



# The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

[www.dedhamuu.org](http://www.dedhamuu.org)

Volume CXXVII, No. 4

December, 2006

## Calendar

### November

- 26, Sunday: Sharing the Plate: Heifer Project
- 29, Wednesday, 8:00 AM: Buildings and Grounds

### December

- 2, Saturday, 9:00 AM: Holly Fair**
- 5, Tuesday: Office CLOSED
- 12, Tuesday, 6:00 PM: Special Congregational Meeting**
- 12, Tuesday, 7:30 PM: Parish Committee Meeting
- 15, Friday, 6:30: CAKES
- 16, Saturday, 9:00 AM: Holiday Pageant Rehearsal
- 17, Sunday: Sharing the Plate: Globe Santa
- 24, Sunday, 6:00 PM: Carol Singing on the Meetinghouse Steps. 6:30 PM: Candlelight Service
- 25 - 26, Monday - Tuesday: Office CLOSED
- 28, Thursday: Office CLOSED

### January

- 1, Tuesday: Office CLOSED
- 5 - 7, Friday - Sunday, starting at 2:00 PM: YRUU Star Island Reunion

The Parish Record is published monthly.

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The deadline for submissions for the January issue of the Parish Record will be

December 17. Send notices directly by e-mail to:

[tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org](mailto:tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org) or call me with

questions: 617-326-9728.

## Sundays in the Meeting House

November 26, 10:00 AM: A Change of Heart Sermon: *Adlai Stevenson and the Politics of Passion* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross

December 3, 10:00 AM: The Hanging of the Greens Sermon: *Winter Solstice* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross

December 10, 10:00 AM: A Christmas Gift. Sermon: *A Christmas Gift* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross

December 17, 10:00 AM: The Annual Christmas Pageant. Bring your mittens for the tree!

December 24, 31, 10:00 AM: Informal Services in the Parish House.

December 24, 6:30 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

## Focus on Religious Education

**Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>** - We'll start in the Meeting House for the "Hanging of the Greens". OWL - Final Class

**Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** - Preparation for Holiday Pageant - teachers' assistance

**Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>** - Rehearsal for Holiday Pageant\* - teachers' assistance

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>** - Holiday Pageant\* - children should arrive by 9:45AM

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** - No Church School.

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>** - No Church School.

**Also, Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>: 6 - 8 PM: Parents' Night Out!** See flyer for details.

Looking ahead:

The Coming of Age kick-off dinner is at 6PM on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> and the COA retreat is from Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>

## All Around the Church Community

### From the Ministerial Search Committee:

#### Beyond Categorical Thinking

On Sunday, Nov. 12, more than 20 members and friends of First Church participated in the “Beyond Categorical Thinking” program sponsored by the Search Committee and led by Barb Greve, a staff member of the UUA. The purpose of this program is to broaden the horizons of all those involved in a ministerial search to include candidates from groups that might not otherwise be considered.

The morning started with a worship service led by Barb. In his sermon, he recounted his life as an adoptee and his search as an adult for his biological parents. His moving account of how he was received as a transgender person by his newly found family gave focus to the topic of the day: acceptance of those different from ourselves.

After a delicious lunch of soup made by Jeff Hutton, the workshop portion of the program began. Barb explained the history and purpose of Beyond Categorical Thinking. He then involved the group in exercise in which all were asked to consider three categories of candidates: those of a different race, those who are bisexual/gay/lesbian/transgender, and those with disabilities. Each participant filled out a chart that asked, for each of the 3 categories, what were our personal concerns, what might be the concerns of others in the congregation, and what were the benefits to calling a person in that category. The results were discussed and tabulated as a group.

Many of the concerns, both personal and congregation-wide, for all three groups revolved around membership: whether present members might be feel uncomfortable and leave or that new members might not be drawn a church with someone different from themselves as minister. Interestingly, many saw this very concern as a benefit: a minister from one of these groups would attract more new members and create more diversity in our membership. One other common concern was the feeling of discomfort that might be felt by both congregants and the minister. But again, others saw this as a benefit: helping us to recognize and address our own feelings concerning race, gender identity/preference, and disability. Some concerns were specific to one category, such as could we afford to make the parsonage accessible for a person using a wheelchair. Benefits, too, were related to a specific group: with a BGLT minister, Dedham might be closer to becoming a Welcoming congregation.

In conclusion, Barb reviewed some of our common concerns and benefits and compared them to the actual experience of other congregations. One example: gay or lesbian ministers have attracted more members, many of whom are BGLT, but even more of the newcomers are heterosexual. A minister’s effectiveness has little to do with the group to which he or she may belong. One participant then asked, “What we should be looking for, then, in a minister?” Barb replied, “Passion. The passion of the minister should match the passion of the church.”

## All Around the Church Community

### Special Congregational Meeting

A *Special Congregational Meeting* will be held on *Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.* The purpose of the meeting is to hear and act on the reports of the Treasurer of the Parish for 2004-2005 and 2005 -2006 and the 2006 Auditor's report of the Deacons. The meeting will be combined with a light supper of cheese and crackers, pizza and beverages. Please RSVP to the church office if you are planning to attend so will we have an approximate number for the pizza order. Also please RSVP to the church office if you need child care.

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### Latest Search News

Our Congregational Record has been released online for viewing by potential ministerial candidates. This means that the Search Committee will soon learn the names of those ministers who are interested in coming to First Church. We will review their online Ministerial Records and decide which we would like to learn more about. We will then exchange packets (physical, not online) with those candidates and decide which ones we wish to interview.

The interview is critical and we would like your input. What would you ask a candidate? Let us know by filling out a card at the Search Info Board in the dining room. We have received some great questions so far:

- Please describe a serious conflict in which you were involved or which you observed closely. How did you help bring it to resolution? What did you do right—and wrong?
- What have you done in other churches to increase and sustain membership?

Can you think of others? Please let us know!

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### In Our Thoughts

Bob Estes' brother was hospitalized after a serious car accident on Friday, November 17. We hope he recovers and wish to offer love and support to Bob Estes and Diane Winchester.

Jake and Marge Wiren have just moved to Brighton Gardens of Dedham. They can be reached by postal mail or by phone at 391 Common Street in Dedham or at 781-407-7711

Neil Braverman sends his love to all at First Church. He continues to struggle with his health and has difficulty speaking over the phone, but is eager to hear from any and all of us by way of email or regular postal mail. He can be reached by email at [nbboston@msn.com](mailto:nbboston@msn.com) or my mail at 90 Whitford Street, Roslindale, MA 02131

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## **The Trading Post Needs Your Things AND Your Help!**

The Trading Post urgently needs those things you have been saving all year in your cellar, attic or garage. The Holly Fair is next week! So bring them as soon as you can. The Parish House is open every morning, thanks to Judy, and Beppy will be setting up for the Fair every day and evening, starting Tuesday, Nov. 28. So please bring your things as soon as possible.

We also need your help. The cliché “Many hands make light work” is a cliché because it is true. If you can give an hour or a few to help set up the Trading Post, it would be MUCH appreciated. We will be working Tuesday through Friday, all day and evening, so any time you can give would be great. Elves are also needed the day of the Fair.

The Yankee Trading Post at the Holly Fair works on the principle of “one person’s trash is another person’s treasure.” We accept items large and small, elegant and utilitarian. If you can no longer find a use for it, someone else will treasure it. We pass “special” items on to the Specials Room, new unused items to the Gift Table, but we are a treasure house of just that eggbeater like grandma once used that you’d love to take home.

Please do NOT bring TVs or monitors. They cost us \$10 to dispose of if they do not sell. We will try to sell them only if you will agree to dispose of them if they are still around after the Fair. Otherwise, almost anything usable goes, and someone will treasure it.

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## **Amnesty International**

We had our second Amnesty letter writing of the new year on November 19. 7 people wrote letters to the Eritrean government on behalf of some evangelical Christian church members and ministers who are currently detained or imprisoned because of their religious beliefs. Many thanks to the following letter writers: Tyler Carpenter, Jeff Hutton, Peter McDonough, Vicky Berg, Betsy Hetzler, Susan Sennott and Judy Barrington. Our next letter writing will be on December 17.

Peter Elefterakis

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## **Our New Website**

The first version of the new First Church website is here! Go to [www.dedhamuu.org](http://www.dedhamuu.org) to see what we've come up with. If you don't see the new site, try the "reload" button on your browser.

We will be adding features and fine-tuning things over the next several months. Please send us your comments and suggestions through the "webmaster" link on the site.

If you didn't receive an e-mail last week with this announcement, perhaps we don't have your current e-mail address. Call the church office or e-mail Judy at [firstchurch@dedhamuu.org](mailto:firstchurch@dedhamuu.org) to update your e-mail address.

Carol Ewing  
Natalie Jensen  
Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

## **Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting November 14, 2006**

**Attending:** Rob Ross, Judy Barrington, Jeff Hutton, Carol Dixon, Diane Winchester, Dan Ewing, Eileen Sullivan, Natasha Lawhon-Schneider, Sam King, Tyler Carpenter, Arnold Sacks, Beppy Martin, Susan Sennott

Meeting called to order by Dan Ewing at 7:35 pm. The meeting began with a moment of silence and reflection.

Minutes of October 10, 2006 meeting - motion to approve by Beppy Martin, second - passed.

### **Old Business**

Status re: replacement of door frame and lock on Parish Minister's office – not completed at this time

Status re: Classroom space for OWL - room was cleaned but some items from church are still in the conference room

Status re: UUA Membership review – Natasha and Carol, not completed at this time

### **Parish Minister's Report**

Rob reported that he had been making pastoral visits or calls to members who are ill or unable to get to church. Rob stated that he appreciates being informed if members are ill or in need of a call. He suggested that the church needs to do a better job keeping touch with older or ill members. He expressed appreciation that Vicky Berg was working to revive the Parish Community Network.

### **DRE Report**

The Our Whole Lives (OWL ) class is wrapping up and the Coming of Age (COA) class will begin in January. Susan expressed some concern regarding the status of the sound system and distribution of the hymn books in the meeting house for the Thanksgiving service. Susan also reported that the Religious Education program is looking for a youth leader as Bailey Stoler is no longer available to do the job. Susan also stated that help will be needed to set up the Hanging of the Greens.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Arnold Sacks reported that he is reorganizing how oil and electric bills are paid so it will be easier to track how much oil/electric is used in each building. Dan Ewing asked for a year to date expenditure report as soon as possible.

## **Sharing the Plate**

November	Heifer Project
December	Globe Santa (December 17 <sup>th</sup> )
January	Dedham Square Circle
February	UU Urban Ministry
March	Dedham Food Pantry
April	International Rescue Committee

Motion to move December's Sharing the Plate to December 17<sup>th</sup> by Eileen Sullivan, second - passed

## **Announcements**

- 12/3 - Diane Winchester
- 12/10 - Judy Barrington
- 12/17 - Beppy Martin
- 12/24 - Rob Ross
- 12/31 - Rob Ross
- 1/7 - Dan Ewing
- 1/14 - Natasha Lawhon-Schneider
- 1/21 - Eileen Sullivan
- 1/28 - Tyler Carpenter

## **Music Director Meeting and Conference**

Diane Winchester reported that the Music Director Conference was held. The concert was not held due to weather and attendance.

## **Worship Location**

Discussion occurred regarding fumes in the meeting house from the product used to seal the floor. It was decided that the Thanksgiving Service would be held in the Parish House.

## **YMCA Lease**

A one year lease with the YMCA expires in June 2007. A volunteer from the committee is needed to negotiate lease for next year/years. Current rent is \$2200/month. Diane Winchester volunteered to negotiate the next lease.

## **Review of Votes at Special Congregational Meeting**

Treasurer's reports of '04-'05 and '05-'06 have been obtained. Dan Ewing has talked with Ollie Ames about obtaining legal counsel.

### **Date for Special Congregational Meeting**

The committee discussed potential dates for the next Special Congregational Meeting. The committee decided to schedule the meeting on Tuesday, 12/12/06 at 6 p.m. This will be combined with a light supper of: cheese, crackers, pizza and wine/beverages. Members are asked to rsvp to the church office if they attending so we will have an approximate number for the pizza order. The wording of the warrant was also discussed.

### **Building Use Applications**

YRUU Youth Retreat  
January 5-7<sup>th</sup>

**Approved**

Diane Winchester  
Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Approved**

### **By-Laws**

The committee discussed a possible review of the by-laws. Members of the Committee on Ministry have volunteered to do research in this area. The committee will consider discussing this item in January.

### **Meeting Dates**

<b>12/12/06</b>	<b>7:30</b>
<b>1/16/07</b>	<b>7:30</b>
<b>2/13/07</b>	<b>7:30</b>
<b>3/13/07</b>	<b>7:30</b>

**Next meeting** of the Parish Committee will be *Tuesday, December 12th, 2006, 7:30 PM.*

Meeting adjourned, 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dixon Hutton

## From First Church Green

### *Thanksgiving Meditation*

November marks a time in which the year turns into its shadows – a time from which it will not emerge for five months. Even the humid warmth that surrounds us these unusual days does not fool us into thinking that the sunset, which now encroaches on 5:00 pm, soon 4:00 pm, marks the coming of winter's darkness. September and October were passionate times, times filled with glorious colors of amber and gold and russet amidst fewer and fewer leaves of green. It was a time of both rejoicing and sadness – rejoicing in the return to the activities of religious communities, sadness in knowing that one morning we will awaken to the bare limbs of trees scratching a leaden sky that threatens cold rain sweeping in off the ocean. Slowly winter gloves and scarves and hats accompanied by the smell of mothballs begin to emerge from their summer caskets. We were so happy to finally bury them on Memorial Day, convincing ourselves we'd never need them again.

Yet when November announces itself with authority in dervish swirls of flying brown leaves we may strangely find ourselves not bereft but filled with expectations. The season of Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays lies ahead, even in the darkness. The smell of mothballs is replaced by anticipation of turkey roasting and the scent of spices. And it is not all darkness and days of gray. There are also days of brilliant sunlight and that special warmth that comes only from the sun. Children bring home from school crayoned pictures of Pilgrims and rainbow-colored turkeys. From the windows of our homes we can now see *other* homes in our neighborhood – homes that had been hidden by leaf-engorged trees all summer.

It is that last image – *other homes, other people* – on which our meditation might dwell. What we can now see serves as a reminder for what we should see more clearly – people near us but whom we do not know, or whom we have known but may have forgotten.

In my pastoral visits and calls this fall I have been giving particular attention to connecting with more than twenty members of our congregation who have been less active or inactive – who are elderly or have been ill or housebound or in need of help with various smaller tasks such as shopping or yard cleaning. These calls have been very much appreciated. When I arrived last fall the Community Network was not functional, but with the energy of Vicky Berg, Doug Howell, Carol Dixon and others we are working to rejuvenate this important work of the congregation, including broadening the kind of caring acts people can commit to so that more members of the congregation will be involved in its 'caring community'. Another new thing that has begun at the suggestion of Carol Dixon is a 'buddy system' that pairs newer members of the congregation with older members so that we can check in on people who haven't been around to see if things are all right. This past week I also became aware for the first time of another mechanism First Church has for providing help – the Baker fund, supplemented by money from the Women's Alliance, and administered by the Benevolent Committee, in confidence, to help women of the church. One of its members informed me that the committee has not met or functioned for more than two and one-half years, but funds are available to be put to appropriate use.

My Thanksgiving meditation concluded with the image of being able to see from our windows, once again, the homes of others in our neighborhood. This image reminds us all of our opportunity to re-connect with members of our congregation who may be in need or who would simply like to hear from us. That is something we *all* can do. And there is one more thing – perhaps the most important of all. As we come to learn of a need someone has, an illness, a family issue, wanting some help around the house . . . to *communicate* that to members of the Community Network and to the Minister so that a response can be immediate. In my two years in Plymouth we had excellent channels of communication so that it was possible, for example, for me to visit patients in Jordan Hospital within a half hour after they were admitted. There was sometimes surprise at the quickness of response, but members of the congregation also found it wonderful and reassuring, giving them a sense that their membership was not simply in a congregation; it was in a family. Of course, it was *the congregation's* ability to communicate need that made this possible.

Rob