



# The Parish Record

First Church and Parish in Dedham

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

Volume CXXVI, No. 5

November 16, 2005

## Calendar

### November

- 19, Saturday, 1:00 PM: Alliance tea for Meg Brown
- 21, Monday, 6:30: Aerobics
- 21, Monday, 7:30: Safe Church Committee
- 23, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics
- 28, Monday, 6:30: Aerobics
- 29, Tuesday, 7:30: COM
- 30, Wednesday, 6:30: Youth Group Meeting
- 30, Wednesday, 6:30: Aerobics

### December

- 3, Saturday, 9:00 – 2:00 Holly Fair
- 13, Tuesday, 7:30 Parish Committee

## Sundays in the Meeting House

November 20, 10:00 AM: All-Church Thanksgiving Service: Susan Sennott and Betsy Stevens

November 27, 10:00 AM: Reflection on the History of Thanksgiving. The sermon will be “Buried Corn, Buried Bodies – Understanding Wampanoag Religion”, by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

December 4, 10:00 AM: Hanging of the Greens. The sermon will be “Advent: Awaken!”, by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross

The Parish Record is published biweekly.  
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The next deadline for submissions is November 27. Send notices directly by e-mail to: [tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org](mailto:tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org) or call me with questions: 617-816-9728.

## There's Still Time!

The Search Committee wants to know what you want in our next minister. All friends and members of First Church have been sent a survey asking for your input. We are hoping to get a response from everyone. If you haven't filled out your survey yet, it's not too late. Do it today! Drop off the completed surveys in the Survey Return Box by the Search Info display in the dining room or mail them the enclosed return envelope. If your copy has been misplaced, we'll be happy to give you another—just speak to any member of the committee.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts!

**The Ministerial Search Committee**

## Focus on Religious Education

November 16, 2005

When do we meet:

Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> – All Church Thanksgiving Service - No Teaching. Note that the UU History Class (6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades) will help receive food donations during the service.

Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> – Holly Fair Craft Day - No Teaching, but helpers are needed. If you have a craft that you would like to share with the children, please let me know, I can help with supplies and set up.

Youth Group – On Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 9 PM the youth group will help set up for the Holly Fair. Pizza and music will be provided!

We are waiting to hear back from Arlington St. Church about serving a meal on Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

### REMINDERS:

1. Don't forget to bring your donations for the Dedham Food Pantry to the Thanksgiving Service!
2. UNICEF Boxes (or their contents) should be returned ASAP!

What can you do with 100 pound chicken? Make chicken cacciatore for 250!

Thank you to all the cooks who helped make cacciatore and brownies for the Dignity Dinner program at the Arlington St. Church. Through this program 250 people in need can count on having a hot meal on Friday nights.

Special thanks go to Arnold Sacks whose face should be glowing from the one hour steam facial he received cooking all that chicken. And, to Jack Sennott who did all of the clean-up (for a few dozen Cheez-its).

Save the Date: On **Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>**, the older elementary school (ages 10 and up) and the middle school students and adults are invited to work at Cradles to Crayons in Braintree. We are schedule to be there for about 1 ½ hours starting at 10 AM.

Cradles to Crayons provide poor and homeless children with essential everyday supplies: a warm coat, books to read, a birthday present. They have served over 40,000 Massachusetts children in the passed 3 years.

**Note:** This is a change of date; we were originally scheduled for Saturday, but were able to get this Sunday slot. There will be a sign-up sheet in the dining room for adults when the date gets closer.

**Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education**

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## **In Our Church Family**

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On Tuesday, November 8, 2005, Marilyn "Meg" Brown's daughter, Sandy Wadlington notified us that Meg had died on Monday, November 7. Meg and Roland, her husband, have been living in Georges Mills, NH near Sandy. Sandy said "I am sorry to tell you Mom died...; it was quick and peaceful."

Sandy and other members of Meg's family will be here for a tea hosted by the Women's Alliance. All are welcome to attend.

First Church Parish House, Saturday, November 19, 2005 at 1 PM

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## **Parish Players News**

*Save the date!*

The Parish Players are pleased to announce that they will be sponsoring a production of "Amahl and The Night Visitors" this holiday season. Performances will take place in the Meeting House on December 10th and 11th at 5 pm. The show runs about 1 hour and is suitable for all ages. No tickets or reservations are needed. Please join us for a wonderful holiday treat!

Update- At the moment there are no plans for a spring Parish Players production as the producers are taking a sabbatical due to other church responsibilities. We are still looking for people who would be willing to help produce or direct a small-scale show with an emphasis on children's participation. No experience is necessary! Please call Natalie Jensen at 781-329-9289 if you'd like more information.

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## **Safe Church Committee**

On Monday, November 21 the Safe Church Committee will meet to begin discussing the creation of a "Safe Church Policy". Members are Debbie Harrison, Jeff Hutton, Dan Ewing, Rob Ross, Susan Sennott, and Beppy Martin. They will be glad to listen to your ideas, and you are also welcome to attend the meeting.

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## **Amnesty International**

Thanks to the following for writing letters on behalf of a lawyer from Guatemala who received death threats because of his human right's work:

Wally Savory, Allison Staton, Meg Duncan, Judy Barrington, Vicky Berg, Beppy Martin and Betsy Hetzler.

All members of the congregation are invited to write letters during coffee hour on November 20th.

Peter Elefterakis

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## **Dedham Food Pantry**

Please bring canned goods and other non-perishable items to church Sunday, Nov. 20.

These will be donated to the Dedham Food Pantry.

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## **Attention All Elves, Helpers!!**

We are still looking for volunteers to help set up the week before the fair. Sign up at coffee hour or contact Janet Hurwitz or Judy Barrington.

Help is needed starting Tuesday afternoon, and every afternoon/evening, and all day Friday.

A luncheon will be hosted by Janet Hurwitz on Friday for holly fair volunteers who are able to help that day.

Thank you to all who have volunteered so far. We could not do this without you.

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## **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](http://www.uusc.org/holidaycards)

## From First Church Green

### The Gracia Carpenter House

Two weeks ago, First Church in Dedham set the Gracia Carpenter House at the Vera School for Autistic Children in Cape Town, South Africa as the recipient of the Share the Plate donations. At that time, I briefly shared the story of my sister Gracia, who was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1964, and who died unexpectedly in Newton, Massachusetts, last July. After mentioning this recipient and briefly describing the school at the service, several people came up to me and asked me about her disability and her life. I mentioned that, at her memorial service, I gave my reflections on her life and how it had affected mine, and that my reflections would be a nice item to place in the Parish Record. Dr. Ross graciously offered his weekly column space here, so, what follows is are my reflections on Gracia's life, as I spoke them at her memorial service.

#### Reflections...

My first memory of Gracia was from outside of the hospital where she was born. The hospital had a first floor window next to a playing field and I was with my friends. Through the glass, my mother mouthed the words "a girl" to us. I was delighted.

I don't ever remember "learning" that Gracia wasn't just another regular person, or ever feeling disappointed that she would never be the playmate that every kid hopes of a younger sibling. It was simply a fact. I do remember that as a performer, I could always guarantee a good audience with Gracia. She loved slapstick – the easiest form of humor for an 8 year old to perform. All that was needed to get her to laugh and laugh was to bump into something and fall down. Which was something I would do over and over. Even now, I often feel that my willingness to make a physical fool of myself – much to the consternation of my own children – is due to the fact that Gracia would never tell me when I looked ridiculous or that I was an embarrassment to her.

Even in her taste of movies -- yes Gracia, like every Carpenter, you did love the movies -- her preferences would be more towards Woody Allen's Sleeper than to anything by Ingmar Bergman. For her (and I suspect for more than a few of us here) there was nothing like watching a couple of grown men repeatedly slipping on a giant banana peel to bring out the chuckles.

Now, Gracia never talked, or really communicated with others with the ease that we all take for granted. Limited by a brain that simply didn't function in the same way that most of our brains do, a brain that prevented her from using "ordinary" means of communication like speech or sign language, she nevertheless interacted with others and found ways to express herself. While early in her life, her expressions took the form of hitting and hurting herself when frustrated; she later learned some gestures to indicate wants and needs, and she used these gestures often. But the bulk of her expressive communication, both early and later in life, was through physical interactions with others – for example, the taking of my hand and moving it towards the door. And through the watching of others.

Gracia always watched people. You see, Gracia may not have been important to a lot of people, but people were always important to Gracia. She always had her eyes on what other people were up to, and few things would give her pleasure like watching my parents scold Melissa or me in front of her. And she would never watch "directly", it was always out of the corner of her eyes where she'd "check you out". And she was quite aware if you looked back. She would be fully aware that if she were quiet and everybody was in the living room, then that chocolate cake in the dining room could be "all hers". And in a work setting, where she cleared tables and stacked chairs, she always made sure that she wasn't the only one doing so.

As she got older, it probably became far more difficult for her to express the glee that she often had in her younger years. But she was always aware of ceremony, and the smile that she expressed upon receiving

recognition of an accomplishment remains one of the most genuine expressions of joy I've ever seen on any person.

From what I understand, Gracia woke up early on Friday and went back to sleep. She didn't wake up after that. We don't know how or why she died that day. We also don't know how or why she was the way she was. I've no doubt that, whether from her unusual sensory input, or from the wide range of personal interactions she had in her life, the world in which she lived was very different than the one in which we live. But I do know that every person who got to know her – really got to know her – found her to be charming, determined and full of personality.

Postscript: Last week, my parents, Victor and Cathe Carpenter, excerpted and forwarded to me this note from Fanie Minnaar, the current principal of the Vera School ([www.vera.wcape.school.za](http://www.vera.wcape.school.za)):

"Our thoughts are with you often in these days after your loss. We understand that Gracia died peacefully. I should think that is the way most of us would like to make the transition. May you find some comfort in the knowledge that your daughter will always be remembered at Vera. We are honoured that her death resulted in yet another blessing of Vera from your family.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this unselfish and generous gesture. We have received a total amount R42,224 (about \$7,000)... We shall put this to use in the hostels for fitting doors to our shower cubicles and for repairing many window and door frames that, after 20 years of use, need urgent attention.

Thank you again for being such loyal Vera School family members...."

My family and I would also like to personally everyone from First Church for your contributions to the school and to Gracia's memory. Thank you.

Tyler

*Come one! Come all!*

# *Holly Fair*

***SATURDAY, DEC 3, 2005***

***9 AM – 2 PM***

***FIRST CHURCH, DEDHAM***

**COURT STREET AT (670) HIGH STREET**

**Across from Dedham Community House**

**WHITE ELEPHANT-TRADING POST, TOYS, GAMES,**

**GIFTS AND CRAFTS SPECIAL TREASURES**

**FOOD TABLE – COOKIES, PIES, BREAD, JAMS, CANDY, AND MORE**

**CHRISTMAS CORNER – TREE ORNAMENTS, GARLANDS. ETC.**

**GREENS – WREATHS, HOLIDAY BASKETS, SWAGS**

**Serving Continental breakfast and a luncheon**