



First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

The Meeting House News

REVeries

Dear Friends,

We are in the midst of Pledge.2006 as I write this. This is the time of year we remind one another that we are a membership organization, not a charity. Part of being an active member of this community means making a pledge. Rich and I have been able to increase our pledge this year by 20 percent. We give using the “automatic deduction” option. That means the money is automatically taken out of our checking account. We know this helps the church with cash flow. And it’s practical. At the beginning of the month, we put money aside for savings, and we pay our pledge. Before we spend money on anything else. By the end of the month, there may be less money available. It may mean giving up having dinner out or a purchase at the mall. That isn’t the end of the world. By making it automatic in this way, we’ve been able to prioritize and stick to our priorities. We’ve put “first things first” and that feels good. To me, pledging is a spiritual discipline. It’s something we do to keep this community strong. I like helping an institution that teaches courage to young people, that goes out into the world to make a difference, that I can go to for comfort when I am feeling vulnerable or sad.

It’s hard to believe it’s been nine years since you called me to be one of your ministers. Since then, the title next to my name has changed, and what’s “in my portfolio” is always evolving. What hasn’t changed is the vitality of this congregation, and the challenge and blessing it is to minister alongside of you. To me, First Parish in Concord has what the Native Americans might call “a great heart.” It is a place that is alive, full of people who are seeking, growing, changing. People who are trying to live better lives, give comfort, seek meaning, contribute, give back. We don’t always get it right. We are human. We make mistakes. We hurt each other. We apologize, ask forgiveness and keep on going, trying to be and build the “blessed community,” one day at a time.

Being a minister here is challenging, fun and sometimes exhausting. That’s why I’m especially grateful for your policy of giving ministers a month of sabbatical time for each year served. This spring, I will be on sabbatical mid-March to mid-June. I will be taking a class on bookbinding and a quilting class. I hope to travel to Italy, visiting my brother who lives in Rome, retracing some of Emerson’s steps (he went to Italy after his first wife died), returning to museums and churches, as well as enjoying the food and countryside. For most of the spring, I’ll be at home in Concord, enjoying my family, my garden and undoubtedly, the reading room at the library. I hope to do some writing, sewing and resting.

“Do not be timid or afraid,” wrote Emerson in 1842. “Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better. What if they are a little coarse, and you may get your coat soiled or torn? What if you do fail, and get fairly rolled in the dirt once or twice? Up again you shall never be so afraid of a tumble.” This spring on sabbatical, I’ll be trying some new things. You may be experimenting too. I look forward to swapping stories.

—Jenny Rankin

Sunday Worship Schedule

February 5

Kay Montgomery preaching
**9:00 – Gospel Choir and Chalice
Choir**

Down in the River to Pray –
Traditional

**11:00 – Handbell Choir and
Junior Choir**

Listen to Your Heart –
Menken/Schwartz

In Paradisum – Fauré

February 12

Celebration Sunday
Gary Smith, preaching
9:00 & 11:00

*Everyone Suddenly Burst Out
Singing* – Willsher

I Have Had Singing – Sametz

February 19

Paul Sawyer, preaching
9:00 & 11:00 – Choir Octet

I Don’t Know Its Name –
Chamberlain

To the Holy Spirit – Dalglish

February 26

Jenny Rankin, preaching
9:00 – Larry Gall, bass

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind –
Quilter

Velvet Shoes – Thompson

11:00 – Adult Choir

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind –
Rutter

Velvet Shoes – Thompson

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There are two inserts with this newsletter:

Cabaret Night
Funderburg Scholars Dinner

The Meeting House News, the newsletter of First Parish in Concord, is published monthly August 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	Mailing Date
Monday, Feb. 13	Wednesday, Feb. 22
Monday, Mar. 20	Wednesday, Mar. 29
Friday, April 14	Wednesday, April 26

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

Money Matters

I hope you all had an enjoyable holiday season. As the new year begins, we are halfway through our fiscal year here at First Parish. Financially, on the income side, we have received \$536.7K of pledged income, which represents 60 percent of pledges for the year. In total, expenses are on track as our YTD expenses through December represent 49 percent of total budgeted expenses. As we look at the various program and administrative areas, expenses are running high in some areas and low in others. In particular, we are working hard to keep facilities expenses within budget. This was one of the many areas affected by the need to make budget cuts when the FY'06 budget was put together.

In the past month, the FY'06 budget has been reviewed in light of new and more up-to-date information we now have about various income and expense areas. We have revised the budget to better reflect how we expect to spend our income this year. We were very fortunate to have received additional pledges after FY'06 began. This has allowed us to provide some additional funds to such areas as denominational support and facilities.

Please carefully consider your pledge for FY'07, as every contribution is important and directly impacts what the church can offer the congregation and the community.

—*Lisa Cole*

Business Manager

Sunday Forum

Forums are held between 10:10 a.m. and 10:55 a.m. in the Chapel. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please contact **Dian Pekin** if you wish to recommend a topic or speaker.

FEBRUARY 5

Makeup of the Supreme Court
Round Table Discussion

This Forum will give participants an opportunity to identify and communicate various impacts of the current makeup of the Supreme Court on their lives.

FEBRUARY 12

No Forum – Celebration Sunday

FEBRUARY 19

After Katrina:
Supporting the Back Bay Mission
Marty Schumacher

Come learn about the Back Bay Mission of Biloxi, Mississippi, a multi-social service agency that has served the needs of the Gulf Coast's poor for decades. In response to Hurricane Katrina, First Parish has helped form a local Interfaith Partnership to support Back Bay Mission as it rebuilds. Marty's parents were volunteers, serving for many years on some of this agency's projects until they were forced to relocate elsewhere because their house was destroyed by the hurricane.

FEBRUARY 26

No Forum – RE Chapel

JERICHO ROAD VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT!

Please join us and many Jericho Road volunteers on Monday, February 27, for an exotic and free Southeast Asian buffet in the Parish Hall. The evening will feature awards, Lowell client testimonials, reflections and an update on Jericho's work in Lowell, Lawrence and beyond. RSVP to Dan Holin at dholin@earthlink.net. And bring a friend interested in volunteering with Jericho Road!

— *Dan Holin*

Parish Notes

NEW ART DISPLAYED IN THE ALTSHULER GALLERY

Stop by the Suzanne Altshuler Gallery (formerly the Exit Gallery) and the stage in the Parish Hall, to view an all-Parish artists' exhibit.

FROM OPEN TABLE

If your group has food left over from an event that you want to donate to Open Table, please label it for Open Table and store it in the kitchen refrigerator or freezer. They are glad to accept donations, but do not want to take things that are not labeled for them. Thank you.

ARE YOU ON THE LIST-(SERVES) AND "IN THE KNOW"?

First Parish is lucky to have some great "IT" people (as in "Information Technology") keeping our congregation up-to-date and well-informed. If you haven't been to our newly refurbished website at firstparish.org, by all means take a look! It's easy to find information about news and programs, recent sermons, including an audio (or podcast) version, and much more! We also have several dedicated e-mail lists for particular interest groups, as well as a general list, FPAnnounce, for distribution of up-to-the-minute news and notes. To see the lists that are available, and to add your name to those in which you're interested, just go to firstparish.org/email_lists.

THANKS!

The Heifer Gift Card sale raised \$5,400 this holiday season, including the gift of a Holiday Endowment to the Heifer Foundation. **Dave** and **Diane Clapp** want to thank all who contributed so generously to Heifer International.

WPA LUNCHEON AND POETRY READINGS

Returning by popular demand are some very talented poets of First Parish and the Concord area, who will read from their collections on Monday, February 27. Bring your own sandwich. Wine, cheese, dessert, coffee and tea will be provided for a small donation. Gathering time is at noon, followed by lunch and the program. All men and women of First Parish and their friends are welcome. No reservations are necessary, contact **Dian Pekin** at 978-263-0426 or pekindc@comcast.net by February 21 to arrange for childcare.

SAVE THE DATE — WORLD DAY OF PRAYER IS MARCH 3

World Day of Prayer, an ecumenical event of informed prayer and prayerful action, has taken place for decades. Concord's World Day of Prayer 2006 service will be held at the Holy Family Parish in Saint Bernard Church in Concord on Friday, March 3, at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by a luncheon in the Parish Hall. All men and women are invited to attend this historical event. This year's ecumenical service was written by the WDP Women of South Africa, who have chosen the theme "Signs of the Times."

VIVA LAS VEGAS!

The Special Events Committee invites you to a great Las Vegas-style show and Casino Night on March 17 and 18 in the Parish Hall! Your admission ticket includes a "Big Vegas Cabaret," directed by **Tom Beck** and starring some of First Parish's best singers and dancers performing songs that made Las Vegas famous. Come and enjoy the show, and a variety of games — even black jack and roulette! Try your luck, maybe win a prize, and have a great evening out. Watch for tickets on sale at coffee hours, and mark these dates in your calendar!

PARISH NOTES continued on page 7

Pastoral Care News

Dear First Parishioners,

It is with very mixed emotions that I tell you I will be leaving my position as your Associate Minister for Pastoral Care at the end of this church year. On the positive side is anticipation: Dan and I are building a new home just outside Brunswick, Maine, to which we will move late this summer. I've long been in love with the coast of Maine and imagined living there as an old woman. Not an old woman quite yet, when I am, there we'll be. I never really thought it would actually happen! It amazes me when dreams coincide with possibility.

But anticipation is tempered with genuine sadness at leaving First Parish and you wonderful people. I thought when I began this part-time ministry that I'd probably stay a couple of years while I searched for another full-time position. Instead, I have enjoyed it so much I've had no desire to move on. You've given me a professional home here.

Also, First Parish has given me time and opportunity to explore another path within my calling to ministry — spiritual direction, retreats and workshops. This side of my ministry has been calling ever more insistently and I am exploring venues for it in Maine and greater New England. After our move, I will continue spiritual direction with people I currently see, by coming here monthly for a couple of days at the Wright Tavern.

As I search out my new paths, know that a search is actively underway, and is looking very positive, for a new pastoral care minister.

I will have more to say, as we get closer to year's end, about the developments of the past four years and what I know I will miss. For now, let me sum it up in a very few words: our committed and caring caregivers and planners; an amazingly talented and cooperative staff; colleagues I will continue to cherish; and you, this multifaceted congregation, with your great love, deep thought, and enduring spirit.

Keeping faith,

— *Karen Lewis Foley*

PLEDGE.2006 CONTINUES UNTIL CELEBRATION SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

This year's five-week pledge campaign will culminate on Celebration Sunday, February 12. Don't miss this important and exciting celebration of the First Parish congregation as we take the time to reflect on our connections to this amazing faith community. Please plan to attend a church service on Celebration Sunday!



PLEDGE NOW!

If you have not yet pledged, please pledge now! You can pledge online (www.firstparish.org), mail in your form or drop it off at the church office. You can also bring your pledge to Celebration Sunday.

We hope everyone — members and friends alike — makes a financial commitment to First Parish this year so we reach our campaign goal of 100 percent participation in supporting the July 2006–June 2007 budget. Pledging is an annual tradition and an annual responsibility!

As you consider your pledge, please refer to the new First Parish Fair Giving Table included in the campaign mailing sent to your home. Our pledge goal is \$940,000, a 7.3 percent increase over last year's 12-month pledge total. Our three main budget objectives are these:

- Bring ministers and staff close to UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) compensation guidelines.
- Restore our fair share contribution to the UUA.
- Adequately fund annual maintenance of the Meeting House.

Please take advantage of the auto deduction options on the pledge form. This payment method helps First Parish to better manage its money flow and allows you to pay your pledge over the entire pledge year.

Celebration Sunday is a day of tradition at First Parish! The services begin with a banner parade of groups from throughout the church — a wonderful way to show our many connections to First Parish in a colorful, visual and beautiful way. **Gary Smith** will give a special sermon for the day. The choir will be singing their favorite anthems about the joy of singing.

And, by all means, please plan to stay for the extra-special (and delicious!) coffee hour reception following each service.

See you on Celebration Sunday! Please pledge generously and make First Parish a priority.

— **Cynthia Ellis and Jonathan Hurd**,
cochairs, Pledge.2006 Campaign

MUSings

*My soul magnifies God
We are enlarged.*

—W. Frederick Wooden

December has become the Choir's month to visit Common Cathedral. We originally selected that month so we could sing Christmas carols with the congregation of homeless men and women, but over time that



goal has become secondary. I pack a stack of carol books in the pocket of my parka, just in case, but I have learned what is most important about this relationship is the worship and conversation we share in those few hours around the dormant fountain on the Boston Common.

This became very clear to me this past December. As we arrived bearing our jugs of soup, Joan, the minister who leads this uncommon service, was reading the lectionary of the day. It was the Magnificat, Mary's beautiful song from the Gospel of Luke — the very text we would be singing the following Sunday in Vivaldi's glorious setting. Immediately, I was drawn in. The Magnificat is one of those passages from Christian scripture that I know by heart. It has always resonated for me as a song of faith and hope, sung by a young woman in extraordinary circumstances.

But that Sunday on the Common, I heard it with new ears. Joan followed her recitation by repeating the opening lines: "My soul magnifies God." To magnify, in this context, means to glorify. But, she pointed out, it also means to enlarge and clarify, as with a magnifying lens. To reveal. "How," she asked us, "do you magnify God in your life?" What a question to ask of a group of homeless people — and their well-sheltered suburban guests.

Then Joan invited members of the congregation to speak; Common Cathedral has a truly "open pulpit." One man spoke eloquently of his invisibility to those who walked by him every day. "But Jesus sees you. He sat down and ate with the poor and the outcast. He wouldn't just walk by as if you don't exist."

"I want to hear the Beatitudes," said someone from a nearby park bench. There was a pause, then hesitant voices: "blessed are the poor in spirit . . . blessed are those who mourn. . ." Awkwardly, we tried to reconstruct the list from memory, until another man pulled a handwritten page from his bag and gave it to Joan to read. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Music Note

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND ENJOY A GOSPEL MUSIC WEEKEND WITH JONATHAN SINGLETON

Save the dates March 4 and 5 for a wonderful opportunity to sing and hear gospel music with this well-known Boston area artist.

- Gospel Choir Workshop —
Saturday, March 4; 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
- Jonathan Singleton Concert —
Saturday night, March 4; 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday Services: 9:00 and 11:00 on March 5

Singers from the workshop will be invited to sing in the evening concert and the Sunday morning worship. Suggested donations: Workshop \$15.00 (includes admission to evening concert); Concert, adult, \$15.00, seniors or students, \$10.00.

For more information, call 978-369-9602, ext. 420, or e-mail music@firstparish.org.

How do we magnify the holy? This question followed me back to Concord and the shelter of our Sanctuary, where the choir joined with the orchestra to put the finishing touches on Vivaldi's *Magnificat*. This setting begins with a powerful G-minor chord declaring "Magnificat anima mea Dominum" — "My soul magnifies God." As we rehearsed, the voices of the choir mingled in my mind with the voices from the Common. "How do you magnify the holy?" "Blessed are . . ." Suddenly, this chord was more than an exclamation of praise; it was a kind of revelation. In the act of drawing breath and bow together, these musicians were creating an aural lens to magnify the holy, giving praise and revealing new light. Light that shone in their faces and in the faces from the Common that lingered in my memory.

*The soul has lifted moments, above the drift of days,
When life's great meaning breaketh in sunrise on our ways. . .*

— Hymn #40: "The Morning Hangs a Signal"

Thank you for the "lifted moments" that come my way here at First Parish — and in the places "out in the world" where we walk together.

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

INTERFAITH TEAM LEAVES FOR BILOXI

Seven individuals from faith communities in Concord and Carlisle flew to Biloxi for a fact-finding trip, January 7 to 11. They met with representatives of grass roots agencies, including Back Bay Mission, Beth Israel Synagogue, HandsOn USA and Oxfam. They hoped to set up work/learning trips for youth and adults this spring and summer 2006 to help in the ongoing and critical rebuilding after Katrina. Visit

the website, www-firstparish.org to read more about this trip, or contact

Jenny Rankin at revjenny@comcast.net.

Thank you for your continuing interest and support.

SUSSY SENDS THANKS TO YOU FOR THE SECRET SANTA GIFTS

Sussy writes, "I want to thank every person who gave such beautiful gifts to my family, sister's family, and friends in need. They were surprised with the amount of money that the gift certificates had. They all bought wonderful outfits and sneakers. Also we went to The Cheesecake Factory with the VISA prepaid card. Thank you very much to all of you for such marvelous gifts. Please say thank you to every person who put a wonderful smile on my family's face."

First Parish's support over the last four years means a lot to Sussy. — **Bill Seaver**

HOLIDAY PALESTINIAN ART SALES A SUCCESS

Many thanks to church members for their purchases of Palestinian arts in the Parish Hall in December. I hope you enjoy the many beautiful items. The purchases yielded over \$2,000, which I will invest in buying more Palestinian crafts, therefore helping to sustain the artisans' families at a time when the UN reports that up to 37 percent of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have had trouble getting food.

—**Janice Hayden**, Folk Art Mavens

STEEL BAND TO PLAY BENEFIT CONCERT FOR HOMELESS WOMEN

The Atlantic Clarion Steel Band is coming to the Trinitarian Congregational Church, 54 Walden Street, on March 5, from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. to play a benefit concert for the One Family Scholars Program, part of the One Family Campaign to End Family Homelessness, and the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program. The band's music ranges from concert classics to calypso, and is ideal entertainment for families. There is a suggested donation of \$20. Refreshments will be served for \$1.00. The SAC education committee is cosponsoring this event as part of its ongoing initiative to address homelessness. For information, contact **Jane Blumberg** at 978-369-8520.

LEARN HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

On Sunday, March 12, from 2 to 5 p.m., Miriam Stein from Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries will be coming to First Parish to offer a workshop on advocacy training. Miriam is an experienced social worker who lobbies at the State House on behalf of poor families. She will be discussing how to write effective letters to elected officials and to newspapers, as well as providing tips for face-to-face meetings with representatives. This workshop is being cosponsored by SAC's education committee. For information, contact **Jane Blumberg** at 978-369-8520.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIAL ACTION AT FIRST PARISH?

The Social Action Community (SAC) helps parishioners connect with a diverse and exciting range of social action projects. To find out more about what is going on, join our e-mail list by sending a blank e-mail to SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org, see our website, www.firstparish.org/sac/, <http://sac.firstparish.org/>, or look at the SAC bulletin board downstairs in the church. If you would like to volunteer and don't know where to start, contact **Bill Seaver**, 978-369-7318, billseaver@earthlink.net; or **Dave Dunn**, 978-263-2273, dave_dunn@bose.com.

FLEA MARKET/RECYCLE SALE IS COMING APRIL 1

It's not too early to think about what treasures you are going to donate to the WPA Flea Market/Recycle Sale, which will take place on Saturday, April 1, rain or shine. Gently used furniture, antiques, kitchen stuff, artwork, jewelry and clean toys are all welcome. No books, magazines, clothing, plants or sports equipment can be accepted. This is a major fundraiser and a great opportunity to offer items that you no longer need.

RECITAL HELPS ALZHEIMER'S

Sarah Whitney's December 15 Benefit Recital at First Parish raised \$960.00 for research into the prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Sarah sends her thanks to all who donated.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee (SC) met on January 9, with **Gene Brown** in attendance representing the Trustees, and **Patrick Everett** as a guest. We extend our congratulations to SC member **Doug Hardy**, whose new book, *Monster Careers: Networking*, hits the stands this month. We also congratulate **Diane Rollert**, whose ordination ceremony will be at First Parish on May 7, and **Paul Sawyer**, whose ordination ceremony will be here on June 4. This month, the staff is focusing on this year's annual fundraising and on the budget for fiscal year 2007. **Melissa Gallo** and **Don Dempsey** have agreed to cochair the committee for the capital campaign. After interviewing four candidates, they have chosen a consultant and will soon recruit committee members. We have received two pledges of \$100,000, so there is already money to help us begin the process. The SC began to review our December 9 meeting with Stefan Jonasson of the UUA. The first action taken as a result of that meeting will be a review of our ends statement as written in our policy governance articles. A subcommittee was set up that will make a first recommendation for changes to the present ends statement. The Communications Committee handed out a report that will be reviewed on February 13. We will review other aspects of Stefan's presentation at future meetings.

Submitted,

—*Sue Beck*

Clerk

Membership Corner

AFFINITY GROUPS, NEW AND NEWER

Are you looking to be a part of a small group in this large church? Consider becoming a member of an Affinity Group. We have 13 functioning groups: Birding, Bridge, Chess (adults and teens), Dancing, Humanists (a nontheist group), Photography, Songwriters Circle, Spanish Discussion/Social, and Groups I and II of "Writing Down the Bones" (creative writing). Jewish Awareness had a festive Chanukah celebration in December and movie evening in January. Genealogy meets monthly on the second Monday of the month, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the church; all are welcome. Jewelry Making will have a meeting on February 16, at 7 p.m. at First Parish. The Cooking Group would like to expand to include Restaurants.

Looking to become established groups are Bicycling (adults only), Concerts, Cooking/Restaurants (new), Dollhouse Miniatures, French Conversation, Games, Museums, Painting, Planning a Productive & Creative Retirement, Scrapbooking, Theological Discussion, Young Adults (18-35 years) and Creative Writing in the evening or on Saturday. The Walking and Theater groups need contact persons to function. Are you interested?

Stop by the Affinity Groups table at the Sunday coffee hours on February 5. To join a group, fill out an interest survey or contact **Judy Dembsey** at 978-263-3272 or dembsey@surfglobal.net.

REflections

At this moment, I am looking at our spring roster of volunteer teachers. I highlight the missing slots in yellow in order to easily reference where there are teaching needs in the RE program. Right now, there is a lot of yellow for our spring term.

9:00 O'clock:

Nursery – 1 teacher
Sandlot/3's – 3 teachers
Kindergarten – 1 teacher
2nd Grade – 2 teachers
3rd Grade – 2 teachers
4th Grade – 2 teachers
5th Grade – 2 teachers

11:00 O'clock:

4s – 1 teacher
3rd Grade – 1 teacher

We need you! If your child participates in Senior Youth Group, Coming of Age, Our Whole Lives, Neighboring Faiths, K-6 classrooms, Spirit Play or Pre-school, then we need you in our Cooperative RE program. And those of you whose kids have been through the program, we welcome you as teachers. And those of you who are adult members of First Parish, with or without kids, we welcome you to our program. Let us come together as a religious community for our children.

WOW

This month our terrific wow (Ways of Worship) teachers came together to discuss possibilities for this program next year. We came up with some very interesting and creative ideas. I will be working with **C.C. King** to shape the program and would like to invite anyone who is interested to give me a call to find out more. A special thanks to leaders **Brooks Stevens, Jay Vogt, C.C. King, Steph Chiha,** and **Barb Caddell** for making this year's service so meaningful and devoting time to make next year's program even better.

WORKSHOP ROTATION MODEL TAKING SHAPE

Through January and February, we are shaping next year's religious education program. Our vision of a multidisciplinary, interactive and engaging program is gradually becoming a reality, thanks to the hard work of **Allison Aley, Lisa McLean, Chris Randall, Deb Welch** and **Sue Wood**. Would you like to be involved in planning an Art, Drama, Music, or Games Workshop? Are you especially drawn to learning through worship? Then give us a call! We promise we will not overwhelm you with time or effort; we just want your ideas and expertise. Contact me or **Allison Aley** (978-369-2322) for more information. We want to include you in the process.

— Pam Howell

Senior Youth News

February is a time for new beginnings and personal transformations for our youth. College applications are in, first semester final exams are over and our youth see this month as a time for fresh starts. It is a joy to be with them each Sunday and hear about how they succeed, fail, pick themselves up and try again.

On February 12, the Youth Group will be going to Common Cathedral. In the past this has been a very moving and personally transformative experience. I want to encourage all youth to participate — even if you don't come to YRUU. Youth are welcome to join in making the food on Saturday, February 11, come with us into Boston on February 12, or hopefully, do both.

We have a good mix of social action and fun for February:

Feb. 5 — YRUU, play "Game Show."

Feb. 11(Sat.) — Make food for Common Cathedral at First Parish (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

Feb. 12 — YRUU to Common Cathedral, (12 noon to 3 p.m.) Parents, please e-mail Mary-Wren if you can drive.

Feb. 12 — YRUU, Speaker on Homelessness and Poverty

Feb. 19 — No YRUU, Public school vacation

Feb. 26 — YRUU, Snowballs

The Time to Talk team is trying to rethink the format and/or time of Time to Talk, since we have had few youth come. We will meet on Wednesday, February 8, at 7 p.m. If you have any ideas or comments for us about how we can set up a smaller, more intimate space for youth to talk about issues in their lives, then please e-mail Mary-Wren. In the meantime, stay tuned to the First Parish website and e-mails for more details.

I know that spring has the obvious metaphors for rebirth and renewal, but sometimes the winter offers us a chance to contemplate and make necessary changes to ourselves. Our youth have so much to teach us about being open to these types of personal transformations.

— Mary-Wren vanderWilden

Wright Tavern Center

Brown Bag Emerson — Ralph Waldo Emerson is one of UU-ism's deep thinkers and spiritual teachers whose messages and wisdom are surprisingly simple and direct. His persistent questions were: How do we touch again those moments when we feel strangely alive? How do we live in between these times? How can we urge our souls to awaken, to stir, to grow? Join **Jenny Rankin** to dive into four of Emerson's essays: *The Divinity School Address*, *Self-Reliance*, *The Over-Soul* and *Compensation*. Bring a sandwich, a friend, your copy of Emerson's essays, and your curiosity.

Thursdays, 2/2–3/1 (no class 2/23) 12 noon to 1:15 p.m.,

A Book of Days: Crafting Your Own Inspiration Book — Join **Susan Galford**, experienced book-binder, and **Jenny Rankin**, avid quote collector, for this two-session workshop. Craft books out of cardboard and beautiful papers, using simple techniques to sew the pages. Share words that inspire you and explore together the spiritual discipline of gathering and keeping your own treasure trove of "wisdom words." Bring three favorite poems or quotes to the first class.

Tuesdays, 2/7, 2/14 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. \$20 materials

Opening the Hand of Thought: A Buddhist Meditation and Discussion Group — Discussions for this 8-session course will be based on the book *Opening the Hand of Thought* by Kosho Uchiyama. Meditation during the last half hour of each session is based on the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. Drop-ins are welcome anytime. Led by Carol Ziegler.

Wednesdays, 2/8 – 3/29 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Augustine's Confessions — *The Confessions* is the first spiritual autobiography and perhaps the most influential book (aside from the Bible) in Christian history. The author, who lived from 354 to 430 C.E., was at different times in his life a pagan philosopher, professor of rhetoric, live-in lover with a concubine, father, traveler, preacher, theologian and bishop against his will. We will see how he survived and matured through the loss of his loved ones, the disintegration of the Roman empire and a radical change in his philosophy. And he will teach us much about our own culture, faith and selves, as he has taught others in preceding centuries. Please read the first three chapters before the first class. Choose from the following editions: Maria Boulding, O.S.B. Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1997, \$12; Philip Burton, Everyman, \$20; or Henry Chadwick, Oxford University Press, 1991, \$14. Garry Wills has a fine short introduction to St. Augustine, published by Penguin and costing \$13. Led by Carl Scovel, Minister Emeritus of King's Chapel.

Mondays, 3/6-4/10 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Out of the Dark: A Saturday Retreat — **Karen Foley** offers this one-day retreat at First Parish, a time for emerging from winter darkness into the light. Explore where you feel light emerging in your life, where it may be guiding you, and where the sacred is for you at this time of equinox and lengthening days. A light lunch will be served, prepared by Karen's able chef (her husband). Dress for comfort and bring a journal or writing materials.

Saturday, 3/11 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. \$75

Listening for God — Join **Gary Smith** for a discussion of short stories taken from *Faith: Stories*, edited by C. Michael Curtis.

March 15 — *Fishers of Men*, by Amy Tan
April 12 — *A Very Old Man...*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
May 24 — *Cello*, by Remy Rougeau

Bring a bag lunch and beverage. The group meets monthly on Wednesdays at 12:15 p.m.

Spiritual Direction — Meeting regularly with a spiritual director or companion can help you bring more attention and intention to your spiritual life. You and your director focus on the experience of your life in the context of your relationship with the holy. We start where you are — whether you have been meditating or praying for years, feel you are on a "growing edge," or whether you are experiencing an awakening of the spirit and want to explore it. Please note that spiritual direction is not therapy or counseling. Sessions may be arranged monthly or biweekly at your discretion. For more information or to make an appointment, call the Wright Tavern to speak with **Caroline McCloy** or **Karen Foley**.

\$60 per session; sliding scale for financial hardship

Small Group Ministry — Sometimes we need something more than Sunday morning worship to invite the Spirit to work in us and through us. We need a place to listen, with others, to our own lives. Small groups can help us name and articulate the power of the holy, the power of Love in our lives. They can allow us to connect more deeply with others and with that "still small voice" inside ourselves that sometimes gets lost in the hustle and bustle surrounding us. Small Group Ministry is alive and well in UU congregations like ours across the country. Call **Caroline McCloy** for information about dates and times and to join a group.

Women's News

THE WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

This year's First Parish Women's Book Groups meet on Tuesday mornings, usually the last Tuesday of the month, and Monday evenings, on the third Monday of the month. The book for February is Willa Cather's classic novel *Song of the Lark*, with "extra credit" for reading *O Pioneers* as well. The evening group will meet on Monday, February 20, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning group will meet on Tuesday, February 28, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join either or both of these discussions.

By the way, copies of the March book, *American Jezebel*, will be on sale during coffee hours, and the author, Eve LaPlante, will be at First Parish for a Wright Tavern Center program on April 6.

Please note that the March evening session will meet on the fourth Monday, March 27.

Books and Dates for the Remainder of 2006

March 27 (p.m.) and 28 (a.m.) — *American Jezebel*, by Eve LaPlante

April 17 (p.m.) and 25 (a.m.) — Poetry: *And Still I Rise*, by Maya Angelou; and *Delights and Shadows*, by Ted Kooser

May 15 (p.m.) and 23 (a.m.) — *The Jane Austen Book Club*, by Karen Anne Fowler

UU News

JUNE 2006 GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS IN ST. LOUIS

The annual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, also known as "GA," will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, this summer, June 21 to 28. Bowing to long-standing feedback from participants, this year's GA will begin on Wednesday and conclude on Sunday, to be more compatible with work and travel schedules. GA is a virtual feast of programming, from worship to workshops to performances, and of course, the business meetings of the Association, called plenary sessions. First Parish is entitled to 15 delegates; it's a great experience to attend and represent First Parish in the denominational process. The Denominational Affairs Committee receives delegate applications, and it's not too early to begin planning now to participate in this year's GA.



NOTES FROM THE UU SERVICE COMMITTEE

Each Sunday we make a pledge to "go out into the world in peace," and there is no better way to do so than to become a supporter of the UUSC. The UUSC is an independent membership organization that promotes human rights and social justice worldwide. In 2006, they are concentrating efforts on stopping torture, bringing clean water to all people and promoting fair labor practices. In addition, they are working on tsunami relief (providing fishing nets), earthquake relief and bringing aid to the people of the Sudan. In 2005, only 90 members of First Parish were also members of the UUSC. We can make a statement about our commitment to social justice by raising that number to full participation. For more information or to become a member, go to the UUSC website at www.uusc.org, or contact **Sue Beck** at sbeck345@comcast.net or 978-369-8445. If you have not done so, please consider signing the UUSC petition to raise awareness of the crisis in Darfur. I will be happy to come to your home for your signature.

— **Sue Beck**, UUSC representative

"MINISTRY FOR THE EARTH" FILM SERIES

Arlington Street Church's Green Sanctuary and Social Action committees are hosting a series of lively, thought-provoking films about ecological responsibility, February to June, Sundays, from 1 to 3 p.m. in the church's Clarke Room, 351 Boylston Street, Boston. All films are free and open to the public (a donation will be accepted), but seating is limited. A discussion follows each film. For more information, see ascboston.org/films or call 617-536-7050.

Feb. 12 — *The Future of Food* (2004, Deborah Koons, 92 min.)

March 12 — *Thirst* (2004, Alan Snitow & Deborah Kaufman, 62 min.)

April 23 — Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* (1972, Hawley Pratt, 60 min.)

May 7 — *Oil on Ice* (2004, Dale Djerassi & Bo Boudart, 57 min.)

June 4 — *Blue Vinyl* (2002, Judith Helfand & Daniel B. Gold, 97 min.)

— **Nancy James**, chair, Denominational Affairs Committee

February 2006 Calendar

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

Every Week...

<i>Morning Meditation</i>	Monday-Friday	7:00 a.m.
<i>Finding the Peace and Keeping the Peace</i>	Monday	9:30
<i>Bones in Chairs</i>	Monday	10:00 (not 2/20)
<i>Bones for Life®</i>	Monday	1:15 (not 2/20)
Concord Interfaith Group	Tuesday	8:00
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:00
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30
<i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>	Tuesday	7:00 (not 2/21)
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Wednesday	9:30
Bell Choir	Wednesday	1:00
<i>Kripalu Yoga</i>	Wednesday	7:30
<i>Melt Chaos into Calm</i>	Wednesday	7:30
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:30
<i>Brown Bag Emerson</i>	Thursday	12:00 (not 2/23)
<i>Melt Chaos into Calm</i>	Thursday	9:30
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Thursday	7:30
<i>Stress Reduction & Relaxation</i>	Friday	9:30 (not 2/24)
Men's Group	Saturday	7:30
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 (not 2/19 or 2/20)

Wed Feb 1	7:00	Youth Advisory Committee	Sun Feb 12	1:00	Common Cathedral (off-site)
	7:30	RE Council		2:00	Our Whole Lives A
Thu Feb 2	7:00	Human Resources Committee		6:00	Our Whole Lives B
	7:30	<i>Drumming Workshop</i>	Mon Feb 13	9:30	Parish Visitors
Fri Feb 3	9:30	Pastoral Care		12:00	Newsletter Deadline
Sat Feb 4	6:00	Funderburg Scholars Dinner		7:00	Standing Committee
Sun Feb 5	12:15	Nominating Committee	Tue Feb 14	12:00	<i>A Book of Days</i>
	3:00	Our Whole Lives A	Wed Feb 15	12:15	<i>Listening for God</i>
	6:00	Our Whole Lives B		7:00	Youth Social Action Committee
Mon Feb 6	7:00	Minister's Orientation	Thu Feb 16	7:00	Jewelry Affinity Group
Tue Feb 7	9:00	WPA Board Meeting		7:30	<i>Drumming Workshop</i>
	12:00	<i>A Book of Days</i>	Fri Feb 17	7:00	Jewish Awareness Group
	6:30	First Tuesday Dinner	Sat Feb 18	7:30	Cabaret Night
	7:00	The Rest of Your Life and Beyond	Mon Feb 20	Holiday — Office Closed	
	7:00	Senior Our Whole Lives		7:30	<i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
	7:30	First Tuesday Vespers	Tue Feb 21	7:30	Denominational Affairs Committee
Wed Feb 8	6:30	Partner Church Committee	Wed Feb 22	9:15	Newsletter Mailing
	7:00	Time to Talk (TTT)		7:30	<i>Play with Purpose</i>
	7:30	<i>Play with Purpose</i>	Fri Feb 24	7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing</i>
Thu Feb 9	7:00	<i>Stress Reduction Drop-In</i>	Mon Feb 27	11:30	WPA Luncheon
	7:30	<i>Drumming Workshop</i>		7:30	<i>Musketaquid/Wright Tavern Discussion</i>
	7:30	Music Events Committee	Tue Feb 28	9:30	<i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>
	7:30	Song Writers Affinity Group			
Sat Feb 11	9:00	Photo Club			



First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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FEBRUARY 2006 NEWSLETTER

The next Newsletter deadline is **Monday, February 13**, at noon.

The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, February 22.

News items should be limited to 100 words.

Don't Miss...

PLEDGE.2006

Pledge Now.

Make First Parish a Priority.

*Come to Celebration Sunday —
February 12*



First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Staff

Gary E. Smith, Senior Minister

Jenny M. Rankin, Minister

Karen Lewis Foley, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care

Rebecca M. Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education

Christine Gay, Religious Education Administrator

Carol Duane, Toddler/Preschool Coordinator

Mary-Wren vanderWilden, Youth Program Director

Elizabeth Norton, Music Director

Eric Huenneke, Organist

David Huston, Bell Choir Director

Judy Burrows, Acting Children's Choir Director

Anderson Manuel, Music/RE Associate

Caroline McCloy, Wright Tavern Center Director

Dan Holin, Jericho Road Executive Director

Leslie Koplou, Assistant to Executive Director, Jericho Road

Margaret Stewart, Parish Administrator

Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator

Jane Johnson, Office Manager

Peggy Gallo, Financial Secretary and Collector

Lisa Cole, Business Manager

Kate Keleher, Newsletter Editor

Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson, Margaret Stewart,
Newsletter Staff

WINTER NOTICE! STAFF PARKING FYI

Please be careful not to park in one of the staff-designated parking spaces unless you are *certain* that the staff person will not be needing the space. The staff often keep unconventional hours and appreciate having their space open. Thanks!

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 to 3:00

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