

March 2010

# First Parish News



## Upcoming Events:

- March 7, Sunday service and RE 10am
- March 14 Congregational Meeting and RE 10am followed by Sundaes Social
- March 21, Sunday service and RE 10am
- March 27, Country Breakfast
- March 28, Sunday service and RE 10am

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*First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter*

## Announcements

### Music Notes from Lynne

Calling all Adults and Children who had fun singing together at Christmas! I am rehearsing with whoever shows up anytime after 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings for Spring and Easter music. We have begun a 'Jazz Alleluia' and a few others. No experience necessary. Just bring your body with your vocal chords and we'll mold it all into glorious sound!

Also, we have some guest musicians lining up to give our services a lift this Spring: Emmalouise St.Amand, soprano, Dorota Wilhelmi-Kohl, violinist, John Hann, tenor, and Kim Farmer/ Karina Berenson, violin duo. If you have something to offer, let me know.

Also, don't forget to mark your calendar for Saturday evening, May 15th at 7:30 for the "Swinging Duos" - Chris Harris and Lynne Walker, piano, with Charlie Hunting, baritone, joining in a Fundraiser for the First Parish Unitarian Church Clock Tower renovation.

~Lynne

### Congregational Meeting - March 14th

At a recent Parish Committee meeting we decided it would be nice to update folks about what is happening at First Parish. This will happen at our March 14th Congregational Meeting. Come to hear about:

- The Website
- Chalice Services
- Budget summary
- RE
- Pledging Event
- Parish Committee
- Trustees

- Northfield Food Pantry
- Breakfasts
- Dinners
- Christmas Fair
- Thanksgiving Dinner
- Opportunity to serve on a committee

Plan to attend and hear what is going on at First Parish.

Submitted by Betty Gibson, Parish Committee Chair

# Church News

## More Generosity from First Parish Members

Members of First Parish can usually be counted on to open their wallets for a good cause and this month there are two such causes that needed our support. The first concerns the response to the UUA Service Committee's request for funds to be sent to Haiti to help with the rebuilding after the disastrous earthquake in January. We are sending a total of \$242 for Haiti earthquake relief - \$115 in checks written directly to the UUSC and \$127 in a church check that covered the collection in cash from parishioners.

The second cause that we supported was the UUSC's annual "Guest At Your Table" drive that raises money over several weeks starting around Thanksgiving and suggests that everyone in a household contribute their spare change over the period. This year we are sending \$58.50 to the UUSC for this fund drive. This makes a total of over \$300 that First Parish members will send to the UUSC for the benefit of those less fortunate than we are. Do pat yourself on the back for just a second - you deserve it!

One small bit of humor that you may appreciate is that, along with the change that I found in the boxes, was a small "pearl" button that looks like it might have come from a blouse. So, if you have lost such a button, let me know and I'll return it to you - I don't think the UUSC could make good use of it anyway!

Thanks to all who helped.

~Noelle

## Updates from the Board of Trustees

The First Parish Board of Trustees has been busy behind the scenes on a variety of projects. Here are a few of the items we've been working on so far this year:

In January, the Board submitted our application to the CPA Committee in hopes of obtaining a CPA grant for restoration of the clock atop First Parish, known as the "Town Clock." If the funding is approved at Town Meeting, the restoration work would ideally take place this summer, and we would once again have a functioning clock atop our steeple. Our proposal was also discussed, and deemed eligible for presentation to the Town, during a February 11th public meeting hosted by the CPA committee.

The Trustees oversaw the replacement of our water line, which leads into the building from the water line operated by the Town. A new faucet was also installed

in the kitchen sink. Both of these efforts were necessary measures taken to repair the drastic drop in water pressure the building had been experiencing, and other structural instabilities. The Trustees would especially like to thank our trusty Sexton, Walter Anson, for his hours of hard work and vigilance in supervising the extensive work done in replacing the water line.

Board of Trustees President Paul Bocko, in consultation with our financial advisor, has been at work outlining a five-year plan intended to "ensure the consistent growth of the church's investments." Our endowment has suffered a significant loss in the wake of the tumultuous world economic situation, but remains sound and strong, with the potential for growth as the economy (we hope!) turns around over the next five years. In other financial news, we have worked out a stable plan to pay off the loan taken out to fund last summer's exterior painting job.

We are also holding an ongoing "Bulb Drive" to fund the purchase of new, energy efficient light bulbs and fixtures. Look for the fancy poster in the Webster Room! Anyone can "adopt a bulb" by signing up on a sheet, with your name next to the bulbs you wish to purchase. Once all the new bulbs are purchased and installed, the energy savings will start saving us money immediately and help make us a greener congregation.

What's next for the Board?

- We are always looking to recruit new Trustees - if interested, speak to Paul or any Trustee for more information on how you can help to serve First Parish.

- We are looking to identify and apply for additional grants to fund our many ongoing renovation needs.

- Some of these renovation projects can be accomplished by our very own membership, and we'll be announcing dates this spring when volunteers can pitch in to do some painting (interior and exterior) and other minor repair jobs. Roll up your sleeves, grab your toolkit, summon up your inner handyman, and come join the party! Dates to be announced.

- Further down the line, we are beginning the process of discussing exciting renovations to the kitchen, in cooperation with the Parish Committee, and the Breakfast & Dinner Committees.

Our next meeting is slated to be a joint meeting with the Parish Committee, which is, as all our meetings are, open to everyone. We value your input!

~Submitted by Michael Bird

# Minister's Corner

Ah, can you smell and feel the spring coming on? I can, even now in late February. The birds are changing their songs. I saw a pussy willow tree in full bloom. And the sun, the sun is getting stronger every day. Of course with the snow melting we get to see other treasures too. Plastic bags that flew up into the trees and lodged there, trash lining the edges of the road, a pair of once frozen gloves now lying brown and soggy in someone's yard. We have it all and as for me that is OK. It all says the melt is on and for that I am thrilled.

People are coming out of the winter too. It has been great to see some of our church friends who have not been able to make it to services much this winter coming to church! When we see a face of a child or adult who we have been missing we light up and the room feels more complete. You know you have been missed when you come to church on Sunday or to one of our breakfasts or dinners and you get a big hug! So hurrah, spring is here and we are too.

If you would like to get together with me sometime other than on Sunday I would be very happy to find a good time and place to do just that. Maybe you want to talk about church life, or home life, or just life itself. Maybe you have been thinking of a sermon topic that you would like to explore with me. Or maybe you have an idea of how our church might make a difference in our community. Or any number of things. Please do give me a call or email and we can get together. I love being your minister and look forward to walking and talking with you.

We have turned a corner in our church year. Next month we go back to our beautiful Sanctuary for Easter Sunday on April 4th. I hope to have this be a kind of "home coming" with children and adults all gathering together singing Alleluias, decorating with flowers, and bringing life where there has been none for the past months. Easter morning I will be participating in the sunrise service at the Mt Hermon campus. It is a lovely Ecumenical service; short, sweet, and a great way to start the day with

friends and neighbors. The United Parish in Bernardston offers a tasty pancake breakfast after the service. So, come, see the sunrise, welcome in Easter, eat pancakes and then come back to Northfield and open up our Sanctuary. No matter the weather. It will be a glorious day.

~Rev. Marguerite

## Pastoral Friends

- Jean Shepherd is home after a stay at Charlene Manor. We hear that she continues to be high spirited and happy to receive visitors. Just give a call at home and come on over!
- Hilda Stewart has undergone surgery in Boston and is now on the road to recovery. Alex sends his best to us and continues to appreciate all the loving thoughts and prayers that have come their way.

## Thinking about becoming a member of First Parish?

Are you considering becoming a formal member of First Parish? Membership is a statement on your part that says that you are committed to this church as your "spiritual home." It is also a way for the congregation to embrace you and your family and to link arms together. Legal members have the right and privilege of voting at our Annual Meeting in June and thereby being able to make decisions about our budget, our ministry, programs and many more aspects of congregational life. If you are thinking about becoming a member of First Parish please talk to Reverend Marguerite or email her at [msheehan222@gmail.com](mailto:msheehan222@gmail.com). New members can "sign the book" in private or in a simple and lovely member recognition service on a Sunday this Spring. Think about it!