

The Steeple



VOL 1 NO.5 January 1, 2009

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Staying In Touch

Notes From the Pastor

'Top Ten' lists abound on the cusp of a new year. Below is my list of the 'Some of The Top Moments at First Parish in Framingham in 2008.

1. The sight of the refurbished steeple lighted in the night, a testament to the generosity of the congregation and a beacon of our hopeful faith.
2. The Installation Service in March: an exquisite gathering honoring our covenant together.
3. The BRE Committee (Belonging As A Religious Experience) worship service, an experience of the love that transcends differences.
4. The mood at worship on the first Sunday following the election of the new President of the United States.
5. The sacred moment each and every time I witnessed someone sign the First Parish Membership Book.
6. The time when a group of people stayed at the table with honesty and love until a conflict was resolved.
7. The sight of the hundreds of pies in Scott Hall and the many who make 'Pies on The Common' so integral to the celebration of autumn in Framingham.
8. Communal silence that embraces us each Sunday.
And, oh the music, sweet music!

9. The (reported to me) look on the face of the person who put on glasses for the first time as a result of our Free Medical Program. Yes!

10. The peaceful, slowed-down, simple, unplugged gathering that is Advent Saturday.

11. Knowing that a homeless family found shelter in our building as the snow fell and the wind whipped around.

12. The joyous faces of the "lamb children" at the December Holiday Intergenerational Service, and witnessing the healthy religious values they are learning.

There are so many more. We have been a community that grieved the loss of some cherished people this year and welcomed many new people into the fold. And, so the story continues. Into the New Year we go! May peace and creativity and blessings abound! Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your minister.

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

Theme Based Ministry for January: Peace

In an effort to help us all focus on particular themes throughout the year, each month we offer some ideas for individual and family activities that might move us along on our spiritual journey. For January:

- Make a "peace" table in your home. When there is an upset that might escalate invite everyone to go to the peace table and breathe deeply. Each person can select an object that makes them feel peaceful to put on the table. The table can be a place where alternative ways of solving conflicts can be discussed. Books relevant to being more peaceful can be rotated and read at the table.
- Decide to pray for peace every evening at dinner. Check out the meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh, #505 in our UU hymnal.

Continued on page 2

- Some favorite children’s books on peace:
Peace On the Playground, Eileen Lucas
Bear’s Bargain, Frank Asch
Every Kid’s Guide To Having Fights With Brothers and Sisters, Joy Berry
The Hating Book, Charlotte Zolotov
The Story of Ferdinand, Munro Leaf
We Are All Alike, We Are All Different, Cheltenham School Children
 Google “Children’s Books about peace.”
- Adult Reading
Nonviolent Communication, Marshall Rosenberg,
My Experiments With Truth, Mohandas Gandhi
Letters From a Birmingham Jail, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
 Google “Interfaith Peace Organizations” and see what is there.

Sunday Worship

JANUARY 4

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

Optimism and the Newness of Things

A new year! We gather to inspire ourselves to learn the behavior of optimism and carry it over the threshold of the new year.

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

JANUARY 11

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

Religion In our World

What do the ‘Top Ten Religious News Stories’ say about our world, and about the Unitarian Universalist voice in the world?

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

JANUARY 18

9:15 Worship

11:00 Worship

Shanti, Shalom, Salaam, Peace

In honor of the life of The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Junior, we make our focus this Sunday ‘Peace’. This is the reflection theme this month as well

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

JANUARY 25

9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

A Grandfather’s Reflections

I first voted for a U.S. President in 1960 in the Framingham Memorial Building. I was 24 and I voted for John F. Kennedy. My multi-tasking grandchildren know very little about many events that have happened between then and now. If I could share with them both differences and similarities between then and now, as well as the perspectives of our two generations, it might be through a saved sermon such as this one.

Rev. Chuck Gaines

From the Ministerial Intern

Dear Ones,

The New Year is upon us; a time of new beginnings, fresh starts, and rededication. As I look forward to the New Year at First Parish, I am excited to think about the ministry projects which lie ahead. One of the projects I am most excited about is assisting the start-up and development of a Young Adult group right here at First Parish.

Young Adults are considered to be those people who fall within the age range of 18 to 35. They may be in

college, graduate school, working full-time jobs, single, married, childless, or with children – in other words, they have multiple identities and roles. So what do they have in common? They share a similar generational outlook. People aged 18 to 35 are part of Generation We, also known as Generation Y. They are known for having grown up with technology and a more global outlook than previous generations.

In recent years, young adulthood has been a time when many people stop going to or no longer attend church.

Our UU congregations are often filled with families with young children and middle-aged and older adults. College students and other young adults are fewer in numbers. I believe that young adults bring vital energy and fresh perspectives to our congregational life and that our congregations suffer when they are absent. If you are a young adult, or know and love someone who is, please contact me at [interminis-](mailto:interminis-ter@uuframingham.org)

ter@uuframingham.org so that I can welcome you into our young adult community here at First Parish.

In faith,
Michelle

Religious Education

January will be a month of transitions in the religious education world. We will have two Sundays left of the first semester. Please take a moment to thank your child's teachers for their time, energy and talents they have given this semester. Without teachers and their fine contributions, we would have no program. Also, please tell your children that they will have new teachers at the end of the month. The "spring" semester begins on January 25th.

Attention ALL teachers, advisors and BRE buddies: Please plan on attending the Teacher Brunches on January 11th. Sponsored by the Religious Education Council, the brunches will be held after each service. Teachers will be seated by grade level so that the fall teachers can pass on tips about the class to the spring teachers. You'll have good food and good company! Childcare will be provided.

Sunday, January 18th will be a Special Sunday. This Special Sunday will include the Preschool/Kindergarten class as well as the first through sixth graders. We will do something for others, in keeping with this year's Special Sunday theme of "Helping Hands".

Attention parents of 10th through 12th graders: During the semester beginning at the end of January, our *Our Whole Lives* teachers will be offering the sexuality education program that is geared specifically to youth

in grades 10-12. *Our Whole Lives* (often called "OWL") is a terrific program that deals sensitively and honestly with many issues confronting teens around sexuality. It is written for different age groups, focusing on age-appropriate information. (We offer the OWL 7th-9th grade program every other year.) If your youth is going to participate in this program for 10th-12th graders, you will need to attend one of the following Parent Orientations in the Huntley Room: Sunday, January 18th from 12:30 -2:30 p.m., or Monday, January 19th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The classes will begin on January 25th – the time of the class is still to be determined. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Knapp-Cordes at janice.knappcordes@gmail.com or 508-877-3771.

If you have not yet returned your **Guest at Your Table box**, please do so as soon as possible. Remember to convert any cash into a check made out to the UUSC. Boxes and/or checks can be dropped off in the RE office in the Parish House.

I wish you peaceful moments among your holiday celebrations.

Julie Porter,
Director of Religious Education

A Note from the Editor

Deadline for the February Newsletter is: FRIDAY, JANUARY 23! Send your unformatted text to: editor@uuframingham.org.

From the Board of Assessors

A healthy and prosperous New Year to all!

At the start of 2009, your Board of Assessors encourages you to say “Yes!” to life—at First Parish and in your personal lives. What a better resolution than that! It does make a difference. You may have read about recent research on the contagious nature of happiness, which affirms life in many ways. Indeed, a piece of happiness is reaching out to others such our helping the homeless and our sponsoring a free medical program at 110 Edgell Road. Service is a big piece of who we are as a congregation.

Each of us is a catalyst for growth and change as we touch the lives of one another. This year the Board welcomes the opportunity to contemplate how we at First Parish can and do encourage and live our liberal religious values in our local and global communities. On January 31, District Executive Rev. Dr. Teresa Cooley will meet with the Board and the Church Council to guide us in thinking outside the box and exploring who we are and who we can be. We expect our draft vision statement to come alive from this interaction. In any case, this workshop is part of the Board’s putting together a strategic plan of leadership to anticipate and serve our needs for the next three to five years.

Within the process of putting together this long-range plan, other projects are brewing. Rich Lawson has formed a Stewardship Committee of which a Canvass Committee and a grant-writing team are a part. Jan Bolton has spearheaded the development of a Personnel Policy manual, which includes plans to move our salaries and benefits to an equitable level. These are just two top-level examples of the Board leading change in conjunction with the Church Council under Pat Walker.

With the global economy in turmoil, we draw from our spiritual resources and can work toward a better world. We each have an opportunity to do important work on behalf of First Parish. Won’t you join us if you haven’t already? The First Parish Steeple shines as a beacon of hope and of liberal religion in our community.

In the spirit of Unitarian Universalism,
Pam Pierson, Chair (pipierson@gmail.com)
Board of Assessors

Membership Corner

Happy New Year! May 2009 be filled with Beauty and Wonder!

Newcomer Orientation

There will be a Newcomer Orientation on Sunday January 11th from 2:30-4:30 in the Huntley room. All Newcomers are invited. This is an opportunity to meet Reverend Kathleen Hepler, learn more about Unitarian Universalism, meet other newcomers, members and staff of First Parish and ask any questions. Babysitting will be provided.

Please RSVP to Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator at:
membership@uuframingham.org,
or 508-872-3111 ext. 218.

New Members

Please give a warm welcome to our newest members: Kate Macumber, Max Walterman, Karin and Dennis Charles and David Eels.

New Member Recognition

Those who have signed the book this calendar year will be recognized on Sunday January 11th during our Sunday worship. Details to follow in the weekly updates.

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.

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

Around The Parish

Please note that we haven't been including this information in the newsletter recently, so there is some catching up here:

Margie Carberry has moved closer to home. She is now at Oak Knoll Nursing Home in Framingham, 9 Arbetter Drive, in the Nobscot section of town. She enjoys having visitors. Jim suggests that you plan to go with at least one other person. This should make it easier for all since she still has a trach and it can be hard to understand her. Also she tires easily, so plan to keep the visits short. Margie has therapy several times a day so you may want to call and check her schedule beforehand. Earlier this month she was thrilled by the bell choir's visit - she used to play with the choir.

After several weeks getting back in condition, **Janet Werner** recently underwent a repeat "conversion procedure" at MWMC to get her "heart back in sync". Cards and calls in the past have buoyed Janet, so keep them coming.

Rose Durkin injured her back earlier this month. She has been in a lot of pain but reports that she is making some progress. She would welcome cards and phone calls (508-872-9471) as well as help with meals.

Amy reports that **Mike Caruso** is continuing to make good progress with his bone marrow transplant and is looking forward to enjoying the holidays with his daughters. Amy's goal is to try to "get back to normal, everyday, family life." They are grateful for all the support from First Parish. Their neighbors have also been an outstanding source of help.

Also recuperating right now are: **Janet Drake** (508-877-5227) who is home recovering from recent surgery and **Oskar Heininger** who is on the mend and staying with a friend (508-358-7229) following some medical problems. **Keith Nelson** (508-875-0333) is now going for therapy twice a week (he could use a ride) to learn to cope with imbalance from a vestibular disorder.

Our condolences are offered to **Walt and Vivian Barker**. Walt's brother, Allen Barker, an accomplished pianist who lived in Wayland, recently passed away.

Karen Hirshman was admitted to the MetroWest Medical Center, Framingham campus on Saturday 12/20 for tests. She has been under treatment for spinal stenosis but began experiencing increased, debilitating pain. She would appreciate calls or visits.

Announcements, Dates & Events

Caritas Coordinator For January

Patricia Greeley: 508.877.0204

Green Sanctuary

Green Film Series

Green Sanctuary will be showing four environmental films during the winter and spring.

These will occur on Sunday evenings from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm in the Huntley Room. Dessert will be provided. Join us on January 18 for *EVERYTHING'S COOL* and save these dates for future films: March 15, April 26, and May 24.

See the Green Sanctuary table during coffee hour for more information.

Green Sanctuary Meeting: the next meeting will be on Thursday, January 22 at 7:30 pm.

MetroWest Free Medical Program

The Framingham site of the MetroWest Free Medical Program (MWFMP) opened its doors at 110 Edgell Road on November 6th. On Thursday evenings and Friday afternoons, volunteers of the MetroWest Free Medical Program offer vision care, women's health services and mental health services to patients without health insurance. Assistance is also provided to connect patients with health insurance and other community resources. In just six weeks, the Program has served 45 patients, including providing very low-cost glasses to about 30 individuals. The demand for these services is clear, with appointments already filling up into February and March 2009.

The MetroWest Free Medical Program is grateful to the support of First Parish Framingham and the many volunteers who led the planning efforts to make this site a reality and for the dozens of First Parish volunteers who participate in the program each week. For more information about MWFMP, visit the organization's website

www.metrowestfreemedicalprogram.org. Appointments for women's health and vision care may be made by calling 508-532-8585. Additional volunteers are needed in the following areas: Medical Providers for Women's Health, Licensed Mental Health Professionals, Ophthalmologists, Opticians.

Interested volunteers may contact Ilene Hofrenning, ihofrenning@yahoo.com, or John Simsarian, jcsimsarian@yahoo.com.

Women's Alliance

January 12th. The Women's Alliance program will be "Your Favorite Book of the Year" Bring a sandwich, coffee and dessert will be served. For info call Susie Macdonald 508-875-3322

Social Action

Everyone is cordially invited to the next meeting of the Social Action Coordinating Committee on Tuesday, January 13, at 7:15 p.m. We'll be hearing reports from our working groups: Free Medical Program, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Guatemala, MetroWest Outreach Connection, and Fair Trade Coffee.

Roots & Shoots---Fun with Nature!

On Nov 15th, our new Roots & Shoots group took a nature walk around the grounds (our previously planned blind hike will be saved for warmer weather). We observed some interesting fungi, touched some wiggly earthworms and velvety moss, and even tasted some watercress! Many thanks to Judy Perry for leading our walk. We also brainstormed ideas for future projects and voted on them. Here are the top vote-

getters: birds and bats, invasive species, and gardening.

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, Jan 24th from 3-5pm in Scott Hall. It may be wintry outside, but we will be thinking spring by building our own bird houses and bat houses (BYO materials---supply list and plans will be provided ahead of time). Roots & Shoots is a youth-focussed organization, but all ages are welcome for this multi-generational activity. Please RSVP to Aimee Dalrymple at ADalrymple@alumni.duke.edu or 508-652-9946.

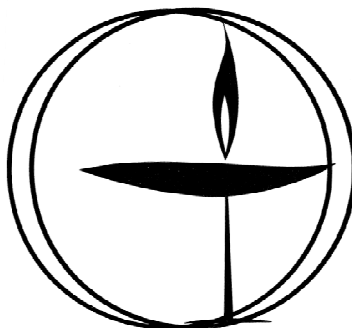
Adult RE

Yoga Class at FPF - Wednesdays 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Register now for the 8 Wednesday winter sessions of Yoga at First Parish. They will be held January 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25. The fee is \$120 (drop-ins \$17). Please mail your check and registration to FPF Adult RE, c/o the church or leave it with the office staff.

Fundraiser for Jim and Marge Carberry

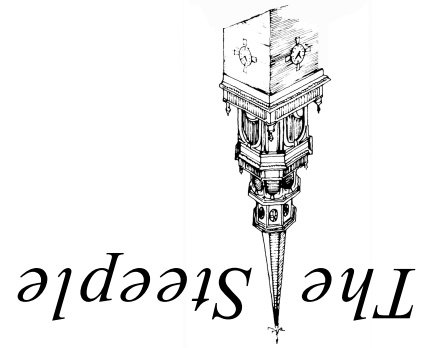
I'd like you all to know that we, neighbors and good friends, have started to organize a fundraiser for Jim and Marge. We've booked the AM Vets Hall in Natick for Saturday, January 31 from 7-11. We have spoken to Jim and he's happy and willing to be the guest of honor. Of course we hope that Marge will be able to attend as well.

For information and tickets please contact Kim Ekonomy at torlex@comcast.net.



January, 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	31	1 » OFFICE CLOSED - HOLIDAY » 8:00 AM COFFEE AND MUFFINS	2 » 1:00 PM Metro-west Free Medical Program	3 » 6:00 PM Private Rental
4 » 9:15 AM Church Service » 10:20 AM Children's Choir » 11:00 AM Church Service » 7:00 PM YRUU	5 » 6:00 PM ROUNDS » 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	6 » 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale » 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	7 » 11:30 AM Worship & Arts » 1:00 PM Stitches In Time » 6:00 PM Junior Youth Group » 7:30 PM Church Council Meeting » 7:30 PM Bell Choir	8 » 8:00 AM COFFEE AND MUFFINS » 5:00 PM The MetroWest Free Medical Program » 7:00 PM RE Council » 7:30 PM Board of Assessors	9	10
11 » 9:15 AM Church Service » 10:15 AM Teachers' Brunch » 10:20 AM Children's Choir » 11:00 AM Church Service » 12:00 PM Teachers' Brunch » 2:30 PM New Comers Orientation » 7:00 PM YRUU	12 » 12:00 PM Women's Alliance » 6:00 PM ROUNDS » 7:00 PM MICAH » 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB » 7:30 PM FCNS Board Meeting » 7:30 PM Finance Committee	13 » 3:30 PM Brownies » 7:00 PM Covenant-JB » 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale » 7:15 PM Social Action Coordinating Council » 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	14 » 1:00 PM Stitches In Time » 7:30 PM Bell Choir	15 » 8:00 AM COFFEE AND MUFFINS » 5:00 PM The MetroWest Free Medical Program » 7:30 PM FCNS Board Meeting	16 » 1:00 PM Metro-west Free Medical Program	17
18 » 9:15 AM Religious Ed » 9:15 AM Church Service » 10:20 AM Children's Choir » 11:00 AM Church Service » 5:00 PM Wyndstone Association » 6:30 PM Green Sanctuary Film Series » 7:00 PM YRUU	19 » OFFICE CLOSED - HOLIDAY » 9:00 AM FCNS Special Event » 6:00 PM ROUNDS » 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	20 » 4:00 PM Trustees Meeting » 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale » 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	21 » 1:00 PM Stitches In Time » 6:00 PM Junior Youth Group » 7:00 PM Metro-west Free Medical Program » 7:00 PM Leadership Unlimited » 7:30 PM Bell Choir	22 » 8:00 AM COFFEE AND MUFFINS » 5:00 PM The MetroWest Free Medical Program » 7:30 PM Green Sanctuary	23	24 » 9:00 AM New Teacher Orientation » 3:00 PM Roots & Shoots
25 » 9:15 AM Church Service » 10:20 AM Children's Choir » 11:00 AM Church Service » 7:00 PM YRUU	26 » 6:00 PM ROUNDS » 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	27 » 3:30 PM Brownies » 7:00 PM Covenant-JB » 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale » 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	28 » 1:00 PM Stitches In Time » 7:30 PM Bell Choir	29 » 8:00 AM COFFEE AND MUFFINS » 5:00 PM The MetroWest Free Medical Program	30 » 8:00 PM Uncommon Coffee House » 8:00 PM Uncommon Coffee House	31 » 8:00 AM Church Council & Board of Assessors



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