

The Steeple



VOL 2 NO.2 October 1, 2009

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Staying In Touch

For me, no season is more truthful in illustrating the human condition than autumn. We are alive. There is great beauty and glory. We are mortal and imperfect. There is great struggle and complexity. Nothing says this more poignantly than the stunning panoply of color that is life on its way to death and new life again.

It is unfortunate that the health care debate is (for reasons of inherent complexity, political shrewdness, reflexive self interest, and attention span compromises) pattering toward decisions that might not actually make the system work much better. Some say that receiving some change is better than none at all. For instance, it looks like it will be law that people cannot be turned away for preexisting conditions. Well, yes, this is a just change to be sure.

Sometimes the solutions to problems evolve incrementally, laboriously, and at a painfully slow pace. Sometimes comes a moment when enough of the complexity converges into a unity and there is a rapid sea change ...a wave of change that brings more justice and love and we experience this as water upon parched land. We know both rhythms in life.

As to health care reform, I was hoping for more of a sea change. I believe that a single payer system that invites competition within certain boundaries would be that sea change. As I write this, it appears that the movement toward this will remain for now in the plodding, incremental mode.

So it is with life. Things move as they move according to the influences that come to bear at any one moment in any one situation.

Each of our lives contributes to the flow whether we feel it at any one moment or not. How we treat someone on a bus, when we speak up and when we don't, where we choose to put our time and resources...all of it influences the evolution of things. This is the great blessing and the great burden of human life.

All praise to those who have plodded along all of their lives with no extraordinary praise or apparent success in their efforts to bring more fairness and mercy to the common mix. And, all praise to those who are able to rise up and lead us to a new creation when the moon and tides are high. Both are essential for the evolution of things.

I believe that this is why First Parish in Framingham exists...
...to invite us to plod along with as much joy and integrity as possible; to stay the course against ennui or fear or confusion in our own lives and in our common life... and to invite us to rise up with courage and enable the sea change when it is time for this.
So good to be with you in this evocative time of year.

Rev. Hepler

Sunday Worship

OCTOBER 4th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
THE DISCOVERY OF AIR

What are the main attributes of someone who professes to be liberal religiously? Does it mean you can believe anything you want? This is our yearly 'Association Sunday' and we will have a visitor from the Unitarian Universalist Association. And...make sure you bring your children to church for the beginning of the service! Unitarian Joseph Priestly(1733-1804), who discovered oxygen (among other things), will pay us a visit!

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

OCTOBER 11th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
COMING OUT AS OUR FULLEST SELVES

In recognition of National Coming Out Day, we ask: Who are we in our deepest, fullest, individual selves? Who are we as a community? What inspires us to work for justice?

Michelle LaGrave, Intern Minister

OCTOBER 18th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
YOUR SPIRITUAL LEGACY

This service will be an invitation to be thoughtful and intentional about what the ethical and spiritual legacy of your life will be.

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

OCTOBER 25th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
LIGHT HAS ITS WAY: THE WAY OF GRIEF

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

From the Ministerial Intern

Dear Ones,

We're on Facebook! If you are also on Facebook or have the ability to join, I hope you'll come check us out and become a fan of our page. Simply search for "First Parish in Framingham Unitarian Universalist" and click on the box which allows you to become a fan of our page.

I imagine some of you may be asking yourselves why a church would want to be on Facebook. So, I'd like to say a few words about what First Parish's presence on Facebook means for us as a community. What is it about and what is it not about?

Facebook is about widening our circle and including more. Unlike private emails and listservs, Facebook allows us to have group conversations in which all can participate. Once a discussion topic is posted, all can read the entire dialog.

Facebook is about exploring ways to do church with busy people. Unlike in-person meetings in which people are excluded by an inability to drive or a need to be at work, all can participate in Facebook as their individual schedules and needs allow.

Facebook is about community dialog and spiritual depth. Vision 20/20 has already begun this process by posting the question: "Describe a time in your experience with First Parish when you felt most engaged, enlivened and inspired." You can find this thread by first clicking on the "boxes" tab then "Vision 20/20". I hope that many of you will choose to respond in this way and I look forward to reading about the difference First Parish has made on your spirit and in your life.

In faith,
Michelle

From the Board of Assessors

Your Board of Assessors has ambitious plans for this year! One of our first endeavors will be to create a covenant for how we will be together as a Board. Other topics include the Policy Manual, the Personnel Manual, a Personnel Advisory Board, the Safe Congregation Policy, Bylaws, and communication technology. We will be receiving monthly updates from the Vision 20/20 team in our process of appreciative inquiry. We hope everyone will be involved in this exciting process which begins with a grateful look at the amazing church that First Parish is and the warm, caring, profound members who are sharing a spiritual journey with one another. As you heard in their service, the team does not have a detailed plan for the process; it will evolve as we proceed. We, of course, are not a business so this will proceed much differently than such a process in a work place. One of the bonuses of this process is that many aspects of appreciative inquiry can be used with our family and friends.

Last year Pam Pierson and Kathleen Hepler organized a series of meetings about leadership titled "Learning while Leading." This year we would like to open the program to the entire church. Anyone who is interested is invited to our first meeting on Monday, October 19, at 7:00 p.m. Please let me know ahead of time if you are coming. We encourage anyone who joins us to seriously consider committing to *all* the meetings; the group is more cohesive and operates best when membership is consistent.

Pictures of your Board members will be on the bulletin board in Scott Hall and we have nametags with our titles highlighted. Please talk to us at coffee hour about your concerns.

At the Board retreat, your Board members were asked to choose an alter ego, someone whom they greatly admire. Here are their choices: Mohammad Yunus, Billie Jean King, Marie Curie, Alice Walker, Thomas Jefferson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Tony Greeley, Huston Smith, Angelina Jolie, Bill Bryson, and William Ellery Channing. Can you match the alter ego with the Board member?

Janice Knapp-Cordes, Board Chair
508-877-3771
janice.knappcordes@gmail.com

Religious Education

Religious education has had a good start to the year – classes have engaged students and teachers, and both youth groups are off to a positive start. Classes and youth groups make covenants about how they agree to be together. The creation of the covenant is a valuable process in our Unitarian Universalist faith, and it provides a framework that the class/youth group can always refer back to. We are a covenanted religion, so it seems fitting for our young people to be involved in the covenanting process.

Attention **OWL participants**: Remember that you have a retreat on **Sunday, October 4th** from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. The retreat is for both OWL classes. Note that you will not have any morning classes that day.

October 11th will be our first “Special Sunday” (Sundays that fall on 3-day weekends) of this church year. On these Sundays, the Early Preschoolers attend their regular class. Different from last year, the Preschool/Kindergartners will attend the first part of the church service with their families, along with the older children, and then will join the first through sixth graders when they come over to the Huntley Room for multi-age activities. After the children are in church, they will have a Children’s Worship in the Huntley Room and then have an activity related to the Children’s Worship. This

format is an experiment this year. Seventh and eighth graders will attend church.

We are looking for another Junior Youth Group advisor. We have two advisors, but we prefer three! The group of 7th and 8th graders meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month for supper, socializing and service. Wonderful bonding happens in this group, and it’s a privilege to work with these young people! If you are interested in serving the church in this way, please contact me. We need you!

Save the date of **November 1st**! The Religious Education Council will be hosting a multi-generational “Harvest Festival” from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. This evening is sure to be a fun celebration of fall, and all ages are invited to partake in the fun! Our YRUU (Senior Youth Group) will host their ever-popular Haunted House, which also will be for all ages. Sign-ups will be on October 18th, 25th, and November 1st during both Coffee Hours.

If you have any questions about the religious education program, please feel free to contact me at 508-872-3111 or dre@uuframingham.org.

Julie Porter
Director of Religious Education

Membership Corner

Newcomer Orientation

There will be a newcomer orientation on Sunday October 18th 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 and refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to me by Wed October 14th and let me know if you need babysitting.

Conversation Corner

Check out the Conversation Corner in Scott Hall during the social hours following both services. This is a new experiment to allow you to both talk about and listen to others talk about specific topics posted in the corner. Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone so join others in the Conversation Corner and live a little.

Connections

Whether you’ve recently joined us or have been here for a while, I am here to help you make connections at First Parish. Allow me to help you find meaningful ways to share your talents. There are many volunteer opportunities with varying time commitments.

Babysitting pool

The babysitting pool is looking for people who enjoy spending time with children while their parents are engaged in an onsite church activity such as a newcomer orientation or an adult RE class. Please join in this effort to allow parents of young children to participate more fully in church life. Volunteers serve as their schedule allows. Let me know if you are willing to be put on the list of potential babysitters.

Photo Directory Update

Keep the pictures coming. In case you are just tuning in, we have simplified the photo directory process. Please submit a photo for our photo directory. Pictures can be mailed to First Parish to Veena Baker’s attention, put in the membership development coordinator’s mailbox in the office or emailed to pictures@uuframingham.org in jpeg format. Thank you to those who have already provided a photo for the directory. We will begin taking photos soon for anyone unable to provide a photograph.

Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator
Email: membership@uuframingham.org phone: 508-872-3111 ext. 218

OCTOBER SPIRITUAL REFLECTION THEME: LEGACY

... that left to us from our ancestor

Worship service October 18th

- Consider the legacies that others have left you: material, emotional, learning, qualities.
- Make a list of how you would like to be remembered. Evaluate how much of your current life time is being spent on the activities/qualities you have listed. Move toward greater congruence.
- Write a letter to your children (or other dear ones) about the values and ethics you most cherish and why. This could be your "ethical will".
- Meet with a financial advisor and make very clear on paper where any money or material things will go when you die, both within your family and to organizations that have great meaning to you.

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

Announcements: Dates & Events

Association Sunday

Sunday, October 4th will be Association Sunday and there will be a Share The Plate collection for the UUA.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's theme this year is "Growing Our Diversity". A goal is for UUA programs to support congregations that enrich racial, cultural, and economic diversity in their church. Another goal is to enable ministers to work more effectively with young people who identify as being of color or multiracial and supporting spiritual development, racial/cultural identify, and leadership. Funds will be used to attain these goals.

Funds will be used by leaders, congregations and theological schools to develop new lay theological and spiritual education programs, scholarships for promising students to prepare for our ministry, and funding for the Diversity of Ministry Team's Initiative to support our ministers of color.

Please make your check payable to First Parish in Framingham and on the memo line note: UUA. Thank you.

Caritas Coordinator

The October Caritas coordinator is Valerie Foley, 781 416-4020, valeriefoley@comcast.net.

Thank You!

Thank you all for your notes and cards of condolence on the death of my father. At age 96 Kenneth Hawkes was the oldest Universalist minister.

Carolyn Gaines

Worship & Arts

Hold the date! Reverend William Sinkford will be our guest minister on Sunday, November 29th. Rev. Sinkford was the president of the UUA from 2001 - 2009 and has

transitioned to the UU Urban Ministry this past summer. Worship & Arts is very excited to be able to bring Rev. Sinkford to our pulpit!

Thank you to the Summer Services Group!

The 2009 Summer Services at First Parish were a complete success! A big thank you to all church members who accepted the challenge of making these services happen, especially Paul and Jessica Witherspoon, Ben Gustafson, Dennis Charles and Ellen Piontek. You are an inspiration to us all! We'd also like to thank the many others who contributed but are not listed here. You did an amazing job and your hard work and dedication to First Parish are truly appreciated.

Ringing of the Bells!

Please join the Senior Youth and the Green Sanctuary Committee on Saturday, October 24th at 4pm for the ringing of the bells. We will be ringing our church bell 350 times as a symbolic representation of our need to reduce the carbon in our global atmosphere to 350 parts per million. On the same day, other churches from across the nation will also be ringing their bells 350 times in support of the need to address global warming.

Memory Mums

Remember a loved one or a joy or a time in your life that you would like to share by purchasing a "memory mum" to decorate our chancel. Yours will be part of a cluster of mums decorating our chancel on October 18th and on into November when no other flowers are available. The cost will be minimal and will provide a burst of color on the chancel on those October & November Sunday's. The order of service will list all contributors. Please contact Beth Walton for details, 508-904-8401 elizabethwalton@verizon.net.

LEGACY PLANNING

Do you love your First Parish family so much that you want to assure its community presence long after you're not here? Then please consider establishing a living legacy by including our church in your estate plans.

Past bequests by generous, forward-thinking First Parishioners have established an endowment that currently permits an annual pledge of more than \$20,000 to supplement our canvass. All these contributors wanted to help preserve First Parish for us, and for generations to come.

Any of our three Trustees would be very happy to answer your questions about assigning some future assets to First Parish. Please e-mail or call Charlotte Neagle, Mary Rose Wells, or Pete Allen - and many thanks for your consideration.

Housing for All

Do you or does someone you know have a home or property that needs Some TLC?

Housing for All Inc., a MetroWest affordable housing rehabilitation and advocacy not for profit, is looking for home and property restoration projects for those in need. We are seeking projects that can be completed within a day or two by a team of experienced construction supervisors and volunteers. Examples of projects would include retrofitting bathrooms and ramp construction for those with disabilities; building clean-up, wallpaper removal, and painting; outdoor clean-up, planting, and landscaping. Our construction team will evaluate and discuss projects with each property owner before we start so that expectations are clear. Labor and materials will be provided by Housing for All, although monetary donations of any amount are welcome to help defray these costs. Our next Workday is scheduled for Saturday, November 7, 2009.

For more information, please contact Mr. Chris Ross, Executive Director, Housing for All, at 508-872-8021.

Pies on the Common Fair

Mark your calendar for this year's Pies on the Common Fair, Saturday October 17 from 10 -3. First Parish's 19th annual, the fair is a significant fund-raiser as well as a wonderful celebration of community. Participation is key to making the event a success, and there are ways to contribute both large and small. Bake pies, sell quilt raffle tickets, or help out with activities at Kids' Corner. You're guaranteed to have fun and make new connections at First Parish. New members and friends are warmly invited to our upcoming Pies planning meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6 at 7:30 in the Huntley Room.

The Committee is looking for help with volunteer coordination and quilt raffle sales as well as a crew of strong folks to help set up and take down. Please contact Monica

Alley (508) 881-7147 or Ann Arvidson (508) 879- 4246 to learn more.

Pies on the Common is also a Craft Fair

And we still have plenty of crafter spaces available for this year's event Saturday, October 17th. These spaces are available to First Parishioners as well as outsiders. If you or a family member makes craft items or artwork to sell, you are welcome to register for a space at Pies. Applications are available in the Pies box in the church office, as well as a file to download from the First Parish web site. Pricing: until Sept. 15th, \$40.00 per 12'x12' space. Postmarked after Sept 15th, it's \$50.00 per space. For further info, call Barbara Uftring at 508-877-9059 or email pies@uuframingham.org Hope to see you at Pies.

Photo Exhibit in Scott Hall

Check out the photo exhibit hanging in Scott Hall. All images were taken by First Parish Photographers and will be on display until October 25th. Most are for sale with 20% of each sale going to the church. Some of the images are available unframed or in different sizes. If you are interested in purchasing any of the images contact the photographer or Beth Walton, 508-904-8401.

Sweet Sounds and Tastes

Please join us for an evening of melodious music and delicious desserts **Sat, October 3, 2009 Christ Lutheran Church 113 Union St, Natick.** **All proceeds benefit MIHN.** Tickets are sold at the door. Please watch our MIHN's website for updates on this annual fundraising event at www.metrowestihn.org.

Roots & Shoots Brunch: Sunday, October 4th 1-3pm

Are you a kid? Or a kid at heart? Do you love nature? Roots & Shoots may just be the group for you. We are a multi-generational youth-focused group that connects with nature (roots) and improves our world one little bit (shoots) at a time. On Oct 4th, we'll meet in Scott Hall for bagels, juice and fruit from 1-3pm. Let's share stories from our past year: How did our garden plot do over the summer? Did any birds nest in the birdhouses we made last winter? Did we successfully beat back invading plants last spring?

Then we will brainstorm new ideas and vote on projects for the coming year. Each project should involve helping animals, the environment and/or the human community. Some general areas of investigation could be learning and improving local water, land, air, plants, animals, and human community. We welcome adult experts and resources in these areas. The Roots & Shoots website at www.rootsandshoots.org is also a great resource.

After the regular meeting, we will be working on our Roots & Shoots garden plot (weather permitting). Donations of hostas (or other hardy leafy perennials), mulch, and/or your helping hands will be greatly appreciated!

Please RSVP to Aimee Dalrymple, Program Leader, at ADalrymple@alumni.duke.edu or 508-652-9946.

FALL ADULT RE PROGRAM

Note Recent Changes in scheduling for Cakes for the Queen of Heaven and Reiki Circle:

CAKES FOR THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

5 sessions, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

New Dates: 10/1; 10/8, 10/22; 11/5, 11/19

REIKI CIRCLE

4 sessions, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. for practitioners, 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. for receivers

New Dates: 10/15, 10/29; 11/12; 12/3. Participants can attend one (or more) sessions and must bring their own pillow and a blanket.

Length of session: for practitioners 2.5 hours; for receivers, 1 hour.

New Fee: \$5 per session for practitioners, \$15 per session for receivers

Free/Cycle

The Free/Cycle Bulletin Board in Scott Hall has a new form! Find it at the end of each First Parish Weekly Update. Items may be posted that are free, for sale, or trade. No business promotions or commercial products accepted. Please send the name of the item, a short de-

scription and your contact information to lunamoth28@gmail.com. Items will be listed for 2 weeks.

Gardeners Thank You

The *garden volunteer* effort was a huge success. Since spring the volunteers have been planting, mulching, weeding, and keeping order in all our garden beds. Many thanks to all who gave their time and their backs, so that the gardens could be enjoyed by all.

The Maintenance Council

National Equality March

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations is a proud sponsor of the National Equality March & Rally that will take place in Washington, D.C. on October 11. The Rev. Peter Morales, newly elected President of the UUA, will preach at All Soul's Church, Unitarian that morning and lead the UUA's delegation to the Rally. Alternatively, you can participate with a solidarity event in your congregation and community. We have all the tools you need for a successful action, including a concise, powerful Standing on the Side of Love petition calling for full LGBT equality. Whatever you can do, please sign up here to let us know that you'll be participating. Click on the "Host an Event" link to publicize your action. If you're planning to come to DC, register for the National Equality March on the events sign up page so we can keep you in the loop about important March details such as the route and UU-specific meeting places and events.

Save The Date!

October 17, 2009

**Home baked pies
Quilt Raffle, Crafts,
Food, Games and
A Contest!**



Enthusiastic Volunteers Are Needed Now!

For info or to volunteer:

Email pies@uuframingham.org or Call 508-872-3111

Proceeds benefit First Parish Church, Framingham

October, 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 5:00 PM Med.Prg 7:00 PM RE Council 7:00 PM New UU 7:00 PM Fairs & Squares 7:30 PM Cake Queen of Heaven	2 1:00 PM Metro West Free Med. Prg:	3
4 9:15 AM Services 11:00 AM Services 1:00 PM Roots & Shoots 4:00 PM OWL Retreat 7:00 PM YRUU	5 6:30 PM Rounds 7:30 PM Meditation Group 7:30 PM Green Sanctuary	6 7:00 PM Covenant Group 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:30 PM Pies On The Common	7 9:30 AM Yoga I 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM Junior Youth Group 7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Church Council	8 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med. 7:00 PM The New UU 7:00 PM Fairs & Squares 7:30 PM Cake Queen of Heaven 7:30 PM Brd of Assessors:	9	10 10:00 AM Private Rental: Scott Hall
11 9:15 AM Services 11:00 AM Services 7:00 PM YRUU	12 6:30 PM Rounds 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	13 9:00 AM NARL 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:30 PM Menu For The Future 7:30 PM Stitches 7:30 PM Pies On The Common	14 9:30 AM Yoga I 1:00 PM Stitches In Time 7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	15 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med Prg 7:00 PM Reiki Circle	16 Pies On The Common Set Up	17 Pies On The Common
18 9:15 AM Services 11:00 AM Services 2:00 PM New Comers Orientation 7:00 PM YRUU	19 6:30 PM Rounds 7:00 PM MICAH: 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	20 7:00 PM Covenant Group 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:30 PM Menu For The Future:	21 9:30 AM Yoga I 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM Junior Youth Group: 7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	22 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 5:00 PM MetroWest Free Med.Prg 7:00 PM The New UU 7:30 PM Cake Queen of Heaven	23 8:00PM Uncommon Coffe House	24 8:00 AM Private Rental 4:00 PM Bell Ringing
25 9:15 AM Services 10:00 AM Junior Youth Bake Sale 11:00 AM Services 7:00 PM YRUU	26 6:30 PM Rounds 7:30 PM Meditation Group VB	27 7:00 PM Heritage Chorale 7:30 PM Menu For The Future 7:30 PM Stitches In Time	28 9:30 AM Yoga I 1:00 PM Stitches In Time 7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	29 8:00 AM Coffee & Muffins 7:00 PM Reiki Circle	30	

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October, 2009



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AFFILIATED COMMUNITY MINISTER

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DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EMERITA

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSISTANT

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