

The Steeple



VOL 2 NO.4 December 1, 2009

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Staying In Touch

This is often a busy time with many things luring us that are supposed to make the holiday times *better...more magical.....more meaningful*. Most years I write something in this December column that encourages all of us to slow down and do less so that we can move more toward....that which is *better...more magical ...more meaningful !!!!!*

My holiday prayer this year is:

May all who exhaust themselves with frantic activity and preparation relish it!

Kiss the joy as it flies!

May all who feel ambivalent about the holidays realize that you are not alone in this.

Be here as you are.

May all who are lonely or grieving in this season, remember that many, many others share this experience at this time of year.

Let us know how we can be there for you.

May all who will navigate the holidays with perfect grace and balance ...with unwavering joy and just the right amount of activity and rest....who buy all earth-friendly politically correct toys in spite of what your children say they really want...and who float like a swan on water through the days ahead...

Be gentle on the rest of us.

May we all put ourselves in the way of grace by reaching toward others in love and acceptance however they show up in our lives and in whatever shape we find ourselves. In this space it is quite likely that magic is afoot.

With Great Affection for All of You,
Kathleen

Sunday Worship

DECEMBER 6th

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

GETTING THROUGH A HARD TIME

Rev. Hepler and Members of the Congregation

A service on what helps us get through rough times. What are the lifelines...the sources....the

coping possibilities....the beliefs....the practices....that allow us to keep move through crisis and maybe even thrive? Mike Caruso and Karen Charles will join Reverend Hepler in the service.

DECEMBER 13th

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

THE SOUL OF THE WINTER SEASON

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

What is the soul of the season for you? What is a soul anyway? Reflections on the winter holidays and the call to live them soulfully.

DECEMBER 20

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

9:15 *Have a Wabi Sabi Holiday* Reflections on an ancient Japanese tradition that honors imperfection. Through singing and readings and music we will humble down to a new awareness of beauty.

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

11:00 Multi-generational Holiday Service, created by the Religious Education Council.

DECEMBER 24th

5:00 & 7:00 pm

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHTING SERVICES

Religious Education

The holidays are upon us once again – where does the time go?! The Memorial Room is filling up with many gifts for Un-Decorate the Tree. If you haven't yet brought in your gift, please do so no later than December 6th. We deliver the gifts to the agencies during that week. Since four agencies are the recipients of over 175 gifts, the organizational efforts are immense. Many thanks to our dedicated Religious Education Council members for successfully orchestrating this event.

If you are finding the hectic pace of the holidays to be stressful and feel that you and/or your family needs some time to reflect on the deeper meaning of this time, do plan to attend Advent Saturday on December 12th from 10:00 to 1:00. This is a multi-generational event aimed at countering the excessive consumerism of the holidays. You can sign up to attend at the "Life at First Parish" table in Scott Hall on November 29th and December 6th, give me a call, or email me at (dre@uuframingham.org) to sign up.

Our Senior Youth Group (YRUU – Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) will be holding their ever-popular Parents' Night Out on December 19th. This is an overnight for your children, an evening out for you, and a wonderful bonding experience between First Parish children and youth.

Join us for carols and other music, words that speak to the universal meaning in the story of the birth of Jesus, and the lighting of your candle in the darkness. *Note, that the 5 PM service is more adapted for younger children.*

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

DECEMBER 27TH

10:00 AM Worship

Combined service with Sudbury and Wayland held at Framingham.

An All-Too-Human Jesus

Michelle LaGrave, Intern Minister

Keep an eye out for information in the Weekly Update.

Our annual Multi-generational Holiday Service, created by the Religious Education Council, will be on December 20th at 11:00 a.m. Families of 4-year-olds through sixth graders will receive a letter about participation in this service. This service honors the religious and cultural celebrations that occur in December – Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. There will be no church school classes held at 9:15 a.m., and only the Early Pre-school class will be held at 11:00 a.m. on that day. Nursery coverage will be offered at both services.

Attention spring teachers! The new semester will begin on January 24th, 2010. In mid-December, you will receive a letter with details about dates, times, and plans for the spring semester. So stay tuned!

I wish you peaceful moments amidst your holiday celebrations.

Julie Porter,
Director of Religious Education

From the Ministerial Intern

Welcome to Advent. In the Christian tradition, Advent is a season of waiting; waiting for the birth of Jesus; waiting for the birth of a King; waiting for the birth of a Savior. Regardless of how any one of us views the meaning of Jesus' birth, we all find ourselves waiting at various times throughout the seasons of our lives. We all wait for something; the birth of a child, a marriage or a graduation, the results of medical tests or job interviews, the safe return of a loved one. For me, Advent is a precious time for it reminds me of the sacredness of waiting, of being in-between, and of not knowing. Advent is a time when I can hold both the joy and the fear of anticipation; a time when I can celebrate the hope found in each moment of the day. May we all be filled with hope in our waiting.

Blessed Be,
Michelle

From the Board of Assessors

The church office received a phone inquiry last week that David Moore referred to me. Former Congressman Joe Kennedy's fuel assistance office was inquiring if we had any parishioners who might be in need of help with heating oil this winter. I would hope that anyone in First Parish who is in need would regard their church home as a place to come for help. We are a community, we care for one another, we share our joys and concerns during Sunday worship, and that caring extends to the rest of the week. Our minister, Caritas, or myself are people to call if you are in need. We can promise confidentiality if that would be supportive. For heating oil assistance, the number I was given is 617.443.1384. Or we could make the call for you.

At our last meeting, your Board of Assessors roughed out a covenant and will vote on and commit to it at our next meeting. We handled quite a few administrative matters; we approved the Employee Handbook, the Building Use section of the Policy Manual, and a three year Facilities Usage Agreement with Framingham Center Nursery School. Also, we committed to recruiting and hiring an intern minister for two years. We have gained so much from our current intern minister, Michelle LaGrave, and it is both an honor and a privilege to be a teaching congregation. Next month we will be hearing from a subgroup of the Green Sanctuary committee as they seek proposals from contractors to insulate and air seal our buildings. These efforts will save us money by reducing the amount of fuel we consume, thereby reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is one large cause of the climate crisis.

Finally, I would like to thank the many people who provide us with opportunities to live our faith. This month I give a special thank you to the RE Council for Un-Decorate the Tree to benefit many children and social service agencies, to the Guatemala Working Group and Green Sanctuary for creating the Guatemala Dinner to raise funds for Onil stoves, to Rebecca Center for selling jewelry to benefit Bendicion de Dios school in Alotenango, Guatemala, to Valerie Waldman and Myrna Howe for selling Christmas cakes to benefit MetroWest Outreach Coalition, and to the Women's Alliance for the Holiday Boutique to benefit First Parish. May our holidays be filled with peace and love and may we be enriched by our giving.

Gratefully,
Janice Knapp-Cordes, Board Chair
508-877-3771
janice.knappcordes@gmail.com

From the Parish Office

The dead line for the January *Steeple* is Monday, December 21st.

Membership Corner

New Members

Please join me in celebrating that Angie and Adam Goldberg, Mark Montgomery and Wilma Stahura have joined our membership. Wilma Stahura has lived in Natick for 12 years after moving from Sandwich, Cape Cod, where her 2 sons grew up. Both sons now live out of state. She works as a staff assistant to a Harvard professor in the Department of Health Care Policy and performs marriages throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as Justice of the Peace. She enjoys visiting other countries and has recently returned from a trip to China and Tibet. She likes working with crafts and takes classes in pottery wheel throwing at the Danforth Museum School as well as having just completed a basket weaving session at Keefe Tech.

Photo Directory

We've begun taking pictures during social hours for the photo directory. You may email me in advance or sign-up to have your picture taken the same day. There's a sign-up sheet at the welcome table. If you would like to have your picture taken during the week, you may contact David Moore in the office at 508-872-3111 or office@uuframingham.org to set up an appointment. It is not too late to submit your own picture. Pictures may be emailed to: pictures@uuframingham.org in jpeg format. Our photo directory is being displayed in the password protected member's only section of our website, www.uuframingham.org. Families with children under 18 years please be sure to fill out a consent form, available at the welcome table, so that we can include your photo. Please help make this photo directory a success by submitting a photo or getting your picture taken. Getting your picture taken only takes a few minutes since we are doing it ourselves. There is no outside company putting pressure on you to buy pictures.

Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator,
email: membership@uuframingham.org,
phone: 508-872-3111 ext 218

Announcements: Dates & Events

Around the Parish

We are sad to report the death of a wonderful friend of First Parish, Florence Chesterton Norris. Florence lived an active 102 years of life especially enjoying music and supporting good causes. She enjoyed attending our Sunday morning services with her 2nd husband Roger Norris, continuing to support First Parish even after his death. She will be missed by all who had the good fortune of knowing her.

Dinner Discussion Group

The next dinner discussion event will be held on Saturday, December 5 at the home of Jack and Louise Rivers. The discussion topic will be: "What do you do for fun?"

Appetizers at 6 pm, dinner at 7, discussion at 8. Contact Dick Paul at e-mail address repen2@comcast.net or at 508-872-9729 for more information.

Men's Club Dinner Meeting

There will be a Men's Club Dinner on Sunday Evening December 6 beginning at 6:30pm with the meal at 7:00pm Note the change of date from the usual Monday to Sunday.

As is our custom, the phone call committee will be phoning for reservations. If you are new, or for some other reason, do not receive a call by Saturday the 5th please call me at 508-872-9729 to make your reservations. Women, of course, are more than welcome. Leo and Janet Giorgio will be preparing the meal for us.

The program involves a description and movie of one of the all time great rescues that few people know about today, the Shackleton expedition of 1913. Oskar Heininger and Dick Rader have put together an evening no one will want to miss.

Dick Paul, President

Holiday Boutique

The Holiday Boutique will be December 5th & 6th. Please bring your gift items to Scott Hall on Friday December 4th from 10 am to 4 pm. Volun-

teers are needed and welcomed. Call Susie Macdonald with any questions. 508-875-3322

Help The Homeless

Change the lives of homeless families in Massachusetts by ordering and purchasing cakes on Sunday, Dec. 6th after church services. These delectable cakes of Espresso Chocolate or Maple Pumpkin Cranberry are \$12 each and will be available for you on Sunday, Dec. 20th. Cakes are wrapped in ribbon and have a card attached with a message from the Coalition for the Homeless. These cakes make the perfect gift or treat to serve for the holidays.

Contacts: Valerie Waldman 508 877-7769 Myrna Howe 781-235-4226

Advent Saturday

December 12th, 10:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Attention people of ALL AGES: Join Julie Porter, DRE, and Reverend Kathleen Hepler in Scott hall to “unplug” from the commercialization of the holidays!

Advent Saturday will be a time for us to be together to reflect on the deeper meanings of this time of year and to invite ourselves to be more intentional about how we navigate this holiday season. Our activities will include creating earth-friendly gifts that one can't buy in a store, decorating an outside tree to support our winter birds, participating in a project that will help others in our community, singing together, (bring a drum if you have one) and sharing a simple meal of homemade soup and bread.

Sign up at the “Life at First Parish” table in Scott Hall on November 29th or December 6th. You can also email Julie at dre@uuframingham.org.

Women's Alliance

December 14, 2009

12:00 pm

Luncheon at Louise Rivers

89 Pleasant Street

call Susie Macdonald 508-875-3322 if you haven't been contacted.

YRUU

On December 19th, the senior youth group will be hosting Parents' Night Out. On the night of the 19th, drop your children off in Scott Hall at 7:00 PM, and we'll take care of them until the next morning - we'll play games, watch a movie, and generally have a good time. The cost is \$20 per

child, a maximum of \$40 per family, which will go towards funding our annual week-long service trip to Habitat for Humanity next summer. Pick-up is before the 9:15 service the next morning. Ask any youth group member if you have further questions, sign-up forms if you're interested can be found at the YRUU table in Scott Hall during coffee hour.

Wassail Gathering (Christmas Eve)

The Wassail gathering is offered after both of the Christmas Eve services. It's a more formal version of the social hours following the regular services. The Wassail team is recruiting volunteers who are interested in helping out with any of the following: shopping, set-up, baking, serving, clean-up.

Please let Louise Rivers (508-875-6688) or Ellen Cormier ellenjcis@gmail.com or 508-877-9012 know if you able to help in any of the ways mentioned above.

Food Pantry

URGENT: Our Food Pantry is very low on items to bring to the needy in the town of Framingham. CAN YOU HELP? Donated food items are collected each Sunday after services.”

Chancel Decorations

Thank you to all who have volunteered to decorate our chancel during the fall and winter. Your contributions are an important component of our Sunday worship.

Starting in January we have 12 Sundays left which need a volunteer. You may decorate the chancel in memory of a loved one or a special event. A group can decorate the chancel to commemorate an event. Or you can decorate the chancel for no reason at all. Give me a call at 508-904-8401 to reserve your Sunday.

Beth Walton
Chancel Coordinator

Roots & Shoots

Donations for Cat Shelters

Until December 6th, Roots & Shoots is collecting the following items for local cat shelters:

Towels

Blankets

Chicken or turkey baby food (Gerber or Beechnut brands)

Friskies dry kitten food (in the yellow bag)

Friskies canned cat food (not sliced variety)

Please put your donations in our designated box in the Parish House lobby. We will deliver the items to Metrowest Humane Society and Stray Pets in Need on December 6th. Questions? Contact Aimee Dalrymple, Program Leader at ADalrymple@alumni.duke.edu or 508-652-9946. Thank you for your help

Interfaith Hospitality Network

First Parish had four successful hosting weeks last year, thanks to many volunteers. We offered shelter and meals to seven families during those weeks. Our next hosting week will take place during the week after Christmas. At that time, First Parish will be host four families (14 people total) in the Parish House. The families will arrive in the afternoon on Sunday, December 27 and will move to their next host site on the morning of Sunday, January 3. We will need help and support from many people to create an enjoyable experience for these families especially at this time of year. There are lots of ways to help. We need help to set up on 12/27 and take down on 1/3. We also need people to prepare meals, and serve as evening or overnight hosts.

Volunteers who will spend time with guests are required to attend a 2 hour training to be held at First Parish on December 17 from 6:30 to 8:30. (Other dates may be available.)

For more information and to sign up, please stop at our table during coffee hour in Scott Hall on December 6 and 13.

Vision 20/20

The Vision 20/20 group continues to gather information from and about the First Parish community. We have created a short survey that you can take on-line in about five minutes to help us know more about who we are. The link to the survey is: <http://tinyurl.com/fp2020survey>

We encourage all friends and members to complete the survey. For those who can't complete the survey online, we will have a table set up after each service where you can complete a paper copy of the survey. Don't miss your chance to be represented! It only takes a few minutes. Thanks.

Legacy Planning

Do you love your First Parish family so much that you want to assure its community presence long after you're not here? Then please consider estab-

lishing a living legacy by including our church in your estate plans.

Past bequests by generous, forward-thinking First Parishioners have established an endowment that currently permits an annual pledge of more than \$20,000 to supplement our canvass. All these contributors wanted to help preserve First Parish for us, and for generations to come. Any of our three Trustees would be very happy to answer your questions about assigning some future assets to First Parish. Please e-mail or call Charlotte Neagle, Mary Rose Wells, or Pete Allen - and many thanks for your consideration.

Lend A Hand Society

Lend A Hand Society is a non-profit organization that reaches out to help needy people in the Boston area with rent, utilities, medical expenses, eyeglasses, hearing aids and other emergency expenses. LAH was founded in 1870 by Rev. Edward Everett Hale, a Unitarian Minister, philanthropist, author, and influential humanitarian leader. Working in partnership with local social services organizations we help one individual or family at a time to prevent homelessness, keep a senior or family's home heated, insure that a child or senior has glasses, and assists with other emergency needs.

By using the Amazon Link on the Lend A Hand Website – www.lend-a-hand-society.org you can help us help people in need. Every time you go into the Amazon Link from our webpage to purchase something from Amazon, we get a percentage of the sale at no extra cost to you.

Please consider using this link for all your holiday and regular shopping. Amazon has almost everything you could ever need.

Nancy Cooper
Lend A Hand Society
(617) 338-5301 phone
lendahandsociety@mac.com

December, 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<p>1 9am - Women's Alliance</p> <p>7:00 pm Covenant Group</p> <p>7:00 pm Heritage Chorale</p>	<p>2 9:30 Yoga II</p> <p>1pm - Stitches In Time</p> <p>6pm - Junior Youth Group</p> <p>7pm Hand - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Young Adult Group</p> <p>7:30 Choir Rehearsal 7:30</p>	<p>3 8am - Coffee & Muffin</p> <p>5 pm - MetroWest Free Med. Prg</p> <p>7 pm RE Council</p> <p>7pm - Reiki Circle</p>	<p>4 Alliance Boutique Set Up Scott Hall & Kitchen</p> <p>1pm - MetroWest Free Clinic</p>	<p>5 9am - 2pm Alliance Boutique</p> <p>11am - Brownies</p>
<p>6 9am—2 pm Alliance Boutique</p> <p>Undecorate The Tree Gifts Returned</p> <p>9:15 & 11:00 Worship Services</p> <p>6:30 pm Men's Club Dinner</p> <p>7pm YRUU</p>	<p>7 6:30pm - Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm - Meditation</p>	<p>8 9am - NARL</p> <p>7pm - Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30pm - Stitches In Time</p>	<p>9 9:30am - Yoga II</p> <p>1pm - Stitches In Time</p> <p>7pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm - Young Adult Group</p> <p>7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>10 8am - Coffee & Muffins</p> <p>5pm - MetroWest Free Med. Prg</p> <p>6:30pm - Parents & Others</p> <p>7:30 Board of Assessors</p>	<p>11 6pm - Girl Scouts</p>	<p>12 10am - 1pm Advent Saturday</p>
<p>13 9:15 & 11:00 Worship Services</p> <p>Junior Youth Bake Sale</p> <p>7pm- PFLAG</p> <p>7pm - YRUU</p>	<p>14 12pm - Women's Alliance</p> <p>6:30pm Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm - Meditation</p>	<p>15 7pm - Covenant Group</p> <p>7pm Heritage Chorale</p>	<p>16 9:30am - Yoga II</p> <p>6pm - Junior Youth</p> <p>7pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm - Young Adult Group 7:30wpm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>17 8am - Coffee & Muffins</p> <p>6:30pm - MIHN</p> <p>7pm - Rehearsal</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 11am - Brownies:</p> <p>11:30am - Rehearsal For Multigen Holiday Service</p> <p>7pm - Parent's Night Out</p>
<p>20 9:15am Worship Service</p> <p>11am Multigenerational Worship Service</p> <p>7pm - YRUU</p>	<p>21 3:30pm - Brownies</p> <p>6:30pm - Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm - Meditation</p>	<p>22 7pm - Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30 pm - Stitches</p>	<p>23 1pm- Stitches In Time</p> <p>7pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm - Young Adult Group</p>	<p>24 8am - Coffee & Muffins</p> <p>5 & 7 pm Candle Light Services</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27 Inter Faith Hospitality Parish House</p> <p>10am - Joint Service at Framingham</p> <p>7pm - YRUU</p>	<p>28 Inter Faith Hospitality Parish House</p> <p>6:30pm - Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm - Meditation</p>	<p>29 Inter Faith Hospitality Parish House</p> <p>7pm - Covenant Group</p> <p>7pm—Heritage Chorale</p>	<p>30 Inter Faith Hospitality Parish House</p> <p>1pm - Stitches In Time</p> <p>7pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm - Young Adult Group</p>	<p>31 Inter Faith Hospitality Parish House</p> <p>8am - Coffee & Muffins</p>		

The First Parish In Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
24 Vernon Street
Framingham, MA 01701

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December, 2009



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CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR
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