



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXVII, No. 3

November, 2006

Calendar

November

- 4, Saturday, 6:30 PM: Alliance Harvest Supper
- 7, Tuesday, 6:30 PM: Parish Players Rehearsal
- 9, Thursday, 6:30 PM: Parish Players Rehearsal
- 10, Friday, 7:00 PM: "The Once and Future Parish Players"
- 11, Saturday, 5:00 PM: "The Once and Future Parish Players"
- 14, Tuesday, 7:30 PM: Parish Committee Meeting
- 17, Friday, 6:30: CAKES
- 21, Tuesday, 6:30 PM: Parish Community Network Meeting
- 26, Sunday: Sharing the Plate

December

- 2, Saturday, Holly Fair

The Parish Record is published monthly.
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The deadline for submissions for the October issue of the Parish Record will be November 19. Send notices directly by e-mail to:
tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org or call me with questions: 617-326-9728.

Sundays in the Meeting House

- October 29, 10:00 AM: Understanding Islam. Sermon: *Faith as Discipline* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross
- November 5, 10:00 AM: Cases in Religious Ethics. Sermon: *Darfur: A Dialogue Sermon* by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross
- November 12, 10:00 AM: Special Service: Beyond Categorical Thinking by the Search Committee
- November 19, 10:00 AM: Thanksgiving Service
- November 26, 10:00 AM: Service to be Announced

Focus on Religious Education

Sunday, November 5th - We'll start in the Meeting House

Sunday, November 12th - Teaching Sunday

Sunday, November 19th - All Church Thanksgiving Service - No Teaching (but "The Gospel According to the Simpsons" class (Jamie, Meghan, Nick and William) will help receive food donations during the service.)

Sunday, November 26th - 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.

Reminder: Don't forget to bring your donations for the Dedham Food Pantry to the Thanksgiving Service!

Continued on next page...

Focus on Religious Education (continued)

HELP WANTED

One helper is needed on November 5th following the children's part of the service.

Several helpers are needed for craft day on November 26th.

If you can help or have questions about what is involved please see me.

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

All Around the Church Community

From the Ministerial Search Committee:

Beyond Categorical Thinking

“What will our new minister be like?” “Will this person think like me, understand where I am coming from?”

These questions arise as we continue on our search for a new minister. All of us have a picture in our mind of what the “ideal minister” might be, often categorized by age, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, or race. With this picture in place, it can be easy to unintentionally exclude ministers who fall into certain categories. In comparing this ideal picture to the actual candidate, there is a danger of losing sight of the qualities we are looking for in a minister.

On Sunday, Nov. 12, the Search Committee invites all members and friends of First Church to participate in the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop offered by the UUA for congregations involved in the search process.

The Beyond Categorical Thinking program is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. This program includes a Sunday morning service with BCT workshop facilitators followed by lunch and a three hour workshop. In the workshop, participants will:

- Consider the hopes, expectations, and concerns they have for a new minister
- Learn more about the ministerial search process, and
- Explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate.

Members of the Search Committee will be calling everyone soon with a personal invitation to attend. Lunch and childcare will be provided. Please consider coming to this important workshop. It offers another opportunity for each of us to be part of the search process.

All Around the Church Community

Meditation Group

This is an open invitation to anyone who would be interested in joining a meditation group which meets on Thursday nights at 7:30 PM. We are currently meeting in each other's homes but will move our meeting back to the Alliance room once the Meeting House renovations are done. Currently we are using a CD to help us center and move into a quiet internal state We coordinate the group by e-mail. If you would like to be added to the Meditation Group e-mail list, please e-mail Carol Dixon Hutton: carolhdixon@gmail.com.

Amnesty International

We had our second Amnesty letter writing of the new year on October 22. 9 people wrote letters letters were written on behalf of an Iranian couple who are prisoners of conscience; they are imprisoned because of religious beliefs.. Many thanks to the following letter writers: Allison Staton, Sharon Lane, Tyler Carpenter, Natalie Jensen, Dan Ewing, Beppy Martin, Diane Winchester, Bob Estes and Judy Barrington. Our next letter writing will be on November 19.

Peter Elefterakis

Parish Community Network

The Parish Community network met on October 12th. We discussed updating the church phone tree, coordinating rides to church, and reissuing the Parish Community survey to gather names of people who can help others in our community. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 21st at 6:30 PM and we would love to have more people join us.

Vicky Berg

In Our Church Family

**OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING! OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY!
OH. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CHURCH WEDDING!
WHAT MORE CAN BRIDE'S PARENTS AND BRIDE SAY!**

A very special thank you to Jeff Hutton and Carol Dixon-Hutton and all of our extended church family and friends who came and vacuumed, cleaned, polished, and replaced all the pew cushions on the ground floor of our Meetinghouse on Oct 4 in preparing the church for Laurie's wedding. For two weeks prior to the wedding stressed out parents and bride tired to find an acceptable alternative. None seemed appropriate.

But our concerns were unnecessary as you all came to our rescue and there are no words that can fully express our thanks to all who came to our aid in a crisis. Only a few attending the church wedding knew about this and all of the out of town guests said what a very beautiful church. Yes, in more ways than one. David and I will bore you with wedding pictures once we have them. Again, thank you for making this special day even more special.

David and Janet Hurwitz

All Around the Church Community

Stewardship Update

As of October 10, 2006 the Stewardship Committee had received \$88,102 in pledges for the 2006-2007 church year. We are very pleased with this outcome which is a mere \$400 short of our goal of \$88,500. Thank you to everyone who helped with the Stewardship Campaign and to everyone who made a pledge to support the operations and programs of First Church in Dedham.

Before you know it, it will be time to start this all again. We would like to move hold the Stewardship Campaign earlier in the church year so that it will not interfere with "Candidating Week" for a settled minister. Please give some consideration to volunteering for the Stewardship Campaign. As my mom always said, "Many hands make light work." Any thoughts please contact Parish Committee co-chairs, Dan Ewing or Diane Winchester, or Carol Dixon Hutton, Stewardship Committee Chair.

Volunteer Needed

We need someone who can deliver foot to the Dedham Food Pantry once a month on Thursday afternoons from about 3 to 5 PM. Please call Pam Aist at 781-326-4640 to volunteer.

Our New Website

The first version of the new First Church website is here! Go to www.dedhamuu.org to see what we've come up with. If you don't see the new site, try the "reload" button on your browser.

We will be adding features and fine-tuning things over the next several months. Please send us your comments and suggestions through the "webmaster" link on the site.

If you didn't receive an e-mail last week with this announcement, perhaps we don't have your current e-mail address. Call the church office or e-mail Judy at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org to update your e-mail address.

Carol Ewing
Natalie Jensen
Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

The Parish Players are coming ...

The Once and Future Parish Players



A MUSICAL REVUE

Fun and refreshments for the whole family!

November 10 at 7 pm and November 11 at 5 pm

To reserve tickets call 781-326-7463

*****NOTE THE DATE CHANGE *****

**First Church in Dedham Alliance
All Family (CHILDREN WELCOME)**

Harvest Supper

Saturday, November 4, 2006

6:30 PM, PARISH HOUSE

DO NOT MISS THIS!!!

*Entertainment by the
Baystatesmen*

**contact: Janet Hurwitz, Judy Barrington
or other members of the Alliance board.**

**Sign up on a Sunday, or RSVP at the church office 9 am -12 noon
or leave a voice mail message.**

Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting October 10, 2006

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

Meeting called to order by Dan Ewing at 7:38 pm. The meeting began with a moment of silence and reflection.

Kathy Elefterakis reported on the auditor's report of the Treasurer FY '05-'06 for the Special Congregational Meeting, 10/15/06. Kathy talked about reviewing the last fiscal year and the change to Quick books. She suggested an approval process for reviewing large bills before they are paid.

Minutes of September 19, 2006 meeting - motion to approve by Sam King, second - passed.

Treasurer's Report

Arnold Sacks reported that he is working to update accounts and to get bills paid.

Safe Church Policy

Natasha Lawhon-Schneider presented the revised Safe Church Policy. The Parish Committee decided to present the revised policy to the congregation at the Special Congregational Meeting.

Motion by Eileen Sullivan to approve most current revision of the Safe Church Policy second – passed.

Report of the Search Committee Letter of Agreement

Eileen Sullivan presented the proposed changes to the Letter of Agreement.

Fair Compensation

Jeff Hutton reported that church employees who work less than 1000 hours per year are not within the Fair Compensation process thus we will be listed as a Fair Compensation Church.

Stewardship Committee

Carol Dixon Hutton volunteered to head up the Stewardship Campaign again this year. It was discussed that the campaign should be conducted earlier in the year so as not to conflict with Candidating Week.

Building Use

National Stuttering Association Parent Group
Saturday/Sunday every other month as space is available, 1-4 p.m.

Approved

Pierce Thanksgiving

Approved

Announcements

10/22 Sam King

10/29 Tyler Carpenter

11/5 Eileen Sullivan

11/12 Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

11/19 Dan Ewing

11/26 Arnie Sacks

New Business

The Parish Committee suggested that in the future all documents for the Annual Meetings/Special Congregational Meetings be available in printed form the Sunday before the meeting at church.

Thanks were expressed to Jeff Hutton for organizing the clean-up of the Meeting House in preparation for the Hurwitz wedding.

Natasha Lawhon-Schneider reported on a \$380.00 bill received from Ken Reeves for facilitating the Safe Church discussions. As agreed half of the bill will be paid by the Mass Bay District. The Mass Bay District will be billing First Church in Dedham for the remaining half of the bill.

Preparation of pledge statements was discussed.

Proposed date for the Annual Meeting is 5/20/07.

Natasha Lawhon-Schneider reported on the status of internet access in the church office. The committee decided to go with Earthlink \$39.00 per month to obtain internet access. Natasha will order Earthlink and will install it after 10/27/06.

Next meeting of the Parish Committee will be ***Tuesday, November 14th, 2006, 7:30.***

Meeting adjourned, 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dixon Hutton

From First Church Green

As the period of our holiday season begins in America, it is both interesting and important to recognize the significance of this time for traditions other than our own – in particular, the Muslim tradition, which represents a rapidly growing element in American culture. Here are a few highlights of the spiritual significance of the past month for Muslims.

Ramadan, which in the year 2006 began September 23, is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, and the time when it is believed the Holy Qu'ran was sent down from heaven, to serve as both spiritual guidance and a means of salvation. During the entire month Muslims fast during daylight hours and eat only a small meal in the evening. The Fast of Ramadan becomes a time for contemplation and worship, and a time to strengthen family and community ties. Ramadan ended October 23. Slight differences of time exist among Muslim communities, since the beginning of Ramadan depends on actual sightings of the new moon.

The Fast of Ramadan places strict restraints on the daily lives of Muslims. In addition to not being allowed to eat or drink during daylight hours, smoking and sexual relations are also forbidden. At the end of the day the fast is broken with prayer and a meal called the *iftar*. In the evening following the *iftar*, it is customary for Muslims to go out visiting with family and friends. The fast is resumed the next morning.

According to the Holy Quran:

One may eat and drink at any time during the night "until you can plainly distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the daylight: then keep the fast until night"

Fasting and contemplation represent a period of moral discipline. But the good that is acquired through fasting can be destroyed by five things: the telling of a lie, slander, denouncing someone behind his back, a false oath, greed or covetousness. Muslims consider these acts offensive at all times, but most so during the Fast of Ramadan.

During Ramadan, it is common for Muslims to go to the *Masjid* (Mosque) and spend several hours praying and studying the Qur'an. In addition to the five daily prayers, during Ramadan Muslims recite a special, long prayer called the *Taraweeh* prayer (Night Prayer). Some Muslims will spend the entire night in prayer.

On the evening of the 27th day of the month, Muslims celebrate the *Laylat-al-Qadr* (the Night of Power). It is believed that on this night, Muhammad first received the revelation of the Holy Quran. According to the Quran, this is also when God determines the course of the world for the following year.

When the fast ends (on the first day of the month of Shawwal) it is celebrated for three days in a holiday called *Id-al-Fitr* (the Feast of Fast Breaking). Gifts are exchanged. Friends and family gather to pray in congregation and for large meals. In some cities fairs are held to celebrate the end of the Fast of Ramadan. With these events, the discipline of the Muslim period of fasting and contemplation is tempered somewhat by occasions for joy and commercial celebration.

In reflecting on the differences across culture and tradition, we can also reflect on the respective balance of *moral discipline and contemplation vs. joy and commercial celebration*. For those of us who are non-Muslims, then, can we pose the question: where should the balance lie in our forthcoming holiday season?

Rob