation – No RE

SENIOR YOUTH NEWS: THE HEARD



The Heard is rocking and rolling into 2012! On January 15, we stood up and delivered a rousing Occupy demonstration at the MLK worship services. We connected the protest movement of today to Martin Luther King's message of justice and equality, concluding with a chorus of Dispatch's "The General."

As we look ahead, the group is eagerly anticipating a couple of adventures. On March 2-3, we will be experiencing CityReach; and on

April 19-22 we will be embark on the Vermont Farm and Flood Recovery Service Trip!

Please RSVP to confirm your participation, email avifirstparish@gmail.com.

February 4: The Heard Chili Cook-Off! 12:30 p.m.

The Heard will be making delicious meat and vegan chili and salsa for the big game. All proceeds will support YRUU's Vermont Flood Recovery/Farming Service Trip. Order your chili and salsa for the Super Bowl by e-mailing avifirstparish@gmail.com. Mmm mmm!

March 2-3: CityReach

CityReach is an overnight urban outreach program. We'll have the special opportunity to learn firsthand about homelessness from the people who've experienced it. We'll take a guided tour of the city, offer clothing and prepare food for the homeless. This is an anticipated and unique experience that has received rave reviews from Heard alumni.

April 19-22: Vermont Farm and Flood Recovery Service Trip

We will be headed to the gorgeous state of Vermont to help restore its natural beauty and work on Liberty Hill Farm. On August 28, 2011, Tropical Storm Irene hit Vermont hard! The Kennet family had to swim their 271 cows out of their barn to high ground. We will be helping clean up debris, working with the animals, and playing in the Green Mountains. This is going to be an adventurous and dynamic service trip.

No Sunday night meetings on February 5 or 19.

Looking forward to these adventures with you! ♦

Yours truly,

— *Avi Salloway*

Youth Program Director

“Renewal House: A True Community” — a poem by a former resident of Renewal House, a UU Urban Ministry program

“My life was chaos/I had nowhere to turn/No family, no friends who could take me in/I called the hotline and spoke to Queen/She said they had a room that was open and clean/ I came that night with my three kids/But what I discovered was not just a room/Not just a house/Not just a program/These people really cared/These people really helped/These people really wanted me to be well/It took me a while to accept them/And where they were coming from/But they didn’t give up/And that means a lot/They tried to get to know me/They played with my kids/They gave me food and resources and things to think about/And then they left me be for a bit/To decide what I would do next/When I told them I wanted to go to school and get a job/They helped me think about where and when and how/When I told them I needed clothes and help with a resume/They sat right down and had me write all I had done/Then they gave me a gift certificate to Target/Every need I had they were able to point me in the right direction/And when I was down they gave me a shoulder to cry on/When my kids were sick they helped me get to the doctor/When I was feeling like giving up and going back they told me I could do better/I realize now that they were a new family for me – A community of hope that showed me the way/Out of my journey of fear and abuse/It took some time to build the trust/But we did it — my advocates and me/And really — it has made all the difference/I never knew I could be so happy and free/That’s the power of the Renewal House Community.”

Join together as we continue to support programs such as the UU Urban Ministries Renewal House. We do make a difference in people’s lives and in the world! Be an activist! ♦

— Faith Bade

Social Action Program Director

Go to sac.firstparish.org for news and calendar information.

Funderburg Scholars Fundraising Dinner February 4, 6:30 p.m. at First Parish

Help Roxbury youth apply to and graduate from college — while you enjoy a nice meal with great company! Meet some Roxbury students and learn more about the program. No fixed “price” — donate what feels right to you at the Saturday dinner. Reserve your place at dinner by calling **Loretta Ho**

• **Sherblom** 978-369-4325 or e-mailing her at Loretta@LHSBenefits.com. Join us for wine and cheese at 6:30 p.m., dinner (by **Caroline McCloy**) at 7:15 p.m.!

• **Recruiting Fruit and Vegetable Makers!**

• Come help make *papier-mâché* fruits and vegetables for “Chicken Man, the Musical” and be a part of this Social Action Community board initiative. Excellent Friday evening option or school vacation activity! All ages welcome. Fridays, February 3 and 10, at 7 p.m.; Tuesday, February 21; Wednesday, February 22; and Friday, February 24 at 2 p.m.

• **Family Home Drop-Off Day, Saturday, February 11 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Parish Hall**

• The annual Home Drop-Off Day will be focused on soft goods this year. We are collecting gently used baby and children’s items for Cradles to Crayons, and towels and sheets only for HGRM (Household Goods Recycling Ministry) — no furniture or appliances this year, please. Children’s items include, boys and girls clothing, winter coats, hats, gloves, pajamas, shoes, baby equipment, board books and baby toys. All donations must be free from rips and stains and in working condition. For donation questions, e-mail abbygwhite@comcast.net. First Parish volunteers are needed for one- to two-hour shifts. This is a *fun*, interactive morning of service for families to do together. Children are welcome! Jobs include inspecting and sorting clothing, toys or books and loading bags of goods into the donation truck. Once again, soup and bagels will be provided for all volunteers. With the help of your hands, we will bring children the essentials they require to thrive — to feel safe, warm, ready to learn, and valued. Sign up at coffee hour or e-mail gnelson@me.com.

• **Date Change! Grounded for Flight: A Wright Tavern Center Course**

• Join **Craig Nowak**, ministerial intern, and **Faith Bade**, Social Action Program Director, on our new start date of Sunday, February 12, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. In this three-part workshop, we will explore how we learn to recognize our own spiritual framework and how this framework creates the support, or “grounding,” to help us expand and inspire our activism and truly take “flight.” Cost: \$60 plus \$12 materials fee and book. Dates: February 12, March 18, and a final date to be determined. See details on the SAC website.

• **SAC News and Events**

continued on page 13

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

Concord-Area Amnesty Group to Meet Tuesday, February 21, at 7:00 p.m.

Join us in the Greeley Room for the regular monthly meeting of Group 15, the Concord-area Amnesty International group. All are welcome. The agenda will include such human-rights-related matters as death penalty cases and developments affecting persons unjustly imprisoned by repressive regimes. For more information, visit www.aigroup15.org or e-mail Lorraine Loviglio at loviglio@rcn.com.

“V Day” Performances —

Saturdays, February 18 and 25 at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel

“Any One of Us: Words from Prison” is a tough look at the violence and exploitation that lead to women’s criminality and incarceration. This dramatic reading uses women’s writings from prison, edited and with a postscript by Eve Ensler. Admission \$10. Proceeds support Renewal House. Sponsored by Mass Campaign for a US Dept of Peace, Concord Prison Outreach and The Theater Project, under the Social Action Community.

“Chicken Man” Is Coming!

March 2, 3, 9 and 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall

A Social Action Community Board Production

Rehearsals are in full swing. Seventh graders are painting the mural backdrop. Word is spreading. All are invited to experience this informative and entertaining musical about dark doings in the rainforest, which has already touched the lives of at least 100 of your fellow parishioners. Bring your friends! Suitable for all ages. For more details see <http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/chickenman>.

How Homelessness Hurts Children’s Health

Eighth Annual Interfaith Homelessness Forum

Sunday, March 11, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 Elm Street, Concord

Family homelessness remains a severe problem in Massachusetts. Over 33,000 families applied for emergency shelter in the year ending July 2011. Expectant women experiencing homelessness are 30 percent more likely to deliver pre-term and 50 percent more likely to have low-weight babies. Children living without permanent housing are 70 percent more likely to have developmental delays and 50 percent more likely to be in poor health.

Learn what we can do to protect children’s health by sustaining the state’s successful Homelessness Prevention Program *now at*

- risk due to limits in state budget funding. Speakers
- will be Dr. Megan Sandel, Associate Professor of
- Pediatrics and Public Health at Boston Medical
- Center and a nationally recognized expert on housing
- and child health; Robert Pulster, Associate Director,
- Department of Housing Stabilization, Mass.
- Department of Housing and Community
- Development; and a panel of area state legislators.
- The forum, organized by the Advocacy Network to
- End Family Homelessness, is free and open to all.

Youth Service Opportunity during April Vacation Week

- The UU Urban Ministry is excited to offer again a
- service opportunity for youth over the April public
- school vacation. UU area teens are invited to join
- teens from our Roxbury youth programs to design
- and lead three days of activities and adventure for
- elementary school children in our Explorer’s Club
- program. Living and working together for a week,
- the teens build lasting relationships and develop
- their leadership skills through this unforgettable
- experience.

- Participating youth groups are asked to commit to:
- Sending one to three youth to Roxbury for four days
- during April public school vacation (Monday, April
- 16, to Thursday, April 19); participating in two to
- three training sessions leading up to the April week;
- providing one to two overnight chaperones for one of
- the overnights (teens will be spending nights at the
- First Parish in Dorchester); supporting the costs of
- the week by donating \$100 per teen participant to the
- UU Urban Ministry. If you know of a teen or group
- of teens who would be interested, please contact Rev.
- Kate Wilkinson at the UU Urban Ministry at kwilkin-son@uuum.org or 617-318-6010, ext. 214.

GREEN NOTES:

- **Mindful Living Idea:** Recycle and reuse at the Home Drop Off Day at First Parish on February 11 to benefit Cradles to Crayons and HGRM.

- **Mindful Living Statistic:** One hundred tons of trash was left behind from Rose Bowl festivities on January 6.

WOMEN'S NEWS

Women's AM/PM Book Group

The February selection for the Women's Book Group is *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot. The evening discussion will be on Sunday, February 26, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. and the morning discussion on Tuesday, February 28, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. — both at First Parish. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both sessions. 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 2012

- Feb. 26, 28 *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*,
by Rebecca Skloot
- Mar. 25, 27 *Room: A Novel*, by Emma Donoghue
- Apr. 22, 24 *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography*,
by Jean H. Baker
- May 20, 22 *Bossypants*, by Tina Fey
-

RE News

continued from page 11

Seventh Grade Neighboring Faiths

We are off! Year after year, both parents and kids say what an important program this was for their religious education. While it takes several very committed adults to make this program happen, it is always executed with such grace.

It is important that your child attend regularly to really get the full potential of this experience. Attendance is important for understanding the many faith communities, but it is also important for building relationships within this cohort of teens. When I ask kids what they like about RE, they most often respond that they like being with their friends. If they no longer trust that their friends will be there, then they don't want to show up either. You can see how this chain could spiral into a very small group. As parents, you can trust that this program is an important religious education experience, so please encourage your child to attend. It is "worth it," and it is the catalyst for creating a strong group as they move into OWL, Coming of Age and Youth Group.

We look forward to seeing your child each Sunday as they travel to neighboring faith communities. This is where they solidify.

FROM THE INTERN MINISTER

Dear Friends,

Maybe it's all the Republican primary coverage I've been watching or listening to lately, but I've been thinking a lot about choices over the last several weeks ... the choices we face and the choices we make. Choice and the freedom to choose is the hallmark of a free society and a free religion.



Indeed, Unitarian Universalism itself is often called a chosen faith since many, not all, but many, of its members chose it as adults over the religion or lack of religion they grew up with. I myself am among those who chose Unitarian

Universalism later in life (I grew up Roman Catholic). Soon after choosing Unitarian Universalism as my religion, I realized that to be a Unitarian Universalist was to face and make choices all the time, personally as well as a member of a faith community.

This leads me to consider a couple of questions that I invite you to think about as well. How do we make our choices as people of faith? What informs the choices we make? In other words, what guides, motivates or otherwise drives the choices we make as people of faith?

Next month, I'll share with you what I've come up with in response to these questions. For now, I encourage you to spend some time with them. Keep them close in your heart and mind as you live your faith these next few weeks. Make it an adventure, not a chore. And in March let's check in and see what we've come up with. ♦

Blessings and peace,

—Craig Nowak

FEBRUARY 2012 CALENDAR

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

Every Week...

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gospel Choir | Sunday | 10:00 a.m. |
| Bell Choir Rehearsal | Sunday | 1:00 p.m. |
| <i>Music Together</i> | Tuesday | 9:30 a.m. |
| February Dinner, Vespers and Blitz | Tuesday | 6:00 p.m. |
| <i>T'ai Chi and Qi Gong</i> | Tuesday | 6:30 p.m. |
| <i>Buddhist Group</i> | Wednesday | 9:30 a.m. |
| Junior Choir | Wednesday | 4:30 p.m. |
| Chalice Choir | Wednesday | 5:15 p.m. |
| Transylvania Troubadours | Wednesday | 6:15 p.m. |
| <i>Soul Play</i> | Wednesday | 7:00 p.m. |
| Adult Choir | Wednesday | 7:45 p.m. |
| <i>Music Together</i> | Thursday | 9:30 a.m. |
| <i>Buddhist Group</i> | Thursday | 7:30 p.m. |
| <i>Music Together</i> | Friday | 9:30 a.m. |
| Men's Group | Saturday | 7:30 a.m. |

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------|--|---|------------|--|
| Thu Feb 2 | 7:30 | By Your Side Singers | . | 6:30 | YRUU |
| Fri Feb 3 | 7:00 | "Chicken Man" Rehearsal | . | 7:30 | Barry Andrews Lecture |
| | 7:00 | Play Reading | . | Tue Feb 14 | 9:00 Networking Group |
| Sat Feb 4 | 8:30 | SAC Envisioning Event | . | 9:00 | WPA Board Meeting |
| | 12:00 | YRUU Chili Cooking | . | 11:30 | New Directions in Pastoral Care |
| | 6:30 | Funderburg Dinner | . | Wed Feb 15 | 6:30 Membership Committee |
| Sun Feb 5 | 10:15 | First Parish Jump Start | . | 7:00 | Ministerial Search Committee |
| | 4:00 | OWL | . | Thu Feb 16 | 7:30 By Your Side Singers |
| | 5:00 | YAC | . | Fri Feb 17 | 12:30 <i>Tai Ji</i> |
| | 7:00 | "Chicken Man" Rehearsal | . | 6:00 | "Chicken Man" Rehearsal |
| Tue Feb 7 | 7:00 | SAC Board Meeting | . | 7:00 | Jewish Awareness Group |
| | 7:00 | Winter Sisters | . | Sat Feb 18 | 7:30 "Words from Prison" Reading |
| Wed Feb 8 | 6:15 | <i>Concord Area Humanists</i> | . | Sun Feb 19 | 3:00 Needleworkers Affinity Group |
| Thu Feb 9 | 7:30 | Diversity Committee film | . | 7:00 | "Chicken Man" Rehearsal |
| Fri Feb 10 | 11:00 | PIT Meeting | . | Tue Feb 21 | 2:00 "Chicken Man" Fruit and Veggie |
| | 6:00 | "Chicken Man" Rehearsal | . | 7:00 | Amnesty Group 15 |
| | 7:00 | "Chicken Man" Fruit and Veggie | . | Wed Feb 22 | 2:00 "Chicken Man" Fruit and Veggie |
| Sat Feb 11 | 9:00 | Home Goods Drop Off Day | . | Fri Feb 24 | 2:00 "Chicken Man" Fruit and Veggie |
| | 9:00 | Photography Club | . | 6:00 | "Chicken Man" Rehearsal |
| | 7:00 | PCC Evening | . | 7:30 | <i>Rise Up Singing</i> |
| Sun Feb 12 | 9:00 | Neighboring Faiths | . | Sat Feb 25 | 7:30 "Words From Prison" Reading |
| | 12:30 | PIT | . | Sun Feb 26 | 12:00 "Chicken Man" Lights and Rehearsal |
| | 12:30 | Travel Task Force | . | 4:00 | OWL |
| | 1:00 | Darwin Program | . | 6:30 | YRUU |
| | 3:00 | Needleworkers Affinity Group | . | 7:30 | <i>Women's Book Group</i> |
| | 4:00 | OWL | . | Tue Feb 28 | 9:30 <i>Women's Book Group</i> |
| | 5:00 | YAC | . | 6:30 | "Chicken Man" Technical Rehearsal |
| | 5:30 | Britain Tour Transcendentalist Potluck | . | Wed Feb 29 | 6:30 "Chicken Man" Dress Rehearsal |
| | 6:30 | <i>Grounded for Flight</i> | . | | |

FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

The March Newsletter deadline is Friday, February 24, at noon.
The Newsletter will be published Tuesday, March 6.

Office Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

Phone: 978-369-9602

Fax: 978-369-8701

E-Mail: FPConcord@firstparish.org

Website: www.firstparish.org

• **Ministers' E-Mail:**
• Elaine Beth Peresluha: uurevdoc@gmail.com
• Jenny M. Rankin: jrankin@firstparish.org
• Craig M. Nowak: cnowak@firstparish.org
•

* **PLEASE NOTE:** The office is CLOSED on Mondays.

First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Staff

Elaine Beth Peresluha, Interim Senior Minister

Jenny M. Rankin, Minister

Melissa Perdue Gallo, Business Manager

Gary E. Smith, Minister Emeritus

Christy McKellips, Assistant to the Ministers

Tina Storey, Assistant to the Business Manager

Faith Bade, Social Action Program Director

Jane Foley, Membership Director

Craig M. Nowak, Ministerial Intern

Becky Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education

Avi Salloway, Youth Program Director

• Elizabeth Norton, Music Director
• Eric Huenneke, Parish 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 Koplów, Operations Manager, Jericho Road
• Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator
• Cassy Bosworth, Office Manager
• Peggy Gallo, Volunteer Collector
• Kate Keleher, Volunteer Newsletter Editor
• Kaye Harvie, Volunteer Copy Editor
•

Darwin Birthday Celebration

Sunday, February 12, 2012 @ 1:00 PM

Hosted by Concord Area Humanists
and

First Parish in Concord
@ 20 Lexington Road

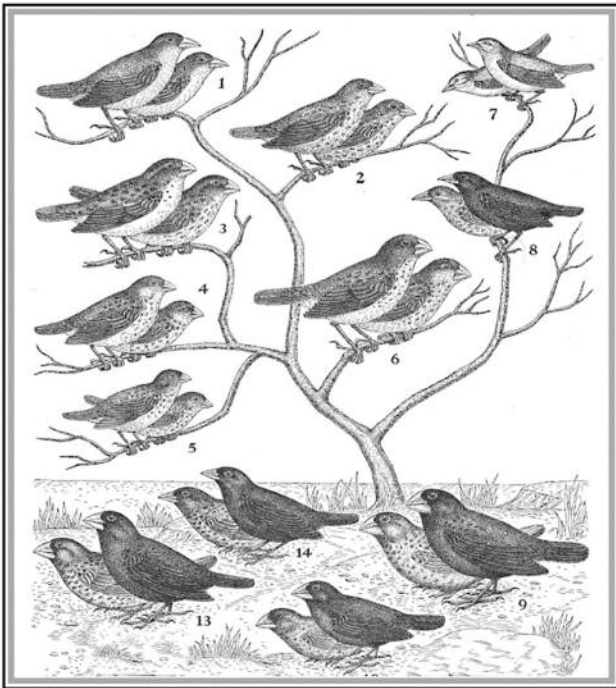
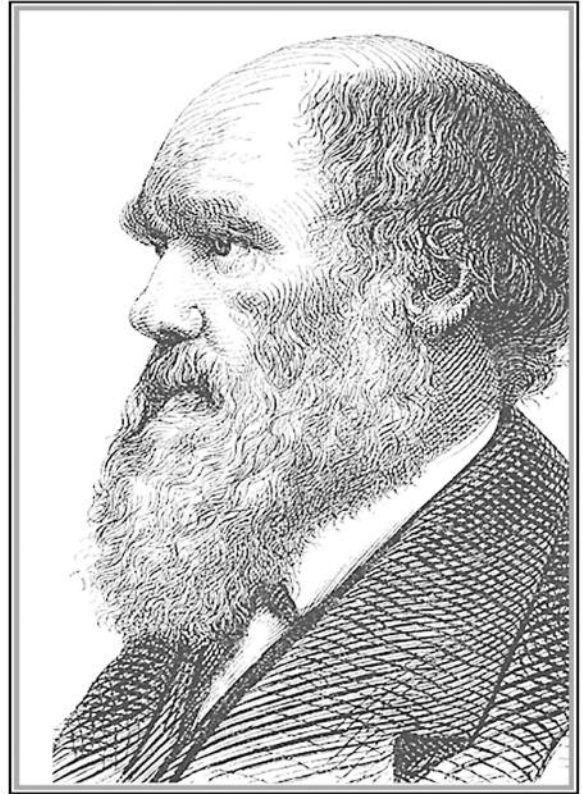
1:00 PM

Charles Darwin will visit with us, reminisce about his life and times, and mingle. Enjoy a light lunch, and of course, birthday cake!

2:00 PM

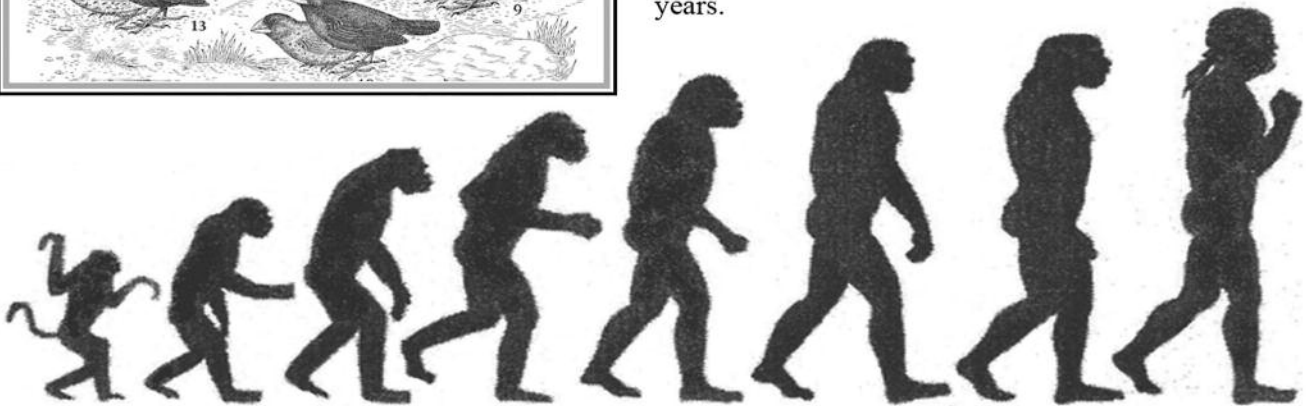
60-minute movie "Journey of the Universe" by Swimme and Tucker. Learn about the Universe's 14 billion years evolution, from Big Bang, leading up to our place in the world, and beyond. Join in lively discussion groups about our Great Story -- Where are we going?

Suggested donation: \$5.00 pp, \$10.00 p/family at the door. All ages welcome. To help us plan, RSVP to: pne@aol.com with "Darwin" in the Subject line.



Earlier, @ 9:00 & 11:00, Rev Dr. Elaine Peresluha will conduct 60-minute Humanist Services honoring the great man. First Parish is a welcoming, inclusive, and historic 375-year old community.

A well-known Humanist Minister, Dr. Johannes Auer ministered the Parish 1926 to 1930. He then became Professor of Theology at Harvard, where he taught until retiring in 1954. He signed the first Humanist Manifesto in 1933, and influenced American Humanism of the period. Many Parish Ministers, and congregations, have had Humanist leanings over the years.



**First Parish in Concord
Hosts
World Day of Prayer 2012**

**Friday, March 2, 2012
Service in Sanctuary: 11:00 a.m.
Celebratory Lunch in Parish Hall: Noon**



**Theme: Let Justice Prevail!
Service Written by the WDP
Committee of Malaysia**

Chicken Man

Social Action Community
at First Parish Presents....

CHICKEN MAN *the Musical*

Written by Jane Blumberg

Directed by Francene Amari-Faulkner

SHOW DATES

March 2nd and 3rd — 7:30 PM

March 9th and 10th — 7:30 PM

TICKETS

\$8 - \$15 *at the door*

info: 978-369-9602



One man
CAN Make a Difference

sac.firstparish.org/cms/chickenman

20 Lexington Road, Concord MA



for Spiritual Renewal

The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • February 2012

Welcome to the Wright Tavern Center. Online registration is available for all courses. Check our website at wrighttavern.org for schedules, 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

Tibetan Buddhism

The Buddhist group will continue to meet in the First Parish Chapel Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings. These weekly sessions are open to all who are interested in transforming love, compassion and wisdom into action. You are welcome to share the spirit of community at these gatherings regardless of your familiarity with Tibetan Buddhism. Donations are gratefully accepted. Contact **Bill Seaver** at 978-369-7318 if you have any questions.

Wednesday: 9:30-11:00 a.m. Thursday: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

T'ai Chi and Qi Gong

T'ai chi is a gentle flowing exercise that will help you build and circulate energy. Based on teachings from China, we will do Qi Gong movements that help you retain flexibility in all your joints. Students will also learn the Hwa Yu tai chi form, a series of connected movement that is like a slow-motion dance. Research shows that tai chi and qi gong improve stability, improve immune function, and create many of the benefits of meditation. If you've tried meditation, but find it hard to sit still, tai chi and qi gong may be the way to give yourself those benefits while gently moving your body. No past experience is necessary. Wear comfortable clothing. Instructor: **Sue Wood**

Sue Wood has been practicing Hwa Yu T'ai Chi since 1984. She was taught by David Zucker. She currently continues her tai chi and qi gong study with Dr. Yang Yang of the Center For Tai Chi Studies (<http://www.chentaiji.com/>).

Tuesday: Feb. 7- March 27 6:30-8:00 p.m. \$120/8 classes

T'ai Ji

Being in touch with our own energy creates endless possibilities within ourselves. By combining music with qi gong and the simple movement of t'ai ji, we can release blocked energy, create wellness and bring our lives into balance. This class is geared to people of all ages. It offers gentle low-impact exercise to reduce stress, to enhance optimal health and to simply create a sense of joy in our lives. Instructor: **Mae Pagan**

Mae Pagan has studied t'ai ji and qi gong for 22 years. She follows the teachings of Chungliang Al Huang and his nontraditional style of teaching t'ai ji movement as a joyful approach to

- life as well as a path to wellness. With a background in Tibetan
- Qi gong and Reiki, she provides a gentle mix of t'ai ji movement with the healing aspects of qi gong. She also holds degrees
- in philosophy, psychology and education.

Friday: Feb. 17, Mar. 16, May 11, Jun. 8 12:30-1:30 p.m.

\$ 25/session

Concord Area Humanist (CAH) Group

- We are a Concord area group welcoming you to normally two evening meetings each month, with a Humanist perspective.
- The Wednesday meeting starts with a social at 7:00 p.m., with program following at 7:30 p.m. We inclusively bring together the various non-supernatural life-stances that have a similar emphasis on our being responsible for what happens around us, such as Buddhist-, Judaic-, Religious-, and Secular-Humanism, Ethical Culture, Naturalism, and all the others that have a life-stance consistent with Humanism and its Aspirations — Humanist Manifesto III. Come and enjoy investigating with us the intersection of science and culture, ethics and social trends, books and ideas. Times and place of meetings may change, so please always check our latest announcements on www.MeetUp.com, and RSVP while you are there. For more information, click on links here and in the program listings. You may also email **Patrick Everett** at pne@aol.com, or **Maria Greene** at maria@justmagicdesign.com. CAH is affiliated with the American Humanist Association and with the UU-HUManists. Our program follows.

Second Wednesday in February — Dialog

- Dr. Abby Hafer has researched for many years in Physiology and Zoology, and given public lectures on Evolution. Abby will talk about animals unlikely from intelligent design, especially two intriguing creatures appearing to break all rules - a good introduction to the movie we will show on Sunday February 12, Darwin's Birthday event.

Wednesday, February 8 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 12 — Charles Darwin's 203rd Birthday Party, cohosted by CAH and First Parish

- At the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services, Rev. Dr. Elaine Peresluha will conduct Humanist services celebrating Darwin. At 1:00 p.m. Darwin will greet us in the Parish Hall, talk about his life and times, cut his cake, and mingle with us while we enjoy a

light lunch of finger food. Suggested donation at the door: \$5/person, \$10/family, children welcome. RSVP will help planning, to pne@aol.com, including “Darwin” in the subject line.

Following the lunch at 2:00 p.m., is the movie *Journey of the Universe*, by B. Swimme & M. Tucker. Learn about the Universe’s and Earth’s 14 billion years evolution, from Big Bang, through early life, to our place in the world, and beyond, through this 60-minute movie. Then join in lively discussion groups and meet new people.

Thursday, Feb 16, 7:30 p.m. Open Discussion Group, Concord Public Library. Hosted by Paul Jameson, paul_jameson@comcast.net.

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**, RN, MS, HN-BC.

Choose either Thursday evenings (7:00-9:00 p.m.) Mar. 8 to Apr. 26 (no class on Apr. 19) OR Friday mornings (9:30-11:30 a.m.) Mar. 9 to Apr. 27 (no class on Apr. 20) Enrollment is limited to 15.

Tuition is \$290, plus an additional \$85 materials fee (including text, CDs, and manual) Continuing Education for nurses and other health professionals available. Discount for Blue Cross Blue Shield members. For more information about the MBSR program, visit www.stressresources.com. Contact Pam Ressler pressler@stressresources.com or 978-369-5243) to register.

Rise Up Singing

This informal monthly musical gathering of adults and children provides participants with an opportunity to sing and share traditional and contemporary folk songs, spirituals, hymns, rounds and chants in fellowship. Singers of all ages and experience are welcome. Bring a copy of *Rise Up Singing* if you have one. Individuals are encouraged to bring instruments if they wish. Led by **Beth Norton and Others**.

- Beth Norton has been Music Director at First Parish since 1994.
- Beth believes in the power of music to express what is beyond words, to deepen our spiritual experience and to build community. As a singer, conductor, violinist and folk musician, Beth enjoys making music in a wide variety of styles with people of all ages and abilities.
- Friday: Feb. 24, Mar. 23, Apr. 27, May 18 7:30 p.m. Free: No registration required

The First Parish Women’s AM/PM Book Group

- Dates given are for Sunday evening, 7:30-9:00 p.m., and Tuesday morning, 9:30-11:00 a.m. Sessions will be at First Parish.
- Feb. 26, 28 *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot
- Mar. 25, 27 *Room: A Novel*, by Emma Donoghue
- Apr. 22, 24 *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography*, by Jean H. Baker
- May 20, 22 *Bossypants*, by Tina Fey

II. UNITATIAN UNIVERSALISM

Turner and the Transcendentalists — The Impact of Visual Artists on Thinkers”

Margaret Fuller, Emerson, James Freeman Clarke, May Alcott all had opinions about the visual artists of their time. We will explore what they had to say and what others, such as the art critic, John Ruskin, thought about J. M. W. Turner’s modern painting. Ruskin argued that “the principal role of the artist is truth to nature” and the heart of Transcendentalism is its relation to nature. We will also look at the Hudson River School, amid 19th century American art movement which was influenced by Turner.

The class will be led by **Lillian Anderson** and **Donna Peterson**. They are in the process of learning about Turner themselves, and will lead a thought-provoking discussion of this “painter of light,” as Turner was known.

Tuesday, Mar. 6 7:30-9:00 p.m. \$5 donation for Wright Tavern Center

Adventure in Learning — Thomas Carlyle and American Transcendentalism

Emerson was just thirty years old when he first met Thomas Carlyle in 1833, after travelling over moor and field to reach Carlyle’s remote farm in the Scottish countryside. Their minds clicked instantly, the connection so powerful that Emerson would call it later “a white day in my years.” He was taken with Carlyle’s restless energy and intellectual faculties. When

Margaret Fuller met Carlyle, she took to him at first sight, but on her second or third visit to his London home, found him tendentious, wordy, and quite simply, unable to stop talking!

Carlyle's essays in the 1830s profoundly influenced New England Transcendentalists, so much so that one scholar has called Carlyle's work the "call-to-arms of transcendentalism."

Join **Jenny Rankin** and others for another "adventure in learning" as we delve into the life and thought of this European thinker who so influenced our own American culture, literature and spirituality.

Tuesday, Mar. 13 7:30-9:00 p.m. \$5 donation for Wright Tavern Center

- **To Be a Christian: an Introduction to Christian Identity for Skeptics, Seekers and Sympathizers.**
- Carl Scovel has taught at the Radcliffe Seminars, the Wright Tavern and King's Chapel, Boston, where he was minister for thirty years. He has learned as least as much from his Concord students as they may think they have learned from him, and looks forward to another series of classes with them.
- *Before You Believe* — an examinations of the assumptions on which Christian faith is based.
- Tuesday, Mar. 20 7:30-9:00 p.m. Fee \$10/session
- *Trying to Trust* — an exposition of Christian behavior and faith for most, not all, Christians.
- Tuesday, Mar. 27 7:30- 9:00 p.m. Fee \$10/session
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