



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXVII, No. 5

January, 2007

Calendar

December

- 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
2, Wednesday, 6:30 PM: Parish Community Network Meeting
5 - 7, Friday - Sunday, starting at 2:00 PM: YRUU Star Island Reunion\
11, Thursday, 7:00 PM: Church Council Meeting
16, Tuesday, 7:30 PM Parish Committee Meeting
19, Friday, 6:30: CAKES
28, Sunday: Sharing the Plate: Dedham Square Circle

The Parish Record is published monthly.

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

January 21. Send notices directly by e-mail to: tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org or call me with questions: 617-326-9728.

Sundays in the Meeting House

- December 24, 6:30 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.
December 24, 31, 10:00 AM: Informal Services in the Parish House. Readings and Stories
January 7, 10:00 AM: The Mystery of Time
January 14, 10:00 AM: Religious Diversity -- Why It Matters
January 21, 10:00 AM: Hymn Sing in the Parish House Dining Room
January 28, 10:00 AM: Thumper's Last Tale

Focus on Religious Education

- January 7, 10:00 AM - Start in the Meeting House
January 14, 10:00 AM - MLK Birthday - no teaching - special activities
Friday, January 19, 5:00 PM - Youth Group at Arlington Street Church
January 21, 10:00 AM - Teaching Sunday
January 28, 10:00 AM - Social Service Project

Thank you all for making our Christmas Pageant one of the best gifts of the season. Everyone contributed in some way, but I would especially like to thank Diane Winchester for her time and talent directing us.

Parent's Night Out - Judy Barrington and I enjoyed working with half dozen enthusiastic little shoppers. It was great fun to see what each child thought their parents would enjoy. After shopping and wrapping presents we all had a hot chocolate and cookie break.

Continued on next page...

Focus on Religious Education (continued)

Coming of Age

Kick-off diner is at 6 PM on Sunday, January 7th

Retreat is Friday, January 19th at 6:30 to Saturday, January 20th at 2:30

Curriculum 1 – January 28th at 10 AM

Youth Group -- Arlington Street Church Cooking is at 5:00 on Friday, January 19th

Looking ahead – We have a date for Cradles to Crayons - February 4th at 10:00 AM (until 1 PM)

Thank you all for the gifts of mittens, hats and guests' presents for Renewal House.

Please return - Guest at Your Table Boxes or Envelopes on January 7th.

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

From the Ministerial Search Committee:

We've got Candidates!

The Search Committee has shifted into high gear. We have received a larger than average number of candidates that are interested a ministry at First Church. They are diverse and interesting group and we are looking forward to learning more about them. We have sent them a copy of our Church Packet and are receiving in return copies of their Ministerial Packets. In the next few weeks, we will be reading each packet and interviewing by phone those candidates we are most interested in. We hope to narrow down the group to three or four candidates. These we will invite to the Greater Boston area in Feb. or Mar. to further interview as well as observe them preach at a nearby "neutral pulpit."

If you have any questions you would like to have us ask a candidate or questions about the search process in general, speak to one of the committee members. Though we are always happy to answer your questions, please be aware that, for the reason of protecting the candidates' confidentiality, we cannot discuss any specifics about the candidates as a group or as individuals.

If you haven't seen it yet, take a look at our Church Packet. It's on display at the Search Info Board in the dining room. It's beautiful!

All Around the Church Community

Committee Members Needed

As the Ministerial Search Committee is busy at work reading packets of potential ministers, there is much for the rest of us to do to prepare for welcoming a settled minister. At the last Parish Committee Meeting we talked about the need to fully staff important committees at First Church. Committees do much of the important work of the church and work best when they are fully staffed by people who bring their own unique talents. Committees meet once a month at a time that is best for the majority of the group. Joining a committee is a great way to get to know a variety of people at First Church. We need to fill vacancies on the following committees:

- ***Religious Education Committee - Function to work with the DRE to plan and implement Religious Education Program. Questions: contact Susan Sennott (781) 329-2453 or Carol Dixon Hutton (781) 461-0522***
- ***Membership Committee – Function to work with Parish Minister to attract and welcome visitors to First Church, also to help new members integrate into church community. Questions: contact: Anne Schiraga (781)329-9699***
- ***Music and Worship Committee – Function to work with Parish Minister and Music Director to make worship a meaningful experience for all. Questions: contact: Diane Winchester (508)543- 6406***

Thoughts or questions can also be communicated to Rob Ross or Judy Butler, both can be reached at the church office, (781) 326-7463 or at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org.

Carol Dixon

Clerk – Parish Committee

Amnesty International

A big thank you to all who wrote holiday cards for Amnesty this year. They include the following: Judy Barrington, Carol Dixon Hutton, Meg Duncan, Bob Estes, Carol Ewing, Virginia Ferentinos, Andrea Gilmore, Doug Howell, Janet Humble, Beppy Martin, Sue Sennott, Allison Staton, Eileen Sullivan and Diane Winchester.

We also sent a condolence card to the family of the murdered Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

The next AI letter writing will be on January 21

Peter Elefterakis

All Around the Church Community

Alliance Holly Fair

Judy Barrington and Janet Hurwitz want to **thank EVERYONE** who worked so hard, helped with and supported the Holy Fair this year. We are sure that it will be one of the most successful recently, once the final tally is in. Special thanks to the following people who volunteered to coordinate each area.

- ★ Trading Post: Beppy Martin and her family
- ★ Books, Music, etc.: Fran Grilley
- ★ Toys: Judy Barrington
- ★ Special Treasures: Sam King and Linda Meyer
- ★ Gifts and Crafts: Pam Aist, Lynn Rogal, and Janet Hurwitz
- ★ Food Table: Susan White, Joan Wislocki
- ★ Christmas Corner: Andrea and Emily Muraida, and Liz Ames
- ★ Greens:
 - ★ Wreaths: Andrea Gilmore
 - ★ Swags: Carol Dixon-Hutton
 - ★ Boxwood trees, baskets: MaryAnn Osborne and Enid Gifford
- ★ Continental Breakfast and Luncheon: Jeff Hutton and family

And very special thanks to all who contributed items to the HOLLY FAIR. To the entire Martin family, Fred and Beppy, Fred, Kate and Allison and Kate Gilmore, all of whom brought many stored items (some of them from Phyllis Ambrose's estate) to church prior to the fair, and to Heather Gardner, Kate Martin's friend. And to Shirley Howard who sent in a contribution. In addition, but not limited to, Barbara Barnes, Ruth Counts, Lucy Jensen, Peter McDonagh, John Barrington and Judy's sister, Pam, Sue Sennott, Sharon Lane, Eileen Sullivan, Arnold Sacks, Laura, Michelle and James Carty, Ben Ames, Kerrie Gallagher, Claudia Leone, Martha Leonard, Anne Schiraga, Vicki Berg, Kathe and Peter Elefterakis, Eileen Coffin, Ruth Coe, and to everyone who came and supported the fair through purchases. If I have missed anyone, I apologize, and we all thank YOU. We cannot do this successfully without the help of everyone. (Both David and Janet were ill during the week prior to the fair and appreciate how everyone worked together when I was there for only a short time most days. We both have recovered nicely and look forward to sharing the holidays with family and friends.) May your holidays be safe, healthy and happy!

Janet

Making Social Action Personal from the Seventh Principle to the First

'Tis the season for reflecting on the preceding year, the hope, joy, and love of the season - and the last-minute gifts I need and donations I'll be making.

And so I find myself reflecting on the UU Principles and how I make them part of my daily actions and my personal social action.

For me, the seventh principle is the most significant because it brings the preceding six principles together in the concept of "the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." It is the principle I act on daily, easily, and automatically. I make my social action where I can.

Earlier this year, when Della and I bought a hybrid gas-electric car, we were taking social action by committing to using less gas and creating fewer emissions: this is a daily act since we are dependent on driving a car and have made a decision honoring the earth and its resources. It's actually tolerable when I'm stuck in traffic now, knowing I'm not adding to the greenhouse gas problem.

On a more basic level, on a recent walk around Houghton's Pond, I decided to pick up all the litter I could see, and it turned into a much bigger act: two guys walking behind me saw me picking up plastic bottles and paper cups and dumping them in trash cans, and they started doing the same thing. I was so surprised seeing my actions having a ripple effect. A few days before, driving into Watertown from the turnpike, Della and I encountered a black lab walking up the exit ramp. We stopped the car right there in traffic, and Della jumped out and encouraged him to get into the back seat and go for a ride with us. Although cars were lined up behind us, no one honked their horn.

Everybody saved a dog's life that day!

We have adopted both an adult cat and a guinea pig from a shelter. I recently read that these are two unpopular types of adoptees, but they are happy in our home and beloved to us. We made a place for these two discarded animals. Can a cat that purrs that contentedly or a guinea pig that squeaks with such abandon when he hears me coming up the stairs be unwanted? Who makes up these rules?

Every time I confront heterosexism or homophobia, ableism, racism, classicism, and sexism, I am acting on UU principles. And sometimes if I want to avoid confronting something, I remember that there may be a young person who is being crushed by the bigotry and hatred surrounding her or who feels there is no one in the world like him. I reach out to people who are different or disabled or suffering from ill-health. I reach out or say "hello" when others look away or pretend a homeless person doesn't exist standing on the brick sidewalk of Harvard Square asking for spare change. The "change" I can't spare is to become someone who looks away, someone who misses that we are surrounded by varying abilities in body, health, and mind. I won't forget that any of us is only temporarily able and that each of us has struggles and will one day die.

I take social action when I make social action, when I take a stand, when I speak up, when I act for the good of another human being, an animal, or the planet: it's all part of the world I live in, and I try to make my slice of this life a little better.

I invite you to reflect on your social action this year, perhaps letter-writing, community outreach, conservation, or buying Fair Trade products.

This holiday season I'm thinking about getting that very tasty Fair Trade chocolate for a stocking stuffer or giving a chick or goat through Heifer International. For my year-end contribution, I'm once again admiring the work of the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund. I know that I can use my money in important ways.

“This gift that I've been given Is yours as much as mine”
- Joyce Poley, Would You Like to Hold the Baby

Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting December 12, 2006

Attending: Rob Ross, Judy Barrington, 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 November 14, 2006 meeting - motion to approve by Eileen Sullivan, second - passed.

Parish Minister's Report

Rob reported that the Parish Community Network is functioning again with thanks to Vicky Berg. He also reported that the Benevolent Committee has met and again is a functioning committee. Rob questioned should the Nominating Committee be a standing committee as it is in other churches. He related that there are other committees in the church that need new members and need to be active.

DRE Report

Susan related that two Youth Advisors have been hired, Rebecca and Andy Hutton. The Youth Advisors and a member of the Youth Group attended a YRUU Conference in Wellesley in December. Coming of Age (COA) class will begin in January and Susan stated that she is looking for Coming of Age mentors.

Treasurer's Report

Arnold Sacks reported that he is paying bills and has been entering deposits into Quick Books.

T Mobile Proposal

The committee discussed a proposal from T-Mobile to site a tower in our steeple. The committee discussed obtaining more information in specific areas:

- Agreements with other churches/groups
 - Congregational Church in Needham – Andrea Gilmore
 - Elliot Church in South Natick – Arnie Sacks
 - Town of Dedham – Beppy Martin

- Health Issues – All members

- Contract – Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

Motion that the Parish Committee continue further investigation of the T Mobile Proposal and eventually bring it to the congregation, if warranted, by Eileen Sullivan, second – passed with one negative vote

Parsonage

Discussion occurred regarding the possibility of lead paint in the parsonage and how to deal with this potential issue. Natasha Lawhon-Schneider suggested the CLPPP, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program as a resource. Sam King will contact private contractors to assess the possibility of lead paint in the parsonage and to gain estimates to rectify the problem if needed.

Review of votes at Special Congregational Meeting

Dan Ewing spoke with recommended legal counsel, outside of the church. The attorney's opinion was that since First Church in Dedham is an unincorporated religious institution the only guidance for the church's actions is the church's by-laws. The attorney stated a legal opinion could not be given.

Deacons' records were transferred but on by November 1st.

Deacons' report has been signed by all three deacons.

Potential date for Special Congregational Meeting is January 7th, 2007.

By-Laws

Members of the Committee on Ministry will come to the January Parish Committee Meeting, 1/16/07, to report on their by-law review.

Committee Staffing

The committee discussed a need for an updated Parish Directory prior to the Ministerial Search Committee meeting with potential candidates. Discussion also occurred about the need for more participants on the: RE Committee, Membership Committee, Music and Worship Committee, and the Benevolent Committee. It was decided an announcement would be put into the Parish Record to announce these committee vacancies.

Next meeting of the Parish Committee will be *Tuesday, January 16th, 2007, 7:30.*

Meeting adjourned, 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dixon Hutton

From First Church Green

The figure of Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* raises an interesting philosophical question about our free market economy. If a capitalist, free market economy is predicated on behavior motivated from self-interest, does this also entail the disregard of others? In an article in *The Freeman*, December 1988, Howard Baetjer Jr. argues that "On the contrary, because we are social beings who depend on, and often care deeply about many others around us, a sound attention to our self-interest must include a great deal of concern for others."

As the archetype of the antisocial capitalist, Ebenezer Scrooge was "a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone . . . a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner . . . hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster." Scrooge symbolizes the belief that support of a free market means forswearing kindness and any feeling for the brotherhood of mankind.

The notion that free markets are corrupting is rooted in the truism that for the market to work, people must act according to self-interest. Without self-interest, there would be no profit seeking, no competition, no production or exchange. But Baetjer sees an illogical leap from this truism to the falsehood that if one is self-interested, one cannot be other-interested – an either/or choice. Scrooge can care about Scrooge, or he can care about others.

Baetjer goes on to argue that one of the main lessons *A Christmas Carol* teaches is that Ebenezer Scrooge, the archetypal greedy capitalist, becomes immeasurably happier when he gives up his selfishness and becomes generously involved with those around him. "But there is no suggestion that he gives up his capitalism; in fact, Dickens tells us that he is at his desk early the day after Christmas. He just broadens his other activities and ends."

Whether or not we support an argument for capitalist economics, we can simply point out that our society and our culture are embedded in that economic philosophy. It may be disturbing that our economy of wealth cannot support adequate medical care or housing or nutrition for all citizens. But our economic system *and* social inequities are facts of life.

Baetjer's article is encouraging in pointing out Scrooge's mistake – namely, that maximizing income is quite a different thing from maximizing well-being. For all his profit motive, Scrooge before the ghosts' visits is not acting to maximize his utility – which includes utility to society. Scrooge is a cold, loveless, bitter man. The result is a loss of something far greater, a loss that overrides the aggrandizing of his "counting house". In this way, Scrooge's maniacal attention to money becomes self-defeating. Scrooge loses music, laughter, family, and love. He loses the very things one hopes any economic system would support.

When on Christmas Day Scrooge leaves his ledgers behind and goes unexpectedly to his nephew's house, he progresses from unhappiness to happiness in an evening, thanks to a

change in focus from narrow money alone to a broader concern that includes the rewards of positive human relationships. He has recognized that among the greatest satisfactions available to human beings are those that come simply from doing something for others we care about.

The upshot is this: given lives embedded in a capitalist economy – whether we choose this or not – we can still reason that *because* others are important to us, it is in our own self-interest to give attention to their well-being. Putting this in economic jargon, we must invest in our relationships with others. These considerations apply beyond family and friends to the communities of which we are a part. Because we live in communities, standard of living *for all* has a bearing on *our* quality of life. Hence self-interest entails paying attention to the community and doing what we reasonably can to improve it.

There is a story about how the founder of the Salvation Army wanted to send a telegram message to his workers one year at Christmas time. Multiple word messages being far too expensive, he finally reduced his thoughts to just one word: *Others*. *Others* symbolizes the importance of *spiritual goods*, but the Salvation Army also recognizes that material goods are often a prerequisite for spiritual goods. We are creatures of flesh and blood as well as of the spirit. We must be fed, clothed, and sheltered adequately if the spirit is to soar. We can do little for others or ourselves if we lack the means with which to do it.

In this Christmas season, let us think of how and where we can invest our material and spiritual capital. In our community, in our church, in those areas of special need that quietly surround us. Ultimately, all material goods are means to spiritual ends. In the final analysis, we *don't* want them for themselves, but for the satisfactions they can give. We want them for *others*.

Merry Christmas 2006

Rob