

The Steeple



VOL 2 NO.3 November 1, 2009

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Staying In Touch

The season of collective gratitude is upon us. For me there is a peaceful simplicity in Thanksgiving, unencumbered as it is by religious dogma or gift giving. It is my favorite. Still, we can have selective memory about what holiday gatherings are like and enter the next one forgetting that perfection is not only impossible, but that having it as an expectation keeps us from enjoying the abundance of a life that embraces imperfection.

So as we abide in this glorious New England autumn I plan to shift my vision to the appreciation of all that is not quite right with an eye to the beauty there. Instead of calling up guilt when I ascend the stairs of my back porch because it is waiting to be sanded and painted, I will bless the patterns of wear and the people who have made them. Instead of imagining (and becoming attached to) a lively and warm conversation around the dinner table with kith and kin, I will seek to welcome people and their interaction however it unfolds, with gratitude. As a spiritual practice, I will let one public room in my house skip a pre-holiday cleaning, and let one complicated recipe go uncooked. And, in the spaces I hope to love the world as it is...deeply flawed and astonishingly beautiful.

The reflection theme for November is imperfection.

With Gratitude for All of You,
Kathleen

P.S. If you do not have a place to be on Thanksgiving, or if you would accept a guest at your table, please e-mail me or give me a call.

Sunday Worship

NOVEMBER 1st
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
BEING ILL AND BEING WELL AND BEING
Reflections on the relative wellness or illness in the health care debate. Share the Plate: Metro West Health Program that has its home at First Parish

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

NOVEMBER 8th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE
The children's book by Maurice Sendak was controversial when it first came out. "Too frightening" said some. Is there wisdom in this popular story?

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

NOVEMBER 15th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
A LIFE-LONG JOURNEY

Our search for truth and meaning is a life-long quest for healing and wholeness, for peace and fulfillment, for shalom.

Michelle LaGrave, Intern Minister

NOVEMBER 22th
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship
THE PRACTICE OF ENCOUNTER

Thanksgiving Sunday

We gather together to give thanks for life and to consider a certain kind of intentionality about how we meet our lives. BRING A FOOD

ITEM TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOOD PANTRY during our 'communion' time. Child Dedication at each service

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

NOVEMBER 29TH
9:15 & 11:00 AM Worship

Rev. Bill Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association for 8 years will be our guest on this Sunday. He is currently interim Co-Senior Minister at the UU Urban Ministry, an urban ministry program in Roxbury. Please come and help us welcome Rev. Sinkford to our pulpit and learn about this venerable and vital UU ministry.

Religious Education

Life in the religious education program is going well. Sunday morning classes are full of life, and the two youth groups are well attended and active. We have some all-Parish activities coming up.

If you love autumn and also a good time, plan to attend the **Harvest Festival** on Sunday, November 1st from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. This multigenerational event, sponsored by the Religious Education Council, will include several fall crafts, some games (such as trying to eat a suspended donut), a potluck dinner, and the now-famous YRUU Haunted House (if you dare to go through it!). If you are interested in unloading some of your Halloween candy, we will have a candy drop-off, and the candy will be sent to troops in Iraq. Bring your own gourd, if you wish, and make a festive centerpiece decoration to take home. Sign-ups for this fun event will be at Coffee Hour on November 1st. Cost is \$3.00 per person; max of \$10 per family, plus bringing a salad or a main course to share. Don't miss this festive gathering for all ages.

Even though it is still October, the Religious Education Council is well into the planning for the annual **Un-Decorate the Tree** project. Giving a gift to a child who might not otherwise receive any holiday presents truly puts our faith into action. On November 8th and 15th, the Christmas tree in the Memorial Room will be

decorated with paper canes with the names of children and a gift that they would like. The names have been sent to us from four local agencies. We also have bulbs with suggested items that shelters need. Please be sure to sign out your cane or bulb at the staffed tables before leaving the Memorial Room and also pick up a color-coded sheet with directions about the gifts. The dates for returning gifts are November 22nd and December 6th.

With the frenzy of news abounding about the H1N1 flu and also the seasonal flu, the Religious Education Council has come up with the following policy: In order to provide a healthy environment for everyone in our RE program, we will follow the guidelines recommended by the CDC and Massachusetts Department of Health:

- It is each family's responsibility to monitor their own health and to keep any family member at home with a fever of 100.4 or higher in combination with flu-like symptoms (cough or sore throat).
- A child may attend class and other RE activities and events if he/she has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) and does not have any other flu symptoms.
- Please remind your children to wash their hands often with soap and water and en-

courage coughing or sneezing in the elbow.

If you want more information, visit this website: www.cdc.gov.

As part of their curriculum Jesus – A Kingdom of Equals, our fifth/sixth grade classes come up with a service project. The 9:15 class has decided to re-invigorate our food collection for “Hope”, the food pantry in Framingham. There are many people right here in Framingham who do not have enough to eat. Please bring any non-perishable canned or packaged food

items with you on Sunday mornings. You can put them in the decorated baskets on the steps to the entrance of the Meeting House, and our 5th/6th graders will make sure the food gets to the right place.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about the religious education program, please feel free to contact me.

Julie Porter
Director of Religious Education

From the Ministerial Intern

The season for Thanksgiving is upon us!

A while back, I found myself in the midst of a spiritual crisis. I was feeling a need to create and maintain a daily spiritual practice and I was struggling with figuring out what that might look like. I had many questions. Would I have enough time? Could I really fit something in every day? With such an irregular schedule as mine, what time of day could I choose that would work every day? My questions went on and on. I was really getting in my own way, putting up all sorts of roadblocks.

Then someone reminded me of something I had heard long ago and forgotten. Meister Eckhart, a German mystic, once said: “If the only prayer you ever said in your life was “thank you”, it would be enough.” I took this advice to heart. Daily spiritual practice doesn’t have to be hard or onerous. Thank You is enough. I now say Thank You every day. In this season of thanksgiving, I now say Thank You to each and every one of you. Thank You for all you do in creating this wonderful community we call First Parish. In this season of thanksgiving, I wish you all hearts filled with Thank You.

In gratitude,
Michelle

Membership Corner

New Members

Please join me in welcoming our newest members: Denise Moorehead, Matt Crawford and Rebecca Crawford.

Denise Moorehead has lived in Framingham for 5 years. She works for Third Sector New England. She is currently a fellow with Metrowest leadership academy.

Matt and Rebecca Crawford have lived in Framingham for 1¼ years. They have a genetically diversified (mixed breed) dog, Guinness, and are expecting a baby in February 2010. Matt is the director of support at a software company and Rebecca is the Outreach Learning Coordinator at the USS Constitution Museum. They both enjoy cooking, singing, music, and socializing with friends and family.

Continued on page 4

Newcomer Orientation

All Newcomers are invited to attend the Newcomer Orientation on Sunday Nov. 22nd from 2:30-4:30. This is an opportunity to meet Rev. Kathleen Hepler, other newcomers, members and staff of First Parish. Find out more about Unitarian Universalism and First Parish in Framingham. Refreshments will be provided. Childcare is available upon request with RSVP. Please RSVP to Veena Baker, Membership Development Coordinator, at membership@uuframingham.org or 508-872-3111 ext. 218.

Photo Directory Update

On Sunday November 1st we will begin taking pictures during social hours for the photo directory. You may email me in advance or sign-up to have your picture taken the same day. There will be a sign-up sheet at the welcome table. It is not too late to submit your own picture. Pictures may be emailed to: pictures@uuframingham.org in jpeg format. Our photo directory will be displayed in the password protected member's only section of our website, www.uuframingham.org. Families with children under 18 years please be sure to fill out a consent form, available at the welcome table, so that we can include your photo. Please help make this photo directory a success by submitting a photo or getting your picture taken.

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

Announcements: Dates & Events

Around the Parish

Karen Hirshman is now at Newton Health Care for rehab for her broken femur which she broke while on a trip to Venice. Visits and/or calls would be appreciated. She can be reached at 617-969-4660.

Keith Nelson

It has been one year since I first stumbled into the world of vestibular disorders. I want to express my gratitude to all the First Parishioners who provided assistance, sent cards and letters, and inquired as to my well-being through this past year.

I am doing much better although still not 100%. I have been back to work since March. I still have good days and bad, with the bad days nowhere near the level I experienced during the four months I spent at home. It's a work in progress!

If you know anybody who has issues with vertigo or any vestibular disorder, please check out the information available through the Vestibular Disorders Association, www.vestibular.org

Keith Nelson

Help The Homeless

Change the lives of homeless families in Massachusetts by ordering and purchasing cakes on

Sunday, Nov. 22 and Dec. 6th after church services. These delectable cakes of Espresso Chocolate or Maple Pumpkin Cranberry are \$12 each and will be available for you on Sunday, Dec. 20th. Cakes are wrapped in ribbon and have a card attached with a message from the Coalition for the Homeless. These cakes make the perfect gift or treat to serve for the holidays.

Contacts: Valerie Waldman 508-877-7769
Myrna Howe 781-235-4226

The Vision 20/20 Team

Our next question is "What is it about Unitarian Universalism that is most meaningful to you?"

We look for your responses in the following ways.

- We are planning a cottage meeting similar to the summer meetings. This will be on Nov 1, 10:30 am - 11:30 am and 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm.
- Posting your response or email to the Vision 20/20 Google group. First-Parish-LRP@googlegroups.com
- Post your response on Face book or drop on written note in our office mail box.

Foreign Film Night

The award-winning 40-minute film "Santa Claus in Baghdad" by local director Raouf Zaki will be

shown Sunday, Nov. 1 at 8:00 pm in the Huntley Room. A multi-faceted tale of family sacrifice and the spirit of giving, it is set in Baghdad during the period of embargo after the Gulf War. "Santa Claus in Baghdad" will appeal to older children, teens, and adults. Discussion and refreshments will follow the film showing.

Women's Alliance

The Alliance will be meeting at noon on November 9th. The program will be a movie on the Grand Canyon. Bring a sandwich. Coffee and dessert will be served.

The Holiday Boutique will be December 5th & 6th. Please bring your gift items to Scott Hall on Friday December 4th from 10 am to 4 pm. Volunteers are needed and welcomed. Call Susie Macdonald with any questions. 508-875-3322

Green Sanctuary Committee & Guatemalan Work Group

The Green Sanctuary Committee and Guatemalan Work Group are joining forces to help overcome one of the largest medical and environmental issues facing the people of rural Guatemala.

For centuries the Mayan Indians have cooked meals using open flame fires on the floors of their homes. This traditional cooking method results in excessive smoke and respiratory problems, the leading cause of death for children under age 5. In addition, this inefficient burning of the firewood has resulted in Guatemala deforesting its country at a rate of 2% per annum.

A practical and culturally sensitive solution has been found and in American terms it is inexpensive. The ONIL stove has been developed and is being used by many villagers. Because of Rebecca Center's work, First Parish is already connected with one village.

On November 20th you can learn about the stove, share a Guatemalan meal with fellow First Parish families and help us buy as many stoves as we can for the families who need them!

Tasty Guatemalan food will be provided for a nominal fee, childcare will be available for small children after dinner, and contributions in any amount will be welcome for the stoves. Please sign up during coffee hour November 1 and November 8 to let us know you are coming

Roots & Shoots

Roots & Shoots on Sunday, November 8th 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 Nov 8th, we'll meet in Scott Hall at 1pm for bagels, juice and fruit. For our first project, we will be learning how to help animals in shelters. We will talk with people who work with homeless animals, make toys, and collect donations of things the shelters need. Please RSVP to Aimee Dalrymple, Program Leader, at ADalrymple@alumni.duke.edu or 508-652-9946.

The Collector

Giving Goes Green

Churches, with their heavy check volumes, were among the earliest organizations to embrace electronic giving as a way to automate contributions. Today, electronic giving in all its forms provides convenience for frequent check writers and donation consistency for churches.

A less frequently discussed benefit of electronic giving is its positive impact on the environment. An enormous amount of natural resources are consumed in the production, transportation, processing and disposal of paper checks. That's why paying bills electronically always ranks high on any list of actions an individual can take to improve the environment. Since the year 2000, the powerful trend toward electronic payments has already produced more than a 50 percent decline in check use.

As you consider the payment method you use to make your regular offering, we hope that you will think about the unique connection between financial stewardship and environmental stewardship.

We have a service where the money is automatically deducted from your account with no paper check at all. You can start any time in the church year. Contact John Hutchins, the collector, at fpfcollector@gmail.com, or stop by the office and pick up a form.

Another alternate, which saves some use of your check book is automatic checks. Many banks have 'automatic check writing' and will write the check for you and send it to First Parish. Talk with your bank if you would like to try this.

Healthy Living Group

The Healthy Living group's first meeting will be on Sunday, November 29th, in the Huntley Room from 7:30-9 pm. The topic under discussion will be ways to improve your health substantially by means of changes that are effective, totally within one's control, but not commonly known. For additional information contact Aaron White by telephone at 508-788-0902 or by email at aaron-white@rcn.com.

Ring The Bell

The First Parish Framingham Unitarian Universalist church rang the church bell 350 times starting at 4pm on Saturday, October 24, 2009. The First Parish Framingham Unitarian Universalist's Green Sanctuary committee and Youth Group provided information on the subject for people who wished to learn more, and handed out 50 compact fluorescent bulbs to interested people.

We plan to continue to ring the bell 350 times every Saturday at 3:50 pm and hand out material until the Copenhagen climate Conference begins meeting on December 6, 2009. The group is looking for volunteers from the church to help ring the bell and hand out flyers on Saturdays from 3:30-4:30 at the church. Feel free to stop by.

We are also looking for donations of additional Florescent light bulbs in individual packages.
Dave Doucette

Social Justice Networking and Skills Workshop

Network with other Social Justice Committee members as you learn about NEW MEDIA TOOLS

that can help you spread the social-justice message and inspire your congregation.

Curious about Facebook? Want to Twitter? Ready for YouTube?

Join UUSC for a New Media training to learn about these vital tools. Amplify your voice, coordinate activities, educate members, and harness the power of the web.

When: Saturday, November 14, 2009 from 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

Where: First Parish in Framingham, 24 Vernon Street, Framingham, MA 01701

RSVP for this event to Nancy Banks at nancy.banks1@verizon.net or 617.835.5426. The workshop is cosponsored by UUSC and the UU-MassAction Network.

Nancy Banks
Executive Director - UUMassAction

Transforming Our Whiteness

A workshop for white members of Unitarian Universalist congregations hosted by Allies for Racial Justice, December 5, 2009 - 8:30 am to 10 pm, First Parish Church, Arlington, MA

In small groups, we will examine how racism impacts our congregations and use the Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution to discuss strategies for making change.

For further details about content, facilitators, schedule, etc. please go to <http://www.mbdoua.org/programs-events/social->

From the Parish Office

- The dead line for the December *Steeple* is Friday, November 20th.
- We are in the process of creating a new email list called "members@uuframingham.org" This will make it possible to communicate with only the membership when parish issues or sensitive information warrant it. Our first mailing will include the username and password for the members section of the web site.
- We are always adding new content to our web site's members' page. Currently you can view the latest picture gallery taken at Pies on the Common. Past copies of *The Steeple*, the minutes of the most recent Board of Assessors meeting, the latest issue of *Inside First Parish*, as well as the *Parish Directory* are all available there.

November, 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>9:15 & 11:00 am Services</p> <p>10:30 & 12:30 am Vision 20/20</p> <p>5:00 pm Harvest Festival</p> <p>7:00 pm YRUU</p> <p>8:00 pm Foreign Film</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3:30pm Brownies</p> <p>6:30pm - Parents & Others</p> <p>6:30pm - Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm Meditation</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7pm - Covenant Group</p> <p>7pm - Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30pm - Menu For The Future</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6pm Junior Youth Group</p> <p>7pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm Young Adult Group</p> <p>7:30pm Church Council</p>	<p>5</p> <p>8am Coffee & Muffins</p> <p>5pm MetWest Med. Prg</p> <p>7pm RE Council</p> <p>7:30pm Cake Queen of Heaven</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1pm MetWest Med. Prg.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10am - Silver Grays Dance Club</p> <p>1pm - Private Rental</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Un Decorate The Tree</p> <p>9:15 & 11:00am Services</p> <p>1pm - Roots & Shoots</p> <p>2pm - Anyone Can Paint</p> <p>4pm Owl Retreat</p> <p>7pm PFLAG</p> <p>7pm YRUU</p>	<p>9</p> <p>12pm Women's Alliance</p> <p>6:30pm Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm Auction Committee</p> <p>7:30pm Meditation</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9am NARL</p> <p>7pm Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30pm Menu For The Future</p> <p>7:30pm Stitches In Time</p>	<p>11</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>9:30am Yoga I</p> <p>1pm Stitches In Time</p> <p>7pm Bell Choir-Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm Young Adult Group</p> <p>7:30pm Board of Assessors</p> <p>7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>12</p> <p>8am Coffee & Muffins</p> <p>5pm MetWest Med. Prg</p> <p>7pm Reiki Circle</p> <p>7:30pm Cake Queen of Heaven</p>	<p>13</p> <p>All Church Pot Luck</p>	<p>14</p> <p>8am - Social Action</p> <p>5pm - MetWest Health Prg.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Un Decorate The Tree</p> <p>9:15 & 11am Services</p> <p>2pm Anyone Can Paint</p> <p>6:30pm Men's Club Dinner</p> <p>7pm - YRUU</p>	<p>16</p> <p>6:30pm Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm Meditation</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7pm Covenant Group</p> <p>7pm Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30pm Menu For The Future</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9:30am Staff-Meeting</p> <p>9:30am Yoga II:</p> <p>5pm FCNS: Scott Hall</p> <p>6pm Junior Youth Group</p> <p>7pm Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7:30 Choir Re-</p>	<p>19</p> <p>8am Coffee & Muffins</p> <p>5pm MetWest Med.Prg</p> <p>7:30pm Cake Queen of Heaven</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5:30pm Guatemala</p>	<p>21</p> <p>12pm Private Rental</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Un Decorate The Tree</p> <p>Gifts Returned</p> <p>9:15 & 11am Services</p> <p>10am Junior Youth Bake Sale</p> <p>2pm - New Comers Orientation</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6:30pm Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm Meditation</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7pm - Heritage Chorale</p> <p>7:30pm - Stitches In Time</p>	<p>25</p> <p>1pm Stitches In Time</p> <p>7pm Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm - Young Adult</p>	<p>26</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>THANKSGIVING</p>	<p>27</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9:15 & 11am Services</p> <p>7pm YRUU</p> <p>7:30pm Healthy Living</p>	<p>30</p> <p>3:30pm Brownies</p> <p>6:30pm Rounds</p> <p>7:30pm Meditation</p>					

The First Parish In Framingham
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A Welcoming Congregation
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November, 2009



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