

The Steeple



VOL 1 NO.4 December 1, 2008

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Staying In Touch

Notes From the Pastor

Whatever projections any of us have on people who have become homeless, it is mostly accident of birth and systemic injustice that finds any one family without shelter. Without home. Without the constancy of place. Without the familiar smells, the family pictures on the piano, the locked door. Without the safety net of relatives, or the cushion of savings. Without a place to lay their burdens down.

During Christmas week, a family without a home will be our guests at First Parish. Out guests, a family of seven, will receive our hospitality at dinner time, make their bedroom at First Parish and eat breakfast here. They will spend each day at 'Interfaith Hospitality Network Day Center' in Natick where they can shower and wash their clothes and receive support in their desire to find a home once again.

There is a story going around this time of year. They say that, long ago, a young family was forced to travel to another city to be taxed. They say that there was no place for them to lay their heads after the long journey. They say

that an innkeeper offered what he had...a stable with straw and the heat of the animals bodies. They say that on that night the young mother gave birth to a child. They say that he grew up to teach a radical hospitality: love beyond the borders of convention. They say that, by his example, many have come to realize that Love's home is the human heart.

Between Christmas and New Years, a family will be our guests at First Parish. I giggle with the knowledge that the best nativity scene in town will be at the Unitarian Universalist Church!

The season is coaxing us to understand that this is not a "service" we are providing, but a blessing we are receiving.

I am deeply appreciative of those First Parish Members who have labored to bring us out of our comfort into the incarnation of the deepest meaning of the season.

Personally, this abundance is the only gift I need.

Warm Holiday Regards,
Rev. Kathleen Hepler

Theme Based Ministry for December:

DECEMBER'S REFLECTION THEME: GOD: the meaning of the word to you, the relative complexity of the use of the word in the UU tradition, the inadequacy of the word at it points toward something else, the experience of that to which it points, the comfort of the word, the discomfort of the word.

Some ideas:

- For one month, let go of whatever you now think, or however you now feel about the meaning of the word God and leave space for something new to evolve. If you label yourself "theist", live for a time with the lable of "atheist". If your label of yourself is "atheist", live for a time with the label of "theist". Consider what it would be like to be both at once. Consider what it would be like to be "post-label".
- Ask two or three cherished people to share what they think the meaning of the word is, or what experience of the "sacred" they have had. Are they the same?
- Read poetry.
- Write about the God you used to believe in, but no longer do.
- Speak with a real child about their images of the sacred... and try to speak with them about yours.
- Read a scientific book about how God does not exist. Read a scientific book about how God does exist.
- Read more poetry.
- Ask three people to share an experience with you that changed their life in a profound way. Reflect on any similarities.
- Consider the possibility that figuring God out in your head, may be a losing proposition.
- Sit down and give up and breathe into the silence.
- Children's Books: *I Stood Upon A Mountain*, Aileen Fisher; *Old Turtle*, Douglas Wood; *What is God?* Boritzer & Marantz; *What is God's Name*, Sandy Sasso.

From the Ministerial Intern

Dear Ones,

I am pleased to introduce the members of the newly-formed internship committee. They are: Monica Alley, Carol Greve, David Mendelsohn, Heidi Safford, and Paul Witherspoon. Carol Greve has graciously agreed to serve as the chair of the committee.

The intern committee plays an essential role in the formation of our Unitarian Universalist ministers and is present at all congregations which host an intern. They provide guidance, feedback, evaluation, and support for the intern. Their responsibilities include meeting monthly with the intern in order to provide support and guidance as well as to act as resources about congregational life at First Parish. They will also be present at many functions in which the intern plays a leadership role.

The internship committee will be open to hearing feedback about the intern's ministry at First Parish and they will make themselves available to you. So please do take advantage of this opportunity as this is an important piece of the ministerial formation process. Please be aware that in the interests of transparency and in awareness that helpful feedback needs to allow for the redress of any concerns, they will not accept anonymous feedback. Of course, you are also invited to share your feedback directly with me or future interns.

With much joy and appreciation, please join me in thanking Monica, Carol, David, Heidi, and Paul for their invaluable contribution to ministerial development at First Parish. Thank you all!

In faith,
Michelle

Sunday Worship

DECEMBER 7

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

God Talk

The theme for consideration this month is "God". On page 1 are some resources/ideas for individual reflection. Each month there is a service that centers around the monthly theme. This is that service. Children (first grade and up) will join us for a "story for all ages" at the beginning of the service

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

DECEMBER 14

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

Afraid of the Dark

One week from this Sunday the winter solstice will arrive and the days will start getting longer bit by bit. We are quick to celebrate the return of the light. This day we consider the beauty and the wisdom of the dark

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

DECEMBER 21

9:15 Worship

The Season, The Sacred, The Sound of Music

This will be a mostly music service, and is the last Sunday morning for our departing Music Director Andrew Shenton. (He will be with us on Christmas Eve) Come and rest in the essence of this season through the sounds of music and poetry.

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

11:00 Worship

Intergenerational

This is our annual Multi-generational Holiday Service, which is sponsored by the Religious Education Council. In this service we honor the December holidays of Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. This year's story will have a Solstice theme. All ages are invited.

DECEMBER 24

Traditional Candle Lighting Services

Singing the old carols, hearing the old story, lighting our candles in the silent night...we celebrate the humble birth of a great love.

In the interest of the earth and for the enhancement of coziness, there are only two Christmas Eve services this year

5:00 PM The children's choir will sing, and while open to all, this is the more "young-child friendly" service.

7:00 PM The adult choir will sing.

DECEMBER 28

10:00 AM Worship First Parish Sudbury

Watch Night When we think about celebrating the New Year, images of Father Time and late-night parties in Times Square may be the first to appear. However, New Year's Eve is also known as "Watch Night" in some religious contexts and is a time of renewing covenants and self-consecration. As Unitarian Universalists, how can we find a deeper meaning to our New Year celebrations?

Michele LaGrave, Intern Minister

A Note from the Editor

Deadline for the January Newsletter is: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18TH! Send your unformatted text to: editor@uuframingham.org.

Religious Education

The holidays are upon us once again – where does the time go?! The Memorial Room is filling up with many gifts for Un-Decorate the Tree. If you haven't yet brought in your gift, please do so no later than December 7th. We deliver the gifts to the agencies during that week. Since four agencies are the recipients of over 200 gifts, the organizational efforts are immense. Many thanks to our dedicated Religious Education Council members for successfully orchestrating this event.

If you are finding the hectic pace of the holidays to be stressful and feel that you and/or your family needs some time to reflect on the deeper meaning of this time, do plan to attend Advent Saturday on December 13th from 10:00 to 1:00. This is a multi-generational event aimed at countering the excessive consumerism of the holidays. You can sign up to attend on the easel in Scott Hall on November 30th and December 7th, or you can give me a call to sign up.

The YRUU is thriving this year. They are holding the annual Parents' Night Out on December 12th. Keep an eye out for information in the Weekly Update.

Our annual Multi-generational Holiday Service, created by the Religious Education Council, will be on December 21st at 11:00 a.m. Families of 4-year-olds through sixth graders will receive a letter about participation in this service. This service honors the religious and cultural

celebrations that occur in December – Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. There will be no church school classes held at 9:15 a.m., and only the Early Pre-school class will be held at 11:00 a.m. on that day. Nursery coverage will be offered at both services.

Teachers needed! We have an empty teaching slot at 9:15 (pre-school, kindergarten) and two at 11:00 (7th/8th grade) for the next semester. If you have children enrolled in the church school program and you did not teach last year or this semester, this is your teaching year. Please step up and fulfill your commitment to the RE program. If you don't have children in the RE program and would like to teach, we'd be delighted to have you! While teaching, learning opportunities abound – our children can be quite profound. Teaching provides a different spiritual growth opportunity. Please contact me.

Attention spring teachers! The new semester will begin on January 25th, 2009. In mid-December, you will receive a letter with details about dates, times, and plans for the spring semester. So stay tuned!

I wish you peaceful moments amidst your holiday celebrations.

Julie Porter,
Director of Religious Education

Membership Corner

New Members

Please give a warm welcome to our newest members : Summer Getzen, Geoff Capraro, Kristin Ruthenberg, Jessica Witherspoon and Paul Witherspoon. They signed the membership book in November.

Babysitting pool

There are a few people in the newly formed babysitting pool. Please join in this effort to allow parents of young children to participate more fully in church life. Let me know if you are willing to be put on the list of potential babysitters.

Photo Directory

A HUGE thanks to the photo directory team and Allison Arnold for their efforts to make the photo directory happen. Thank you to everyone who signed up to have their picture taken, too. It would have been great! As often happens in life, something changed the course we intended to take. How fascinating! Won't it be interesting to see what becomes possible because of this unexpected change? After the holidays we will resurrect the photo directory project.

Newcomer Orientation

There will be a Newcomer Orientation on Sunday December 14th from 2:30-4:30 in the Huntley room. All Newcomers are invited. This is an opportunity to meet our minister, Kathleen Hepler, learn more about Unitarian Universalism, meet other newcomers, members and staff of First Parish and ask any questions. Please RSVP to Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator at membership@uuframingham.org or 508-872-3111 ext. 218.

Service

Are you looking for little ways to contribute through service but don't have a lot of time? Allow me to help you fulfill this yearning. We have diverse opportunities that would benefit from your helping hands.

Veena Baker
Membership Development Coordinator
membership@uuframingham.org

Announcements, Dates & Events

Caritas Coordinator For December

Lydia D'Andrea 508-370-9746

Are You a Young Adult?

We are looking for young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 to explore the formation of a young adult group. If you have any interest in joining the group or would like to know more, please contact Michelle LaGrave at internminister@uuframingham.org or at ext. 203.

Boston Pride

We are exploring the idea of resuming a First Parish presence at Boston Pride. If you are interested in marching or volunteering to become a marshall or would simply like more information, please contact Michelle LaGrave at internminister@uuframingham.org or at ext. 203.

From Walt Barker, Collector

To have your contributions deductible for Calendar Year 2008, they must be received in the church office by December 30 so we may deposit them December 31, 2008. If you are donating stock, allow 15 days for your broker to process. If you need instructions, contact me via email, fpfcollector@charter.net or by phone, 508 757-4445.

Metrowest Interfaith Hospitality Network

As many of you are aware, First Parish has become a host congregation in the MetroWest Interfaith Hospitality Network (MIHN.) Our first week to host families is Christmas week (December 21 – 28.) As hosts, we will provide a place for each family to sleep in the Parish House, a family style dinner each evening and breakfast before the guests return to the day center. Many of you have already signed up to volunteer or have donated money, bed linens and other items which will help to make the week a success. There may be a few things that we still need, and we'll let everyone know what they may be.

We do not know how many parents and children will be staying with us at Christmas. Our goal, during this special time of year, is to make their lives a bit less stressful by providing a warm, welcoming place for them to rest for a few days. As we all run around the Parish House getting ready for our beautiful Christmas Eve services, please offer a smile and warm hello to our special guests to let them know that they are welcome and that we are glad that they are with us.

If you have any questions or ideas, please contact Lisa Mihnos at lymihnos@comcast.net

Share The Plate

Share The Plate in September raised \$701.75 for the Metrowest Free Medical Program. MWFMP provides free medical care to people with limited or no health insurance. 110 Edgell Road opened on Thursday, Nov. 6th. Volunteer health care professionals and other support workers assisted with giving much needed services to the people who sought gynecological care and optical

care including glasses, if needed.

In October \$1660.01 was donated for the Share The Plate to the Unitarian Universalist Association. Donations support programs focused on deepening our shared ministries. 50% of the funds raised will support Lay Theological Education programs, grants for congregations, districts and seminaries that can be applied through the UUA. Funds will also support the Diversity of Ministries Team's Initiatives to support ministries of color.

YRUU

Haven't had a chance to get out and get your holiday shopping done yet? Need some time without the kids underfoot? The first parish YRUU are here to help. We're continuing the tradition of hosting Parents' Night Out this year on Friday, December 12th. You can bring your children, ages 4 through 6th grade, to an overnight at Scott Hall in the Parish House starting at 7:00 p.m. The price is \$20 per child, \$40 maximum per family. There will be all manner of activities, a movie to watch, careful supervision from competent youth and the YRUU advisors, and breakfast before you pick them up the next morning at 9:00 a.m.. The proceeds for this event go to support our annual service trip to Habitat for Humanity, so you can be sure you are contributing to a good cause. You can talk to any YRUU member or advisor for more information. Sign-up forms are available at the YRUU table during coffee hour. after the 9:15 and 11:00 services.

Social Action

Would you like to tell Representative Ed Markey that global warming is our priority? UU Mass Action Network (recipient of Share the Plate last April) is organizing meetings with Mass. representatives and providing training and materials. Contact Janice Knapp-Cordes to be a part of this. janice.knappcordes@gmail.com 508-877-3771

Women's Alliance

The Holiday Boutique will be a two day fair, December 6th, from 10 to 3 & 7th from 10 to 1. We need help with baking, staffing, set up and clean up. We need gift ready items (no books, clothing, stuffed animals or electronics please). Bring items to the Huntley Room on December 4th from 10 to 4. If you can give a few hours to help please contact Susie Macdonald, 508-875-3322

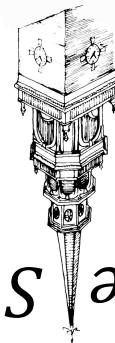
The annual Women's Alliance Christmas luncheon will be December 8th at Louise Rivers, 89 Pleasant Street, Framingham, MA at 12:00 noon. It will be catered.

Around The Parish

Former First Parish members, Donna and John Howland send best wishes to everyone and say they are happily at home in the New Orleans area on the north side of Lake Pontchartrain where they are active members of the Northshore UU Church and have helped host Long Haul teams from our area. Contact information: 5 Red Oak Lane, Covington LA, 70433 and donna.howland@mac.com.

December, 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p>1</p> <p>6:00 PM ROUNDS</p> <p>7:30 PM Meditation Group VB</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3:30 PM Brownies</p> <p>4:30 PM Trustees Meeting</p> <p>7:00 PM Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30 PM Stitches In Time</p>	<p>3</p> <p>11:30 AM Worship & Arts</p> <p>1:00 PM Stitches In Time</p> <p>6:00 PM Jr Youth Gr</p> <p>7:00 PM OWL</p> <p>7:30 PM Ch Council</p> <p>7:30 PM Bell Choir</p>	<p>4</p> <p>8:00 AM Coffee and Muffins</p> <p>11:00 AM Women's Alliance Boutique</p> <p>5:00 PM The MetroWest MedPrg</p> <p>7:00 PM Adult RE Council</p> <p>7:00 PM RE Council</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9:00 AM Women's Alliance Scott Hall Set Up</p> <p>1:00 PM Metrowest Free Medical Prg.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>10:00—3:00 Women's Alliance Boutique Scott Hall</p>
<p>7</p> <p>8:30 AM Chime Choir</p> <p>10:00—1:00 Women's Alliance Boutique</p> <p>9:15 AM Church Service</p> <p>11:00 AM Church Service</p> <p>6:30 PM DRE</p> <p>7:00 PM YRUU</p>	<p>8</p> <p>12:00 PM Women's Alliance</p> <p>6:00 PM ROUNDS</p> <p>7:00 PM MICAH</p> <p>7:30 PM Meditation Group VB</p> <p>7:30 PM FCNS Board Meeting</p> <p>7:30 PM Finance Committee</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7:00 PM Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30 PM Stitches In Time</p>	<p>10</p> <p>1:00 PM Stitches In Time</p> <p>6:00 PM Family Hospitality Working Group</p> <p>7:30 PM Bell Choir</p>	<p>11</p> <p>8:00 AM Coffee and Muffins</p> <p>5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. Program</p> <p>6:30 PM Parents & Others</p> <p>7:30 PM Board of Assessors</p>	<p>12</p> <p>6:00 PM Parents Night Out</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10:00 AM Advent Saturday</p> <p>1:00 PM Silver Grays</p>
<p>14</p> <p>9:15 AM Church Service</p> <p>9:15 AM RE Childrens' Worship</p> <p>10:20 AM Chime Choir</p> <p>11:00 AM Church Service</p> <p>11:00 AM RE Childrens' Worship</p> <p>2:30 PM New Comers Orientation</p> <p>7:00 PM YRUU</p>	<p>15</p> <p>6:00 PM ROUNDS</p> <p>7:30 PM Meditation Group VB</p> <p>7:30 PM Maintenance Council</p>	<p>16</p> <p>3:30 PM Brownies</p> <p>7:00 PM Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30 PM Stitches In Time</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:00 PM Stitches In Time</p> <p>6:00 PM Junior Youth Group</p> <p>7:00 PM Leadership Unlimited</p> <p>7:30 PM Bell Choir</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:00 AM Coffee and Muffins</p> <p>5:00 PM The MetroWest Free Medical Program</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1:00 PM Metrowest Free Medical Program</p> <p>6:00 PM Uncommon Coffee House</p>	<p>20</p> <p>11:30 AM Intergeneration Service Rehearsal</p>
<p>21</p> <p>InterFaith Hospitality</p> <p>9:15 AM Church Service</p> <p>10:30 AM Chime Choir</p> <p>1:00 AM Intergenerational Holiday Church Service</p> <p>7:00 PM YRUU</p>	<p>22</p> <p>InterFaith Hospitality</p> <p>7:30 PM Meditation Group VB</p>	<p>23</p> <p>InterFaith Hospitality</p> <p>7:30 PM Stitches In Time</p>	<p>24</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED InterFaith Hospitality</p> <p>5:00 Intergenerational Service</p> <p>7:00 Church Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED InterFaith Hospitality</p> <p>9:00 AM Private Rental</p>	<p>26</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED InterFaith Hospitality</p>	<p>27</p> <p>InterFaith Hospitality</p>
<p>28</p> <p>10:00 AM Church Service First Parish Sudbury</p> <p>1:00 AM InterFaith Hospitality</p> <p>7:00 PM YRUU</p>	<p>29</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>30</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>7:30 PM Stitches In Time</p>	<p>31</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>1:00 PM Stitches In Time</p> <p>6:00 PM Square Dance</p> <p>7:30 PM Bell Choir</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>



The Steeple

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit # 319
Framingham, MA

The First Parish In Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
24 Vernon Street
Framingham, MA 01701

First Parish in Framingham ~ Unitarian Universalist Established 1701

TEL: 508 872-3111

FAX: 508-879-5780

WEB SITE: www.uuframingham.org,

E-MAIL ADDRESS: office@uuframingham.org

SENIOR MINISTER

INTERN MINISTER

AFFILIATED COMMUNITY MINISTER

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSISTANT

MUSIC DIRECTOR

DIR. OF CHILDREN'S CHOIR, YOUTH

ENSEMBLE, BELL CHOIR

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

WEDDING AND RENTAL COORDINATOR

MINISTER EMERITUS

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EMERITA

Rev. Kathleen D. Hepler, minister@uuframingham.org

Michelle LaGrave, internminister@uuframingham.org

Rev. Karin Peterson Tanenholtz

Julie Porter, dre@uuframingham.org

Beth Walton,

Dr. Andrew Shenton, music@uuframingham.org

Trish Ramey, tramey@rcn.com

Veena Baker, membership@uuframingham.org

David Moore, office@uuframingham.org

Alma Gould

The Reverend Dr. Charles A. Gaines

Carol M. Greve

ASSESSORS: Pamela Pierson, Chair; Eve Benda, Jan Bolton, Aimee Dalrymple, Gail Kaprielian, Janice Knapp-Cordes, Andre Lamontagne, Richard Lawson, Diane Montgomery, Christopher Ross

CLERK: Jennifer Saffran

COLLECTOR: Walter Barker, ASSISTANT COLLECTOR: Anne Ten Eyck

TREASURER: William Schreiber

TRUSTEES: Charlotte Neagle, Chair; Peter Allen, Mary Rose Wells

The Steeple is published monthly throughout the year. Subscription inquiries should be sent to office@uuframingham.org or by contacting the Church Administrator at 508-872-3111. Non member subscriptions are \$25.00 per year.