



January 3, 2014
Volume 50, No. 5

Our fiftieth year!

The Meeting House News

REVERIES

Many good things have happened since I joined First Parish as its new Senior Minister five months ago — so many good things that I am a bit out of breath by it all! We are off to a wonderful start together.

In August, First Parish Manager of Operations Fifi Ball and I got right to work seeing where there needed to be improvements in our communications, policies, and financial transparency. As a result, the monthly balance sheets are posted on the church website and a bulletin board every month. We have updated parts of the policy manual and have more updates in the works. We are supervising the rest of the church staff through a process of goal setting and evaluations. Things are running pretty smoothly. Recognizing the dedication and hard work of the church staff, the Standing Committee gave each of them a holiday bonus in December. These bonuses ranged from \$500 to \$1000 (after taxes). To a person, the church staff deeply appreciated the recognition of their hard work.



In September, the whole congregation celebrated my installation with more than 50 area clergy in attendance. The work of the team who put the installation together paid off with a joyous service and a gracious reception. That late fall evening couldn't have been more beautiful. In addition, we were able to welcome both Rev. József Szombatfalvi from our partner church in Transylvania and Rev. Gary Smith, First Parish minister emeritus to the festivities.

October and November saw much work in the congregation as the Environmental Taskforce brought forth a proposal to put solar panels on the religious education wing of the church. Many volunteers worked hard to bring this proposal to a congregational meeting where it was unanimously accepted. What a win for all of us! In a similar manner, conversations were started about how we raise and spend money at First Parish. Over 50 people attended a workshop on "The Soul of Money." Treasurer Suzanne Lowe and Fifi Ball facilitated meetings about budget priorities for 2014-15 and the corresponding stewardship efforts. And in an act of true generosity, members of First Parish gave over \$6,000 to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) for typhoon relief in the Philippines. There are bright financial days ahead of us!

This fall we have enjoyed the music of the Lincoln Ringers, our "bell choir in residence." We have eaten together at various potlucks and luncheons. At memorial services we have mourned the passing of some longstanding First Parish members. And we have rejoiced at new members joining and at the dedication of a child. In addition we celebrate with Tony Fisher, Ministerial Intern, in his successfully passing the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC). Being a teaching congregation is just one way that First Parish provides for Unitarian Universalism's strong future. I could go on and on about the many other things we have done as a

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There are two inserts at the end of this newsletter:

- ◆ Wright Tavern Winter/Spring Programs
- ◆ 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, January 5

Strangers Bearing Strange Gifts — Rev. Howard N. Dana

9:00 & 11:00 – “Instant Choir”

(see Music Notes, page 12 for details)

Sunday, January 12

Tony Fisher preaching

9:00 – First Parish Choir

11:00 – Mandolin Trio: Al Armenti, Norm Nichols and Rob Castillo

Sunday, January 19

Intergenerational Service

One Service at 11:00

Intergenerational Gospel Choir

Sunday, January 26

God or the Boston Globe — Rev. Howard N. Dana

9:00 & 11:00 – Lincoln Ringers

Sunday, February 2

Atheism — The Toughest Spiritual Practice —

Rev. Howard N. Dana

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
February: Friday, January 24	Tuesday, February 4
March: Friday, February 20	Tuesday, March 4
April: Friday, March 20	Tuesday, April 1

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

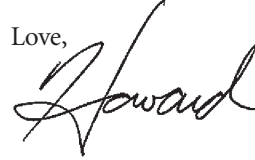
Editor's Note: *We are delighted that writers are so enthusiastic, but gently suggest using fewer exclamation marks. A former editor's rule was to use an exclamation mark only to announce the Second Coming — and only if He actually did come. Thanks.*

REVeries

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congregation this fall — wonderful things large and small. But I will stop for now and simply say that it is a pleasure to be among you. We are doing good things together. May our New Year bring more life and health and joy and love to everyone touched by First Parish in Concord.

Love,



Howard N. Dana

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, MA, 01742, 978-369-9602 extension 411. His cell phone number is 717-412-8543. In addition to regular office hours, Howard makes appointment to meet with people at other times. Please call or e-mail **Cassy Bosworth** at 978-369-9602 or cbosworth@first-parish.org to schedule appointment with Howard.

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

Parish Notes

continued on page 3

Newsletter Submission Note

Dear First Parishioners,

Please bear with us as we continue with changes to the *Meeting House News* that we hope will deliver news of First Parish most effectively and efficiently.

Regarding “Save the Date” Items: The monthly newsletter will now feature a SHORT column titled “Comng Up,” specifically for events coming in the next month(s). Include title, date and contact info; a URL if there is one, is particularly helpful.

Regarding ALL Items: Please limit your items to 100 words or fewer!

The February newsletter deadline is Friday, January 24.

Altshuler Gallery Exhibit for January and February

We have a dual exhibit of photographs and illustrations on display in the Altshuler Gallery during January and February in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. The photographs on view are of Martin Luther King’s 1965 march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, the state capitol. They were taken by photojournalist and First Parishioner, Ivan Massar, who was on that 50-mile march. The illustrations are by Guy Bubillout, with artistic design by Milton Glaser. They are from the book *Connected Wisdom*, by Concord resident Linda Booth Sweeney, Ed. D. This collection of folk stories, and images, serves to teach people of all ages about our inherent connectedness and our uniquely human capacity to notice this interdependence. The essence of this work will be an integral part of our intergenerational MLK worship service on January 19, and an intergenerational workshop on January 23 exploring these ideas.

Calling All Artists Grades 6 through 12

Calling First Parish artists in grades 6 through 12 to display a work of art in the Sue Altshuler gallery in March. We welcome drawings, prints, photographs, paintings, collages, or any 2-D art. If your item is not framed for hanging then please note that we will need to put tiny holes in the corners to hang it. This is a way to share your talents with our parishioners and beautify our church. Please include a note with your name, the medium used and a way to contact you. The show will be hung March 4. Art can be stored in Doug B’s office the week before. Questions? Contact **Marcia Schloss** 978-371-2751 or marcialou28@gmail.com.

Music Events Committee — Opportunity To Get Involved

The Music Events Committee is looking for a few new members to help coordinate and support upcoming music events. If you’re a lover of music and would like to contribute to the vibrant music ministry at First Parish, this would be a great way to get involved. Particularly useful skills include selling tickets online, graphic design, contract negotiation, and an interest in attending and hosting weekend concerts. Call **Rob Hamilton** at 508-272-6850.

Creative Practice Affinity Group

Starting on Thursday, January 16: Do you write, paint, sculpt, knit, do C++ programming, photography, dance, music — anything and everything. Join us every month for support, inspiration, discussion, resource sharing, accountability, and a sense of community — whatever your creative outlet. Explore the links between Spirituality and Creativity. Be part of a group. All are welcome to the Creative Practice

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.

January and February – Altshuler Gallery – Photography Exhibit by Ivan Massar and Illustrations by Guy Bubillout.

January 3 at 7:00 p.m. – Play Reading Group

January 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m. – “Wild and Precious”

January 8 at 6:00 p.m. – Arts Council Meeting

January 11 at 9:00 a.m. – Photo Club meeting – open to all First Parish adults

January 24 at 7:30 p.m. – Rise Up Singing, First Parish’s monthly song circle.

January 26 at 7:30 p.m. – Sarasa Chamber Music Concert, “The Pathway to J.S. Bach”

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.

Affinity Group meetings on the third Thursday of every month in the Brooks Room, from 10 a.m. to noon. Contact **Derek McCarthy** at dsm32@cornell.edu.

Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder?

Join the discussion led by **Jim Snyder-Grant** and **Lillian Anderson**. This is the topic for the January 17 meeting of the Jewish Awareness group at First Parish from 7 to 9 p.m. All are welcome.

Save the Dates — May 2 and 3!

“Yankee Home Companion” to celebrate Music and the Arts at First Parish. Lots of stories, songs, sound effects and fun.

WPA Luncheon Meeting on January 22

Begin your new year by socializing with old friends and meeting new ones at the Women’s Parish Association’s luncheon meeting on Wednesday, January 22. Social time will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch at noon. The program will begin at 12:45 p.m. Stay tuned for program details, which will be announced on the First Parish website, in the *Sunday News* and in FPAnnounce

notices. The cost of the lunch is ten dollars, payable at the door. Contact the church office or **Dian Pekin** at pekincd@comcast.net by January 19, for reservations and dietary requirements. All women and men of First Parish and their friends are warmly welcome.

Transcendentalism Council News and Events

“Thoreau and the Language of Trees” —Tuesday, January 28, 7:30 p.m. **Richard Higgins** weaves together Thoreau’s writing with photographs to explore the writer’s passion for trees. The lecture is illustrated with Higgins’ own photographs, Thoreau’s sketches of trees, and images by landscape photographer Herbert Wendell Gleason, who documented Thoreau’s Concord. Reception to follow. Sponsored by the Transcendentalism Council, the Thoreau Society, and the Walden Woods Project. \$10 suggested donation. Information: fptranscendentalism.org.

PHOTO: RICHARD HIGGINS



Transcendentalism Council Website Launched

The Transcendentalism Council has a new website, fptranscendentalism.org. Find details of our events and links of interest, and download a seasonal calendar of Concord-area Transcendentalism and Concord history events.

Creative Concord Programs to Be Offered

Throughout 2014, the Concord Historical Collaborative will offer “Creative Concord: Artists, Artisans, and Architects.” Discover the stories, people and objects that show Concord’s historical and artistic importance, locally and nationally. Register for these monthly programs, held at multiple historic sites, in the visual arts, music, writing, craftsmanship and architecture through Concord-Carlisle Adult and Community Education at www.ace.colonial.net. As new members of the Concord Historical Collaborative, the Transcendentalism Council hopes that First Parish will be represented in “Creative Concord.” Contact **Dianne Weiss** (diannemcweiss@comcast.net) or **Victor Curran** (vacurran@comcast.net) if you are interested in helping develop a program.

First Parish’s Invested Funds to Be Reviewed

The Trustees are beginning a periodic review of the investment management arrangements for our invested funds, currently worth \$2.7 million. Welch & Forbes has managed these funds well since 1975. At the same time, techniques for investment management have evolved a great deal since then, and we want to be sure that we have the best possible fit between our needs and services available from vendors. Welch & Forbes will be invited to participate in this process.

Parishioners may know of investment firms that serve institutional nonprofit clients and that have a strong record and clear investment approach. If you know of a firm you think should be considered by the Trustees, please contact **Laura Bernstein** at 781-259-9926 or lrb1943@gmail.com. We cannot consider a firm that has close ties to a member of the congregation.

MINISTERIAL INTERN

Thank You!

One of my New Year’s resolutions some years back was to start journaling. I went out and bought a simple spiral bound notebook with a sketch of a



lizard on the front and made my first hopeful entry. I kept at it regularly for a few months; and while I never gave it up completely, the time between my entries over the following months and years grew longer and longer. On New Year’s Day 2009, I looked back at what I had written and was taken aback at the message that

jumped out of the pages. “YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT!” It took another few months and a quiet retreat to make the decision to pursue a long dormant call, but in the fall of that year I applied for acceptance to divinity school and entered the process of becoming a minister.

From the time the decision was made, things have moved much faster than I would have ever thought. In December, I finished all my coursework at Andover Newton Theological School and I met with the UUA’s Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC), who granted me a Category 1, which means that upon completion of my internship here in Concord, I will be welcomed into the fellowship of Unitarian Universalist ministers.

I have much to be thankful for, not the least of which is an intern church that takes the teaching process seriously and provides a rich environment in which to engage in the craft of ministry, as well as a fabulous and patient staff that is next to none. Many of the things you have taught me came in handy as I met with the MFC. But there’s also that little lizard notebook that took everything in over the course of three years and finally gave back the message that it was time for something new. Obviously not every New Year’s resolution ends up being life changing, but I’m here to tell you that it is possible. Anything is possible!

Happy New Life! ♦

Blessings,

Tony

STANDING COMMITTEE NEWS AND NOTES

December marks the halfway point in the Standing Committee (SC) year. As we pass into the second half of our year “connections” seems to be the theme.

First, we continue in large ways and small to listen to you and talk with you — the congregation we represent. Every Sunday at both coffee hours, a Standing Committee member is at the membership table eagerly waiting to hear how you think First Parish (FP) is doing.

We provide additional channels for communication through FP e-mail announcements, congregational discussions, and congregational meetings. Our bulletin board contains posted copies of the agendas for upcoming meetings and the approved minutes of past meetings. Minutes are also posted on the Web.

Second, outside of SC, most of us belong to other groups within FP, such as the choir, the Intern Committee, the First Tuesday group, the Holiday Craft Workshop, RE, Stewardship Promotion, and Solar Panel Adoption. These involvements allow us additional opportunities to listen and connect.

Third are our connections at the level of policy and governance, our formal obligations within the structure of FP to support the smooth management of the church. We work closely with the Executive Team (ET) of **Howard Dana** and **Fifi Ball** and with our Treasurer, **Suzanne Lowe**. We are pleased to be developing stronger ties with the Trustees of Parish Donations. Subcommittees charged by the SC, often including non-SC members, funnel their feedback into our SC meetings as well, as does the Nominating Committee.

Through all these connections, we strive to stay aware of First Parish’s varied needs, hopes, interests and enthusiasms. We have lively discussions to determine when our governing board roles suggest we take action, when we are required to do so, and when we can be most effective acting as cheerleaders on the sidelines for new or established initiatives.

At our December meeting we noted the web of staff interconnections — usually seamless and often unacknowledged — that allows the day-to-day work of the church to continue. So with a deep sense of gratitude for the steadfast performance of our salaried staff over the last several years, we endorsed Howard’s suggestion that we express our appreciation with a bonus using special funds (not part of our annual budget) to say, “Thank You.” The combined total of this bonus was about \$16,000.

The individual bonuses were hand-delivered to each staff member with the message that it was from the

Standing Committee on behalf of the whole congregation. It was an especially pleasing connection to have made during our holiday season. ♦

Jack Nevison

Chair of the Standing Committee

Stay in touch with us at:

Laurie Van Loon, lvloon@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.

Standing Committee, Staff and Trustees — Opportunities for New Collaboration

Report to First Parish, December 2013

Three organizations within First Parish exercise significant oversight over its financial operations:

- The Standing Committee provides fiduciary oversight over First Parish’s operations, and plays a role in fundraising.
- The Staff (represented by the Senior Minister and Director of Operations) manages the day-to-day income and expenses of running our large UU church.
- The Trustees of Parish Donations invest and protect the donations that have been given over the years for the long-term support of First Parish. This includes maintaining and managing the buildings that have been given to First Parish (all the buildings other than the Meeting House). The Trustees contribute as much from the endowment as they sustainably can to support First Parish operations each year.

While having different perspectives and fiduciary responsibilities, these three organizations share the common goal of, now and into the future, using First Parish’s assets to best support First Parish’s mission.

Since the fall of 2011, in our efforts to ensure strong communication and collaboration among these groups, representatives of the Standing Committee, Staff and Trustees have taken steps to better understand each other’s areas of responsibility and concern regarding the church’s financial operations and its endowment. We have attended each other’s regularly scheduled meetings, and we have held two special meetings discussing ways to further improve collaboration. We are planning a number of steps toward more unified financial operations and reporting. We will meet again in the spring of 2014 and look forward to additional collaboration.

Not long after I began working at First Parish, three people approached me with an idea for sustaining the life of the congregation. Each of these folks suggested that I create a method to contact all the members and friends of the congregation. One person was passionate about people he had not seen in a long, long time. Another was interested in following up with people who became involved with the congregation in the last couple of years, but didn't seem to be around anymore. And the third person suggested that a three-year cycle to communicate with the entire congregation would be best.

I was pleased to hear from these three because I understood these suggestions as a genuine desire for this large congregation of 800 to build a deep sense of belonging for everyone who finds his or her way here. These ideas highlighted the deep love and caring I sense within First Parish. The desire to reach out to everyone also acknowledges that as individuals and as a congregation, we sometimes lose track of each other. Losing track of each other happens sometimes because at different times in our lives different areas take precedence over other areas. Our relationships at First Parish may become more or less important, depending upon the other spheres in our lives.

In covenantal community, like First Parish and other Unitarian Universalist congregations, we have a responsibility to each other. This responsibility includes looking out for each other both as individuals and as a religious community. We pick up the phone and call someone we have not seen in a while. We may encourage someone we don't recognize to come to the next potluck dinner. We can work with four other people to plan an event for the congregation or start an affinity group. We can invite someone we met at church out for a cup of tea to learn more about their theology. When we lose track of each other, we have a responsibility to the congregation to apologize when we discover our mistakes. And if we feel that we have been forgotten, we have a similar responsibility to the community to forgive when we come back. Apology and forgiveness are religious disciplines we practice at First Parish. Each time we apologize or forgive it becomes a little easier to do the same in the future.

• Not only do the members and friends of First Parish have a
• responsibility to each other, but your staff has a responsibility
• to the congregation as well. As your Director of Congregational
• Life I was charged to develop a program, among other things,
• to reach out and connect with the entire congregation. This
• charge led to the first phase of the Ambassador Program, where
• 220 out of 785 members were contacted from April through
• October 2013. Congratulations First Parish, your dream of
• reaching out to everyone is happening! I'd like to thank all the
• ambassadors for their input, time and effort. ♦

In faith and fellowship,

—*Rachel Baker*

Director of Congregational Life

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 individ-
• ual 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 the 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.

TRANSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIP NEWS

After two open meetings, and numerous conversations with members of the congregation and staff, the Kopjafa Task Force has recognized a clear consensus on a permanent site for the 20th partnership anniversary kopjafa (commemorative pole) carved by our partner minister Rev. József Szombatfalvi. The recommended location is next to Keresztúr Terrace, between the terrace and the Meeting House. Task force members are in the process of writing up their recommendation for submission to **Howard Dana** and the Standing Committee. Stay tuned for the next stage of this process. In the meantime, enjoy the kopjafa in its temporary location in the Parish Hall.

The “Holiday Greetings for Keresztúr” program was a great success. RE children and parishioners hand-made 48 “cards” during coffee hours (thanks to **Ken Estabrook** and **Pam Howell** for organizing). And parishioners wrote more than 55 cards to friends and scholarship students in Keresztúr, and deposited their cards in the Keresztúr Holiday Mailbox. Many thanks to all who keep these connections alive, with special thanks to **Dana** and **Kathy Booth** for ensuring delivery to our partners in Székelykeresztúr!

We’re delighted to announce further details about Harmony and Heritage: A Transylvania Pilgrimage (October 30–November 10, 2014), open to all parishioners. Please see the article below for details about our next pilgrimage to our Partner Congregation in Transylvania.

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

The next Partner Congregation Committee (PCC) meeting will be on February 6. Details will be in next month’s *Meeting House News*. We welcome parishioners who wish to learn more about our Transylvania partnership. ♦

Minden jót! “Best wishes!”

— **Rodger Mattlage** for the Partner Congregation Committee (rmattlage@mac.com)

Harmony and Heritage: A Transylvania Pilgrimage — October 30–November 10

The plans for our next visit to our partner church in Székelykeresztúr are under way. If you are interested in hearing about them or are considering joining us, plan to attend one of the following meetings — Sunday, January 12, at 12:30 p.m., or Wednesday, January 15, at 6:30 p.m. — to learn the details. We’ll discuss the itinerary possibilities and possible travel extensions, costs and payment schedules and scholarship assistance, as well as the goals of the trip and the educational preparation before we go.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS

The Nominating Committee/Leadership Development Team

Leadership development at First Parish is an extension of spiritual development. Our congregational leaders need more than technical training; they need a combination of skills and qualities to enable them to be both skillful and faithful in their leadership.

Save the Date

Please join us Saturday March 1, for a half-day workshop: The Art of Leadership at First Parish, led by **Rev. Howard Dana**.

In the meantime, the Nominating Committee is in full swing, taking nominations, (self and otherwise). We want to know what you would like to do. We are talking with people about ways to get more involved, and how to develop and hone spiritual leadership practices and skills. Please contact any member of the Nominating Committee if you would like to talk, learn more about leadership and/or are looking for ways to deepen your engagement at First Parish. We are looking forward to hearing from you. Feel free to be in touch with any of us.

The Nominating Committee/Leadership Development

Team: **Russell Herndon**

(rherndon@hydrabiosciences.com), chair, **Doug Hardy**

(Doughardy@gmail.com), **Donald Leopold**

(dleopold@sherbrooke.com), **Shawna Reid**

(shawnareid@gmail.com), **Sue Ryan** (susanryan101@comcast.net),

Kate Svrcek (katesvrcek@hotmail.com), **Alane**

Wallis (awallis@nutter.com), **Dianne Weiss** (diannemcweiss@comcast.net)

Our primary goal is to deepen our connections with our Keresztúr friends and extended families, as well as to create our own community of travelers and understand more about ourselves and the history and heritage of Transylvanian Unitarianism. Music is the transformative bridge that allows that to happen. Informal group singing will be a part of our shared experience as we work to create a bilingual partnership songbook.

We hope you’ll consider joining **Beth Norton**, possibly **Howard Dana** (who hopes to go), and the planning committee on this important journey. If you are interested but can’t attend either meeting, we’ll be happy to send you the information presented.

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

As we move into January, the new year, and toward Martin Luther King Day on January 20, I'm reminded of the call that came to all of us in early 2009 by our soon-to-be-elected President Obama. He called all residents of the United States to consider MLK Day a "day on, not a day off." MLK Day had been sanctioned by Congress as a day of service in 1994, but something about Obama's leadership in that moment revived the energy for this "day on."

That year, I found a social service agency in Arlington that provided support groups for families who had recently lost a parent. We organized toys into newly labeled boxes and cleaned layers of dust off the top of window trim. A few years later, I cut squares of fleece for blankets for homeless children. Last year, I took youth from my home church to the Curley School in Jamaica Plain, where we wrote cards to soldiers, drew and wrote stories for children without books, and assembled craft bags for students at the Curley School.



Looking back, I don't remember those experiences because they were life-changing, or because someone's story stayed with me. I remember those moments because they were done in the company of strangers, for people I will never meet. This annual practice has grounded my citizenship to the United States in giving back.

This Martin Luther King Day, I hope you will make it a "day on." I hope you find an opportunity in Lowell or Roxbury or Cambridge to ground your citizenship to humanity in giving back to others. ♦

In faith,

—Bethany Lowe

blowe@firstparish.org

A Mirror on Intolerance

Understanding and overcoming prejudice is something we all strive to do; however, we are not always aware of how our culture reinforces those biases. This is especially true when we travel abroad and we experience situations of anti-Semitism, homophobia, ethnic intolerance or racism. On Thursday, January 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall, the Transylvania Partnership Community, the Diversity Committee and the Social Action Community are cosponsoring a panel discussion featuring Rev. Harold Babcock and others familiar with the complexities of Transylvania's many cultures. Rev. Babcock is the minister of the First Religious Society UU, Newburyport, the UUA's current

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/sacemailist; or visit the Social Action bulletin board.

ambassador to the Hungarian Unitarian Church's headquarters in Kolozsvár, and past President of the UU Partner Church Council.

There will be discussion following the presentation. For more information, contact **Lillian Anderson** at Lillianand@comcast.net. This program is the first of two parts. The second part will be a workshop in the spring to examine our own beliefs regarding tolerance/intolerance and cultural difference so that we can be better prepared to meet the unexpected both at home and abroad.

"Wild and Precious" — Steve Cadwell's Theatrical Performance January 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m.

In this theatrical production of his poems, stories, music and photographs, **Steve Cadwell** shares what he's found it means to be a man: a wild and precious boy born in Vermont in the fifties who becomes a hearty gay man in Concord, Massachusetts. The audience will find "Coming to Terms" themes that resonate with their own journey to adulthood. Engrossing entertainment for adults and mature teens. Performances are Friday, January 10, and Saturday, January 11, at First Parish. Two acts with intermission. First Parish members **Francene Amari-Faulkner** and **Claudia Nimar** will be directing and producing, respectively. Tickets: \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors, and \$15 for students. Purchase tickets by calling the church office at 978-369-9602. Cash or checks only, made out to First Parish Concord. Sponsored by the Social Action Community Council.

Vegan Potluck — Tuesday, January 14, 6:00 p.m.

Enjoy a delicious potluck dinner in the Parish Hall, January 14, at 6:00 p.m., hosted by Reverence for Life and the Environmental Leadership Team. 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. Your \$2 donation helps to cover expenses. Don't have time to cook? A simple salad or a loaf of bread is just fine. Need a recipe? Contact **Marcia Schloss** at 978-371-2751 or marcialou28@gmail.com.

SAC Notes

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Diversity Committee Meeting — Thursday, January 16, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

We welcome the participation of anyone who would like to help us fulfill our mission of being a Welcoming Congregation. Please attend the meeting, or contact Sara Ballard at sara@sb.org for more information.

Communities for Restorative Justice Breakfast with Senators Eldridge and Barrett, January 27 at 8:30 a.m. at Tri-Con

The Massachusetts Campaign for a Department of Peace invites you to a legislative breakfast at Concord's Trinitarian Congregational Church hosted by Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ), together with Senators Eldridge and Barrett, on January 27, 8:30-10:00 a.m., in support of SB52: An Act Promoting Restorative Justice Practices. "This legislation helps offenders break out of the cycle of crime through acts of community service and offers victims the opportunity to receive an explanation and apology from the offender." (State Senator Jamie Eldridge) The film, "Finding Courage," may also be shown. It is free and open to the public, but registration is required. Sign up at <https://senatebill52rjbreakfast.eventbrite.com>, or call the Tri-Con office, 978-318-3447. If a voicemail is left, it should include all names of those attending, an e-mail address (to confirm registration) and a phone number.

Social Action Community Grant Application Deadline Friday, January 31

Each year, First Parish allocates 7.5 percent of annual pledged income to Social Action Grants. The Social Action Community Council distributes these grants to local, national and international organizations. The Council encourages social entrepreneurship and gives extra weight to grant requests that provide seed money for specified projects with a limited time period to "incubate" new ideas. Grant awards priority is given to those new concepts and ventures. Please keep in mind that grant applications must be sponsored by a First Parish pledging member. Further details on the grant application process, policies and requirements can be found at <http://sac.firstparish.org/cms/grants> or by contacting Wendy Holt (wendyholt48@yahoo.com) or Katharine Esty (katharinecesty@verizon.net).

Save the Date! David Ballard's "Having It All" Cabaret on March 14 and 15

David Ballard, who grew up at First Parish, will perform his critically acclaimed cabaret show "Having it All" at First Parish, to benefit the Trevor Project, on March 14, and 15. Cosponsored by the Diversity Committee and the Music Events Committee. Look for more details in next month's newsletter.

PASTORAL CARE NOTES AND NEWS

Writing a Note Card

One Sunday last spring at coffee hour, I sat at the note card-writing table. I wrote:

Dear Josie (not her real name),

Today a breeze is coming in through the open door of the Parlor here at First Parish. I am so sorry your mother has died. I hope you find comfort in the beauties of spring.

Writing a condolence note is an exercise in acceptance and hope. In writing to a person who has lost a loved one, we acknowledge not only their loss but also our own vulnerability. Here are some things I keep in mind when writing:

- Write in your own voice, the way you would normally speak to the person.
- Include some details of real life, to help the recipient feel more connected to you. That's why, when I don't know the person I'm writing to, I say something about where I am as I write.
- Tell a story about the person who is gone. "I'll never forget your dad marching in the Fourth of July parade." "You've told me how Nana used to make soup for you in her nineties."
- Remember that your note is precious, even if it's been a while since the person passed away.

May the notes we write bring comfort to the recipient.

— Mary Ann Barton, parishioner

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

The Lay Minister for January Carolyn Shohet: careshohet@aol.com or 978-369-6231.

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).

I always giggle when children ask if First Parish is my home, if I actually live here. It sort of reminds me of when I was a child and saw my



second grade teacher out shopping for milk in the market: “What are you doing here, at the grocery store?” I would incredulously ask her.

Context is everything, isn't it. And yet, the real answer to the children's question is, “Yes, I do live here.” And you

live here. In truth, we all live

here. Church is where real life does happen right in front of us. We become part of others' lives and they become part of ours.

Whether it be the Elf workshop, Sunday School, Santa's visit, a December memorial service, our Blue Christmas service, the tableau, angel Sunday, Rise Up Caroling or Christmas Eve services, here we are, living and calling this place our “home.”

Thank you for our holiday memories. They will certainly warm our collective soul through the cold darkness of January. ♦

Love,

— Pam Howell

Director of Religious Education

Holiday Thank-You's All Around!

Our Little Angels — Thank you to **Matteo, Tallulah** and **Carly Neale Paris, Kimberly Brainerd** and all the Holiday Term teachers for making this such an uplifting tradition.

The Holiday Craft Workshop — Thank you to **Jan Goddard-Taylor, Marilyn Lowitt, Patty Popov, Sarah Napier** and **Dave Elwood** for organizing all of the craft elves and making this year an incredible event of holiday joy.

The Eighth Grade Play, “A Year with Frog and Toad” — Thank you to **Sue** and **Tom Beck** for directing this play for our eighth graders, and to **Amy Capofreddie** for organizing everything behind the scenes. They all worked so hard every Sunday to create this special gift for our parish. Thank you also to our eighth graders, who showed up each week because they cared.

The Christmas Eve Tableau — Thank you to **Kristin Parlman** for organizing all of the cows, shepherds, sheep, angels and kings for this story

January 2014 RE Calendar

- Sun., Jan. 5 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies-4 years
Spirit Play – K-1st Grade
Middle RE – 2nd-5th Grades
6th/7th Grades – Neighboring Activists
8th Grade – OWL at 4 p.m.
9th Grade – Coming of Age at 11 a.m.
- Sun., Jan. 12 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies-4 years
Spirit Play – K-1st Grade
Middle RE – 2nd-5th Grades
6th/7th Grades – Neighboring Activists
8th Grade – Dramatic Arts at 9 a.m. this week
9th Grade – Coming of Age at 5 p.m.
- Sun., Jan. 19 Little RE – Babies – 4 years, 11 a.m. ONLY
A Very Intergenerational Service – Please Come!
- Fri., Jan. 24 Coming of Age Retreat
- Sun., Jan. 26 Little RE – Regular RE for Babies-4 years
Spirit Play – K-1st Grade
Middle RE – 2nd-5th Grades
6th Grade – Neighboring Activists – Wright Tavern
7th Grade – Neighboring Faiths, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
8th Grade – OWL at 4 p.m.

that just must be told. It is the story of hope and love that restores all that come to see it unfold in our Sanctuary.

Coming of Age City Reach Retreat — Thank you to **Jamie Atkins**, our Coming of Age Leader, for organizing a heart-changing retreat to the streets of Boston for our 9th graders.

Santa's Visit to Sunday School — Thank you to **Peter Mitchell** for donning his Santa robes and visiting all of our children for cookie day.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend — An Intergenerational Service to Remember

Please join us for a story- and music-filled service on January 19, at 11 a.m. **Beth Norton** is arranging a moving gospel choir, and I am working with a local author, Linda Booth Sweeney, to bring Dr. King's messages alive through folk tales from far-off countries depicted in the book *Connected Wisdom: Living Stories for Living Systems*. Our hope is that this service will feed the dreams of all ages on a cold winter morning.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Intergenerational Learning Workshop

Thursday, January 23, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room

In a spider's web, what happens on one part of the web affects every other part. Like a spider's web, our forests and oceans, our

RE News

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families and communities are so intricately woven that no part exists in isolation.

Through the wisdom of ancient storytellers, this workshop celebrates Martin’s life-long message of interconnectedness and our children’s innate ability to appreciate its power. This understanding is crucial in solving the interlinked social, environmental and economic problems of today’s world.

The workshop will awaken this innate systems intelligence in young people and encourage them to see, as MLK did, that their world is an interconnected, dynamic and tightly woven web of nature, people, issues and events. Learning to see the ‘big picture’ at a young age is both purposeful and meaningful.

Please join Linda Booth Sweeney and me for a fun-filled evening based on the book *Connected Wisdom: Living Stories for Living Systems*. We will be getting inside some of Martin’s big ideas through folktales, games and good conversation.

This special workshop is open to people in third grade and up. Each adult should be accompanied by at least one, and up to three, children. There is no fee for this workshop. Your pledge dollars are supporting this unique experience. Space will be limited, so please e-mail RE Council member **Sarah Napier** to reserve your spot: sarah.napier@mac.com.

Middle RE — Winter Term Starts on Sunday, January 26

We will be continuing with our UU Curriculum for both the second/third grades and the fourth/fifth grades. Second and third graders will continue with “Moral Tales”: <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/index.shtml>. Fourth and fifth graders will continue with “Tool Box of Faith”: <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/index.shtml>

Since this is our first time using this curriculum, we would love to have your thoughts about the Holiday Term. Did your children like their lessons? Did they like being in a smaller, age-level group? Did they like coming together at the end and playing some games in the Emerson Room? Many people worked very hard to make this happen. Let us know what you and your child thought. RE Council member **Rachael Morris** is ready to receive your comments: rae-moe26@gmail.com.

Please express a special thank you to **Jan Goddard-Taylor, Brenda Mahnken, Meghan Giannetto** and **Dave Venesey** for making this happen at 9 a.m. And to **Sue Kurker, Anna Huckabee Tull, Rachael Morris** and **Rick Hedeman** for our 11 a.m. kids.

The Winter Term teachers will be **Linde Ghere, Pina Madera** (2nd/3rd) and **Cindie Bryan** and **Lorraine**

SENIOR YOUTH NEWS

The plans to go to West Virginia are full-speed ahead. We currently have ten youth signed up, and a few more who are still deciding.

This January 31 (or February 7 if it snows too much), the youth will be leading a night of Rock ’n’ Roll Bingo. This will be an event for families of all ages and sizes. Youth will serve pizza and homemade chili and lead a few rousing rounds of bingo. When a “bingo” is announced, we’ll celebrate with musical performances from some of our talented youth musicians. Dancing will be encouraged.

All funds raised will support scholarships for youth to go to West Virginia, as well as an in-kind donation to the organization we’ll be working with in West Virginia, Appalachia Service Project.

We’d love if you would join us for Rock ’n’ Roll Bingo! Come see how fun our youth are.

In faith,

— *Bethany Lowe*

blowe@firstparish.org

Sousa (4th/5th) for 9 a.m. **Denise Theodores, Jake Nunes** (2nd/3rd) and **Rita Tsang** and **Kristin Parlman** (4th/5th) for the 11 a.m.

Neighboring Activists — Winter Term Starts on Sunday, January 26

Our sixth graders will be going on field trips and learning how animals enrich our lives, both emotionally and physically. We will travel to Drumlin Farm and shovel manure, visit a rescued horse and learn about our interdependent web. Thanks to **Kristin Moore, Darlene Vanstone, John Peterson** and **Louisa Paushter** for leading this active and odiferous program.

Neighboring Faiths Begins

We will begin our Neighboring Faiths Winter Term on January 26. **Jan Power** has continued her leadership in this program for her second year. She has improved our curriculum for this class in so many ways, and we will be using her work to guide this group of seventh graders. Our leaders, **Brandon Roberts** and **Katherine Mast**, will be working with Jan to take our teens to many houses of worship. This exploratory program enables our youth to discover how we are both similar and unique to many of the world’s great religions. It also gives them the space to understand what we believe as Unitarian Universalists and what they believe as individuals. There is an extended session for youth on Sunday, January 26, with a mandatory parent information session immediately following in the Sanctuary from 12:30–1:00 p.m.

As I write this column, in the waning December days of 2013, I am fantasizing about an extra week between December 31 and January 1. A week without work, rehearsals, meetings, schedules. A time to relax, reflect, take stock and breathe before jumping into the new year. I've shared this fantasy with quite a few people and all have given it their approbation.



I recognize this as a symptom of the overload that often happens at the end of the calendar year.

Preparation for the holidays and meeting end-of-the-year deadlines create a lot of pressure. To top it off, we are planning for January! As far as I can tell, there are no winter doldrums anymore.

January 2, we're off and running once again. Or sledding . . .

There is much to look forward to early in 2014. Musically, here at First Parish there are at least two informal opportunities to begin the New Year in song. An "Instant Choir" for the services on January 5 is open to anyone who would like to sing. Just come 45 minutes early to learn the New Year's greeting songs that we'll sing. Two weeks later, all are invited to join the combined First Parish choirs in a one-rehearsal Intergenerational Gospel Choir. We'll prepare music for the service honoring Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday on January 19. And, as always, there's our monthly Rise Up Singing group on Friday, January 24 — also open to singers and instrumentalists of all ages and stages.

A particularly exciting innovation in the New Year is the creation of a contemporary music ensemble for First Parish. We've been able to expand Gail Carey's position as Music Ministry Associate to include the creation of this new ensemble for adult instrumentalists and singers while continuing her wonderful ministry with our children's choirs. We envision a "house band" and a group of singers who can regularly contribute to our worship and community life with music in contemporary styles. You'll be hearing more about — and from — this group as it develops.

There is much to look forward to in the coming year. And I know that fantasy week just isn't going to materialize. Still, my hope for all of us is that we can find that time to refresh, relax and renew sometime during these holidays at the turning of the year. And that we can begin 2014 with new energy and inspiration. Happy New Year! ♦

Blessings,

— *Beth Norton*

Music Director

"Instant Choir" on Sunday, January 5

On our first Sunday of 2014, we will welcome 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 begins 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!

Hope Out Loud III — UU Urban Ministry Concert

Sunday, January 19, 4:00 p.m.
"Come in Peace. Come in Love."

Come join us at the Urban Ministry in Boston for another collaborative interfaith concert on Sunday, January 19. At this midwinter celebration of song, dance and spoken word, we will continue to build friendships with the UU Urban Ministry (UUUM) community. **Gail Carey**, our Music Ministry Associate, is again engaged in music ministry outreach with children from the UUUM Explorer's Club. The UU Urban Ministry Children's Choir will be joining forces with First Parish's choirs in MaMuse's popular "Hallelujah." These voices will join UU regional participants in an intergenerational gospel rendition of Brian



Tate's "Come in Peace." Other Boston community group participants include the Union United Methodist Radical Praise Children's Choir and the Neo Praise Dance teams, the Greater Victory Temple Choir, and the much adored Boston Community Choir.

This is a great opportunity to show our ongoing support for the good work of the UU Urban Ministry, our faith ministry that serves the needs of inner-city children and families at risk. The concert is free of charge and open to all. There will be lots of group singing, so bring your voice and help us live out our benediction as we go out into the world in peace, in song.

Music Notes

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Bus service from Concord will be available for singers and concert attendees on January 19. Interested singers may contact **Gail Carey** (improv-gail@gmail.com) and join a one-day rehearsal on Wednesday, January 15, at 6:15 p.m. To reserve your seat on the bus, please contact the music office.

Intergenerational Choir for MLK Sunday!

Once again this year, all First Parish choirs will be teaming up on January 19 for our Intergenerational Gospel Choir Sunday. This one-rehearsal choir is open to all congregants of our church. Perhaps you've always wanted to sing in a choir but do not read music. Maybe you love the idea of learning music together in the time-honored oral tradition. Maybe you'd love to join the choir but just are not able to make the weekly commitment. Maybe you are like some of us singers who cherish the opportunity to join together across the generations. If so, this is the choir for you!

If interested, just come join us on Wednesday, January 15, for our joint rehearsal. We've decided to make a community gathering out of the evening, so it looks like this:

6:15-7:00 p.m. – Learn songs with **Gail Carey** in the Sanctuary

7:00-7:45 p.m. – Community dinner with pizza and greens

7:45-9:00 p.m. – Joint choir rehearsal including chalice choir, gospel choir, adult choir, Intergeneratioanal Gospel singers and band

We will sing together in worship on Sunday, January 19, for the ONE 11:00 a.m. service. Please arrive ready to warm up with all choirs by 10:00 a.m. Any questions may be directed to **Gail Carey** or **Beth Norton**. Please do let us know if you plan to attend on Wednesday, January 15, so we can order enough food for all.

In song,

Your FP Choir Directors

Beth Norton, Anderson Manuel
and **Gail Carey**

Introducing StorySlam!

Join us for First Parish's first ever StorySlam, Saturday February 22, at 7 p.m. An evening of funny, poignant and enlightening stories told by you and your fellow parishioners. Based on The Moth, the nationwide phenomenon you may have heard on NPR and hosted by **Sean Kavanagh**, this promises to be a wonderful community-building event.

Here is how it works: Show up with story ready to tell. The stories must be true stories and be from your own experience, not someone else's. Each story must be no longer than five minutes and must be told without notes, props or music. Storytellers will put their name in a hat; then names will be drawn and we'll hear as many as we can — usually 10 to 12 stories, with a short intermission.

There'll be a \$5 cover charge, and we'll serve drinks and snacks. This is an eighteen and older event. Proceeds will benefit Social Action

The theme for our first StorySlam! will be "Experiences That Formed Me." Stories should have some emotional weight. They can be funny and/or serious, but they should have some significance to you and for the audience. They should be your story, not your friend's. Interesting anecdotes are not enough. They should be stories where you learned something, gained or lost something, discovered something. How did you grow or change from the experience?

For inspiration, check out The Moth's website at <http://themoth.org>. If there is interest, Sean will offer a storytelling workshop a few weeks before the event. If you are interested in a workshop, e-mail Sean at seanjkavanagh@yahoo.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 hour January 5, in the church office, or online at first-parish.org/forms. Registration deadline is January 5; note that retreats may fill before then. Questions? Contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

The Women's AM/PM Book Group Meetings

The Women's Book Group will discuss *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*, by Adrienne Nicole LaBlanc. The evening session will be Monday, January 27, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the home of **Bozena Smith** (537 Hayward Mill Road, Concord). The morning session will be Tuesday, January 28, 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.

Remaining Books and Dates for 2014:

- 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

You Are Invited to Join the WPA

One hundred thirty years ago, Ellen Emerson, daughter of Ralph Waldo, was key in forming the Women's Parish Association. Women met to address pressing issues inside and outside the church. Ellen directed religious education at First Parish and was the first woman to run for and win a seat on the town's School Committee. The WPA proved to be a pathway for

- women to organize and give voice to social causes near and
- dear to them. A known social group, they were chastised at
- least once by church leaders for having too much of a good
- time! Fortunately, today at First Parish, there are lots of ways
- to become involved. Step out this winter. Come to lunch, hear
- a speaker, knit a shawl, go on retreat, help with a meal. If
- you'd like a ride to our monthly luncheon or have a question
- or concern to share, contact **Marilyn Lowitt**, 978-793-0267,
- Marilyn.Lowitt@verizon.net, or any one of our WPA board
- members.

UU NEWS



The UU General Assembly (GA) is coming to New England this 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, alicevanduseen@gmail.com.

JANUARY 2014 CALENDAR

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

Every Week...

<i>Music Together</i>	Tuesday	9:30 a.m.
<i>T'ai Chi</i>	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.
<i>Buddhist Group</i>	Wednesday	9:30 a.m.
<i>Music Together</i>	Wednesday	4:00 p.m.
Junior Choir	Wednesday	4:30 p.m.
Hum, Strum and Drum	Wednesday	5:00 p.m.
Chalice Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
Gospel Choir	Wednesday	5:15 p.m.
Adult Choir	Wednesday	7:45 p.m.
<i>Music Together</i>	Thursday	9:30 a.m.
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.

Wed Jan 1	<u>Happy New Year</u>	•	7:30	Reverence for Life
Thu Jan 2	Return to Regular Hours of Operation	•	7:30	Diversity Committee
	7:30 By Your Side Singers	•	Fri Jan 17	7:00 Jewish Awareness
Fri Jan 3	7:00 Play Reading Group	•	Tue Jan 21	2:00 Needleworkers Affinity Group
Tue Jan 7	9:00 WPA Board	•		7:00 Amnesty Group
	2:00 Shawl Ministry	•		7:00 Evening Worship
	6:00 Minerva Gatherings Potluck Dinner	•	Wed Jan 22	11:30 WPA Luncheon
Wed Jan 8	2:00 Pastoral Care Lay Ministers	•	Thu Jan 23	7:00 Pastoral Thursdays
	7:00 <i>Concord Area Humanists</i>	•	Fri Jan 24	7:30 <i>Rise Up Singing</i>
	7:00 Environmental Leadership Team	•	Sun Jan 26	7:30 Sarasa Concert
Fri Jan 10	7:30 "Wild and Precious" Performance	•	Tue Jan 28	7:30 Thoreau and Language of the Trees
Sat Jan 11	9:00 Photography Club	•	Thu Jan 30	7:00 <i>Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)</i>
	10:00 Department of Peace	•		
	7:30 "Wild and Precious" Performance	•	Fri Jan 31	9:30 <i>Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)</i>
Sun Jan 12	12:30 Nominating Committee	•		6:00 Rock 'n' Roll Bingo
	6:30 Standing Committee	•		
Tue Jan 14	6:00 Vegan Potluck	•		
Thu Jan 16	10:00 Creative Practice Affinity Group	•		
	7:30 By Your Side Singers	•		
		•		

JANUARY 2014 NEWSLETTER

The February Newsletter deadline is Friday, January 24, at noon.
The Newsletter will be published Tuesday, February 4.

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.

• Minister's E-Mail:
• Howard N. Dana: hdana@firstparish.org

• Ministerial Intern's E-Mail:
• Tony Fisher: tfisher@firstparish.org

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

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1/5/2014

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HASTINGS
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HEDSTROM
HENCHMAN
HERNDON

1/19/2014

HURVITZ
HUSTON
IZZO
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JENKINS
JIGANTI
JIMENEZ
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JOHNSTON
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2/2/2014

KLEIMAN
KNUDSON
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1/12/2014

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HOITT
HOLM
HOLMES
HOLT
HOLT
HUBBARD-NELSON
HUGENDUBLER
HULIHAN
HULIHAN
HUNTER
HURD
HURLEY-WALES

1/26/2014

KATTWINKEL
KAVANAGH
KEANE
KELEHER
KELEHER
KELLNER
KELLY
KENNEDY
KESSLER
KEUTMANN
KEY
KILBURN
KILCOYNE
KILNER
KIMBLE
KING
KING
KING
KINGSBURY
KIRSHEN

2/9/2014

LOWELL
LOWITT
LOWITT
LYNCH
LYONS
MACDONNELL
MACOMBER
MACPHEE
MADDEN
MADDEN
MADERA
MADIGAN
MADJID
MANNING
MANNING
MARDEN
MARTIN
MASSAR
MAST
MATHESON



The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

for Spiritual Renewal

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • Winter and Spring 2014

The Wright Tavern Center (WTC) is pleased to offer a variety of meaningful, thought-provoking and creative courses that provide for our infinite spiritual curiosity and development. Brief course descriptions are listed by day of the week. Please see the WTC website (www.wrighttavern.org/cms/courses) for full course details and facilitator bios. To register, call 978-369-9602 unless a different registration contact is listed with the course description.

CONTINUING OR REPEATING COURSES

Tibetan Buddhism

The Buddhist group will be meeting in the First Parish Chapel on Wednesdays mornings and Thursdays evenings. These weekly sessions are open to all who are interested in transforming love, compassion, and wisdom into action. You are welcome to share the spirit of community at these gatherings regardless of your familiarity with Tibetan Buddhism. Contact **Bill Seaver** at 978-369-7318 if you have any questions.

Weekly: Wednesday, 9:30-11:00 a.m.; Thursday, 7:30-9:00 p.m.
Fee: Donations are gratefully accepted.

Concord Area Humanists (CAH)

On Wednesday evening, January 8, Ellery Schempp will present "Thoughts on the 50th Anniversary of my Landmark Supreme Court Case." Ellery is famous for being the primary student involved in the landmark 1963 United States Supreme Court case of Abington School District v. Schempp declaring that required public-school sanctioned Bible readings were unconstitutional." Bring refreshments to share? Program starts about 7:20 p.m., followed by discussion, then more socializing. At 9:00 p.m. an open steering committee meeting will be held, all invited.

Wednesday, January 8, 7:00 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. No registration required; just come and sing. Donations appreciated

Leader: **Beth Norton** and *others*.

One Friday per month at 7:30 p.m.: January 24, February 28, March 28, April 25, May 23, June 27

First Parish Women's AM/PM Book Group

The dates below are for Monday evening, 7:30-9:00 p.m., and Tuesday morning, 9:30-11:00 a.m. Tuesday sessions will be at First Parish. Please contact First Parish for directions to the Monday sessions. There is no fee for either group.

January 27, 28 *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*, by Adrienne Nicole LaBlanc, Nonfiction

February 24, 25 *The Language of Flowers: A Novel*, by Vanessa Diffenbaugh

March 24, 25 *Flight Behavior: A Novel*, by Barbara Kingsolver

April 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, Nonfiction

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR)

Cultivating mindfulness, or awareness of the present, creates the framework for this popular course modeled after the internationally recognized program of Jon Kabat-Zinn at UMass Medical School. Research continues to suggest positive benefits from the practice of mindfulness-based stress reduction to the immune system, chronic illness, hypertension chronic pain, as well as to the daily stresses of our busy lives. This interactive course consists of eight weekly two-hour group classes, where participants will be introduced to and practice guided mindfulness meditation, relaxation techniques, gentle yoga stretches, and self-inquiry exercises. Participants commonly report a reduction of stress-related symptoms, increased awareness and concentration, and improvement of positive coping skills at home and in the workplace. Instructor: **Pamela Katz Ressler**, RN, MS, HN-BC. Fee: Tuition is \$300, plus an additional \$95 materials fee (including text, CD's, and manual). Continuing Education Units for nurses and other health professionals available. Discount for Blue Cross Blue Shield members. For more information about the MBSR program, visit www.stress-resources.com. To register, contact Pam Ressler at pressler@stress-resources.com or 978-369-5243. Enrollment in each class is limited to 15. Choose either Thursday evening or Friday morning.

Thursday: January 30-March 28 7:00-9:00 p.m. (no class Feb. 20)

Friday: January 31-March 29 9:30-11:30 a.m. (no class Feb. 21)

T'ai Chi and Qigong

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

Friday: January 3, March 7, April 11, May 9, June 13
12:30–1:30 p.m. Fee: \$25 per session

T'ai Chi

T'ai chi and Chi Kung are slow and graceful movements that energize your body. In our practice, we gently move all the joints, and you will enjoy improved balance, stability and better energy. Research shows that tai chi practice improves blood pressure, and can provide many health benefits. And it's a lot of fun! We practice the Hwa Yu form, supplemented with Chi Kung exercises, and short meditation to start our sessions. New and continuing students are welcome. Instructor: **Sue Wood**, a student of David Zucker, who learned this form from Master Li.

Tuesday: Dates to be determined for winter session 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Fee: \$120 for 8 weeks

ABC Music Together (Ages 0-4)

- 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. For more information and to register, go to www.abcmusictogether.com. Instructors: **Deb** and **Tom Foote**
- Tuesday and Thursday starting January 7, 2014
- 9:30–10:30 a.m., or 10:30–11:30 a.m.