

February 2009

First Parish News



Upcoming Events:

- February 1, Sunday service and RE 10am, Rev. Sheehan
- February 8, Sunday service and RE 10am, Lisa Prolman
- February 15, Service and RE, 10am, Rev. Sheehan
- February 22, Sunday service and RE 10am, Marie Ferre

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First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

Announcements

A Followup From the Sermon on The 4th Unitarian Universalist Principle

Some folks who attended our worship service on January 25th have asked me for more information about the Prince family that I referenced to in the sermon. Mr Abijah Prince was a slave, owned by Reverend Benjamin Doolittle, who was the 2nd minister of First Parish from 1717-1749. We have a replica of Reverend Doolittle's tombstone outside our sacatory. The book that talked about slavery in Northfield, was Mr and Mrs. Prince: How An Extraordinary 18th Century Family Moved Out Of Slavery And Into Legand. The author is Gretchen Holsbrook Gerzina and the book can be found in the local public library system. While it is new infomation for some of us at First Parish, to understand that the minister from our church owned slaves, it gives us a chance to look more deeply at the history of slavery in the North and how our own religious ancestors participated in, or refused to participate in slavery. As we look at the present and to the future we must also always keep an eye to the past.

Conversation Circle Gathering Again

February 4th our Conversation Circle will gather again in the Webster Room at 7PM. Let's hope that the weather is better than last month so that we can gather for conversation, a time of quiet reflection and tea and cookies. Please come and join us, whether you have attended a circle meeting in the past or not! It is a fun way to spend time together. Bring a friend!

Music Notes from Lynne:

"Remember Love" in the WINTER:

At a time when troubles threaten to overcome us, we more than ever need to 'remember love' . . . and what better time to remember than this month of Valentines?

From the depression era of the 1930's and on through World War II, and into the 50's and beyond, we have a rich legacy of song from such giants as Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, Cole Porter, Frank Loesser, Hoagy Carmichael, and Harold Arlen. Titles such as "Make Believe", "The Song Is You", "Baby It's Cold Outside", "Some Enchanted Evening", and "If Ever I Could Leave You" stir memories and warm us through and through.

Singers Lynne Walker and Charlie Hunting will be joined by Lynne's son, Jonathan Bell, singer/songwriter and pianist living in New York City. Jonathan is currently teaching and performing in the Big Apple, putting the finishing touches on a CD soon to be released of his own compositions, and otherwise musically active as an arranger and accompanist.

In 1965, Hal David and Burt Bacharach wrote "What the world needs now is love, sweet love; It's the only thing that there's just too little of. . . . No, not just for some, but for every one."

We hope that this afternoon of 'remembering love' will move us just a little closer to filling that gap.

Come, join us Sunday, February 16th at 2:00 at Trinitarian Congregational Church.

Minister's Corner

We are coming into my favorite month of the year. February? Cold, cloudy, snowy, messy, stuck in between January and March? For me, February is about hints of change. Not dramatic change but hints. The light increasing by seconds and then moments – just a hint. The color of the sky a tiny bit more blue – just a hint. The sound of the birds changing their tunes – just a hint. And of course the old groundhog, hinting that no matter what happens on February 2nd, spring is just 6 weeks away.

This season of hints keeps me hopeful and reminds me that there is so much I do not know. I am teased into shedding off some of my winter grouchiness and celebrating small things – the warmth of the sun on my face, the extra moments to walk in the afternoon, the insistent drip, drip, drip off the roof.

These small changes are good for my soul and by this time of year I need every bit of soul help I can get. This year when so many of my friends and family are hurting from the economic downturn and it seems like things are getting worse before getting better, hints of change help. Our nation continues to celebrate the momentous Presidential election where the first President of color has been elected. No matter your thoughts about the political direction this may lead, we all are witnessing a hint, a small change in the history of our land. What was once inconceivable to many, is now a new beginning. Come with me into February! Smell the air, count the

moments, watch the ice form and melt. Gather with friends and talk about what the election means to you and marvel at all the different responses.

Marge Piercy is a Massachusetts poet who is used to living through all our seasons (of weather and of culture.) She writes about February in her poem "February Ground." Here are two stanza's; just to give you a hint about her poem. Maybe it will entice you to search it out! (from *The Crooked Inheritance*.)

“...Having the world snatched
From us makes us grateful even
For fence posts, for wheelbarrow
Rising, for the stalwart spears
Of daffodil uncovered.

Everything revealed is magical,
Splendid in its ordinary shining.
The sun gives birth to rosebushes,
The myrtle, a snow shovel fallen,
Overcome on the field of battle.”

In faith and with a hint of spring,
Reverend Marguerite

This Month in Unitarian Universalist History

This monthly column is dedicated to celebrating some milestones and anniversaries from Unitarian and Universalist History. The information is taken from the book *This Day in Unitarian Universalist History* by Frank Schulman.

February 1, 2003

Laurel Salton Clark was killed with six other astronauts when their spaceship Columbia disintegrated 39 miles above north Texas as it was coming to land. Clark was a native of Ames Iowa and wanted to become a veterinarian but instead became a surgeon for the NASA. She was a member of the Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church in Racine Washington.

February 4, 1939

The American Unitarian Association sent Martha and Waitstill Sharp to Czechoslovakia to work with refugees from the Nazi invasion. This marked the beginning of the Unitarian Service Committee. The USC merged in

1963 with the Universalist Service Committee – which we as a church support in our annual *Guests at Your Table* collection. For more information or to join the UUSC search their interesting website at www.uusc.org

Feb. 15, 1820

Susan Brownell Anthony was born on this day in Adams Massachusetts. Her family were Quakers but were actively involved in the First Unitarian Church in Rochester NY. She was active in the temperance, abolition and suffragette movements and organized the national Woman Suffrage Association with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She was arrested at the polls in 1872 when she claimed the right to vote. She was charged \$100 which she refused to pay. In her last testimony to women's right to vote she said "Failure is impossible!" Women were given the right to vote 14 years after her death.

Committee on the Ministry

The Parish Committee is an appointed committee to help with communication between the minister and the congregation and to provide another avenue for assessing the ministry of our church. We meet monthly, review First Parish church ministry concerns and also provide support and evaluation for the minister as part of her fellowship as a community minister. The Committee on the Ministry is intended to be a safe, sensitive and productive place to reflect on concerns about the church ministry. You are invited and encouraged to talk with the committee members about your enthusiastic support for the ministry of the church and any concerns that you have with Rev. Marguerite or with other aspects of our church ministry. This is a confidential committee so that all parties feel confident in their ability to share information in a thoughtful process. The committee members include Walt Anson, Betty Gibson, Lynne Warrin and Rev. Marguerite.