



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXVII, No. 6

February, 2007

Calendar

January

- 28, Sunday: Sharing the Plate: Dedham Square Circle
29, Monday, 7:00 PM: Informational Meeting with T-Mobile

February

- 4, Sunday: 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM: Cradles to Crayons field trip
4, Sunday: 11:30 AM to 4:00 PM: **Sort and Pitch Party!**
7, Wednesday: Alliance Pot Luck Supper
13, Tuesday: 6:30 PM: Membership Committee Meeting
13, Tuesday: 7:30 PM: Parish Committee Meeting
16, Friday: 6:30 PM CAKES
18, Sunday, 2:00 PM: Ruth Koe Memorial Service
25, Sunday: Sharing the Plate: UU Urban Ministry

Also...

- Aerobics: Mondays and Wednesdays: 6:30 PM
Meditation: Thursdays: 7:30 PM

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 or call me with questions: 617-326-9728.

Sundays in the Meeting House

- January 28, 10:00 AM: Sermon: *Experiments With Truth* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross
February 4, 10:00 AM: Sermon: *Understanding Ritual* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross
February 11, 10:00 AM: Sermon: *The Way of the Tao* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross
February 18, 10:00 AM: Sermon: *Five Stones of Liberalism* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross
February 25, 10:00 AM: TBA:

Focus on Religious Education

Sunday, February 4th - Cradles to Crayons (for ages 10 and up)

Sunday, February 11th - Teaching Sunday

Sunday, February 18th - School Vacation – Special Activity

Sunday, February 25th – Teaching Sunday

Looking ahead:

Our Youth Service is on March 25th (NOT on March 4 as previously scheduled).

Continued on next page...

Focus on Religious Education (continued)

Coming of Age celebrated their Kick-off Diner on January 7th. Thank you, Claudia Leone and Carol Hutton, our COA leader, for helping to make the dinner a success.

RE at First Church and Parish (FC&P) is not just about Sunday mornings. Here is one day in the life of FC&P - Friday the 19th of January:

- In the early afternoon Becca Hutton unloaded the meal we had prepared from the freezer and delivered it to Arlington St Church (ASC).
- Around 5 PM Milo Carpenter and his friends Nick Terzian and Jeff Arcscott arrived at Arlington Street Church to help serve the meal. Andy Hutton joined them as he could make it from work.
- I wish everyone from FC&P could have been there to feel the appreciation for our meal. When Jessica del Rosario, who runs the Supper Program, announced that the meal included Caesar Salad I saw one woman smile in anticipation. It was a sweet moment! And speaking of sweet, the brownies we sent were topped off with a dollop of whipped cream, making them just a bit festive. Once everyone is served, guests who are interested can line up for seconds. Jessica told us that you can judge a good meal by the length of the line for seconds. I don't want to brag, but the line was all the way across the room! Thank you all for making this possible, especially Betsy Stevens who started the ball rolling many years ago.
- Meanwhile, "back at the ranch" the COA group began their overnight retreat in the dining room, while the Cakes group was meeting upstairs.

I hope you are all warmed by the lovely note we received from Renewal House thanking us for our gifts from the mitten trees and giving tree. I would like to thank Judy Butler for turning her car into Santa's sleigh to load and deliver all of the gifts.

* Cradles invites us to bring donations when we visit. If you would like to contribute, new children's socks and underwear are always needed. You can drop them off at church from 9 to 12 weekdays, or bring them to church on Sunday, January 28th.

Reminder: It's not too late to return those Guest at Your Table Boxes.

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

From the Ministerial Search Committee

Things are Heating Up!

We on the Search Committee are seeing a lot of each other lately. In one recent two-week period, we met six times! We are happy to get together, though, as we have been conducting phone interviews with some wonderful ministerial candidates. We'll soon be choosing three of them as Pre-Candidates. What does that mean? We will invite each one to visit Dedham for a weekend. During that time we will interview them more extensively, show them around the First Church buildings, and observe them conducting a worship service at a nearby "neutral pulpit." It's a time for the committee and the candidate to get to know one another better.

As each candidate comes to visit, we naturally want her or him to see the church at its best and know that this is a community that cares for its church home. The newly painted interior of the Meeting House will definitely impress them, but not so the inside of the Parish House. There are plans underway to have the inside thoroughly cleaned, some of the walls repainted and the carpet cleaned. But none of that can happen until the clutter has been removed. Take a look under the stairs to the RE office, the cloakroom, the dining room. You'll see broken chairs, unidentified boxes filled with who knows what, filing cabinets with nothing in them—all stuff that needs to be sorted and either stored or thrown away. So join us on Sunday, Feb. 4, from 11:30 to 4:00 for a "**Sort & Pitch Party.**" We'll be going through all the STUFF that has been accumulating over time and clearing it out. We'll start right after church and lunch will be provided. Wear your play clothes and "pitch" in!

Your Opinion, Please...

There's a new question on the Search Info Board in the dining room and, as the Search Committee considers candidates, it would be really helpful to have a sense of how the church community feels about this issue:

If money is not an issue, how important is it to the church community that the minister and her/his family live in the Parsonage? Why?

Please take a minute to respond to this question using one of the index cards provided on the Board or contacting one of the members of the Committee directly.

All Around the Church Community

Informational Meeting

Monday - January 29th - at 7:00 PM at the Parish House
Possible Installation of Cellular Transmission Equipment in the Steeple of First Church

There will be an informational meeting to discuss the possibility of installing T-Mobile cellphone transmission equipment in the steeple of the church. A representative from T-Mobile will attend the meeting to describe how the installation would be done, its visual impact on the church (which is virtually none) and other issues relating to a cell-tower installation.

We hope that everyone who is interested will be able to attend this meeting.

Note from Renewal House

January 5th, 2007: To the members of First Church & Parish of Dedham –

Thank you so much for the wonderful donation of gifts for the residents of Renewal House this holiday season. It is a true blessing for us to know that churches/individuals such as yourselves are always there year after year to support our program – and to keep some joy in the lives of the families we serve. We are grateful for your partnership. And, we are fully aware that our program would not be the same without your involvement. The personal touch we are able to offer our residents due to our connection into a retinue of UU churches, truly makes a difference.

In all we served over 30 families through our emergency shelter program- each of these families also received individual advocacy, support groups and family counseling. In addition we serve an average of 100 people per month through our own community support group “Circle of Hope”. The work can be challenging and at times draining and yet when we see transformations in the lives of the women and children, we know how vital our service and ministry are.

Thank you again for your partnership.

Grace and Peace,

Susan Criscione, Director

All Around the Church Community

A Message from Peter Reynolds about the Dedham Square Circle

Thursday the 1st of February. 7pm. -- Mark it on your calendars.

The Dedham Square Circle (the Circle of Friend Who Care About the Square) is holding our quarterly gathering at the Dedham Historical Society in Dedham Square (across from the Post Office) Come hear the progress DSC is making in helping preserve our treasured "Main Street" way of life. It's always a great gathering –tasty treats and raffles -- meet lots of fellow Dedhamites and neighbors who care about the town and what it can become if we all are involved, communicating and moving it forward together!

We have invited all candidates for Selectmen to have a 5 minute spotlight on what they feel the role of Dedham Square is in our future.

Please visit the site to learn more. Go here: <http://www.dedhamsquarecircle.com>

Until then, try to get your coffee, gifts, books & toys, DVDs, flowers, newspapers, banking, hair styling, real estate help, pizza, cigars, travel services, laundry, etc in Dedham Square! Oh, yes... and have dinner at one of our eating establishments and a movie at our historic 1927 Art Deco movie theatre!

This is one of the most important ways to keep our historic Square alive and well.

And if not in the Square, try to keep it in Dedham. Support all small businesses who make our town unique and provide old fashioned customer service.

And if you DO go to Roz, Canton or Norwood, -- while you're there tell them about historic Dedham! :-)

See you in the Square,

Peter

In Our Thoughts

Nancy Searle, Ruth Koe's daughter, called this morning to let us know that Ruth passed away yesterday. A Memorial Service is planned for February 18 at 2:00. The members of First Church and Parish extend their deepest sympathy to Ruth's family.

Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting January 16, 2007

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

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

Minutes of December 12, 2006 meeting - motion to approve by Jeff Hutton, second - passed.

Parish Minister's Report

Rob reported that Ruth Koe had passed away and that her memorial service will be held on February 18, 2007. Rob added that Parish Community Network and Membership Committee members have been thinking of how to reach out to older members who are no longer able to attend church.

DRE Report

The Coming of Age (COA) program started with a kick off dinner on January 8th. The class consists of students from First Church in Dedham and First Church in Needham. A (COA) retreat will be held on January 19th and 20th. A date of Sunday, February 4th, has been set for the Church School to go to *Cradles and Crayons*. The Youth Group will be serving at the Arlington Street Church Dignity Dinner Program on Friday, January 19th. The meal prepared by the Church School will be served that night.

Treasurer's Report

Arnold Sacks was unable to attend the meeting. Treasurer's report will be presented at the next meeting. By phone, Arnie reported that we pay \$53 to the UUA for each member. He has been talking to a representative from the UUA about our membership count and is attempting to bring our assessment in line with our current membership numbers.

T-Mobile Proposal

Discussion occurred about the T-Mobile Proposal. Committee members are still attempting to get fee information from other churches. Natasha reported on clarifications needed in the T-Mobile Contract. Further discussion occurred regarding T-Mobile's access to our buildings. Andrea Gilmore spoke about how this could potentially be arranged.

Motion: to proceed with an informational meeting with the congregation and representative from T-Mobile, by Sam King, second – Eileen Sullivan, passed with one negative vote.

Parsonage

Discussion occurred regarding painting the inside of the parsonage. The committee also discussed a proposal from the **Mass Bay District** and the **Ballou Channing District** re: the possibility of renting the parsonage as office space. The committee decided to allow the **Mass Bay District** to look at the space but no further consideration of this matter could occur until after June 2007.

Search Committee

Jeff Hutton reported that 14 ministers had signed up to look at our congregational record. The committee has had six telephone interviews up to this time and will have at least one more. The committee has received high praise on the packet.

By-Laws

Members of the Committee on Ministry have obtained copies of the by-laws from other churches. The committee discussed issues potentially related to by-law review. The Parish Committee decided to continue to explore by-law review and change. A proposal was made to set a date to review and discuss by-laws of First Church and Parish in Dedham. The Parish Committee will meet for this purpose on February 26, 2007 at 6 p.m..

Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee was proposed, not all members are confirmed at this time.

Committee Staffing

Judy Butler is working on updating the Parish Directory. Carol Dixon will work with Susan Sennott to re-staff RE Committee. Membership Committee staffing will be discussed at the next Parish Committee meeting.

Stewardship Committee

Carol Dixon will chair the Stewardship Campaign. Beppy Martin and Judy Barrington agreed to lend some support. A finance committee was proposed, not all members are confirmed at this time. Moving the Stewardship Campaign up to the month of March was discussed.

Building Use

The committee approved a building use request for the First Parish in Needham Service Auction, on March 31st, 7-10 p.m.

Next meeting of the Parish Committee will be *Tuesday, February 13th, 2007, 7:30 p.m.*

Meeting adjourned, 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dixon Hutton

From First Church Green

Engaged Religion

Our experience of religious diversity can be the occasion for questioning but also for deepening personal faith. What is genuine *engagement* of one's own faith with others?

First, *engagement* is the rejection of an artificial insularity of religious meaning. Keeping out the spiritually troublesome. A religiously plural world is an arena of interchange in which *all* beliefs and cultures are players. You may not like all the players. Beliefs may be inconsistent, manipulative, even silly. But no one can be ruled off the stage, *a priori*.

Second, *engagement* is not simple confrontation. It is not about proving the truth of one's own theological views against the claims of another. It is dialogue. *Cooperative* dialogue. It is the cooperative experience of trying to help another fully express what they mean rather than cutting off discussion when the direction doesn't suit us.

Third, *engagement* is openness. Genuine engagement with other faith traditions must raise questions that impact one's own faith. But to get beyond the fear of encroachment, one must be able to truly understand the assumptions, beliefs, practices of a follower of another tradition. Do religious claims about the world preclude such sharing? Do we end up with a relativism of world views that exist in a multiplicity of parallel but non-interacting universes?

The idea of 'engaged religion' is a Buddhist notion. It is seen in recent initiatives to be actively and *cooperatively* engaged in addressing the world's social and political and environmental problems. Problems of human rights. Animal rights. Oppression. Misuse of natural resources. 'Engaged religion' is an extension of the enlightenment of *Bodhisattvas*: compassionate beings on the verge of achieving nirvana who willingly return to the world of birth and death to help those in need. The idea of the bodhisattva has taken form in 'engaged Buddhist' movements devoted to peacemaking, environmental consciousness, ministries of healing, hospice work with dying – changing the world into a more ethical, more human place.

But the idea of 'engaged religion' exists in other traditions as well. Hindus affirm multiple forms of spiritual truth, expressed in the RigVeda by the formula "Truth is One. People call it by many names." Such 'engagement' leads Hindus to feel comfortable participating in Jewish high holy days and Roman Catholic masses.

Muslims place great emphasis on the fundamental equality of all human beings in a universal brotherhood. The Sikh Guru Nanak imagined a world where people of all traditions shared an infinite spirit within and lived together at peace, working together.

Shared spirituality is not an abstract principle, nor is it simply a *laissez faire* attitude

about religious belief. The consequence of the latter would be that it doesn't really matter *what* faith says about the world. The consequence of the former would be that religion doesn't really say *anything* about the world.

Unitarian Universalists think of spiritual sharing across religious traditions with the image of "one light, many windows" – an image that comes from Vivekananda. But that image, although inviting, does not resolve underlying incompatibilities among religious traditions.

So we are back to dialogue – living dialogue. In dialogue, different faith traditions become meaningfully engaged with one another, with the world – and the possibilities of *engagement* follow the recommendation of Roger Williams: spiritual dialogue is a necessary condition of the freedom of the soul.

Rob

The Parish Community Network
First Church and Parish, Dedham

A community is a group of people who choose to be together. The Parish Community Network was formed to help strengthen the connections between us. Members of this committee coordinate the opportunity we all have to serve others in our community. We receive requests directly from people who need a helping hand, from people who know of a friend's need, and from our minister and director of religious education. We hope you will be interested in joining this part of our caring community.

If you did not complete this survey before Christmas, please look at the list on the back of this page and consider the ways in which you can help someone who needs a little help. Thank you for sharing your time and talents.

Please hand your survey to a member of the Parish Community Network, Put it in the Parish Community Network in the church office, or send it to the church office.

Thank you,
Pan Aist, Judy Barrington, Vicky Berg, Doug Howell and Rob Ross

Name _____ Town _____

Phone number _____ E-mail address _____

I am more often available

_____ mornings

_____ afternoons

_____ evenings

I have more free time on

_____ weekdays

_____ weekends

_____ I find that I need some help with a few things. Please call me so we can talk about it.

Please indicate how you can help.

I can call someone on a regular basis.

I can prepare a meal for someone who is ill.

I can deliver a meal.

I can drive someone to church.

I can drive someone to a medical appointment.

I can run an errand or shop for, or with, someone.

I can visit someone at home, in a nursing home, or in the hospital.

I can help with mail and other paperwork.

I can help someone clean their home.

I can rake leaves or shovel snow for someone.

I can make minor home repairs for someone.

I can provide childcare during a family emergency.

I can help a family during a divorce or illness of a child or an elderly parent.

I can adopt a homebound friend.

I can pick people up at Fox Hill in Westwood, drive them to church and back to Fox Hill, one Sunday each month.

I can pick people up at New Pond Village in Walpole, drive them to church and back to New Pond, one Sunday each month.

I can help in another way.
