

January – 2012

# First Parish News



## Upcoming Events:

- January 7<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday 8 to 10am  
Country Breakfast
- January 8<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 11 am  
Round Robin at  
Bernardston UU
- January 15<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
Rev. Marguerite  
Sheehan  
Bernardston UU  
joining us
- January 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
Chalice Circle  
Service
- January 29<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
Rev. Marguerite  
Sheehan
- February 5<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
Rev. Marguerite  
Sheehan
- February 12<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
Chalice Circle  
Service
- February 19<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10 am  
Rev. Marguerite  
Sheehan

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

Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup> we will join  
Bernardston UU at 11:00am

Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup> Bernardston will  
join our service at 10:00am

### You are invited to a Gathering of the Elders!

On Tuesday January 10 at 2PM (snow date January 17<sup>th</sup>) we are having a "gathering of the elders" at Lynne Warrin's home at 42 Ashuelot Road. By elders I mean both elder in years and also elder in wisdom and life experience. Many churches have formal positions called elders who, because of their senior status may be drawn to service in the church like being a listening ear and loving heart for those who are new to coming to church, sharing in pastoral care, leading worship or being in a leadership position on committees. In many ways our church has functioned in this way without using the title of elder. At First Parish we have had a bit of a "sea change" lately with some of our "youngers" taking on more of the committee leadership and some of the "elders" gratefully stepping back. This is a good thing for the most part but we do not want to lose sight of the older members of the church who have the wisdom, life and church experience that comes with years.

As well as referring to roles in the church, being an elder also can mean being someone who is in a new stage of life; perhaps retired or working fewer hours, maybe with children grown, having different health concerns, being widowed or single, playing a role as a grandparent, and for many people looking at the ongoing life question of purpose.

First Parish is an inter-generational church. We celebrate our children, our youth and younger adults, our middle age adults, and our elders. This gathering is an opportunity for the elders to meet as a group with me as your minister, to talk about the challenges and the richness of this stage in life. It is a time to hear from other people who may be walking in your shoes or who may be having a very different experience of aging in our church. We may decide after gathering once that an ongoing group would be fun and helpful. If you want more information please call or email me. If you would like a ride, Betty Gibson is willing to set up car pools.

Please join us – we need you!

In peace, Marguerite (413-253-9938 and [msheehan222@gmail.com](mailto:msheehan222@gmail.com))

### RE News

December ended on a happy with a very successful participation in the Christmas Eve Service with terrific readings and musical performances by the children. Ruthanne and I were immensely proud of all of them. We also had an enthusiastic visit by Adria and Austin Paulson who spoke about their hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro on December 10th. We don't at the moment have anyone signed up for January or February but hopefully that will change soon. In between visits, Ruthanne and I will continue with our planned curriculum. Again, please think about sharing an experience, a philosophy or a talent with the RE children. I can guarantee a captive audience and lots of nice thank you cards after the fact.

Deb and Ruthanne

# First Parish Happenings (Cont.)

## Notes from Lynne

**Music at First Parish** during December brought much enjoyment to many people as youth and adults, instrumentalists, ensemble and solo singers, lent their time, talent and enthusiasm to an unprecedented variety of music for the celebrations of **Winter Solstice**, (Vocal Ensemble sang "Dark of Winter", Jim Scott's arrangement of "Longest Night" and the "Celtic Blessing") and **Christmas Eve** services.

For the third year in a row, adult musicians joined in a Pre-Christmas Eve service musical offering of holiday music ranging from nostalgic songs "White Christmas" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas" to "Ave Maria", and choral renditions of the "Coventry Carol" and "In the Bleak Mid-Winter". Soloists were Carey and Steve Baskowski, Stephanie Ciccarello, John Hann, Ann Linge, Ruthanne Paulson, Lynne Walker, and Karina Berenson on violin.

The service music itself served to highlight a great and wonderful variety of readings, read ably by both children from the Religious Education program and adults including the Rev. Alex Stewart, Michael Bird, and Ann Linge. Vocal solos were sung by Stephanie Ciccarello ("Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"), John Hann ("Mary's Baby Boy"), and an original song performed by Terry McKeon and children, Rowan and Calla McKeon ("Once There was a Babe"). Groups performing included the Vocal Ensemble, Men's Ensemble, and Women's Ensemble each contributing to the meaning and beauty of the service which ended with "Silent Night" sung first by all the children, then by the congregation with a soprano descant, followed by "Dona Nobis Pacem" sung as a round by the Vocal Ensemble from the balcony.

For their contributions in making Christmas Eve at First Parish 2011 a musically rich and memorable one, many thanks go to the musicians mentioned above plus the following adults: Chris Harris, Dick Moore, Michael Bird, Paul Bocko, and Richard Fitzgerald and to the children: Anna Baskowski, Fiona and Genevieve Bird, Nina and Bailey Bocko, Kaylee and Kensey Gibson, Sadie MacDonald, Rowan and Calla McKeon, Vivienne and Juliette Potee, Ella and Jane Potee-Martin.

We hope to continue to make vocal and instrumental music offerings in the New Year 2012 at the **third service of each month**. Suggestions are welcome. Practices will continue to take place at 9:15 on the first, second and third Sundays of each month.

Lynne Walker, Music Director

## Notes about the Christmas Fair

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for a truly great Christmas Fair experience this year. Large profits notwithstanding, people make it a success or failure and this year's Fair was a resounding success. The silent auction was the engine driving us, with Ruth and Karina (and others) working extra hard to provide the buying public with items that would bring people into First Parish to bid - and the results were astounding. In addition, we had the best bake table I've ever seen, with Stephanie and Deb in attendance. The food items - fudge, peanut brittle, toffee, truffles, pizzelle, cookies, hermits (thanks, Lisa), etc. - were terrific and the beautiful packaging made everything all the more special. Thanks to everyone who baked or otherwise contributed. The crafts table did well, with Mary Anne's sock monkeys right up front catching everyone's eye. The quilt raffle brought in a respectable amount and both quilts stayed in Northfield, going home with thrilled winners. As usual, gingerbread cookies were a highlight and sold out fast - the decorating crew (Ruth, Karina, Stephanie, Tammy Gibson, Betty, Sarah and Erika) did a fabulous job as always. Betty and Marie worked so hard this year that the Thrift Shop made more than ever before. If you want to know how many people come just for the Thrift Shop, all you have to do is look at the early birds who crowd in before we're open - the whole front hall was filled with people at 8:35! And finally, the luncheon crew did a beautiful job with paninis, chili, corn chowder and cornbread. One luncheon guest was heard to say that we should think of selling the corn chowder commercially!! The only catch was that our wreaths never made it. But they can certainly be brought back next year, especially since our supplier felt so badly about their non-arrival that they sent us a check to cover the loss - how terrific was that? So, thanks to all who made the Fair such a great success. We managed to make First Parish both dollars and friends this year - may we continue this tradition on into the future.

Noelle Anson

## Other Items of Interest

### *What is the Committee on the Ministry?*

This committee was formed for the purpose of hearing any concerns that arise at First Parish. We are a group of individuals who listen to concerns from the members and friends of First Parish and the minister. These concerns are discussed with the hopes of coming to a solution that will be acceptable to everyone.

If you have concerns, please be assured that they will be handled in confidence by the committee members.

Tom Adams, Betty Gibson  
Lynne Warrin & Rev. Marguerite

## *What is Chalice Circle Sunday ?*

Chalice Circle Sundays are lay lead worship Sundays which include all the typical components of a worship service (hymns, prayers, stories, offering) and instead of a sermon or message the congregation reflects together on a spiritual topic. The intent is to learn to engage with spiritual reflection and deep listening to each other and to build fellowship within our congregation. Lay members volunteer to choose a topic and develop a few questions for reflection and to help guide the congregation through a simple reflection process.

## *What is the Interfaith Council?*

The Interfaith Council of Franklin County is a 20 year old organization that is devoted to interfaith dialogue and social transformation. As the mission statement says "We honor the rich variety of religious and spiritual traditions of our community, and gather to create a mosaic that respects differences while reinforcing all that unites us. We strive to be a forum for greater understanding, a vehicle for spiritual enrichment, a force for justice and peace, a voice for the vulnerable and defenseless, and an advocate for the wise stewardship of the earth and its resources." First Parish is a voting member of the Council and presently Reverend Marguerite attends as our church representative but we also have two slots for other delegates if anyone in the church would like to attend monthly potluck meetings or even just come once or twice to get more familiar with the Council and its programs. The Council is meeting in March at our church! All are welcome to attend.

The purposes of the Interfaith Council include:

- \*Creating a forum across religious lines where people can meet, discuss, and reach out to each other and to others.
- \*Developing a vehicle for greater understanding of the collective riches of diverse religious roots and varied spiritual traditions.
- \*Offering a focus for action toward social issues of common concern.
- \*Fostering the opportunity for common public celebrations and remembrances.

Over the years the Council has sponsored educational forums, interfaith conversation groups, a Peace Maker award ceremony, a homeless warming shelter in Greenfield, a Holocaust Remembrance Service and a place where social service programs can meet people from local faith communities to garner interest and support for their work. If you would like more information about this small but very active group of people from very different faith traditions you can ask Reverend Marguerite about it, or come to a meeting or check out the website <http://www.interfaithcounciloffranklincounty.org>. We are proud that our church is a contributing member to this organization and would love to have more church members and friends involved in the good work and fellowship of the Council. Check it out!

## **Minister's Column**

Happy New Year to Everyone!

Here we are at the formal beginning of winter and as I write we have had no significant snow other than that wild Trick or Treat snow in October. I for one am enjoying the ease of getting around without snow or ice but also recognize that this has been and continues to be one of the strangest weather seasons in my life. It reminds me of the old folk tale where a farmer's horse runs away and the village tries to console him on his "bad luck." His response is "Good luck, bad luck, who knows?" The horse returns several weeks later with 4 mares and when the villagers congratulate him on his "good luck" he says "Good luck, bad luck, who knows?" Later, his son is riding one of the horses and breaks his leg (bad luck?) but is then not conscripted when the army comes along and his father says again, "Good luck, bad luck, who knows?" May we take each day, no matter the weather, and every New Year with the equanimity of the farmer, keeping our minds open to what happens next! I take this philosophy with me as the year 2012 begins and as we soon step into the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of our church year. I am grateful for all the wonderful people of all ages who are part of our church community and I continue to be in awe of how much this congregation does to "keep the lights on" and keep the message of liberal religion and ecumenical connections alive and meaningful in the village of Northfield. While some days we might think "bad luck", like when the wreathes did not show up for our Christmas Fair, we end up being surprised by how much fun the silent auction was. I for one hope that the congregation does keep up the wreath making tradition because it is such a great time for fellowship, but I am also curious as to what might be around the corner for "fun and fund raising." The New Year that begins celestially on the Winter Solstice, and when we turn the page of the calendar to January 1, 2012, is a time to take stock and to look forward. As I look forward to the winter and spring church season I am looking forward to our "gathering of the elders" in January (see the invitation in this newsletter if you inadvertently did not get one.) I am looking forward to more church suppers, more game nights, more Chalice Sundays, more ecumenical services and the continuing growth of our Religious Education program. I am looking forward to more discernment as a congregation about the purposes of our gathering. Our religious ancestors built our church as bedrock in the frontier town of Northfield so that there would be a place in the center of town to gather for civic work, social support and worship. As we slide into the year 2012 I ask each of our members and friends to ponder the question "Why are we here today and what do we hear the Siren of Life and Love calling us to become?" Is it good luck or bad luck that our children are growing up and needing more space in the building? Is it good luck or bad luck that on some Sunday's we are busting out of our Webster Room? In the end what does it all say about who First Parish is in 2012? I am lovingly curious about the future. Are you?

Happy New Year, Reverend Marguerite

Attached is a Flyer, this will start a little earlier and will be very family friendly. I have plans for Ping Pong, Charades room, and other games. There will be 2 poker tables, Everyone will simply be donating 50% of there entry fee to the church, and 50% to their charity. The only bonus twist is that my business will donate an extra \$50.00 to the charity of the biggest winner at the Poker Tables. I am going to try an increase this number by asking for small donations from some other business in the community. Please post the flyer wherever you can!!



# CHARITY GAME NIGHT FEB 4<sup>TH</sup> ( 6:30ish TO 10:30ish ) NORTHFIELD



FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN CHURCH

PLAY FOR 1 OF THE FOLLOWING 5 CHARITIES:

Warm the Children - Recorder Coat Program

Loaves and Fishes (Northfield Based charity for food, meds, car repair, etc).

Franklin County Hospice

Dakin Animal Shelter

Meals on Wheels (Council on Aging)

SNACKS, HOME MADE BAKED GOODS, DRINKS, MUSIC PROVIDED !! YOU PERSONALLY ARE GUARANTEED TO LOSE \$10.00 (MINIUMUM "BUY IN" COST TO PLAY) Poker Table, Board games, Ping Pong, Charades, and others –BRING your own if you like!

50% OF YOUR ENTRY GOES TO YOUR CHOSEN CHARITY, 50% TO THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.

THE BIG POKER WINNER FOR THE NIGHT EARNS AN EXTRA \$50.00 TOWARDS THEIR CHARITY (Donated by Z-Foot Therapist-Z-Coil Shoes [www.zcoil.com](http://www.zcoil.com))

For more info call Terry McKeon at 413-498-5431 or emailing [Zcoil@comcast.net](mailto:Zcoil@comcast.net)  
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