



November 23, 2009
Volume 46, No. 4

The *Meeting House* News

REVERIES

Dear Friends:

My mind is still brimming with images from this past weekend: the Parish Hall bedecked with red feathers and French murals for the auction, swarming with people dressed to the nines. It's a critical fundraiser for us; thank you for coming and for bidding high! And then, the next day, the same Parish Hall, but this time with metal folding chairs all in a row, and a hushed silence, as many of you gathered to watch a film about World War II, the rescue of refugees by Unitarians, the early role our Unitarian headquarters played in turning American attention to the Holocaust. And the applause in the Sanctuary when Gary announced we raised the money, completed the Capital Campaign!

There is a strong sense of energy and vitality here in this community. The light, or "soul flame," that you bring makes a difference! We need you. Whether you have been here for years or are just new, we hope you are finding a niche here where you can unearth your own talents and gifts, where you can find your ministry, where you can grow your soul.

For me, during the months of February, March and April of 2010, I'll be trying to do some of that soul work on sabbatical. My plans are still in formation, but I hope to return to the library as I have done in years past, continuing my exploration of the transcendentalists. I have a big stack of books piled up but not much time to read them in the course of an everyday week. I am interested in the transcendentalists' encounter with Europe and their response to what they saw there — how it changed them and helped to shape their ideas, their practical work in the world, their spiritual lives.

I expect to return to Italy during this time, as well as continue my work as chair of the UUA Margaret Fuller Bicentennial committee, which is planning for General Assembly in Minneapolis next June. May 23, 2010, is the 200th anniversary of Margaret Fuller's birth. There is a group working here at First Parish to celebrate the life of this woman, who is now considered a "public intellectual" on the same rank as Emerson, Alcott and Thoreau.

Sabbatical comes from the same root as "sabbath," and the core idea, as Judaism has so brilliantly taught us, is to rest. The Sabbath day was one day in the week we were required to rest, to enjoy the creation and one another. So I'll be trying to rest, enjoy my family, exercise, garden, maybe even take that yoga class I've been talking about for so long. I thank you for this gift of time away and look forward to sharing with you new discoveries when I get back.

—In faith,

Jenny Rankin

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 6

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 First Parish Choir and Children's Choirs

Joseph, Dearest Joseph Mine – Traditional

11:00 Gospel Choir and Children's Choirs

December 13

Jenny Rankin, preaching

9:00 First Parish Choir

Al Hanissim – Frimer/Jacobson

Lo v'chayil – Levine

11:00 Mark Nimar, baritone

December 20

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir

A Ceremony of Carols – Britten

Judith Ross, harpist

December 27

One Service at 11:00 o'clock

Margie King Saphier, preaching

11:00 – Sarah Whitney, violin

Don't Miss...

CHILDREN'S CRAFT WORKSHOP!

Saturday, December 5, 1:30 p.m.

WPA HOLIDAY CONCERT & TEA!

Tuesday, December 8

Concert at 3:00 p.m., Tea at 4:00 p.m.

First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ♦ Gathered in 1636

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1	REVeries Sunday Worship Schedule
Page 2	In This Issue Auction Success Parish Notes
Page 3	Pastoral Care News Sunday Forums
Page 4	Partner Church Committee Ordination Invitation Winter Solstice
Page 5	MUSings and Music Notes Pipework
Page 6	REflection and RE News December RE Calendar
Page 7	Holiday Flowers Standing Committee RE News, continued Senior Youth News
Page 8	SAC News and Events
Page 9	Membership Corner SAC, continued
Page 10	Women's News Parish Notes, continued
Page 11	December 2009 Calendar
Page 12	First Parish Staff UU News

There are three inserts with this newsletter:

- ◆ Brahms Concert information
- ◆ Holiday schedule and information
- ◆ Wright Tavern Center courses

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

Monday, December 14
Monday, January 25
Monday, February 22

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

PARISH NOTES

Tres Bien Auction Success!

The Auction team is pleased to announce that the “Mastering the Art of French Bidding” auction raised more than \$30,000 for the First Parish operating budget! Final figures are still in process, but the enthusiasm and generosity of our First Parish staff, members and friends exceeded our best hopes! Many thanks to **Caroline McCloy**, head chef; **Jim McCloy**, auctioneer and sous chef; **Leslie Koplow**, decorations; **Bob Treitman**, cashier operations, with **Stephanie Chiha**; **Eric Read**, online auction operations; **Kate Keleher**, graphics (books, tickets, posters), **Cynthia Ellis** and **Phyllis Savage**, raffle baskets; **Tracey Hurd**, vacation homes and posters; **Mary Lou Toussaint** and **Anne Fortier**, beverage service; **Dave Elwood**, setup/cleanup; **Melissa Gallo**, staff liaison and witty writer of item descriptions; and the many, many willing and generous volunteers who made the operation run so smoothly and well!
— **Lillian Anderson** and **Margaret Stewart**, Auction cochairs

Thanks for Another Great Fair

This year’s Holiday Artisans Fair was another fantastic communal effort and a great success. It was a festive event that provided fun-filled shopping for unique gifts and a café of great food. There are too many people to list here. However, special thanks go to **Jen Petersen** and all the artisans, **Rhoda Miller** and the kitchen crew, **Barbara Wheeler** and all the volunteers and **Doug Baker** and the sextons and the cleanup crew.
—**Dian Pekin**, chair, Holiday Artisans Fair

The Cats and Their Folks Are Happy

The catnip balls that have been created by **Cindy McLean-Greeley** and her many hardworking angels for our annual Holiday Artisans Fair for the past 40-plus years are always a big hit. They sold out quickly! The Concord area cats thank you! For future fairs, the WPA would like to do something special for our dog friends as well. Please send suggestions for items that could be crafted for dogs to pekindc@comcast.net.

New Sponsors Needed for the Transylvania Student Sponsorship Program 2009-2010

Five freshmen are looking for a First Parish sponsor. Sponsors are asked to provide \$400 a year for four years, and to correspond regularly with their high school students. We are introducing two new categories of sponsorship, Contributor and Pen Pal. A Contributor wishes to provide financial aid only, and a Pen Pal wishes only to correspond with a student. If you would like to become a Sponsor, Contributor or Pen Pal, please contact **Sue Beck** at sbeck345@comcast.net or 978-369-8445. Stop by if you see me at coffee hour to see the letters and photos from our new students.

First Parish Theatre Project

We have many people interested in exploring and reading plays at First Parish. We meet on the first Friday of the month at First Parish. This month, on Friday, December 4, at 7 p.m., we will be reading Lillian Hellman’s classic drama *The Children’s Hour*. It is a drama dealing with

Parish Notes continued on page 10

Caring Connection

The Caring Connection freezer is now full of delicious Irish beef stew and Tuscany chicken stew. A big thank-you goes to **Rhoda Miller, Bev Bringle, Martha Wallace, Linda Reynolds, Judy Dembsey, Marty Stern, Petra Betts, Valerie Holt, Jane Johnson, Darien Smith, Ginger Lang** and **Lois Mitchell** and — to **Lois Suarez**, who not only was there all morning washing pots but came back at five to help Rhoda fill containers and put them in the freezer.

Threshold Choir — Singing and Pastoral Care Joined

The newly formed Threshold Choir meets the first and third Thursday of the month from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. You do not have to be a member of the choir to participate and there are no singing auditions — all voices are welcome. Threshold choirs provide pastoral care through life's transition by singing rounds, chants, lullabies, classical choral music, spirituals and hymns. When there is a request, two or three members (men and women) visit a parishioner's bedside, home, or place of his or her choosing, singing songs that appeal to the individual's taste.

We experience many thresholds in life. Birth and death are the ones we think of first, but there are other times — such as prior to or after surgery, during chemotherapy or radiation, after receiving a diagnosis that changes how you perceive your life, or getting married.

Beth Norton and I thank **Laurie Corelle**, who discovered Threshold Choir at the Indian Hill Music Center in Littleton. This summer Beth attended the class and immediately saw how a Threshold Choir could provide another dimension to pastoral care here and to those who participated. Threshold choirs provide the opportunity for the singers at the biweekly practices to experience the gift of singing as well as the gift of being sung to, since members take turns being the singer and the receiver of song.

The philosophy of Threshold Choirs promotes the practice of loving kindness and compassion for each of the participants, who attend practices when they can and go out to sing to a parishioner with one or two others when they feel ready. It is acceptable to attend only practices. And of course, we only go to parishioners who request a visit from this choir.

Covenant Groups

Covenant Groups meet to explore what it means to be human. Following is a quote by Forrest Church, which was used by one the covenant groups to explore what it means “to the face the darkness [of humanity] and

redeem the day.” If you would like to belong to a covenant group, call me or e-mail mksaphier@comcast.net.

“Never forget this. Never forget the email sent by a doomed employee in the World Trade Center [on 9/11/01], who, just before his life was over, wrote the words, ‘Thank you for being such a great friend.’ . . . Pay close attention to these and every other note of almost unbearable poignancy as it rings amidst the cacophony. Pay attention and then commit them to the memory of your heart. For though the future as we know it is no longer, we now know the very worst of which human beings are capable can bring out the very best. From this day forward, it becomes our common mission to be mindful of both aspects of our nature: to counter the former while aspiring to the latter; to face the darkness yet redeem the day.” ♦

— *Margie King Saphier*

I am writing this early, on November 5, because tomorrow I leave for El Salvador with the Sight & Bite Team, who run free eye and dental clinics, one of which will be at Centro Arte para la Paz, where our youth went last year. Before they returned home, the youth presented two framed documents to Sister Peggy — the First Parish benediction in English and in Spanish. They now hang on the wall at Centro Arte. In addition to assisting in the eye clinic, I will photograph the benedictions for the youth and all of you to see.

SUNDAY FORUMS

December 6

Ronald J. Catella has been the Owner's Representative for First Parish's now completed addition. He will review some of the issues that challenged his 40-plus years experience as a construction project manager. A few pictures will be shown to point out some of the surprises that were discovered and solved during the construction process.

December 13

Because of the long-standing relationship First Parish in Concord has had with Santa Claus we are glad to announce that he will be here again this year. He has indicated that with the many demands on his busy schedule he could be at Lexington Road between only 10:10 and 10:50. His timing fits perfectly with First Parish, and we hope many of you will be able to support his generosity.

We welcome speakers from the congregation as well as other ideas for future Forums. Please contact **Charles Lowell** at chasrlo@verizon.net or **Robert Hilsinger** at rhilsinger@verizon.net. ♦

PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE

Beyond our shared religious roots, nearly half a millennium ago, what's the deal with Transylvania anyway? The PCC asks you to mark your calendars now for a very special evening, Friday, January 8, when this year's Balázs scholar, Rev. Róbert Bálint, will join us for a potluck supper at First Parish.

Each year the Balázs scholarship program brings an exceptional young Unitarian Transylvanian minister to study at the Starr King UU Graduate School in Berkeley, California. And each year dozens of UU congregations throughout the country vie for the honor of hosting that exceptional young minister during his or her semester break. For one evening in January, First Parish has that honor. The evening's festivities will begin at 6 p.m. We'll have a sign-up sheet during Sunday coffee hours in December. Bring your curiosity, your favorite dish and a healthy appetite.

In other news, it is with great delight that we announce the dedication of the Keresztúr Terrace in front of the new RE wing, currently designated as such with a temporary plaque. A permanent bronze plaque will soon replace it.

The PCC would like to thank everyone who signed the "Thank You" card to our Székelykeresztúr friends for their astonishing recent donation to our First Parish capital campaign. A group picture of those in attendance at the Building Dedication ceremony on Sunday, November 8 will be included with our card. Meanwhile, news of the remarkable gift still reverberates, including at the UUA level with a piece in the most recent *UU World*. Go to www.uuworld.org/news/articles/152568.shtml.

The Partner Church Committee always welcomes new members. Our next supper meeting will be held at the home of **Rodger Mattlage** and **Pat Brinkman** on Thursday, December 10, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact either cochair by e-mail — **Lillian Anderson** (lillianand@comcast.net) or **Winslow Pettingell** (LondonSW11@aol.com). For the latest PCC news and information, including more about Rev. Bálint and the Balázs Scholar Program, go to www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/partner-church.

Minden jót! "Best wishes!"

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

First Parish in Concord
and
the Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Salem, Oregon
*invite you to join us in celebration
as we ordain*

Angela Marie Herrera
to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry

Saturday, December 12, 2009
at 3:00 P.M.

at First Parish in Concord
20 Lexington Road
Concord, Massachusetts

Reception to Follow

*Clergy and Seminararians are invited to gather
at 2:30 p.m. to robe and process*

*To RSVP, and to request child care, contact
Jane Johnson (978) 369-9602,
or jjohnson@firstparish.org*

Winter Solstice Celebration

The First Parish Women's Circle invites everyone to a celebration of the Winter Solstice on Monday, December 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the church Parlor. We'll tell stories, sing songs, enjoy the longest night, and observe the magic of the turning season — complete with wonderful music and seasonal treats. This celebration is planned to include all ages, in the tradition of a village gathering. Welcome, Yule!

The 2009 UUA General Assembly in Salt Lake City was a historic one for music leaders in our UU congregations. At the Service of the Living Tradition, the annual worship service that recognizes credentialed UU clergy and, more recently, credentialed Religious Educators, the UUA officially acknowledged the first class of seven credentialed UU Music Leaders.

The intent of the UUA's new Music Leader Credentialing program is to summon music leaders to their calling of music ministry and enrich their service to Unitarian Universalist congregations. The program articulates standards for UU music leadership in the areas of musical competence, UU heritage and values, and leadership and interpersonal skills. It provides a three-year path to develop the proficiency and knowledge needed to meet these standards and holds the candidate and credentialed music leader accountable to these standards.



I have had the privilege of participating in the design and implementation of this credentialing program, a process that spanned most of this past decade. In May, I was appointed to the UUA's Music Leader Credentialing Committee, the body that evaluates candidates and ultimately bestows the credential. In November, I attended my first meeting of this committee and was impressed by the depth and quality of the candidates' work and professional development. It bodes well for the future of UU Music ministry!

I am very pleased to say that **Gail Carey**, our Children's Choir director, is currently a candidate in this program. Gail has successfully completed her first year of study, and **Margie King Saphier** recently became her sponsor on behalf of First Parish. Gail's work in this credentialing program has already had a positive impact on our Children's Choirs and, increasingly, on the wider congregation and community. I am proud of First Parish's connection to this credentialing program that will benefit our congregation's music ministry as well as music ministry in the wider denomination. ♦

Blessings

— *Beth Norton*

An Afternoon of Christmas Carols

Are you in 4th, 5th or 6th grade? Do you know all of the words to the "Twelve Days of Christmas"? Do you have a favorite Christmas song? Come sing with us for an afternoon — just for fun. We'll have the words — don't worry. Just come to the Parish Hall on Wednesday, December 9, from 5:15 to 6:00 p.m. We'll provide the cider and snacks. For questions, call **Gail Carey**, Children's Choir Director at 781-626-3043. See you there!

Music Outreach to the UU Urban Ministry

In the spirit of shared song, a few of our First Parish Music Program staff will be heading out to First Parish in Roxbury on Saturday, December 5. Accompanied by several First Parish song-

loving volunteers, we will be offering a music workshop to young children who are served by the UU Urban Ministry. This social justice ministry is supported by member congregations that make financial contributions and participate in the social justice work of UUUM. The workshop will be led by **Gail Carey**, First Parish children's choir director, and will be part of their weekend Explorers Club. This monthly club is part of UUUM's Stand High/Stand United weekend enrichment program, serving about 50 at-risk children between the ages of 7 and 12. A few First Parish members are already long-term participants within this program. If you would like to join us on December 5 from 10:00 to noon, please contact either **Mark Richards** (mark.s.richards@verizon.net) or **Claudia Nimar** (cnimar@aol.com). ♦

PIPEWORK

Progress continues on the First Parish organ project at the Russell & Company shop in Vermont. Work has begun on rebuilding and retrofitting the existing organ console to serve as a secondary console in the balcony. Once this work is done, the console will be prepared to play the different sections of the new instrument as it gradually takes shape. This will be especially helpful, since it will take months for the new console to be built. Parts of the existing console that can be removed will be taken to the organ builder's shop for this rebuilding and retrofitting process in order to save travel and production time.

Work continues at the Russell shop on rank-by-rank pipe evaluations, and designs for the new pipe work. November and December are busy months for organ builders as much of their time is spent on maintenance and tuning for their regular clients during the late autumn through Christmas. Russell & Company is also in the final stage of completing the organ project in line before First Parish. They expect this project to be finished by Christmas.

After the first of the year, periodic work will be done on site at First Parish, and we expect after a few months we should be ready to hear one of the organ divisions as it comes to life for hymn playing and less complex organ music. ♦

— *Eric and Beth*

REFLECTION AND RE NEWS

This term in our Second through Sixth Grade program, we are exploring one of our six Unitarian Universalist sources — Jewish and Christian teachings that call us to Love

Thy Neighbor. In this term, we are learning from both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. We begin with a story or parable and then turn this into a hands-on expression of loving thy neighbor. Our children are listening to “The Feeding of the Five Thousand,” discussing

the possibilities of that miracle story, and then doing the work of feeding many people. All of our hands come together, making soup and bread for our congregation and for the UUSC. By bringing active life to these stories, we are giving our children the opportunity to live them and feel the power of working in community to accomplish something no one of us could have done alone. I believe that is one reason we come to First Parish, all of us — to experience life in ways that could not be done in isolation. The power of human connection, organization and cooperation that enliven the spirit and help us define personal meaning in our daily lives. ♦

— Pam Howell

OWL Mandatory Parent Orientation

Our Mandatory Parent Orientation nights are December 2 and 3 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. During this time, parents will meet our excellent OWL leaders: **Mark Russell Prior, Peter Nobile, Lora Venessy and Laura Warner**. We are lucky to have these knowledgeable and experienced leaders working with our children in this important First Parish program. The first OWL class begins on January 24.

Calling the Littlest Angels!

First Parish children three-years-old up to First Grade will be donning their angel garb on Sunday, December 20. Please do not miss this joyous occasion.

December RE Calendar

Sun., Dec. 6	Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–6th Grades No RE for 7th Grade 8th Grade Play, 10:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m. in the Parish Hall Coming of Age 4:00–6:00 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 13	Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–6th Grades No RE for 7th or 8th Grades
Sun., Dec. 20	Little Angel Sunday Regular RE for Babies–4 years Regular RE for K–2nd Grades No RE for 7th or 8th Grades
Sun., Dec. 27	Regular RE for Babies–4 years No RE for 2nd–8th Grades
Sun., Jan. 3	Regular RE for Babies–4 years No RE for 2nd–8th Grades

The First Parish Tableau

Would your child like to be a lamb? A shepherd? The baby Jesus? I know mine did! Please contact **Bridget Neale Paris** if you would like to be part of this long-standing Christmas Eve tradition at First Parish. Sign up for one or both service times — December 24, at 4:00 p.m. or at 5:30 p.m. Contact Bridget at b3@smd7.com.

Mark Your Calendars for December 11 and 12, at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall

Under the strong leadership of **Brenda Fingold** and **Victoria Rizzi**, our 8th graders have been working each Sunday to prepare the humorous play “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.” This is an intergenerational play for ages five and up. It playfully celebrates our Unitarian Universalist values of inclusion and the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Your family is sure to enjoy this heart-warming dramatic event and First Parish tradition. Come and see the play your child will be performing in when they too are in 8th grade.

Children’s Holiday Craft Workshop!

“Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but inside it’s so delightful...”

The Tradition Is Back!...the Children’s Holiday Craft Workshop is on Saturday, December 5, from 1:30-4:30 p.m. at First Parish.



Please join us at this wonderful workshop to watch our children with magic in their eyes and a smile on their face and feel the joy that only making a gift for someone or some pet you love brings!

RE News continued on page 7

**Honor Your Special Ones
with a Christmas Flower Memorial**

If you would like to contribute to the Christmas Memorial Flower Fund, please sign up at coffee hour on December 6 and 13. The names of those remembered will be printed in the order of service on Christmas Sunday.

STANDING COMMITTEE

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held at First Parish on Monday evening, December 14, at 6:30 p.m. Please look for the monthly minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log in) or on the church bulletin board. ♦

RE News

continued from page 6

**Second through Sixth Grade Workshop Rotation
Judeo-Christian Teachings: Love Thy Neighbor**

- 12/6 Week 4 – Caring for Others: Concord Prison Outreach, House of Hope. Story: The Prodigal Son
- 12/13 Week 5 – Thinking of Others: Caring Connection and Hanukkah, Stories: Zacchaieus, Judah Macabee
- 12/20 Week 5 – Thinking of Others: Caring Connection and Hanukkah, Stories: The 23rd Psalm and Judah Macabee
- 12/27 No RE for 2nd–6th Grades
- 1/3 No RE for 2nd–6th Grades

RE Orientation Dates 2009-2010 for Leaders and Teachers

Orientation Schedule for 2nd–6th Grade Workshop Rotation:

- Term 3: Wednesday, Jan. 6, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
- Term 4: Wednesday, March 17, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Orientation Schedule for 7th Grade Teachers:

- 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths:
Thursday, Jan. 7, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

SENIOR YOUTH NEWS

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

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

- December 6 Snowballs
- December 13 Trust Games
- December 20 Holiday Party (Yankee Swap and Cookie Baking). Bring something you already own, but don't want (wrapped) Alums welcome!
- December 27 No YRUU — Winter Vacation

Applications for the April Vacation Youth Service Trip to New Orleans are due December 10. This is an amazing opportunity for our youth to work rebuilding homes in the 9th Ward in New Orleans through our association with Gulf Coast Works. If you have any questions, contact me or **Faith Bade** (Social Action Director).

The Youth Group sponsors a Transylvanian student's education by earning \$400 for him each year. In the summers of 2007 and 2009, we got to meet our student, Hunni, whom we all loved. This year we are asking each youth to find a way to earn \$10 and donate it to our fund. It's a small thing for our youth to do that has a huge impact on Hunni.

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

— Mary-Wren vanderWilden

I am writing this after helping to decorate for the First Parish Auction. The group working away in the Parish Hall and kitchen are amazing. It again makes me question how we define social action. These First Parish members are contributing significantly to the success of this auction event, which ultimately funds the whole of First Parish, which ultimately creates the opportunities for us to “go out into the world.” Our outreach is visible and our impact significant. The SAC board chose our theme of “home” this year partly because everything we do begins in the home. Our First Parish home is an incredible launching point for our social action work. Thank you for all that you do. ♦



—Faith Bade,

Social Action Program Director

Crop Walk Thanks

Many thanks to all who made the 2009 Crop Walk a great success — walkers, volunteers, and sponsors alike. Despite the challenge of rain and snow, walkers raised an amazing \$53,000 for hunger relief! Any outstanding pledge money should be turned in to the office as soon as possible.

Caroling Party at the Prison Farm

Please join us on Friday, December 4, from 7 to 9 p.m. for the annual caroling party at the prison farm, Concord’s minimum-security facility. Each year people from Concord-area faith communities join with the inmates for this festive holiday event, an interesting and moving experience for all. Participants 18 and over are welcome, but you must sign up ahead by calling Lenore at 978-369-1430 before November 30. Questions? Call Lenore. Feeling timid? Contact **Don Miller** at 781-646-4965 or donaldbmiller@comcast.net.

“Soldiers of Peace: Stories from 14 Countries around the World”

On Sunday, December 6, 1:00–3:00 p.m., the Mass. Campaign for a U. S. Department of Peace will demonstrate, with this film, that peace is breaking out all over! The Peace Alliance, made up of the state campaigns, featured the film at its annual conference. Its

stories inspire us to continue building peace in all the ways offered by the First Parish Social Action Community and in our relationships. Following the film, we will answer questions.

A Thank-You

Thank you to all who attended the “Journey to Freedom” film screening on November 15. This story of moral courage was sponsored by the First Parish Social Action Community and our UUSC representatives, **Sue Beck** and **Leslie Fisher**.

Environmental Leadership at First Parish

We continue to refine what our role as a faith community is within the environmental movement. Stay tuned for our next event as we continue to form our vision. Meanwhile, thank you to all who participated in the 350.org rally at the Old North Bridge on October 24. This was a wonderful event and almost 100 First Parishioners attended. The Carbon Monster puppet created with the help of the RE 7th graders was a big hit. Thank you to **CC King**, **Margot Kimball** and **Bob Andrews** for making this happen.

Youth Service Trip to New Orleans, April 2010 Youth and Chaperones Needed

There will be a final informational meeting Sunday, December 6, at 6 p.m. at First Parish regarding the Youth Service trip to Annunciation Mission (www.annunciationmission.org) from April 17-24, 2010. Contact **Faith Bade** (FBade@firstparish.org) or **Mary-Wren vanderWilden** (vanderWilden@verizon.net) with questions.

SAC Holiday “Organizations in Need 2009” Deadlines

Please see our website for more details, but the essential dates are these: Mitten Tree ends December 13, Renewal House blanket drive and HGRM towel drive ends December 20, UUSC boxes must be returned by December 20, CPO gift bags may be donated until December 6, and Secret Santa donations are due by December 8, as specified when you received your recipient’s information. There are ongoing needs for household items and gently used clothing for Lowell, and Open Table pantry items. Go to www.firstparish.org under Social Action, Current Events for more information and for volunteer opportunities.

Donation Drive Scheduled January 30 at First Parish

The Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts (HGRM) and Cradles to Crayons (C2C) SAC programs are currently planning a big donation drive here at First Parish on Saturday, January 30, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stay tuned for more details about this fun, family-oriented day of social action! All ages welcome.

SAC News and Events continued on page 9

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.

The Many Facets of Membership: A Love Story

Once upon a time, there was Jeremy. Jeremy reached a time in his life when he felt pulled to find a church, one where he would feel safe with his questions of faith. After asking neighbors and reviewing websites, he found himself one Sunday morning staring at the large doors that would lead him into the historical church. For a man with a strong sense of adventure, his heart was racing wildly as he strained with the weight of the door, uncertainty gripping his body, like a toddler on the first day of preschool.

Jeremy was greeted warmly by a smiling face and an outstretched hand, a welcome that eased doubt enough for him to find a seat. Caught a little off guard at the intensity of it, he was moved and inspired by the service. Afterward, Jeremy was invited to coffee hour and asked to use a special mug so he could be greeted well. Jeremy complied, and he spent the next half hour talking to members, getting a tour of the building, and learning about the church.



How touched he was with the outreach made to him on his first visit. Jeremy's research drew him in the door; hospitality made him return.

And return he did! As an amateur singer in local theater, Jeremy joined the choir. An advocate for equal rights for all, he joined a committee dedicated to promoting equality and diversity. He provided snacks for coffee hour, volunteered as an elf for a children's craft workshop, and donated flowers for Sunday morning services. There were so many reasons why Jeremy felt at home at this church, the biggest being the community of people of which he had become a part.

After a while, Jeremy wanted to find another way to be of service, a way to give back for the warm, generous welcome he received. Jeremy joined the Membership Committee, where he was encouraged to help newcomers, as well as those seeking another or different connection within the church. It was there he was able to connect on yet another level with the community he had grown to love. The end.

Are you our Jeremy? The Membership Committee is looking for people who are interested in helping with the many ways we connect with each other. Please contact me at jfoley@firstparish.org. ♦

—*Jane Foley*

Membership Director

What's Your Affinity? Find Out on Sunday, December 6

Are you looking for a connection at First Parish? Be part of an Affinity Group! These groups participate in a variety of activities based on interests or hobbies, including French Conversation, Jewish Awareness, Needleworkers, Travel and more. On Sunday, December 6, during coffee hour, browse the Affinity Groups tables, ask questions or sign up for a new one. Active groups include Spanish Discussion, which will be making **Roberto Castillo's** fabulous paella on December 5, and the Jewish Awareness Affinity Group which meets monthly to discuss Judaism. Questions? Contact **Nita Chase** at anichase123@yahoo.com, **Steph Chiha** at steph@pierre.com, or see **Linda Benua**. ♦

SAC News and Events

continued from page 8

New sac Grants Public Comment Process

The SAC Grants Committee has instituted a new public comment process for all new grant requests. The public comment period for the fall grants requests has ended but stay tuned for the next public comment period after receipt of the spring 2010 Grants requests. Comments can be made online at www.firstparish.org, under Social Action, Grants, Grants Requests & Comments, or via the mail. Contact **Wendy Holt**, SAC Grants Committee chair, wendyholt48@yahoo.com, with any questions.

Women's Retreat Weekends

Please join other First Parish women for a weekend of fun, introspection and connection with women of all ages. This year we'll explore aspects of laughter and joy through the decades of our lives. Join us for this annual getaway to Senexet House in Woodstock, Connecticut (about 90 minutes from Concord), on one of two available weekends — Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, January 22–24 or January 29–31.

Bedrooms sleep one to five guests, and the meals are fresh, delicious, and prepared by someone else! Registration forms will be available in the church office, or find them online by December 15, at www.firstparish.org/forms. Questions: darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471. ♦

—**Darien Smith**, for the Women's Retreat Planning Committee

Women's AM/PM Book Group

As usual, the Women's Book Group will discuss just one book for November and December; and the selection is *Lydia Cassatt: Reading the Morning Paper*, by Harriet Scott Chessman. The evening discussion will be Monday, November 30, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning discussion, on Tuesday, December 1, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. — with both meetings at First Parish.

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 2010:

Jan 25, 26	<i>Infidel</i> , by Ayaan Hirsi Ali
Feb 22, 23	<i>Black Swan Green: A Novel</i> , by David Mitchell
Mar 29, 30	<i>She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders</i> , by Jennifer Finney Boylan
Apr 26, 27	<i>The Elegance of the Hedgehog</i> , by Muriel Barbery and Alison Anderson (translator)
May 24, 25	<i>My Life in France</i> , by Julia Child, with Alex Prud'Homme
June tbd	Potluck; suggestions for next year

Parish Notes

continued from page 2

the trauma of false accusations that shatter careers and relationships. The script is easily available, so we are expecting that everyone who attends will be bringing a copy of the play. If you have any difficulty with this, please contact **Claudia Nimar** at cnimar@aol.com, or **Lillian Anderson** at Lillianand@comcast.net.

It's Spicy Bouillon Season!

Winter is (nearly) upon us and it is time to think Bouillon! **Kel Keleher** is soliciting volunteers to help one Sunday a month, by either buying, preparing and serving for the 9:00 o'clock service or serving and cleaning up at the 11:00 o'clock service. Please e-mail him at kel@rkeleher.com or call 978-944-2734 if you are interested in helping with this delicious First Parish tradition.

Christmas Concert and Tea – December 8

Treat yourself and friends to an afternoon of holiday music and a traditional Christmas tea on Tuesday, December 8. The music program will begin at 3 p.m. in the Sanctuary during which the nationally acclaimed Sgt. Daniel Clark, known as "The Singing Trooper," will entertain us with unique renditions of popular holiday tunes and a variety of favorite songs. Clark has performed with the Boston Pops, Donny Osmond, several TV programs and numerous functions across the nation. Tea will be served in the Parlor and Parish Hall at 4 p.m. All men and women of First Parish and their friends are welcome. There is no charge and no reservations are necessary.

Transcendentalism Council

There are many exciting projects being created by our First Parish Transcendentalism Council. We recently cosponsored, with the Thoreau Society, a brilliant reenactment of Thoreau's defense of John Brown, the Emerson Forum, that featured a discussion with Jayne Gordon and **Jenny Rankin** and Jenny's classes and tours to various historical sites in Concord. We are currently developing plans for celebrating Margaret Fuller's Bicentennial on May 23, 2010 — events that may include lectures, tours and theatrical/musical presentations, as well as a worship service. We are also developing our itinerary for our next travel adventure in "Tracing the Steps of the Transcendentalists" abroad — this time to France. Stay tuned for details. The council meets on the third Thursday of each month. For more information or to get involved, contact **Steph Chiha** or **Lillian Anderson**.

Three Cheers for Angela Herrera

Come join us in expressing our thanks on Saturday, December 12, by taking part in Angela Herrera's ordination reception. We will need help with baked goods from home (hint: Angela loves dark chocolate), shopping, being part of a sandwich crew in the morning, platter arranging, table decorating, punch and coffee making, or cleanup. If you can help in any of these areas please get in touch with **Rhoda Miller** after December 2. Call her at 978-369-6639 or e-mail her at rhodamill@aol.com.

DECEMBER 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. (not 12/27)
Networking Group	Tuesday	9:00 a.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:00 a.m. (not 12/22 or 12/29)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m.
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	5:00 p.m. (not 12/23 or 12/30)
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	6:45 p.m. (not 12/23 or 12/30)
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:15 a.m. (not 12/24 or 12/31)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.

Tue Dec 1	9:30	<i>Women's AM/PM Book Group</i>	.	Sun Dec 13	10:00	Palestinian Crafts Sale
Wed Dec 2	9:30	WPA Board Meeting	.		4:00	Needleworkers
	7:30	OWL Parent Orientation	.	Mon Dec 14	12:00	Newsletter Deadline
Thu Dec 3	7:30	Threshold Choir	.		6:30	Standing Committee Meeting
	7:30	OWL Parent Orientation	.		7:30	<i>Humanist Meeting</i>
Fri Dec 4	7:00	Theater Group	.		7:00	Jericho Road Board Meeting
Sat Dec 5	1:30	Children's Crafts Workshop	.	Thu Dec 17	7:30	Transcendentalist Committee
	8:00	Brahms Recital	.		7:30	Neighboring Faiths Orientation
Sun Dec 6	10:30	8th Grade Play Rehearsal	.		7:30	Threshold Choir
	1:00	Soldiers of Peace	.	Fri Dec 18	7:30	<i>Rise Up Singing—Carols!</i>
	4:00	Needleworkers	.	Sun Dec 20	10:00	Crispaz Craft Sale
	4:00	Coming of Age	.		12:15	Nominating Committee
Mon Dec 7	7:30	Human Rights Council Breakfast	.		4:00	Needleworkers
	6:30	<i>T'ai Chi</i>	.	Mon Dec 21	5:30	Youth Service Meeting
	7:00	RE Council	.		7:30	Solstice Celebration
Tue Dec 8	3:00	<i>Tea and Poetry</i>	.	Wed Dec 23	6:30	Membership Committee
	3:00	Holiday Concert and Tea	.	Thu Dec 24		Holiday—Office Closed
Wed Dec 9	9:30	Pastoral Care Council	.		4:00	Christmas Eve Service
	12:15	<i>Sandwiches and Short Story</i>	.		5:30	Christmas Eve Service
	7:00	Youth Advisory Committee	.		7:00	Christmas Eve Service
Thu Dec 10	6:30	Partner Church Committee	.		9:00	Christmas Eve Service
Fri Dec 11	12:30	<i>T'ai Ji</i>	.	Fri Dec 25		Holiday—Office Closed
	7:00	8th Grade Play Performance	.	Sun Dec 27	4:00	Needleworkers
Sat Dec 12	9:00	Photo Club	.			
	3:00	Ordination of Angela Herrera	.			
	7:00	8th Grade Play Performance	.			

Massachusetts Bay District Served by First Parishioners

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) serves Unitarian Universalism by providing a venue for UU's from many congregations to come together over common issues and interests. Like any international organization, the UUA breaks down to 19 administrative districts in the United States. First Parish in Concord belongs to the Massachusetts Bay District (MBD). Led by District Executive Teresa Cooley, MBD provides leadership training and programming to 55 congregations in the greater Boston area. See the website at <http://www.mbdoua.org/>.



Two members of First Parish are active in the district. **Laura Graham** is serving her first year as a member of the District Board of Directors. Laura's leadership experience at First Parish is a valuable asset as the district makes its own transition to Policy Governance. **Mark Richards** chairs the District Nominating Committee. If you have an interest in serving with congregants from area churches, let either Laura or Mark know.

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

Ministers' E-Mail:
Gary E. Smith: garyesmith@firstparish.org
Jenny M. Rankin: revjenny@comcast.net
Margie King Saphier: mksaphier@comcast.net

First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Staff

Gary E. Smith, Senior Minister
Jenny M. Rankin, Minister
Melissa Perdue Gallo, Business Manager
Cassy Bosworth, Assistant to the Ministers
Jane Foley, Membership Director

Margie King Saphier, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care
Rebecca M. Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education
Jane Barnes, Religious Education Administrator
Carol Duane, Program Coordinator for Young Children
Mary-Wren vanderWilden, Youth Program Director

DECEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

The January Newsletter deadline is Monday, December 14, at noon. The Newsletter will be published the last week in December.

News items should be limited to 100 words.

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

Dan Holin, Jericho Road Executive Director
Leslie Koplou, Operations Manager, Jericho Road

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

First Parish in Concord
presents

THE LIGHT AND LIVELY SIDE OF JOHANNES BRAHMS

*The stolid composer of the German Requiem had a fun-loving side
you may not have heard before—but should not miss!*



8:00 PM Saturday, December 5, 2009

First Parish in Concord
20 Lexington Road

Liebeslieder (Love Songs), op. 52
for four voices and four-handed piano, and
Zigeunerlieder (Gypsy Songs), op. 112 and 103
as originally composed for four solo voices and piano

Performed by Susan Chivvis, Jeanie Furlan, Peter Boettcher, Larry Gall, Kathy Lague,
Gabiella Snyder, and Brian Gilbertie, with Robert Gartside and Roderick Phipps-
Kettlewell on piano.

Donations to benefit music programs at First Parish will be gratefully appreciated.



The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • December 2009

Welcome to the Wright Tavern Center. Online registration is available for all fall courses. Check our website at wrighttavern.org for schedule, course descriptions, presenter bios, registration information and policies. Questions? Contact Cassy Bosworth at cbosworth@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602. Please check the board in the lower church entryway for course locations..

I. Growing Your Spirit

Tibetan Buddhism

The Buddhist group meets in the First Parish Chapel. These sessions are open to all who are interested in transforming love, compassion and wisdom into action. You are welcome to share the spirit of community at these gatherings, regardless of your familiarity with Tibetan Buddhism. Donations are gratefully accepted. The Venerable Lobsang will return around Christmas. Contact Bill Seaver at 978-369-7318 with questions.

Wednesdays, 9:30–11:00 a.m. and Thursdays 7:30–9:00 p.m.

T'ai Ji

Being in touch with our own energy creates endless possibilities within ourselves. By combining music with qigong and the simple movement of t'ai ji we can release blocked energy, create wellness and bring our lives into balance. This class is geared to people of all ages. It offers gentle low-impact exercise to reduce stress and enhance optimal health, and to simply create a sense of joy in our lives. Taught by Mae Pagan.

Friday, 12/11, 12:30–2:00p.m. \$25/class

Covenant Groups

If you are interested in exploring topics such as acceptance, friendship, letting go, evil, death, etc., in an intimate group, consider joining a Covenant Group. Groups of fewer than ten people meet at least once a month for one and a half hours of confidential sharing of spiritual ideas and experiences. The following groups currently have openings:

Sundays, 4:00–5:30 p.m.; contact Bill Seaver, 978-369-7318 or billseaver@earthlink.net.

First and third Sunday of the month, 7:00–8:30 p.m.; contact Mark Richards, mark.s.richards@verizon.net or 978-771-9823.

First and third Tuesday of the month, 2:00–3:30 p.m.; contact Don Miller, donaldbmiller@comcast.net or 781-646-4965.

Tuesdays, 7:00–8:30 p.m.; contact David Downing at dowdav@earthlink.net or 978-263-8454.

Every other Thursday, 1:00–2:30 p.m.; contact Fred Van Deusen at fredvandeu@aol.com or 978-369-0435.

II. Creativity As A Spiritual Path

Sandwiches and Short Story

- Formerly known as “Listening for God,” this informal group meets with Gary Smith once a month to explore a story’s meaning. Bring a sandwich and beverage and join us Wednesday noon, December 9, at 12:15 p.m. The story for December is “Closely Held,” by Allegra Goodman, found in *Best American Short Stories 2008*, Salmon Rushdie, editor, pb \$14.00.

- Wednesday, 12/9, 12:15 p.m.

Rise Up Singing

- This informal monthly musical gathering of adults and children provides participants with an opportunity to sing and share traditional and contemporary folk songs, spirituals, hymns, rounds and chants in fellowship. Singers of all ages and experience are welcome. Bring a copy of *Rise Up Singing* if you own one. Individuals are encouraged to bring instruments if they wish. Led by Beth Norton and others. No registration necessary.

- Fridays: 12/18, 1/22, 2/26, 3/26, 4/23, 5/21 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Poetry

- Tea and Poetry meets the second Tuesday of the month. Join Rev. Margie King Saphier and Lorraine Loviglio for afternoon tea while sharing your favorite poems and listening to others share theirs (no poetic talent required). This informal monthly gathering is for you if you enjoy poetry or always thought you would if you knew where to start. Bring a poem (or two or three) to read aloud. Relaxed and inspired, we will recall poems we may have loved years ago, discover new ones, and explore the power of poetry to move us to tears or laughter.

- Tuesdays:, 12/8, 1/12, 2/9, 3/9, 4/13, 5/11 3:00–4:30 p.m.

III. Sources of Unitarian Universalism

Humanism

- Concord Area Humanists have these three gatherings planned.
- Monday, November 30, at Wright Tavern, 7:30 p.m., open discussion on “What is Our Mission?” RSVP to Pat Everett at pne@aol.com.
- Tuesday, December 8, 7:30 p.m., the small evening discussion group takes on “Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism.” RSVP to Paula Vandever at vandeverP@aol.com.
- Monday, December 14, at Wright Tavern, 7:30 p.m., celebrate Humanlight and a positive secular vision with an indoor potluck picnic. Bring a finger food and wine to share, and don’t forget your wine glass. We’re attempting a zero-plastic-waste affair. RSVP to Maria Cox, mc2cox@comcast.net.

CELEBRATE!

HOLIDAY EVENTS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR 2009
FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD

SEE COMPLETE DETAILS OF THE HOLIDAY EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE *MEETING HOUSE NEWS*

WORSHIP, ADVENT SUNDAYS

In the First Parish Sanctuary:

November 29: Advent I Worship services, led by Angela Herrera. Music provided by vocalist Emily Melcher.

December 6: Advent II. Children's Choirs, First Parish Choir (9:00); Gospel Choir (11:00). Gary Smith, preaching.

December 13: Advent III and Hanukkah, First Parish Choir (9:00) and Mark Nimar, baritone (11:00). Jenny Rankin preaching.

December 20: Advent IV, Christmas Sunday, with preschool choir of Angels (preschool thru first grade). *Ceremony of Carols*, by Benjamin Britten, presented by First Parish Choir. Gary Smith preaching.

WORSHIP, CHRISTMAS EVE

Four Services: 4:00, 5:30, 7:00, 9:00 o'clock

Family-oriented services at 4:00 and 5:30, with lots of Christmas carols and the Christmas story. Children's Choirs at 4:00, the Gospel Choir at 5:30. The 7:00 o'clock service features congregational carol singing; and at 9:00 o'clock, the First Parish Choir will sing. Each service concludes with candle-lighting and "Silent Night."

WORSHIP, AFTER CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 27, led by Margie King Saphier, with music by Sarah Whitney, violin. One service only, at 11:00 a.m.; child care for youngest children; no RE classes.

WORSHIP, AFTER NEW YEAR'S

Sunday, January 3, led by Gary Smith, with New Year's Intergenerational Choir. One service only, at 11:00 a.m.; child care for youngest children; no RE classes.

SING

"Rise

Up Caroling," Friday, December 18, 7:30 p.m. Singers of all ages, please bring voices, instruments and cookies to share. Carol lyrics and sheet music provided.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT AND TEA

Join friends at First Parish for holiday music and a traditional Christmas tea on Tuesday, December 8. Music begins at 3:00 p.m., and tea will be served at 4:00 p.m. No charge; no reservations necessary.

HOLIDAY SERVICE PROJECTS

This year more than ever – reach out: See reverse side.

DECK THE HALLS

Join the Flower Committee on Saturday, December 12, at 9:30 a.m. to decorate the Sanctuary for the season. Contact Peg Hedstrom for details, 978-3691562.

INVITE A SILENT GUEST

Guest at Your Table boxes, distributed November 15, are "fed" throughout the holidays and returned on December 20. Share the holiday with the work of the UU Service Committee.

CHILDREN'S CRAFTS

Saturday, December 5, 1:30-4:30 p.m. First Parish children are invited to spend the afternoon at the church, making great gifts for the holidays. Adult and teen "elves" are invited to share the fun! E-mail Sue Ward at susan_ward_mail@yahoo.com to help out.

"THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER"

On December 11 and 12 at 7 p.m. the eighth graders will present this humorous play for 5-year-olds and up. It playfully celebrates the Unitarian Universalist values. Your family is sure to enjoy this heartwarming dramatic event that is part of the First Parish tradition.

YOUTH HOLIDAY PARTY

On December 20, 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Wright Tavern, all YRUU youth and alumni are invited to come celebrate the holidays by baking cookies and participating in a Yankee Swap. Wrap something that you already own, but do not want anymore.

SOLSTICE REVELS

The First Parish Women's Circle invites everyone to a celebration of the Winter Solstice on Monday, December 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the First Parish Parlor/Parish Hall. We'll tell stories, sing songs, enjoy the longest night, and observe the magic of the turning season—complete with wonderful music and seasonal treats. All ages welcome, in the tradition of a village gathering. Welcome, Yule!

REMEMBER

Add a ribbon to the Holiday Memory Wreath in the Sanctuary; donate poinsettias for services.

FIRST PARISH SOCIAL ACTION “HOLIDAY ORGANIZATIONS IN NEED” 2009 DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

November 1–November 30: “Stock the Pantry” for Open Table. Pick up a bag with list of needed items in church office and deliver *Bag of Donated Food Items* to Open Table pantry (105 Everett Street, Concord) on Thursdays 1-3 p.m. or to 37 Emerson Road, Concord. Website is www.opentable.org. Contact Claudia Nimar at cnimar@aol.com.

November 1–December 6: Help fill Concord Prison Outreach *Gift Bags for Prisoners*. List of items needed found at www.firstparish.org under Social Action, Current Events, or in church office. Drop off in First Parish coatroom. Contact Becky Blodgett at 978-369-2564.

November 1–December 13: Start Knitting (or purchase) hats, mittens and scarves for the *First Parish Mitten Tree*, located in the Parish Hall. Donations to House of Hope and Common Cathedral. Contact Joan Wesolowski at joanwes@mail.com.

November 15: *Secret Santa* names have been given out during coffee hour for recipients from Renewal House, Eliot Center, Walden Street School and First Connections. Contact Allison Aley, at allisonaley@yahoo.com. *UUSC Guest at Your Table Boxes* are available in the church office, with a return date of December 20. Website is www.uusc.org. Contact Sue Beck at sbeck345@comcast.net.

November 22: Through December 20, donate *Used or New Blanket* for the Urban Ministry’s domestic violence shelter, Renewal House. Urban Ministry website: www.uuum.org. Drop blankets off at 37 Emerson Road, Concord. Contact Claudia Nimar (cnimar@aol.com). Through December 20, donate *Used or New Towels* for HGRM’s needy individuals and families. Drop off in the wicker basket in the First Parish coatroom. HGRM website: www.hgrm.org. Contact Diana Page at dianapage@hotmail.com.

Ongoing: Donate a wide variety of *Household Items* (pots, pans, dishes, small appliances, beds, furniture) for the homeless in Lowell. Clothing and linens can be dropped off at 294 The Valley Road, Concord. Larger items can be scheduled for pickup. Contact Bill Seaver at billseaver@earthlink.net.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Open Table in Concord and Maynard offer volunteer opportunities, which can be found on their website at www.opentable.org, for their food pantry and weekly meal program. Consider volunteering at the Concord pantry located at 105 Everett Street on Thursday afternoons. Contact opentableconcord@yahoo.com or 978-369-2275 to volunteer.

Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts (HGRM) offers volunteer opportunities on Tuesdays/Thursdays/Saturdays, 9 a.m. until 12 p.m., at their Acton facility. They provide large and small household items for those in need. Go to their website at www.hgrm.org or contact volunteers@hgrm.org or 978-635-0134 to volunteer.

Cradles to Crayons offers volunteer opportunities for all ages at various times during the week at their Giving Factory in Quincy. They take care of the personal needs of children ages 0-12. Volunteer at 617-471-8417 or cradlestocrayons.org.