

The Steeple



VOL 2 NO.8 April 1, 2010

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Staying In Touch

One of the questions that the Vision 20/20 group has been asking is, "Who are our neighbors"? The answer to that question is one way to consider the shape our future might be taking.

In January the residence at 14 Vernon Street (the beautiful crème colored house next to our parking lot) opened up. It is a residence for adult men and women with mental illness and/or disabilities and is run by Advocates. Since it is a permanent residence, it is likely that we will be neighbors with the residents there for a long time.

Several residents are coming regularly to church on Sundays and I think they come back because they feel welcome here. This is a sure sign that we are practicing our faith that affirms the "inherent worth and dignity of every person".

I have been in conversation with some of the staff at 14 Vernon St, and the important thing to know is that those who might show up at First Parish are people who are quite able to be in the community without worry on anyone's part. It is our purpose now to remember what we have learned through the wonderful First Parish program, 'Belonging as a Religious Experience'. I know that we will be enriched by the ways we will discover to embrace our new neighbors.

Julie Esty, a beloved member of this church, who died in 2007 was a tireless advocate for peace and justice who inspired everyone. I love the fact that Julie spent a lot of her childhood at her family home...14 Vernon Street. She would, I think, be quite happy to know that her home is now offering comfort and stability for those who need it.

If you have questions, concerns or great ideas.... don't hesitate to speak with me. In the meantime, take the time to strike up a conversation with any new person you might see in church. We grow more gentle and aware when we intentionally travel beyond our comfort zone to the heart of another person.

Here we go into the blooming season!
See you in church.
Kathleen Hepler

Sunday Worship

APRIL 4TH
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
EASTER SUNDAY
RISING TO THE LIFE THAT IS
Rev. Hepler, Preaching

Let your spirits rise on this day of Christian celebration from a Unitarian Universalist perspective! What matters is that we are willing to rise up to life again and again...and Jesus knew this. Come and hear the triumphal music, sing the songs of hope, and reflect on the human ability to rise to the life that is.

APRIL 11th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
YOM HASHOAH
Rev. Hepler, Preaching
This is the day of remembrance for the 6 million killed during the Holocaust....and also, the recognition of the heroism during that time. Today we remember with some stories of those who maintained their humanity (even at great risk) despite all of the violent forces conspiring otherwise. What did Unitarian Universalists do during the war?

APRIL 18TH
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
LAUGHING
Rev. Hepler, Preaching
Laugh to speed up enlightenment? Laugh to live longer?
Laugh to cope? Oh heck, let's laugh to have fun!

APRIL 25
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
Intergenerational Earth Service

Religious Education

Watching those hardy crocuses burst through the hard ground on the lawn between the Meeting House and the Parish House is so satisfying. Yes, spring is in the air! I always feel a wonderful sense of hope around this time of year, and I see it as a time of renewal. I hope you too are welcoming the earth's shift into this season.

The schedule for Religious Education in April is a bit unusual for first through eighth graders. We will have "Special Sundays" on both April 4th, Easter, and on April 18th, a three-day weekend and the beginning of school vacation week. First through sixth graders will attend the beginning of the church service and then come to the Huntley Room for special activities. Early Preschoolers will have their regular classes. Preschool/Kindergartners will have their regular class on Easter, but will join with the older children on April 18th. Seventh/eighth graders will attend church on those Sundays.

On April 25th, we will have a multigenerational Earth Day service. The service will honor our earth and will provide an opportunity for all ages to worship together for the entire service. Except for the Early Preschool class, there will be no regular classes that day. Regular classes will resume on May 2nd.

All Parents: Keep your eyes out for the 2010-2011 registration forms coming in the mail. The forms will be mailed during the week of April 19th. Registrations will be due back in the RE office by May 9th. We will have all the teaching positions open, as well as some youth advisor positions. Please remember that if you are not currently teaching or advising, next year is your teaching year.

MYSTERY FRIENDS will be here in April and May! Please look elsewhere in this newsletter for a description of this new, multigenerational program that encourages communication among the generations!

Julie Porter,
Director of Religious Education
dre@uuframingham.org

From the Intern Minister

Dear Ones,

It's April already! With the onset of spring showers and flowers comes a reminder that the end of my two-year internship here at First Parish is approaching. In the next two months, we will take the time to reflect together and to say good-bye. My leave-taking will be both joyous and sad as we celebrate all the ways you have supported my growth as a minister and grieve the loss of our walking together. I will miss you all dearly.

In the meantime, there is so much I look forward to experiencing with all of you. I am especially excited about the staff-led potluck which will be occurring on April 9th. We will be exploring all the myriad ways in which we can choose to eat ethically. This may mean shopping for locally produced foods, eating organic, buying humanely-raised meats, or choosing to eat vegetarian or vegan more often, or even all the time. The staff will be cooking some of our favorite ethical foods for you and asking you to do the same. Eating is such a basic activity of human experience. We all must take in sustenance every day. What better way to build a spiritual practice than within the context of something we must do everyday anyway?

In faith,
Michelle

From the Parish Office

The dead line for the May *Steeple* is Friday, April 23rd.

From the Board of Assessors

Rich Lawson, Tony Greeley, and Andre Lamontagne deserve a round of applause for creating and organizing an excellent canvass. I hear that pledges continue to come in, thanks to the dedicated group of canvassers. I thank all of you for your commitment and generosity to First Parish. Once we know how much money has been pledged, we can map out our budget for next year. We will be having budget talkbacks some Sundays in May before the Annual Meeting. Personally, I hope that we can give our dedicated staff a well-deserved raise.

There are many hopes springing up at First Parish. After several years, steadfast dedication, and much hard work, the Green Sanctuary committee is ready to submit the documentation for officially becoming a Green Sanctuary. Judy Perry has done a yeoman's job of writing, recruiting other writers, and shepherding the document through revisions. A subgroup of Green Sanctuary has obtained bids on insulating and air-sealing our three buildings to save energy, the highest recommendation that came out of the energy audit. We are investigating how to fund this endeavor.

There are three events coming up that I hope you already have on your calendars. We will ordain our intern minister, Michelle LaGrave, on May 2nd. The Auction Committee is hard at work, preparing a delightful evening for us on May 8th. And the Annual Meeting will be on June 6th. I hope you will be able to come together with our church community at these celebrations.

On Sundays and on evenings when I come to meetings, I am continually amazed at all the things that go on at First Parish and all the dedicated people who make those things happen. I may be chair of the board, but I am quite sure that I don't know half of what goes on and how many people are dedicated to doing their part to keep us functioning and living out our values. I give you my deepest thanks for all you do, day after day, year after year.

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

Membership Corner

Progressive New UU class

This class is intended for newcomers considering membership as well as new members. Rev. Kathleen Hepler will be leading this class which blends the New UU curriculum (themes and history of Unitarian Universalism) with an exploration of your religious/spiritual journey. The class will begin with these 3 Monday evenings 7-9pm: April 12th, April 26th and May 3rd. The class will continue with an additional 3 meetings once a month in May, June and over the summer- dates to be determined. Please let Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator, know of your interest so that we can keep you informed of any schedule changes.

Membership Matters

Please join me in celebrating that **Ben Jones** has joined our membership.

Signing the Membership book is an intentional process, a symbolic gesture of affirming Unitarian Universalism as your spiritual identity. By signing the Membership book at First Parish in Framingham you are committing to contribute to the caretaking of the church and church community through showing up, monetary pledges and acts of service. Please let me know if you are considering joining our membership.

New Member mini-biographies

Wendy Hodge and husband Peter have lived in Natick for 18 years. She has two children Kate (14) and Matt (11) and a cat, Gypsy. Wendy is an artist and teacher. She enjoys gardening, walking and travel.

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

From the Parish Historian

An Easter Story

Many of you know that our current meeting house is actually the 5th Meeting House since the founding of First Parish in 1701. The 4th meeting house was built in 1846. Although the steeple fell off in 1918 (an interesting story on its own) during a March gale, the building was repaired and hosted the Easter Service as usual in 1920. That evening there was a storm (some say there was a bolt of lightning) and the meeting house went up in spectacular flames according to several eye witnesses. By the next morning all that was left was the granite foundation along with burned timber, and the church bell which was no longer usable.

The First Parish membership was rallied by the minister, Rev. John Henry Wilson. After considering the possibility of merging with another local church, First Parish decided to begin the long, arduous process of raising the money to build a 5th meeting house. Services were conducted in the Village Hall across the Framingham common for the next seven years until the current handsome meeting house was built and ready for use in February, 1927.

Janet Nichols
Parish Historian

Announcements: Dates & Events

Caritas Coordinator for April

Valerie Foley, 781 416-4020, valeriefoley@comcast.net

Around The Parish

The father of Daryl Hess passed away Sunday morning, March 28th at the age of 94 after suffering from cancer and surgery for a broken hip.

Sustainable Foods Potluck Supper

The staff of First Parish invites you to come and share our excitement about ethical eating!

April 9th 6 - 8 pm

The focus of this potluck will be on ethical eating and a celebration of spring. We will have a potluck dinner at 6:00, followed by a vendor fair at 7:00. Please sign up at coffee hour after church services or by contacting the Parish Office by phone, 508-872-3111 or e-mail, office@uuframingham.org. Let us know if you will bring salad, bread, drinks or dessert. Please make an effort to have your contribution be organic, local, sustainable, or vegetarian. Staff will provide the main course dishes. Let us know if you'd prefer to bring a main course.

SACRED CIRCLE DANCING

Sunday, April 11th

7:00- 9:00 pm

Scott Hall

Donation \$5.00

Call Paula (FP choir member) for more info: (508) 485-1030

YRUU Pancake Breakfast

Sunday April 11th, between services, the senior

youth group will host a pancake breakfast in Scott Hall. Save the date! Save your appetite! Savor the culinary expertise of our senior youth and support their upcoming Habitat for Humanity trip.

Women's Alliance

The Alliance April Fools Luncheon will be April 12 at noon. If you haven't been called by April 5th, let Susie Macdonald know at 508 875-3322. To partially cover the cost of the luncheon there will be a charge of \$6.00.

Shining our Light Group

First Parish in Framingham is a great place to be. We would like to begin a conversation about how we can get the word out to those who would be interested in being a part of our community but don't know we exist. If you have some ideas about how to do this, please join Rev. Kathleen Hepler and Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator, for a session of idea sharing and brainstorming on Wednesday April 14th at 7pm. Dessert will be served.

Dinner Discussion Group

The next dinner discussion will be held on Saturday, April 17 at the home of Diane Engel. The discussion topic will be announced in the *Weekly Update*.

Appetizers at 6 pm, dinner at 7, discussion at 8. Contact Dick Paul at email address repen2@comcast.net or at 508-872-9729 for more information or to say what you are bringing: appetizer, salad, entree, dessert or beverage.

OUR MONEY, OURSELVES

An experience of reflection about our relationship with money. Rev. Hepler will facilitate a process this spring and summer that will mostly involve an

every- other- week reading, individual reflection questions and/or exercises that will be posted on the First Parish web-site (or mailed to you if you don't have a computer). However, we will meet once as a full group in the spring and once in late summer to begin and to end the process. The object is to bring increased awareness to our feelings, ideas, and past experiences with money so as to integrate it more peacefully into our living both ethically and spiritually. First Group Meeting: Wednesday, April 28th 7-9 PM Huntley Room. Bi-weekly online (or mailed) reflection material and suggestions (May 3-August) Final group meeting: Wednesday, September 15th, 7-9 PM Huntley Room.

Please sign up in Scott Hall or send an e-mail to:
office@uuframingham.org

UU Mass Action Advocacy Day

Someone once said, "Democracy is not a spectator sport." Tired of being a spectator? Want to get in the game? Reserve Wednesday, April 28th, to have a real conversation with a legislator and have your opinion be listened to. UUs from all over Massachusetts will meet at UUA headquarters on Beacon Street and walk next door to the State House to talk with our legislators.

UU Mass Action Network is organizing the 4th annual Advocacy Day along with the UU Urban Ministry; the three issues this year are Homelessness Prevention Climate Justice and Eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities. Advocacy Day begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. To register, go to www.uumassaction.org For carpooling, contact Janice Knapp-Cordes, 508-877-3771.

Save The Date

The First Parish Annual Talent & Treasure Auction will be May 8th.

MYSTERY FRIENDS!

Attention All Ages: the Religious Education Council is sponsoring a new program in April and May called Mystery Friends. This is a community-building event and provides a fun way for adults and children in our congregation to become better acquainted with one another. Several other UU congregations run this program with great success. Young adults/adults make strong connections with our next generation of UU's! Children and adults/young adults (in this case, anyone over 14 can be considered a young adult) first sign up to participate in this program. They will then be paired up with someone, but won't know who their Mystery Friend

is. Each participant will write two letters (or draw pictures) to their Mystery Friend over the course of three weeks. There will be a party at the end of the program, and the Mysteries will be revealed! Sign-ups for participating in this program will be after both services in Scott Hall on April 11th, April 18th, and April 25th. More details will be provided when you sign yourself (or your child) up. The wrap-up party will be on May 23rd after each service.

Maintenance Council

"In blue and yellow from its grave, Springs up the crocus fair". Spring is all around us at First Parish. The gardens are waking up and need a good cleaning. The maintenance council welcomes your help. Contact Beth Walton 508-904-8401 or elizabeth-walton@verizon.net.

Memory Bulbs

It is not too late to remember a loved one or a joy or a time in your life by purchasing a "memory bulb". The bulbs will be used to decorate our chancel on April 11th before they are planted in our gardens for all to enjoy. The cost will be minimal. Please contact Beth Walton for details or to order - 508-904-8401 - elizabeth-walton@verizon.net.

Food Pantry

April in canned fruit and vegetable month.

Your generous donations help to support "HOPE", our local food pantry. This month your donations will also help to introduce the idea of giving when the pre-K&K re classes go on an Easter egg/can hunt. All donations are gratefully received. Thank you for your continued support.

Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure.

This July, I'll be participating in a very special event called the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure.

I'll walk 60 miles over the course of three days with thousands of other women and men. Net proceeds from the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure™ are invested in community-based breast health programs and breast cancer research. The research funded focuses on decreasing breast cancer incidence and mortality in the next decade.

I will be walking in honor of my mother Suzanne, who passed away in 1990. She developed breast cancer when she was just 30 years old, with two small girls at home. She was one month shy of 42 years old when she died.

Without a cure, one person will die of breast cancer every 13 minutes in the United States. That's why I'm walking so far. To do something bold about breast cancer. I hope that you'll share this incredible adventure with me by supporting me in my fundraising efforts.

I've agreed to raise at least \$2,300 in donations, and I need your help to reach my goal. Would you please consider making a donation? Keep in mind how very far I'm walking - and how hard I'll have to train. You can donate online at The3Day.org. Just click on Donate and search for my personal fundraising page. You can also call 800-996-3DAY to donate over the phone. Or just ask me for a donation form that you can mail in. I attend the 11:00 service with my husband Ambar and our daughter Suzanna.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Joanne Sarkar

Kitchen Responsibilities

A group has been formed to keep the kitchen in good order (clean & neat), now we need the membership's help. Each committee or group who uses the kitchen needs to be sure the kitchen is left in good condition and ready for the next user. Clean and put away utensils, dishes carafe's etc. Please see the kitchen rules on the bulletin board. Thank you, The Kitchen Group

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 establishing 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.

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

First Parish has had five successful hosting weeks since we began last year, thanks to many volunteers. We offered shelter and meals to ten families during those weeks. Our next hosting week will take place during the week of April school vacation. At that time, First Parish will host four families (14 people

total) in the Parish House. The families will arrive in the afternoon on Sunday, April 18 and will move to their next host site on the morning of Sunday, April 25. We will need help and support from many people to create an enjoyable experience for these families especially. There are lots of ways to help. We need help to set up on 4/18 and take down on 4/25. We also need people in the following roles:

Dinner preparers: to prepare meals at home and bring to Scott Hall for dinner at 5:45PM

Dinner and evening hosts: to greet families as they arrive from the day center, eat dinner with the group and assist parents with children's needs (5:30 p.m. -- 8:30 p.m.)

Overnights hosts: two people to spend the night in the Parish House, wake with guests at 6 a.m. and serve a simple breakfast (8:30 p.m. -- 7 a.m.)

In order to spend time with the families, you must attend a Volunteer Training. There are two trainings scheduled between now and April 18. For more information, please contact Lisa Mihnos at lymihnos@comcast.net or 508-309-3413.

If you do not have time to volunteer, we will happily accept donations of non-perishable breakfast and healthy snack items or a contribution to our grocery fund.

For more information and to sign up, please stop at our table during coffee hour in Scott Hall on April 4 and 11.

Margaret Fuller Bicentennial

At First Parish in Concord, we are preparing to host a May weekend of events dedicated to Margaret Fuller. Events begin Friday night, May 21st, 7 pm, at the Concord Library with a keynote address from noted Fuller biographer, Charles Capper, Professor of History at Boston University. Saturday is a full day at First Parish, starting with three Fuller scholars in a panel discussion moderated by Jenny Rankin, followed by tours of Concord sites associated with Fuller, Chamber Music of the Transcendental Period in our Sanctuary, exhibits in our Parish Hall, and an 8:00 pm play/staged reading, starring Margaret Fuller. Please find a schedule attached and on our website: www.firstparish.org/margaretfuller

Walk for Hunger, Sunday, May 2

With poverty and unemployment rising at unprecedented rates this year's Walk for Hunger is more important than ever. Since 1969, The Walk for Hunger has relied on support from religious organizations such as yours. Now is the time to step up and join us for Project Bread's 42nd Annual Walk for Hunger on Sunday, May 2. For more information, visit www.projectbread.org/walk or call 617-723-5000.

April, 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 9:00 AM Quilting 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. Prg 7:00 PM RE Council 7:00 PM Quilting	2	3 10:00 AM Quilting 11:00 AM Brownies 2:00 PM The Tao of Pie making
4 9:15 AM Services 11:00 AM Services 7:00 PM YRUU	5 5:30 PM Met.West Med Prg 6:00 PM Parent Support/Study Group 6:30 PM Rounds 7:00 PM Auction 7:30 PM Reconnecting with Earth 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	6 8:30 AM FCNS: Huntley 6:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:00 PM Understanding & Working with Our Emotions 7:00 PM Covenant Group 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale	7 9:30 AM Yoga IV 11:30 AM Worship & Arts 6:00 PM Junior Youth 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Young Adult Group 7:30 PM Choir 7:30 PM Church Council	8 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 9:00 AM Quilting 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. Prg 7:00 PM Quilting 7:30 PM Board of Assessors	9 6:00 PM Staff Pot Luck	10 1:00 PM Private Rental: Scott Hall
11 9:15 AM Services 10:00 AM Junior Youth Bake Sale 11:00 AM Services 7:00 PM YRUU 7:00 PM Sacred Circle Dance 7:00 PM PFLAG	12 12:00 PM Women's Alliance 6:00 PM Parent Support/Study Grp 6:30 PM Rounds 7:00 PM UU Exploration 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB 7:30 PM MICAHA 7:30 PM Reconnecting with Earth	13 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	14 9:30 AM Yoga 1:00 PM Stitches In Time 7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Young Adult Group 7:00 PM Shining Our Light 7:30 PM Cakes	15 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 9:00 AM Quilting 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. Prg 7:00 PM Quilting	16	17 11:00 AM Brownies
18 9:15 AM Services 11:00 AM Services 7:00 PM YRUU Met West Interfaith Hosp. Net	19 6:00 PM Parent Support/Study Grp 7:30 PM Reconnecting with Earth 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB Met West Interfaith Hosp. Net	20 7:00 PM Covenant Group 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale: Met West Interfaith Hosp. Net	21 7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Young Adult Group 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal Met West Interfaith Hosp. Net	22 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. Prg 7:30 PM Woman-Circle Met West Interfaith Hosp. Net	23 8:00 PM Un Common Coffee House	24 Met West Interfaith Hosp. Net
25 9:15 AM Services 11:00 AM Services 7:00 PM YRUU	26 6:00 PM Parent Support/Study Group 6:30 PM Rounds 7:00 PM UU Exploration 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB 7:30 PM MICAHA:	27 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	28 9:30 AM Yoga IV 1:00 PM Stitches 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Our Money Ourselves 7:00 PM Young Adult Group 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	29 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 9:00 AM Quilting 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. Prg 6:30 PM Parents & Others 7:00 PM Quilting	30	

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Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
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