



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXIX, No. 7

March, 2009

Sundays in the Meeting House

March 1, 10:00 AM: "The Gifts and Limitations of Every Stage of Life". The Rev. Rali Weaver will lead worship.

The Children will be invited to bring their parents and stay for worship.

Life is truly an ever flowing stream. Most ages and stages pass quickly with little fan fair. This Sunday we will reflect upon all the stages of life and how we might relax into them and make life more enjoyable.

March 8, 10:00 AM: "The Lessons of Religious Intolerance"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to their Sunday School classes.

Many dividing lines through out history have been drawn in the name of religion. This Sunday we will reflect upon religious intolerance and what it has to teach us.

March 15, 10:00 AM: Alliance Sunday.

The First Church Women's Alliance will Lead Worship

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to a special activity in the Parish House.

The First Church Women's Alliance brings together the women of the church to work on social events, outreach projects, and fund raising events, most notably, the annual Holly Fair. One of the oldest continuously running women's groups in the United States this their Anniversary Sunday we will have the opportunity to reflect upon their long history of serving the Common Good and where they are going in the years to come .

March 22, 10:00 AM: Stewardship Kick Off Sunday: "Deep Economy"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to their Cool Deed.

There will be an opportunity to offer your Joys and Concerns as a part of Worship.

In his book Deep Economy Bill McKibbin encourages us to look beyond growth as an "economic ideal". On this Stewardship Sunday we will reflect upon ideas of growth and economy how we might adjust our own measurements of success to reflect more faith based spirit filled goals.

March 29, 10:00 AM: "Living Outside the Box"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to their Sunday School classes.

There will be an opportunity to offer your thoughts and ideas following the service.

Anne Hutchinson whose likeness graces the Massachusetts State House has been a polarizing figure in American History. This Sunday we reflect upon her life and times and what role scapegoats play in the foundation of any new belief system .

Calendar

Parish Players: March 13, 14, 15

7:00: Friday, Saturday

2:00: Sunday

Also...

Who Killed the Electric Car: Feb. 28, 7:00

Parish Committee: March 3, 7:00

Life Line Screening: March 11

CAKES: March 20, 6:00

Parish Players Practices:

Sundays, 11:30

March 8 - 11, 6:00

Folk Concert Coffee House: March 28, 7:00

OWL Classes in Needham. Sundays, 10:15

Lenten Bible Study: Sundays, 5:00

Youth Group: Sundays, 1:00

Aerobics: Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:30

Meditation: Thursdays, 7:00

**Please see our website
for the complete and
up-to-date calendar**

If you do not receive our weekly church emails and would like to please contact the church office at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org

From Our Minister:

Have you ever had one of those days where nothing is going right? Where everywhere you turn things feel like they are going downhill and you are never quite sure if they can turn around? Winter sometimes feels full of them for me. You clean the floor it gets covered in mud again. You shovel your walks and they become covered in snow and ice again. You get over a cold and it returns. Everything must be done again and again it can become overwhelming.

I was thinking about days such as this when I stumbled across an article asking the question "What does it mean to respond as a person of faith in the 21st Century?". The article had a bunch of convoluted (to my sensibilities anyway) explanations for why a person of the Christian faith should trust in God to provide. Even though I didn't agree with many of the premises of the article this started me wondering how we might answer this question as Unitarian Universalists.

Certainly there are encouragements in our faith tradition for us to work together for Justice and Equality but there is no mandate to look at life through a positive lens. Still keeping our eyes pointed to the sunny side of the street has inherent benefits and I think it might behoove us to consider including optimism as one of our core principles and purposes (albeit unwritten).

The first reason I think optimism is important to a healthy spirit filled life is because I believe that when you start from the upside of things you build on strengths instead of weaknesses. If you start from your strengths and climb upward you naturally have a shorter hike to the top than if you started down in the deep cavern of your weaknesses.

Secondly, if you focus on the positive you can actually help to lift up all of those around you. Imagine you are on a trip and you get sick with the flu. You can do one of two things. You can complain and make your illness everyone else's problem or you can keep an upbeat attitude while taking care of your own needs and asking politely for help when you need it. Imagine the difference in your travel companions if they don't have the added struggle of lifting you up as they carry themselves along. This is equally true for our vacation companions as well as all of your companions in this life.

Finally, I believe if we can train ourselves to see possibility everywhere even when conventional wisdom and past history says there is none-- we might just create possibilities that were never there before. Imagination that is unfettered can chart its own course.

As we muddle through these last weeks of winter may our hearts be open to the possibilities of summer days. And if you cannot embrace fully the principle of optimism may you at the very least be graced by the sunshine in other people's hearts.

HAPPY SPRING!

Rali

Focus on Religious Education

The Sunday School has transitioned nicely from our busy holiday schedule back to regular church school classes. Thanks to all the teachers who have stepped up to teach this semester. The “Special Times” class, grades K to 2, have been learning about Tu Bishvat: which is a Jewish Holiday called the “New Year of Trees”. They have also learned about Valentine’s Day. The “Timeless Themes” class has been learning about the life of Jesus and stories from the New Testament (Jesus in the temple, Jesus and the law and Jesus and the Loaves and Fishes). The Neighboring Faiths class is preparing for their transition to the OWL class. They have attended a getting acquainted social with youth from the Needham UU church. Also the Neighboring Faiths class is collecting “canned protein” (tuna, hash, beef stew) to help needy families through the winter. The collection box is located by the bulletin board near the office. The pre-school children continue to have fun. This class is always in need of adult or teenage friends to help and give our dedicated, consistent teachers a chance to attend church.

The penny jar is getting heavy but there is room for plenty more! We will be collecting pennies until March. This project supports the building of schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. “Pennies for Peace” also advocates for the education of girls in these countries. This work was started by Greg Mortenson and his efforts are described in the book “*Three Cups of Tea*”. Our next “*Cool Deed*” will be on Sunday, February 22nd . We will continue to work on the Pennies for Peace program. On the 22nd we will provide hands on activities that help the children learn more about school children in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The overall idea is to promote tolerance and understanding of those who are different from us. The activities will be set up in stations. I will need three volunteers to make this a successful morning. Please let me know if you can volunteer. It should be an interesting morning.

Our special activity on February 15th was connected to the greater concept of “love” and appreciation. We talked about all the grown-ups who do things to make the church work. The children made cards to thank them for what they did and also got to “spy” on them in church. We did not have time to make cards for everyone but it was very heartening to see how aware the children were of everyone who gives their time and effort at church. All that you do is noticed and appreciated. Thank you for being wonderful role models for our children.

Looking Ahead:

March 1 st	Curriculum
March 8 th	Intergenerational Service or Special Activity, Family Choir
March 15 th	Curriculum
March 22 nd	“Cool Deeds”
March 29 th	Curriculum

continued

Focus on Religious Education

Help Needed:

- Sign up at coffee hour or contact Carol to be a nursery volunteer. Help our nursery director, Adeline with our littlest First Church friends.
- We need substitute teachers for the spring semester. Please let Carol or Rali know if you could help out for a couple Sundays during the spring semester.
- Three volunteers needed to help with, February 22nd “Cool Deed”.
- Please let us know if you can help.
- Resources needed: magazine pictures of Pakistan and Afghanistan for a collage activity.

Carol Dixon
Chair, Religious Education Committee

Focus on Religious Education: Our Whole Lives

Our Whole Lives Starts on March 1

On March 1, we will offer our middle-school students the OWL (Our Whole Lives) curriculum in joint classes with students of the same age who attend the First Parish in Needham. We anticipate a large (15-18) class of mostly 7th grade students, with about an even distribution from of boys and girls and an even distribution of students from Needham and Dedham.

On Friday, February 27, we will have one social get-togethers for the students here in Dedham with pizza and games. Our goal is to have our children and the children from Needham get to know each other a little better before they start sharing classes on the following Sunday. The social on Saturday, February 7 was – to the eyes of the adults anyway – very successful, as we had 11 (out of a possible 18) attend a pool party in the middle of February. The group seemed to get along as well as we've seen any group of newly acquainted teenagers with a wide variety of personalities.

One important reminder though. As the OWL curriculum considers and discusses issues of a personal and sensitive nature, we need to receive a signed permission slip by all parents/guardians of any student who intends to attend that class before the first class convenes on March 1. We intend to collect all forms on Friday, February 27, but if you can get your form in to either or us before then, that will work too. Thank you.

Tyler Carpenter and Allison Staton
Leaders, OWL-2009

All Around the Church Community

The 2009 Service Auction

The Service Auction was a great success and a lot of fun. We raised over \$6000. This was possible because so many people were very generous with their donations and with their purchasing. Hopefully everyone will enjoy their purchases and experiences. Thank you so much to the many people who made the evening possible. We would especially like to thank: Judy for her help in the office, Vicky for producing the program, Andrea for providing the meal, Kathy for being the accountant, Jeff, Dan, and Rich for being the auctioneers, and to Dan for taking care of the bar. E-mails will be coming out soon to let you know who bought your services. Please contact: Carol, Carol or Anne if you have any questions.

Thanks again,

The Service Auction Committee:
Carol Dixon, Carol Ewing, and Anne Schiraga

The Parish Players Upcoming Production is March 13-15 Tickets are now available!

Don't miss the Parish Players up-coming production of “**You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown**”! Performances will take place on March 13 and 14 at 7 pm, and on March 15 at 2 pm. This is a light-hearted musical suitable for all ages. You may call or email the church office to make reservations (781-326-7463, firstchurch@dedhamuu.org), or sign up in the dining room during coffee hour. Tickets are \$5 for those under 12 and over 65, \$10 for all others.

Please note that due to the popularity of past matinée performances, all Sunday reservations must be paid for by noon on March 15. Tickets that have not been purchased at that time will be released if all other seats have been sold.

If you do not receive our weekly church emails and would like to, please contact the church office at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org

From the First Church Greening Committee

February 28th 7 PM in the Parish House: Greening Event

Who Killed the Electric Car?

On February 28th at 7 pm, First Church in Dedham will show a documentary about the life and death of the General Motors EV-1, an electric car that produced no emissions and catapulted American technology to the forefront of the automotive industry.

This event will take place at the Parish House at 670 High St. Admission is free and all are welcome.

Star Island

The first of February always strikes me as “turning the corner” on winter. Not only do we start to see more light at the beginning and ending of the day, but the Star Island Conference Catalog arrives! Peter and I started attending conferences on Star with our daughter, Anne, when she was eight years old. Now, twenty plus years later, we look forward to the International Affairs Conference each July. Many families at First Church are familiar with Star Island, the 40 acre piece of rock off the coast of Portsmouth, NH, which has been the site of UU weekly retreats for over 100 years. I’d like to encourage families new to First Church to explore the possibilities of visiting Star this summer. It’s a wonderful place for a family vacation. Most conferences have extensive programs for children, from first grade to senior teens. I’d also like to encourage those familiar with Star to check out new opportunities – workshops for a Thursday to Sunday (Writers’ Retreat, Yoga & Pilates, Photography with Peter Randall), and several Wednesday to Sunday or Friday to Sunday possibilities (Star Women, Innerpeace Healing Arts). Most conferences fill up fast, and applications need to be postmarked by March 15. Scholarships are also available. Check out the website at www.starisland.org, or contact me with any questions.

Kathy Elefterakis

Bible Study

Rev. Weaver will offer a Lenten Bible Study this time working from Bible Workbench a scriptural study system that focuses on each week’s lectionary selection using poetry and liberal commentary to help to increase our understandings of the text. This Class will take place on Sundays from 5-7 at the Parsonage including potluck Sunday Dinners. This class begins on March 1st and will end the Sunday before Easter (Palm Sunday).

All Around the Church Community

Stewardship Sunday

Stewardship Sunday is March 22nd. Participation in the Stewardship of this Church and Parish is one way of supporting the wider community and serving the common good. Consider filling out your pledge card before this event. Watch the website for more details.

Amnesty International

Jim , Meg , Virginia , Julia , Deb , Jeff , Rob , Sharon , Beppy , Kerry , Genia , Allison and Eileen wrote letters on behalf of a Chechen, imprisoned by the Russians, who is at risk of torture.

Thanks to the above who took time during coffee hour to write letters.

Peter Elefterakis

Meditation Group

The Meditation Group will continue to meet each Thursday at 7pm. We will focus on a book written by Pema Chodron, called *When Things Fall Apart*. The book has short chapters, 5 to 6 pages, which could be the focus of each meditation session. The book can be purchased through Amazon, through Shambala Press or at Barnes and Noble in Braintree. Please let me know if you are interested or call the church office.

Carol Dixon

Aerobic Dancing

Group meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 in the auditorium. No experience is necessary, and beginners are welcome.

- Low impact dances!
- Dance at your own level!
- Elevate your heart rate!
- Get some exercise!
- Sing along!
- Have fun!
- Come and try!

Any questions--contact Debbie Harrison (jchds@comcast.net)

All Around the Church Community

Chalice Crafters

Crafty parishioners join together to visit and to work on their wares. If you have something you are working on and would like some company or if you would like to learn to make things to later be sold at church events, please join the group every third Tuesday of every month from 7- 9 pm. Our next meeting is on March 17. Contact Dale Meyer Curley for more details.

Other Upcoming Events

Saturday March 28th there will be a **Folk Concert Coffee House** evening at First Church. If you would like to assist with making or selling baked goods at this event please notify the Church office.

Friday, April 10th there will be a **Passover Seder** at First Church. If you would like to assist with preparations please contact Rev. Weaver (raliweaver@yahoo.com) If you would like to attend please sign up at the Church Office (firstchurch@dedhamuu.org)

On the Sunday April 19th, (the Sunday before Earth Day) we will have a **Folk Music Sunday**. If you are interested in sharing your song please contact either Sam King or Rali Weaver.

If you do not receive our weekly church emails and would like to, please contact the church office at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org



Massachusetts Bay District of UU Congregations @ Work

Welcoming People as They Are
by Greg Buckland
Youth and Young Adult Ministries

In Fall 2007 I walked through the doors of the First UU Society of Exeter, NH seeking sanctuary. My job as a Field Organizer in the harrowing NH Presidential Primary demanded seven long days a week, with only a brief break on Sunday morning. I needed somewhere to be still and be touched; to connect with human beings, if only briefly, outside the context of work.

The relatively accessible hours (the congregation offered 9am and 11am services) allowed me flexible access to the worship. I found warm smiles welcoming me at the open door. The folks in the next pew slid over to introduce themselves. "I don't know if I've seen you before... I'm Jill." They didn't assume I was new, only that they hadn't met me, and maybe they had something to learn. Neither did they bombard me with questions or expectations. We worshipped together. The music was varied and thoughtfully chosen. The congregants were engaged in multiple ways: from singing with heart, to sharing stories of joy or sorrow, to being both centered and challenged by the sermon. I had to rush off after the service, but from that point on I dedicated that space and time on Sundays. Nine out of ten Sundays, I was there. Campaign life is extreme, but many young adults (18-35) are in a similar place. Overworked, facing student debt, a poor economy, a society focused on TV and consumption, we are seeking connection to others, wisdom to understand, and strength to persevere. Most of us are no longer living in the communities of our youth. Work may be frantic or dehumanizing. Early Sunday morning may be a time to sleep in or to recover.

What I found in New Hampshire though was a true ministry: a strong community of caring, where members took good care of each other, and welcomed the stranger, willing to accept me just as I was. I was a part of the church for only a few months before I was transferred for work. But the welcome, the respite and the warmth I found there helped me understand genuine hospitality is possible and we as Unitarian Universalists can be its vessel.

Resources for Young Adult Ministry

Ministering to the Missing Generation by Carol Howard Merritt

The Multigenerational Congregation by Gil Rendle

Greg Buckland,
gbuckland@mbduua.org,
617-816-0402

Accepting people as they are:

Radical Hospitality by Homan and Pratt

Growing a Beloved Community by Tom Owen-Towle

Learning Hospitality:

Rev. Dr. T. Cooley's slide presentation of "Hospitality 202" at www.mbdoua.org/uploads/Hospitality.pdf

www.mbdoua.org / 617-393-4216

Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting January 6, 2008

Present: Judy Barrington, Audrey Cecil, Carol Dixon, Dan Ewing, Sam King, Sharon Lane, Claudia Leone, Jeff Hutton, Kerry Matthews, Allison Staton, Eileen Sullivan, Rev. Rali Weaver

Meeting called to order at 7:01pm

We began with a moment of silence.

Minutes of 12/02/08 –Motion made to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Second, motion carried.

Ministers Report

Rali Weaver submitted the minister's report both orally and in writing. December was an active month. Rali asked us to determine "share the plate" for January and February. We decided January will go toward Minister's discretionary fund and February will go toward Dedham Food Pantry. Rali discussed building security and a recent intruder. More steps are being taken to secure the buildings. Rali will be taking some vacation days in February.

Behavioral Covenant

Claudia Leone presented her committee's work on the document. We discussed some new wording, which will be taken back to the committee for review.

Work of the Parish Committee

Allison Staton shared some articles from the InterConnections publication.

Personnel Policy -Sharon Lane reports that she has reviewed some policies of other churches. The committee will be meeting later this month to work on the document.

By-Laws – Olly Ames will be contacted for an update.

Membership Ideas - The greeter program developed by Sharon Lane seems to be working well. Allison Staton plans to make a display board identifying new members.

Stewardship Campaign

The Stewardship committee is starting to take shape. The committee co-chairs will be Kerry Gallagher and Jeff Hutton. Committee members will be Tam Johnson, Grace Pena, Geoff Tegnell, Kathy Widger, and Virginia Ferentinos.

Treasurer's Report

The November Budget was reviewed. Motion was made to accept the report. Second, motion carried.

The December report did not include a \$4500 deposit so the final report will be recalculated and resubmitted.

The Alliance check distribution was discussed. A motion was made to have \$500 go to RE, \$200 to Stewardship, \$300 to Music and Worship. Second, motion carried.

Religious Education

Carol Dixon reports that December was a busy month. In January they will transition to new teachers. The “Cool Deeds” group will be collecting “Pennies for Peace”. The idea comes from the book Three Cups of Tea about building schools in Pakistan. The middle school OWL program is in the process of being pulled together.

A big thank you to Carol Dixon for continuing to coordinate the RE Program while we search for a new RE Director.

Building and Grounds

Parsonage - Jeff Hutton and Sam King installed a new tankless, energy efficient water heater, which the Deacons agreed to fund out of building maintenance. Natalie Jensen is assisting with winterizing by insulating pipes.

Parish House – Sam King purchased and is installing new locks.

Meeting House – Next week will be the combined Music and Worship and Building and Grounds meeting to discuss potential Meeting House Renovations.

Fund Raising

1. Service Auction will take place February 7th. A flyer will go out this week about the event.
2. Jeff Hutton and Sam King hope to do monthly community dinners for the larger community. Natalie Jensen will produce a sign.
3. Rali Weaver obtained the Amazon.com agreement for their website fundraiser. Dan Ewing will review the agreement and we will discuss at a future meeting.
4. A donation dish will be put out at coffee hour to help defray the cost of coffee.
5. At this point we are on target regarding fund raising for this year.

New Business

A non-profit group called Music Access Group has asked to use the Parish House for a folk music coffee house on March 28th. Carol Dixon will speak with them about a custodial fee and the possibility of our selling concessions at the event. A final decision about approval will be made at the next meeting.

We will discuss Ministers Rights and Responsibilities at our next meeting.

Next meeting will be February 3, 2009 at 7pm.

Judy Barrington will offer the opening words.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43pm

**Respectfully submitted,
Audrey H. Cecil**