



The Parish Record

First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXVI, No. 4

November 2, 2005

Calendar

November

2, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics
7, Monday, 6:30: Aerobics
8, Tuesday, 7:30 Parish Committee
9, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics
11, Friday, 6:30: CAKES
12, Saturday, 6:30: Alliance Harvest
Supper
14, Monday, 6:30: Aerobics
16, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics

Sundays in the Meeting House

November 6, 10:00 AM: Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

November 13, 10:00 AM: Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

Focus on Religious Education

November 2, 2005

When do we meet:

Sunday, November 6th – Teaching Sunday for Grades 5-7,
Grades 1-4 cook for Arlington St. Church

Sunday, November 13th – Teaching Sunday for Grades 1-4,
Grades 5-7 cook for Arlington St. Church

We will be doing our annual cooking for Arlington St. Church on the first 2 Sundays in November. If you would like to help with shopping, food preparation or delivery, we'd love to have you. It's a great chance to work with the kids, it's fun and it gives the teachers a chance to enjoy a morning in the meeting house.

**WE ARE MISSING A COUPLE OF OUR CHEFS HATS
PLEASE CHECK YOU KITCHENS**

If you missed church on October 30th, please take time to read the letter of thanks we received from All Souls Church in Shreveport Louisiana. I'll post it on the bulletin board outside the dining room.

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

The Parish Record is published biweekly.
Tyler Carpenter, Interim Editor

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Interim Parish Minister
Susan Sennott
Director of Religious Education

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The next deadline for submissions is
November 13. Send notices directly by e-
mail to: tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org or
call me with questions: 617-816-9728.

In Our Church Family

What Do You Think?

One section of the Search Info board in the dining room is focused on getting your input on questions facing the church community as we search for a new minister.

The first question posted was "What is the greatest challenge facing the church in the next 2 years?" These were the responses:

- Increasing our active membership
- Finding someone who gives the church administrator lots of advance notice for projects.
- Building a more active congregation—need more members who are younger and want to be involved
- Finding someone like Bruce
- Membership
- It's time to pull together instead of squabbling all the time—that last Parish Committee meeting was a disgrace!
- Development of lay leadership
- The environment/global warming
- Attracting new members is important, but retaining the ones we already have is a must
- Finding a high level solution to the problem of bullies in positions of power

We have lost many members and we seem to be less energetic as a group. How will we attract & keep new members while maintaining the interest & energy of the remaining members?

All of the above provide the Search committee with valuable information as we look for our new minister. Thank you for your input. Since almost half of the responses deal with membership growth and retention, the question posted right now on the board is "What can be done to attract and keep new members while still engaging those who already attend?" Take a minute at the next coffee hour to write down your ideas. Let us know what you think!

The Ministerial Search Committee

It is with sadness that First Church forwards the news from Ann Beckett that Polly Overholt has passed away. There will be a Memorial Service and reception at First Church and Parish in Dedham on November 8 at 2:00.

Bruce Clary is doing well in Oklahoma, and he sends us regards, along with his new address and phone number:

3137 East 26 Place, Tulsa, OK 74114

Phone: 918-743-0553

Attention All Elves, Helpers!!

This year marks the third anniversary of the "CHRISTMAS CORNER" at the Holly fair. Our chief elf has moved to Oklahoma (AKA Dottie Clary). Each year Dottie would make close to 100 ornaments for our tree & other festive X-mas decorations. WE need your help. Would anyone be willing to make weather it be 2, 12, or 20 ornaments or any type of decorations? If you would like to help out but believe you are not a "crafty" person, I would be happy to share my samples complete with directions & personal tutoring if needed. Please contact me. Andrea Muraida at 781-320-1958 or amuraida@aol.com. Look forward to sharing this fun project with you. Oh, and by the way, for those of you that are not familiar with the X-mas corner it is a corner of the dining room complete with a xmas tree, lights & a decorated fireplace. Oh so merry & Bright. Thank you for in advance for your help!

Andrea

From First Church Green

Report of Value Analysis Workshop I

On Tuesday October 18th members of the Parish Committee and Deacons 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 30 congregational values the group came up with in the order in which they were expressed:

1. There is a need to create an appropriate and robust Safe Church Policy.
2. Develop a Fair Compensation Package for the settled minister.
3. Make the church and its activities more visible in the immediate community as a way to increase membership.
4. Generate a wider participation of the congregation in church leadership responsibilities.
5. Grow a bigger choir, with better singing and music.
6. Plan, schedule enjoyable social activities such as 'friendship dinners' and events in the Parish House.
7. Clean out the grass growing wild in the garden and elsewhere in the landscape, and beef up the Building and Grounds Committee.
8. Clean the rug in the Parish House Conference Room, and improve the Youth Group meeting place.
9. Put up acoustic tiles in the Parish House dining room.
10. Install a rheostat on the Parish House dining room lights.
11. First Church and Parish should become an official 'Welcoming Congregation' and go through the UUA process to achieve that.
12. Conduct a thorough review of the by-laws and clarify the 'church' and 'parish' structure.
13. More children in the Religious Education program.
14. Update the Parish House kitchen, including a new stove and floor.
15. Fix the heating system.
16. Assess and improve the Auditorium floor and seating.
17. Schedule Adult Ed discussion groups based on congregation interests; create a meditation group.
18. Plan the regular Stewardship campaign.
19. Re-establish the Membership Committee and work to increase membership.
20. Keep the church's existing members and keep them involved in church activities.
21. Develop an improvement plan and redecorate the Meeting House.
22. Institute Joys and Sorrows in some worship services.
23. Work to improve the effectiveness of the Parish Committee.
24. Embrace new and enjoyable ways for fundraising within the congregation.
25. Have fun and schedule fun events.
26. Find a Producer for the Church Players.
27. Establish a Men's Group.
28. Use the Auditorium to create a Coffee House with entertainment or a Movie Night.
29. Get the congregation more involved in meaningful social action.
30. Make the congregation a loving family and community.

At this point, the group re-examined the 30 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, but 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. Work to improve the effectiveness of the Parish Committee. (23)
2. Plan the regular Stewardship campaign. (18)
3. Develop a Fair Compensation Package for the settled minister. (2)
4. Make the church and its activities more visible in the immediate community as a way to increase membership. (3)
5. More children in the Religious Education program. (13)
Re-establish the Membership Committee and work to increase membership. (19)
Keep the church’s existing members and keep them involved in church activities. (20)

Green Team:

1. Institute Joys and Sorrows in some worship services. (22)
Make the congregation a loving family and community. (30)
2. Get the congregation more involved in meaningful social action. (29)
Make the church and its activities more visible in the immediate community as a way to increase membership. (3)
3. Develop a Fair Compensation Package for the settled minister. (2)
Plan the regular Stewardship campaign. (18)
4. Re-establish the Membership Committee and work to increase membership. (19)
Keep the church’s existing members and keep them involved in church activities. (20)
Make the church and its activities more visible in the immediate community as a way to increase membership. (3)
5. Clean the rug in the Parish House Conference Room, and improve the upstairs classroom (8)
Install a rheostat on the Parish House dining room lights. (10)
Update the Parish House kitchen, including a new stove and floor. (14)

Fix the heating system. (15)

Develop an improvement plan and redecorate the Meeting House. (21)

Clean out the grass growing wild in the garden and elsewhere in the landscape, and beef up the Building and Grounds Committee. (7)

As one can see, there was a rather strong consensus between the teams in a number of areas. 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. In addition, the First Church and Parish membership is invited to participate in further Value Analysis workshops. As soon as we have at least eight participants, we will schedule dates and times that best meet people's family and work commitments. Everyone's voice is important to successfully achieving First Church and Parish's goals. This additional workshop therefore is an opportunity to let your thoughts, your concerns, and your hopes be directly known.

Some Shared Themes:

1. Both teams placed a high priority on the need of First Church and Parish to get its basic finances in order. This included planning for the current Stewardship campaign and developing a Fair Compensation Package on the basis of UUA guidelines. There was also a sense that people wanted greater knowledge of the congregation's financial picture – ease of access to individuals' own pledge status, reports on the current overall state of the congregation's financial health, reports that evaluate and share the congregation's financial needs for expenditures. The latter would include a report on the result of an assessment of mold in the Meeting House, reports on needed repairs or remodeling, etc. When a congregation is aware of its financial status, in terms that it can understand, it will be better prepared to make the needed commitments of funds and pledges to address those financial needs.
2. Also a high priority for both teams were a number of goals related to increasing membership. This included, first of all, getting a functioning Membership Committee up and running. This committee would not only explore ways to encourage new membership, it would also see that visitors and guests are properly welcomed and provided with information about church activities and membership. But any goal of increasing membership must be a multi-pronged approach. Therefore, other goals involved growing participation in the RE program and especially making sure the church and its activities are more visible in the local community, particularly as they relate to meaningful social action. The Youth Group can be a key player in this goal. Discussion groups and Adult RE recently addressed by the Interim Minister with the RE committee are another opportunity.
3. A third area of concern had to do with improving the effectiveness of church governance, the interrelationship of standing committees, and the functioning of the Parish Committee and Deacons. Part of the difficulty derives from the considerable ambiguities and inconsistencies in the existing by-laws. Many difficulties could be alleviated and improved by learning about and instituting some basic processes for dividing the tasks and responsibilities within the Parish Committee and Deacons and other committees, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of decision-making procedures, and conducting successful meetings. The Interim Minister has a rather large kit bag of many useful tools that could be applied here.
4. A fourth shared goal pertains to how this congregation wishes to identify itself. What is an appropriate 'conceptual model' for First Church and Parish in Dedham? Many felt they wanted the congregation to become more of a community, more like a loving family. For some, this could include introducing 'Joys and Sorrows' into some worship services. For others, it would mean more social events in which people simply get to know one another better. For others, it would involve inter-generational activities – whether of a community action nature or purely for fun. Whatever the implementation details, I heard a clear message that this congregation would like to become a more closely knit family.

5. A fifth but nevertheless highly significant shared goal was the need to give better attention to First Church and Parish's physical plant and landscape environment. A number of explorations are already underway with the help of Andrea Gilmore to determine if it would make sense to get the Meeting House on the historical register or whether there are any town historical preservation funds available to use for improvements. The Meeting House and Parish House are important resources not only to this congregation but also to the Dedham community. They should be fully used by both. But that means they have to be in proper shape to be used, with safe and functioning internal systems – heat, lighting, appliances, etc. There is much work to be done here, but it is also work that could be done by members of the congregation themselves, once it is known precisely what improvements should be made first, second, third, and so forth.

I am proud of the very good work and energy of everyone participating. Clearly, it will be important to have some further meetings to turn these shared perceptions into actions and teams of good people willing to devote their time to seeing them through. I look forward to working with you all and keeping the commitment going.

Rob

From the Wider Community

Order your 2005 UUSC holiday cards now!

The UUSC is proud to offer you and your congregation four new holiday card designs for the 2005 season. Three of these new cards are original designs by winners of UUSC's 2005 Holiday Card Design Contest:

- "Chalice Dove," by Karen Walker, UU Fellowship of Raleigh, N.C.
- "Faith," by Paola Mangiacapra, Westminster Unitarian Church, East Greenwich, R.I.
- "Snow Child," by Edward Schantz, First Parish Church UU, Northborough, Mass.

The fourth design, "Candle of Light and Hope," is from Good Cause Greetings.

We hope you will make these beautiful holiday cards available to the members of your congregation. UUSC holiday cards are a wonderful way to share with your loved ones the spirit of the season and your passion for justice.

Proceeds from the sale of these cards help UUSC put Unitarian Universalist values into action through our work for human rights and social justice. For information or to place an order online, go to www.uusc.org/holidaycards

Flu Shots

On Monday, November 14th and Tuesday, November 15th, the Dedham Board of Health will offer a flu clinic for all Dedham residents. Flu and pneumonia vaccines will be available for a donation of \$2.00 each.

- Monday, November 14th from 2:00 to 3:00 PM at the American Legion, 155 Eastern Ave.
- Tuesday, November 15th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Town Hall at 26 Bryant Street

If you have questions, please contact the Dedham Board of Health at 781-751-9220.

SAVE THE DATE!

ALLIANCE

HARVEST SUPPER

ENTERTAINMENT

**THE BAYSTATESMEN
BARBERSHOP CHORUS**

NOVEMBER 12, 2005

SATURDAY 6:30 PM

PARISH HOUSE DINING ROOM

**DONATION \$ 10 10 YRS. AND UNDER \$ 5
CHILD CARE PROVIDED AFTER DINNER**

RSVP: CHURCH OFFICE 781-326-7463 OR SIGNUP COFFEE HOUR