



December – 2011

# First Parish News

## Upcoming Events:

- December 4<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
•Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- December 11<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
•Chalice Circle Service
- December 18<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
•Rev. Marguerite Sheehan – Winter Solstice
- December 24<sup>th</sup>  
Christmas Eve Service 7 pm
- December 25<sup>th</sup>  
No Sunday Service
- January 1<sup>st</sup>  
No Sunday Service
- January 7<sup>th</sup>  
Country Breakfast Sat. 8 to 10am
- January 8<sup>th</sup>  
Round Robin Service in Bernardston – Coffee Hour @ 11am

Check Out First Parish Website:

[northfieldunitarian.org](http://northfieldunitarian.org)

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First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

## First Parish Happenings

### Round Robin Services January 8th and January 15th

Our congregation has been invited to participate in a Round Robin service series in January. The Unitarian Congregational Church in Bernardston and our First Parish will be hosting each congregation as a way to get to know each other and to share messages from our collective Unitarian Universalist faith traditions. The service in Bernardston on January 8th starts with a coffee hour at 11! We will host the January 15th worship service at 10AM, offer our usual delicious coffee hour, integrate the visiting children into our Religious Education program and just get to know other local Unitarian Universalists. This is a good way to see ourselves not just as one church, but as part of our association of churches. Please plan on coming to both services (weather permitting of course!) What a fun way to start off the year 2012!

### NOTES from RE

RE has enjoying pretty full attendance week after week and we have been having exploring the seven principles through exercises, art, games and even through guest visitors. We recently had Lisa McLoughlin come in to talk about Paganism which the kids connected with and seemed to understood instinctively. Every week we have, as always, started our mornings together with "Joys and Concerns" and most weeks we have also done some singing with Ruthanne. We will be having Austin and Adria Paulson come on the 11th of December to talk about their trip to Africa and hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro. We are currently preparing for the Christmas Eve Service with some poetry reading and excerpts from some favorite children's books. Ruthanne is also

rehearsing three songs with the children for the service. It has been a very positive, fun and educational fall for all of us in RE and we are looking forward to the new year. We are hoping to get a few more people to visit us in the upcoming months so if you have something to share, please sign up on the sheet which is outside the RE room.

Deborah Potee and Ruthanne Paulson



### NOTES from LYNNE

Music, Music, Music! Bells ringing, voices of all ages raised in joyous song, organ notes resounding. We have a small (but powerful) group of hearty souls coming for practices on Sunday mornings before services in preparation for special music at both the Winter Solstice Service (Sunday, December 18th at 10:00) and for Christmas Eve (Pre-service music at 6:30, service at 7:00 pm on Saturday, December 24th). I still invite individuals to join in the fun. Most of the music is familiar and easy to learn. We could use another bass and tenor - and more women are welcome too. The pre-service music on Christmas Eve will include traditional religious and secular music sung by the adult Vocal Ensemble, as well as vocal, violin, piano solos and duets.

Invite your friends and neighbors to come, relax, and listen to seasonal readings and music to set the tone for their Christmas celebrations. All are welcome.

**Rehearsals at the church: Sunday Dec. 11th and 18th at 9:00 am. Special rehearsal for Christmas to be announced.**

Lynne Walker, Music Director

# Minister's Corner

Are you ready for Christmas? People are already asking me this, and as usual I can confidently say "No!" I am not ready for Christmas and do not expect to be ready until the day arrives. I am someone who, although quite organized for most of my daily chores and responsibilities, is never ready for something like Christmas. Maybe because deep inside me there is still the faithful child who, although expecting and hoping for good things to come my way, also believes that there is something mysterious and graceful about life. In other words, I go about my life knowing that really I am not in control! At church we have held our Christmas Fair and decorated our Webster room for the holiday season. We will soon celebrate the coming of the Winter Solstice. We are already getting ready for Christmas Eve where we will sing carols and tell the old stories and watch our beautiful children taking center stage. We are as ready as we will ever be. But in the end, we will not be ready. Something will likely go astray. Someone will forget their lines or will misplace the candles, or will sing a carol off tune. We will not be ready, but Christmas will come and God willing, we will be here to share it with each other. So in advance of that day, here is another way to think about "readiness" for Christmas.

No one is ever really ready for Christmas.

If we were really all prepared:

If every gift we had contemplated had been obtained;

If all the goodies our friends deserve were baked and cooled  
and stored just so;

If we never snapped at someone we care about, nor stopped  
short of being all we could be;

If our minds were 100% loving and our hearts were 100%  
generous;

They would be ready - and truly not need Christmas quite so  
much.

So come Christmas, most needed of season.

Come with the reminder that love does not depend on  
perfection

But on our willingness to risk connection.

Come into the unready manger of our hearts that we may  
feel the warmth of new life

And give flesh to the promise of hope that cries to bring  
healing into the world.

Come Christmas! Come Love! Come Hope!

Be born in our unready hearts on this silent and holy night.

( by M. Maureen Killoran)

*Peace to all, Reverend Marguerite*

