

January 2010

First Parish News



Upcoming Events:

- January 3, Sunday service and RE 10am
- January 10, Sunday service and RE 10am
- January 17, Sunday service and RE 10am
- January 24, Sunday service and RE 10am
- January 30, Country Breakfast
- January 31, Sunday service and RE 10am

Individual Highlights:

Church News 2

Minister's Corner 3

First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

Announcements

Pastoral Friends Needed!

At our most recent Committee on the Ministry, the committee was talking about how well our church cares for our members. We talked about how we are usually able to reach out when people are ill and might want a visit from a church friend. We noted how wonderful it is when someone arrives with a pot of soup when a family member is in the hospital or when someone has a new baby! We talked about how much good a phone call or a card can do when we have not seen a member or friend on a while. Many people in our congregation spontaneously reach out to each other and that is what a community church should be. And yet sometimes we think that "somebody else" must be doing this. Or "somebody else" must have thought to check in with her/him. And sometimes "nobody" does. And so, the Committee on the Ministry wants to ask you, our members and friends, if you would like to intentionally be a "pastoral friend". All that means is would you like to be called if it comes to our attention that someone in our church family is in need?

Would you like to be called to make a visit or a phone call, cook up a pot of soup, or send a note to a friend in need? If so, please give Betty Gibson or Reverend Marguerite a phone call and we will keep you in mind if there is a need. This is just one more way that we can show each other how caring our congregation is. Even in a small town, and a small church, small acts of caring make a big difference.

Thank you!

Church Supper, January 16th, Saturday 6:00 pm.

Comfort Foods - Chicken Pot Pie, Shephards Pie, Macaroni and Cheese, Salad and Dessert.

As always, we need volunteers to cook and serve.

Contact Ruth for more information.

Minister's Corner

Ring out wild bells, to the wide sky...Ring out, wild bells, and let him die...ring out the old, ring in the new." Alfred Lord Tennyson counsels us in this season to ring out the old, ring it out and let it die and then, ring in the new. As we tumble into the year 2010, I expect that many of us will be ringing our bells and hoping that the New Year will ring in goodness, peace, and blessings.

Each Sunday when I am in the pulpit I get to go upstairs with the children to ring our church bell as a way of starting our worship service. Maybe you also have had the chance to do this with them. The children, whoever wants to climb those cold and steep bell tower stairs, gather with me around the bell rope and we get ready to pull. It is kind of like coming into a huddle for a football game! First we decide how many times we should pull the rope. Last year we usually chose a small number, like three or four times. But this year we are going for bigger numbers, more rings, and a bigger sound. Once we decided to go for 12 pulls on the bell cord! And then we say "OK town, did you hear? Church is beginning!" And they are proud that we have made a big sound. They are proud that the town knows we are here. They are ringing out wild bells and ringing in new ones too.

This past year has been a good one for our church. We have a beautiful new painted church building. We have begun a new lay lead worship service; our Chalice Sundays. We are welcoming in new and old friends to our church services. We have an informative and beautiful new church brochure that we are ready to put to use. Our children's program is blossoming with more children and more input from the congregation. I could go on and on and I bet that each of you has your list too.

During our first service of the New Year we will have a chance to reflect on how we, each in our own ways, is ringing out and ringing in wild bells. Tennyson ends his poem with the following stanza. "Ring in the valiant man and free, the larger heart, the kindlier hand. Ring out the

darkness of the land, ring in the Christ that is to be" Tennyson's language may not be yours or mine but I believe that many of us find that his hope and his sentiment still ring true. How do we, the members and friends of First Parish, ring in freedom, compassion, kindness and service? How can we ring out darkness and ring in the love that is to be? How loudly and how often are we ringing out the wild bells of First Parish? Are we up to 12 times? Can you hear the sound of our bell?

Peace in the New Year, Marguerite