



November 29, 2013
Volume 50, No. 4

Our fiftieth year!

The Meeting House News

IN THIS ISSUE

REVERIES

At their meeting on Sunday, November 10, 2013, the First Parish Standing Committee took a historic vote. They voted to change the way our congregation raises money. In addition to the annual pledge drive, First Parish will also accept special fundraisers and designated gifts to supplement its programs and projects. This shift fits with fundraising in the 21st century.

Ever since the economic downturn of 2008 and 2009, fundraising for not-for-profits has changed. It has changed for houses of worship too. To fulfill their mission in the world, churches, synagogues and temples must seek funds from a variety of sources.

No longer is it possible to succeed by having one pledge drive a year.

Other fundraisers and gifts throughout the year must augment this crucial pledge drive. First Parish in Concord is no exception to this rule. To fund our mission we must raise more money from more sources; otherwise we unnecessarily hobble ourselves.



While I do not fear a rush of First Parish members who will now want to raise money for various projects, I do think that the first couple of years of this new policy will find us asking some interesting questions. This change will allow generous people who may have had gifts turned away in the past the opportunity to offer those gifts again. This

change may result in new gifts being offered. And it will surely result in special fundraising by groups within the church. These efforts will need to be coordinated, but we will seriously consider all offers of fundraising, large and small. While I will ultimately be in charge of approving these fundraisers or not, I will rely on congregational leaders and church staff to help me determine whether a gift or fundraiser is appropriate for First Parish. I look forward to the creative chaos this change could bring.

The secondary matter the Standing Committee did not take up at its meeting, but which also needs to be discussed widely, is whether or not a designated gift or project-oriented fundraiser should include a percentage for the First Parish operating budget to cover overhead.

Individuals and groups in the congregation enjoy the use of the church's buildings, its staff hours and other administrative capabilities, and its various modes of publicity. I think it is perfectly reasonable that 15 percent or 20 percent of a gift or fundraiser should go to defray these costs. I am sure there are various opinions about this percentage, and I look forward to a wider conversation about it.

One of the clearest things that I have learned in my short time as your minister is that no issue looms larger for First Parish in Concord than money! Money arises in almost every conversation. How it is raised. How it is spent. Who controls it before it is spent. And what priorities go into its allocation. Money is a huge issue for us. All this gives us all the more reason to talk about it. In itself, money is neither good nor bad. We have the opportunity to use it for good. Imagine what First Parish might do in the world if it saw fundraising as an opportunity to further its mission. Imagine how that shift could change everything.

Love,

Howard N. Dana

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There are four inserts at the end of this newsletter:

- ◆ Celebrate: Holiday Information
- ◆ "A Year with Frog and Toad"
- ◆ Concord Area Humanists Information
- ◆ Coffee Hour Snacks Host Lists

First Parish in Concord
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

First Parish in Concord is a welcoming Unitarian Universalist congregation that seeks ways to deepen spiritually, build community, and make a positive difference in the world.

WORSHIP SERVICES AT FIRST PARISH

Sunday, December 1 – One Service ONLY at 11:00
Hanukkah and the Season of Light — Tony Fisher
First Parish Choir

Sunday, December 8
Kneeling into the Body of Earth — Rachel Baker
9:00 & 11:00 – Lincoln Ringers

Sunday, December 15
Your Birth Was a Miracle Too — Rev. Howard N. Dana
9:00 – Junior Choir and Sophie Hibben, piano
11:00 – Chalice Choir and First Parish Choir

Sunday, December 22
The Turning of the Year — Rev. Howard N. Dana
9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir

Sunday, December 29
Fireside Service in the Parlor
One service ONLY at 11:00
Eric Kilburn, vocals and mandolin

Sunday, January 5
Strangers Bearing Strange Gifts — Rev. Howard N. Dana
9:00 & 11:00 – “Instant Choir”
(see Music Notes on page 9 for more information)

Sunday Flowers for the Sanctuary

If you would like to donate pulpit flowers in memory or celebration of a loved one or are interested in arranging flowers for a Sunday service, please contact **Ellen Whitney** at 978-369-7434 or ellenwhitney@verizon.net.

The Meeting House News, the newsletter of First Parish in Concord, is published monthly — online and in print, 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	Published
January: Friday, December 13	Friday, January 3
February: Friday, January 24	Tuesday, February 4
March: Friday, February 20	Tuesday, March 4

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

Editor's Note: *We are delighted that writers are so enthusiastic, but gently suggest using fewer exclamation marks. A former editor's rule was to use an exclamation mark only to announce the Second Coming — and only if He actually did come. Thanks.*

PARISH NOTES

Finding Your Minister

Howard Dana's hours are the following:

Tuesday 10:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday 10:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 10:00 to 4:00 p.m.

You may contact Howard at hdana@firstparish.org, or at 20 Lexington Road, Concord, 978-369-9602, extension 411. His cell phone number is 717-412-8543. In addition to regular office hours, Howard makes appointments to meet with people at other times. Please call or e-mail him to schedule an appointment, or call **Cassy Bosworth** at 978-369-9602.

Howard is unavailable, and does not look at e-mail except for emergencies, on Monday, his day off, and Friday, his sermon writing day.

Newsletter Submission Note

Dear First Parishioners,

Please bear with us as we initiate some changes to the *Meeting House News* that we hope will deliver news of First Parish more effectively.

Regarding Inserts: Beginning with the January issue of the *Meeting House News*, we will no longer publish full-page inserts, which in the print newsletter were meant as posters (for a bulletin board or your fridge, maybe). This doesn't make sense in our online format, is often redundant, and creates a way-too-long-to-read newsletter.

However, if you choose to submit a special visual for your upcoming event (*instead of an item in the body of the newsletter*), we offer a quarter-page (4.25" x 5.5" vertical) "ad" space. Any full-page-size submissions will be reduced, greatly affecting legibility. Brevity is suggested.

The January newsletter deadline is Friday, December 13.

Holiday Hours at First Parish

The First Parish office will be closed December 23, 24 and 25. The office will be open December 26, 27 and 31, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be one service only on Sunday, December 29, at 11:00 a.m. in the Parlor.

All-Parish Art Display

View the new display in the Suzanne Altshuler Gallery. Gallery A is in the stairwell outside the Sanctuary and Gallery B is on the stage of the Parish Hall. The exhibit will run until the end of December.

Parish Notes

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Eve LaPlante Author Talk — December 8

On Sunday, December 8, at 3 p.m., author Eve LaPlante will talk about her latest books, *Marmee and Louisa: The Untold Story of Louisa May Alcott and Her Mother* and *My Heart Is Boundless: Writings of Abigail May Alcott, Louisa May's Mother*. A reception and book signing will follow. Books will be available for sale by Orchard House during this exciting event. These books will make outstanding holiday gifts. The Women's Parish Association and The Transcendentalism Council are pleased to bring Ms. LaPlante to First Parish. All are warmly invited. Don't miss this chance to meet the author of two of the most interesting books written in the last couple of years. There is no charge for the talk or the reception.

An Honor for Our Transcendentalism Council

We are delighted that the Transcendentalism Council of First Parish in Concord has been unanimously elected to membership in the Concord Historical Collaborative.

"The Concord Historical Collaborative coordinates efforts and activities in Concord to present its rich history through diverse educational opportunities, and fosters an appreciation and stewardship for Concord's historical resources." The Collaborative's members include the historic houses, Concord Free Public Library, Concord Museum, Concord Art Association, The Thoreau Society, Walden Woods Project, and Walden Pond State Reservation.

We are very grateful to **Howard Dana** for his enthusiastic support of our application.

Please check out our new website for event information: <http://fptranscendentalism.org>.

Play Reading Group to Meet December 6

The Play Reading group is generating interest. We read plays aloud together for pleasure and discussion. Save the first Friday of each month. All are welcome. No theater experience is necessary.

For our meeting on December 6, at 7 p.m., we finish reading "Clybourne Park," by Bruce Morris:

"Winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize and London's Olivier Award for Best Play, "Clybourne Park" is a bold new play about race, real estate and the volatile values of each. Inspired by Lorraine Hansberry's classic play "A Raisin in the Sun," this acclaimed work explodes in two outrageous acts set 50 years apart. Act One takes place in 1959, as nervous community leaders anxiously try to stop the sale of a home in a white community to a black family. Act Two is set in the same house in 2009, as the now predominantly

First Parish Arts Corner — Fostering Community through the Arts

Each month, in this "corner," the First Parish Arts Council will highlight arts events in the upcoming month that offer opportunities to participate in the ministry of the arts at First Parish. Unless otherwise noted, questions may be directed to music@firstparish.org.

December 1 – January 2 – All Parish Art Show – Altshuler Gallery

December 6 at 7:00 p.m. – Play Reading Group – "Clybourne Park"

December 4 or at 6:00 p.m. – Arts Council meeting

December 13 at 7:30 p.m. – Rise Up Caroling, the holiday edition of First Parish's monthly song circle.

December 14 at 9:00 a.m. – Photo Club meeting – open to all First Parish adults

December 20 at 7:30 p.m. and 21 at 2:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. – "A Year with Frog and Toad" – presented by 8th grade RE class

December 22 at 3:00 p.m. – Lincoln Ringers Holiday Concert

For more information on these events, check the *Meeting House News*, FP Announce and the *Sunday News*.

The purpose of the First Parish Arts Council is to further the mission of First Parish through facilitating, promoting and coordinating a diverse arts ministry that inspires and celebrates creativity and connection. The council is open to all interested parishioners. Contact **Lillian Anderson**, chair, for more information: lillianand@comcast.net.

African-American neighborhood battles to hold its ground in the face of gentrification."

Copies are available within the Minuteman Library network. Two copies have been requested for sharing. Call or text **Linda Hardiman** at lmhardiman@gmail.com or 617-909-1196.

Concord Area Humanists Host Rev. John Gibbons

Concord Area Humanists will welcome Rev. John Gibbons, Senior Minister of First Parish in Bedford, at 7 p.m., Wednesday, December 11, at First Parish. "Raised in a fundamentalist humanist church and now serving an eclectic church of atheists, theists, agnostics, Jews/Christians/Buddhists and who-knows-who-else under its big tent," he will ponder matters of clarity and contamination. He is past president of the UU Partner Church Council and former board chair of the UU Service Committee, and now chairs the UUSC's Ministerial Leadership Network. First Parish Bedford was recognized as a "breakthrough congregation" in 2012 by the UUA. Suggested donation is \$5. Bring some refreshments to share. For more information and to confirm the date, contact www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org or pne@aol.com.

MINISTERIAL INTERN

Celebrate Music at First Parish

Planning, planning and fun! This is **Beth Norton's** twentieth year as our music director; and thinking about all the joy that her musical talents have given us, makes us want to celebrate. So the Arts Council has an idea that might allow us to have a good time and provide the framework for an exciting creative musical fundraising event — “A Yankee Home Companion” at First Parish in the spring.

On Tuesday, December 10, at 7 p.m., we will begin with brainstorming ideas to create the framework for the show. We hope that we can have participation from many performers, writers, artists, etc., to shine the spotlight on the many facets of the musical jewel that we share. We'll put out a call for performers in January; but in the meantime, we need creative thinkers and writers, so please bring your ideas to this first meeting.

If you'd like to participate in the planning but can't make this meeting, contact **Lillian Anderson** at (lillianand@comcast.net).

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“A Year with Frog and Toad”

First Parish Eighth Grade Players present “A Year with Frog and Toad” on Friday, December 20, at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 21, at both 2:00 and 5:00 p.m. Children and adults of all ages will enjoy this humorous musical play based on the stories by Arnold Lobel about the enduring friendship between a fretful Toad and an exuberant Frog. Tickets are available at coffee hours and in the church office with a suggested donation of \$10 per adult and \$5 per child.

After paying for rights, proceeds will be donated to the 52nd Street Project, founded in 1981 by composer and lyricist Willie Reale. The 52nd Street Project is dedicated to the creation and production of new plays for kids between the ages of nine and eighteen who reside in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of New York City through a series of unique mentoring programs that match children with professional theater artists to create original theater. The Project also provides programs, after-school homework aid and academic mentoring.

Future Projects to Be Discussed at Amnesty Meeting

Ideas for a Group 15-sponsored community event in the spring, a film that may be screened at a First Parish Forum around Human Rights Day, and plans for the annual write-a-thon (“Write for Rights”) will be among the projects to be discussed at the December meeting of Amnesty International Group 15. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 17, at 7 p.m., in the Greeley Room at First Parish. All are welcome, and refreshments will be served.

Harmony and Heritage: A Transylvania Pilgrimage — October 30 to November 10, 2014

This is an invitation to experience the transformative power of travel with others from First Parish. Inspired by our new kopjafa we

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As I write this, it seems hard to believe that within weeks, the days will start getting longer again. Weren't our boys of summer just jumping up and down on the green grass of Fenway in celebration of a miraculous season? Aren't there still a ton of leaves in my yard waiting for me to get out my trusty rake and get to work?

Time always seems to speed up for me as the holidays approach and I can't say I ever feel ready. There's too much to do to begin with, and then a whole set of seasonal expectations and traditions get layered on top of that “normal” insanity!

Hold on a second . . .

. . . OK, I'm back.

I just went outside, took a few cleansing breaths of cool fresh air and relaxed a little. While I was out there, my neighbor walked by with his dog and we chatted about life and family. I asked after his wife, who was recovering from a recent stroke, and he shared the difficulties and the small triumphs they have experienced. We laughed about the leaves in both our yards, and he said that this year he's going to let them take care of themselves. As I turned to head back inside to the keyboard, I smiled at the comfortable conversation, the warm connection, and the gentle reminder about what's important in our lives. The season is not about the lists or the decorations or getting everything done; it's about tuning in to the cyclical nature of our lives and connecting with each other on a deeper level, of sharing our joys and our sorrows.

Let's keep in mind that the stories we celebrate are human stories of difficult times, of long journeys, of triumph over hardship, and finally, of hope and anticipation for the birth of something new. ♦

Blessings,

Tony

STANDING COMMITTEE NEWS AND NOTES

Two major currents flow through our Standing Committee (SC) activities this year. First, the continued refinement of our evolutionary path from Mission, to Strategic Ends, to Annual Goals. Second, coordination and collaboration with our brand new minister **Howard Dana** — including expanded discussions of church governance.

The first current saw the late September formation of the SC Annual Goals for the year:

- Model healthy communication and transparency among, to and from the congregation.
- Enable the congregation to participate more fully in congregational life and decision making.
- Develop systems that foster increased financial stewardship as a congregational norm.
- Model shared ministry and spiritual leadership; support and collaborate with **Reverend Dana**.

As part of achieving Goal #3, stewardship, we have sponsored two congregational discussions of budget priorities for 2014-15 (with one more to come) in the areas of both income and expenditure: fundraising and brainstorming for the future. This month and next we will group and prioritize suggestions from those meetings and pass the budgeting ideas to **Howard Dana** and **Fifi Ball** to begin the draft of the 2014-15 budget.

Goal #2, increased congregational participation, led to coordination between the Standing Committee and the Environmental Leadership Team to set up the Congregational Meeting on November 10, which voted unanimously to support installation of solar panels on the First Parish roof.

A third effort to improve shared participation is the SC Task Force on Committee Formation and Function. This task force has made real progress on revising the present policy and looks forward to reporting back by January. A revised policy will clarify committee formation and oversight. One outcome will be to enable the Standing Committee to consider in more detail the Congregation's request for a Finance Committee.

The other major current — collaborating with **Howard Dana** in his first year of ministry — has meant a significant policy change in the way programs can raise funds to support special efforts. The background for this change has been eight years in the making as major fundraising professionals in many churches have opened up the opportunity for donors to target their gifts and groups within the church to engage in project-specific

fund drives. Howard reported that research to date shows that special giving does not cannibalize regular giving when well managed. After a lively discussion, the Standing Committee passed the following motion:

“We adopt a policy of accepting dedicated funds subject to the minister's approval and oversight. We direct the senior minister to minimize any adverse impact on the annual campaign.” ♦

Stay in touch with us at:

Laurie Van Loon, lvanloon@comcast.net; **Kristin Haddad**, Kristin.haddad@gmail.com; **Jake Nunes**, Jake_Nunes@shs.org; **Mark Russell Prior**, mark.russell.prior@comcast.net; **Suzanne Lowe**, slowe@expertisemarketing.com; **Kate Crosby**, kate_crosby@newview.org; **Andrea Siani**, Andrea.Siani@gmail.com; **Alec Walker**, alecwalker@aol.com; **Gretchen Nelson**, ghnelson@me.com; **Patty Popov**, PPopov@nichols-pratt.com; **John Nevison**, jmn@newleaf-pm.com.

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are envisioning a unique opportunity to deepen our connections with our partner congregation, and to strengthen our own community by traveling to Transylvania in the fall of 2014.

The three primary goals for this trip are these: to learn more about our Transylvanian Unitarian history and heritage; to deepen our connections with our Keresztúr friends and extended families; and to continue building bridges with our partner congregation through music. Informal group singing will be a part of our shared experience as we work to create a bilingual partnership songbook.

Our dates have been chosen so that we can attend both All Souls Day events and the annual gathering at the fortress in Deva, commemorating the death of David Ferenc, founder of Transylvanian Unitarianism.

At two informational meetings in January — Sunday, January 12, at 12:30 p.m. and Wednesday, January 15, at 6:30 p.m. — we will provide information about the itinerary, optional extensions, cost (estimated now at \$2000-2500) and payment schedule, scholarship assistance, and educational preparations for the trip.

We hope you'll consider joining **Howard Dana** and **Beth Norton** on this important journey. If you are interested but can't attend our informational meetings we'll be happy to send you the information electronically.

— **Lillian Anderson, Sara Ballard, Val Holt, Rodger Matlage**

I am a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals. UUAMP formed a few years ago when a number of membership professionals across the country found that they could be more effective in their congregations if they reached out and shared best practices with others doing similar work.

One of my colleagues has been working with her congregation to transition from the “Welcome Table” model, where one, two or three trained members welcome visitors and answer questions, to a model where a larger and larger percentage of the congregation take personal responsibility for approaching people they don’t know or recognize.

This model empowers all members, friends and visitors to participate in an intentional ministry of welcome in the whole church: at coffee hour, in the vestibule, in the Sanctuary, in the religious education classrooms, in the stairwells, and in the parking lots.

Some questions to keep in mind if you would like to help First Parish in Concord build an intentional ministry of welcome include the following:

What did you think of the service today?

I don’t think we have met, my name is...

What brought you here today?

Tell me about yourself.

Can I introduce you to my friend? ♦

In faith and fellowship,

— *Rachel Baker*

Director of Congregational Life

Save the Date — New Member Recognition Celebration and Ceremony

First Parish will welcome and celebrate our newest members at both services on Sunday, January 5, 2014; please be there to honor our newly signed members.

Coffee Hour Snacks

In beloved community we care for each other. Sometimes we take care of others, knowing that on other days, we will be cared for. This is true for coffee hour snacks.

On advice from the Coffee Hour Snack Task Force and individual members and friends of First Parish, I have alphabetically assigned 20 families and/or individuals to each Sunday throughout the year. I invite these 20 families and individuals to work together to decide how they would like to provide setup, simple snacks, light table monitoring, and cleanup for the

two coffee hours on the Sunday to which they are assigned. Feel free to ask a friend to fill in for you if you are not available on the date you are assigned.

At the end of this newsletter you will find about six weeks’ worth of Sundays with last names of 20 families and/or individuals responsible for snacks each week. I will send contact information and additional information to each group of 20 over the weeks.

PASTORAL CARE NOTES AND NEWS

Shawl Ministry

Tucked into a corner of the alcove in the Minister’s office is a plastic container full of color, hope, warmth and love. Yarn, shawls and community connections are built by the members of the Shawl Ministry. Responses from those who have received a shawl are more than just thanks. They are words of “manifested love” and “a great sense of comfort and love” as written in the thank-you notes sent by parishioners. The members of the Shawl Committee, part of the Caring Connection, invite anyone with an interest in participating to join them on the first Tuesday of the month in the Brooks Room. You can learn the simple knit or crochet stitches used to make a shawl. And don’t worry about doing it all on your own. A “Share a Shawl” is passed around and created by many different, loving hands. For more information, contact **Regina Hugendubler** at ode2joy@usa.net or 802-310-9507.

The Pastoral Care Team at First Parish — Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings

The Lay Minister for December is **Dana Snyder-Grant**: at danasg@newview.org or 978-266-9406.

Minister: **Rev. Howard N. Dana** (hdana@firstparish.org)

Ministerial Intern: **Tony Fisher** (tfisher@firstparish.org). Or call the church office at 978-369-9602.

Lay Ministers:
Contact **Diane Clapp**, d.clapp@comcast.net or 781-257-5025.

Caring Connection, for meals or rides: Contact **Tony Fisher** (tfisher@firstparish.org), or call the office at 978-369-9602.

Pastoral Care Council:
Contact **Judy Dembsey** (dembsey@verizon.net).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS

Please join us for a Nominating Committee-sponsored coffee hour on December 15, 2013. Stop by our table. We are very eager to hear what you are interested in getting involved with at First Parish. What kinds of service float your boat? What kinds of leadership are you interested in, and what is your leadership style?

We will have information about upcoming leadership opportunities, and we would love to talk to you about how we nominate people to the Standing Committee.

Feel free to be in touch with any of us.

The Nominating Committee: **Russell Herndon** (rherndon@hydrabiosciences.com), chair, **Doug Hardy** (Doughardy@gmail.com), **Donald Leopold** (dleopold@sherbrooke.com), **Shawna Reid** (shawnaeid@gmail.com), **Sue Ryan** (susanryan101@comcast.net), **Kate Svrcek** (katesvrcek@hotmail.com), **Alane Wallis** (awallis@nut-ter.com), **Dianne Weiss** (diannemcweiss@comcast.net)

Special Note: You Can Help First Parish Become More Sustainable

During this holiday season, why not give First Parish the gift of solar? On November 10, our congregation voted unanimously to add 70 solar panels to our south facing roof. These panels will generate enough electricity to cover 25 percent of the cost of what our church building uses, and will reduce our carbon footprint by 194 tons over the next 20 years.

Hoping to avoid a loan for the cost of installation, we are offering parishioners the opportunity to adopt a full or partial panel (each panel costs \$1200) and give a gift to the church that keeps on giving. Fund an entire panel yourself or go in with friends, fellow committee members, or extended family. You can name a panel in honor of a loved one. Or dedicate it to the future of your children.

This effort also acts as a pilot fundraising program, because we are allowing individual parishioners to contribute to a specific program, rather than our traditional policy of accepting contributions only into the general fund. If all 70 panels are adopted, we will not only cover the full cost of installation but also make a \$16,800 donation to the general operating budget.

Please help us live our values. To adopt a solar panel, please contact **Berni Jenkins** (berni.jenkins@verizon.net) or **Kate Crosby** (kate_crosby@newview.org).

TRANSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIP NEWS

The kopjafa (commemorative pole) task force had its initial meeting with interested parishioners, and looked at several placement options on the church grounds. They will meet again in December; the place and time will be sent in an FPAnnounce for anyone interested in getting involved. Until a permanent location is finalized, the kopjafa's temporary home is in the Parish Hall.

We strongly encourage sponsors of students to send them a holiday card; to facilitate that, we will collect cards and send them as a package. Those who have traveled to Keresztúr, hosted visitors, formed relationships, or just want to connect with the people there may also send cards. Please put your card (cards only, no gifts) in the Keresztúr Christmas Cards collection box in the office by Sunday, December 8, to be included in this mailing. If you are sending these to a particular person or family, please print their names clearly on the envelope.

We're delighted to announce there will be a pilgrimage to Transylvania open to all parishioners from October 30 to November 10, 2014. Please see the article on page (4 and 5) of this newsletter for more details.

The UU Partner Church Council will host a regional conference on Saturday, January 18, in Bedford. It's billed as "One day of Workshops, Worship, Learning and Sharing on International Partnerships." See <http://tinyurl.com/l82lbt8> to learn more or to register; it promises to be a fun and educational day.

Our PCC will present a program in January called "The Mirror in Tolerance." We will look at ethnic tensions in Transylvania, including Hungarian/Romanian, and also issues of anti-Semitism and bigotry against the Roma (Gypsy) population. This will feature one or more speakers, and discussion. We'll have more information (including date and time) in the January newsletter, and via FPAnnounce.

The next PCC meeting will be at **Dana Booth's** house in Carlisle on December 12. All are welcome — socializing at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting following. RSVP to Dana at dana.a.booth@gmail.com if you are coming so he'll know how much food to provide. ♦

Minden jót! "Best wishes!"

— **Sara Ballard** for the Partner Congregation Committee

On my commute to and from church, there are worn paths along each edge of the traffic islands that create order in a five-way intersection. There are a dozen or so people, most of them homeless, who walk these paths morning until dusk, seeking money, food and connection. As I've made this commute, sometimes six times a week, it's made me reconsider how generous I can be.

Initially, I was challenged. I was reminded of my travels in India, when I didn't give money to children who were begging because I knew most of them were part of begging "rings." These rings funneled money to leaders who took a large portion of daily earnings from these small children. It sounded like a type of modern slavery to me. I'm not aware of systems like this in Boston, but the reminder preventing me from seeing the traffic island walkers.



After a few weeks, I pushed myself. I turned off the radio so I couldn't be distracted. I put my window down (until it got too cold). I smiled. I had quick conversations. In one of these conversations, I asked one woman what her favorite snack was. "Chocolate and coffee," she answered.

I saw an opening. I started buying bags of chocolate, keeping them in the passenger seat of my car, ready to hand out on my commute. I went to Dunkin' Donuts and got \$5 gift cards. These small steps freed me of my hopelessness. There was something I could do to alleviate a small morsel of human suffering.

When I hear people talk about social action, they are often scared by the enormity of suffering in our world. "Where do we start?" is a common question. I think the answer to this question is always the same. "See. Ask. Do." See that suffering exists — in Lowell, Dorchester, and Concord, too. Ask those who are suffering what they need. Do whatever you can to fill that need. No good-faith action is too small, just as no dream is too big. ♦

In faith,

—Bethany Lowe

blowe@firstparish.org

Diversity Committee Holding Open Meeting

The Diversity Committee will hold an open meeting on Thursday, December 5, at 7:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room. We would love to have some new participants who are interested in helping us welcome and advocate for those who may feel marginalized, and help raise awareness in the congregation on issues that they may face. These groups include those who are LGBT or questioning,

those of differing ethnicities or races, or those dealing with disability. We'll discuss the events we are already planning or sponsoring this year, and brainstorm about other possible events, such as workshops and/or film series. Please come if you are interested in making sure we live up to our mission of being a truly Welcoming Congregation. If you have questions, or would like to participate but can't attend the meeting, please contact **Sara Ballard** at sara@sb.org.

Vegan Potluck and Carol Sing on Tuesday, December 10, at 6:00 p.m.

'Tis the season ... to enjoy carol singing and a delicious potluck dinner in the Parish Hall, December 10, at 6:00 p.m., hosted by the Reverence for Life committee. Please bring your own beverage and a dish to share that is free of meat, fish, eggs, honey and dairy. Also, attach a card with the ingredients of your dish, to help out those with allergies or special diets. Don't have time to cook? A simple salad or a loaf of bread is just fine. We will make optional the \$2 donation for folks who bring a nonperishable plant-based food item for the Open Table pantry. Ideas for items include cereal, pasta and sauce, vegetarian baked beans, chili and soup, nuts, vegetable oil, nut butters, jam, quinoa, couscous, and canned fruit and vegetables. RSVP by December 8 to **Marcia Schloss** at 978-371-2751 or marcialou28@gmail.com.

Holiday Gift Bags for Prison Inmates

For many years, the Holiday Gift Bag Project of Concord Prison Outreach has brought hope and holiday spirit to each of the inmates in Concord's two prisons. The list of gifts approved by the Department of Correction can be found at: <http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/news/2014-holiday-gift-bags-for-prison-inmates.html>. At First Parish, a box will be available in the coatroom to receive donations from Saturday, November 30, through Tuesday, December 10. Adult volunteers are needed to help with the gift bags on weekday mornings from Tuesday, December 3, through Tuesday, December 17. In addition, there will be two evening sessions: Wednesday, December 4, and Tuesday, December 10, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. For the two evening sessions, please sign up in advance. For information or to volunteer, please contact **Don Miller**, donaldbmiller@com-cast.net or 978-610-6298.

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, sac.firstparish.org/cms/sacemallist; or visit the Social Action bulletin board.



*It was the longest night.
People gathered from near and far,
in small groups and large,
to share their fears and grief,
and the darkness in their hearts.
A year like no other this was,
Testing us beyond what we'd ever imagined.*

*Day after day, week after week,
we found ourselves growing
and becoming sturdy
because there was no other choice.*

*And the Solstice fire was lit and the candles passed
and the light of the new year's dawning
lifted our heavy hearts
and brought us brightness and hope.**

"I've noticed that EVERY year is, in some way, a year like no other," says Julie Forest Middleton, author of this beautiful poem. And of course, she's right. But I also think of

Dylan Thomas' famous lines from "A Child's Christmas in Wales:" "One Christmas was so much like another ... that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six."



For me, both writers capture the essence of late December in our hemisphere, when the earth begins to tilt back toward the sun. Through the ages, humans

have enacted rituals expressing this primal knowledge, lighting Solstice fires, Advent candles and Hanukkah menorahs; telling ancient stories, singing carols by heart. One power of ritual is timelessness. Celebrations merge in memory from year to year. But by observing them, at the appointed time and with well-known custom, we honor the uniqueness of what is fading in the darkness and anticipate what will be born anew with the return of the sun.

I look forward to celebrating the winter holidays and revisiting our well-known rituals: Rise Up Caroling, the Holiday Loss Wreath, the candlelit Christmas Eve services. To these gatherings, I will bring the particularities of this "year like no other," and offer them to the immutability of custom. I also look forward to the new light and new customs that this season will bring.

The choir will sing UU composer Jason Shelton's haunting setting of Julie Forest Middleton's poem on December 22, when we celebrate the Solstice in our worship. May the coming year, which will surely be like no other, bring us all brightness and hope. ♦

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Music Director

• **"Instant Choir" on January 5!**

• On our first Sunday of 2014, we will welcome any and all singers who are interested in creating an "instant choir" for worship to come rehearse 45 minutes before each service.

• We will learn two easy anthems to sing during the service and come forward to lead the hymn singing. If you have any questions, contact **Beth Norton** — or just come. Rehearsal starts at 8:15 a.m. for the 9:00 a.m. service, and at 10:15 a.m. for the 11:00 a.m. service. Begin 2014 with song!

• **Is the Organ Finished Yet?**

• This is a valid question, especially for parishioners who have been around awhile and were part of the vote to finance the organ project as part of our Capital Campaign. Here's the answer, as of early December 2013 ...

• The organ is now roughly 90 percent complete. When completed, it will have 70 stops and 46 ranks of pipes. We now have 42 complete ranks of pipes, and two reed stops that are 50 to 70 percent complete. A beautiful new bench of solid walnut, meant to go with the new console, has been delivered and has been in use for many months with the balcony console. A special Kurzweil rack module of orchestral sounds, along with audio speakers, was gifted by the organist to the church for incorporation into the organ's new midi system. This adds another dimension of high quality sampled sounds, in addition to the pipes, available to the organist. (You may remember hearing the strings and piano in a recent prelude).

• The pipework remaining to be built consists mostly of reed ranks, which are the most challenging pipes to complete, stabilize and voice. The completed project will also include a new organ console located downstairs, to the left of the pulpit.

• The organ project has taken longer than initially projected for several reasons. Much of the existing pipework that Steve Russell, our builder, had planned to reuse turned out to be unsuitable, either in terms of quality or tonal characteristics. So, new pipework has been fabricated or other vintage pipework rebuilt to make up the new instrument. This change required increased time and labor but has not impacted the cost of the organ. Also, Steve had to cope with a serious health issue in 2012 and the recent death of his father. Steve has recovered well, and we offer our deepest sympathy to him and his family on his loss.

• Russell & Co. hopes to complete the pipework in the first quarter of 2014. The new console will take longer. But, as you can hear, the 90 percent now installed represents the truly special organ that First Parish will have upon completion. It will take its place as one of the significant pipe organs in the greater Boston area.

• If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Thank you for your support — and your patience!

• — **Beth Norton and Eric Huenneke**

It's the Christmas season. And now, it is the Christmas season in November. Really? The consumer push is on: more days for more stuff. But not in RE. Not in church. We leave November for Thanksgiving and save Christmas for December, where it belongs. Church needs to be counter-culture and rooted in values. Church is something we need to count on to remind us what is true.

I hope you and your family find peace in knowing that RE doesn't do Christmas in November. I hope you find hope in knowing your child can attend the Craft Workshop and make handmade gifts with loving adults. I hope you find the holy-day spirit in a Sanctuary that values the truest nature of Christmas: that darkness — in all its forms — will be pierced by the promise of new light. ♦

Love,

— Pam Howell

Director of Religious Education

Little Angels — Sunday, December 22

Don't miss this yearly tradition of joy. Imagine all of the wonder that is sparked by marching our little angels out to sing their song of hope, "This Little Light of Mine." This year, our angels will be led in song by **Kim Brainerd** and **Matteo Paris**. Thanks to them, the donning of robes and halos is possible!

Need more Christmas Cheer?

The Tableau, Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m.

Kristin Parlman and I will have fun with your children, dressing them up as cows, angels, sheep, shepherds and all the other characters that make the ancient Christmas story come alive for our Christmas Eve services. Please e-mail me if you

want to be part of this joyful experience on Christmas Eve. Cider, eggnog and holiday cookies will be provided. It is simple. Come at 3:30 p.m., dress up and have fun.



December 2013 RE Calendar

- Sun., Dec. 1 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies–4 years
No RE for K-12th Grades
11 a.m. One Service ONLY
- Fri., Dec. 6-7 9th Grade Coming of Age Social Justice Retreat
- Sun., Dec. 8 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Spirit Play – K/1st Grade
Middle RE – 2nd-5th Grades
6th/7th Grade Neighboring Activists
8th Grade Dramatic Arts, 9 a.m. this week
9th Grade Coming of Age at 5 p.m.
- Sun., Dec. 15 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Spirit Play – K/1st Grade
Middle RE – 2nd-5th Grades
6th/7th Neighboring Activists (Field Trip)
8th Dramatic Arts
- Sun., Dec. 22 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies–4 years
Spirit Play – K/1st Grade
Middle RE – 2nd-5th Grades
6th/7th Grade Neighboring Activists

Sixth/Seventh Grade Neighboring Activists — Reflection from a Young Activist

Thanks to our 6th and 7th graders! They made a difference. This term they did Crop Walk, Gaining Ground and our First Parish Garden, and moved bricks and had fun. Please take a moment to look at the RE bulletin board that shows the story of their work together. Thanks to **Bev Bringle**, we can all see what they have been up to over the last year. Their parent leaders really made a difference too. **Leslie Koplou**, **Deborah Hamor**, **Jane Stewart**, **Eric Moore** and **Jeremy Osborne** led them through each muddy event. Our parents are the backbone of this RE Program. Thank you!

Eighth Grade Drama — "A Year with Frog and Toad"

We are expecting a great show this year from our eighth graders. They are putting on a new play this year, with plenty of music too. People ages five and up are invited to attend the show. Come once or come three times, but COME! Friday night, December 20, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, December 21, at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. A nominal fee will be charged at the door to support the cost of the play rights. Any extra money will go the charity.

RE News

continued on page 11

Children's Craft Workshop Is Coming!



All you little elves, get ready to have fun making homemade treasures for your holiday gifts. This year, the craft workshop will be on Saturday, December 7, at 1:30 p.m. Be sure to be there for this amazing annual event. Thank you to **Jan Goddard-Taylor, Marilyn**

Lowitt, Patty Popov and **Sarah Napier** for making this all possible.

The First Parish Garden....in December?

Yes. Now is the time when we need someone to be the main person to help with the garden. There is still work to be done closing it for this year, and then there is the planning for the spring. I am looking for someone who could take this on. This is a ministry that should not "die on the vine." It connects all ages, it grows food for Open Table, it teaches our children how to feed themselves. It is local, green and organic. What more could we ask for? Well ... someone to lead it! Give me a call if this is you.

Middle RE (Second through Fifth Grades) Holiday Term Practices

This Holiday Term in Middle RE we will be doing things a bit different. We will be using our Unitarian Universalist Curriculum for our children. If you are interested in learning more, please visit these links information:

Second and third graders will do the first five sessions of "Moral Tales" <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/index.shtml>.

Fourth and fifth graders will do the first five sessions of "Tool Box of Faith" <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/index.shtml>.



SENIOR YOUTH NEWS

At the beginning of November, we had two information sessions for youth who were interested in going on the service trip to West Virginia from April 20 to 26. Commitment forms aren't due until December 1, but I already know that we'll have a great group of youth and chaperones for our service trip.

This year, we'll be working with Appalachia Service Project (ASP), a nondenominational organization that was started by a Methodist minister in 1969. ASP will help match us with families in Wyoming County, West Virginia, whose homes are in need of minor repair. ASP will also coordinate our meals and debrief sessions while we're staying at their facility in Brenton, West Virginia.

We hear from other UU congregations that it is a transformational experience and we're looking forward to sharing it with the congregation. If you have any knowledge about Appalachian music, history or culture that you could share with the group before we go, please be in touch with me.

In faith,

— *Bethany Lowe*

blowe@firstparish.org

Rise Up and Call Her Name

All women are invited to become acquainted with the diverse range of feminine imagery in Mexico and Central America, including the Earth Goddess Tonantzin and the Virgin of Guadalupe, as well as the important meaning of corn to these cultures. Meet on December 4 from 9:30 a.m. to noon in the Parlor. For more information, contact **Bozena Smith** at bozena-smith@mindspring.com.

Women's Retreats 2014: Living Joyfully

All women of First Parish are warmly invited and welcome to attend this year's retreats, where we'll focus on what it means to live joyfully as we share our time together. Banish all cares as we relax, have fun, rejuvenate, and reflect on finding, creating, and sustaining joy in our lives. Choose either of the two weekend retreats (Friday evening through Sunday lunch) at Senexet House in Connecticut, January 24-26 or January 31-February 2, or the mini retreat at First Parish, Friday evening, February 7, and morning through afternoon Saturday, February 8. Registration forms at coffee hours or in the church office starting December 8. Questions? Contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

Women's Parish Association

All women of First Parish are invited to participate in this year's WPA activities. We seek to foster social ties and provide creative programming to support charities and our church community. Come to a Wednesday lunch, volunteer to help with our Holiday Tea on Friday, December 13, and invite your friends, parents or children to come along. Look for our news in the *Sunday News* or *Meeting House News*. If you are interested in working with us on the board in the new year, contact **Marilyn Lowitt**, Marilyn.Lowitt@verizon.net, or **Lois Whitney**, awhitney@alum.mit.edu, to learn more.

The Women's AM/PM Book Group Meetings

As usual, the Women's Book Group will discuss just one book for November and December, and the selection is *Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake*, by Anna Quindlan. The evening session will be Monday, December 2, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the home of **Leslie Fisher** (43 Middle Street, Concord). The morning session will be Tuesday, December 3, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in the Brooks Room at First Parish.

All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both 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 2013-2014:

- Jan. 27, 28 *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*, by Adrienne Nicole LaBlanc
- Feb. 24, 25 *The Language of Flowers: A Novel*, by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
- Mar. 24, 25 *Flight Behavior: A Novel*, by Barbara Kingsolver
- Apr. 28, 29 *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, by Rachel Joyce
- June 2, 3 *Eighty Days: Nelly Bly and Elizabeth Bisland's History-Making Race Around the World*, by Matthew Goodman

UU NEWS

The UU General Assembly (GA) is coming to New England next year — June 25-29 in Providence, Rhode Island. This will be a wonderful opportunity for members of First



Parish to participate in GA without committing to significant travel. Much more information will follow, but now is a great time to mark the dates on your 2014 calendar. If you would like to become involved at this time in planning our involvement, please contact **Alice Van Deusen**, Denominational Affairs Committee, alicevandeusen@gmail.com.

DECEMBER 2013 CALENDAR

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

Every Week...

<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m. (not 12/25!)
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m. (not 12/25!)
Gospel Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m. (not 12/25!)
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m. (not 12/25!)
Lincoln Ringers	Thursday	1:30 p.m.
Men's Group	Saturday	7:30 a.m.
Sunday Forum	Sunday	10:30 a.m.
Worship Reflection	Sunday	12:15 p.m.
Men's Group	Sunday	7:00 p.m.

Sun Dec 1	11:00 <u>One Service ONLY</u>	•	Sat Dec 14	9:00 Photography Club
Tue Dec 3	9:00 WPA Board Meeting	•	Sun Dec 15	12:30 Nominating Committee
	9:30 <i>Women's Book Group</i>	•		12:45 Short-Term Covenant Group
	1:30 First Tuesday Group	•		6:30 Ministerial Intern Committee
	2:00 Shawl Ministry	•	Tue Dec 17	7:00 Evening Worship
Wed Dec 4	6:00 Minerva Gatherings Potluck Dinner	•		7:00 Amnesty Group
	9:30 <i>Rise Up and Call Her Name</i>	•	Thu Dec 19	7:30 By Your Side Singers
	6:00 Arts Council	•	Fri Dec 20	7:30 8th Grade Play "A Year with Frog and Toad"
	7:00 Concord Area Humanists	•		
Thu Dec 5	7:00 Environmental Leadership Team	•	Sat Dec 21	2:00 8th Grade Play "A Year with Frog and Toad"
	7:30 By Your Side Singers	•		5:00 8th Grade Play "A Year with Frog and Toad"
Fri Dec 6	7:30 Diversity Committee	•		
Sat Dec 7	7:00 Play Reading Group	•	Tue Dec 24	Services at 4:00, 5:30, 7:30 and 9:30*
Sun Dec 8	1:30 Children's Holiday Craft Workshop	•	Wed Dec 25	<u>Happy Holidays</u>
Tue Dec 10	3:00 Eve La Plante Lecture	•	Thu Dec 26	Office Open 9-1
	6:30 Standing Committee Meeting	•	Fri Dec 27	Office Open 9-1
Wed Dec 11	6:00 Vegan Potluck	•	Sun Dec 29	11:00 <u>One Service ONLY</u> in the Parlor
Thu Dec 12	7:30 Forum Committee	•	Tue Dec 31	Office Open 9-1
Fri Dec 13	1:30 Pastoral Care Meeting	•	Wed Jan 1	<u>Happy New Year</u>
	7:00 Transylvanian Partnership Community	•	Thu Jan 2	Return to Regular Hours of operation
	12:00 Newsletter Deadline	•	Fri Jan 3	7:00 Play Reading Group
	12:30 T'ai Chi	•		
	3:00 WPA Holiday Concert and Tea	•		
	7:30 <i>Rise up Caroling</i>	•		

* **NOTE:** Some Christmas Eve service times have changed!

DECEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

The January Newsletter deadline is Friday, December 13, at noon.
The Newsletter will be published Friday, January 3.

Office Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

Phone: 978-369-9602

Fax: 978-369-8701

E-Mail: FPConcord@firstparish.org

Website: www.firstparish.org

* **PLEASE NOTE:** The office is CLOSED on Mondays.

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- **Minister's E-Mail:**
- Howard N. Dana: hdana@firstparish.org
-
- **Ministerial Intern's E-Mail:**
- Tony Fisher: tfisher@firstparish.org
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First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Staff

Howard N. Dana, Senior Minister

Tony Fisher, Ministerial Intern

Fifi Ball, Director of Operations

Rachel Baker, Director of Congregational Life

Bethany Lowe, Social Action Community Director

Gary E. Smith, Minister Emeritus

Tina Storey, Assistant to Director of Operations

Becky Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education

Emily Wheeler, Religious Education Administrator

Bethany Lowe, Youth Program Director

-
-
- Elizabeth Norton, Music Director
- Eric Huenneke, Parish Organist
- Anderson Manuel, Youth Gospel Choir Director
- Gail Carey, Children's Choir Director
-
- David Huston, Music Director Emeritus
-
- Dan Holin, Executive Director, Jericho Road
-
- Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator
-
- Cassy Bosworth, Office Manager
-
- Peggy Gallo, Volunteer Collector
-
- Kate Keleher, Volunteer Newsletter Editor
- Kaye Harvie, Volunteer Copy Editor
-

First Parish Eighth Grade Players present
the musical play



A year
with **Frog
and
Toad**

Friday, December 20, 7:30 PM

Saturday, December 21, 2 PM & 5 PM

Based on the books by Arnold Lobel
Music by Robert Reale
Book and Lyrics by Willie Reale

Tickets on sale starting November 17th during coffee hours.

Suggested donation \$5 child, \$10 adult

CONCORD AREA HUMANISTS

7 p.m. Wednesday 11 December

At First Parish in Concord, 20 Lexington Road

Enter through lower door on right-side of main building

John Gibbons ~ *Humanism in Unitarian Universalism*

Date tentatively changed from Dec. 4 because of Special Concord Town Meeting on Dec 4. Please confirm date later on www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org, (click on "Events" at top).

What Religion is This? Musings of a Lifelong Humanist and UU

"Raised in a fundamentalist humanist church and now serving an eclectic church of atheists, theists, agnostics, Jews/Christians/Buddhists and who-knows-who-else under its big tent, I'll ponder matters of clarity and contamination."



Rev. John Gibbons is Senior Minister of First Parish in Bedford, a Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregation. He is very involved in Bedford and metropolitan Boston, a participant in interfaith roundtables, chaplain to the Bedford Minutemen, a founding member of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, the Tuckerman Coalition, and Interfaith Alliance. He also participates actively in the life of the Unitarian Universalist Association, is past president of the UU Partner Church Council, former board chair of the UU Service Committee, and currently chairs UUSC's Ministerial Leadership Network. First Parish Bedford was recognized as a "breakthrough congregation" in 2012 by UUA.

Meeting will start at 7:00 with socializing and a few announcements. Suggested donation \$5. Bring some refreshments to share? Program will start after some socializing. Program will be followed by open discussion led by the presenter, then more socializing. At 9:00 we usually have an open steering committee meeting, to which anyone is invited

More on www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org, and from pne@aol.com

December Snack List

12/1/2013

EVINS
FACKERT
FATTEL
FENNELL
FERGUSON
FEY
FISCHELIS
FISHER
FISHER
FLOYD
FLOYD
FOLEY
FOLEY
FORBES
FORBES
FORMAN
FORSBERG
FORTIER

12/8/2013

FORTIER
FOUSER
FRANGULES
FRESE
FRITZ
FRY
GAGLIARDI
GAINSBORO
GALFORD
GALLO
GALLO
GALUSZA
GAUTHIER
Geffken
GEOGHEGAN
GIANNETTO
GIDLEY
GILL
GLITZENSTEIN
GOGGIN

12/15/2013

Nominating Committee

12/22/2013

GOMBERG
GOODEARL
GOURLIE
GRAHAM
GRAHAM
GRANAHAN
GRAVES
GREELEY
GREENBERG
GREENLAND
GRIFFIN
GRIGSBY
GRUSON
HADDAD
HAGAR
HALL
HALPORN
HAMILTON
HAMILTON
HAMMOND

1/5/2014

HAMMONDS-DINARDO
HAMOR
HANSELMAN
HAPP
HARDIMAN
HARDT
HARDY
HARGREAVES
HARPER
HARRING
HARTIGAN
HARTSHORNE
HARVIE
HASTINGS
HAUT
HAWKS
HEDEMAN
HEDSTROM
HENCHMAN
HERNDON

1/12/2014

HESEL
HEWITT
HIBBEN
HILL
HIXON
HOCH
HOGAN
HOGAN
HOITT
HOLM
HOLMES
HOLT
HOLT
HUBBARD-NELSON
HUGENDUBLER
HULIHAN
HULIHAN
HUNTER
HURD
HURLEY-WALES

Celebrate!

HOLIDAY EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR 2013 FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD

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

Advent Sunday Worship

In the First Parish Sanctuary:

December 1: ONE SERVICE, AT 11:00. *Hanukkah and the Season of Light*, Tony Fisher preaching. First Parish Choir.

December 8: *Kneeling into the Body of Earth*, Rachel Baker preaching. Lincoln Ringers (9:00 and 11:00).

December 15: *Your Birth Was a Miracle Too*, Rev. Howard Dana preaching. Junior Choir and Sophie Hibben, piano (9:00); Chalice Choir and First Parish Choir (11:00).

December 22: *The Turning of the Year*, Rev. Howard Dana preaching. Preschool Choir of Angels (preschool through first grade) and First Parish Choir (9:00 and 11:00).

Christmas Eve Worship

Four Services: 4:00, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30* Family-oriented service at 4:00, with lots of Christmas carols, Children's Choirs and the Christmas story tableau. Lessons and carols with Gospel Choir at 5:30. Chamber Choir at 7:30, and First Parish Choir at 9:30. Each service concludes with candle-lighting and "Silent Night." *NOTE NEW TIMES.

Blue Christmas Tuesday Evening Worship

Tuesday, December 17, 2013, 7:00 p.m. For some, Christmas does not bring joy. It can amplify financial concerns, loneliness, loss or sorrow, leaving people on the outside looking in. Howard Dana, assisted by Tony Fisher and Rachel Baker, offers this evening worship to remember the other side of the holidays. This service is a special time to be together in loving kindness and gentle community, to share reflective words of remembrance, solace and comfort. All are welcome.

Sunday Fireside Worship: December 29

Fireside Service in the Parlor at 11:00 a.m., Rachel Baker and Bethany Lowe leading.

You and Your Family Are Invited to Be Angels this Holiday Season!

- Individuals or families are warmly invited to extend their holiday spirit to the wider First Parish community during the upcoming holiday season. We have several parishioners who have difficulty getting to church and who would love ONE RIDE to ONE SERVICE during the month of December. This is a great way to build our caring community. Most of our parishioners live locally, and they would be grateful to be able to attend a service during the holidays. Would you or someone in your family be willing to provide one ride to one parishioner on one Sunday? Tony Fisher will gratefully receive e-mails (tfisher@firstparish.org) or phone messages (617-823-5904) letting him know when you are available; and he will make the connection for you. Please help welcome our seniors back to church. It's a small act that could mean so much during the holidays.

Holiday Service Projects — Opportunities to Help

- **Mitten Tree:** Hats, scarves and mittens for friends at local nonprofits will be collected from December 3 through 19. Please put items to be donated on the tree in the Parish Hall.
- **Concord Prison Outreach:** Donations for prisoners are due between Saturday, November 30, and Tuesday, December 10. Please leave in the First Parish coatroom.
- **Secret Santa:** Thank you to all of our First Parish Secret Santas. During this busy time, it is wonderful that you have thought of and shopped for local families whom you do not even know, but who will be so grateful for your generosity. Please bring your gifts to either coffee hour on December 1 or December 8. There will be a designated drop-off table. Again, thank you so much for giving your holiday spirit!
- **Coat Drive for the Homeless:** Donate winter jackets, coats or hooded sweatshirts for those in need. All men's and women's sizes would be welcome. Please be sure they are clean, bring them to the church, and put them in the labeled drop box located just inside the side door of the church.

Sing! Rise Up Caroling

Rise Up Caroling, Friday, December 13, 7:30 p.m. Singers of all ages, please bring voices, instruments and cookies to share. Carol lyrics and sheet music for instrumentalists provided.

Christmas Concert and Tea at First Parish

Join us for a spirited afternoon of Holiday Music followed by a Traditional Christmas Tea on Friday, December 13. Music begins at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Tea and traditional fare are served at 4:00 in the Parish Hall. All members and friends of First Parish, of all ages, are invited. A free event, this is a gift to the community from the Women's Parish Association. No reservations are required.

Memorial Poinsettias and Flowers

Come to the poinsettia table at December coffee hours or contact Ellen Whitney at ellewhitney@verizon.net or 978-368-7434 if you wish to donate a poinsettia or cyclamen in memory of a loved one (suggested donation: \$20 per plant). Their names and yours will be included in the memorial listing in the December 22 order of service. The plants decorate the Sanctuary throughout the Christmas holidays and are later distributed by the pastoral care team.

Poinsettias Holiday Delivery

Also at the poinsettia table will be information and sign-up for the Annual Holiday Flower Delivery. Deliveries of poinsettias and flowers bring good cheer to a parish member, and perhaps you can meet someone for the first time. Contact Caitlin Selle at selle.caitlin5@gmail.com or 978-371-3915, or visit the poinsettia table to sign up to deliver flowers. Also please tell us if you know of someone who would appreciate a flower delivery.

Invite a Silent Guest

Our Sixth and Seventh Grade Neighboring Activists will be promoting the Guest at Your Table program beginning November 24. There are no boxes this year! Instead, during the holidays, everyone is asked to remember the UU Service Committee and their innovative grassroots partners around the world by going to the special website set up just for First Parish and making a donation: <https://guest.uusc.org/activity/uusc/uusc/team?show=first-parish-in-concord>. We'll even have workstations set up during coffee hour to make it easy to do.

Children's Holiday Craft Workshop

On Saturday, December 7, from 1:30 to 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! Please e-mail Head Elf Jan Goddard-Taylor at jangooddard-taylor@comcast.net or Marilyn Lowitt at Marilyn.lowitt@verizon.net with any questions you may have. To help at a craft table, please e-mail head elf herder Patty Popov at ppopov@nichols-pratt.com.

"A Year with Frog and Toad"

On Friday, December 20, at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, December 21, at 2:00 and 5:00 p.m., the eighth graders will present a humorous play for five-year-olds and up, directed by Sue and Tom Beck. Your family is sure to enjoy this heartwarming dramatic event.

Youth Group Holiday Party and Lock-In

On December 20, 7:00-9:00 p.m., all YRUU youth and alumni are invited to celebrate the season and participate in the annual Yankee Swap Party. We will ring in the Winter Solstice together with merriment, Chinese food and good times! Bring something wrapped that you already own and want to give away, or a joke gift, or something new under \$20. The Youth Group will have a Lock-In sleepover party in the church following the Yankee Swap.

Rememberance: Holiday Loss Wreath

The Holiday Loss Wreath will be present in the Sanctuary during the month of December; you may want to add a ribbon in honor of someone you love who has died. You can also remember your loved ones by donating flowers for Christmas; sign up at coffee hour with the Flower Committee.

Hear the Bells — Handbell Concert

On Sunday afternoon, December 22, at 3:00 p.m., the Lincoln Ringers, our handbell choir in residence this year, will present a one-hour concert of seasonal music in the Sanctuary. A festive reception will follow in the Parish Hall.