



December 6, 2010
Volume 47, No. 4

The *Meeting House* News

FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Listening to the Congregation: The Vote and Its Message

On November 14, 250 members of First Parish gathered to vote on an article to adopt a new co-equal ministerial leadership structure for First Parish. The article passed by a vote of 128 to 122. The good news was that so many people participated, shared their views and listened to one another. Parishioners demonstrated that they care deeply about the future of their Church. The not so good news was that the Congregation was virtually equally divided in what they supported as the best ministerial leadership structure going forward.

So what is a vote this close really saying? One clear message is that there is no Congregational mandate for changing the leadership structure at First Parish, certainly not at this time. Though the vote also suggests there is sufficient energy and interest in the issue of leadership models to warrant further study.

Another possible message — less clear, as the vote was on structure not directly on ministers — is that there also is deep division among the congregation as to what is the best approach for replacing Gary. We know what competencies we seek in our ministers but are divided as to how to go about getting them fulfilled. The level of intensity and engagement on the part of the Congregation reflects our strong loyalties and affection for all three of our ministers.

From the listening we have done before, during and after the vote it is apparent there are many valid, logical perspectives for moving forward with First Parish ministerial leadership. We understand that people hold strong views about which is best and that these views are very different from one another.

Our interpretation from the closeness of the vote is that there is no overwhelming mandate for either a hierarchical or co-equal leadership structure at this point in time. So what do we do? The UU Transition Office tells us that the divisions we are experiencing are not unusual particularly in situations where there has been a long-standing, beloved minister in place. They recommend congregations use the transition to take pause and reflect on who they are and what they want. They also recommend we hire an Interim minister to help First Parish as a Congregation do just that.

I speak for the Standing Committee, the Executive Team, and the newly formed Search Committee in saying it is not the time to push forward with any new ministerial leadership structure nor is it a time to call a new minister. (See Jenny's letter, page 3). It is time to pause, celebrate Gary's ministry, say goodbye and then experience life without Gary. It is time to charge our newly voted in Search Team with finding the best possible senior interim minister who can help us take advantage of the opportunity this transition affords us — to come together for and with one another and emerge as an even stronger more vibrant community.

—*Jeff Clanon*

Chair, First Parish Standing Committee

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 5

Jenny Rankin, preaching

9:00 – Junior Choir & First Parish Choir

11:00 – Chalice Choir & Gospel Choir

December 12

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 – First Parish Choir

11:00 – La Jouissance

December 19

Gary Smith, preaching

9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24

4:00 – Children's Choirs

5:30 – Gospel Choir

7:00 – Congregational Carol Singing

9:00 – First Parish Choir

Sunday, December 26

Craig Nowak, preaching

11:00 only in the Chapel

– Nancy Ackerman, clarinet

Sunday, January 2

Gary Smith, worship leader

11:00 only – Congregational singing
led by Beth Norton

Don't Miss...

WPA HOLIDAY CONCERT AND TEA

Tuesday, December 7

3:00 p.m. Concert in the Sanctuary

4:00 p.m. Tea in the Parish Hall and Parlor

First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ♦ Gathered in 1636

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- ◆ Green Gift Ideas from the ELT
- ◆ Holiday Events
- ◆ Wright Tavern Programs

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 27
Monday, January 24
Monday, February 28

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

PARISH NOTES

Coffee Hour Treats

Thank you to all who have provided a snack to share during coffee hour over the past month. This congregation-wide effort helps to make coffee hour what it should be — a connection and community-building opportunity for newcomers and longtime members alike. The December Coffee Hour Snack schedule is as follows:

December 12: E, F & G

December 19: H, I & J

December 26: Bring your cookies/sweets leftovers to share!

Please provide a small snack during coffee hour on the Sunday when the first letter of your last name comes up.

Thanks for Another Great Artisans Fair!

The Women's Parish Association extends hearty and heartfelt thanks to all those who made this year's Holiday Artisans Fair in November another great success. It was a fantastic community effort! Everyone enjoyed working together, browsing and shopping for great gifts, and eating delicious food throughout the day. Fortunately, the weather cooperated nicely! Proceeds from the fair will be used for facilities maintenance and a variety of charities. Many thanks, everyone!

Women's Circle Solstice Event

Winter Solstice—the longest night of the year—when darkness descends and moves us to light candles and fires to ward off those lingering ancient fears about whether the light will return. Then, out of the darkness comes the birth of the light and the sun and the days begin their gradual lengthening through a new season. Join the First Parish Women's Circle in a Solstice event open to the church community. Stories, a warm fire, lighting of candles, sharing of refreshments—an enjoyable evening for all ages to celebrate this tradition, which is the foundation of so many of our winter holidays. We will celebrate on Monday, December 20, in the Parlor and Parish Hall at 7 p.m..

Labyrinth Project



We are happy to announce that the Women's Parish Association has made a very generous contribution to the Labyrinth Fund! Many thanks to the WPA, which does so much to support First Parish projects, and thanks to all who have made donations to support reinstallation of a Labyrinth at First Parish. We are over two-thirds of the way to our goal! We continue to accept donations and pledges of all sizes. For

more information or if you have questions, please contact

Darien Smith at 978-369-1471 or see the website,

www.firstparish.org/labyrinth.

Holiday Concert and Tea

To kick off your holiday season, our annual Holiday Concert and Tea will be held on Tuesday, December 7. Eric Kilburn and Ted Powers of the Swing Band, Swing Cafe, will entertain us with a concert of seasonal music in the Sanctuary at 3 p.m., followed by a traditional Christmas tea in the Parlor and Parish Hall at 4 p.m. All First Parish members and friends are cordially invited. Reservations are not required, but it would

Parish Notes continued on page 4

LETTER FROM REV. JENNY RANKIN

December 3, 2010

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish,

The ministerial transition process this fall has been full of ups, downs, surprises and discoveries for me. I remain enthusiastic about collaborative ministry, which I've think we've seen works for us. The vote in favor last month wasn't conclusive, however, and was complicated by several factors. Thus, it doesn't seem wise to push forward with the co-equal structure at this time, and therefore, I will not be submitting my candidacy to the Search Committee.

To me, this fall has been a signal that it is time for us to take a step back, take a breath (or two or three) and then find new ways to come together as a congregation, listen to one another's different points of view, find common ground, and a way forward. I will support the Standing Committee and the Search Committee as they do their work on the interim and on the future.

I am grateful for the overwhelming support I have received from First Parish. I love this church, this ministry, this congregation. I want to continue to walk this transition journey with all of you. I will continue in my current role and serve with strength, heart, and soul to the best of my abilities, as long as my ministry continues to be valuable to First Parish.

For fourteen years, I have been blessed to serve in ministry with Gary Smith, and I want to make the concluding chapter of our team ministry the best it can be. It's time for our community to lift up and celebrate Gary's ministry.

Hiring an interim minister is a wise decision. It will give us the space we need, once Gary has retired, to reflect on where we have been and consider where we want as a community to move.

Thank you for all of the support you have expressed for my ministry and for me as a person. Let us walk the days in front of us with gentleness, courage, respect, and confidence in this brave and bold institution.

Warmly,

Rev. Jenny Rankin

- **Ministerial Search Committee**

- The members of the newly formed Ministerial Search Committee are:

- **John Boynton**
- **Caroline McCloy**
- **Toby Smith Ropeik**, chair
- **Terry Rothermel**
- **Mary-Wren vanderWilden**
- **Fred Van Deusen**
- **Alec Walker**, SC rep
- **Rhoda Miller**

Christmas Eve at First Parish

4:00 – Children’s Choir

5:30 – Gospel Choir

7:00 – Carol Service

9:00 – Adult Choir

The services will be geared to different ages, from families with very young children at 4:00 p.m. to the adult musical service at 9:00 p.m. All services will conclude with the traditional candlelighting and singing of *Silent Night*. ♦

Parish Notes

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be helpful for planning purposes if you contacted the office or **Dian Pekin** at pekincd@comcast.net if you are planning to attend, or if you need child care or transportation. There is no charge for this event. It would be helpful, but not necessary, if you brought some sweets to share (cookies, brownies, bars, etc.) all plated up. Vegan and vegetarian items will be available.

Heifer Gift Cards for Sale in December

Heifer gift cards will be on sale at all coffee hours on December 5, 12 and 19. A perfect gift for the person who doesn’t need a “thing” gift. Give the “gift that keeps on giving” — various animals that keep on giving as the recipient passes on the gift of offspring to another family in villages around the world. For information, call **Diane** or **Dave Clapp** at 781-257-5025.

Crispaz Holiday Gifts on December 12

Once again, the wonderful crafts from El Salvador and Guatemala will be available for holiday gifts. On Sunday, December 12, in the Parish Hall, Fair Trade Crafts and Crispaz will be offering beautiful tablecloths, napkins, wooden boxes, tote bags, carved nativity scenes, toys, jewelry, and lots more. Your purchases will help some 40 cooperatives and more than 500 women in these countries. Come to the Parish Hall at coffee hours on December 12 to start on — or complete! — your holiday shopping.

Art Show Benefiting Jericho Road Project

One hundred and fifty people attended an art opening at the home of **Sven** and **Janine Olson** on the evening of November 11. Proceeds from the art show, which featured work from 20 local artists, benefits the Jericho Road Project. The show included a wide variety of mediums and styles — including oil, pastel, acrylic, watercolor, egg tempura and photography. Works will remain on display and be available for purchase through the holidays at the Olsons’ home.

PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE

Just in time for the holidays the Partner Church Committee will have Transylvanian craftworks for sale during the coffee hours on December 5 and 12. We invite you to come and have a look!

By all accounts last month’s Culture and Music Pilgrimage to Transylvania was a resounding success. In attendance were 22 members of our First Parish community, including **Gary** and **Eliz Smith**; our music director, **Beth Norton**; members of the choir; and members of the Partner Church Committee.

As part of the week’s festivities, the Community House (as it was previously referred to) was officially named the Székelykeresztúr-Concord (USA) Unitarian Parishes Friendship Congregation House, or Friendship House for short. In commemoration of that very same friendship, our own **Rev. Gary Smith** presented a plaque to Rev. József Szombatfalvi, on behalf of First Parish, in fond recognition of the 20th anniversary of our very special partnership.

Meanwhile, the group for next summer’s (fifth) Youth Service Pilgrimage (YSP) has now been formed and planning sessions are well under way for our July 6th departure. For ongoing updates about the YSP program be sure to check the PCC Web page at www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/partner-church.

Our next Partner Church Committee meeting will be held on December 9, and we would love to have you join our happy group. For further information drop **Winslow Pettingell** a line (at LondonSW11@aol.com), and for our latest PCC news and information go to www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/partner-church. ♦

Minden jót! “Best wishes!”

— **Winslow Pettingell**, PCC chair

A Special Note from the Standing Committee

If you are not already signed up to receive emails from FPAnnounce, we encourage you to do so. This is the primary way for you to learn about news and events at First Parish, especially news of an immediate nature. In this time of ministerial transition, it is especially important for everyone to have timely access to as much information as possible.

To subscribe, please send an e-mail to firstparish-announce+subscribe@googlegroups.com. You will not get a confirmation message back. Please help us improve our communication to the Parish by joining the e-mail list. ♦

PASTORAL CARE NEWS

According to Jennifer Cole in *Ceremonies of the Seasons*, “Seasonal rituals give rightful symbolic importance to the significant changes in the natural year, marking the passage from one phase to the next.” In this multicultural period of our history, many of us celebrate a composite of rituals as we mark the passage of time, helping to make meaning of our lives. Some of us celebrate Hanukkah and Christmas, others the Winter Solstice, some observe Kwanza and some celebrate all.

At our home, during the Thanksgiving weekend, we also celebrate Christmas. This tradition began when our twin sons each got married. We soon learned their respective in-laws preferred having their adult children during Christmas, while we preferred Thanksgiving. So on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, we decorate the tree and do a simple gift exchange, in which each person received one name for gift giving. We have followed this tradition for four years. But family traditions around holidays can be short-lived



because families are always changing. This year Greg and Lauren, who live in Virginia, were not able to join us because they are expecting a baby in December. As more grandchildren arrive, there will come a time when our adult children will tell us they no longer want to make the trip to Massachusetts. Hopefully by then, Jon and I will feel relieved that we are no longer responsible for hosting this high energy (but wonderful) weekend. In the meantime, we spend Christmas Day with our daughter’s family in Northborough (with two grandchildren being raised Jewish). I often wonder how other families work out the many family demands of the season. I got my idea from one of my sisters. I am sure there are First Parish families trying to resolve the many family demands of the holiday, so please let me know how you resolved this issue and how long it lasted, so I can share with others your anonymous success and failures. Hearing about other people’s creative holiday traditions reminds us we are not alone.

And yes, it is important to remember the holidays are also a stressful time. They usually don’t match the photo-ops we see on TV, in the movies or portrayed in advertisements. Having the whole family together can remind us of loved ones no longer living. Our memories can simultaneously be full of joy and sorrow. Recognizing that this is a season of remembrance, the holiday wreath will be in the Sanctuary through New Year’s so you may tie a ribbon on the wreath in memory of loved ones. Also, the Threshold Choir will be offering a meditative service on Sunday, December 5, in the Chapel at 4:00 p.m., to remember loved ones and to enter a peaceful and reflective hour for spiritual nourishment.

A meaningful holiday tradition that continues at First Parish is the delivery of poinsettias on Sunday, December 26, to members of First Parish who are recovering from an illness, whose loved one recently died, or who have difficulty coming to Sunday services. Please sign up during coffee hour to participate in this longtime tradition of bringing the warmth and caring of the congregation to a parishioner. It is a tradition that the whole family can do together. ♦

In faith,

—*Margie King Saphier*

Associate Minister for Pastoral Care

STANDING COMMITTEE

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held at First Parish on Monday, December 13, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. on the Wright Tavern sunporch. Please look for the monthly minutes online at firstparish.org under Church Life (you must log in) or on the church bulletin board. The January Standing Committee meeting will be held on Monday, January 10. ♦

MUSINGS

Here it is, December, and as **Gary Smith** says, “we are looking down the barrel at Christmas.” As a church musician, I enter Advent with a combination of delight and dread. Mostly delight, because of all the beautiful music that we hear only during this time of year; dread, because it gets so busy and if I’m not careful I become so focused on the performance of Christmas music that I lose sight of its message.

That’s one of the reasons I love the carol “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”. Those of you who attend the 9:00 o’clock service on Christmas Eve may have noticed

that we always sing it. Now you know why. Each time we sing it, it brings the Christmas story, in all its mythic glory, to a place of relevance to me, encouraging me to “hear the angels sing” above the “Babel sounds” of every day life.



“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” is a true Unitarian Christmas carol. Rev.

Edmund Hamilton Sears [1810-1876] wrote the poem in 1849 while he was serving First Parish Unitarian Church in Wayland, Mass. Sears also served Unitarian parishes in Lancaster and Weston.

It has been said that Sears wrote the carol as a melancholy Christmas reflection. Hymnologist William Reynolds observed that it was the first of a number of carol-like hymns written by American poets in the 19th century and that “hymns stressing the social message of Christmas — ‘peace on earth, good will’ — are distinctly American.”

Like most of the Christmas carols in Singing the Living Tradition, the text of “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” has been altered — though not as egregiously as some. (That’s a topic for another column.) The changes to Sears’s lyrics reflect an impulse toward gender neutral language; for the most part, his essential message remains intact.

But one verse was completely omitted from our hymnal, and it is the one I find I most need to hear during this season. Perhaps you do too:

*And ye, beneath life’s crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!*

May you find rest and peace this Christmas season — and hear the angels sing. ♦

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Rise Up Caroling Friday Night, December 17, at 7:30 p.m.

Each December we have a “special edition” of our monthly Rise Up Singing session to celebrate the Christmas season. This is your chance to sing all of those carols you love, and to teach them to your children! Singers and instrumentalists of all ages are invited to the Parish Hall. Word sheets will be provided for singers and music for instrumentalists. We have parts for just about any instrument! Bring a plate of cookies to share and get into the Christmas spirit. ♦

PIPEWORK

During November significant work was accomplished on the new First Parish organ. A wood flute from the old organ was restored, with all stoppers in the top completely repacked. This caused this rank of pipes to come alive in a way not heard in decades. It is now a useful color with definition and warmth, which we used for the continuo part of the Telemann motet on Thanksgiving Sunday. In addition, three more ranks of pipes were added to the organ’s Swell division (contained in the left-hand expression box when facing the façade). This now gives us one complete diapason chorus for hymn leading and another lovely flute made from scratch by Russell & Company. We continue to be impressed with the builder’s ability to rebuild vintage pipework in a way that is appropriate to our room’s acoustic. Their manufacturing and tonal skill is evident in how impossible it is to tell any difference between their completely new ranks and remanufactured pipe ranks they use within the instrument.



Remanufactured pipes are quite labor intensive, but save significant money on materials by using pipe stock from the builder and from our old instrument. We now have 10 ranks of pipes installed. but remember, there is a total of 45-46 ranks that make up the new instrument, so there are a lot more to come. Several of those ranks are already in process, with installation expected after the first of the year.



The expression louvers that are so helpful in controlling tone volume have now been completed and are functioning beautifully. These flank the entire fronts of both boxes that make up the back half of the organ. Many of the fluorescent light fixtures that we saved from the old organ have also now been installed in

Pipework

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Recently I consulted with one of our sixth graders on our RE program. I am fortunate to have such thoughtful and knowledgeable kids in our program that calling on them for



advice is not strange at all. I presented him with a problem I was having for our December 19 RE class. "I'm having Santa visit RE and I'm wondering how kids could tell him their wishes with such a large group." There was a brief silence.

"Let's cut paper ornaments and have kids write one wish for something you can't buy in a store. Then we'll hang them on the Mitten Tree." Yes, that was it right there. He said it all so simply. And so I ask you, What is your one wish for this holiday season that you cannot buy from a store? Like me, I bet the answer has something to do with family, health and just being together.

Mark Your Calendars for Friday evening, December 11, at 7 p.m. and Sunday morning, December 12, at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. in RE. Under the leadership of **Brenda Fingold** and **Jake Nunes**, our eighth 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 heartwarming dramatic event and First Parish tradition. The eighth graders will also be performing the play for both the 9 and 11 o'clock RE programs for second through seventh grades. ♦

— Pam Howell

Director of Religious Education

Seventh Grade Art in Action

This year our seventh graders made art from the remnants of living: they made art out of laundry, they made planters out of newspaper, they made a pulpit cloth out of the debris from Mary Abbott's discarded plastic from diabetes, and they made art out of nature in the style of Andrew Goldsworthy. All of these expressions of art symbolized the resourcefulness of the

December 2010 RE Calendar

Sun., Dec. 5	Regular RE for Babies—4 years Regular RE for K—6th Grades 7th Grade Art in Action at 11 a.m. (Brooks Room) 8th Grade Dramatic Arts at 6:30 p.m. (Parish Hall) 9th Grade Coming of Age at 7 p.m. in the Emerson Room
Sun., Dec. 12	Regular RE for Babies—4 years Regular RE for K—6th Grades – Begin in the Parish Hall at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. for Play 7th Art in Action at 11p.m. (Parish Hall) 8th Dramatic Arts at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. (Parish Hall)
Sun., Dec. 19	Regular RE for Babies—4 years Regular RE for K—6th Grades No 7th Grade program No 8th Grade program
Sun., Dec. 26	Regular RE for Babies—4 years No RE for K—9th Grades
Sun., Jan. 2	Regular RE for Babies—4 years No RE for K—9th Grades

human spirit. Lives are unpredictable at best, and when things just don't go as planned, our reaction to the change is what really counts. Looking at a difficult situation with a spirit of resourcefulness builds courage and moves us toward meaningful living.

Our leaders helped our seventh graders make friends while lifting our UU principles of honoring our earth and respecting the interdependent web of life. In appreciation of their work with our teens, I would like to thank **Karen Economopolous**, **Jill Appel**, **Bettina Burbank**, **Paul Chang** and **CC King** for guiding our kids in expressing our UU values through original art.

Angel Sunday on December 19

Please do not miss this long-standing First Parish tradition. Our angels will process down the aisle in all of their angelic splendor at both the 9:00 and 11:00 o'clock services. Thanks go out to **Sue Beck** for leading our little angels in song and spirit on this glorious Sunday.

Second- to Sixth-Grade Workshop Rotation Fall Term: Judeo-Christian Teachings

Dec. 5	Animals Make Us Human Grades 2 & 3 – Pets and the Art of Playing Grades 4 & 5 – Horses: Learning to Find Calm in Fear Grade 6 – Wild Animals: Our Need to Seek
Dec. 12	The Best Christmas Pageant Ever at 9 and 11 a.m.

RE News

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FROM THE INTERN MINISTER

RE News

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Dec. 19 Baking Holiday Cookies for the Congregation with Santa as a Special Guest in RE

Jan. 9 Honor All Beings – Water and Guest at Your Table

Orientation for 2011 Religious Education Teachers

Neighboring Faiths – 7th Grade Teachers:
January 10 at 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Young Children's Program (Caregiving, Spirit Play & Story Play) Winter and Spring Teachers:
January 19 at 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Workshop Rotation Program for Second–Sixth Graders:

Winter Term: January 26 at 7:30–9:30 p.m.

Spring Term: April 30 at 7:30–9:30 p.m.

Teen Programming (8th Grade):

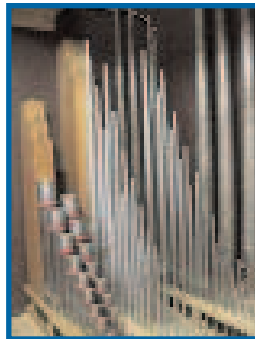
8th Grade *Mandatory Parent OWL Orientation*
December 1 and 2, 7:30 p.m.

Pipework

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the new instrument to make servicing and continued installation much more efficient.

So, listen carefully to the tonal blend and lovely sounds coming from the rear gallery during this holiday season. We've heard many positive comments about what we're hearing so far and trust that this organ will only continue to blossom in the New Year. ♦



—*Eric Huenneke*

Parish Organist

It has become something of a tradition for my husband and me and a few of our friends to go to Manchester, Vermont, the day after Thanksgiving and peruse the outlet stores and then enjoy lunch at a favorite restaurant. This year, as usual, I left empty-handed save for a couple of used books I purchased from the local bookseller.

The truth is I don't much care for the outlets; I gave up caring about the logo on my shirts long ago. I treasure instead the company of my husband and friends. I look forward to this day each year, knowing we will reminisce about years past and add a few new pages to the story of our lives. Such is the nature of those events in our lives we deem tradition.

Our traditions, no matter how banal the setting, are ways we make meaning, number our days, and celebrate what is important in our lives. What traditions do you hold near and dear to your heart? ♦

Blessings and peace,

—*Craig Nowak*

Do you realize that almost everything that we do — the way we live, where we work, how we eat, how we play — relates to the “environment”. The environment is *us*. It is all that is in us and around us. The environment is your life, your family, your earth. I find it overwhelming to think about all that I do that impacts the “environment.” So this



holiday season I am focusing on two things — simplifying my holiday frenzy and reducing the waste created by my holiday. For help with this I have turned to The Center for a New American Dream (<http://www.new-dream.org/holiday/simplify.pdf>), which “works to promote sustainable lifestyles that will ensure a healthy planet for future generations.” Read their brochure. Find out more. In the meanwhile, here are a few things that I am going to try to do:

- Reflect on what kind of holiday celebration I want, with more activities to enjoy with my family and friends.
- Give more gifts of time and experience, and gifts to charity. (My family loves Heifer International www.heimer.org for the gifts that keep on giving.)
- Change how I box and wrap my gifts. Why buy wrapping paper when I have newspaper (especially the comics!), wonderful artwork from my daughter, old calendars and Christmas cards, and fabric in my house? And why get extra boxes when I can use the ones from last year, or from my recycling bin (cereal boxes are a great size), or not use any at all.
- Plus I think ribbons are overrated. (Did you know 38,000 miles of ribbon alone is thrown out annually — enough to tie a bow around the earth?) And I could always cut up fabric to make a bow.

Maybe you can try to do something different to simplify your holiday season. Let me know. I would love to share your stories.

Make sure you check out the Holiday Gift Ideas from the Environmental Leadership Team at <http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/news/elt-holiday-gift-ideas-2010.html>. Send me *your* ideas to add to this list! ♦

Happy Holidays!

— *Faith Bade*

Social Action Program Director

Immigration: Common Read

- Did you get your book yet? *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona Borderlands*, by Margaret Regan, is available in the church office (\$15 per book). Other UU’s are participating in this Common Read (<http://www.uua.org/publications/commonread/index.shtml>). **Craig Nowak** is planning his trip to the border in January as part of his ministerial internship. The UUA is publishing information on immigration as a proposed Study/Action Issue (www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/152647.shtml) and **Jenny Rankin, Craig and Faith Bade** are preparing for our discussions with you on Sunday, January 9, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.; Thursday, January 20, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.; and Thursday, January 27, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Sign up in the church office or contact **Faith Bade** at FBade@firstparish.org.

UUSC Thank-You & Guest at Your Table Boxes

- Thanks to all who attended the UU Service Committee luncheon and workshop on November 7. Over 50 First Parish members became new UUSC members with a contribution of \$40. Thanks to all! More Guest at Your Table boxes are available in the church office. The boxes are now due back on Sunday, January 9 ([Please note this date change](#)). To learn more about the UUSC, contact **Sue Beck** at sbeck345@comcast.net.

Holiday SAC

- The **Mitten Tree** is up in the Parish Hall and will remain up until December 19.
- **Secret Santa** matches have been made and you should all have your instructions on when and where to return your gifts. Contact **Allison Aley** with questions at allisonaley@yahoo.com.
- The **Clementine Drive** for Open Table on Sunday November 21 resulted in over 15 boxes collected. This made a great difference to the Open Table Thanksgiving meal. Thank you!

New SAC Web Pages

- The new Social Action Web pages are “live.” Go to sac.firstparish.org to see them. Take a few minutes to see the enhancements — the calendar of all of our social action programs; the news blog on events and news of interest related to these programs. Browse the site using the tags and categories listed. Give us feedback. What else would you like to see? Let me know at FBade@firstparish.org.

SAC News and Events

continued on page 10

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.

Home Drop-Off Day on January 22 — 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Start sorting through your items! Get ready to volunteer! This wonderful all-church event is back. Donations will benefit Cradles to Crayons (C2C) (www.cradlestocrayons.org), and Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts (HGRM) (www.hgrm.org). Acceptable donations are listed on their websites but can include: new and gently used clothing, books, toys, baby items, and school supplies for kids age 0-12, plus furniture (mattresses, bed frames, tables, chairs, sofas), kitchenware (dishes, glassware, pots, toaster ovens, coffee makers), linens (sheets, blankets, towels), and other household items like rugs, prints, vacuums, radios, irons). Contact **Abby White** with questions about C2C at abbywhite@comcast.net and **Alice Hogan** about HGRM at ac.hogan@verizon.net.

SAC Grants Information

The Fall 2010 Grants applications are being reviewed and the awards will be announced shortly and posted on our website, www.sac.firstparish.org. The spring application deadline is March 15, 2011. Contact **Wendy Holt** at wendyholt48@yahoo.com.

Guatemala Recovery Project

Maya Skills is a collective of Guatemalan Mayan women who are survivors of the trauma of their civil war. Our First Parish Social Action Community has selected Guatemala Recovery as one of our target projects. First Parish members of the Guatemala Recovery Project will be selling Maya Skills jewelry during coffee hours December 5 and December 12. Please buy gorgeous jewelry and support a great cause. Julio Cochoy, who spoke at our Forum on “Trauma and Healing in Guatemala,” will be at the tables and will be glad to tell more about Maya Skills and healing the trauma. For additional information, contact **Steve Cadwell** at CadwellSA@aol.com.

GREEN NOTES

Mindful Living Idea: Wrapping paper is accepted in most recycling programs. Wrapping paper made from mylar, or metallic or foil coated papers is typically not recyclable. Usually ribbons and bows are not recycled either. Check with your trash service company before recycling.

Mindful Living Statistic: Just by eliminating daily wasted plastic and paper from your lunch or your child’s, you would save 67 pounds of garbage a year.

ELT Holiday Gift Ideas

The Environmental Leadership Team (ELT) has published a list of Holiday Gift Ideas (<http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/news/elt-holiday-gift-ideas-2010.html>). Check out the “green” ideas insert with this newsletter for a wide variety of recipients. How about an Eco-artware business card holder? Or a large animal model from Cardboard Safari? Or a share from a local CSA? Or give the gift of sharing a ride or delivering a vegetarian meal? This gift list will also be available in an insert on Sunday, December 5. Do you have your own ideas for “green” gifts? Send them to **Faith Bade**, FBade@firstparish.org, and we will publish them on the new SAC Web pages.

ELT: Sustainable Development Discussion at the Wright Tavern Center

Sustainable Devens: a local example of sustainable development applied to a former Army base in North Central Massachusetts. Learn about how Devens has successfully balanced economic development, environmental protection and social equity on the former 4400 army base just down Route 2. Devens is viewed by many as the premier U.S. example of eco-industrial development, where firms collaborate to reduce their environmental impact, share by-products and improve their bottom line. Devens has created a nonprofit, the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, to work with firms to green their operations, and has developed the Eco-Star environmental branding and achievement program as a tool for members on their journey toward sustainability. **Peter Lowitt**, FAICP, ELT member and First Parish member, will discuss the groundbreaking work in sustainability that is occurring in Concord’s backyard. Monday: January 24, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Fee: \$10. Sign up in the church office or e-mail cbosworth@firstparish.org.

Plan Ahead — Save the Date! Valentine’s Day Latin Dance Night

Saturday, February 12.

The First Parish El Salvador Youth Service Trip is hosting a Valentine’s Day Latin Dance Night, including professional dance lessons on February 12. All proceeds will go to El Centro de Arte Para la Paz. Questions? Contact **Julia Reynolds** at julia.rey94@gmail.com.

SENIOR YOUTH NEWS

December is the beginning of winter — the time when we feel the cold and the long dark nights and respond by but-toning up and hunkering down. For many youth, the weeks of December seem long. Fall activities have ended or will soon be over, exams keep coming, and college application deadlines are right around the corner. Minds turn toward winter recess. Quietly many let go of the determination that had been keeping them active and focused for the past months.

But if we look at nature, December is an important time. Under the ground, hidden from view, seeds are in prepara-tion, waiting for the right time to come forth. Animals may be hibernating, but they too are resting for exertions to come.

So December is a period of needed rest, of pulling back, of recharging before future growth. This month, YRUU will honor this spirit by taking things light and easy:

Dec. 5 Bonfire and S'mores

Dec. 12 Wink

Dec. 19 Cookies and Yankee Swap – YRUU Alums Welcome

Dec. 26 No YRUU

Jan. 2 Reflections for a New Year – YRUU Alums Welcome

Also, we have some great events on the horizon:

Jan. 28-30 YRUU Winter Retreat!!!!

Feb. 4-5 Chili Lock-In (Chili being sold after service on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 6)

Feb. 11 Rock 'n' Roll Bingo

YRUU is starting to collect plastic bags and clean, dispos-able plastic take-out containers for the chili sale. If you have any, please drop them off for Anastassia in the RE office.

In closing, good wishes to all of us who are taking the time to recuperate and revitalize our spirits.

As always, call or e-mail me with any ideas, questions or comments. ♦

— *Anastassia Zinke*

Youth Program Director

SUNDAY FORUMS

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

December 5, 2010

Prophetic Unitarians and Universalists of the 19th Century

Polly Peterson of our First Parish community will talk about her recently published book, *Stirring the Nations's Heart*, in which she presents 18 stories of prophetic Unitarians and Universalists of the 19th century. The UUA requested that she write this book for a variety of uses in RE, youth, and adult courses, discussion groups, etc. It is a compelling reminder of how indebted we are today to the great thinkers and activists that she has written about. Even if you heard Polly's talk at the October WPA lunch-eon, this Forum will be of interest to you, since Polly will cover different people.

December 19, 2010

Santa Claus

Santa will be making a special visit to First Parish!

Save the Date!

Saturday, January 22, 2011

6:30 p.m. to ??

First Parish Circle Supper

Circle Suppers are potluck dinners of seven to nine people held at the homes of those willing to host. The suppers are a great opportunity to sample the cooking of your fellow First Parishioners, as well as to spend some quality time together.

To attend a supper, just sign up during coffee hour on Sundays through January 9, or e-mail **Jane Foley** at jfoley@firstparish.org. All we need from you is your name, address, e-mail and telephone number, and how many people you are bringing with you. You don't need to know anyone or even know how to cook to attend — you can always offer to bring the wine and bread!



Can you host a supper in your neighborhood? It's easy and painless. Just set a table and open your home!

Please contact **Jane Foley** — jfoley@firstparish.org.

Membership as a Lifelong Journey

Twenty people recently signed the Membership Book, an indication that there is a strong commitment to the health and vitality of First Parish. Whether you signed the book two weeks ago or twenty years, we must keep in mind that membership does not end when you sign the Membership Book; rather, it is an ongoing journey, full of discovery and connection. Members are encouraged to develop a strong UU and First Parish identity, participate in programs and special events, serve in leadership positions, and give back to the First Parish community and the larger world around us.

The Reverend Victoria Weinstein of the First Parish Church of Norwell reminds us, "We never really know what combination of fate and friendship and good luck it is that brings certain people together in this world for any purpose. But we believe that membership in the church calls each of us here to celebrate the fate that has drawn us together, and to regard each one a spiritual friend and a potential teacher." ♦

—*Jane Foley*
Membership Director

Hold On to What Is Good.

First Parish is... "a warm, caring community of intelligent, compassionate people...an ever-changing circle of friends...a large family with a common desire to live up to, and work together to achieve, a common set of principles...a spiritual home where I can unclutter my mind, feed my soul and take part in a community of shared values." (*Responses from Annual Appeal 2010*)

First Parish is... a song at the bedside of a man in transition, her coming of age, a drop of water on his forehead to celebrate his birth, a healthy meal when she is too ill to cook, a celebration of their union, a renewal of vows, a memorial to her life.

First Parish is... being accepted and challenged each week, harmonizing together in song, a children's message that moves you to tears, connecting with a friend at coffee hour, translating values into practice with people from all corners of the world, laughing with friends.

First Parish is... always here for you. For over 374 years, First Parish has served families, women, men and children through lean times and strife, through times of abundance and celebration.

**Hold On to What Is Good:
Make a Gift to the First Parish Year-End Appeal.**

Your gifts directly and immediately support every aspect of First Parish's mission. They account for nearly 70 percent of First Parish's operating budget.

If you have not yet received your year-end appeal mailing, please contact **Pamela Hathaway** at plhathaway@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602. ♦

—*Pamela Hathaway*
Development Director

Women's Retreats! Looking Back and Moving Forward — Celebrating the Community of First Parish Women

This year's First Parish Women's Retreats will focus on the changing roles of women as individuals and in community as we celebrate the 20th year of the Women's Retreats. As one focus of the weekend, the planning group is recommending *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present*, by Gail Collins. All women of First Parish are warmly invited and welcome! The retreats are held at the cozy Senexet House Retreat, in northeastern Connecticut; the dates are January 21–23 and 28–30. Registration forms will be available in the church office, or find them online by December 15, at www.firstparish.org/forms. Questions? Contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471. ♦

The 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 *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. The evening session will be held Monday, December 6, 7:30–9:00 p.m.; and the morning session, on Tuesday, December 7, 9:30–11:00 a.m. Both at First Parish.

All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the monthly 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. ♦

Book and Dates for 2011:

- Jan. 24, 25 *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present*, by Gail Collins
- Feb. 28, Mar. 1 *The Glass Castle: A Memoir*, by Jeannette Walls
- Mar. 28, 29 *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, by Khaled Hosseini
- Apr. 25, 26 *The Help**, by Kathryn Stockett
- May 23, 24 *Still Alice: A Novel*, by Lisa Genova

*Recommended also as a good audio book

General Assembly (GA) — June 2011

It's not too early to start thinking about General Assembly (GA). This year's GA will mark the 50th anniversary of the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. Join thousands of fellow UU's from across the country as you remember the persons and events that brought into being the UUA in May of 1961, reflect on your denomination's relevant achievements and struggles since then, and to chart new aspirations for the future we are determined to shape. Charlotte, North Carolina, will be the place. June 22–26, 2011, are the dates. This is a great opportunity for families to experience the power of our wonderful denomination together. Make GA part of your family vacation plans either by camping nearby or staying in one of many venues. Check out the UUA website for details about the variety of programs and workshops. If you would like to be an adult delegate or a youth delegate, contact **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net as soon as possible. ♦



Nominating Committee Note: Matchmakers? Match!

Do you want to get involved in a First Parish program, event or committee but are not sure whom to talk to? Are you a program leader, event planner or committee chair looking for folks to join you? Let a member of the Nominating Committee know of your interest and we'll pass your contact information on. Simple! Nominating Committee members are **Laura Graham, Lillian Anderson, Eric Read, Kate Svrcek, Sue Ryan, Marianne Zasa, Patty Popov, Russ Herndon and Kate Keleher.**

DECEMBER 2010 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.
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Monday	6:30 p.m. (not 12/20 or 12/27)
Networking Group	Tuesday	9:00 a.m.
<i>Kundalini Yoga</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m. (not 12/21 or 12/28)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m. (not 12/29)
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	5:00 p.m. (not 12/29)
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m. (not 12/29)
<i>Yoga for Women</i>	Wednesday	6:45 p.m. (not 12/29)
<i>Mindful Practice</i>	Wednesday	7:30 p.m. (not 12/29)
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m. (not 12/29)
<i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i>	Thursday	9:30 a.m. (not 12/23 or 12/30)
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Thursday	7:30 p.m.
YRUU	Sunday	7:00 p.m. (not 12/26)

<p>Wed Dec 1 6:00 Youth Build Lowell .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:30 Our Whole Lives Parent Meeting .</p> <p>Thu Dec 2 7:30 Threshold Choir .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:30 Our Whole Lives Parent meeting .</p> <p>Fri Dec 3 12:00 Children's Craft Workshop .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Setup Begins .</p> <p>Sat Dec 4 1:30 Children's Craft Workshop .</p> <p>Sun Dec 5 4:00 Remembering Service .</p> <p>Mon Dec 6 10:00 <i>Jingle Jam</i> .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:00 <i>Humanists</i> .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:30 RE Council .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:30 <i>Women's Book Group</i> .</p> <p>Tue Dec 7 9:00 WPA Board Meeting .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">9:30 <i>Women's Book Group</i> .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">10:00 <i>Jingle Jam</i> .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">3:00 WPA Christmas Concert .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">4:00 WPA Christmas Tea .</p> <p>Wed Dec 8 7:00 Youth Advisory Committee .</p> <p>Fri Dec 10 12:30 <i>T'ai Ji</i> .</p> <p>Sat Dec 11 9:00 Photo Club .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">4:00 8th Grade Play .</p> <p>Sun Dec 11 9:00 8th Grade Play .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">11:00 8th Grade Play .</p>	<p>Mon Dec 13 10:00 <i>Jingle Jam</i> .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">6:30 Standing Committee .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:00 <i>Humanists</i> .</p> <p>Tue Dec 14 10:00 <i>Jingle Jam</i> .</p> <p>Wed Dec 15 12:15 <i>Sandwich & Short Story</i> .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">6:30 Membership Committee .</p> <p>Thu Dec 16 7:00 Development Committee .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:30 Threshold Choir .</p> <p>Fri Dec 17 7:30 <i>Rise Up Caroling</i> .</p> <p>Sun Dec 19 12:30 Nominating Committee .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">3:00 Needleworkers .</p> <p>Mon Dec 20 7:00 Women's Circle .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Solstice Celebration .</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:00 Jericho Road Board Meeting .</p> <p>Fri Dec 24 Holiday—Office Closed</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">4:00 Christmas Eve Service</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">5:30 Christmas Eve Service</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">7:00 Christmas Eve Service</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">9:00 Christmas Eve Service</p> <p>Sat Dec 25 Holiday—Office Closed .</p> <p>Sun Dec 26 11:00 <u>Single Worship Service</u> .</p> <p>Mon Dec 27 12:00 Newsletter Deadline .</p>
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Holiday Gift Ideas

from the First Parish Environmental Leadership Team (ELT)

Trying to find that perfect present for those hard-to-shop-for recipients? The First Parish ELT (with a lot of help from friends) has compiled a list of must-have gifts for every person you'll ever need a gift for! (Please note we do not endorse these products or companies).

1. The Gadget Geek: There are so many green gadgets to give to your gadget geek or simply an inquisitive child or teen. How about solar-powered hat fans, flashlights, holiday wreaths, or a robot? Check out the solar products sold at Gaiam (www.gaiam.com/search.do?query=solar). Or give a very practical gift, such as a solar powered charger (<http://www.earthtechproducts.com/p2588.html>) or a home energy monitor (<http://www.bluelineinnovations.com/default.asp?mn=1.274.285>).

2. The Young Child: Give a stuffed animal to your littler recipients. These Sweater Critters (www.eco-artware.com/catalog/sweater-critters.php) are adorable. Made from clean, recycled wool sweaters and stuffed with shredded recycled polyester, the animals come in all shapes and sizes.

3. The Deep Thinker: This is a great book for all ages — teens on up — offering simple ways to make life more meaningful and sustainable. Author Libuse Binder's book offers a modern road map for those looking to make a difference in the world. *10 Ways to Change the World in Your Twenties* gives green thinkers something new to ponder over the holidays.

4. The Philanthropist: If you're new to giving, groups such as Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) or the American Institute of Philanthropy (www.charitywatch.org) can help you make informed decisions. Also try out Trees for a Change (www.rb.com/Sites/treesforchange/project.htm), a program that offers "Tree Gift Cards." Trees for a Change is also a green business certified by Green America and is committed to sustainable business practices, including using only 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper for its tree gift certificates and cards and planting extra trees as carbon offset. And of course you can donate to the over 20 First Parish Social Action Community Programs found at <http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/programs>

5. The Male or Female Fashionista: First World Trash (www.firstworldtrash.com) is a little New York-based company that makes duffel bags, laptop sleeves, makeup bags and more all from recycled materials (billboards, seat belts, etc). Eco-artware uses authentic parts from mid-20th century

watches to create vintage recycled cuff links (www.eco-artware.com/catalog/TC30-movement-recycled-cufflinks.php?c=cufflinks). Beyond watch parts and transit tokens, they also recycle coins and circuit boards into jewelry and accessories.

7. The Active Traveler: Give a round of golf at a course that is partnering with the Audubon Society (acspgolf.audubon-international.org) to make golf courses also function as wildlife sanctuaries. Give a trip to an eco-friendly lodge (earth911.com/news/2009/06/01/best-summer-eco-destinations), where your recipient can create excellent memories without consuming goods or leaving an unnecessarily large footprint.

8. The Business Person: How about a business card holder or key chain made from recycled materials. Check out the beautiful business gift ideas at Eco-artware (www.eco-artware.com/catalog/mens-accessories.php)

9. The Animal Lover: Donations made in your recipient's name to an animal-based charity can be a memorable gift. Check out Farm Sanctuary (www.farmsanctuary.org) or the World Wildlife Fund (www.worldwildlife.org/home-full.html#farmsanctuary) — organizations with reputations for using their funding thoughtfully. If you want an actual gift to wrap, check out the Cardboard Safari (recycled paper animal models) (<http://www.cardboardsafari.com/shop/index.php?localekey=41316ab756f77a53a185e6ffaf825bfb>).

10. The Foodie: What about fresh seasonal produce from a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)? At a CSA the farmers offer a number of "shares" to the public (a share is usually a box of seasonal produce). There are many local CSAs, including: First Root Farm, Concord; Linden Tree Farm, Lincoln; Drumlin Farm, Lincoln.

11. Anyone You Care About: Don't forget about our own First Parish ELT Initiatives (<http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/news/elt-mindful-living-initiatives.html>). Sign someone up for an energy audit and then offer to help do the suggested action items (wrap pipes, weather-stripping, etc). — Share a ride to worship with a neighbor. — Give someone a locavore, vegetarian, or vegan meal.

Happy Holidays from the First Parish ELT!

Send your own "Green Gift Ideas" to Faith Bade at FBade@firstparish.org.

Celebrate!

Holiday Events, Programs and Services for 2010 • First Parish in Concord

See complete details of the holiday events throughout the Meeting House News

Advent Sunday Worship

December 5: Advent II and Hanukkah. Children's Choirs; First Parish Choir (9:00); Gospel Choir (11:00) with Jenny Rankin, preaching. **Meditation Service** 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Chapel, led by Margie King Saphier with the Threshold Choir directed by Beth Norton.

December 12: Advent III. First Parish Choir (9:00) and music by La Jouissance (11:00). Gary Smith preaching.

December 19: Advent IV. Christmas Sunday, with choir of littlest angels (preschool through first grade). Choruses from Handel's *Messiah* sung by the First Parish Choir at both services. Gary Smith preaching.

Christmas Eve Worship

Four Services: 4:00, 5:30, 7:00 and 9:00 p.m.

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 will feature congregational carol singing; and at 9:00 o'clock, the First Parish Choir will sing. Each service will conclude with candlelighting and *Silent Night*.

Worship, Sunday after Christmas, December 26

One service only at 11:00 a.m. led by Craig Nowak in the Chapel, with music by Nancy Ackerman, clarinet. Child care for the youngest children, no RE classes.

Worship, Sunday after New Year's, January 2

One service only at 11:00 a.m. led by Gary Smith in the Sanctuary. Child care for the youngest children, no RE classes.

Winter Solstice Revels

The First Parish Women's Circle invites everyone to a celebration of the Winter Solstice on Monday, December 20, at 7:00 p.m. in the First Parish Parlor and Parish Hall. We will 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!

Holiday Singing — Rise Up Caroling

"Rise Up Caroling," Friday, December 17, 7:30 p.m. Singers of all ages, please bring voices, instruments and cookies to share. Carol lyrics and sheet music for instrumentalists provided.

Join in the Decking of the Halls

Join the Flower Committee on Saturday, December 11, at 9:30 a.m. to decorate the Sanctuary for the season. Contact Peggy Brace for details, 978-369-1373.

Christmas Concert and Tea

Join friends at First Parish for holiday music and a traditional Christmas tea on Tuesday, December 7. Music begins at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, and tea will be served in the Parish Hall at 4:00 p.m. No charge; no reservations necessary.

Holiday Service Projects

Mitten Tree: Hats, scarves and mittens for Common Cathedral and House of Hope guests will be collected from November 14 to December 19.

Homeless in Lowell: Donate gently used household items to Bill Seaver in this ongoing donation drive.

Concord Prison Outreach: Donations for prisoners are due by Sunday, December 5; please leave in coatroom at First Parish.

Memorial Poinsettias: Sign up at coffee hour to donate Poinsettias or assist with flower deliveries on December 26.

Volunteer Opportunities: Open Table Concord and Maynard, Household Goods Recycling Acton, and Cradles to Crayons in Quincy need help throughout the year. Questions? Please contact Faith Bade, Social Action Program Director (fbade@firstparish.org).

Invite a Silent Guest

Guest at Your Table boxes, distributed in November, are "fed" throughout the holidays and returned on January 9. Share in the holiday work of the UU Service Committee.

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

On Saturday, December 11, at 4:00 p.m., and Sunday, December 12, at the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. children's service, the eighth graders will present this humorous play for five-year-olds and up. It playfully celebrates the Unitarian Universalist values. Your family is sure to enjoy this heart-warming dramatic event that is part of the First Parish tradition.

Youth Holiday Party

December 19, 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. Bring something wrapped that you already own but do not want anymore, or a joke gift, or something new under \$20.

Youth New Year Reflections

January 2, 7:00–9:00 p.m. in the Wright Tavern. All YRUU youth and alumni are welcome to come and relax and recover after the holiday business and reflect on, "Who am I in this new year?"

In Remembrance



for Spiritual Renewal

The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • December 2010

Welcome to the Wright Tavern Center. Online registration is available for all 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

Monday Morning Meditation

Join **Jenny Rankin** in the Chapel for silent meditation. Drop-ins Welcome. No charge.

Monday: Dec. 6-Jan.31 (no class Dec. 27 or Jan. 17) 9:15-9:45 a.m.

Jingle Jams

Musical fun for the whole family! Jingle Jams are one-time classes perfect for making holiday memories with young children and their siblings, parents and grandparents. We'll sing holiday favorites, play instruments and dance together. These classes are a great, no-commitment way to share Music Together with your friends, and are also an opportunity for Music Together "graduates" to see their favorite teachers.

Instructors: **Tom** and **Deb Foote**. Registration is encouraged. Sign up at abcmusictogether.com. \$10 per child, maximum of \$20 per family.

Tuesday: Dec. 7, 14 10:00 a.m. First Parish in Concord

The Art of Living: Mindfulness Practice in Everyday Life

Is it possible to live with greater ease, joy and connection? This workshop will explore how to develop and deepen spiritual practice in the midst of the demands, stress, pace and distractions of our hyper-connected modern life. Using the practice of Insight Meditation (Vipassana) as a foundation, we will examine how to establish and maintain a personal spiritual practice in order to live with greater wisdom and compassion in daily life. No previous experience with meditation is needed to participate. Leader: **John Bigay**

Wednesday: Dec. 8, 15; Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 7:30-9:00 p.m.
\$60 (Drop-ins welcome)

Yoga for Women in Midlife

This series is designed to help develop stability, strength, flexibility and a sense of well-being which are particularly important at this stage of life. The class is a moving meditation, with the intention that each woman set her own pace and honor her body's ability. It integrates breath, movement and postures for hormone balance, a healthy heart, strong bones, core strength and stress reduction. It also provides a nurturing environment for the spirit so that inner strength and higher awareness may flourish. Limit: 12 students per class. Instructor: **Lee Courtemanche**

Wednesday: Jan. 5-Mar. 30 (no class Mar. 16) 5:00-6:15 p.m. or 6:45-8:00 p.m. Fee: 12 sessions/\$192

ABC Music Together (ages 0 to 4)

Mixed Age classes offer an opportunity for children to participate at their own level, while the adults (no matter what their level of musical ability) and older children provide models for ways of music making they might want to try another time. Everyone in a mixed age class benefits by experiencing the music making of those around them — some terrific teaching ideas come from very young children, who have a special originality and spontaneity in their approach to music. Instructors: **Deb** and **Tom Foote**. For more information and to register, go to www.abcmusictogether.com

Tuesday: Jan. 11-Mar. 8 9:30-10:30 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Friday: Jan. 14-Mar. 11 9:30-10:30 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Understanding Transitions

As we transition into a new year, it is interesting to look at the many transitions we continually face and to recognize the significant role they play in our lives: coming of age, starting a family, getting a new job, becoming an empty-nester, entering mid-life, becoming a grandparent, retiring, as well as a myriad of unexpected changes like divorce, being "downsized" and the death of a loved one. Understanding the psychological redefinition that one goes through in such times is key to gaining strength, clarity and inner peace. This class is loosely based on the work of William Bridges and his book *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, and will thus be broken down into three topics for discussion: endings, the neutral zone, and the new beginning. Attendance at all three classes is highly recommended in order to gain a clear understanding of the significance of each phase of transition. Instructor: **Rena Hedeman**

Thursday: Jan. 13, 20, 27 7:30-9:00 p.m. Fee: \$20

Concord Area Humanist Group

"Humanist Positive Message." Doug Muder, a well-known Humanist author, will discuss how standing against oppressive religious dogmas can play an important role in a Humanist's personal liberation. For more information visit www.gurus.org/dougdeb/

Monday: Dec. 6 7:00-9:00 p.m.

The first of two sessions of the "Necessity of Virtue" workshop series based on Galen Guengerich's 8-session workshop, with the same title, presented at 2010 UUA GA in June. The workshop will include video from that series. Galen rejects the divine as the source of our morality, and then develops Aristotle's thinking on the state of character in encouraging the fullest development of human potential. The series will be led

by three members of the CAH Steering Committee who attended Galen's workshop. Contact **Patrick Everett** at pne@aol.com for information on CAH events.

Monday: Dec. 13, Jan. 10 7:30–9:00 p.m.

II. Creativity As A Spiritual Path

These classes are offered throughout the year.

Sandwiches and Short Story

Bring lunch and enjoy an hour of discussion with **Rev. Gary Smith** about the short story choice of the month. December's story is "An East Egg Update," by George Bradley. All stories can be found in *PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories*, edited by Laura Fuman; Anchor Books, 2010 pb \$16.

Wednesday: December 15 12:15–1:15 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. Leaders: **Beth Norton and Others**. No charge. No registration required.

Friday: Dec. 17, Jan. 28, Feb. 25, Mar. 25, Apr. 22, May 20, Jun. 24 7:30 p.m.

III. Sources of Unitarian Universalism

Spiritual Autobiography

"We tell stories because we can't help it," says James Carroll. "We tell stories because they save us." Each of us, whether we realize it or not, has a spiritual story of our own. Often our stories lie dormant, undiscovered or only partially realized. This class provides a context and opportunity to reflect upon our spiritual odyssey. It is an adaptation of the Spiritual Autobiography class that has been taught here in the past, but is significantly different. Through a series of writing and drawing exercises, we will prepare to write our own autobiographies. Several short papers and one longer piece will be required. Confidentiality respected and expected. Attendance at each session is required. Minimum of 10 participants needed for the class to run. First Parish members only; registration required. No charge. Leader: **Rev. Jenny Rankin**

Monday: Jan. 24, 31; Feb. 7; 28, Mar. 7 7:00–8:30 p.m.

"The Fall of Man"

Readers from First Parish, directed by **Lillian Anderson**, will read a short play by Cori Martin entitled "The Fall of Man." The play begins with God's and Gabriel's mutual congratulations on how swimmingly everything is going. Their self-satisfaction is

interrupted by the appearance of Adam and Eve, who have been working out the life sentences inflicted on them by God 900 years previous. They ask for a retrial in hopes that their sentences might be commuted. God at length agrees, even when he discovers that the serpent will be acting as the plaintiff's counsel. What begins as a retrial of Adam and Eve soon turns into something else. What that is and how it turns out is yours to discover on the evening of January 13. Those planning to attend may wish to read Genesis 3, which sets the stage for this story. The play will begin with a brief introduction by **Carl Scovel** who will also moderate the discussion afterward. Playwright Cori Martin teaches writing at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. She is also a singer and poet, and the wife of a fellow faculty member.

Thursday: Jan. 13 7:45–9:00 p.m. Fee: \$10
(All proceeds go to the Wright Tavern Center.)

IV. Social Action

Common Read

Rev. Jenny Rankin, Ministerial Intern **Craig Nowak**, and Social Action Director **Faith Bade** invite you to join together in a "Common Read," a reading project participated in by UU's across the country. Learn more about a General Assembly study issue. Connect with the wider UU community. Delve deeply into the stories of immigration. Share Craig's experiences at the Mexican border. Read the book *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona Borderlands*, by Margaret Regan. A limited supply of books will be available for sale in the church office for \$15, or they can be ordered from the UUA bookstore at www.uuabookstore.org. Sign up now at 978-369-9602 or by e-mailing FBade@firstparish.org.

Sunday: January 9 12:30–2:30 p.m.
Thursday: January 20 and 27 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Devens: a local example of sustainable development applied to a former army base in North Central Massachusetts. Learn about how Devens has successfully balanced economic development, environmental protection and social equity on the former 4400 Army base just down Route 2. Devens is viewed by many as the premier U.S. example of eco-industrial development, where firms collaborate to reduce their environmental impact, share by-products and improve their bottom line. Devens has created a nonprofit, the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, to work with firms to green their operations and developed the Eco-Star environmental branding and achievement program as a tool for members on their journey toward sustainability. Speaker: **Peter Lowitt**, FAICP and member of First Parish.

Monday: Jan. 24 7:00–8:30 p.m. Fee: \$10