

The *Meeting House* News



REVERIES

February has been a big month at First Parish! Thank you for showing up and sharing your voices and viewpoints! Plan to join us the last weekend in March to help envision the next chapter in First Parish's collective life (see the PIT article, page 9). Pledge early and generously to make that future possible!



As I meet with new members, I am frequently asked, "Tell me about Unitarian Universalism. Where did it come from? What do you believe?" Hard questions to answer! Often, we say we are a "big tent," welcoming spiritual seekers of diverse backgrounds, world views, beliefs. Still, it isn't always easy to "get our hands around" what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, or a congregation with that identity, in 2012.

One thing that has always helped me understand this "living tradition" of which I am a part is to learn the life stories of women and men who have dwelt in this tradition before me. Women like Clara Barton or Dorothea Dix, men like Joseph Priestley in England or Theodore Parker in America. Like us, they usually differed from one another in their views on human nature, God, what happens after we die. Like us, they often cared deeply about the world they lived in and wanted to make it better. Like us, they thought hard about what they believed, what they didn't believe, and committed their lives to an ongoing intellectual and spiritual search that could only be called a kind of "passionate seeking."

During March, to explore more deeply this living tradition we share, and to honor the interim goal of reconnecting with our history better, I will be offering a series called "Roots Hold Me Close." We'll be learning together about the Unitarian tradition outside of America and how it emerged around the globe.

During a time when the congregation is seeking a new way forward, it can be comforting — and spiritually strengthening — to "touch down" into our roots. There is a foundation under our feet. We walk on ground that has been hallowed by the spiritual fire, courage and tenacity of women and men who lived here before us. May their spirit bless us and keep us in these days.

— *Jenny Rankin*

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- ◆ "Chicken Man" Info
- ◆ "Heard" Vermont Trip Info
- ◆ Wright Tavern Center Courses

First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636



**First Parish Auction
and Cinco de Mayo !FIESTA!
Saturday, May 5, 2012, 6:30 p.m.
in the Parish Hall**

This year’s biennial First Parish benefit features a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta with a fabulous dinner and a live auction, creative and original raffles and an amazing Grand Prize! Bid online for incredible items before the auction, or raise the ante during the live and silent auctions the evening of May 5.

The Auction Donations Committee will be at coffee hours in March; for contributions, contact **M. Lou Toussaint** @ mlou512@yahoo.com.

To volunteer for one of the Auction committees leading up to or on the day of the event, contact Auction cochairs **Shawna Reid** shawnaeid@gmail.com or **Kelly Roberts** kbr5@cornell.edu or call 978-287-4229.

Sunday Services at First Parish

9:00 and 11:00 a.m. in the 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, March 4**
• *Toward a Theology of Abundance* — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha
• This Sunday we begin the process of inspiring a new conversation around money for First Parish. The Bell Choir, banner parades and special music begin our transparent conversation about sustainable stewardship.
- **9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir, Children’s Choir and Bell Choir!**
• *Circle Round for Freedom* – Hirschorn/Glover
• *Creation Will Be at Peace* – Page
• *Spanish Dance* – McChesney
- **Sunday, March 11**
• *“The Fountain-Light of All Our Day”* — Rev. Jenny M. Rankin
• “Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,” William Wordsworth once wrote, suggesting that the soul existed somewhere before we are born, somewhere with the divine. It was a controversial statement in his time because Christians did not believe in the preexistence of the soul. Are children closer to the divine than adults? Do we lose that sense of transcendence as we get older? Do our “shadowy recollections” of childhood — that sense of wonder, joy in the natural world — do these really sustain us as we grow older as Wordsworth claimed?
• Second in a two- part series on the British romantic poet and the spiritual insight and fire he passed on to our Unitarian ancestors.
- **9:00 – First Parish Choir**
• *Let All the Beauty We Have Known* – Norton
• *Now I Walk in Beauty* – Smith
- **11:00 – Siri Smedvig, violin**
- **Sunday, March 18**
• *Miss Manners Reflects On Interim Etiquette* — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha
• Miss Manners has long asserted the import of etiquette in assuring social order. She has even gone so far as to claim the loss of social graces as the source of war and crime. Most appreciative interim minister wonders if Miss Manners has wisdom to offer First Parish as we step into an all-congregational gathering. How shall we politely ponder our direction and move forward?
- **9:00 – Joan Esch, cello**
• **11:00 – First Parish Choir**
• *Simple Gifts* – arr. Copland
• *Gentle Words* – arr. Hall
- **Thursday, March 22**
• *A Water Vespers* — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha
• Today is International Water Day. Join Elaine in the Chapel at 6 p.m. to share in this global day to honor the human right to clean, safe water. We will reflect on the global implications of water, the hope and challenges in sustaining its quality, and its availability for all.

Services at First Parish

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Sunday, March 25

Reverence for Life — Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha and Lora Kim Joyner

Today we honor all beings, our relationship to creation, and our appreciation of the diverse opinions that make up First Parish. The Reverence for Life discussion engages us all in different ways. How we relate to one another and honor our differences is foundational to the success of this denominational initiative.

9:00 & 11:00 – Anna Huckabee Tull, vocalist (and friends)

Dare to Rise – Huckabee Tull

Sunday, April 1

“Fools Rush In” —Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha

... where wise men fear to tread.” The Fool, too often dismissed as impractical, silly, irresponsible and illogical, is really quite courageous. On Palm Sunday, we risk looking “foolish” with the chance to play and try something new. We will celebrate today, and close our congregational weekend work, celebrating mission and vision. To fulfill our destiny — sometimes we have to take risks. Today is the day.

9:00 – First Parish Choir and Junior Choir

Make a Joyful Noise – Collins

Hallelujah – Cohen

11:00 – Gospel Choir & Chalice Choir

One Voice – Moody

Hallelujah – Cohen

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, March 23
 Friday, April 20
 Friday, May 18

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

Finding Your Interim Minister

Elaine, AKA Rev. Dr. Elaine Beth Peresluha, will be on vacation from March 5 to 15. Jenny Rankin will be available for administrative or pastoral emergencies. Elaine’s normal office hours resume on March 16, when you can find her in her office at 20 Lexington Road, Concord; 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 cmckellips@firstparish.org to schedule an appointment. Monday is Elaine’s day off and Friday is her sermon writing day.

Terrific Tuesdays Begin March 6

One of the great First Parish social events starts this week! Attend any or all of the Terrific Tuesday dinner events in March.

Note earlier starting time

Appetizers at 5:45 p.m., dinner at 6:00. A vesper service follows the meal at 7:00 in the Chapel. Check out the Wright Tavern listing for lecture events that follow. Child care is available, and the cost is \$5 per person/\$20 per family. Sign up during coffee hour or in the church office.

Ministerial Intern Announced

Anthony Fisher will be First Parish’s next Ministerial Intern. Tony had enjoyed a career in educational publishing and had deep involvement in his home UU parish in Reading, Massachusetts, when he decided to pursue the ministry as a full-time calling. He entered Andover Newton Theological School as a Master of Divinity student in 2010. Tony’s warmth and his experience in UU affairs impressed the Ministerial Internship Committee, which had the privilege of reviewing packets from a number of highly qualified candidates. The sermons and service that he submitted showed spiritual and human insight and a degree of craftsmanship that would be admirable even in a settled minister. The First Parish internship is a half-time position extending over two years, and Tony will complete his coursework at Andover-Newton while serving our congregation. Elaine Peresluha will mentor Tony in 2012-2013, and the mentoring will fall to our newly chosen minister the following year. The Ministerial Internship Committee welcomes new mem-

Parish Notes

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bers who would enjoy meeting with Tony each month to provide a nonministerial perspective on parish life. If you would like to join, speak to any of the current members: **Dave Dawson, Dave Elwood, Kristin Haddad, Dana Snyder-Grant, Alec Walker** and **Dianne Weiss**.

You Can Sponsor the Flowers Any Sunday

If you would like to provide Sunday flowers for a memorial or celebration, please contact **Peggy Brace** at 978-369-1373.

Ferry Beach Registration — Next Month!

Mark your calendar now for the annual First Parish Ferry Beach Retreat Weekend, May 25-28 (Memorial Day Weekend). Join families from our own congregation and First Parish in Lexington for a relaxed weekend on the beach at the UU Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center in Saco, Maine. Registrations for the weekend will be taken at coffee hours on April 22 and April 29. Look for the Ferry Beach information table in the Parish Hall beginning Sunday, April 15. For questions before then, contact **Darien Smith** (darien@smithquest.com, 978-369-1471). Also, check out the excellent summer camps and conferences for all ages at Ferry Beach, at www.ferrybeach.org.

Celebrate the Arrival of Spring

The First Parish Women's Circle invites the entire First Parish community, their friends, and family members to a celebration of the Spring Equinox on Thursday, March 22, at 7:30 in the Wright Tavern. We will greet this season of renewal and growth with colored eggs, planting of seeds, songs, readings, reflections, and seasonal treats. Come join the festivities!



"The Heard" Trips and Travel Task Force Open Congregational Meeting

Sunday, March 18 at 5:00 p.m.

Join Youth Program Director **Avi Salloway** and RE Director **Pam Howell** and The Heard for a meeting to discuss youth travel. The meeting is open to the entire congregation, and we encourage middle school and high school parents and youth to participate. The meeting will serve to understand the opportunities of the future better. We will discuss the upcoming trip cycle and develop a schedule that suits the needs and interests of the First Parish youth.

Tuesday Group Meets April 3

The next meeting of the Tuesday Group will be held Tuesday April 3, at 1:30 p.m. **Dave Dawson** will discuss the Cocomat Grove fire in 1942, and the interesting outcomes for two women who were involved. (Future meetings of the Tuesday Group will take place on May 1 and June 5.)

Get Ready for the Return of Sybarite5!

First Parish's own violinist **Sarah Whitney** is returning to the Parish Hall with her eclectic New York-based string quintet for a double-show weekend Saturday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, April 15, at 3:30 p.m. A lively evening of mixed genres — including tango, jazz, classical and more — awaits you! Winner of the prestigious 2011 Concert Artist Guild competition in New York City, Sybarite5 continues to delight audiences of all ages. Tickets are available now online at www.Sybarite5.org, and will soon be available at upcoming coffee hours. Don't miss this mesmerizing, talented ensemble!

Concord Area Humanists

On Sunday, March 11, our new First Parish Humanist Committee is planning an evening potluck dinner with discussion — "What is Humanism," and "Where does it fit in First Parish?" If interested, please e-mail pne@aol.com with "potluck" on the subject line.

On February 12, we celebrated Darwin's birthday, with "Darwin" and a movie telling our 14-billion-year story. Over 130 attended this first-ever major First Parish Humanist event since our Humanist minister Johannes Auer left in 1930 to teach at Harvard Divinity School. Auer helped generate the first Humanist Manifesto in 1933, when Unitarians led the flowering of American Humanism.

Call to Justice General Assembly 2012

Come join a delegation of First Parish members and Unitarian Universalists from across the country to convene in Phoenix, Arizona, from June 20 to 24.

This year's General Assembly will be a truly unique experience. There will be multiple ways of engaging in justice work. There will be workshops, worship, and opportunities to work with community partners on projects located in a variety of settings. There will be opportunities to go in-depth on important justice issues such as colonization, border issues and advocacy. These are some of the issues that **Faith Bade** and **Craig Nowak** have drawn our attention to in preparation for GA in 2012. Early registration is March 1 to April 30. Late registration, May 1 to June 24. The Denominational Affairs Committee will be holding informational meetings. Come learn about the work of our denomination, and why it is so important to support our denomination.

Parish Notes

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Parish Notes

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Concert and Tea on March 16

Looking forward to spring? The Women’s Parish Association cordially invites you to their annual spring concert, which will take place on Friday, March 16. The concert will begin at 3 p.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by tea in the Parlor and Parish Hall. All women, men and youth are cordially invited. There is no charge for this event and no reservations are needed. It’s not necessary, but if possible, please bring along some nicely plated cookies, brownies, bars, etc., to share with others. Details about the concert will be published in the Sunday News and on the FP Announce e-mail distribution list.

Thoreau Commemoration

Save the date: Sunday, April 29, at 3 p.m. The 150th anniversary of the legacy of Henry David Thoreau will be commemorated in the Sanctuary, where his funeral took place on May 9, 1862. Dramatic readings, period music, and a guided walk to the Thoreau family gravesite in Sleepy Hollow will be included. Sponsored by the Transcendentalism Council of First Parish and the Thoreau Society.

First Parish’s Annual Passover Seder — Saturday, April 7

Yes, it is the day before Easter and the first day of Passover. All in our First Parish community are welcome with family and friends. Ticket costs will remain the same as last year. The only difference will be BYOB (doesn’t have to be Kosher). (\$15 for people 13 through 80; \$5 for children 6 through 12. All other ages, no charge, but you must have reservations.)

We are able to keep prices down and the fun of working together up because everyone takes on an assignment. Cooks, table setters, servers, food arrangers, shoppers and cleanup people are all needed. Please reserve early for we have to limit the number to under 45. Phone or e-mail Rhoda Miller. Tickets can be purchased Sunday, March 25 or April 1, or in the office during the week. Sorry, we cannot sell tickets after Wednesday April 4. Contact Rhoda Miller with questions at 978-369-6639 or rhodamill@aol.com.

Jewish Awareness Affinity Group Meets

The Jewish Awareness affinity group meets this month on March 16 at First Parish from 7 to 9 p.m. Mel Bernstein will lead us in a discussion on “Iran’s Nuclear Threat to Israel: Will Iran get the nuclear bomb? What should Israel do about it?” All are invited.

Elaine Peresluha, Jenny Rankin and I discussed stewardship in our ET meeting this week, and the concept of stewardship being the intersection or, “sweet spot,” where dreams and vision meet responsibility. I’ve been in more meetings and discussions about stewardship and fundraising since I’ve been involved in this church than I could ever count, and I very much like this definition of stewardship. Our theme for this year’s annual campaign, “Uniting in Stewardship,” was meant to convey the idea of all of us joining together, but I think the idea of us uniting our dreams and vision with our responsibility as a member or friend of First Parish is powerful.

Our campaign kicks off on Sunday, March 4. My role in the campaign is to develop a budget based on our pledge goal of \$906,000. As always, I will be communicating budget status as we move through the early spring, right on up until the Annual Meeting in June. I am always available to answer any questions you may have about the budget. ♦

— Melissa Perdue Gallo

STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

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

- 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.

The Five Wishes— A Workshop to Help You Make Important Decisions

History

The Five Wishes program began in Florida with “Aging with Dignity” founder, attorney Tim Tavey. He visited Mother Teresa’s home for the dying in India. Even though the people were in humble surroundings, they were treated with compassion and love. Returning home, he lived for a year as a volunteer in her home for AIDS patients in Washington, D.C., and was deeply moved by the experience.

The Five Wishes document was introduced in Florida in 1997, with the aid of a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It is recognized in 40 states and is available in 21 additional languages. Over 15,000 organizations nationwide have distributed over 12 million copies.

When the Five Wishes are completed, it is important to share the document with family members, health care professionals and places of worship so that one’s chosen wishes will be acknowledged and respected.

Program

Five Wishes looks at the personal, emotional and spiritual needs of a person, not just his or her medical needs. It is a legal document that lets you get the care desired when it is most needed.

Wish 1: Choosing a durable power of attorney for health care

Wish 2: Deciding what medical treatment you want or don’t want — a Living Will

Wish 3: Choosing the types of care you want — how you want your pain to be managed

Wish 4: Describing in detail how you want to be treated so that your dignity can be maintained

Wish 5: Taking advantage of the opportunity to tell others how you want to be remembered

This document is the only advanced directive that deals with spiritual matters and assists health care providers in respecting your religious beliefs.

There will be a short DVD, followed by an in-depth discussion of each of the wishes, as well as exploring how best to have a conversation with loved ones who may have difficulty making these decisions.

Sue Dobbie, RN, BS, CPN (Certified Parish Nurse) and parish member, will be presenting an informational session on the “Five Wishes” document on Sunday evening, March 25, at 7 p.m. in the Chapel at First Parish. The program will be presented through the Wright Tavern. There is a \$5.00 fee for the Five Wishes booklet. Call the church office to sign up. For more information, please contact Sue at 978-501-6969 or susandobbie@gmail.com.

The Caring Connection

Thanks to the cooks! Thanks so much to cooks **Debbie Clark, Donna Peterson, Jane Johnson, Kathy Mayer, Leslie Fisher, Lois Whitney, Marty Wallace, Mary Ann Barton**, and leaders **Carolyn Shohet** and **Rhoda Miller** and **Tracey Hurd** for cooking a record number of entrees, soup, and bread to fill our Caring Connection freezer. It was a fun, efficient and busy morning — it was wonderful to have everyone there! With **Rev. Jenny Rankin**’s leadership, we have been providing meals for parishioners much more frequently than in years past. People enjoy the delicious, healthy food, delivered in bags beautifully decorated by our RE children. Thanks to Carolyn and Rhoda for leading the cooking efforts that make this possible, and to **Bev Bringle, Pat Kane** and **Petra Betts** for leading food deliveries.

More thanks

Sometimes being part of the Caring Connection means simply being “on call” as needed. Thank you to everyone who is part of a possible-drivers list. When a congregation member calls for help with a ride, it is so important to have a list of people willing to drive. Just being on the list

Pastoral Care News

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

The Lay Minister for February is **Dana Snyder-Grant**, 978-266-9409 or danasg@newview.org.

Ministers: **Rev. Jenny Rankin** (revjenny@comcast.net) and **Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha** (uurevdod@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).

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is a gift to our community. Thanks also to **Kitsy Rothermel**, who continues to write notes on behalf of the Caring Connection to parishioners undergoing change or illness; **Louisa Pausher** and **Bridget Neale Paris**, who stand ready to welcome new babies to families; and all who write "thinking of you" notes at coffee hour. (Be sure to look for the table.)

Feel like helping out with the Caring Connection? Contact **Tracey Hurd**, Caring Connection Team Leader at thurd@aol.com.

Shawl Ministry to Begin

Thanks to the incredible organizing efforts of **Holly Cratsley** and **Regina Hugendubler**, Shawl Ministry is launched! Thirteen people attended, and more RSVP'd with apologies, our kickoff meeting on February 22. At the meeting we decided that shawls can be knit individually or passed from knitter to knitter. Drop-in meetings will be held twice a month, where we can exchange patterns, shawls, needles, etc. Regina and other expert knitters are happy to help provide knitting help. **Craig Nowak** shared reflections about how Shawl Ministry has worked in other churches, noting that at First Parish the ministers will choose recipients for the shawls, as part of their pastoral care outreach. Eventually we will have shawls stored and on-hand for outreach by **Jenny Rankin** and the other ministers. The first shawl, created by the Women's Retreats with extra help from **Val Holt**, has been delivered and appreciated. A new shawl was started by **Ginger Lang**, and passed off to **Becky Blodgett**. Becky will be looking for more willing hands in a week or two. Contact Regina if you might be interested.

The Shawl Ministry is always open to everyone. We will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m.; also in conjunction with the Knitting Affinity Group on the third Sunday of the month at 3 p.m.. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 7, in the Wright Tavern. Contact **Regina Hugendubler** at ode2joy@usa.net with any questions or to be put on the mailing list.



There are a few things in life of which we can be certain. Each day, the sun will rise and set. The ocean tide will ebb and flow. No matter how long the winter (or not!), the crocus will push its way through last fall's dried, brown leaves to spatter our gardens with points of color. The birth of a child will swell someone's heart with a love they had never before experienced. The death of a loved one will make someone's heart feel burdened with grief.

Mixed among that certainty are changes, some expected and a lot more not. Circumstances change, as do priorities. We often grow and need to push ourselves forward. And sometimes we face the inevitable realization that something has to give.

For me, a time for change has come. It is with a grateful but heavy heart that I am leaving my position as Membership Director at First Parish. I have accepted a position in the city where I live, as a paraprofessional in the Early Childhood Center of the Melrose Public Schools. As a mother of an active child, an undergraduate student at Salem State University, and a deeply involved member of the Melrose UU Church, it will help tremendously to be so close to home.

I will miss greatly the staff of First Parish, who've helped me grow and provided me with a daily dose of goodwill and humor.

I will miss greatly the Membership Committee, who were so welcoming to me, and who understand what it means to be welcoming to each person who enters this church.

As a final message to you, I want you to consider this: As a congregation, you've been spending a lot of time visioning, and soon you'll decide on the direction First Parish should move toward when calling a new senior minister. Included in that visioning, consider the notion of radical hospitality. As Rev. Marilyn Sewell notes, "I speak of radical hospitality today because there is a world out there that needs home, that needs community, and I want us to stretch spiritually, to stretch ourselves open ... When we take the risk, our lives will grow so much richer and deeper because we have extended ourselves. Our creativity will blossom, for we will not be stuck with our old assumptions, our narrow ways of perceiving reality. Our world will grow wider and softer and more trusting." ♦

Take the risk.

With love and appreciation,

—Jane Foley

Membership Director

MUSINGS

March is my least favorite month of the year. It's hard to say why. Many good things happen in March. The Nortons celebrate numerous family birthdays. Here in the Northeast, the first shoots of bulbs begin to break through the soil and the days get noticeably longer. There's much to hope for. But even so, March feels like the longest 31-day month in the year.

For me and my family there are birthdays to celebrate, but also deaths to commemorate. Inevitably, it snows on those green shoots of snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils at least once before the month is over. And yes, the



days get longer, but there's that pesky time change in the middle of the month to upset the circadian clock. We're done with winter (even if it's not done with us), yet spring still feels a long way off. It's an unpredictable time of year! I wonder if it's this unsettled nature of March that makes it seem so long.

March also brings mud season. It can be difficult to imagine, as tires spin in the ruts, or boots suddenly slide beneath us that we will ever stand again on firm ground. And of course this year, March comes during the "mud season" of our interim process. It's a challenging time of change, transition, wheel spinning and sliding!

"It will be hard, we know, and the road will be muddy and rough, but we'll get there, heaven knows how we will get there, but we know we will." I know I keep coming back to these words from "Woyaya" (*Singing the Journey* No. 1020), but they seem so appropriate to this interim period that we're navigating with the guidance of **Elaine Peresluha** and the Parish Interim Team. I am grateful for their careful planning, their curiosity, their willingness to listen to difficult conversations and their courage in moving us through this muddy and rough season of transition. Their leadership and our long history of weathering change assure me that "we know within" and that First Parish will eventually come out of the mire of uncertainty with a renewed sense of our mission and our identity.

So it's March and it's mud season, both in the natural world and in our interim process. But we know within, and that the mud holds seeds of renewal that will germinate and grow, bringing the glory of spring and hope for our future. Woyaya. ♦

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Music Director

PARTNER CONGREGATION COMMITTEE

- The Partner Congregation Committee (PCC) invites you to join us for the Terrific Tuesday Dinner on March 6, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., with delightful music, tasty victuals and a vesper service led by First Parish's Director of Music, **Beth Norton**. A sign-up sheet is available during Sunday's coffee hours and child care is available at the dinner.

- The plans continue for First Parish's hosting of a special delegation from our partner Keresztúr Congregation. Our 14 guests will arrive on September 20 and stay through to October 1. As is Hungarian custom, family names precede given (first) names:

- **Youth:** Balogh Em, Ciocan Ágnes, Deák Tamara, Rezi Kinga, Nagy Henrietta, Tamási Dezs

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

- For biographical information and pictures, along with pictures of past Keresztúri pilgrimages and for 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>).

- The PCC and the Executive Team are working together to raise the funds to pay for 12 of the delegates' airfares (two spouses who'll be joining the delegation will have their airfares paid for by their families). Our most recent fundraiser was the enjoyable "Evening in Székelykeresztúr" held on February 11, with choral music, stories and more Hungarian cuisine selections than could possibly be sampled in one sitting! We would like to say a resounding "Köszönöm" to all who made the evening such a pleasing success.

- We continue to look for volunteers to host Keresztúr pilgrims in their homes and for help with homestay and activity logistics, and (especially) for assistance with fundraising activities/events. For information, or to volunteer, please contact **Ken Estabrook** at kestabrook@verizon.net.

- 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 **Winslow Pettingell**, 353 Thoreau Street, Concord, on Thursday, March 15, at 6:30 p.m. For further information, drop us a line. ♦

Minden jót! "Best wishes!"

— **Winslow Pettingell**, PCC chair,

LondonSW11@comcast.net

First Parish Mission/Vision Retreat Weekend

SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, March 30, 2012, to Sunday, April 1, 2012

You have been part of First Parish Listens. Thank you. Now be ready to join as First Parish dreams, and First Parish decides.

In January, all members and friends of First Parish received a letter from the Parish Interim Team describing the February Blitz and the all-congregation planning weekend, from Friday, March 30, to Sunday, April 1. We want you to bring your wisdom and energy to this important weekend. The information you shared during February will inspire our collective response to the priorities we named.

The details of the schedule and registration information will be available online, at coffee hour, and in the church office. The Parish Interim Team is reviewing and collating the feedback from the Listening Sessions to include your feedback in planning the weekend. The PIT and the Ministerial Search Committee have heard what you had to say. Now they are assuring the opportunities to bring our community learning into a plan for the future. It's time to discover and declare proudly who we are as a church community.

The PIT is designing this weekend event to include First Parish members and friends in appreciating our collective experience that defines who we are today. During the weekend, come to help claim a shared vision for First Parish and to find a representative expression of what we want our future to look like. You will have the opportunity to focus your energy on the area of your greatest delight.

When we have completed our work on this weekend project, First Parish, the Standing Committee, the PIT and the Ministerial Search Committee will be in the strongest position possible to complete our interim work and begin the search for the best settled minister to serve First Parish.

The members of the Parish Interim Team – happy to hear from you at any time – are **Rebecca Curzon, Sven Olson, Mark Richards, Kathryn Esty, Susan Ryan and Jim Smith.**

Parish Interim Team — First Parish in Concord

Rebecca Curzon rebeccacurzon@comcast.net

Katharine Esty katharineesty@verizon.net

Sven Olson sven.a.olson@chase.com

Mark Richards markr@upriverministries.org

Susan Ryan susanryan101@comcast.net

Jim Smith JAS@foleyhoag.com

Updates From the Parish Interim Team

Phew! What a month February has been! Many Listening Sessions and so much wonderful participation from our community! The PIT would like to thank you for joining the Listening Sessions. The deep listening and deep sharing with each other has been an honor to take part in.

What are we going to do with all of this information? That is a question that has come up a lot. And we want you to know we do have a plan. The information we have received through the Listening Sessions is being analyzed and synthesized right now. Through this work we are planning an All-Church Gathering (details below) where **you** as a congregation will decide what is most important to us now, and have the opportunity to work toward the goals we collectively set.

Registration for the All-Church Gathering will begin in early March. **We have room for everyone** so please block off the dates in your calendar. This promises to be an inspiring and joyful occasion!

Friday March 30: First Parish 6-9 p.m.

Saturday March 31: The Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center, Westford, MA 8:30-4:00 p.m.

Sunday April 1: First Parish (times TBA)

The Parish Interim Team would like to thank all those who have made the February Blitz so successful. A special thanks to **Doug Baker** and his team of sextons for their constant attention to detail, and their patience with our ever-changing process and need for space.

We would also like to thank **Cassy Bosworth** and the office volunteers for their hard work, registration support, stuffing the orders of service (sometimes twice), and also for their patience and grace amidst our time pressured efforts to get information out to you. Thanks to the Standing Committee, the Nominating Committee, and Ministerial Search Committee for hosting the Tuesday potluck suppers, and again to the Ministerial Search Committee for working tirelessly with the PIT to support our effort to hear what is on our minds.

And finally a thank you to everyone who volunteered to bring food, take notes, make copies, find markers, set up extra chairs, etc, etc, etc. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you all on March 30.

— Parish Interim Team

During the current term, we have invited some of our teens to come and talk to their younger “UU brothers and sisters.” This has been such a gift to the program in so many ways.

A high school boy came and talked to the boys about what it means to have physical courage. Several eighth grade girls came and talked about friendship. Two high school girls came to talk about beauty and the media.



Their collective words of wisdom were touching. However it is happening, either within our families, within our schools, within our community or within our parish, these kids are coming away with a sense of who they really are and a sense of self that is rooted in personal values.

Collectively, we must be doing a really good job because some of the words that were spoken could have come from wise old sages.

Here are just a few of the teens comments:

- ◆ Be true to your own self when making decisions about your appearance.
- ◆ Don’t judge people right away; some of our best friends seemed strange at first...
- ◆ Don’t over-think social situations; just try to be you.
- ◆ Tell your friends when they have something on their face; honesty is valued.
- ◆ We are more alike than we are different.
- ◆ Use adversity to grow yourself.

Not only were these discussions valuable for our younger kids; they were leadership opportunities for our teens. It gave them a chance to be the teacher and to reflect on their feelings about these issues. Their reflections were valued and considered. They articulated personal truths and named the importance of individual integrity. Going direct? If that is the theme for the interim process, it is being mirrored well in our RE program. ◆

— Pam Howell

Director of Religious Education

New RE Administrator at First Parish

I am delighted to announce the arrival of **Emily Wheeler** to our First Parish staff. Emily is filling the important role of RE Administrator. She

March 2012 RE Calendar

- Fri., Mar. 2 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Temple Beth El, 5 p.m. at First Parish
- Sun., Mar. 4 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2nd–6th Grades, Emerson Room
8th Grade OWL at 4:00 p.m., Emerson Room
- Sun., Mar. 11 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2–6th Grades (Emerson Room)
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths: Mormon Visit (Brooks Room) Meet at 8:15 a.m.
- Sun., Mar. 18 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2–6th Grades (Emerson Room)
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths: Islamic Visit (Brooks Room) 12:00 noon
- Sun., Mar. 25 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2–6th Grades (Emerson Room)
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths: Baptist Visit (Brooks Room) 9:30 a.m.
8th Grade OWL at 4:00 p.m. (Emerson Room)
- Sun., Apr. 1 Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Regular RE for 2–6th Grades (Emerson Room)
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths: Cult Discussion 11:00 a.m.
8th Grade OWL at 4:00 p.m. (Emerson Room)

comes with a wealth of volunteer and organizational experience and knows Concord well. She has worked with Gaining Ground and other agricultural initiatives in our community.

Emily will be present on Sunday mornings to help with our busy RE program, and I am excited to have her assistance.

It has been a busy few months without an assistant, and I really appreciate how much the RE Council, the teachers and the kids have stepped up to help with our programming. Many (including me) found this enthusiasm joyful, and Emily and I will continue to involve these willing parish hands in building our RE community together.

Parish Interim Team: Listening Session for Families

A special family Listening Session has been added to the Listening Session schedule. This session is scheduled for Saturday, March 3, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

These Listening Sessions have been an effective way to hear what is on our members’s mind, but we have not heard much from our families. What do you value here? What needs improvement? What is your experience?

RE News

continued on page 11

Please come! You will meet new people and hear reflections about our parish. You will get to express your insights and feelings about this place. I do hope people take the time to show up and name what is important to their family and to their child's spiritual growth.

March 31 — Rock 'n' Roll Dance Party for All Ages

Avi Salloway, our own Youth Program Director, will be playing with his band.

Join First Parish for a special dance and concert featuring the music of the fathers of Rock 'n' Roll; Elvis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard and more. Avi will have his Stratocaster and band on the stage! This is a party for all ages. Families are encouraged to have fun and dance away at this community FUN-raising event.

Second- to Fifth-Grade Workshop Rotation

This term, we are continuing the Winter Term and 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.

We have grouped our kids by gender for part of this term. This has created smaller groups and given our kids a chance

to make more connections with each other. So far, there has been very positive feedback from this experience. I would love to hear from you if you have any comments to offer.

In the beginning of our term, we invited some of our wise teens; toward the end of our term, we are inviting some of our wise

elders. **Dick Shohet** will be coming to speak of moral courage, with tales from his teaching days. **Kate Henchman** will be sharing her wisdom about growing up as a "shy person." **Carolyn Shohet, Darien Smith** and **Val Holt** will express the importance of long-term friendships. This term is a chance to connect our generations through story and through crafting. I do hope your child will be present for this unique opportunity.

We will finish this term with a very special program. We have a guest coming to our



SENIOR YOUTH NEWS: THE HEARD

Hello, Sunshine! The Heard ventured to the mountains of New Hampshire January 27 to 29 for the Winter Retreat.

We enjoyed a beautiful weekend on Lake Sunapee — skiing, cooking, playing and sharing. Many thanks to our liaison host **Pam Cahallan** and fellow chaperone **David Ropeik**.



As we move from winter into spring, we are ready to grow together. Join us for a Sunday night meeting to be a part of The Heard.

We have two awesome experiences to look forward to.

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.

The Heard Recording Session! We are teaming up with famed musician/engineer **Eric Kilburn** to record at Wellspring Studios! We will be rehearsing in March to prepare for the session. Date TBD; stay tuned!

PLUS

March 31 – The Rock 'n' Roll Dance Party! Join First Parish for a special dance and concert featuring the music of the fathers of Rock 'n' Roll: Elvis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard and more. I'll have my Stratocaster and band on the stage. This is a party for all ages. Come one, come all!

Looking forward to Vermont and Rock 'n' Roll! ♦

Yours truly,

— *Avi Salloway*

Youth Program Director

Elaine Peresluha is working hard with both the congregation members and staff as we all learn to listen better and to hear each other's voices more clearly. The Social Action board wants to hear your voice! We are gathering your stories, your reflections, and your inspirations. Many of you heard the personal stories on Social Action Sunday, January 22 (if not, they can be found on our website). These personal statements were powerful and moving. Please take a few minutes and e-mail me *your* story. It does not have to be long and it does not have to be grammatically correct, but it does need to be personal and heartfelt. We hope to continue to find ways for the voices of you, the members of First Parish who make this a Social Action Community to be heard!

The SAC Board is honored to have received a \$3,000 donation from a First Parish member. We are offering this money as a special onetime grant opportunity as you will read about below. Thank you to this wonderful parishioner for raising up this critical issue of children and homelessness.

We look forward to hearing from *You!* ♦

—*Faith Bade*

Social Action Program Director
fbade@firstparish.org

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

SAC Board Announces One-Time \$3,000 Grant with March 31 Deadline

\$3,000 Help Homeless Children Grant

The Social Action Community Board (SACB), due to the generosity of a congregation member of First Parish in Concord, offers this onetime opportunity for applicants to submit a proposal for a \$3,000 grant to help address the issue of children's homelessness within the United States. The grant is specifically targeted to replicable, entrepreneurial projects that help American homeless children. Go to sac.firstparish.org/cms/news to learn more or contact **Faith Bade**, fbade@firstparish.org.

SAC Board Opportunities

This is the time of year when the SAC board reviews its goals and assesses its board structure and task

- force composition. If you are interested in working on a social action issue or supporting the work of the SAC Board please contact Faith at fbade@firstparish.org.

"Chicken Man" Is Here!

- Opening night was March 2, followed by other performances March 3, 9 and 10; all at 7:30 p.m. All First Parish members are encouraged to come to this community-building, multigenerational musical. Produced by the Social Action Community board, the play tackles issues of environmental sustainability and indigenous empowerment in a fun-filled and hopeful manner put on by a cast of 60 of your fellow parishioners. Appropriate for all ages — bring your friends! Tickets are available at coffee hours and through the office. For more information, see <http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/chickenman>.

Social Action Grants Deadline Is March 15

- The Social Action Grants Committee of First Parish announces its next application deadline. Please go to sac.firstparish.org under Grants to learn more about the policies and application process. For additional information, contact **Wendy Holt**, chair, at wendy-holt48@yahoo.com, or any of the SAC Grants Committee members (**Carolyn Copp**, **Claudia Nimar**, **Dave Dawson**, **John Lowe**, **Katharine Esty**, **CC King**, **Eric van Loon**).

How Homelessness Hurts Children's Health and How You Can Help

- **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 42,000 families sought state housing assistance in the year ending July 2011, 30 percent more than in 2010. 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; a formerly homeless mother; and a panel of area state legislators. The forum, organized by the Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness, is free and open to all. For information, contact **Jane Blumberg**, jane_blumberg@mac.com.

SAC News and Events

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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.



“Grounded for Flight,” Wright Tavern Course — Sunday March 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Join **Craig Nowak**, ministerial intern, and **Faith Bade**, SAC Program Director, at our second workshop date for Grounded for Flight, a Wright Tavern Center course. In this second workshop, we are exploring 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: \$40, plus \$12 materials fee and book.

Curious about Amnesty International?

If so, you are welcome to drop in on the regular monthly meeting of Group 15, the Concord-area Amnesty chapter, on Tuesday, March 20, at 7 p.m., in the Greeley Room. Refreshments will be served. For more information, visit www.aigroup15.org or e-mail **Lorraine Loviglio**.

Activist Movie — Friday, March 23 at First Parish from 7-9 p.m.

The movie “Amazing Grace,” with Michael Gambon and Albert Finney, will be shown. This G-rated 2006 film is based upon the true story of William Wilburforce and chronicles his efforts as a social justice activist to end the slave trade in Great Britain. Wilburforce also founded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Desserts and discussion about will follow the film. This is an excellent and inspiring film for all interested in any social justice issue. All ages are welcome.

“Reverence for Life” Weekend — March 24 to 25

Saturday workshop, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. — “An Interconnected Web of Life Awareness Encounter: Embracing Life Together,” facilitated by Dr. Susan Gore and Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner. Contact **Kathryn Shane** to register at kdshane1@verizon.net.

Saturday evening, plant-based dinner with speaker: 5:30-9:00 p.m.: Cosponsored with the Environmental Leadership Team. Gary Kowalski, UU minister and author, speaking on “The Inherent Worth of Every Being: Expanding Our Interconnected

Web.” Performance of “Dare to Rise” by composer **Anna Huckabee Tull** and some First Parish choir members. Dinner at 5:30 p.m., speaker at 7:15 p.m. A family-friendly evening. RSVP for dinner portion only by March 19 at kdshane1@verizon.net.

Sunday Worship Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Join Rev. LoraKim Joyner, coofficiating with **Rev. Elaine Peresluha**, in celebration of honoring all beings. Please bring a photo of your favorite animal, human or nonhuman being to be blessed by the ministers.

Contact: **Kathryn Shane** at 978-263-1456 or at kdshane1@veriozn.net, for any information, or visit sac.firstparish.org/cms/reverenceforlife.

Immigration Study Group: Film and Speaker March 28, 6:30 p.m. at First Parish

Join **Craig Nowak** and **Faith Bade** for a showing of the film “The Least of These” and a discussion by **Nancy Sweeney**, First Parish member and clinical psychologist, who has for the past two years provided psychological evaluations for clients of the Asylum Network of the Physicians for Human Rights. Nancy has worked with clients from Guatemala, Afghanistan, and Eastern Europe, in collaboration with other organizations. The film is a documentary on the detention of immigrant children in a former prison in Texas, and the controversy that occurs when activist attorneys discover the conditions. It explores the role and limits of community activism, and considers how American rights and values apply to the least powerful among us.

“Stranger in the Forest: On Foot across Borneo”

We will continue our exploration of the ecology of rain forests around the world and their susceptibility to exploitation. Gently used copies of this fascinating book by Eric Hansen will be available at coffee hours in March in preparation for a discussion on April 15 to be led by **Laurie Van Loon** and **Alec Walker**.

WOMEN'S NEWS

Women's AM/PM Book Group

The March selection for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is *Room: A Novel*, by Emma Donoghue. The discussions will be held at First Parish with the evening discussion will be on Sunday, March 25, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. and the morning discussion on Tuesday, March 27, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both 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

- Apr. 22, 24 *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography*, by Jean H. Baker
- May 20, 22 *Bossypants*, by Tina Fey
- June TBD Potluck and choosing books for next year

RE News

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parish — Susan Tordella. Susan runs an unusual program that teaches children about rising above bullying behavior. Susan brings her favorite chicken and encourages a discussion about empathy and responsible compassion. This unusual event will happen on March 25 and the chicken will be on a leash!

March 4 – Week 4 of the Winter Term: Boys (Moral Courage with **Dick Shohet**); Girls (**Kate**

Henchman and stories from growing up as a “shy person”)

March 11 – Week 5 of the Winter Term: Spiritual Courage (boys), Stories from a Shy Person (girls)

March 18 – Week 6 of the Winter Term: Finish Raft and Reflections (boys), Honesty (girls)

March 25 – Week 7 of the Winter Term: Rulers of the Roost – A very special learning opportunity with ...yes...Chickens!

April 1 – Week 1 of the Spring Term: Earth Centered Practices - Building Community among our children and families

Orientation for Religious Education Teachers

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.

FROM THE INTERN MINISTER

Last month I talked about choice and the freedom to choose as the hallmark of a free society and free religion and posed the following question for reflection: What guides, motivates or otherwise drives the choices we make as people of faith?



Upon reflection, it seems the quick and easy answer is that our values and beliefs guide or drive our choices. Yet, in looking at my own experience, I soon realize this is not always true. Indeed there have been times, more than I'd care to admit sometimes, when I have made choices guided or motivated by convenience, fear or anger.

Generally, such motivations don't align with my values or beliefs, which tells me that having a particular set of values or beliefs isn't really enough to compel me to draw upon them for guidance in my life. I find I need a place to practice the beliefs and values I espouse, a place where I'm held accountable for them.

The noted Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams called church a place “where we get to practice what it means to be human.” One of the gifts of a liberal religious community is that we are able to discern and practice our beliefs and values in a supportive community. Because we are human, we will inevitably stumble. We will occasionally act out of fear or anger or confusion and that's okay; for the liberal religious community does not ask perfection of our values, but a commitment to their practice. ♦

Blessings,

—*Craig Nowak*

COMMUNITY NEWS

Nancy James is pleased to bring a state-of-the-art Distractology 101 tour to Concord during the week of April 2-6. Distractology 101 is an interactive program developed by the Arbella Insurance Group Charitable Foundation to teach new drivers the dangers of distracted driving.

“We're proud to be helping to educate teens and other new drivers about the dangers of distracted driving,” stated Nancy. “This is about saving the lives of our children behind the wheel. I hope parishioners with teens will recognize the importance of this education effort. Training like this could be the difference between being safe and being a statistic. I can think of no better way to celebrate 30 years in business than to bring this important program to Concord.” To sign up for the free Distractology 101 training, contact N.P. James Insurance Agency at 978-369-2771, npjames@npjames.com or www.npjames.com.

MARCH 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.
<i>Music Together</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m.
Terrific Tuesday Dinner and Vespers		5:45 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.
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Music Together</i>	Thursday	9:30 a.m.
<i>Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction</i>	Thursday	7:00 p.m.
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.
<i>Music Together</i>	Friday	9:30 a.m.
<i>Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction</i>	Friday	9:30 a.m.
Men's Group	Saturday	7:30 a.m.

Tue Mar 6	7:30	<i>Turner and the Transcendentalists</i>	•	Tue Mar 20	7:00	Amnesty International
Wed Mar 7	1:00	Pastoral Care Lay Minister Meeting	•	Thu Mar 22	6:00	Vespers to honor Global Human Rights to Clean and Safe Water
	6:15	Concord Area Humanists	•		7:30	<i>Little Women</i> Educational Series
Thu Mar 8	7:15	PIT Meeting	•	Fri Mar 23	6:00	Reverence for Life film
Fri Mar 9	7:30	"Chicken Man" Performance	•		7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing</i>
Sat Mar 10	9:00	Photography Group	•	Sat Mar 24	8:30	Reverence for Life Workshop and Lecture
	7:30	"Chicken Man" Performance	•	Sun Mar 25	1:30	Reverence for Life
Sun Mar 11	9:00	Neighboring Faiths	•		4:00	OWL
	6:00	Concord Area Humanists Potluck	•		7:00	<i>Five Wishes</i>
	6:30	YRUU	•		7:30	<i>Women's Book Group</i>
Tue Mar 13	9:00	Networking Group	•	Tue Mar 27	9:00	Networking Group
	9:00	WPA Board Meeting	•		9:30	<i>Women's Book Group</i>
Wed Mar 14	7:00	Community of Activists Vespers	•	Wed Mar 28	6:30	SAC Immigration Event
Thu Mar 15	7:30	By Your Side Singers	•		7:30	Orientation for 2nd-6th Grade Teachers
	7:30	<i>Thomas Carlyle and the Transcendentalists</i>	•	Thu Mar 29	7:30	<i>Little Women</i> Educational Series
Fri Mar 16	7:00	Jewish Awareness Group	•		Fri Mar 30	5:00 All-Congregation Seminar
Sat Mar 17	8:00	New U	•	Sat Mar 31		All-Congregation Rock 'n' Roll Dance Party
Sun Mar 18	9:00	Neighboring Faiths	•		Sat Mar 31	8:00 All-Congregation Seminar
	3:00	Needleworkers' Affinity Group	•			
	5:00	Travel Task Force	•			
	6:30	<i>Grounded for Flight</i>	•			
	6:30	YRUU	•			

MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

The April Newsletter deadline is Friday, March 23, at noon.
The Newsletter will be published Tuesday, April 3.

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
•

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

THE HEARD

THE VERMONT FLOOD RECOVERY AND FARMING TRIP

TO HELP RESTORE THE NATURAL BEAUTY



APRIL 19-22

LIBERTY HILL FARM

ROCHESTER, VERMONT

PLEASE RSVP TO AVI SALLOWAY: AVIFIRSTPARISH@GMAIL.COM



for Spiritual Renewal

The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • March 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: April 3 – May 29 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 simply to 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: Mar. 16, May 11, Jun. 8 12:30-1:30 p.m. \$ 25/session

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, CD's, 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.

Five Wishes — The Best Gift You Can Give to Yourself and Your Loved Ones

- The Five Wishes program looks at the personal, emotional and spiritual needs of a person, not just his or her medical needs. It is a legal document that lets one get the care one wants when it is needed the most.

Wish 1: Choosing a durable power of attorney for health care

Wish 2: Deciding what medical treatment you want or don't want — a Living Will

Wish 3: Choosing the types of care you want — how you want your pain to be managed

Wish 4: Describing in detail how you want to be treated so that your dignity can be maintained

Wish 5: Taking advantage of the opportunity to tell others how you want to be remembered

This document is the only advanced directive that deals with spiritual matters and assists health care providers in respecting one's religious beliefs.

We will discuss each of the wishes in depth, as well as exploring how best to have the conversation with loved ones who may have difficulty making these decisions. Instructor: **Sue Dobbie**, RN, BS, CPN.

Sue Dobbie has been a nurse for many years, most recently in the home care and hospice field. She received her certification in Parish Nursing from Andover Newton Seminary.

Sunday: March 25 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Fee: \$5 for provided brochure

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: 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.

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 and 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 traveling 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 1830's 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.

- Thursday, March 15 7:30-9:00 p.m.
• \$5 donation for Wright Tavern Center

Roots Hold Us Close: The Origins of Unitarianism

Unitarianism has sometimes been called “the Boston religion.” It has been strongly associated with New England and with the 19th century, and for good reason. But Unitarian thought emerged centuries before, and in countries around the globe. Join Jenny Rankin and others for this “adventure in learning,” an exploration of how Unitarianism emerged and developed from the third century onward. In this participatory seminar, we will look at ancient beginnings, as well as Poland, Transylvania and England. Come prepared to participate, explore, and learn something more about your “roots” as a Unitarian Universalist. We hope to have a follow-up class on the Universalist tradition next fall. Instructor: **Rev. Jenny Rankin** and **Others**. Call the church office at 978-369-9602 to sign up. A minimum of eight participants need to be preregistered for the class to be held. After that, drop-ins are welcome.

Thursday: March 8, 15, 22 and 29 12:00–1:30 p.m. OR
Sunday: March 11 and March 18 12:30–2:00 p.m.
\$5 per class to support Wright Tavern Center for Spiritual Renewal.

Transitions Group

The author William Bridges suggested that there is opportunity in a “transition time,” but if you are looking for work, or trying to make a change from the work you currently do, it doesn’t always feel that way. For four Thursdays in March, this group

- will meet, facilitated by the Rev. Jenny Rankin, to offer a place
- for conversation, support and inspiration. Join with others who
- are walking this same leg of the journey. We will look at the
- “invitations” that transitions offer us, as well as the challenges
- they hold. Facilitator: **Rev. Jenny Rankin**. To preregister, call the
- church office at 978-369-9602.

- Thursday: 9:00 a.m. March 8, 15, 22 and 29
- \$5 per class to support Wright Tavern Center for Spiritual Renewal.
- Drop-ins are welcome.

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
- 30 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, March 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, March 27 7:30-9:00 p.m. Fee: \$10/session