



First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

The Meeting House News

REVeries

Dear Friends,

I could have used this column to beseech each and every one of you to participate generously in this year's Annual Appeal, and to thank all of you who have. It is a tight year. You will hear soon of some of the necessary reductions in expenses we have needed to make just to hold even this year (see the Budget Status Report insert included with this *Meeting House News*). So your participation on the income side matters more than ever.

But I write instead of staff and decision making and some changes that many of you may not have noticed. Several years ago, the Standing Committee challenged Jenny and me to hire a strong business manager and to consider forming an Executive Team consisting of the three of us, moving from a more "corporate" model of having a Head of Staff (me) to a less hierarchical model of a team, with the Business Manager taking on operational matters and leaving Jenny and me to focus on our ministry to you. Once we hired **Melissa Gallo** in early 2008, we began working toward this goal and have now settled into this new model.

The Executive Team meets regularly and often, each of us making decisions in our own areas of expertise but bringing greater policy and strategic questions back to the team. We work closely with the Standing Committee to shape our dreams for First Parish out over the next several years and we report to them on our progress. We are sharing the responsibilities of leading this large and important institution. It is a model for now, recognizing that the three of us have a certain chemistry and combination of talents that make this model work.

At the latest Standing Committee meeting, we were thanked for the work we do together, which we truly appreciated, and I wanted you to know about it. Any of us welcome your comments and questions.

—*Gary Smith*

Please see page 7 for information about our ongoing monthly series.

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

Sunday Worship Schedule

May 3

Gary Smith, preaching
9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir and Guests

Missa Gaia – Paul Winter

May 10

Gary Smith, preaching
9:00 – First Parish Handbell Choir
11:00 – First Parish Choir

May 17

Jenny Rankin, preaching
9:00 – Gospel Choir
11:00 – First Parish Choir

May 24 - Memorial Day Weekend

Margie King Saphier, preaching
One Service at 11:00
Silver Bass Trio

May 31

Bill Sinkford, preaching
9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir, Children's Choirs and Gospel Choir

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There are three inserts with this newsletter:

- Wright Tavern Courses
- Budget Status Report
- Casino & Cabaret Night

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, May 18 | Wednesday, May 27 |
| Monday, Aug. 17 | Wednesday, Aug. 26 |

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

YOU'RE INVITED! CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION

GET THAT LIGHT OF YOURS OUT FROM UNDER THAT BASKET!

Want an opportunity to let the Standing Committee know what matters most to you as a member of this community? Want to offer your two cents worth about what it means to be a member? Want to let the Standing Committee know what your vision is for our community? Then plan to attend the Standing Committee's Congregational Conversation on Saturday, May 9, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There is no substitute for congregational wisdom, so please come and share yours. **Gary Smith** and **Jenny Rankin** think this is so important that they *both* plan to be there. Preregistration is greatly appreciated to ensure that an adequate number of facilitators are on hand. Please respond to **Laura Graham** at lbarrettgraham@gmail.com.

From the Intern Minister

Dear Friends,

One of the questions I am asked most often at First Parish is, "What will you do after this internship?" Well, thanks for asking!

After I say good-bye to First Parish at our Annual Meeting in June, I'll spend the rest of the summer preparing to see the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in September. I'll send them a packet containing letters, transcripts, essays and information about who I am and what has gone into my ministerial formation over the last five years. They will hear me preach, ask me lots and lots of questions, and then . . . (hopefully!) they will agree to grant me fellowship as a UU minister.

If they do, the next steps kind of happen all at once: I'll be finishing up my degree (I have a few classes left), seeking ordination, and "going into search." This last part is how ministers and churches find each other. It's a little like online dating: you post a profile, click on the other party's information, and hope for a chance to meet in person (for an interview).

So I don't know where my first ministry position will be. Perhaps here in New England. Maybe back home in the Pacific Northwest. Or maybe the right call will be somewhere I never imagined.

Wherever it is, First Parish will be with me in spirit. I have grown very fond of this wonderful congregation, and the norms and practices I learned this year will continue to shape my ministry. You have let me into your lives with patience and love, giving me many opportunities to learn and grow. The rippling effects of this time at First Parish will last throughout my ministry.

Thank you so much!

Blessings,

— *Angela Herrera*

Membership Corner

FIRST PARISH AFFINITY GROUPS

Affinity Groups are self-directed social groups that are open to all and help us to connect and feel a part of the First Parish community. Groups that are starting up again this spring are Walking, Bicycling and Kayaking; and other active Affinity Groups include French Conversation, Needleworkers, Hiking, Honor All Beings, Italian Conversation, Jewish Awareness, Photography, Travel (local), Spanish Discussion-Social, Writing Down the Bones, and Restaurants. If you would like to be part of an Affinity Group or want more information, stop by the Newcomer's Table during one of the coffee hours or e-mail **Nita Chase** at anichase123@yahoo.com.

Parish Notes

THREE COVENANT GROUPS ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERS

Three groups are meeting and accepting new members. **Mark Richards** meets Sundays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. with his group. Contact **Mark** at mark.s.richards@verizon.net for dates and location. **Don Miller's** (donaldbmiller@comcast.net) group meets the first and third Tuesdays of the month at First Parish. **Bill Seaver's** group has scheduled meetings (Sundays: May 10, June 7, August 16 and September 20) from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. at his home, 294 The Valley Road, Concord.

GREETINGS FROM LISSA

From First Parish member **Lissa Gundlach**, whom we as a congregation sponsor on her path to the Unitarian Universalist ministry:

It is with warmest wishes that I send my greetings! You may remember me from my high school years at First Parish — active in youth group, singing in musicals, showing my artwork in the Parish Hall. My experience at First Parish was transformational, inspiring me to explore the meaning of spirituality and faith for myself and the larger world. I graduated in 2002 from Vassar College with a bachelor's degree in Religious Studies and a call to ministry, nurtured by the generosity and patience of my UU mentors at First Parish.

In the fall of 2005, I answered my call to ministry and began theological studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where I will graduate in May 2009. I am a candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry, and in August I will begin a full-time parish internship at Unity Church Unitarian Universalist in St. Paul, Minnesota, under the supervision of the Reverends Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs. I am looking forward to this year of learning and growth.

Walking the path toward UU ministry, I have always felt supported by my home church. It is here I learned how to "Go out into the world," guided by my UU faith and values to work for social change. First Parish in Concord taught me how to believe — in myself, the Unitarian Universalist tradition, and the church as a community of worship, love and justice. It is with much gratitude that I take my next steps, knowing that we walk together in faith.

2009 SEDER A GREAT SUCCESS

Our 17th First Parish seder was a wonderful experience for all. **Dana Snyder-Grant** once again advised our seder leader, who this year was our Intern Minister, **Angela Herrera**. Angela did a great job as did our cooks, servers and clean-up volunteers. The seder is always a wonderful way for us to get better acquainted with each other and 2009 was no exception. Thank you all for making the evening such a success. See you in 2010! — **Rhoda Miller**

FINAL FERRY BEACH RETREAT REGISTRATION

The annual First Parish Ferry Beach Retreat Weekend is May 22-25 (Memorial Day Weekend). Join families from our own congregation and First Parish in Lexington for a relaxed weekend on the beach at the UU Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center in Saco, Maine. Registration packets are available at coffee hours and in the church office during the week. The final date for registration for the weekend is Sunday, May 3, at coffee hours. For questions, contact **Darien Smith** (darien@smithquest.com, 978-369-1471). Also, check out the excellent summer camps and conferences for all ages at Ferry Beach, at ferrybeach.org.

PARISH NOTES continued on page 10

Pastoral Care News

At the recent Alzheimer's workshop, Rev. Jade Angelica cited two quotes about hope. The first quote was from Martin Luther, "Even if I knew the world would end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today." The second was by Vaclav Havel, "Hope is not believing you can change things; hope is believing you can make a difference."

When a loved one has Alzheimer's, it often seems like the end of the world, but we can make a difference by entering his or her reality. Because of the on-going changes in the brain, the Alzheimer's brain interprets what is being seen or experienced differently from how you and I see or experience the same thing. The paradox is, if we insist on our reality as truth, the loved one with Alzheimer's will likely stonewall, become belligerent, and be very upset. We can make a positive difference by being curious about what they see, hear or are experiencing. Our responses can honor their experience and also offer a sense of safety.

Being curious about another person's perspective is a good way to affirm and promote the inherent dignity of all individuals, not just those with Alzheimer's. When we truly listen to another with curiosity, he or she is more likely to listen to us. This transition of returned curiosity does not happen with a loved one with Alzheimer's; instead the bonus is a loved one who feels safe and understood. This is not easy work. It requires that we remain open while we grieve the daily mental and physical diminishment of our loved one. The Alzheimer's Association (800-272-3900) is a wonderful resource for families looking for education and support groups, as is the Concord Council on Aging. Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle, author of *The Majesty of Your Loving: A Couple's Journey through Alzheimer's*, addresses how to have an open heart and mind in the midst of grief.

A special thanks to the RE staff and children who decorated paper bags to deliver meals to parishioners by Caring Connection. The children also decorated note cards. Starting in September, Pastoral Care will have a table in the Parish Hall so you can write "Thinking of you" or "Congratulations" notes to a parishioner who was mentioned that day prior to silent meditation. In this way we all have the opportunity to show our care, concern and joy for one another.

In faith,

—Margie King Saphier

Money Matters

2009 ANNUAL APPEAL UPDATE — GIVE TO YOUR VALUES

By the time you read this, the "official" portion of the 2009 Annual Appeal will be over, and the budgeting process for our 2009-2010 fiscal year will have begun. Many thanks to those of you who have already pledged. As of today (April 17), we are at nearly 70% of our target pledge goal. As you may recall from our earlier communications, this year's pledge target of \$924,000 represents a reduction of our current year's budget by nearly 12%, based on our realization of the challenging financial times that all of us are facing. Even so, we still have a long way to go in order to meet this goal, as only slightly more than half of our church members have pledged thus far. In any fundraising campaign, the last 20% is always the most difficult, so the Annual Appeal team is working hard to ensure that we meet this pledge goal in a timely manner.

There is a certain sense of urgency in achieving this goal. For example, reaching only 90% of the \$924,000 target would represent a reduction of \$92,000 in our budget for next year. What many members of First Parish don't realize is that because so many of our costs are fixed, a shortfall of this magnitude would necessarily result in a significant reduction in existing programs offered by First Parish. And late pledges will negatively impact the budgeting process for next year, as the Executive Team (**Gary Smith, Jenny Rankin and Melissa Gallo**) needs to plan the church's expenditures based on committed pledges at the time that they develop the budget, which is well in advance of the July 1 start of the next fiscal year.

So while we acknowledge that all of us are facing difficult times ahead, we ask that those members of First Parish who have not yet pledged to reflect on what they value about First Parish, and to make a commitment to pledge this week. If there is significant economic uncertainty in your future, then pledge an amount with which you feel comfortable. You can always choose to increase your pledge later if there is an improvement in your personal situation. If you can't find your pledge form, call First Parish and leave a message with the amount that you will be pledging. (We're flexible.) But please pledge something, as it demonstrates your commitment to a community of caring friends and staff who are there, and will continue to be there, when you need them.

Give to Your Values — Community, Generosity, Hope. The theme of our 2009 Annual Appeal sums up what being a part of First Parish represents to us. Please help us maintain the programs, the people, and the place that we hold dear by making a pledge as soon as possible if you have not already done so. —**George Gagliardi and Caroline McCloy**, 2009 Annual Appeal Cochairs

FROM THE COLLECTOR

If you are currently paying your pledge by automatic deduction from your bank account, and have chosen another method for the new year, please remember that we can't discontinue or change your deduction without a signed form from you. The deductions as they are now would continue past June. The forms are available on the church website or in the office. Thank you!

Wright Tavern Center

Wright Tavern was bursting with activity in March and April, and the months have flown by. The big spring push is almost over, and planning for the fall semester is under way.

The deadline for course proposals is May 31. If you are thinking of offering a course in the fall, please be in touch with me right away to be included in the catalog. We welcome and encourage you, as members of First Parish, to think about enriching our community by contributing your time and talent to Wright Tavern programming.

MAY HIGHLIGHTS: We have several surprise additions to our calendar this spring. Two wonderful programs with gifted teachers have been included as space has opened up to accommodate them. First, Sifu **Andrea Sheffield** of Wah Lum dancing dragon fame brings her Chi Kung and T'ai Chi for Health to First Parish for the first time. The course starts today — Wednesday, April 29 — and can be joined in progress or on a drop-in basis.

Second, we are pleased to welcome Brugh Joy back to First Parish for a three-day retreat from May 14–17: The Art of Heart Centering in the Day-to-Day Experience of Life.

SUCCESSSES: Even though March is past, we must acknowledge Rev. Carl Scovel's masterful Lenten teaching, *Parables: Christian Kÿans*, his "best course yet." Eight fortunate people were enriched by **Angela Herrera's** five-week Spiritual Autobiography course. The Healing Power of "YES" workshop taught improvisational theater techniques as remarkably effective tools for being present for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. **Merill Comeau**, whose fabric creation graced the First Parish pulpit on Easter morning, had a full house for her four week course *Making Art out of Life*. Finally, Rich and Antra Borofsky's one-day version of their popular *Intimacy as a Spiritual Path* workshop was a deeply satisfying experience for all who attended.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: The River Blessing Ceremony at Egg Rock is part of the 8th annual RiverFest Celebration. Join me, **Caroline McCloy** and others at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 13, for this simple but profound early morning ceremony, a sweet way to start the day before our final Sunday worship service. Come, one and all!

Visit The Wright Tavern Center website at www.wrighttavern.org for the latest news and events, in-depth descriptions of courses and presenter bios. Contact us at FPtavern@aol.com or 978-369-9602. For short course descriptions, please see the Wright Tavern insert in this *Meeting House News*.

In celebration,

— *Mary Elizabeth Wheeler*

Director

MUSings

"Could a Mass celebrate the whole earth as a sacred place?"

This question was the creative genesis of the *Missa Gaia*, or *Earth Mass*. In 1980, while serving with the Paul Winter Consort as artists in residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, jazz saxophonist Paul Winter was challenged by the dean of the cathedral to "create twentieth century music for the Mass."



Unfamiliar with the Mass liturgy and ritual, Winter set about learning the history of the Mass. He discovered that the Mass has been the cradle of western art music for most of a millennium. He also learned that the themes of many Masses from the Middle Ages and Renaissance were drawn from folk and popular tunes.

What if the themes for an Earth Mass could come from the songs of nature? What if the Kyrie — a prayer for mercy — was based on the ethereal howl of the tundra wolf, an animal traditionally feared and reviled by humans?

What if the mysterious and joyous song of the humpback whale, "a symbol of the Great Mother," provided the melody of the Sanctus? "Holy is the Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and Earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!"

What if the Agnus Dei, the "lamb of God," was a harp seal pup, whose plaintive voice would mingle with that of human beings in an ancient prayer for reconciliation and peace?

Winter decided to dedicate this *Earth Mass* to St. Francis, the patron saint of animals and the environment; and he composed, with Jim Scott, the wonderful *Canticle of Brother Sun*, based on the saint's famous prayer to begin and end the Mass.

The title *Missa Gaia* combines the Latin name for the Mass (*missa*) and the Greek goddess of the earth, Gaia. Mixing the sacred and the scientific, it evokes the "Gaia Hypothesis: that the entire range of living matter on earth ... could be regarded as constituting a single living entity ... endowed with faculties and power far beyond its constituent parts."

The *Missa Gaia* is an extraordinary liturgical and musical creation combining animal and human voices, Gregorian chant, ancient prayers, Latin rhythms and the ethereal song of the soprano saxophone in a synergistic worship experience. The First Parish Choir and Children's Choirs, along with guests musicians — including the wolf, the whale and the seal — look forward to sharing it with you on Sunday morning, May 3, at both services. Come prepared to join in "grateful hymns of praise."

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Social Action Community News and Events

In place of my monthly column I would like to present a report from our SAC cochair **Claudia Nimar**, on the work of a new SAC



Grant recipient. Some of you may remember that **Robin Van Loon's** winter visit with our youth group made an incredible impression, showing them what a young First Parishioner can do to change the world.

The SAC Grants committee selected Camino Verde's Basic Agroforestry: Baltimori Project/Peru as a 2009 grant recipient. The project's focus is the installation of agroforestry systems (sustainable, tree-based agricultural plots) on the farmlands of all willing participants within the rural community of Baltimori, in the buffer zone of the Tambopata National Reserve. Our SAC Grant funded the purchase and delivery of 700 tree saplings, benefiting 10 farmers in the first round of planting, completed in early February. The project's aims include a second year of expansion, in which each farmer, having received 70 trees each in the first year, will be offered the opportunity to reforest further territory. For information on Camino Verde, go to www.Caminoverdeperu.org.

Please contact me with causes and concerns.

— *Faith Bade,*

Social Action Program Director

EAT WELL, SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, a multi-cultural farmer training program, sponsors a program called World PEAS CSA. Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), where members pay in advance for 18 weeks of fresh, locally and sustainably grown produce (and fruit if you'd like). World PEAS CSA invites you to become a shareholder or to contribute to a share for a low income family. The vegetable share provides a selection from over 70 locally grown traditional and ethnic vegetables from June to October. For more information, visit www.nesfp.org/ or contact CSA coordinator, Matthew Himmel at: 978-654-6745, or mhimmel@comteam.org.

UUSC CONTINUES WORK IN SUDAN

The UUSC humanitarian efforts in Sudan continue despite recent setbacks. In a major victory for antigencide activists, TIAA-CREF announced it will pressure portfolio companies to help end the genocide in the Darfur region, and it will divest from companies

that fail to take meaningful steps. UUSC's Drumbeat for Darfur was an early major participant in the Sudan divestment movement, and TIAA-CREF is UUSC's pension-fund provider. Member contributions make up about 60 percent of UUSC's annual budget. Join today at uusc.org.

UPCOMING SERVICE TRIP CELEBRATIONS

Celebrate with our service trip participants during May. On May 10, the El Salvador group will update us on their work at Centro Arte Para La Paz (Art Center for Peace) run by Sister Peggy O'Neill. Sister Peggy has made it her mission to bring a culture of peace to the war-torn people of El Salvador. On June 7, the New Orleans group will celebrate with our congregation. Their work in New Orleans reminds us of how much is yet to be done to help residents return to their homes and neighborhoods.

SAC GRANTS

SAC Grants will hold their biannual awards meeting at 7 p.m. on May 3 at **Alane Wallis's** home. Look for updates on the First Parish website in late May.

WALK FOR HUNGER MAY 3

Walk 1 mile or all 20 in the oldest pledge walk in the U.S.! Start at Boston Common between 7 and 9 a.m. and help the more than 522,000 people in Massachusetts who struggle to put food on the table. Project Bread-funded emergency food programs provided more than 43.4 million meals last year alone. To organize a team, contact **Faith Bade** at FBade@firstparish.org. Or register online at www.projectbread.org/walk.

MUSKETAQUID EARTH DAY CELEBRATION — MAY 2

Come join the 19th annual Musketaquid Earth Day, starting with a river ceremony at 10:00 a.m. (Lowell Road Boat Launch in Concord). Then parade at 10:45 a.m. (from the Lowell Road Bridge through Concord Center) to the Emerson Umbrella, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 40 Stow Street, Concord). Bring your family and friends! Contact 978-371-0820 or www.emersonumbrella.org for more information.

EQUAL EXCHANGE OPENS CAFÉ IN BOSTON

The Equal Exchange Café is a new project that promotes Fair Trade products. You are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 9, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m., where you can meet Coffee Project coordinators, learn about UUSC's work, hear about the Equal Exchange Interfaith Program and sample products. Families are welcome. RSVP by May 4 to [Cristin at cmartineau@uusc.org](mailto:cmartineau@uusc.org). Location: 226 Causeway St., next to North Station.

DRINKING GOURD PROJECT SUNDAY, MAY 17, AT FIRST PARISH

The Drinking Gourd Project invites you to go back in time on May 17 from 3:00-4:30 p.m. (followed by a guided walking tour of Walden Woods lead by Elise Lemire). Join us for a talk on a lost history, unearthing stories of "ordinary people" who led ordinary and heroic lives in Concord, 17th-19th century. Keynote speaker is Elise Lemire, author of the newly released *Black Walden: Slavery and Its Aftermath in Concord, Massachusetts*. Contact **Susan Ryan** with any questions at susanryan101@comcast.net.

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/; visit the Social Action bulletin board; or e-mail our Social Action Program Director, **Faith Bade**, at FBade@firstparish.org.

Going Deeper Spiritually

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

SERIES IX, 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 a series of reflections, each 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.*

May 2009: **VISION** — There are times in our lives when we pick up our heads, look far out into the future, and have a vision of who we want to become, where we want to head.

There are other times when we go day to day, our eyes focused on the ground, on the road in front of us. We attend to the day-to-day, taking care of children, parents, work, bills, whatever needs our attention.

We chose “vision” as our theme this month to encourage us all to pick our eyes up from the day-to-day, the immediate, the urgent — and gaze, if only for a moment, toward the far horizon. It is easy to get focused on the short term and lose sight of the long view.

So what are some “vision questions” we might ask? I think of questions Gary raised in his Easter sermon. What matters most in your life? Who do you want to become? As Margaret Fuller put it long ago: “What were we born to do? How are we going to do it?” These are vision questions. These are questions that take us away from the details and lift us up to the larger horizon.

The following words by Dana McLean Greeley seem right on point when it comes to vision.

“We need vision and courage and faith in the future,” Dana wrote. “Even if our charts are wrong, at times we have to trust them, and not stay at home in the old world. The new world waits to be discovered and to be realized by us. Impatience and even radicalism fare better than complacency and indifference, and bravery are better than fear. ...I would like to have us train our children to climb mountains and to sail the open seas, but likewise to take risks for democracy and for brotherhood and for peace. And if we would train them, we must be examples ourselves. Something of the spirit that was in Columbus should be in us. We need new ideas and bold action in science and in social ethics and in the church and in life.”

From “Exploration and Discovery,” a sermon given on Columbus Day eve October 11, 1970, quoted in *Forward Through the Ages, the Writings of Dana McLean Greeley, 1970-1986*, p. 104)

Senior Youth News

Every year I find May to be a crazy roller-coaster of a month. Emotionally we are getting ready to say good-bye to our seniors and hello to the incoming freshmen. Calendars are packed with proms, performances, sports and schoolwork. It is my hope that Youth Group does not feel like another thing on the calendar, but a place for renewal, peace and connections.

It’s a busy May calendar for youth:

- May 3: Wink – a wild and crazy game
- May 10: YRUU alum **Jessye Weinstein** and Resistance Movements
- May 16-17: Leadership Retreat to Boston (all YAC members and youth interested in leadership invited)
- May 17: 11:00 a.m. Senior Recognition Service
- May 17: T’ai Chi
- May 24: No YRUU – Memorial Day Weekend – Ferry Beach
- May 31: Ultimate Frisbee Championship Game vs. Tri-Con

Our current YAC (Youth Advisory Council) and prospective members will be going on our annual leadership retreat in May. We get to eat on Newbury Street in the Back Bay, and then sleep on the floor of the First Church of Boston on Marlborough Street, while we do some visioning for the upcoming year. Joining YAC is a wonderful way for youth to gain leadership skills while having fun. We have YAC members from each class along with a few amazing adults (**Jamie Atkins, Tracey Bird and Winslow Pettingell**), who plan our Sunday nights and provide leadership at Youth Group. The success of our Youth Group is directly related to the fact that everything is youth-led.

At the 11:00 o’clock service on May 17, First Parish will recognize our high school seniors. It is a lovely ceremony, where we send the seniors off into the world, but reassure them they will always have a home here at First Parish.

Spring fever has hit us and our moods have lifted. On the other hand, so many of the youth are facing good-byes and major changes. Through the joys and sorrows of life’s journey, I would like the youth to know that First Parish will always give them strong roots and sturdy wings.

—*Mary-Wren vanderWilden*

SARASA AT FIRST PARISH

On Sunday, May 3, at 7 p.m., the First Parish Music Events Committee will present a concert by the Cambridge-based, nationally acclaimed chamber music ensemble Sarasa. The performance will feature songs of Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert; with William Hite, tenor; Maggie Cole, piano forte; Claire Jolivet, violin; and Tim Merton, cello. Tickets: \$19 adults, \$16 seniors, \$12 students, children free. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at sarasamusic.org. The public is invited. For information, call 617-492-4758, 978-369-3779 or 978-369-9602.

Reflection and RE News

It has been my deepest joy working with all of your children this year. We have shared many touching and thoughtful moments together in our RE program. I am working so hard to keep our programs healthy and vibrant next year too, but I need your help.

This is my fourth year here, and it is my third year having to reduce our RE budget. If you have made your pledge, as Mark and I have, thank you. If you are still considering your pledge and have questions to ask of RE, please feel free to call me. If you are waiting, please consider that we are also waiting. We are waiting for your pledge of support so we can plan for the financial reality of next year.

When Mark and I made our pledge decision in this year of economic unrest, we asked ourselves what was important to us and the answer was clear — we wanted to do our part in making sure that First Parish is there for you and your children next year. I do hope your family feels the same way about us. It is a covenant we have with each other, a trust, if you will, to ensure First Parish is there for all of our families in times of celebration and in times of hardship.

Thank you all for your continued and steadfast report.

— Pam Howell

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION MAY 2

In RE our children made an Earth Float for the Musketaquid Earth Day Celebration. A special thanks goes out to **C.C. King** for her work in leading this spiritual experience for our kids. If your child wishes to be part of the release of our First Parish float, please join us at the River Ceremony at 10:00 a.m., Lowell Road Boat Launch in Concord.

Then join in the Earth Day Parade: 10:45 a.m. from Lowell Road Bridge through Concord Center to the Emerson Umbrella Arts and Environment Festival, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Emerson Umbrella, 40 Stow Street, Concord.

Free! Bring your family and friends and join in the Call and Response!

SURPRISE VISITOR ON MAY 17

In May, we are thrilled to have Cindy Rivka Marshall back with us as our Surprise Visitor. If you recall, Cindy did a marvelous rendition of Queen Esther last year in the Sanctuary for the message to children. She is a renowned storyteller who uses song, music and theatrics to

MAY RE CALENDAR

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Sun., May 3 | Regular RE for Babies – 6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths, Islamic Temple |
| Sun., May 10 | Regular RE for Babies – 6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. |
| Sun., May 17 | Regular RE for Babies – 4 years, 9 and 11 a.m. Surprise Visitor for K–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. |
| Sun., May 24 | Regular RE for Babies – 4 years, 9 and 11 a.m. |
| Sun., May 31 | Regular RE for Babies – 4 years, 9 and 11 a.m. Kids in Action for K–6th Grade, 9 and 11 a.m. |

provide delightful entertainment for our children. On May 17, we will begin in the Sanctuary with a children's message from Ms. Rivka Marshall, and then our K-6th graders will gather in the Parish Hall for more stories and laughter.

SPRING TERM FOR 2ND-6TH GRADERS

On May 3, we will continue to explore the spiritual movement of T'ai Chi with Sifu **Andrea Sheffield**, from Wah Lum Kung Fu in West Concord. She will be teaching our children about this meditative physical practice.

On May 10, we will be working with **Brenda Fingold**, First Parish member and holistic health consultant. This class will be closing our year-long theme of honoring our earth. In this class, we will be celebrating both Mother's Day and Earth Day, for Earth is also our mother.

THE GOOD NEWS GARDEN

On a cold morning in February, **Susan Ryan** asked if we could do some gardening with our First Parish kids over the summer. What a great idea! Sue and I have secured a plot in the Hugh Cargill Community Garden (across from the Concord Court House). We will work with our First Parish kids planting seeds, digging beds, weeding and picking produce in the summer and fall. We will donate our vegetables to Open Table.

Would your children like to be involved? If so, please let Pam know. We will have a sign-up sheet on May 3 at the RE Registration table for families to sign up for a one- or two-week commitment to care for our plot. Exploring the joy of gardening and growing food is one of the ways your child can experience the power of our earth. Exploring the joy of giving to others is one of the ways your child can experience the power of the human spirit — two great aspirations of our Unitarian Universalist sources. I hope your child and family has the time to participate in this simple but powerful ministry this summer. On May 31, we will have a Kids-in-Action Sunday that will focus on our community garden plot.

RE REGISTRATION ON MAY 3, AT 9:00 AND 11:00 A.M.

We have already begun our registration for religious education for next year. We are trying to keep many of the positive elements we have enjoyed so much this year and fold them into a slightly gentler Workshop Rotation model. Instead of five workshops, we will have three. This will allow us to meet as a large group first, in the Chapel, and then divide into three smaller groups for exploring the day's theme in a deeper way. We will not need to separate the role of leader and

RE NEWS continued on page 9

Partner Church Committee

The Partner Church Committee is hosting a Dateline Transylvania event on Saturday, May 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Join us for a bit of C&D (coffee & dessert) and connect/reconnect with our partner church community in Székelykeresztúr.

In addition to a presentation (in words and photos) about our program and an update on the latest Youth Service Pilgrimage (YSP), we'll have a raffle and an update on the Keresztúr Community House project, along with information about (major and minor) naming rights sponsorships for windows and doors. Please RSVP to ensure that there is C&D for all. Egészségedre!

The list of First Parish attendees for the September 18–20 Community House dedication in Székelykeresztúr is lengthening. So far four are set with another four not quite confirmed. Everyone is invited and we hope you'll come too. It will be an iconic, merry occasion, abounding with music and dance, a time to connect with old friends and new, and an opportunity to tour some of the majestic eastern Carpathian region, with its Unitarian heritage and Hungarian culture. To learn more contact **Rodger Mattlage** at rmattlage@yahoo.com.

Finally, we are in the process of revamping our Partner Church Google group list. Look for imminent e-mails announcing the changes. If you would like to be on our general mailing list, please send an e-mail to Rodger, again, at rmattlage@yahoo.com. *Minden jól!* "Best wishes!"

—**Lillian Anderson** and **Winslow Pettingell**,
PCC cochairs

Sunday Forums

Because of the ongoing renovations, Forums have been suspended for now. Please call **Charles Lowell** or **Robert Hilsinger** about future topics.

RE NEWS

continued from page 8

guide with this flexible model, just as we did not need to do so during this transitional year. When choosing your teaching assignment, consider the season and the topic to find the best fit for you.

Our program will continue to be one that uses the Cooperative Teaching Parent model. When you register your child in RE, you also register yourself. We know that you count on us to plan for your child's time in our program. At the same time, we truly count on your commitment to fulfill your teaching obligation as well. If you wish to teach a particular program, please register early. The sooner you register the more likely you will be able to teach your first or second choice. Some programs are already sufficiently staffed for next year.

Don't want to wait until May 3 to register? Then register online this year!

- 1) Go to Firstparish.org
- 2) Select Education & Spirituality
- 3) Click on the RE Registration Link.

Please call **Jane Barnes** in the RE office with any questions.

PET FOOD DRIVE A SUCCESS

Thanks to 6th Graders **Erika Peterson**, **Kathryn Shane** and **Mariko Chang**, the food drive for pet food was a big success. On Thursday, April 16, we delivered hundreds of pounds of pet food to Open Table. They were thrilled to have this abundance of food in these difficult times. Without the team effort of these three, this could never have happened.

A THANK-YOU FROM OUR PRESCHOOL RE PROGRAM

Our youngest children in RE (Babies to 4 years) have been using the Parlor as temporary classroom space until our new space is ready next fall. The space was working out quite well, but we lacked the number and variety of toys we enjoyed when we shared the Milldam classroom space last year. Fortunately, several First Parish parents have generously donated a wonderful selection of toys to round out our collection of arts & crafts materials. **Tracey Hurd** contributed a complete wooden Brio train set, some baby dolls and a collection of tea set items. **Jay Copeland** offered us a delightful Little Tikes dollhouse with accessories. **Gretchen** and **Paul Nelson** gave us a toddler-sized table and chair set. A few other families donated several types of puzzles, and some large plastic trucks. The children have spent recent Sundays blissfully engaged in playing with these new toys. On their behalf, a big heartfelt "thank you" to all of you who have blessed us with your thoughtful donations. — **Carol Duane**, Young Children's Program Coordinator

Standing Committee Information

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held off-site on Monday evening, May 11. Please look for the monthly minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log in), or on the Parish News bulletin board.

Women's News

WOMEN'S AM/PM BOOK GROUP

The May book for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver. The evening session will be held Monday, May 18, 7:30-9:00 p.m.; and the morning session, on Tuesday, May 19, 9:30-11:00 a.m. Please note that due to construction at First Parish, the discussions will be held at the following homes:

Monday, May 18, 7:30 p.m. at **Siri Smedvig's** home: 85 Westford Road, Concord

Tuesday, May 19, 9:30 a.m. at **Darien Smith's** home: 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. The June meeting will be an evening potluck and discussion of book suggestions for next year (date TBD). 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.

Classified

SUMMER RENTAL NEEDED

A family of four, who recently moved to Singapore, would like to find a 2-3 bedroom apartment or house from June through August 2009. They need a fully furnished place, non-smoking, with Internet service. They have two boys who are 13 and 16 years old. Please contact Diana at 978-371-0833.

PARISH NOTES continued from page 3

FLEA MARKET AND PLANT SALE

Don't forget to go to our popular multivendor recycle/flea market sale and plant sale at First Parish on May 30 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Due to limited space this year, we will not be collecting household item donations from First Parish members. Vendors will be selling from rented tables. If you would like to rent a table for \$35, contact **Pat Kane** at 978-369-8418 or at cstmcloth@yahoo.com. We will be collecting donations of perennial plants from First Parish members and friends, so start preparing donations from your gardens. Contact **Ginger Lang** at 978-369-2346 if you have questions about plant donations. This event is an important fundraiser for capital improvements to our facilities.



TRACING THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS IN ITALY



Living in Concord and worshipping at First Parish means that we are surrounded continually by a remarkable history of truly American philosophers and writers. They are part of the fabric of Unitarian Universalism. Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Hawthorne and Alcott, as well as many others in the mid-nineteenth century, struggled to create a uniquely American philosophy. They traveled abroad, saw many amazing cultural icons, and used their travel experience to more fully understand their own culture.

Jenny Rankin inspired us to follow their footsteps, see what they saw, and try to conceive of their lives as they thought, wrote, communicated and returned home. What an amazingly rich experience it was for all of us to be together and participate in this trip — **Lillian Anderson, Sara Ballard, Laura and Mel Bernstein, Lillian Braden, Steph Chiha, Doris Goldthwaite, Bob Harper, Kate and Kel Keleher, Rhoda Miller, Mary Morgan, Claudia Nimar, Maura Perkins, Donna Peterson, Kitsy and Terry Rothermel, Dorothy Schecter, Bozena Smith and Darien Smith**. We visited Rome and the antiquities, Florence and the Renaissance, and the Tuscan countryside in between, just as the transcendentalists did. Emerson arrived broken in spirit from the death of his first wife, Ellen; Margaret Fuller created a new life for herself, marrying and giving birth to a son while helping to fight for the Italian revolution. They were changed by their experience.

Together we walked, learned, ate, walked, shared, read, talked, walked, drank, heard, saw — and finally understood why we went. Traveling as a First Parish group, whether it is to Transylvania or Italy, in search of a connection to our partner church village or to our heritage as transcendentalists, means that we return transformed because we have done this together as a faith community.

This group of First Parish Transcendentalists have stories to share and some additional work to do to bring the spirit of Emerson, Fuller and their friends back to First Parish. We are in the process of forming an ongoing committee that will serve as a coordinating body for all of the interesting events in the next several years — e.g., the Emerson Forum, Margaret Fuller's Bicentennial, etc. Our first meeting will be on Tuesday, May 19, at 7:30 p.m., and anyone interested in participating should plan to attend. —**Lillian Anderson, Steph Chiha, Kate Keleher**, Planning Committee



Transcendental Notes

THE EMERSON FORUM QUARTERLY MEETING — MAY 4

The topic will be Harold Bloom's *New York Times* article on how the "financial panic of 1837 helped shape Ralph Waldo Emerson's vision of America." The Bloom op-ed column, "Out of panic, self-reliance," is in the October 12, 2008, issue of the *Times* and will be discussed in light of the financial crisis of 2008-2009. The meeting is to be held on Monday, May 4, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on the Wright Tavern porch. All are welcome; there is no charge.

May 2009 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. |
| YRUU | Sunday | 7:00 p.m. |
| Networking Group | Tuesday | 9:00 a.m. |
| <i>Kundalini Yoga</i> | Tuesday | 9:30 a.m. (First Parish in Weston) |
| <i>T'ai Chi</i> | Tuesday | 7:00 p.m. |
| Bell Choir | Wednesday | 1:00 p.m. |
| Junior Choir | Wednesday | 4:25 p.m. |
| Chalice Choir | Wednesday | 5:15 p.m. |
| <i>Chi Kung and T'ai Chi for Health</i> | Wednesday | 7:00 p.m. |
| Adult Choir | Wednesday | 7:45 p.m. |

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| ALL EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT FIRST PARISH UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. |
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|---|--|
| <p>Fri May 1 7:00 Casino & Cabaret Night</p> <p>Sat May 2 9:00 Special Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Department of Peace Meeting 7:00 Casino & Cabaret Night</p> <p>Sun May 3 12:10 Nominating Committee 3:00 El Salvador Meeting 5:30 Transylvania Trip Meeting 7:00 Sarasa Concert</p> <p>Mon May 4 7:00 The Emerson Forum 7:00 <i>Making Art out of Life</i></p> <p>Wed May 6 7:00 Youth Advisory Committee</p> <p>Fri May 8 12:30 <i>T'ai Ji</i> 6:00 New Members' Dinner</p> <p>Sat May 9 9:00 Photo Club 10:00 Congregational Conversations 7:00 Partner Church Committee Coffee and Dessert</p> <p>Sun May 10 11:00 Neighboring Faiths 12:15 Green Sanctuary Meeting</p> <p>Tue May 12 9:30 WPA Board Meeting 3:00 <i>Tea and Poetry</i> 6:00 Cancer Support Group</p> <p>Wed May 13 7:30 Concord Clergy Laity Group Meeting</p> | <p>Thu May 14 2:00 Deacons' Meeting (off-site) 3:00 <i>Brugh Joy Weekend</i></p> <p>Fri May 15 7:00 <i>Brugh Joy Weekend</i></p> <p>Sat May 16 8:00 <i>Brugh Joy Weekend</i> 1:00 Neighboring Faiths Sandwich-Making</p> <p>Sun May 17 9:00 <i>Brugh Joy Weekend</i> 11:00 Neighboring Faiths 3:00 Drinking Gourd Project 3:00 Photo Club Reception and Exhibit</p> <p>Mon May 18 12:00 Newsletter Deadline 7:30 Women's AM/PM Book Group (off-site)</p> <p>Tue May 19 9:30 Women's AM/PM Book Group (off-site) 7:00 Amnesty Chapter Meeting</p> <p>Fri May 22 Ferry Beach Weekend Begins</p> <p>Sat May 23 Ferry Beach Weekend</p> <p>Sun May 24 Ferry Beach Weekend</p> <p>Mon May 25 Holiday — Office Closed Ferry Beach Weekend Ends</p> <p>Wed May 27 9:15 Newsletter Mailing 12:15 <i>Listening for God</i></p> <p>Fri May 29 7:30 <i>Rise Up Singing</i></p> <p>Sat May 30 10:00 WPA Recycle and Plant Sale</p> |
|---|--|



First Parish in Concord

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MAY 2009 NEWSLETTER

The **June Newsletter deadline** is **Monday, May 18**, at noon.
The Newsletter mailing is Wednesday, May 27.
News items should be limited to 100 words.

Don't Miss...

CASINO & CABARET!

Friday and Saturday, May 1 & 2
7:00 p.m.

WPA RECYCLE AND PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 30
10 a.m to 3:00 p.m.

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

Gary E. Smith, Senior Minister
Jenny M. Rankin, Minister
Melissa Perdue Gallo, Business Manager

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

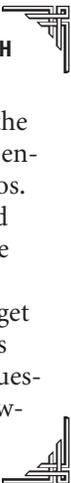
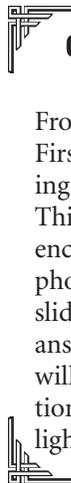
Elizabeth Norton, Music Director
Eric Huenneke, Organist
Martha Goodman, Handbell Choir Director
Anderson Manuel, Youth Gospel Choir Director
Gail Carey, Children's Choir Director
David Huston, Music Director Emeritus

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

A. Bigay, Assistant to the Ministers
Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator
Jane Johnson, Office Manager
Peggy Gallo, Financial Secretary and Collector
Faith Bade, Social Action Program Director
Kate Keleher, Newsletter Editor
Kaye Harvie, Jane Johnson, Newsletter Staff

**OPENING RECEPTION: 7TH ANNUAL FIRST PARISH
FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT**

From 3 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 17, the members of the First Parish Fine Art Photography Club will host an opening reception for the month-long display of their photos. This event is the group's thank-you for the support and encouragement First Parish has provided. Come see the photographers' latest work, enjoy refreshments, watch slide shows, find photos and cards to give as gifts, and get answers to your photography questions. Club members will be available to talk about their work and answer questions about digital cameras, photographing wildlife, low-light photography, and fixing damaged photos.



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

Ministers' E-Mail:
Gary E. Smith: garyesmith@firstparish.org
Jenny M. Rankin: revjenny@comcast.net
Margie King Saphier: mksaphier@comcast.net
Angela Herrera: aherrera@hds.harvard.edu