



First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

The Meeting House News

REVeries

Dear Friends,

It was wonderful to see so many of you at Opening Sunday at Kerem Shalom. Gary preached on “exile,” the choir sang *By the Rivers of Babylon*,” and one person commented, as they were leaving, that they had parked their car in Babylon! Yes, it is a teensy weensy bit inconvenient, but we thank you for hanging in there and for showing up.

Although many things are different, many things are the same. We still welcome your children for Religious Education on Sunday morning, and your teenagers for youth group at night. We still reach out to one another in times of crisis or transition. You help us out when you let one of the ministers know of a pastoral need. We are still a congregation that trains new ministers, and you have welcomed **Angela Herrera** graciously. We still learn together. We welcome special guest Robert Richardson this month with lectures on William James and Emerson. (He is the college professor whose class everybody *had* to take; don’t miss it.) Gary still joins with some of you to “listen for God,” and I am teaching Transcendentalism again. We are blessed with a spiritual renewal center that brings us some of our old favorites as well as new opportunities to stretch and grow.

We hope that there will be a way this community called First Parish can strengthen your spirit this year. Yes, we are under construction; yes, things are different; and yes, there will be things we miss. No point in denying it. We need as much humor, patience and flexibility as we can muster. I thank the staff, who have had so much added to their plate, and think especially of those crammed into the Parlor (come and see!). Yet I think about those Israelites out there in the wilderness, wandering around, grumbling, as they were sent one test after another. Wherever they went, they took their ark of the covenant with them. When they set up the Tabernacle, they could worship. Wherever they were, they were home. They had their heart, their center, their stillpoint in whatever storm came.

My hope for each one of us is that we can, as one person said to me yesterday, “find the stillness” in the midst of the busyness of our own lives, in the midst of this sometimes-crazy transition year upon which we are so bravely embarking. It remains an honor and a delight for me to be part of a faith community that holds itself to a high standard, that tries to do so much, for one another and for the wider world. See you at Kerem Shalom!

—*Jenny Rankin*

Please see page 7 for information about our new monthly series:

GOING DEEPER SPIRITUALLY: Monthly Thematic and Theological Queries for the People of the First Parish in Concord

Sunday Worship Schedule

October 5 at Kerem Shalom

Jenny Rankin, preaching

9:00 – First Parish Choir and Children’s Choir

11:00 – Rosalie Gerut, Cantor at Kerem Shalom and Children’s Choir

October 12 at Kerem Shalom

Angela Herrera, preaching

9:00 – Pamela Schweppe, soprano

11:00 – First Parish Choir

October 19 at Kerem Shalom

Gary Smith

and Rob Richardson, preaching

9:00 – First Parish Choir

11:00 – Youth Gospel Choir

October 26 at Fenn School

Jenny Rankin, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir and Guests

Please refer to the Construction Update on page 7 for important information about both the ongoing Church construction and ways to stay connected in this time of construction and change.

Our Meeting House Family

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There are two inserts with this newsletter:

- Wright Tavern Center schedule
- Wright Tavern Center course descriptions

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, Oct. 13	Wednesday, Oct. 22
Monday, Nov. 10	Wednesday, Nov. 19
Monday, Dec. 8	Wednesday, Dec. 17

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

On September 20, **Gary Smith** officiated at a memorial service at First Parish in Lincoln for longtime member **Jean Harwood**, who died in California on August 6. Bill Winter, 56-year-old brother of **Anna Winter Rasmussen** and **Susan Frommer**, was stricken suddenly at his Wayland home on August 9 and died August 17; a memorial service was held at the Martha Mary Chapel in Sudbury on August 25. **Pam Schweppe** and her family have suffered yet another loss with the August 23rd death of her father, Peter Smith, following a long illness; a memorial service was held at the Trinitarian Congregational Church on September 5. **Mark Hazel**, age forty-six, husband of **Sarah Hazel** and father of young **Chloe** and **Gwen**, died at home in Concord on August 30 while under hospice care; **Margie King Saphier** officiated at his Kerem Shalom memorial service on September 7.

Former parishioner **Carol Novak** died on September 3 while hospitalized for lung disease; **Becky Blodgett** represented First Parish at a memorial celebration of Carol's life, held September 7 at the New View Community House at the Half Moon Hill community in Acton. Maria Bade, mother of **Chris Bade** and a Holocaust survivor, died in Concord on September 5; **Jenny Rankin** conducted a service in her honor at the Society of Friends Meetinghouse in Cambridge on September 13. Cathryn Bean, daughter of **Cliff** and **Dorrie Bean**, died at Salem Hospital on September 7 after a long illness; no service is planned, and the family requests privacy. **Beth Norton's** aunt, Helen Henderson McIlwraith, died on September 8 in New Hampshire; "Aunt Honey" had been living with cancer for several years. We remember all these families with deepest sympathy and continue to hold them in our hearts.

Special thoughts go out to **Mary Matheson**, who fell and broke her pelvis in late August; notes would be appreciated at Life Care of Nashoba Valley in Littleton, where she is in rehab. Also to **Dianne Weiss**, who is in New York City with her mother-in-law, Margolith Goldsmith Weiss, now under the care of hospice. And to **Kel Keleher**, whose September 12th gallbladder surgery didn't keep him from Opening Sunday two days later.

We're happy to report two newborns, and send congratulations to the Kemeza and Leopold-Berry families. Liam Robert Kemeza was born to **Charlotte** and **Will Kemeza** on August 14. **Don** and **Dee Leopold** welcomed a grandson on September 9; Quinn Peter Berry was born to their daughter Holly.

Standing Committee Information

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held off-site on Monday evening, October 6. Please look for the monthly minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log in).

Sunday Forums

Because of the ongoing renovations, Forums have been suspended. We hope to schedule programs for late fall. Please call **Charles Lowell** or **Robert Hilsinger** about future topics.

From the Intern Minister

Greetings! This summer I had a chance to get to know many of you when I led worship throughout much of July. On homecoming Sunday I had the pleasure of meeting many more, and let me say I have never heard the word “welcome” so many times! What a warm community First Parish is. I am thrilled to be with you as your student intern minister.

Some of you met my family over the summer, and heard a little about who I am and where I’m from. For those who were away, I’ll include a little introduction here.

I am originally from Oregon, where I attended Marylhurst University, earning a bachelor’s degree in Religion with a certificate in Mediation and Conflict Resolution in 2005. Along with serving as a board director for my home church in Salem, Oregon, I also worked as a caregiver for the elderly and as a birth doula trained at Seattle Midwifery School. It was in this context of service, study, and caring for others that I heard the call to UU ministry.

With my husband and two children (Olivia, 12, and Mauricio, 9) in tow, I moved to Cambridge in 2005 to attend Harvard Divinity School. I am now one semester away from completing my degree, and will be seeing the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (the final step before ordination) in December 2009.

This important moment in First Parish’s history, with its challenges, promise and vision, is a wonderful opportunity as a teaching congregation. It is also a good time for ministering to each other. It is my hope that this internship makes the most of both. I look forward to our year together.

In faith,

Angela Herrera

Wright Tavern Center

Dear First Parish Community,

Our Fall 2008 semester is under way and we have some great news!

Wright Tavern Center and the adult religious education program at Kerem Shalom are cosponsoring several courses, which will greatly ease the challenges of limited teaching space this fall. The Journeys of Faith program at First Parish in Weston is also cosponsoring several programs. Additional programs will be held off-site, so check for course locations.

Our other big news is that we finally have online registration for selected courses. We have established a relationship with a local company specializing in online registration for nonprofit organizations. We are very excited to offer this service and hope that it will streamline



for *Spiritual Renewal*

WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER continued on page 4

Parish Notes

BUDDHIST GROUP MEETING PLACE CHANGE

The Buddhist Group that has been meeting weekly in the Chapel for the last seven years as part of Wright Tavern is meeting this year across the Mill Dam in the Trinitarian Congregational Church at 54 Walden Street. The evening session has changed days to 7:30-9:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, and the morning group still meets from 9:30-11:00 a.m. on Wednesdays. These free weekly talks are open to all. Call **Bill Seaver** at 978-369-7318 for more information.

BELIEFS QUILT NOTE CARDS FOR SALE

Judy Dembsey has kindly consented to let us put her World Systems of Beliefs quilt on a 4x6 note card. The front features a color photo of the quilt; the back has an explanation of the symbols. A package of 8 cards (blank inside) with envelopes is \$12.00. All proceeds go to the First Parish operating budget. Contact **Sue Beck**, sbeck345@comcast.net or 978-369-8445 to order.

ASSOCIATION SUNDAY IS COMING!

Join thousands of Unitarian Universalists in affirming our common bonds and purposes on the second annual Association Sunday on October 12. Our liberal faith is needed to help heal our wounded world, and now is the time to pool our resources to help “Grow Our Spirit,” through new programs for lay theological education and excellence in ministry.

Funds raised by Association Sunday’s collection will be distributed by the Unitarian Universalist Association as part of President Sinkford’s five-year plan to “Grow Our Faith.” Fifty percent of the money raised will be used as grants to congregations, districts and seminaries to create new programs for lay theological education and spiritual deepening. The other 50 percent will be divided equally among our ministers’ association’s new CENTER programs for continuing education to promote excellence in ministry, scholarships for promising students preparing for our ministry, and the Diversity in Ministry Team’s initiative to support our ministers of color. Come ready to give generously to help grow our spirit and faith; we are better together!

WPA LUNCHEON MEETING—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

Election Day is almost here and we are all anxiously wondering who the next President of the United States will be. Join us for lunch and a discussion led by **Rick Frese**, Associate Professor of Government at Bentley College. Using tracking methods developed with his students, Rick will engage us in an interesting, interactive exercise that attempts to predict the election results. A sandwich and dessert buffet will be served. All women and men are welcome. Place: Concord Art Association. Time: 12:30 p.m. Charge: Eight Dollars. For reservations, contact the church office or **Dian Pekin** at pekinc@comcast.net by October 23.

Money Matters

On Monday mornings, the staff gathers for one-half hour and we share a highlight of what's coming up for our area that week. I often have trouble coming up with one thing that might summarize what I'll be up to. The scope of this job is broad (something I love about it), and sometimes very deep in detail (filling out forms for the government — not so much love there). In any given week, I will work in all of these areas:

Capital Campaign: pledging, construction, loan agreement, logistics, personnel, budget

Annual Campaign: pledging, planning, monitoring payments

Annual Budget: reporting, planning, analysis

Executive Team: strategy, decision making, work planning, problem solving

Operations: insurance, legal matters, interface with the Commonwealth (more frequent than you might think!), infrastructure planning

There are other things too, like working with the wonderful Human Resources Committee, who this year have offered to revamp our personnel policies manual; and attending the Standing Committee monthly meeting. This position does not suffer from a lack of diversity in tasks!

One other note: For those of you who are interested, the monthly financial report is available in hard copy from the Business Office, after it has been approved by the Standing Committee.

—Melissa Perdue Gallo

WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER continued from page 3

the registration process and make our programs available to more people within our own community while reaching out to the greater community. We are in an experimental stage and welcome your feedback at FPTavern@aol.com.

A reminder to current and potential presenters: the deadline for proposals, including ongoing course dates, is October 15, 2008, for the Winter/Spring 2009 catalogue. Please consider options for off-site teaching spaces along with your proposals.

As always, your gifts of time and talent are always welcome. Please let me know if there is any way we can further serve your needs for spiritual growth and renewal.

With kind regards,

Mary Elizabeth Wheeler

Director

Pastoral Care News

October is a time for introspection, as well as looking back. The leaves are falling; the light is fading, reminding us that life is finite and precious. Rev. Forrest Church writes in *Death and Love: My Journey through the Valley of the Shadow*, "Religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die. Knowing we must die, we question what life means." Forrest goes on to say, "The goal of life is to live in such a way that our lives will prove worth dying for." Freely giving love to others makes life worth living for, as well as dying for. Forrest also believes that "love given away lives on forever."

Giving love away is being in right relationship with one self, with one another, and with all that is. The Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are about being in right relationship by atoning for one's sins (or withholding one's love) against oneself, others and God. Divali, or the Festival of Lights, marks the Hindu, Sikh and Jain New Year and is celebrated throughout the Indian sub-continent, Europe and North America. In addition to welcoming the New Year, Divali focuses on hope, friendship and goodwill, or being in right relationship.

At First Parish, as we worship at Kerem Shalom, we are called to be in right relationship with one another in new ways. In addition to being sensitive to the fact that our large congregation adds a lot more wear and tear on their beautiful new sanctuary, we also need to be sensitive to our own members who need to park near the synagogue. Please plan on arriving early so you have plenty of time to let your family off at the synagogue entrance, to park your car on Elm Street and to walk back in time for the service. A word of caution: As cars leave Route 2 and turn right onto Elm Street, they are often driving very fast and are not expecting to meet traffic or pedestrians turning into the Kerem Shalom driveway.

If you are interested in joining a covenant group, also known as Small Group Ministry, call me or talk to me at coffee hour. I am the one walking around with a yellow hard hat, which says, "Ask me about Covenant Groups!" Joining a Covenant Group is another way of cultivating being in right relationship.

In faith,

—Margie King Saphier

Membership Corner

Thank you to all First Parish members for your smiles and patience during our temporary uprooting. Change is a test of will and flexibility. I am continually impressed by our membership and tenacious staff members, who have truly proved their strength through this transition. Our time at Kerem Shalom has been valuable in sharpening our senses and strengthening community. Many of you attended summer services and it was wonderful to see those of you we missed over the summer at Opening Sunday. Our full house on Opening Sunday reminds us that “home” is not defined as a building, but rather is where we gather together.

We are thankful to be sharing Kerem Shalom’s space. During our time in our transitional space, there are bound to be ways that our temporary “home” does not fit the same as the home we are used to. I challenge you to be a part of the solution. This may mean offering to assist an older member from the parking lot into the service, giving up your seat as you are able when we fill the worship room, or volunteering to help lead a team of donors for food at coffee hour.

Thank you to **Caroline McCloy**, **Marilyn Lowitt** and **Cynthia Ellis** for offering food for Opening Sunday. In so many ways, learning to share another space is an opportunity to learn about our community and about its members.

The New U, a three-part course in understanding Unitarian Universalism and First Parish will be offered this fall on October 26, November 2, and November 9, from 4 to 6 p.m. This course is one of the steps to becoming a member at First Parish. Please contact the First Parish office to register.

Please contact me, or one of the Membership Committee members, if you would like to organize a group to host a coffee hour or if you are interested in being on the committee. You can reach me at memberfp@aol.com or 978-369-9602, ext. 450. You can also visit our Newcomers Table at coffee hour following either service.

—*Abby White*

MUSings

“Exile” was our community’s spiritual theme last month — an appropriate metaphor as we continue to worship away from our church home in this time of transition. In my planning during September and in my personal reflections as we continue to live the day-to-day reality of this construction period, I am drawn back to the words of Psalm 137, the song of a people in exile:

*On the willows there
We hung up our harps
For there our captors
Asked us for songs
And our tormentors, asked for mirth, saying
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?*

The songs of the captive Israelites were an essential part of their identity in exile. They were demeaned by their captors’ insistence that they sing these holy songs as mere entertainment. What a poignant reminder of the importance of music to a culture and a community of faith.



Our worship at Kerem Shalom has been blessed by some wonderful congregational singing. Like the generous congregation that is hosting us, the intimate, resonant sanctuary seems to embrace us and encourage us to sing the songs of our faith. It is easy to hear one another and feel a part of the whole. How can we keep from singing!

Recently, the First Parish staff gathered to sing hymn number 1020, Woyaya, at the beginning of a meeting:

*We are going, heaven knows where we are going, but we know within.
And we will get there, heaven knows how we will get there,
but we know we will.
It will be hard, we know, and the road will be muddy and rough,
But we’ll get there, heaven knows how we will get there,
but we know we will.*

This song’s resonance with our current situation is obvious! But I was also struck by the spirit in that room as we raised our voices together in song. Our singing strengthened us and encouraged us to face our daily challenges with faith, optimism and humor.

I feel this when I sing with the choir each Wednesday; when we sing as a congregation each Sunday; when we surround one another in times of sadness or in joy, providing sustenance with the sound of our voices.

*What though the tempest ’round me roars, I know the truth, it liveth.
What though the darkness ’round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I’m clinging,
Since love prevails in heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing?*

May we continue to be sustained by the songs of our faith in the weeks and months ahead.

Blessings,

—*Beth Norton*

Social Action Community News and Events

During this time of displacement from our physical home at First Parish, there will be no available space for any tables at coffee hour. This particularly impacts the many events and programs organized by SAC. I am asking all First Parish members to take the time to continue to support and participate as they have in the past — as these programs still exist and still need your help. Equally



important is the opportunity these programs give to our members to gather together,

bond, and create a community. Additionally, all SAC programs should plan on meeting off-site for the time being. I am available to help find alternative spaces for events and meetings. Please contact me with your causes and concerns at FBade@firstparish.org.

Thanks!

—*Faith Bade*

Social Action Program Director

JOIN PAM HOWELL, JENNY RANKIN AND OTHER FIRST PARISH STAFF ON THE SEPTEMBER 28 JERICHO ROAD RIDE

There is still time to join us for the Jericho Road Ride, a family-friendly bike-a-thon from Concord to Lowell with three route options (10 mile, 20 mile, and 40 mile) starting at First Parish on Sunday, September 28. Forty-milers launch at 11 a.m., 10- and 20-milers launch at noon; all riders and families will celebrate at the finish line with food, prizes and entertainment. Adults must raise a minimum of \$175; children 14 and under raise \$50 to participate. All 14 and under riders are automatically entered in a raffle to win a brand new Trek bike. Join us to raise money to support Jericho Road's services to Lowell nonprofits. If you can't ride, perhaps you can support someone who will be riding. See jerichoroadproject.org for more details or to register.

EL SALVADOR YOUTH SERVICE DEADLINE AND MEETING

The final application deadline and next deposit due date for the El Salvador Youth Service Trip in April 2009 is October 15. All accepted youth should plan on attending the first planning meeting on Monday evening, October 27, at a place to be determined. Any questions? Please contact **Faith Bade** at Fbade@firstparish.org or lay leader **Jim Reynolds** at jim.reynolds@alumni.princeton.edu.

DEADLINE FOR SAC GRANT PROPOSALS IS OCTOBER 17

Please check the First Parish website for details on grant guidelines and submissions. The grant program is intended to help members of First Parish to go out into the world. The Social Action Grants Committee will be accepting grant applications through Friday, October 17. Feel free to contact **Alane Wallis** at awallis@nutter.com or 978-369-1114 with any questions.

CONCORD PRISON OUTREACH LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Concord Prison Outreach is looking for volunteers at both of the Concord prisons, known as MCI (Medium Security Prison) and NCC (Northeastern Correctional Center). There are tutoring opportunities at the NCC school, childcare in the early afternoon at the Kids Corner at MCI, and delivering library books to NCC. All volunteers will be required to have an orientation. For more information, call **Linda Reynolds**, 978-371-0562, or Lenore James, 978-369-1430.

JOIN JENNY RANKIN AND OTHER PARISHIONERS AT THE 2008 CONCORD CROP WALK FOR THE HUNGRY

The Crop Walk will take place on Sunday, October 19; registration at 1:30 p.m., step-off at 2:15 p.m., at Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord. This walk raises funds for Church World Service to use for disaster relief and development projects around the globe, and also for seven local area food pantries and suppers. **Jenny Rankin** will be walking, and invites others to join her; this is a great event for the whole family. You may pick up sponsor forms or make a donation to sponsor Jenny at coffee hour; look for the person wearing the Crop Walk sandwich board. Online pledging is available, see concordcrop.org to find out how to join the First Parish team, or to sponsor Jenny or other team members.

FIRST PARISH YOUTH GET READY FOR NEW ORLEANS APRIL 2009

We will again offer a youth service trip to New Orleans in April 2009, partnered with Gulf Coast Works. The first informational meeting is on Sunday, November 2, at 7 p.m. at a place to be determined. Stay tuned. Contact **Faith Bade** at Fbade@firstparish.org with any questions prior to the meeting.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIAL ACTION AT FIRST PARISH

The First Parish Social Action Community (SAC) helps parishioners connect with a diverse and exciting range of social action projects. To find out more about what is going on, join our e-mail list by sending a blank e-mail to SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org; see our website, www.firstparish.org/cms/content/view/97/70/; or e-mail our Social Action Associate **Faith Bade** at Fbade@firstparish.org.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE!

The building project continues to make progress. The old bell and millstone are now in prominent places on the front lawn, the RE wing is beginning to take shape, and there is confidence in getting us back in to the Sanctuary for worship before the end of 2008! To all of you who have helped with your contributions of time or money — thank you. We are bringing the dream alive! The contributions are making such a difference to our community, now and for generations to come. There is more to do and more contributions are required to make it to the finish line, so please consider giving more if you can. If you haven't contributed yet, please consider contributing now — just go by the First Parish building and you can see how the money and effort of our congregation is being put to such good use! We would love to have 100% participation from the congregation — \$2 or \$200,000 — it all helps us reach our goal.

To help us reach you with information on our community, our progress and uses of your contributions, please ensure you are signed up for FP Announce and RE Announce e-mails. Now more than ever, it's important we stay connected! One of the ways that the ministers and staff communicate with the congregation is by e-mail lists called "FP Announce" and "RE Announce" (for families with kids in our religious education program). If you are not currently on one of these list serves, you may be missing important info from First Parish. Especially during this time of construction and transition, we really want to stay connected. Please follow these instructions to sign up: Go to the First Parish website, firstparish.org, and just under the wide top bar, click on <About First Parish>, then click on <E-mail list subscriptions>, and follow the directions there to register your e-mail on <First Parish Announce> and/or <First Parish Religious Education Announce>.

Going Deeper Spiritually

Monthly Thematic and Theological Queries
for the People of the First Parish in Concord

SERIES II, 2008-2009

Note: *Following the lead of All Souls Unitarian in Tulsa, Unity Church in St. Paul and the First Parish in Weston, we continue this month a series of reflections, each month focusing on a particular theological concept. Worship during the month will include at least one Sunday where this concept is explored. We hope the suggested topic for the month will find its way into our small group gatherings and into our conversations, even at home.*

October 2008: **REPENTANCE** — For some of us, depending on our religious background, repentance can be a "heavy" word. But we chose it to honor wisdom from the Jewish High Holy Days and because we think it has a hopeful, human message.

The Hebrew word for repentance is *teshuva* and it means "turning." These ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are a time to turn — turn back toward the kind of life you really want to be living but are not. Turn back toward your true self, toward others, toward God.

Repentance here is not useless, agonizing self-flagellation. *Teshuva* is something we *do*. It is positive, constructive, practical. We admit we're human, that we make mistakes, and we try to make amends, reaching out to people we have hurt. These are the days to pick up the phone, send a card, wipe the slate clean, start the new year fresh.

In order to repent, we first have to wake up. Think about how we are living. Or not living. Reflect on our lives.

Awake from your slumbers, ye who have fallen asleep in life and reflect on your deeds. Remember your Creator. Be not one of those who miss reality in the pursuit of shadows, and waste their years in seeking after vain things which neither profit nor save. Look well to your souls and improve your character.
—Maimonides

Only that day dawns to which we are awake. — Thoreau, *Walden*

This is what repentance means: discovering that you have more to you than you dreamt or know, becoming bored with being only a quarter of what you are and therefore taking the risk of surrendering to the whole, and thus finding the abundant life. — H. A. Wilkins

My friend says she doesn't want to go to temple on Yom Kippur because it's all about guilt. No, I tell her. Since Rosh Hashanah, I've been on a journey, fasting, prayer, trying to find a new self to begin a new year. It's a chance for self-examination, for reconciliation. God cleanses us of our burden of guilt and gives us a new year. The High Holy Days, to me, are a gift.

— Ellen Kushner, host, "Sound and Spirit" radio program on WGBH.

Questions:

- Are there ways in which you have "fallen asleep"? What would help you wake up?
- Are there things you have done or not done in the last year (week, month) that make you want to say "I'm sorry." Name three.
- Who are the people in your life whom you need to forgive? Whom you need to ask to forgive you?

Reflection and RE News

At the time of this writing, we have just finished our first service at Kerem Shalom. Much had gone into planning this worship service, and I am happy to report that none of my dreams came true. It is strange how fear of the unknown can seep fiendishly into our night visions.

Over the next few weeks we will be trying new ways to celebrate religious education together. We will be working with trees and learning how to be social activists from some of our 6th graders. We will plant daffodils and create banners for the annual Crop Walk. We will be doing things together in both large and small groups. And, most importantly, we will be learning how to support each other in this time of transition.

One of our goals in our religious education program is to provide our children with a centering and spiritual experience through story, song, dance and reflection. We want our children to develop a deep connection to themselves and with our religious tradition. We also want our children to grow up spiritually alive, committed to engaging with the world in a just and loving way. As parents, you know you are the primary teacher for your children. They look to see what you think is important and the choices you make with your time and resources. When you make a commitment to First Parish, you are choosing to be in community with others who feel similarly about what it means to live a good life. The specifics of our individual beliefs may differ, but the principles that define how we choose to engage with the world are the same: the words of our Benediction.

We have all heard that it is not what you say, but what you do. I think it is actually both: what you say and what you do. And this is just one of the reasons I connect with Unitarian Universalism. How about you?

— Pam Howell

OCTOBER'S SURPRISE VISITOR

Because of the transition, we will be doing the Surprise Visitor event a little differently in October. Our congregation will be guests at the Fenn School on October 26. This is also the great Hindu festival of Divali. We are so pleased to be celebrating this festival with song, dance and food. It is sure to be a lively service and just another way to experience our Surprise Visitor program. We do hope you will join us for this important celebration.

OCTOBER RE CALENDAR

Sun., Oct. 5	Regular RE for Babies–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. 7th Grade Art in Action, Gaining Ground, 2–5 p.m. 8th Grade Drama, 51 Walden, 3–5 p.m. 9th Grade Coming of Age, Boston, 1:00–4:30 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 12	Regular RE for Babies–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. No 7th Grade Art in Action No 8th Grade Drama No 9th Grade Coming of Age
Fri., Oct. 17-19	9th Grade Coming of Age, Camp Takodah 5:30 p.m. departure, 2:00 p.m. return
Sun., Oct. 19	Regular RE for Babies–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. 7th Grade Art in Action, Wright Tavern, 2–3 p.m. 8th Grade Drama, 51 Walden, 3–5 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 26	Regular RE for Babies–4 years at Fenn School, 9 and 11 a.m. Divali Celebration, 2nd–6th Grade, Intergenerational at Fenn School 7th Grade Art in Action, Wright Tavern, 2–3 p.m. 8th Grade Drama, 51 Walden, 4–6 p.m.

ALL-RE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE: BABIES TO 9TH GRADE

These orientations are for the teachers for each of the programs.

ORIENTATION SCHEDULE FOR BABIES TO 6TH GRADE TEACHERS IN THE WRIGHT TAVERN

- 2nd–6th Grades Holiday Term #2:
Thursday, October 30, 7:30–9:30 p.m.
- 2nd–6th Grades Winter Term #3:
Thursday, January 15, 7:30–9:30 p.m.
- Babies–1st Grade, Terms 3, 4 and 5:
Thursday, February 5, 7:30–8:30 p.m.
- 2nd–6th Grades Spring Term #4:
Thursday, March 12, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

During each orientation, we will cover safety and first-aid information, review classroom rituals, obtain “substitution” lists and allow time for you to meet with your term’s teachers.

ORIENTATION SCHEDULE FOR 7TH AND 8TH GRADE TEACHERS

- 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Spring Term:
Wednesday, December 17, 7:30 p.m.
- 8th Grade Our Whole Lives (OWL), Winter Term,
Wednesday, November 13, 7:30 p.m.

Senior Youth News

We are off to a terrific start, thanks to the hard work of our youth leaders! We spent the month of September building community by getting to know each other and developing trust. A big part of that experience was our annual fall retreat, where the youth love to “chill out” before the craziness of fall sets in. This year we had the added bonus of sharing that experience with some of the Transylvanian visitors, who joined us on the retreat.

Jeanine Calabria and I have been working all summer to organize our fourth Youth Pilgrimage to Transylvania for July 2009. It is a life-changing experience for our youth to help others, make deep connections with our Transylvanian friends, and learn about themselves in new and unexpected ways. Information and applications for youth and adult chaperones can be found on the First Parish website and are due October 6.

This year we are offering Senior High OWL (Our Whole Lives), a popular class for 10th to 12th graders that meets for four Monday nights and one Friday night lock-in to discuss different aspects of high school relationships. The class builds on the facts and skills learned in 8th grade OWL by meeting high school age youth where they are with regard to relationships and sexuality. We are lucky to have **Jim Reynolds** and **Jan Bergstrom** as teachers. Applications can be found on the website and are due October 20.

Look in the mail for the monthly youth newsletter, *What's the Deal?*, which outlines our Sunday night programs. Our October schedule is:

- October 5: Make Friendship Bracelets
- October 13: (Monday) Snowballs
- October 19: Vespers; bring a reading, music, quote, instrument, etc.
- October 26: Field Trip to Witches Woods, leaving First Parish at 6:00 and returning at 9:00; permission slip is on website

Fall is such a busy, hectic time as we settle into our new routines. The YAC is putting a lot of thought and energy into creating a youth program at First Parish that can be an oasis of peace, a place for youth to feel connected, and a place to grow one's soul in these busy times. As always, call or e-mail me with any ideas, questions or comments.

—*Mary-Wren vanderWilden*

Partner Church Committee

OUR SZÉKELYKERESZTÚR VISITORS

Once again they've come and gone. Together, we sang and ate and toured and laughed. We extended our connections and deepened our friendships while strengthening the foundations for future visits between our two communities.

Without our old “home” on Lexington Road, we had a unique opportunity to explore other venues for our organized events, including Concord Academy, the Concord Masonic Temple and the UU meetinghouses in Belmont, Bedford and Carlisle. We are grateful for their use.

But none of these events, nor our numerous other activities, would have been possible without the efforts of far too many people to mention individually. We are immensely grateful to our planners and coordinators, to the kind host families and munificent donors who underwrote all major expenses (including travel), to our ministers and staff, to those who provided essential support for our many outings. By conservative estimate, this represents well over 100 of you in our First Parish community who extended hands, hearts and homes to give our visitors a warm and loving experience. For more details, see the First Parish Fall Visitors' Gallery.

THE COMING YEAR

After a brief respite to recharge and process what we have learned from this marvelous visit, we PCC-ers will develop our agenda for the remainder of the church year, with a special focus on supporting next summer's 2009 Youth Service Pilgrimage to Keresztúr.

Nagyon Szépen Köszönöm és Minden jót! (Thank You Very Much and Best Wishes!)

Lillian Anderson and **Winslow Pettingell**, PCC Cochairs, and **Rodger Matlage**, Webmaster

GIVE YOUR FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO OUR SEVEN PRINCIPLES

After a two-year study, the UUA Commission on Appraisal has just released a draft of revised Article II — UUA's Principles and Purposes of the Association's bylaws in September 2008. It is seeking input on the draft through October 16, 2008. Please give your response to these changes through an online survey here:



<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gfHqF27tzFiiJiB8eFj7Eg%3d%3d>

If the UUA Board of Trustees approves the text, the Commission will present it at its December meeting; the revised text will be first voted on at the 2009 General Assembly in Salt Lake City. If a majority approves, a final vote will be taken at the 2010 GA in Minneapolis.

UU NEW ENGLAND FALL CONFERENCE — OCTOBER 17–18

The theme of this very important conference is "The Future of Unitarian Universalism," featuring the UUA presidential candidates Rev. Laurel Hallman, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Church, Dallas, Texas; and Rev. Peter Morales, Senior Minister, Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden, Colorado. The conference venue is the DCU Center Arena and Convention Complex, Worcester. Meet the candidates on Friday evening and hear the keynote speeches, and meet with the UUA Board of Trustees on Saturday. For further details, visit the Mass Bay District website, mbduu.org. Contact **Holli Jones-White** if you are interested in attending.

Community News

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE AT KEREM SHALOM OCTOBER 26

A Red Cross blood drive will be held at Kerem Shalom from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, October 26, Kerem Shalom's Mitzvah Day, a day devoted to "Tikkun Olam," repairing the world. More details will follow this month. Please sign up, if you are able, to give the gift of life.

SECOND ANNUAL CONCORD BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

- Sunday, October 5, 2:00 p.m.
- Front lawn of the Emerson Umbrella Center for the Arts, 40 Stow Street, Concord, Mass.

WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

With the upcoming election, the Women's Book Group will be reading *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, by Barack Obama, for the October discussions. The evening session will be Monday, October 27, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning session on Tuesday, October 28, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Please note that due to space limitations during the ongoing construction, the October meetings will be held off-site at the following homes:

Evening Session: October 27 at the home of **Steph Chiha**,
80 Stone Root Lane., Concord

Morning Session: October 28 at the home of **Darien Smith**,
124 Hill Street, Concord

Directions will be sent by e-mail.

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, please contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

Books and Dates for 2008-2009 are as follows:

Dec. 1, 2 *The Maytrees*, by Annie Dillard

Jan. 26, 27 *Water for Elephants: A Novel*, by Sara Gruen

Feb. 23, 24 *The History of Love: A Novel*, by Nicole Krauss

Mar. 30, 31 *The Witch of Portobello*, by Paulo Coelho

Apr. 27, 28 *Grandmother's Secrets: The Ancient Rituals and Healing Powers of Belly Dancing*,
by Rosina-Fawzia B. Al-Raw

May 18, 19 *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver

June (TBD) Potluck and suggestions for next year

Cosponsored by Animals As Intermediaries, the Emerson Umbrella Center for the Arts, Holy Family Parish and First Parish in Concord.

Creatures of all sizes welcome, including farm animals (on leash or enclosed), for a community interfaith blessing, following St. Francis Day.

For further information and directions, please visit www.aai-nature.org, or contact Sophie Wadsworth, sophie@aai-nature.org or 978-369-2585.

Classifieds

APARTMENT NEEDED

Bill Maxwell is looking for a small apartment, 2-3 rooms including kitchenette, in Concord or contiguous towns. Partial rent in kind (I am a professional painter and love to paint) would be ideal. Please contact Bill at wimaxwell@gmail.com, or 978-369-5257.

SEEKING SHORT-TERM HOUSING

Trish and Russ Pratt are seeking a short-term rental or house-sitting opportunity, from mid-October to mid-January. Contact Trish at 978-635-0287 or momentumcoaching.com.

October 2008 Calendar

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

Every Week...

Men's Group	Saturday	7:30 a.m.
Gospel Choir	Sunday	10:00 a.m.
Seventh Grade "Art in Action" Class	Sunday	2:00 p.m. (not 10/5 or 10/12)
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 p.m. (not 10/12)
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m. (First Parish in Weston)
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. (not Oct. 14) (Kerem Shalom)
Bell Choir	Wednesday	1:00 p.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m.
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.

UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE, WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER COURSES WILL BE HELD AT FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD. PLEASE CHECK THE WHITE BOARD IN THE LOWER HALLWAY FOR COURSE LOCATIONS.

Wed Oct 1	6:00	Youth Advisory Committee		Mon Oct 20	7:00	<i>Transcendentalism: The Dreamers and the Dream</i>
Fri Oct 3	11:30	<i>T'ai Ji</i>			7:30	Senior Our Whole Lives (OWL) Orientation
Sun Oct 5	4:00	Ninth Grade RE Class		Tue Oct 21	7:00	<i>Eating with a Conscience (off-site)</i>
Wed Oct 8	7:00	<i>Spirit in Practice (First Parish in Weston)</i>		Wed Oct 22	9:15	Newsletter Mailing
Sat Oct 11	9:00	Photo Club		Thu Oct 23	7:30	2nd-6th Grade RE Orientation
Mon Oct 13	Holiday — Office Closed			Fri Oct 24	7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing</i>
	12:00	Newsletter Deadline		Sun Oct 26	12:30	WPA Luncheon & Discussion (off-site)
	7:00	YRUU			4:00	New U
Tue Oct 14	3:00	<i>Tea and Poetry</i>		Mon Oct 27	7:00	<i>Transcendentalism: The Dreamers and the Dream</i>
Wed Oct 15	9:00	<i>Vegan Cooking (off-site)</i>			7:30	<i>Women's AM/PM Book Group (off-site)</i>
Thu Oct 16	7:00	<i>Emerson: Transcendentalism and Education</i>		Tue Oct 28	9:30	<i>Women's AM/PM Book Group (off-site)</i>
Fri Oct 17	10:00	<i>Emerson on the Creative Process</i>		Wed Oct 29	7:00	<i>Spirit in Practice (First Parish in Weston)</i>
	6:00	<i>In the Maelstrom of American Modernism (Concord Public Library)</i>		Thu Oct 30	7:00	<i>Intimacy as a Spiritual Path</i>
Sun Oct 19	1:30	Crop Walk for the Hungry (off-site)				



First Parish in Concord

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OCTOBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

The November Newsletter deadline is Monday, October 13, at noon.
The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, October 22.
News items should be limited to 100 words.

Don't Miss...

HOLIDAY ARTISANS FAIR

Saturday, November 1
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

At The Concord Armory

**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
Angela Herrera, Ministerial Intern

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
Anderson Manuel, Music/RE Associate
Gail Carey, Children's Choir Director
David Huston, Music Director Emeritus

Mary Elizabeth Wheeler, Wright Tavern Center Director
Dan Holin, Jericho Road Executive Director
Leslie Koplow, Assistant to Executive Director, Jericho Road

A. Bigay, Assistant to the Ministers
Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator
Jane Johnson, Office Manager
Melissa Perdue Gallo, Business Manager
Peggy Gallo, Financial Secretary and Collector
Abby White, Director of Member Services
Faith Bade, Social Action Associate
Kate Keleher, Newsletter Editor
Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson, Newsletter Staff

HOLIDAY ARTISANS FAIR, NOVEMBER 1—NEW VENUE!

Plans are well under way for this year's Holiday Artisans Fair, to be held Saturday, November 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Since the fair will take place at the Concord Armory, we are able to add more artists and artisans selling a wide variety of high quality gift items. Food will be served throughout the day. Bring all your friends to do some great holiday shopping. Entrance fees are \$3 for adults and \$2 for children. There is no charge for children under five years of age. Contact **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net or the church office if you would like to help with this important, fun-filled event.

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 to 3:00
Phone: 978-369-9602
Fax: 978-369-8701
E-Mail: fpconcord@aol.com
Website: firstparish.org

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Margie King Saphier: mksaphier@comcast.net
Angela Herrera: aherrera@hds.harvard.edu