



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXVI, No. 9

February 1, 2006

Calendar

February

- 2, Thursday, 7:00 PM: RE Committee Meeting
- 4, Saturday, 9:00 AM: Sewing Guild
- 4, Saturday, 11:00 AM: Memorial Service for Sallie Ewing
- 6, Monday, 6:30 PM: Aerobics
- 8, Wednesday, 6:30 PM: Aerobics
- 9, Thursday, 9:00 AM: Building and Grounds Committee Meeting
- 9, Thursday, 7:00 PM: Membership Committee Meeting
- 10, Friday, 6:30 PM: CAKES Group Meeting
- 12, Sunday, 2:00 PM: Alliance Tea
- 12, Sunday, 7:00 PM: Youth Group
- 13, Monday, 6:30 PM: Aerobics
- 14, Tuesday, 7:30 PM: Parish Committee Meeting
- 15, Wednesday, 6:30 PM: Aerobics
- 19, Sunday, 11:00: Amnesty International Letter Writing

The Parish Record is published biweekly.
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The next deadline for submissions (the New Year's Issue) is February 12. Send notices directly by e-mail to: tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org or call me with questions: 617-816-9728.

Sundays in the Meeting House

February 5, 10:00 AM: Super Sunday. The sermon will be "Super Sunday, Super Ritual" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

February 12, 10:00 AM: Spirituality in a Religiously Plural World. The sermon will be "Rabbinic Judaism and Our Sense of the Holy" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

February 19, 10:00 AM: Religion and Mental Health. The sermon will be "Family Problems – Family Values" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

Focus on Religious Education

When do we meet:

Sunday, February 5th – 10 AM: We start in the meeting house. Serving as Church Mice are Simone Carpenter and Julia Ray.

Sunday, February 12th – 10 AM: Teaching Sunday

Sunday, February 12th – 7 PM: Youth Group

Sunday, February 19th – 10 AM: Presidents Day weekend:
Special activities

Sunday, February 26th – 10 AM: Social Service Project

Cradles to Crayons - On Sunday, January 22nd Timeless Themes and UU Heritage classes went to Cradles to Crayons in Quincy. Craig Simonsen, our guide, showed us around the warehouse and gave a Q&A session. Our kids did a great job answering questions.

I think we got the best job, which was to test the electronic toys. We went to work on a laundry cart which was overflowing with toys, some were just in need of new batteries, others were relegated to the retired toy bin, a.k.a. the trash. To their credit, Cradles is as fussy about what they give their children in need as we are about what we would give our own children.

Continued on next page...

Focus on Religious Education

(continued from Page 1)

We tackled the job with gusto –, using up all of the AA batteries on hand. Sometimes there were so many toys going at once, it was hard to tell if the toy in your hand was making a sound.

Everyone agreed it is a place we would like to volunteer at again. Thank you, Ollie Ames, Betsy Hetzler, and Tyler Carpenter for joining us.

Arlington Street Church - On Friday, January 27th, Bailey and the youth group served dinner at the Arlington Street Church dignity dinner program. Thank you, Peter Dorson, for doing the round trip driving.

We are always interested in hearing about social service projects for our children and youth groups, so let me know if you hear of any.

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

All Around the Church Community

Doug Howell is at Clark House Nursing Center at Fox Hill, 30 Longwood Drive, Westwood, MA 02090; His number is 781-320-8402. He is improving and hopes to be back on his feet soon. He would appreciate cards and visits from First Church members.

Many Thanks to Lois Leonard for her talent and generosity. Everyone had a fabulous time at the Wine Tasting - it was as advertised "Fun and Educational". Because of Lois' gifts we made some \$\$\$ for the church too! Don't miss the next one!

Amnesty International

On January 15th, Eileen Sullivan, Allison Staton, Judy Barrington, Pam Aist, Susan Sennott, Tyler Carpenter, Diane Winchester, Claudia Leone and Bob Estes wrote letters on behalf of a Kurdish Prisoner of Conscience in Syria. Our next letter writing session will be on the 19th of February.

Peter Elefterakis

Sunday, February 12th, 2pm

***You are invited to The Alliance February Tea
(formerly the Christmas Tea)***

***Come and enjoy an elegant, relaxing afternoon
Tea, goodies, poetry and song***

All Around the Church Community

Service Auction Update

We will hold a Service Auction Saturday, March 4th. This will be a “fun” fund raiser that will support the operating budget of First Church and Parish in Dedham. The auction will be most successful if everyone participates. The schedule for the night will include dinner, beverages, entertainment and a live and silent auction.

We are a church made up of talented, creative people so there should be a great selection of services available at the auction. As we are a community, you may want to donate a service that allows you to make a connection with someone in the church or one that gives you the opportunity to share an interest or talent with someone else in the congregation. A few ideas for services are listed below. Is there a service that you are looking for, if so, please call or e-mail Carol Dixon Hutton, (781) 461-0522, carolhdixon@gmail.com. A Service Donation Form is included in this Parish Record. Please fill it out and return it to the Church Office by February 18th.

All donations are welcome there is no donation too large or too small. In the past, some people have donated:

- **Services of time** (something you love to do but someone else despises)
Errands, gardening, window washing, organizing, cooking, babysitting, sewing, painting, dogwalking, petsitting, etc.
- **Services of sharing**
A dinner, a weekend or a week at a vacation home, a round of golf, a boat ride, art, crafts, or sharing a talent or interest with an adult or child, etc.
- **Professional services**
Some of your professional time you would share, i.e consultation, tutoring, lessons, treatment, etc. (silent auction available)
- **Gift certificates or tickets**
Dinners, museums, sporting events, shows, movies, etc.
- **Cooking**
A special food item you would make for someone else at a mutually agreed upon time
- **Your own ideas!!!!**

Your participation will make this event a success. Please donate a service of services and plan to attend the auction on March 4th.

Thank you,

The Service Auction Committee

Carol Dixon Hutton, Andrea Gilmore, Vicky Berg, MaryAnne Osborne,

Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

All Around the Church Community

Wanted: Fund Raising Ideas

Have you had an idea for a fundraiser that never seemed to get anywhere? Have you had an idea for publicizing an event that you thought about but never told anyone or that you remembered for one event but forgot for another? We all have thoughts and ideas that occur in conversations at coffee hour or come to us after the fundraiser is over- one of those "I wish we would have done this or that."

We are hoping to collect all those ideas and compile them into something more organized so that future event planners do not have to reinvent the wheel or, Heaven forbid!, have to remember all the details for each and every event. Send your thoughts and ideas whenever they come to mind (even at 3AM) to the church office and Judy and Rob will begin to organize them in some sort of useful way.

Thank you all.

Free Color Copies!

Conway Office Group is placing a "Digital Ricoh Photocopier" at the church office for one week beginning Thursday, February 2. First Church is a "Beta Test Site" for the machine. That means church members may use the machine free of charge for one week. Conway states, "This offer does not obligate you in any way other than a commitment to complete a written 'User Survey' at the end of the trial period."

Feel free to drop in during office hours (9 am – noon) to do color copying and complete a survey about the machine. I will not be doing the copying. You will need to make your own copies.

Save the Dates!

Women's Alliance Winter/Spring Programs

Sunday, February 12, 2006, 2 PM: Alliance "holiday" Tea. Everyone is invited. Bring a friend. In connection with Valentine holiday this month, a "romantic" music program and poetry readings.

Sunday, March 26, 2006, 10 AM: Alliance Sunday in Meeting House

Members of the Alliance will conduct the service. The Alliance will be hosting the coffee hour.

April, 2006 Saturday Date TBD: Intergenerational afternoon program. All are invited. Bring a friend.

May, 2006 Tuesday, Date TBD: Potluck supper and business meeting

From First Church Green

From First Church Green

Report of Value Analysis Workshop II

On Tuesday January 17th members of the congregation participated in a workshop to begin to identify and evaluate the future needs of First Church and Parish in Dedham. The workshop used Value Analysis – a participatory method I have developed for defining organizational values and guiding its members and leadership towards meaningful goals.

The Process:

First, the group as a whole brainstormed a list of congregational values that attempted to capture in concrete terms those specific features, programs, or attributes individuals felt should be part of the church's future in a five-year time frame. People identified areas of need – both large and small, short-term and long-term. Some identified broad goals; others made quite specific recommendations. The following are the 26 congregational values the group came up with in the order in which they were expressed:

1. Increase membership.
2. Develop a more diverse congregation.
3. Generate more enthusiastic participation in fund raising.
4. Involve more people – including new members – in the running of the church.
5. Make sure the congregation can know the agenda of Parish Committee meetings in advance.
6. Establish an ongoing 'Suggestion Box' to improve communication of a wide variety of issues needing attention.
7. Achieve a fully funded RE program.
8. Generate more lay participation in worship services.
9. Get more publicity in local papers about First Church and Parish activities.
10. Set up a Wayside Pulpit on the Church Green.
11. Encourage more existing members to attend worship services through a calling tree.
12. Conduct a thorough reform of the First Church and Parish By-laws.
13. Restructure existing committees and clarify their roles and responsibilities.
14. Develop a process to better identify visitors and ensure their welcome by members and the minister.
15. Create 'how-to' guides for church tasks such as scheduling, the membership process, committee work, etc.
16. Create guides for committee chairs.
17. Organize transportation for people unable to get to church worship services and activities.
18. Develop a capital plan with a prioritization of needed building improvements and other major expenditures.
19. Make the Meeting House interior more friendly to handicapped people.
20. Develop more adult RE programs.
21. Paint the Meeting House interior.
22. Develop a capital giving program so people are able to remember the church and the endowment in their will.
23. Improve the landscaping around the church buildings.
24. Put new rugs in the Meeting House.

25. Improve the entire Music Program.
26. Advertise.

At this point, the group re-examined the 26 congregational values using a process known as “scrubbing”. This process ensures that the *meaning* of each value is the same for everyone. Scrubbing does not require that everyone supports each value, only that everyone is agreement with what each means.

Next, the group divided into two teams to discuss and prioritize these congregational values in two different ways. First, each team evaluated the results of the brainstorming on a graphic tool in which each congregational value was considered in terms of two attributes: impact and magnitude. *Impact* represented the team’s perception of how much achieving a particular congregational value would contribute to the desired future of First Parish – that is, its importance for the needs of the congregation. *Magnitude* represented the team’s perception of how difficult or complex it would be to implement a congregational value. This work gave teams an opportunity to make refined judgements about the broad goals important for First Church and Parish as an organization of diverse individuals. Teams also arrived at these shared values in a consensus-driven process. That is, the values that emerged represented what members of the team could commit to, even if there were not complete agreement about all the specific details on how to implement them.

The teams then did a second prioritization of these congregational values in which they picked those areas they felt should be worked on first. You might call this the *tactical* prioritization. These choices represented each team’s strategy for where First Church and Parish should put its initial efforts, since no congregation could attack all its desired goals at once. It proved to be very revealing to see how much commonality occurred among the teams. Where teams felt several congregational values needed to be considered together, they formed them into a group.

The top five congregational values, in order of priority, to be worked on by the congregation were, for each team:

Red Team

1. Get more publicity in local papers about First Church and Parish activities. (9)
Set up a Wayside Pulpit on the Church Green. (10)
Advertise. (26)
2. Paint the Meeting House interior. (21)
Improve the landscaping around the church buildings. (21)
Put new rugs in the Meeting House. (24)
3. Generate more lay participation in worship services. (8)
Develop more adult RE programs. (20)
Improve the entire Music Program. (25)
4. Generate more enthusiastic participation in fund raising. (3)
Develop a capital giving program so people are able to remember the church and the endowment in their will. (22)
5. Make sure the congregation can know the agenda of Parish Committee meetings in advance. (5)
Establish an ongoing ‘Suggestion Box’ to improve communication of a wide variety of issues needing attention. (6)
Conduct a thorough reform of the First Church and Parish By-laws. (12)
Restructure existing committees and clarify their roles and responsibilities. (13)

Create 'how-to' guides for church tasks such as scheduling, the membership process, committee work, etc. (15)
Create guides for committee chairs. (16)

Blue Team:

1. Increase membership. (1)
2. Get more publicity in local papers about First Church and Parish activities. (9)
Set up a Wayside Pulpit on the Church Green. (10)
Advertise. (26)
3. Improve the entire Music Program. (25)
4. Establish an ongoing 'Suggestion Box' to improve communication of a wide variety of issues needing attention. (6)
5. Conduct a thorough reform of the First Church and Parish By-laws. (12)

As one can see, there was a rather strong consensus between the teams – as well as agreement with several areas identified in the Value Analysis session for the Parish Committee. The following discussion represents my own take on the general themes that appeared to emerge and the priority attached to them. However, it is important that everyone conduct their own analysis independently, then compare results.

Some Shared Themes:

(1) Both teams placed a high priority on the need of First Church and Parish to increase membership. The Red team saw its highest priority values (9, 10, 26) as *means* to achieve increased membership. The Blue team made increased membership its highest priority and identified the same values (9, 10, 26) as the Red Team as its second priority.

(2) Also a high priority for both teams were goals related to making the church attractive and welcoming, and a place worthy of respect. This especially included improving the Music Program (25) as a way of demonstrating a greater involvement and participation of memberships in worship services.

(3) A third area of agreement had to do generally making a needed internal reorganization of First Church and Parish's infrastructure – its committees, their interrelationships, and especially its By-laws (25). To improve the effectiveness of church governance, the By-laws will have to accurately represent the true values and mission of the church, and better define the tasks and responsibilities of the Parish Committee and Deacons and other committees.

(4) Finally, both teams called strongly for greater and wider participation in church activities and worship services.

The participants can be proud of their very good work and energy. The next phase is to turn these shared perceptions into actions and teams of people willing to devote their time to seeing them through. The next phase of the Value Analysis process – defining action items – will take place for the Parish Committee on January 31. I look forward to working with you all and keeping the commitment going.

Rob

***First Church in Dedham
Service Auction - 3/4/06
Service Donation Form***

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Description of service donation:

Date (if applicable): _____

Estimated Value: _____

Minimum Bid (if applicable): _____

*Please return to the church office by: **February 18, 2006***

Questions???

Call Carol Dixon Hutton at 781-461-0522 or email at carolhdixon@gmail.com

