



February 2008

First Parish News

Upcoming Events:

- February 3rd
Sunday Service 10 am
“The Ties That Bind
and Set Us Free”
Rev. Marguerite
Sheehan
- February 10th
Sunday Service 10am
“Dear God; Dear
Me”
Johanna Conant,
Guest speaker
- February 17th
Sunday Service 10am
“Dedicated to the
Ones We Love”
Rev. Marguerite
Sheehan
- February 24th
Sunday Service 10am
TBA
Rev. Stanley Dahlman

First Parish Website:
northfieldunitarian.org

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First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

Announcements

Preview of upcoming services:

March	2	Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	9	Congregational meeting
	16	Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	23	Easter – Rev. Marguerite
	30	Johanna Conant
April	6	Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	13	Rev. Stanley Dahlman
	20	Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	27	Johanna Conant

RE NEWS

Since September, the RE class has been meeting every Sunday in our brightly painted room and have been having a grand time. The nine girls, ranging in age from 2 to 8, are bright and energetic and we have spent the past months getting to know each other.

After we are sung out by the congregation, we start our time together in a circle sharing our own joys and concerns. Typically, we then read a picture book and end with an arts and crafts project. This schedule varies depending on holidays or current events that need to be discussed or planned. We have discussed several of the UU principles including the importance of caring about the environment and respecting each other’s feelings. In an effort to make the children involved in the church, the group sang two songs at the Christmas Eve service. Thanks to Steve and Cary and their musical talents, the singing was spirited and seemed to add to the joy of the occasion. The girls loved being a part of the service and I think it would be important to include them somehow every year. In this same spirit, we have started a “Valentine Buddy” project that will help the children connect with a member of the congregation that they may not be familiar with and make a valentine card for that person. Hopefully, a friendly relationship will be ignited and

continue throughout the year. This Sunday, February 3rd is “Sunday Sundaes” and over ice cream sundaes, after the service, valentines will be exchanged. I have appreciated the tremendous help of Nicole and Megan almost every week and have been very grateful when anyone else pops down to lend a hand. I am having lots of fun with the girls and the time goes by very quickly every week. Anyone interested in sharing ideas for projects to do this spring would be welcome. We are hoping to have a service that involves the children and anyone who wants to contribute their talents to making this happen, please let me know.

Deb Potee

COFFEE HOUR

We are always looking for volunteers to bring refreshments for our coffee hour following each Sunday service. Please remember to use the sign-up sheet in the downstairs hallway.

FOOD COLLECTION

Remember to bring canned or dry goods (each Sunday) for the hungry in our own Franklin County. The youth will collect these foods as part of our Sunday Offerings and will be taking these contributions to a local food pantry.

Last week Tammy delivered the food, that had been collected, to Katie’s Cupboard. This is a recently opened food pantry right here in Northfield. (see article in the Northfield Newsletter). There will be more information from Tammy about Loaves & Fishes and Katie’s Cupboard in next month’s First Parish newsletter

Saturday – March 1st 5:00 pm

A Community Pot Luck & Game Night at First Parish – stay tuned for more details!!

Minister's Corner

Have you seen it? Have you felt it? Are you starting to believe it? Seen, felt, believed that we have turned a corner on winter and spring really is coming! Well, maybe it is because Dorrie and I were able to take a few days to vacation in Florida (at a UU Bed and Breakfast by the way). Maybe having those few days in the warmth, walking by the ocean, watching the spoonbills dancing on the water, has distorted my vision. Coming back to a foot of snow fallen and more recently 24 hours without heat in our house has taken the edge off. But still, when I am out walking if I keep my vision lifted off the snowy surface and even past the barren trees, I can see the change in the light and I do feel, believe that spring is on its way.

But still, for the most part, February in New England remains a time for hunkering down and going within. At our first service in January we talked about taking this winter time as a community to focus inwardly so that we might see even more clearly who we are as a people and a faith community. I suggested that you each reflect on what or who is most important in your life and how well you are honoring that "most important" factor. And then, to think about your life as a church member and to reflect on how you are helping the church move toward what is most important. These are hunkering down reflections. Have you been able to take some quiet time to consider these questions?

The Parish Committee is taking our February meeting to do some of that reflection as well. We are going to set aside some time to sit in quiet and ask each other who we are, why we are here, what we hope and dream for First Parish now and in the future. As your elected leaders, the Parish Committee should not only be the "planners and the organizers" of the daily life of the church, but also the dreamers. Our hope is to spark some ideas of our own and then to bring those sparks back to you as a congregation later in the spring. Maybe, just maybe, our hunkering down can help direct us toward ways of deepening our lives and making a greater impact in our world. First Parish is a church in the "free tradition". This means that there are no greater authorities than us to mandate, or even to gently suggest what it means to "be church." There is a freedom in such a tradition and there is also a responsibility. May we take the time to go within, to talk with each other, to work together to live out this "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." The groundhog may or may not be doing "deep work" in February, but we certainly are.

In Faith, Reverend Marguerite
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This Month in Unitarian Universalist History

This is a new monthly column dedicated to celebrating some milestones and anniversaries from Unitarian Universalist history. The information is taken from the book [This Day in Unitarian Universalist History](#) by Frank Shulman. If your interest is piqued by these milestones and you would like to review this book, just let me know! Rev. Marguerite

February 3, 1821

Elizabeth Blackwell, best known as America's first woman physician, was born on this day. Blackwell was friends with Florence Nightingale, a well known Unitarian nurse. Elizabeth Blackwell wrote about physical hygiene for women, a subject that was considered offensive and taboo and she later became a professor of gynecology at the London School of Medicine for Women.

Feb. 12, 1855

Fannie Barrier Williams was born in Brockport, New York. She was an African American teacher, whose family joined All Soul Church (Unitarian) in Chicago. Williams helped establish the club movement for African Americans to meet, discuss politics and develop talents. She was the co-founder of the Frederick Douglas Center (1905) a predecessor of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Urban League. She died in 1944.

Feb. 28, 1901

Linus Carl Pauling was born in Portland Oregon. He helped integrate chemistry with quantum theory and founded the discipline now known as molecular biology. When the atomic bomb was developed Pauling became a pacifist. He was a member of the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles California. He received the Nobel Peace prize in 1955. Pauling died in 1994 at the age of 93

Pathways to Forgiveness

Pathways to Forgiveness is the title of a two evening event to be held on Wednesday evenings March 5th and March 12th at First Congregational Church in Greenfield from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. The church is located at 43 Silver Street in Greenfield.

The Franklin County Interfaith Council (which First Parish is a member of), Greenfield Community College, Temple Israel and Our Lady of Peace Church are sponsoring these events. Please consider coming!

On Wednesday March 5th, Joseph Sebarenzi, who teaches conflict resolution in Brattleboro and was once leader of parliament in his home country Rwanda will be speaking about his family's experience in the genocide of 1994. During that time he lost seven siblings and numerous other relatives. Over the years he has been a strong advocate for peace and reconciliation instead of revenge and hate. He was forced to leave Rwanda in the wake of a plot to assassinate him.

Mr. Sebarenzi has been an executive for national and international organizations and is a regular speaker on BBC and voice of America and has much to offer us on the subject of forgiveness and reconciliation.

On Wednesday March 12th discussion in facilitated small groups will be focusing on Pathways to Forgiveness in communities and families.

The public is invited and urged to attend these two important evenings on behalf of peace in our world.

Youth on the Move - Bridging Partnerships!

Please hold the date – Sunday March 2nd – to welcome two youth from the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence who will be sharing the pulpit with me at First Parish. They will be talking about their trip with other Unitarian Universalist youth who traveled to Transylvania last summer. The Northampton youth got to visit their “partner church,” learned more about the Transylvanian roots of our faith and had a great international experience. I was excited to hear them present their experience a few weeks ago and asked them if they would come up and “partner” with us by traveling to Northfield. Please come to church on Sunday and invite any friends who might like to hear about this youth adventure.

In faith, Rev. Marguerite