



First Parish in Concord  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
Gathered in 1636

November 28, 2007  
Volume 44, No. 4

## The Meeting House News

### REVeries

My childhood New England Congregationalism proclaimed a blond, blue-eyed and gentle Jesus, an invisible friend, one who taught by parable and example. "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam," we would sing, in my Sunday school classes. But, as I grew and learned and questioned, I left this faith behind for Unitarian Universalism.

But what I value most about Christianity, what I have never left behind, is the meaning of Jesus precisely at this season, this birth of a child. Here is a religion, and almost uniquely so, that takes a human and holy birth, a birth to a mother named Mary, and places this holy birth at a particular time. Here is a religion that places the events of the birth and of the life of Jesus in a particular place: Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee, the Mount of Olives. These are places we can find on a map.

What I value most about Christianity, what I have never left behind, is that here is a faith that proclaims an incarnation, God become human, God incarnate in Jesus, and here is a meaning for Unitarian Universalists if ever there was one: this is a faith that begins with a human, a faith that looks you in the eye.

What I value about Christianity is that this can be a faith that looks you right in the eye, comes looking for you, eyes meeting another, hands meeting another. Scraping away all the chapters in my Christology textbooks, all those great councils of the Christian church that debated humanity and divinity and exiled me to heresy; scraping away all this, we have in this month of December the birth of a baby, the birth of Jesus, the beginning of something. Take all the other theological trappings away and we are celebrating this month a holiness that began with a human.

Jesus burst into this world like a flash of hope. That is why we sing this month. That is why we light our candles. This is very close to what Unitarian Universalism means to me. This is what a Unitarian Universalist does with Christmas, does at Christmas. We sing. We light candles. We hope. We hope right along with our Christian brothers and sisters for a rebirth of this hope and this light. Maybe this is a season to remember this and to remember this by looking other people in the eye ourselves.

—Gary Smith

### Sunday Worship Schedule

#### December 2

**Jenny Rankin**, preaching

**9:00 – Adult Choir**

*Dawning of Our Dreams* – Shelton

*Light Everlasting* – Christiansen

**11:00 – Gospel Choir,**

**Anderson Manuel, director**

#### December 9

**Gary Smith**, preaching

**9:00 – Adult Choir**

*Ocho Kandelikas* – Jagoda/Jacobsen

*Mi zeh hidlik* – arr. Chilcott

**11:00 – Handbell Choir,**

**Martha Goodman, director**

*And the Glory of the Lord*

– Handel/McChesney

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

– arr. Sherman

#### December 16

**Music Sunday**

**Gary Smith**, worship leader

**9:00 & 11:00 – Adult Choir**

**First Parish Festival Orchestra**

*Christmas Oratorio* – Saint-Saëns

#### December 23

**Christmas Sunday**

**Gary Smith**, preaching

**9:00 & 11:00 – Adult Choir and  
Children's Choirs**

*Children Go Where I Send Thee*

– Traditional

*When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled*

– Alexander

#### December 30

**Mark Richards**, preaching

**One service only at 11:00**

– Silver Bass Trio

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There is one insert with this newsletter:  
**Holiday Schedule**

*The Meeting House News*, the newsletter of First Parish in Concord, is published monthly — in print and online — September to June, to provide parishioners and friends with information about our congregation and our larger community.

Please send address changes to:  
First Parish in Concord  
20 Lexington Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Noon Deadline	Mailing Date
Monday, Dec. 10	Wednesday, Dec. 19
Monday, Jan. 14	Wednesday, Jan. 23
Friday, Feb. 15	Wednesday, Feb. 27

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

## BEST JOB ON SUNDAY MORNINGS: HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE AN USHER?

**Any Sunday:** Openings are now available for people who would like to become ushers. It's easy, it's fun, you get to see lots of friends, and it will help you get to church (wink, wink!). You don't need to have experience or be an "olde" pillar of the church, just a welcoming and friendly presence. You need to do this only one Sunday per month, but you can do more. We especially need people for the 9:00 o'clock service. Can't commit? Join our "substitutes" list.

**Christmas Eve:** And how would you like to volunteer for one of the wonderful Christmas Eve services?

Contact **Kris Yerby** at krisyerby@comcast.net (978-369-1264) or **Tom Wilson** at twilson@wilsongroup.com (978-369-1765).

*Join us; you'll be glad you did!*

## Standing Committee Information

The Standing Committee met on November 12. Look for the minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log on), or look for them on the bulletin board in the downstairs hall. The next Standing Committee meeting will be off-site Monday, December 10.

## Sunday Forum

Forums are held Sunday morning from 10:10 a.m. to 10:55 a.m. in the Parlor. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please contact **Robert Hilsinger** or **Charles Lowell** if you wish to recommend a topic or a speaker.

### DECEMBER 2

*Caregivers 24/7*

**Kathleen Elcox**  
and **Rev. Margie King Saphier**

Kathleen and Margie will explore "Caregivers 24/7." Join them to discuss the issues involved and the need for survival techniques for the caregiver. As the population ages and life expectancy increases, the need for understanding these issues will be very important to everyone. Each one of you either already is, or at some time will be a caregiver.

### DECEMBER 9

No Forum

### DECEMBER 16

*A Visit with Santa*  
The Old Boy Himself

The traditions of kindly and generous gift givers throughout the centuries will be celebrated with gusto! Santa will visit First Parish again this year to bring holiday cheer and to listen to the wish lists of big and little folks alike. It's not too late to let him know what your heart desires! Small gifts will be distributed to the children and their parents can take advantage of the photo op!

### DECEMBER 23

No Forum

## Parish Notes

### ARTISANS FAIR—ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS

**Lois Mitchell**, Women's Parish Association president, and Artisans Fair cochairs, **Jen Petersen** and **Dian Pekin**, extend heartfelt thanks to all who helped make this year's fair another great success. There are too many people to list here, but special appreciation goes to **Rhoda Miller**, **Gerrie Madigan**, **Nancy James**, **Helen Martin**, **Becky Blodgett**, **Helen Stoddard**, **Lois Suarez**, **Barbara Wheeler**, **Cindy McLean-Greeley**, **Doug Baker** and all the sextons. This was a great communal effort!

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT AND TEA—DECEMBER 11

Treat yourself and friends to an afternoon of holiday music and a traditional Christmas tea on Tuesday, December 11. The music program will begin at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, during which the critically acclaimed Bill and Bo Winiker Jazz Trio will entertain us with delightful jazz renditions of popular holiday tunes. Tea will be served in the Parlor and Parish Hall at 4 p.m. All men and women of First Parish and their friends are welcome. There is no charge and no reservations are necessary.

### CRISPAZ CRAFTS AVAILABLE ON DECEMBER 16

Once again you will be able to do your holiday shopping among beautiful crafts made by artisans from El Salvador and Guatemala. The CRISPAZ artisans' cooperatives offer training, a sense of community, and a market for their goods to some of the poorest people in Central America. On Sunday, December 16, after both services, come choose among lovely embroideries, whimsical ornaments, carved wooden toys and so much more, all while supporting CRISPAZ, Christians for Peace in El Salvador. Thank you!

### FAIR TRADE HOLIDAY GIFT BASKETS ARE HERE IN DECEMBER

Once again, we will be offering Fair Trade gift baskets for the December holidays. Baskets containing coffee, cocoa or tea, plus our popular chocolate bars, will be available in a variety of types and sizes at both coffee hours on December 9, 16 and 23. We are not taking advance orders, so be sure to stop by early for the best selection! All proceeds from the sales will benefit the church's operating budget.

### HONOR YOUR SPECIAL ONES WITH A CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIAL

If you would like to contribute to the Christmas Memorial Flower Fund, please sign up at coffee hour on December 9 and 16. The names of those remembered will be printed in the order of service on Christmas Sunday.

### FIRST PARISH QUILT NOTE CARDS CAN BE YOURS!

**Judy Dembsey** has kindly consented to let us put her World Systems of Belief quilt on a 4 x 6 note card! For \$10.00 you can purchase a package of eight cards (blank inside) with envelopes. All proceeds will go to the church's operating budget. Stop by the UUSC table during coffee hours or contact **Sue Beck**.

### SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The office at First Parish will be closed on Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day — Monday and Tuesday, December 24 and 25. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday — December 26, 27 and 29 — and Monday, December 31, the office will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The office will be closed on Tuesday, January 1. Regular office hours (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) will resume on Wednesday, January 2.

PARISH NOTES continued on page 10

## Money Matters

### IMPORTANT ALL-PARISH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CHOICE

Our ministers, staff, and the leaders of the "Come Build a Dream" Capital Campaign urge you to attend an all-Parish special meeting on Sunday, December 2, at 12:30 p.m. to vote on which building option you want to pursue.

This meeting is the *final* decision-making gathering for the entire membership of First Parish that will determine the nature of our building, and therefore our programs and activities, for decades to come. If you don't usually attend all-Parish meetings, this is one in which we urge you to participate.

This is your church, your spiritual home. Please be a part of deciding its future.



### ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

First Parish's Pledge-2008 Campaign plans have started to take shape. Your annual pledges keep our First Parish ministry, programs and operations vital and available to all of us. In early February, you'll be receiving a letter that contains pledge cards and details. Please consider how you might give as generously as possible by Celebration Sunday on March 2. Our annual pledges really do come back to us in so many beautiful ways at First Parish!

—Dave Dawson and Mary Ellen Connell

## Pastoral Care News

In this season of thanksgiving and giving, the Pastoral Care Council (PCC) acknowledges all those who have actively supported efforts to provide an area for parishioners who need to sit during coffee hour. This includes those who are unsteady on their feet, those with a disability or receiving chemo, radiation, or those who are elderly or who are pregnant or nursing a baby, plus many more. It is important to remember that the reason an individual is sitting may not be physically apparent.

Establishing this area is still in its experimental stages. The ideal place to have tables is in the Parlor next to the fireplace, but this is not possible when there is a Forum. In early October, we had the tables placed in the far corner near the stage thinking this was a quieter area. Because of feedback from individuals who would like to sit, PCC learned that negotiating the busy crowd in the Parish Hall was intimidating. In consultation with **Doug Baker**, the tables have been placed next to the wall between the two entrances, which requires the least amount of walking.

We also received feedback that the term *Safe Area* and the *Reserved* signs on the table did not feel welcoming to many in the congregation. There is power in words, so the PCC is reviewing how we can convey our message. Send me your suggestions.

This relatively small, but extremely significant act of providing an area for those who need to sit is a social action initiative addressing the issue of ableism and ageism, as well as a community-building action, showing through our actions that we are inclusive of *all* our members. Please continue to share your thoughts with the PCC.

On a different note, please give a *big thanks* to **Nicole Sheehan**, who has been our sole memorial reception coordinator for the past six months. She has done a wonderful job. Nicole will continue as coordinator, but she will be joined by **Marilyn Lowitt**, **Brooks Stevens** and **Francene Amari-Faulkner**.

**Holiday Flowers:** Every Christmas season the poinsettias that decorate the Sanctuary are delivered on December 26 to those parishioners who have experienced a difficult year, or who are unable to attend First Parish on a regular basis. If you are available on December 26 to deliver one or two plants, please call the church office or sign up during coffee hour. Delivering flowers is a wonderful way to observe this season of giving.

In faith,

—Margie King Saphier

## Wright Tavern Center

Welcome to Wright Tavern Center. We look forward to meeting you! Thinking of signing up for a course? Check out the FALL 2007 course schedule for details. For full course



descriptions, presenter bios, registration forms and instructions, please visit our beautiful and user-friendly updated website with downloadable catalog at [wrighttavern.org](http://wrighttavern.org). Questions? Contact **Mary Elizabeth Wheeler**, Wright Tavern director, at [FPTavern@aol.com](mailto:FPTavern@aol.com) or at 978-369-9602.

Check the white board in the lower church entryway for course locations.

### ONGOING CLASSES IN DECEMBER

These classes are already under way, but are either run on a drop-in basis or can be joined either at a pro-rated fee or at no charge.

#### LISTENING FOR GOD

*Rev. Gary Smith*

Join Rev. Gary Smith for a discussion of short stories taken from *Listening for God*, Volume 3, by Paula J. Carlson and Peter S. Hawkins (ed. Ausberg Fortress Press, 2000). The group will discuss *Christmas 1967*, by Oscar Hijuelos, at the December meeting. Bring a bag lunch and beverage.

Wednesday 12/5 12:15-1:15 p.m. no charge

#### MBSR MEDITATION MAINTENANCE

*Pam Ressler*

Monthly two-hour sessions are for graduates of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program or others familiar with mindfulness meditation to share insights and challenges of their practice, as well as to practice new tools for integrating both formal and informal forms of meditation into their lives.

Wednesday 12/5 7:00-9:00 p.m. \$15 drop-in

#### THE ART OF RAGA NEW!

*Sadhana Upadhyay*

Sadhana Upadhyay performed in the Divali service at First Parish. This three-week "crash course" is not to be missed. You will have a chance to hear her beautiful, passionate voice and experience the fascinating and mysterious art of raga for yourself. All are welcome to listen and learn.

2 Thursdays 12/6 & 12/13 7:00-8:30 p.m. \$30/  
\$20 drop-in

#### T'AI JI

*Mae Pagan*

This class combines music with Qigong (energy release exercises) and the simple movement of T'ai Ji (active relaxation) to release blocked energy and bring our lives into balance. Gentle low-impact exercises reduce stress, enhance optimum health, and create a sense of joy and well-being.

Friday 12/14 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. \$20/\$25 drop-in

#### RISE UP SINGING

*Beth Norton and Others*

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

Friday 12/14 7:30-9:30 p.m. no charge

#### RESTORATIVE YOGA

*Edi Pasalis*

Designed to restore our connection to ease in our bodies, joy in our well-being, and trust in our deepest selves, restorative yoga classes combine slow, flowing movement with still, supported poses, and incorporate guided and silent meditations, affirmations, calming breathing and deep relaxation. No yoga experience is necessary. All levels are welcome.

3 Wednesdays 12/5-12/19 5:30-7:00 p.m. \$45/  
\$20 drop-in

#### INTERPLAY: CULTIVATING JOY, ENERGY AND FUN

*CC King*

InterPlay helps us develop skills for spontaneous, effective responses to life's challenges. Through simple, effective practices rooted in voice, movement, stillness, storytelling and song, we expand our knowledge and skills for moving toward what makes us feel fully alive. It's fun, it's easy, and anyone can do it! This group is suitable for newcomers and continuing enthusiasts.

Thursday 12/13 10:00-11:30 a.m. \$15/\$20 drop-in

### PREVIEW OF 2008 COURSES

**Forgiveness and Reconciliation** – Father Leonel Narváez, Catholic priest from Bogotá, Colombia, returns to the Wright Tavern Center to lead the four-step Forgiveness module in this deeply transformational process.

**Prayer and Meditation** – Jeffrey McIntyre makes the distinction between these two primary spiritual practices and discusses their practical applications.

**Tough Texts** – Rev. Carl Scovel will discuss five texts from the Old and New Testaments, that challenge our values and perspectives. Such texts as these brook no simple resolution, but like Zen k'ans, force us to take them seriously and re-examine our own assumptions. Offered for five weeks during Marvelous Mondays in the Lenten season.



## Social Action Community News and Events

### THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL ACTION

During this holiday season we have many opportunities here at First Parish to “go out into the world in peace ... strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor all beings”. Our Social Action



page today is filled with opportunities to reach out and make a difference.

Other options are available at coffee hour or on our website. Do take the time to find an opportunity that fits you and your family.

Thank you to First Parish members who helped Open Table for Thanksgiving. Both the guests and the staff were most appreciative! As always, contact me with your causes and concerns at FBade@firstparish.org.

— *Faith Bade*  
Social Action Associate

### THE HOMELESS CHILD IN SCHOOL

The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness will hold its fourth annual forum on January 27 at the Trinitarian Church in Concord, from 7:00-8:45 p.m. This year's forum, The Homeless Child in School, will feature Robyn Frost, executive director of the Mass. Coalition for the Homeless, Mary William, program director of the Homeless Student Initiative for the Boston Public Schools; and Laurie Burnett, homelessness education coordinator for the Framingham Public Schools. Learn what can be done to help the estimated 96,000 children in Massachusetts without permanent homes. For information, contact **Jane Blumberg** 978-369-8520.

### CAROLING AT CONCORD PRISON FARM DECEMBER 7

Want to bring some holiday support to someone who will be lonely this season? Do you love to sing? Want a brief but interesting peek inside the walls of the Concord Correctional Center? Come join the carolers on Friday, December 7, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. There will be music by String 'n' Things, Concord's own jazz group, as well as carols sung by all and special musical offerings by the members of the Music Theory class at NCC. If you would like to be there, call Ron Millet at 978-371-7941, ext. 1114, to sign up. Prison rules do not permit children under 18 to attend.

### HEIFER INTERNATIONAL GIFT CARDS ON SALE IN DECEMBER

Heifer gift cards will be available during coffee hour on the first four Sundays in December. Give a gift that keeps on giving! Call **Dave** or **Diane Clapp** at 978-443-4346 with questions.

### SOCIAL ACTION GRANTS AWARDED

The Social Action Grants Committee is pleased to offer \$29,300 in funding to 16 organizations who submitted proposals for consideration. Projects ranged near and far, from supporting orphans in Africa, Argentina and Cambodia, to supporting local programs addressing domestic violence, homelessness, the needs of inmates of the Concord prisons, climate change and more. Funds for these grants come from your pledge dollars. Seven percent of all funds collected are directed to programs outside our church that help us fulfill the mission of our creed. For detailed information on individual grants, please visit [firstparish.org](http://firstparish.org) and click on social action or contact **Alane Wallis** at [awallis@nutter.com](mailto:awallis@nutter.com).

### FALL 2007 GRANT AWARDS

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Program	\$ 3,000
The Friends of the Rafael Hernandez School	2,500
Domestic Violence Services of Central Middlesex	2,500
Gaining Ground	1,500
Concord Climate Action	1,000
Concord/Acton Family Homelessness Advocacy Network	700
Concord Prison Outreach	3,000
Black Heritage and Abolitionist Walk Project	500
Chiapas Photography Project	1,000
Connect Africa Foundation	2,150
The Sharing Foundation	3,000
Amnesty International Concord, Group 15	500
Centro Arte Para La Paz	1,000
Children's Island	1,400
Gulf Coast Works	5,000
Mass. Campaign for Peace	550

### UU MASS ACTION NETWORK WANTS YOUR HELP

UU Mass Action is an initiative sponsored by UUSC to help UU's become a stronger political force. They are urging us to send postcards to our legislators asking them to sponsor strong legislation aimed at curbing global warming. Stop by the UUSC table and pick up a preprinted card to send today! We are looking for a politically minded person to be the First Parish rep for this important new initiative. Check out their web site or contact **Sue Beck** for more information.

**SOCIAL ACTION COMMUNITY** continued on page 7

### WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIAL ACTION AT FIRST PARISH?

The First Parish Social Action Community (SAC) helps parishioners connect with a diverse and exciting range of social action projects. To find out more about what is going on, join our e-mail list by sending a blank e-mail to [SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org](mailto:SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org), see our website, [www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/97/70/](http://www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/97/70/), e-mail our Social Action Associate **Faith Bade** at [FBade@firstparish.org](mailto:FBade@firstparish.org), or check out information on the SAC bulletin board downstairs in the church.

## MUSings

Over the last decade or so, our December holiday celebrations have featured the presentation of a “minor” major work by the First Parish Choir and a varying group of professional and



semiprofessional musicians from the Parish and the wider community, which I have dubbed the “First Parish Festival Orchestra.” Thanks to the generosity of a music-loving parishioner, we are able to continue the tradition this year, despite the cuts that were made to our annual music budget last spring. On December 16 (Beethoven’s Birthday!), the choir will present Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Oratorio de Noël* (*Christmas Oratorio*) at both services.

Rehearsing and preparing this piece has been a musical adventure of discovery for me and for the choir. The *Oratorio* is an early work of Camille Saint-Saëns [1835-1921], composed when he was only 23 years old. It is scored for choir, soloists, string quartet, organ and harp. After a lovely pastoral prelude, “in the style of Bach,” the work begins with the Gospel of Luke’s vivid depiction of the angels’ appearance to the shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus. The rest of the libretto is freely paraphrased from the Psalms, the book of Isaiah, Lamentations and the Gospel of John. This rich variety of stirring choruses, lyrical solos and colorful vocal ensembles provide commentary on the meaning of Jesus’ birth.

Saint-Saëns is probably best known for his orchestral works, especially his *Organ Symphony*, the symphonic poem *Danse Macabre* and, ironically, *The Carnival of the Animals*, a work he wrote as a musical joke. He actually forbade its performance during his lifetime, fearing it would ruin his reputation. The musical clarity, sense of proportion, colorful harmony and elegance of these more famous and larger works is evident in Saint-Saëns’ early oratorio, the style of which was likely circumscribed by the prevailing conservative customs in French church music during the 1850’s.

To me, Saint-Saëns’ *Oratorio de Noël* is a charming and reverent musical meditation on the meaning of Jesus’ birth. We are looking forward to sharing it with you on December 16.

Blessings,

—Beth Norton

## SOCIAL ACTION COMMUNITY

continued from page 6

### UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS ARE HERE

UU Service Committee needs your support to combat hardship in Darfur and around the world. Holiday cards in four lovely designs are available at \$12.00 for 10 cards with envelopes. Stop by at coffee hour, or contact **Sue Beck**. These go quickly, so don’t delay!

### KNITTERS, GET READY! THE MITTEN TREE IS BACK

The mitten tree will be up from Sunday, December 2, until Sunday, December 16. Hats, scarves, mittens and gloves — both purchased and handmade and for all ages — are welcome and will be distributed to Common Cathedral, House of Hope in Lowell, and Renewal House in Roxbury. Baskets for your contributions will be located under the trees in the Sanctuary or in the Parish Hall. Many thanks to **Joan Wesolowski** for coordinating this program. Please contact **Faith Bade**, FBade@firstparish.org, with questions.

### CLEMENTINES FOR OPEN TABLE

Please fill **Claudia Nimar**’s car trunk with clementines again! This year your donations will be gratefully accepted outside the side door of the church on Sunday, December 16, between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Thanks so much for giving Open Table guests this special treat.

### WE WILL BE ASKING FOR PRESENTS FOR THE NEEDY AGAIN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

First Parish has a long tradition of reaching out to families who need a helping hand during the holiday season. **John Boynton** and **Bill Seaver**, in conjunction with Community Teamwork of Lowell (comteam.org), will once again be looking for generous First Parishioners to help struggling families in Lowell enjoy Christmas. Watch the *Sunday News* and SAC e-mail for specifics on the families and their needs. Contact **Bill Seaver** (billseaver@earthlink.net) with questions.

### HELP THE REBUILDING IN NEW ORLEANS — DONATE OR JOIN THE FAMILY TRIP

Gulf Coast Works (formerly Bridge to Biloxi) is now rebuilding with-in New Orleans’ Ninth Ward. Fill **Dick Shohet**’s truck with donated tools for the rebuilding efforts, here at First Parish on Sunday, December 2, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; or join the holiday family work trip from December 24 to 30. Families and children are welcome! For a list of tools needed or to learn more about the trip, contact **Tracey Hurd** (thurd@comcast.net) or go to [gulfcoastworks.org](http://gulfcoastworks.org).

### FILL UP AND RETURN THE GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

These UUSC boxes have been “fed” since Thanksgiving and should be returned to First Parish on Sunday, December 16. Either bring the full box to church; or to become a UUSC member, enclose a check made out to UUSC for the total dollar amount, complete the UUSC membership information on the bottom of the box, and return to First Parish. Contributions are tax-deductible. Contact **Sue Beck**, SBeck345@comcast.net, with questions.

## Reflection and RE News

When I think of the first year I came to First Parish with my young children, my most memorable event was the Children's Craft Workshop. I am sure my reaction was not that different from your initial reaction. I was amazed at the number of people, young and old-er, who came together to make gifts for loved ones. I saw teens, children, mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers all working together to create something for someone special in a child's life.

When we look to teach our children alternatives to the mall, the Children's Craft Workshop is one of the best. Here we create imperfect gifts from the heart for the people we love in our lives. Yes, it is work to organize all of those elves and prepare the craft tables, but it is work people are happy to do. It is a joyful noise that is created. And it is where holiday memories are made.

**Roselyn Romberg** has been our Head Elf for a few years now. She has organized the attic and created lists (checking them twice!). This is Roselyn's last year as Head Elf and she is leaving the program in great shape. We all appreciate her work in bringing our community together during the holidays. We are also so fortunate that **Susan Ward** will be our next Head Elf and is excited about carrying on this important event.

The Children's Craft Fair is not just an event. It is an important ministry to our children and to their parents. It is a First Parish tradition that embraces the ministry of gift-making from the hands and hearts of our First Parish children.

— Pam Howell

### CAREGIVING, STORY PLAY AND SPIRIT PLAY

Thanks to our dedicated parent teachers, the programs for our youngest children are running very smoothly. We are keeping a close eye on class sizes and are prepared to be flexible if any of these younger classes become too large. At the current time things are productive and manageable, but we are monitoring the weekly attendance for any regular increase that might affect this group.

We are in our third year with Spirit Play and our children have truly responded to this meditative and spiritual way of telling a story. This is an opportunity for our kids to settle themselves, focus on one story, listen with their friends, and think about what the story is saying. There is room and space for their own ideas and questions, and time for them to be still and to wonder. The teachers have done their work in making this a calm, meaningful experience.

### WORKSHOP ROTATION #3: STORIES FROM THE

## DECEMBER RE CALENDAR

Sat., Dec. 1	Children's Holiday Craft Workshop 1:00 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 2	Regular RE Pre-K – 8th Grade 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. 7th Grade Buddhism 11:00 a.m. 8th Grade OWL 4:00-7:00 p.m. 9th Grade COA w/parents 4:00–6:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 7	9th Grade COA Lock-in 5:30 p.m. to December 8 at 6:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 9	Regular RE Pre-K – 6th Grade 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. 7th Grade Buddhism 11:00 a.m. 8th Grade OWL 4:00-7:00 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 16	Regular RE Pre-K – 1st Grade 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Storyteller in Chapel, 2nd-6th Grade 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. 7th Grade Buddhism 11:00 a.m. 8th Grade OWL 2:00-7:00 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 23	Regular RE Pre-K 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Little Angel Sunday Chapel Celebration K-6th 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Sun., Dec. 30	Child Care Pre-K at 11:00 a.m. <i>Only</i> No RE K-8th Grades

### HEBREW SCRIPTURES — NOAH'S ARK

One of the great things about our Real Stuff workshop is that it has become a way to link what First Parish members are doing for Social Action to what First Parish kids are learning. This next rotation will focus on the story of the flood and the ark. This subject is a natural link to the modern-day flood, Katrina, and what adults at First Parish are doing to help those in need. **Donna DeAngelis** was involved in Bridge to Biloxi and Hands-On. She and a group of First Parish youth went to Biloxi and worked to help others. Donna is sharing this experience with our RE program in our Real Stuff workshop. We will be looking at how people made a difference in others' lives and the progress that has been made in rebuilding Biloxi. We will also be giving our kids a chance to create care packages for those who are still in need. By using real-life experiences in our classrooms, we are teaching our children that people they know are helping others and what a great experience that can be.

### DON'T MISS THE CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CRAFT WORKSHOP

**When?** Saturday, December 1, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**Where?** First Parish in Concord, Parish Hall

**Who?** First Parish kids age 6 and up

**What?** A holiday tradition!

Children make beautiful handcrafted gifts for their family and friends. Old and new favorites include woodworking, beading and jewelry, basket weaving, porcelain plate painting, ornaments and more!

We still need: **Craft Elves and Wood Elves** to help work with children. All materials are provided. You just need to bring an interest in kids and a willingness to have fun! Interested? Contact **Roselyn Romberg** at 978-287-5766 or [roselyn.romberg@gmail.com](mailto:roselyn.romberg@gmail.com).

RE NEWS continued on page 9



## Senior Youth News

The youth, like adults, look for opportunities to connect and feel the spirit of the holidays amongst the commercialism and craziness of this season. We have planned a December that we hope provides youth with opportunities for connection and peace. I continue to be proud of the youth as they work to provide a patient and welcoming presence with one another.

Look over the December calendar and feel free to come to everything or drop in when it works for you. Please take special note that YRUU alums (college students) are welcome to come to our holiday party on December 16.

- December 2 Trip to Boston to see Blue Man Group leaving at 3:00 p.m.
- December 9 Agree/Disagree Game
- December 16 Holiday Party – Alums welcome! Bring something you already own, but don't want (wrapped) for a Yankee Swap

(No YRUU December 23 or 30)

I would like to encourage youth (and parents) to find a Thursday to work at Open Table, a community dinner and food pantry operating out of First Parish. Open Table really needs youth to help with clean-up from 6 – 7 p.m. on Thursdays. It's a rewarding experience to help those directly in your community and youth can earn community service credit as well. Please contact Mary-Wren if you can do this.

Mark your calendars now — our Winter Retreat will be January 25 to 27— right after finals so we'll be ready to blow off some steam!

As always, I welcome calls or e-mails. May your December be full of joy!

—*Mary-Wren vanderWilden*

## Membership Corner

### THE PHOTO DIRECTORY IS COMING!

We hope you will sign up to have your photograph taken for our new pictorial directory. You can sign up in the Parish Hall during coffee hour or in the hall outside the office during the week. Or, online registration is possible by visiting the First Parish website at [firstparish.org](http://firstparish.org), and clicking the link under the benediction on the home page. We welcome all members and friends to have their photos taken. For inclusion in the directory, a pledge in the last year is appreciated. Each family or individual who has a photo taken will receive one free 8 x 10 color photograph plus a free directory.

### AFFINITY GROUPS

Are you looking to be part of a small group in this large church? Consider becoming a member of an Affinity Group. There are 12 ongoing groups. If you want to start a new group, please consider being the contact person. Stop by the Affinity Groups table at coffee hours on December 16. To join a group, sign up at the table or contact **Anita Chase** at [anichase123@yahoo.com](mailto:anichase123@yahoo.com) or **Linda Benua**.

### RE NEWS continued from page 8

**200+ brown paper grocery bags.** If you have any you can donate, please leave them in the coatroom across from the kitchen, or bring them to the workshop, with our thanks!

This event is a cherished tradition and is a great opportunity to have fun working with other wonderful people at First Parish.

### SURPRISE VISITORS, CONTINUED

I think all would agree that Matt Meyer was a big success as our first Surprise Visitor. All had fun exploring the art of drumming and how music can change the way we feel.

December is filled with holiday surprises! On December 16, Elisa Pearmain, author of *Doorways to the Soul*, visits. We will begin in the Sanctuary with a children's message from Ms. Pearmain, and then our 2nd-6th graders will gather in the Chapel for stories and fun.

On December 23, we welcome bellowphonist Leonard Soloman. This one-man band built his own instrument, and he will play a variety of music and rhythms. He welcomes our K-6th graders and any of their parents who wish to join in on the fun.

### OUR LITTLE ANGELS

It is that time of year again! Our little angels will be singing in our worship service on Sunday, December 23. To prepare for this joyous event, **Sue Beck** will be helping our 3- to 6-year-olds learn the traditional song *This Little Light of Mine* on Sunday, December 16. Thank you, Sue, for once again leading our youngest in song.

### RE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE FOR '07-'08 RE

Workshop Rotation #3: Thursday, December 6, 7:30–9:30 p.m.

Caregiving, Story Play and Spirit Play Rotation Terms 4 & 5:  
Tuesday, February 5, at 7:30 p.m.

Workshop Rotation #4: Wednesday, February 6, 7:30–9:30  
*Please note: This is a new date!*

Coming of Age Mentor Orientation, 8th Grade:  
Sunday, February 10, 2:00–6:30 p.m.

## Women's News

### FIRST PARISH WOMEN'S RETREATS 2008

Friday p.m., January 25, to Sunday afternoon, January 27; or Friday p.m., February 1, to Sunday afternoon, February 3.

**Juggling** — it's one of the most-used metaphors for how we lead our busy lives. We say it all the time, but how often do we have a chance to sit back and think about exactly what all we are juggling — which "balls" we're trying to keep in the air at the same time, and how long we need to keep them all up there?

Come join other women of First Parish for a retreat weekend of talking, companionable silence, singing, eating, walking and having fun together, as we let all those juggled responsibilities rest, however briefly, as we consider our busy lives and trade stories and strategies.

The Women's Retreats are held at Senexet House, a comfortable old vacation home overlooking Roseland Lake in northeastern Connecticut, about an hour and a half from Concord. The bedrooms sleep one to four guests, and the meals are fresh, delicious and prepared by someone else! The two retreats will be as similar as possible, and as unique as any group will be.

If you have questions about the retreats, please call **Barbara Chase** at 978-369-5123 or e-mail at [bbc0117@aol.com](mailto:bbc0117@aol.com); or **Lillian Anderson** at 978-369-1468 or e-mail at [Lillianand@comcast.net](mailto:Lillianand@comcast.net).

### THE WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

The November/December book for the Women's Book Group is *Say the Name: A Survivor's Tale in Prose and Poetry*, by Judith H. Sherman. The evening group will meet Monday, December 3, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning session, on Tuesday, December 4, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both of these discussions. If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group e-mail list, contact **Darien Smith** at [darien@smithquest.com](mailto:darien@smithquest.com). The books and dates for 2008 are as follows:

- January 28 (p.m.), 29 (a.m.)  
*Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie
- February 25 (p.m.), 26 (a.m.)  
*Bobbed Hair and Bathtub Gin: Writers Running Wild in the Twenties*,  
 Marion Meade
- March 24 (p.m.), 25 (a.m.)  
*The Memory Keeper's Daughter*,  
 Kim Edwards
- April 28 (p.m.), 29 (a.m.)  
*One Thousand White Women*, Jim Fergus
- May 19 (p.m.), 20 (a.m.)  
*The Year of Magical Thinking*, Joan Didion

### WRIGHT TAVERN PUBLICIST WANTED

Volunteer staff position. PR, marketing, outreach and local media. Perfect for someone either leaving or interested in reentering the job market. Contact **Mary Elizabeth Wheeler**, director, at 978-369-9602 or [FPTavern@aol.com](mailto:FPTavern@aol.com).

**PARISH NOTES** continued from page 3

### TRANSYLVANIA PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE (PCC) UPDATE

After the wonderful November 11 choir concert and reception celebrating last summer's five separate travels to Transylvania (photos at <http://firstparish.org/photos>), including a total of 77 first parishioners, the PCC now turns its focus on new programs for broadening and deepening our relationships with our friends in Keresztúr.

**Pilgrimages:** While working on a long-term approach for regular future visits in both directions, we are focusing on two in 2008. The first is a smaller, multi-generational work trip to Keresztúr in the summer of 2008. The second is hosting a delegation from Keresztúr, culminating with the celebration of their thanksgiving with us on September 28.

**Financial Assistance:** In addition to continuing to support our ongoing programs, we are investigating the needs for financial assistance for the considerable renovations to the multiple buildings that the Romanian government has finally given back to the Unitarians, after decades of neglect and abuse.

**Student Sponsorship:** Thanks to **Sue Beck** and **Ivan Kristoffy**, all 51 students have sponsorship for the 2007-2008 academic year; one to the middle school, 37 to the Unitarian high school, and 13 to colleges and universities.

**Governance:** We are reorganizing the PCC into small initiative-focused subgroups directed by a core group cochaired by **Lillian Anderson** and **Rodger Mattlage**. If you are interested in participating please contact us. Minden jót! (Best wishes!) —**Lillian** and **Rodger**

## Community News

### BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

Casey Family Services is seeking parents to provide a family for children, ages 10 to 15 and youth in foster care. For more information, please call Francyne Fuller at 800-883-8836.

## December 2007 Calendar

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

### Every Week...

<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 p.m. (not 12/18 or 12/25)
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. (not 12/25)
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
Bell Choir	Wednesday	1:00
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:00
<i>Restorative Yoga</i>	Wednesday	5:30 p.m. (not 12/26)
<i>Kripalu Yoga</i>	Wednesday	7:30 p.m. (not 12/26)
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:30 a.m. (not 12/20 or 12/27)
<i>The Art of Raga</i>	Thursday	7:00 (not 12/20 or 12/27)
<i>Tibetan Buddhism</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.
Men's Group	Saturday	7:30
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 (not 12/23 or 12/30)

Sat Dec 1	9:00	Secret Santa Delivery	Fri Dec 14	11:30	<i>T'ai Ji</i>
	1:30	Children's Crafts Workshop		7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing: Caroling</i>
Sun Dec 2	12:30	All-Parish Meeting	Sat Dec 15	9:00	Trustees Meeting
	4:00	Coming of Age		9:00	Adult Choir and Orchestra Rehearsal
	4:00	Our Whole Lives		2:00	Christmas Decorating in the Sanctuary
	7:00	Sarasa Concert	Sun Dec 16	10:30	Ushers Meeting, between the services
Mon Dec 3	7:00	Jericho Road Board Meeting		2:00	Our Whole Lives
	7:30	Religious Education Council Meeting		4:00	Coming of Age
	7:30	Women's Book Group		7:00	Honor All Beings Affinity Group
Tue Dec 4	9:00	WPA Board Meeting	Tue Dec 18	10:00	Candle Elves
	9:30	Women's Book Group		7:00	Amnesty International
	7:30	Special Events Committee		7:00	Denominational Affairs
Wed Dec 5	12:15	<i>Listening for God</i>	Wed Dec 19	9:15	Newsletter Mailing
	7:00	Youth Advisory Committee Meeting	Fri Dec 21	7:30	Solstice Celebration
	7:00	<i>Stress Reduction Drop-In</i>	Mon Dec 24		Holiday—Office Closed
Thu Dec 6	7:30	Workshop Rotation Meeting		4:00	Christmas Eve with Children's Choirs
Fri Dec 7	6:30	Coming of Age Lock-In		5:30	Christmas Eve with Gospel Choir
Sat Dec 8	9:00	Photo Club		7:00	Christmas Eve with Bell Choir
Sun Dec 9	4:00	Our Whole Lives		9:00	Christmas Eve with Adult Choir
	7:00	Social Action Community Board Meeting	Tue Dec 25		Holiday—Office Closed
Mon Dec 10	12:00	Newsletter Deadline	Fri Dec 28	8:00	Scottish Dancers
	7:00	Standing Committee (off-site)	Sun Dec 30	11:00	Single Worship Service
Tue Dec 11	3:00	WPA Christmas Tea	Tue Jan 1		Holiday—Office Closed
Thu Dec 13	10:00	<i>InterPlay</i>			



**First Parish in Concord**

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST**

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Concord, MA 01742

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**DECEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER**

The **January Newsletter deadline** is **Monday, December 10**, at noon.  
The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, December 19.  
**News items should be limited to 100 words.**

**Don't Miss...**

**ALL-PARISH MEETING  
ON THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

*Sunday, December 2*

*12:30 p.m.*

**First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
Staff**

- Gary E. Smith**, Senior Minister
- Jenny M. Rankin**, Minister
- Margie King Saphier**, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care
- Rebecca M. Blodgett**, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care
  
- Pam Howell**, Director of Religious Education
- Jane Barnes**, Religious Education Administrator
- Liz Davis-Chaffin**, Workshop Rotation Coordinator
- Carol Duane**, Program Coordinator for Young Children
- Mary-Wren vanderWilden**, Youth Program Director
  
- Elizabeth Norton**, Music Director
- Eric Huenneke**, Organist
- Martha Goodman**, Handbell Choir Director
- Judy Burrows**, Children's Choir Director
- Anderson Manuel**, Music/RE Associate
  
- Mary Elizabeth Wheeler**, Wright Tavern Center Director
- Dan Holin**, Jericho Road Executive Director
- Leslie Koplw**, Assistant to Executive Director, Jericho Road
- Rebecca Johnson**, Jericho Road Ministerial Intern
  
- A. Bigay**, Assistant to the Ministers
- Douglas Baker**, Sacristan and Curator
- Jane Johnson**, Office Manager
- Peggy Gallo**, Financial Secretary and Collector
- Caroline McCloy**, Director of Member Services
- Faith Bade**, Social Action Associate
- Kate Keleher**, Newsletter Editor
- Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson**, Newsletter Staff

**WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION**

The First Parish Women's Circle invites everyone to a celebration of the Winter Solstice on Friday, December 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parlor. Put on some festive, comfortable clothing — anything sparkly and/or green would be great — and come join friends and neighbors by the hearth.

We'll tell stories, sing songs, enjoy the longest night, and observe the magic of the turning season — complete with wonderful music and seasonal treats. This celebration is planned to include all ages, in the tradition of a village gathering. Welcome, Yule!

**Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 to 3:00**  
**Phone: 978-369-9602**  
**Fax: 978-369-8701**  
**E-Mail: [fpconcord@aol.com](mailto:fpconcord@aol.com)**  
**Website: [firstparish.org](http://firstparish.org)**

**Ministers' E-Mail:**  
**Gary E. Smith: [garyesmith@firstparish.org](mailto:garyesmith@firstparish.org)**  
**Jenny M. Rankin: [revjenny@comcast.net](mailto:revjenny@comcast.net)**  
**Margie King Saphier: [mksaphier@comcast.net](mailto:mksaphier@comcast.net)**