



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXVII, No. 2

October, 2006

Calendar

October

- 1, Sunday, 11:15 AM: Safe Church Meeting
- 3, Tuesday, 7:30 PM: Committee on Ministry
- 9, Monday: Church Office Closed
- 10, Tuesday, 7:30 PM: Parish Committee Meeting
- 12, Thursday, 6:30 PM: Parish Community Network Meeting
- 14, Saturday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM: Fall Fair
- 15, Sunday, 11:15 AM: Special Congregational Meeting
- 17, Tuesday, 7:00 PM: Music and Worship Committee Meeting
- 20, Friday, 6:30: CAKES
- 22, Sunday, 11:15 AM: Membership Meeting
- 29, Sunday: Sharing the Plate

The Parish Record is published monthly.
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The deadline for submissions for the October issue of the Parish Record will be October 22. Send notices directly by e-mail to: tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org or call me with questions: 617-326-9728.

Sundays in the Meeting House

October 1, 10:00 AM: Sermon by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross: *What are Children?*

October 8, 10:00 AM: Sermon by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross: *Nature on Black Wings*

October 15, 10:00 AM: Sermon by Rev. Dr. Robert Ross: *HUMANISM*

October 22, 10:00 AM: Service by the Music and Worship Committee: *October's Bright Blue Weather*

October 29, 10:00 AM: Service to be announced.

Focus on Religious Education

Sunday, October 1st Intergenerational Service - Teacher Dedication Litany

Sunday, October 8th Columbus Day Weekend. No Church School, no OWL Class. Special Activities

Sunday, October 15th Church School

Sunday, October 22nd Church School

Sunday, October 29th Social Service Sunday – Cooking for Arlington St. Church

It was great to see everyone after the summer!

We have begun using some new curricula and it will be interesting to see how it works for both teachers and children. I welcome your feedback.

Continued on next page...

Focus on Religious Education (continued)

On October 1st there will be a special Dedication for our teachers. I hope you'll all be there to participate in this special litany. Teachers are the heart of Religious Education.

HELP WANTED

One helper is needed on October 8th for Special Activities.

Several helpers are needed on October 29th for Arlington St. Church cooking.

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 Music and Worship Committee

Sunday, October 22 – October's Bright Blue Weather

Surely one of the most beautiful months of the year is October. It is a gentle reminder of summer past, it is a feeling of nostalgia, and its gentle winds can evoke thoughts of wanderlust. The air is crisp, (and so are the apples), the colors left in the trees are vibrant and the skies are often bright and cerulean blue.

On this Sunday we wish to share with each other: poems (your own or another's), personal reflections of October, short readings etc.

There will be a basket in the dining room, starting October 1st, into which you may place your contribution---come the 22nd you will be invited to draw a paper from the basket and read it to the congregation, if you so choose. (You will have time during the service to reflect on what you have chosen---and to "practice" it in your head before reading.) We think this will be an intriguing way to share with one another---"October's Bright Blue Weather".

See you there and thanks for your part in the service

Diane Winchester

All Around the Church Community

What Do You Think?

The Search Committee will be busy in the coming months finishing the Church Packet, reviewing applications from interested candidates and conducting interviews. Besides reading articles in the Parish Record, you can keep informed of where we are in the process by looking at the Search Info Board in the dining room. On it is a clock with months replacing the usual numbers? As the hands of the clock move from month to month, we will post information on what we are doing at that time. If you have any questions, please ask any of us.

We will also be using the Info Board to gather information from you. For the interview process, we want to be prepared to answer questions from candidates concerning how the congregation might feel about different issues. We will be posting some of these issues on the Info Board. Please take the time to look at the questions and respond. We need to be able to accurately represent your ideas.

The question presently posted is "Should First Church become a Welcoming Congregation?" and why or why not. If you are unfamiliar with the UUA Welcoming Congregation program, there is an explanation at <http://www.uua.org/obgltc/wcp/wc1expln.html> as well as on the Info Board itself. Presently more than 60% of congregations in Massachusetts are designated as Welcoming Congregations. This issue will very likely come up during interviews.

Please take the time to let us know what you think.

The First Church Ministerial Search Committee.

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

All Around the Church Community

Help Wanted

Wednesday, October 4th, from 6:30 to 9:30 PM
Bring Vacuum Cleaners, buckets, rags, and energy

We will:

- Clean the inside of the Meeting House for Laurie Hurwitz's wedding on October 8th
- Move cushions and other good stuff back into the church

Many hands make light work! See you here. For questions, call me at 781-461-0522
Jeff Hutton

More Help Wanted

The Building and Grounds Committee is looking for someone to work 5 hours/week. The job would include mowing the lawn, clearing brush, and some snow shoveling. Weeding and gardening would be optional. Payment is \$12/hour. Please contact the church office if you are interested.

Membership

As we begin this new church year, I have had a unique opportunity to personally reflect on the importance of membership in First Parish to me, my family, and to the life of our church community. A key piece in the vitality of our church is membership! Please plan to stay just 15 minutes after church on Sunday, October 22 to help plan this year's membership activities.

Anne Schiraga

Amnesty International

We had our first Amnesty letter writing of the new year on September 24, to President Fernández of the Dominican Republic, regarding the treatment of ethnic Haitians in his country and 10 people wrote letters. Many thanks to the following letter writers: Allison Staton, Milo Carpenter, Tyler Carpenter, Eileen Sullivan, Debbie Harrison, Betsy Hetzler, Janet Humble, Diane Winchester, Bob Estes and Vicky Berg. Our next letter writing will be on October 23.

Peter Elefterakis

In Our Church Family

David and Janet Hurwitz wish to thank all those in our "church family" who have supported us with regard to the First Church Meetinghouse and our daughter Laurie's wedding on Sunday, October 8. Please know how much we do appreciate everyone's kind words, concerns, and the work party planned for Wednesday, October 4 at 6:00 PM to clean the church and make it presentable for her wedding day.

Thank you very much!

All Around the Church Community

Service Auction 2006 ... Stories

As it is now officially summer's end, it is even more satisfying to reflect back on the summer.

At the end of the summer Jeff and I spent a wonderful day with Della and Natasha Lawhon-Schneider at our cottage in Mattapoisett. Della and Natasha purchased "our day at a quaint seaside cottage with quahogging and a walk to an island bird sanctuary". Well the day was rainy and about 50 degrees. The quahogs were safe from our rakes that day and we could see the island from the beach. We readjusted our plans and did share a nice day of walking on the beach, touring the area and gothic UU Church in Fairhaven, eating drinking, laughing and sharing great conversation. The Service Auction was seven months ago but we are still reaping its benefits. Besides being a fund raiser it is a chance to make new connections within our church community. If you have a Service Auction Story to share consider posting it in the Parish Record. Of course, it's not too soon to think about our fund raising event for this year.

Carol Dixon Hutton

First Church Fall Fair **Saturday, October 14th**

On Saturday, October 14th, we will host our annual Fall Fair. As usual, there will be attractions for all ages: farm animals, a moonwalk, games, crafts, take home foods, lunch, a raffle, etc.... This event has great potential as a community builder and if the weather cooperates (!?), a huge fund raiser! Its success, therefore, will be in direct relation to the number of First Church members who become involved. Please save the date to participate in the excitement, by doing something you have always done or by trying something new. Opportunities abound! In particular:

Last year's big "money maker" proved to be a very successful raffle. We were able to present many wonderful offerings, thanks to the generosity of so many First Churchers and Dedham retailers. It would be great to improve upon last year's effort by getting our items in earlier and begin selling raffle tickets a week or two in advance of the fair.

Another area of improvement could be public relations. If anyone, perhaps with artistic or graphic tendencies, would like to take on this job, attendance at the Fair could mount. Responsibilities would include: creating flyers to be distributed at local schools and around town, putting reminders and information into the Parish Record, making announcements Sunday mornings in the meeting house and placing notices in local newspapers just prior to the fair.

Please contact Liz Ames (781-461-9559 or lizziesim@mac.com) with your thoughts, comments and inquiries. Let's work together and have a great day on the 14th!

*****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.**

From Janet Hurwitz to everyone at First Church:

Mr. and Mrs. David Hurwitz

and

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gordon

Request the honor of your presence

at the marriage of their children

Laurie Rachel Hurwitz

To

William Robert Gordon

Sunday, the eighth of October,

One-thirty in the afternoon, Two Thousand and Six

First Church and Parish

670 High Street, Dedham Massachusetts

Ministers performing the ceremony are

David Hubner and Betsy Stevens

Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting August 29, 2006

Attending: Rob Ross, Beppy Martin, Judy Barrington, Jeff Hutton, Carol Dixon, Diane Winchester, Tyler Carpenter, Dan Ewing, Eileen Sullivan, Natasha Lawhon-Schneider

Meeting called to order by Dan Ewing at 7:30 pm. The meeting began with a moment of silence and reflection.

Minutes of July 18, 2006- motion to approve by Sam King, second Judy Barrington, passed.

Safe Church Policy

The *Safe Church Policy* was mailed to the congregation and accompanying letter were mailed to the congregation in August, writing and mailing was coordinated by Natasha Lawhon-Schneider.

Congregational meetings to discuss the Safe Church Policy were scheduled for **9/17/06 and 10/1/06 at 11:15 a.m. in the Parish House**. Rob Ross will facilitate these meetings, also Natasha volunteered to contact the UUA as to an outside facilitator. Judy Butler will be asked to send an e-mail to the congregation announcing these meetings and will mail notice to those who do not have e-mail.

Special Congregational Meeting

The committee discussed and determined a new date for Special Congregational Meeting. The Special Congregational meeting has been changed to 10/15/06. The congregation can vote on the Safe Church Policy at this meeting.

Building Use Fees

Eileen Sullivan presented a chart comparing First Church's building use fees with other area UU churches. A revised First Church in Dedham building use policy and fee structure was presented, discussed, and modified.

Motion to accept modification of First Church in Dedham Building Use Rules and Fee Structure by Beppy Martin, second Judy Barrington, passed unanimously.

Sharing the Plate

- September 24th - New Orleans Public Library
- October 29th - Oxfam
- November 26th - Heifer Project

Announcements

- September 10th - Dan Ewing
- September 17th - Beppy Martin
- September 24th - Diane Winchester
- October 1st - Carol Dixon Hutton
- October 8th - Judy Barrington
- October 15th - Jeff Hutton

Warrant for Special Congregational Meeting

Discussion re: warrant for Special Congregational Meeting, warrant needs to be posted 7 days in advance of the meeting. Format for writing warrant is available in the church office.

YMCA Lease

Dan Ewing reviewed his discussions with the YMCA re: the nursery school lease to date. Discussion occurred regarding community outreach to the increased price of oil. Dan presented an analysis of the costs involved in hosting the nursery school, comparing rent to fuel and custodial costs. He estimated that we make a net profit of \$561.62 /month. The committee discussed raising the rent to help offset some the increased fuel costs and determined that we should try to raise the rent by 5%, \$2,200/month.

Motion: Dan Ewing will negotiate and complete a one year lease with YMCA, with a minimum raise of 3%, by Jeff Hutton, second, passed unanimously.

Needham Church Use of our facilities

Discussion occurred re: a letter from Rev. John Buehrens, First Church in Needham requesting that we consider sharing space for the 2007-08 church year. Concerns were expressed about such a venture as it would be our first year with a settled minister and concerns were also expressed by some members of the Ministerial Search Committee. Rob Ross encouraged us to offer something in the spirit of cooperation. We discussed offering:

- a venue for the coffee house
- some meeting space
- space for adult forum
- consult with Susan Sennott re: possible RE space

Dan Ewing will contact John Buehrens by e-mail, letter will be drafted at the next meeting.

Letter from Member of Congregation

Discussion occurred regarding a need to respond to a letter from a concerned member of the congregation beyond verbal interaction. We questioned whether the UUA could provide support with conflict resolution. Rob has been in contact with David Pohl re: potential conflict resolution. Rob offered to meet with anyone who has a desire to talk about this situation.

Letter of Agreement

The Search Committee has requested a draft letter of agreement to submit to the UUA in September as part of the Search Process.

- *Sub-committee : Sam King, Diane Winchester, and Carol Dixon Hutton*

Fair Compensation

We have been asked by the Search Committee to decide if FCP will seek certification as a Fair Compensation Congregation

- *Sub-committee: Jeff Hutton, Beppy Martin, and Natasha Lawhon-Schneider*

Compensation Package

The Search Committee needs to submit a salary with the material about us that is due in September as part of the Search Process.

- *Sub-committee: Jeff Hutton, Tyler Carpenter, and Judy Barrington*

The Search Committee needs all this to be completed in 3 weeks, by September 25th.

The Parish Committee will meet on the following dates:

September 19th, 7:30 pm
October 10th, 7:30 pm
November 14th, 7:30 pm
December 12th, 7:30 pm

Next meeting of the Parish Committee will be *Tuesday, September 19th, 2006 at 7:30.*

Meeting adjourned, 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Dixon Hutton

From First Church Green

The Parish Committee and several members of the congregation requested that I post in this month's newsletter the portion of my sermon on Safe Church Policies Sunday 17 September that dealt with work I had done (originally at First Parish, Plymouth) to develop a way of relating the UU principle of democratic process and what I have called *the ethics of human interaction*. It is my pleasure to do so. The Plymouth congregation discussed these principles several times, made a number of additions and modifications, then voted unanimously to accept them at a congregational meeting. The *acceptance* after each principle represents a commitment by each individual to uphold that principle.

Democratic Principles: A Guide to the Ethics of Human Interactions

Rev. Dr. Robert R.N. Ross

As a voluntary association of autonomous, self-governing fellowships, the democratic process is at the heart of Unitarian Universalism. Unitarian Universalist faith is grounded in freedom, reason, and tolerance. Its Principles seek to uphold the sanctity of the individual voice, and affirm that humankind need not adhere to the same beliefs to discern the common good. Moral authority arises from individual conscience and inclusive dialogue.

1. There is no “one way”. Individuals within democratic communities differ in their perceptions of right and wrong, and in the ways to achieve goals. A democratic process seeks a way to find consensus rather than accepts only one way as an imposed orthodoxy. (See also Dani Rodrik, Harvard University, on *Four simple principles for democratic governance of globalization*, May, 2001.)

I accept that diversity of opinion and belief is an inherent part of the democratic process.

2. Discussions of the common interest should be public and open to all. When more than two or three gather to discuss and decide matters that pertain to the community as a whole, such discussions should be announced in advance and open to everyone for their participation. Everyone should be “in the loop”.

I accept that discussions of matters of interest to the community as a whole should be open to all members.

3. To make intelligent decisions, leaders acting in behalf of the community must accurately know and fully understand the needs and wishes of the community. Before decisions are made, all relevant information must be gathered and shared among members of the community. The wishes of various individuals and groups must be identified and clearly communicated to those responsible for making decisions or acting on behalf of the community.

I accept that I must participate in the gathering of full and accurate information upon which leaders base decisions.

4. A robust communication network is key. A successful democratic community must not only share information vertically (from the members to its leaders) but also communicate information horizontally (in a wide network across the various constituents of the community – both individuals and groups). Everyone is responsible for communicating information to those known to have interest in or be affected by that information. Communication should be multi-mode (text, phone, email, etc.) and a summary of Parish Committee meeting minutes should be published in the monthly congregation newsletter.

I accept that I have a responsibility to communicate to others information affecting them.

5. Trust and respect are critical underlying values. Members of a democratic community must agree to allow free expression of diverse ideas and opinions and develop suitable forums and mechanisms for resolving differences without personal animosity or retribution.

I agree to participate in the resolution of differences in a rational and harmonious way.

6. Consensus is the word. A democratic community that can achieve commonality of purpose and agreement about the means to achieve its objectives *by consensus* will have the emotional support and commitment of its members for actions taken. When direct consensus is difficult to achieve, tallying a numerical vote can be useful. However, a group seeking to make the correct decision or identify the best course of action in a complex or ambiguous context should return to discussion and shared prioritizations to reach consensus. The goal of the democratic process in a church congregation is not to determine which goals or actions win by majority vote but to build a spiritual community and achieve the warmth and mutual support of an extended family.

I agree to participate in shared processes that seek consensus within the community beyond 'majority rule'.

7. Freedom is defined as a covenant of cooperation with others. Freedom that acts solely out of selfishness is blind and dangerous and ultimately self-destructive. The promise to cooperate with fellow congregation members to promote a common cause, may restrain individual freedom for a time, but will ultimately allow its rebirth in a form that can be shared by the entire community. Such shared freedom is true autonomy. "Democracy means not 'I am as good as you are,' but 'you are as good as I am.'" —Theodore Parker

I believe cooperation is the best expression of individual freedom.

8. Total participation is essential. A democratic process, when combined with less than full participation by everyone, raises the danger of minority rule by default. It is important that it be easy for minority voices to be heard in a congregation; small groups of committed people who want to make needed changes can do so. However, the ultimate effectiveness of the democratic process requires that *all* elements of the community be heard and included, and that decisions and actions taken are consistent with the wishes and needs of *the community as a whole*. Minimally, “community as a whole” means the *majority* of its members – by consensus or by vote. But ideally, “community as a whole” should mean *unanimity*, and this requires that the needs and interests of the community have been discerned and readily shared among members. The role of leadership is to help identify and put before the community its shared needs and interests.

I commit to participating in all matters of interest to the community as a whole.

9. Enfranchisement must be universal. Members of a community who are especially likely to lose their full voice in the democratic process or otherwise “fall through the cracks” because of factors such as age, geographical location, economic status, work and family commitments, education, ethnic or cultural background, race, etc. must be given every opportunity by the community to exercise their right to participate. This may mean the process has to make various accommodations to ensure the full participation of all members.

I commit to those efforts necessary to ensure that all members of the community can participate on an equal basis.

10. Commitment is not disposable. Members of the community who have accepted responsibility in a leadership role or other directive capacity should not dispose of their commitment other than as required by exceptional circumstances. The democratic process requires consistency, daily nurturing, and continuous improvement.

I agree to abide by my commitments to the community and work to continually improve the democratic process.

Rob