



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXX, No. 6

February, 2010

Sundays in the Meeting House

Note: In order to conserve energy and reduce our carbon footprint we will meet in the Parish House through February 28th.

February 7, 10:00 AM: Stories and Music with Sam Martinborough
Children will begin in worship and be sung to their classes.

The Music and Worship Committee is pleased to announce that Sam Martinborough will be leading worship on Sunday, February 7th. Some of you will remember the service that he led in June of 2008 when he shared about his native country Guyana. All in attendance were enthralled by his stories and his music. Sam's ability to engage and uplift all he encounters is sure to make this a Sunday not to miss.

Following Worship there will be a Committee Fair. Join us during coffee Hour to find out more about what goes on at First Church and how you can get involved.

February 14, 10:00 AM: Music Sunday
Children will start in the Dining Room and be sung to their classes.

Celebrate Valentine's Sunday with our music Director and Choir for an exploration of love through music and poetry.

February 21, 10:00 AM:
"What the Communist Manifesto Had to Teach"
The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.
Children will begin in worship and be sung to their classes.

On February 21, 1848 the Communist Manifesto written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels was published. One of the most influential political manuscripts of all time it addressed issues of the class struggle caused by capitalism. On this 162 anniversary of its publication (and without fear of being arrested) Rev. Weaver will explore what the Communist Manifesto might have to tell us about the world we live in today.

February 28, 10:00 AM: "Motivation"
The Rev. Rali Weaver and Student Minister Seth Carrier will cooperatively preach.
Children will start in the Dining Room and be sung to a Cool Deed.
Coming of Age students will attend the service in full.

What drives us to do what we do? How might we change our habits if we better understood our motivation? This Sunday, Rev. Weaver and Ministerial Student Seth Carrier will dialogue about what it is that motivates us and how understanding our own motivations might liberate us to achieve more. In case you are wondering this is not intended to be a motivational speech.

Calendar

Parish Committee: Feb 2, 7:00
Comfort Food Supper: Feb 6, 5:00
Great Thinkers and Thoughts:
Feb 9, 7:00
Feb 23, 7:00
Cakes: Feb 19, 6:30
Pizzeria Uno Fund Raiser, Feb 19 all day
Children's Clothing Swap: Feb 20, Noon
"Parenting the Gifted and Talented Child":
Feb 20, 7:00
Caps for Cupcakes Bake Sale:
Feb 21, 11:00
Parish Players Practices: Sundays, 11:30
Youth Group: Sundays at 6:00
Aerobics: Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:30
Meditation: Thursdays, 7:30

Next Parish Record Deadline: Feb 21

**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 by phone: 781-326-7463 or by email: firstchurch@dedhamuu.org

From the Minister

“Thaw with her gentle persuasion is more powerful than Thor with his hammer. the one melts, the other breaks into pieces.”

-Henry David Thoreau

As I write this we are experiencing a serious winter thaw. Everything outside my window is melting and becoming slush. As I look out my window I imagine this January Thaw is kin to our friend Indian Summer. Perhaps it is her messy younger brother. Just as his sister that appears in Autumn so too Winter Thaw comes to offer us a reminder of a season we might have otherwise forgotten. In the midst of bitter cold brother Thaw comes to persuade us that spring can and will come again.

As the rain and warm temperatures wash away snow, some of Sophia's (my dog) tennis balls emerge from the lawn and I wonder what treasures might emerge if I allowed such a thaw in the seasons of my own life.

On this day when the temperatures rise near 50 it feels magically warm to my senses. This 50-degree thaw day is offering warmth in a way that repeating early spring 50-degree days don't.

When I was a child my mother would occasionally make breakfast for dinner. This break in the pattern of eating (which only happened once or twice per year) always put a smile on my face. However if we had eaten pancakes every night of the week they would have become ordinary. Today I wonder what other ways I might liberate myself from old routines by simply shifting my patten and how that slight shift might make room for something new to enter in.

If we allow it I know our brother Thaw can also enter into within the seasons of our lives. Just by getting up earlier and greet the sun or going to bed later and appreciating the stars we can make room for new warmth in our lives. We could spend the afternoon with a child and open the window to our own childlike nature or we can enjoy tea with an elder and open the window to our own maturity. What ever shift we make offers room for our brother Thaw to enter our hearts.

As this long cold month of February begins I encourage you to look at your own life patterns and consider what gentle shifts you might make to thaw your own wintering heart.

May February find us preparing our spirits for spring to come again, with all its flowers and sunshine and may we be found in every season of our life with our minds and hearts ready to open to whatever magic it brings.

Happy Happy Valentines Day
I love you.
Rali

Rev. Rali Weaver is the Senior Minister at First Church and Parish in Dedham.
She can be reached at raliweaver@yahoo.com

From Seth – “Opening My Eyes”

I was fortunate to be able to travel to Senegal, Africa during the first two weeks of January to visit my friend Ellen, an anthropology professor who is currently spending her 9-month sabbatical researching gender and women’s sexuality issues in the capital, Dakar.

The trip was an amazing experience on many levels. After an intense semester of school and work, taking a vacation was wonderful, as well as a much-needed opportunity to get some rest. I was fortunate to visit many beautiful sites, including Ngor Beach and the Island of Goree, which while now a scenic artists’ retreat used to be the final launching point of the cross-Atlantic slave trade.

The people and culture were also amazing – it was a pleasure to enjoy the rich and spicy cuisine that is so different from ours. In addition to the food itself, the mode of eating was a pleasant change of pace, as it was much more community oriented: meals were all eaten off of one platter, each person eating from the imagined “pizza slice” in front of them. I much appreciated this increased Senegalese focus and emphasis on community and family. While our individualistic culture in America definitely has its strengths, the bonds of camaraderie and closeness that exist in the cohesive extended family units are something we increasingly miss out on in America.

Some of the differences were hard to miss, and just different, not good, bad or in-between. There was sand everywhere, even in neighborhoods and open areas, areas where I would have normally expected to see grass and fields. As someone who appreciates and enjoys the spirit and joy behind bright colors, a difference I really enjoyed was watching people walking around in their brightly colored prints and traditional African garb.

The difference that most opened my eyes was the economic disparity that exists between our two countries. The unemployment rate in Senegal is hovering around 48% and the overall difference in wealth and resources between our countries was vividly apparent. It was common in taxicabs, for instance, that the windshield was cracked and spider-webbed. This is a pretty accepted part of life there, and yet it is something that in privileged American eyes would be a safety hazard we would never accept. Another example that was difficult for my sensibilities to adjust to was the abundance of garbage along city streets, in front of apartment buildings and private homes, and in the countryside. It is not that the American method of piling garbage all in one big endless pile causing environmental problems is necessarily a better solution, but I was consistently aware of the presence of trash in the streets of Senegal.

So the trip was a blessing for me, a mixture of much needed down time, appreciation for the sights and traditions of a country and people with whom I was not previously familiar, and an enhanced understanding and appreciation for how lucky I am to have been born into a country of wealth and comfort. My eyes were opened both to a different culture that has many gifts to offer, and to a deeper understanding of the reality of the privilege I have, just by fortune of birth.

Peace and love,

– Seth

Seth Carrier is a ministerial student at Andover-Newton Theological School.
He is interning here at First Church for the 2009-2010 academic year, and can be reached at sethcarrier@gmail.com

Focus on Religious Education

I can hardly believe we are halfway through our church school year! What a busy and exciting time it has been thus far. I am thoroughly enjoying getting to know our group thoughtful, exuberant and creative kids. I also love it when the adults approach me with ideas for Cool Deeds, creative projects or favorite holiday stories. It is clear to me from this enthusiasm that even those who aren't currently RE parents still have a deep interest in how the youngest members of our congregation are included in our search for truth and meaning. Soon it will be time to plan the curricula for next year. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions in this process.

In October's Cool Deed our church school kids learned how UNICEF saves the lives of children in countries affected by poverty, war or natural disaster. Some of them went trick-or-treating and raised about \$40 for UNICEF. Right now, UNICEF is working hard to save lives amid the terrible aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti. You can help by donating on their website: <http://www.unicefusa.org>.

My sincere thanks goes out to Doug Elliot and Tyler Carpenter for donations of shelving, and to the members who offered to help clean up the RE wing over the holiday break.

This spring the K-1 students in *Special Places; Sacred Spaces* will be constructing their own little homes in cardboard boxes for their class sleepover. If you have a large cardboard box you can donate please talk to Grace Pena.

Because the democratic process is a fundamental part of Unitarian Universalism, the kids who gathered for January's Cool Deed got to vote on how to collect donations for *Cradles to Crayons*, a group that provides for children in low-income families around Boston. Out of a list of needed items, our kids voted to collect toys and winter clothing. We read a list of suggestions for fund-raisers, and two of our kids came up with great event ideas of their own. They voted to have a bake sale where goodies are purchased with clothing items instead of money. For an added incentive, the three participating classrooms will be competing against each other to collect the most items. This will be held on our next Cool Deed Sunday, February 21st after church. Ladies and Gentlemen, start your ovens!

This month the 3 and 4 year olds begin Spirit Play, a Montessori-based UU curricula adapted from Jerome Berryman's Godly Play. Anyone interested in learning more or possibly helping out in the classroom is welcomed to attend the teacher training on Sunday January 31st, 12:30-4, or the parent orientation during social hour on February 7th.

After the holidays is a good time make room for all your new loot by passing on the things you don't need. Check your kids' closet to see if you have any of the following items lying around. Or perhaps you have a gift certificate to a toy or art supply store you'd be willing to donate to the RE program. Most-wanted items:

Yoga cards

Modeling clay or modeling beeswax

Stamps (with washable ink)

Watercolor paints
Melissa and Doug's architecture blocks, or plain wooden building blocks
Puzzles or educational games with a nature/spiritual/mythological theme
Trays, such as cafeteria or rectangular serving trays (for doing artwork on)
Child-sized brooms
A non-electric carpet sweeper

Aoife

Aoife Barrington-Haber is our Religious Education Director. She can be reached at faeriecool@hotmail.com

Children's Clothing Swap

What do you do when your child keeps growing out of their clothes faster than you can get more? Trade them in! As a fundraiser for First Church, and an economical answer to clothing our kids, we will host a Children's Clothing Swap. Come with your bags of clothes you can't use, lay them out on the table, and then take what you need from other tables. Participants should take their leftover clothes home or donate to *Cradles to Crayons*. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

Where: First Church Parish Hall

When: Saturday February 20th, 12-3PM.

Entry Fee: \$5 if you bring clothes, or \$10 to come empty-handed and leave with as much as you can carry..

Aoife

All Around the Church Community

For Parents of Preschoolers

February 7th will be our first Spirit Play class meeting, which will be an orientation for the children so they will be comfortable with and successful in the new class format. This will take place during regular class time, and attendance to this orientation is required for all children planning on registering for Spirit Play. Following this, during Social Hour, will be a parent-only Spirit Play orientation, so you can learn and experience a little of what your children will be doing. Childcare will be provided, and parents of preschoolers are strongly encouraged to attend.

All Around the Church Community

First Church Women's Alliance Upcoming Events in February

Please save these dates for two interesting and fun afternoons:

Saturday, February 13, 3:00 PM: **Valentine Tea** in the First Church Dining Room

Mothers and daughters
Friends bringing friends
Young women bring your dollies
An afternoon of fun, activities, food and more

Sunday, March 28, 11:30 AM: **Pot Luck Luncheon** in the First Church Dining Room

Everyone welcome, and we'll have a speaker after the luncheon. Look for more details in the next Parish Record.

Parenting the Gifted and Talented Child A Fundraiser for First Church

Every child is a gift to the world. All children have talents to develop and share with one another. However, there are children who may be described as gifted, defined by the National Association for Gifted Children in this way:

A gifted person is someone who shows, or has the potential for showing, an exceptional level of performance in one or more areas of expression.

Some of these abilities are very general and can affect a broad spectrum of the person's life, such as leadership skills or the ability to think creatively. Some are very specific talents and are only evident in particular circumstances, such as a special aptitude in mathematics, science, or music. The term giftedness provides a general reference to this spectrum of abilities without being specific or dependent on a single measure or index. It is generally recognized that approximately five percent of the student population, or three million children, in the United States are considered gifted." www.nagc.org

If you feel you have an intense, precocious child, you may be interested in this 2-part series, hosted by Judy Butler and based on **The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids** by Sally Yahnke Walker (2002, Free Spirit Publishing).

Session 1: Saturday, February 20, 7:00 - 9:00 pm at First Church Parish House
Session 2 time and location to be announced
Cost \$25

The first 10 paid registrations will receive a free copy of Sally Yahnke Walker's book

All Around the Church Community

Comfort Food Church Supper

Saturday, February 6th

5 to 7:30 pm

Adults \$10.00,
Children under age 13 \$5.00
Children under age 6 free

We will have a "Comfort Food Church Supper" on Saturday, February 6th, from 5 to 7:30 pm. All the food will be homemade and the menu will include:

- homemade soup
- macaroni and cheese
- salad
- fresh baked bread
- home baked cookies for dessert

Eat in or take out. All proceeds of this dinner will go towards our commitment to raise \$10,000 as part of our church budget.

We welcome volunteers, and will need you to:

- Cook soup
- Make salad
- Bake bread
- Bake cookies
- Serve and/clean up

Sign ups are available at coffee hour. Mark your calendars and enjoy a night off from cooking! Any questions please contact:

Carol Dixon or Jeff Hutton
(781) 461-0522
carolhdixon@gmail.com

Bake Sale

The "Caps for Cupcakes" Bake Sale to benefit Cradles to Crayons On February 21st (our next Cool Deed Sunday), our the K-6th church school classes will be holding a bake sale after church. But instead of money, baked goods will be purchased with clothing items! More details coming soon.

All Around the Church Community

Great Thinkers and Thoughts in Unitarian Universalism

Continue to join Rev. Weaver in front of the fire at the Parsonage the Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month from through April 20th to discuss central thoughts and thinkers of the Unitarian Universalist Movement. Drawing from such great thinkers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, Hosea Ballou, Harriet Martineau, Henry Whitney Bellows, William Lawrence Sullivan, Sophia Lyons Fahs, and Forrest Church we will explore Unitarian and Universalist thought through the decades. Some pre-reading is required please contact Rev. Weaver for details raliweaver@dedhamuu.org.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

The Pizzeria Uno Fund Raiser, Friday, February 19

If you have a coupon for First Church, we get a percentage of what you buy! The more you buy, the higher percentage we get. Last time we made over \$200. Let's see if we can beat that! Coupons are available at the church office, or ask for one to be emailed to you (email Eileen at eileen.s@rcn.com). You can make copies and give them to family, friends, neighbors, anyone. This is an all day event, lunch, dinner, eat in, take out- lots of ways to eat a yummy meal and help First Church at the same time. **Hope to see you for dinner on the 19th.**

Adult R.E. Program: *Articulating Your Faith*

Led by our Student Minister Seth Carrier, *Articulating Your Faith* is an Adult Religious Education curriculum written by two UU ministers, Barbara Wells and Jaco B. ten Hove, which is designed to help both new and long-term UUs practice putting their religious beliefs into words. Given that we are part of a non-creedal liberal faith, this can be a daunting task even for the most experienced of us! Come spend five consecutive Monday evenings, starting March 29th and ending April 26th, exploring the richness of our tradition with other members and friends. We will gather promptly at 7pm in the Women's Alliance Room.

**Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting
December 1, 2009**

Present: Judy Barrington, Audrey Cecil, Carol Dixon, Jeff Hutton, Sharon Lane, Claudia Leone, Kerry Matthews, Grace Pena, Michael Roberts, Eileen Sullivan, Jeff Tegnell, Rev. Rali Weaver

Meeting called to order at 7:06 pm

Unison Affirmation. Opening words by Carol Dixon.

Minutes of 11/03/09 – Motion made to approve the corrected minutes of the last meeting. Second, motion carried.

Ministers Report- Rali reports that an average of 50 adults and 20 children have been attending church on Sunday's this Fall. There is positive energy and we are welcoming new people. Sunday services will once again be held in the Parish Hall during January and February to conserve heat. A Committee on Ministry has been put together which Dale Meyer Curley will chair. Eileen Sullivan, Natalie Jensen and Deb Harrison will also serve on the committee.

Work of the Parish Committee –

Chair and committee members:

Finance Committee- Dan Ewing

Membership Committee- Kathy Widger. Rali and Kathy will meet next week.

Personnel Committee-Eileen Sullivan will chair, Claudia Leone, and Kathy Elefterakis. This committee will meet after the first of the year.

Stewardship Committee- Alison Staton and Kerry Gallagher will co-chair.

Nominating Committee- Judy Barrington, Janet Hurwitz or Susan White, Sharon Lane, RE Chair, and Peter Elefterakis. This committee will convene in February.

Definition of Roles –Carol Dixon will write up the workings of the Annual Meeting and Special Meeting. Rali has posted the by-laws on the church web site. Judy Barrington will supply info on the committees. Judy Barrington and Rali will organize a Committee Fair after the holidays. Audrey Cecil will send info about the Warrant to Sharon Lane

Treasurer's Report – Michael Roberts provided an accounting of last month's financial transactions. Fundraising is ahead of schedule based on the projection of \$1000 per month. Plate collections are slightly ahead of budget. The Treasurer's report will be amended and presented at the next meeting due to computer printout issues.

Building and Grounds – Jeff Hutton reported that the front of the Parish House was painted and windows were cleaned. A dead tree was removed from behind the church. A new stove was installed in the Parsonage. Leaf raking was not completely successful. More work can be accomplished.

Fund Raising – Approximately \$5045. has been raised so far this year. Another Uno Pizza night is being planned for a Friday in January. Fair Trade coffee might be a potential fund raising possibility. Rali will check on the details. A community supper is being considered. Carol Dixon and Jeff Hutton will work on the details. Trivial Pursuit night and Movie night are also considerations.

R.E. Committee – Things are going well. The Spirit of Christmas Tree Pageant will take place of December 13th. A Parents Night Out evening is being planned for this month. R.E. is looking for teachers for the Spring.

Old Business –

Goals for the New Year – Parish Committee goals include: putting together a binder about the workings of the church including committee function, Parish Committee roles and job descriptions. We also want to welcome new ideas and integrate new people into committees. Church goals include: finishing the Welcoming Church process by the end of the church year. We also want to continue to work on the Food Pantry, gathering resources and helping them to identify a permanent home.

New Business

1. Aoife will be using the church kitchen this month.
2. A request has been made by the Dedham Village AA to use space on Wednesdays from 7-8pm. A motion was made to allow a branch of the Dedham Village AA to use the last classroom on the end of the classroom building for a one-month trial basis starting January 6, 2010, subject to reassessment every six months. The motion was seconded and passed.
3. A thank you was extended to Rali for offering to host a get together at the Parsonage on Christmas Eve.

Next meeting will be on January 5, 2010 at 7pm.

Rali will offer the opening words.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:51pm

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey H. Cecil