



# The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

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

Volume CXXVI, No. 8

January 18, 2006

## Calendar

### January

- 23, Monday, 6:30: Aerobics
- 24, Tuesday, 7:30: Committee on Ministry
- 25, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics
- 28, Saturday, 6:00: Wine Tasting at the Parish House
- 30, Monday, 6:30: Aerobics

### February

- 2, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics

## Sundays in the Meeting House

January 22, 10:00 AM: An Old Fashioned Hymn Sing, led by the Music and Worship Committee. See inside for details.

January 28, 10:00 AM: Religious Dimensions of Poetry. The sermon will be "The Pale Light in Winter" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

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

## Focus on Religious Education

When do we meet:

**Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Nursery, Storytime, In Our Hands (First teaching Sunday of the new semester).

Timeless Themes and UU Heritage – trip to Cradles to Crayons. We will depart at **9:15 sharp** and expect to return by 1 PM. A snack will be provided.

**Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>** - 10AM Teaching Sunday

This coming Sunday ( January 22<sup>nd</sup> )we have a date to work at Cradles to Crayons. Their mission is to provide poor and homeless children with GREAT everyday supplies. In addition to the much needed clothing each child receives several books to call their own. Our job will probably be to sort clothing or test toys.

Younger children are not allowed to help at the warehouse, but any adults and young adults who would like to join us are welcome. We'll leave from church at 9:15 and return about 12:30. There is a sign-up sheet in the dining room.

For anyone who would like to send a gift with us, new socks and underwear are always needed for girls and boys sizes 2 to 12. You can drop them anytime the office is open up to 9:15 on Sunday.

**Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education**

The Parish Record is published biweekly.

Tyler Carpenter, Interim Editor

670 High Street  
Dedham, MA 02026

Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross  
Interim Parish Minister  
Susan Sennott  
Director of Religious Education

Church Office:  
Hours M-F 9 a.m.–noon  
Phone 781-326-7463  
FAX: 781-326-7464  
E-mail: [firstchurch@dedhamuu.org](mailto:firstchurch@dedhamuu.org)

The next deadline for submissions (the New Year's Issue) is January 29. Send notices directly by e-mail to: [tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org](mailto:tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org) or call me with questions: 617-816-9728.

## Focus on Religious Education

Parents and teachers: please give me your thoughts on the following:

A proposal for restructuring the RE schedule to follow the “Way Cool Sunday School” model which calls for a 4 week rotation:

- Week 1 (First Sunday of the month): Start in Meeting House- Children will take an active roll by helping to prepare the church for service, ushering, and collecting the offertory. They will go to the parish house following the offertory. At the Parish House they can help with set up for coffee hour and play games. Questions: What about the Storytime age group? Should they go to the Nursery or start in the Meeting House.
- Week 2: Regular RE classes
- Week 3: Regular RE classes
- Week 4: Social Action Project – The activity may be in-house or a field trip. We will try to find an activity that includes all classes.

When there is a fifth week we can have our “children only worship” and an art or craft activity or other special activity

The new model calls for less classroom time and may appeal more to the children, especially the boys who need more physical activity. It will free up teachers who would like to attend Sunday Service more often. It will provide an opportunity for adults who may not be interested in teaching or who cannot commit to a regular teaching schedule to participate with the children in a social service activity.

I have spoken to DREs from a couple of churches who are following this schedule and so far they like it. As always, I look forward to hearing from you.

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

## All Around the Church Community

### An Old-Fashioned Hymn Sing!

This Sunday, January 22. It's that time again. Time to think of the hymns you just can't get enough of. We'll be meeting in the dining room to raise the rafters with rich rhythmic singing. The Music & Worship Committee will lead, the choir will sing some unfamiliar hymns, and you will have the opportunity to choose the rest. Come ready to Sing and Rejoice

## All Around the Church Community

**Saturday, January 26**

Just a reminder: We will have a wine tasting to be held in the Parish House! See the flyer included in this issue, and come join us.

---

### **Back By Popular Request**

#### **Sharing a New Song's Fruit Sale!**

Once again Sharing A New Song is selling sweet, juicy fruit and crunchy-fresh pecans! All boxes are 20 lbs. Ruby Grapefruit, (18-20) , \$16; Navel or Valencia Oranges (approx. 30) \$18; ½ Grapefruit, ½ oranges \$20; and crunchy pecans (1 lb) \$10. Delivery will be February 11th. Buy a box for yourself or split an order with someone. The fruit is excellent and sure to be enjoyed.

**LAST DAY TO ORDER IS FEB. 1ST.**

See or call Diane Winchester if you are interested. (508)543-6406. Thanks.

For those of you who don't know Sharing A New Song (SANS) is a chorus which travels to areas of the world where understanding among people is created through the sharing of music. The friendships developed are lifelong. Their first journeys were to the former Soviet Union. After the cold war the group journeyed to China, Cuba, South Africa, and the U.S. In August, Diane Winchester traveled and sang with the group in South Africa and this year will be doing the same in Viet Nam and Cambodia. Other church members who have shared their talents and personalities with SANS are Bob Estes, Kate Martin and Margaret Winchester.

---

### **Service Auction**

**Saturday, March 4th**

*Do Not Pass Go, Do Not Collect \$200 – put this event on your calendar now:*

This is a fundraiser to meet the \$8000 fundraiser line in this year's budget. You may remember that the weather did not cooperate for the Fall Fair, so we are looking forward to fabulous evening of fun and funds for First Church.

There will be an evening that will include: dinner, libations, laughter and wonderful opportunities to purchase services or very special goods. It's not too soon to begin thinking of the special service you could donate to the auction. We always have a few special goods, so please let us know if you are considering donating a special item.

Helpers are needed. Please contact Carol Dixon Hutton (781) 461-0522 or [carolhdixon@gmail.com](mailto:carolhdixon@gmail.com) , if you can help with this special evening.

## Thank you!

The Search Committee would like to thank everyone who completed a Congregational Survey. We received 72 out of the 150 that were sent out—a return rate of over 50%. We are in the process of analyzing the data and will have a full report in the early spring.

What next? We are presently planning 3 or 4 “cottage meetings” for the last 2 weeks in March. Everyone will be invited to a small meeting at the home of a member or friend where there will be food, drink, and an informal discussion of the survey results. We are interested in talking to as many people as possible to get a clear idea of what type of minister people would like to have. Individual invitations will be sent out to all. If you are unable to attend the meeting you are invited to, please let us know. We will schedule more meetings as necessary.

Remember to take a look at the Search Info Board in the dining room. There is a new question we’d like your response to: “What is your favorite sermon topic?”

### From First Church Green

Since early December I have been working with the Membership Committee to help put together a proposal for a Woburn Grant – funds provided through the Mass Bay District for congregations interested in reaching out to more diverse populations, generating new participation in church activities, and ultimately increasing membership in the congregation. The Membership Committee has done a superb job in putting together a proposal. The program proposal is well-thought out, and the Committee would like to see First Church and Parish go forward with the project activities described with or without an award of funds. I would like to share their good work with you with the following relevant portions of the proposal:

#### Project Summary

There are three major goals for use of Woburn Grant funds by First Church and Parish:

1. Give visibility about First Church and Parish’s spiritual life and activities to new diverse populations (ethnic, cultural, racial, etc.) moving into Dedham and surrounding communities.
2. Increase participation of these new populations in the spiritual life and activities of First Church and Parish.
3. Ultimately increase membership from these populations, particularly of parents with RE school age children.

The project will be managed by the Membership Committee, with assistance from the Treasurer and the Finance Committee. To accomplish these goals, three projects are proposed which will be publicized under the title: **Meet Your New Neighbors.**

1. A group for parents and their children, that will meet bi-weekly, with stories and crafts, which will emphasize changing cultural and ethnic shifts in Dedham and other targeted communities.
2. “Arts on the Green” will utilize First Church’s unique location and its common in the center of Dedham. Through diverse and interactive forms of art, members of the community at large will be exposed to First Church and what it offers as a resource, both culturally and spiritually. This program will be seasonal.
3. Diverse cultures and religions will be the focus of an Adult Book Club that will meet monthly and be led by the minister. The project will introduce works that will foster understanding

and discussion of the new members of the Dedham community and the surrounding communities.

### **Proposal Narrative**

Background: First Church and Parish in Dedham draws members from Dedham and surrounding towns that include Westwood, Norwood, Walpole, Hyde Park, and West Roxbury. The church has approximately 90 active members currently. As of September, 2005 the church called Dr. Robert Ross as Interim Minister while starting a two-year search process for a settled minister. Dr. Ross and the search committee are leading the church in self-evaluation and goal setting. First Church has identified membership growth as a top goal and seeks to increase its membership by 20% during the coming church eighteen months.

The following represents current ethnic and cultural demographics in Dedham:

White	94.5%
African American	1.5
Native American	.2
Asian	1.9
Hispanic/Latino	2.4
Multi-racial	1.1
Other	.8

While Dedham and surrounding communities have historically been largely White, new housing stock is being added to the town of Dedham through affordable-income housing developments within three miles of the Meeting House. Projections from town officials for the demographics of the newcomers include a significant increase of families from diverse ethnic groups and cultures. Therefore, this is an opportune time for the church to reach out and spread the word about the spiritual resources and activities of First Church and Parish. The church seeks to welcome the new householders, break down barriers for them in learning about their new community, and connect them to current members of our church, with the anticipated end result that these new residents might choose to become members of First Church and Parish.

### **Program Details**

The **Meet Your New Neighbors** program will operate during the church year from September 2006 through March 2007 with a Program Evaluation in April, 2007. The contact goal is to reach 50 adults and 20 families with preschoolers who will participate in book/discussion groups and also interact with each other and with the members of First Church and Parish.

The expected outcome is to support First Church and Parish's identified membership growth goal that seeks to increase its membership by 20% during the coming church eighteen months.

Three community involvement/outreach activities are planned for the grant year. Two book groups will run from late September through March, and community-wide Arts events will be held on the Church Green during the months of April/May and late August. A Program Evaluation will be completed by the end of the church fiscal year.

The first book group – the bi-weekly story time and crafts group for parents and their children, – will be led by the Church Administrator, the Membership Committee, and other members of the congregation.

A second book group for adults will meet monthly and be led by the Minister. Book titles will be selected to reflect themes of respect for cultural and ethnic diversity included in the principles cited above. Speakers from the community may be interspersed with book discussion and subsequent networking.

Participants will read books that reflect the changing cultures of Dedham residents and the newcomers. The books will also reflect several of the UU principles:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

The nature this project (and the other projects as well) will help bring these abstract and global principles into actualization and the local and community level.

Two field trips to sites of cultural interest may be interspersed with book meetings. Questions arising from the readings may also become the theme of two potluck dinners at the church. The potluck dinners will be a means for book group members and additional church members to meet socially and get to know more about each other while engaging in focused discussion.

A third series of events – Arts on the Green – will be targeted to the greater Dedham community. Arts on Green will provide multicultural art events open to the larger community, with activities highlighting the cultures of the neighbors – storytellers, puppeteers, quilting, crafts, music, and an art exhibit for adults. Professional artists will lead the activities. Youth group, church members and book club members will be volunteers, participants, and will help in publicizing the events. The First Church and Parish Green is a particularly good vehicle to make activities immediately visible to the community.

All of these projects can be given notice in the Dedham Times through a church member who is an editor there.

Community partners that we will invite to participate in both book groups and arts events will include local merchants and service providers such as Blue Bunny Bookstore, a local children's bookstore; and municipal service providers, such as the Dedham health department and Dedham police department (child ID program).

A cohesive campaign with a logo and the program name will be used for all posters, and advertisements with First Church and the chalice symbol tie-in a prominent feature. Newspaper articles before and after events will also add to publicity.

Evaluation Methods: The evaluation plan will consist of two parts. Participants will complete questionnaires before and after the programs. Questions will include to what extent the program activities have increased awareness of other cultures, helped participants meet their neighbors and what they have learned about First Church and Parish. Open-ended questions will ask whether the program met participant expectations and what programs they might be interested in for the future. The second part of evaluation will measure the impact on church membership by tallying the numbers of adults and families that become active in First Church for the first time, and measuring the increase in Sunday School registration and new members joining the church.

This is excellent work by the Membership Committee. They are an extremely valuable resource for First Church and Parish.

Rob

