

November 2007

# First Parish News



## Upcoming Events:

- October 27<sup>th</sup>  
Breakfast 8-10am
- October 28<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10am  
"Outside the Box"  
Rev. Stanley Dahlman
- November 4<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10am  
Membership Sunday  
"Belonging"  
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- November 11<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10am  
Guest speaker –  
Johanna Conant
- November 18<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday Service 10am  
"Guest at Your Table"  
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- November 25<sup>th</sup>  
Congregational Meeting 10am
- December 1<sup>st</sup>  
Christmas Fair

First Parish Website:  
[northfieldunitarian.org](http://northfieldunitarian.org)

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*First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter*

## Announcements

### First Parish announcements:

Preview of upcoming services:

December 2 Marguerite Sheehan  
9 Elaine Bomford  
16 Marguerite Sheehan  
22 Solstice Service  
24 Christmas Eve service  
30 Stanley Dahlman

### MUSIC NOTES:

On Sunday October 14th about 30 people thoroughly enjoyed the thoughtful musical presentations of Ferne Bork and Bruce Kahn, self-billed for this occasion as "Itinerant Preachers".

Their varied program centered upon an extension of Reverend Marguerite's previous Sunday Sermon on "What if the Hokey Pokey Is What It's All About?", by presenting personal comments around Bruce's own familial dealings of the impending death of his father. Music included the "Zen Gospel Singing", "The Water Is Wide", "Let the Joy Do Its Part", "Bridges", and their ever popular "How Can I Keep From Singing".

We were even treated to the unexpected appearance of Dan Tynan who added his color at the piano as well as vocally to several songs later in the hour. This warm, friendly, politically and environmentally active and talented couple (and trio) enjoy being with us, and hope to be back again next October to fill our building, our bodies and our souls with their magical music. lw

### Volunteers needed:

In order for the annual Thanksgiving meal to happen this year we need volunteers to come forward. Please consider helping out even for a short period of time. (See article on page 3)

### Notes from the Parish Committee:

If you are interested in or would like more information about becoming a member of First Parish please be in touch with Rev. Marguerite or a member of the Parish Committee.

A minister's report (summary of the various ministerial activities that Rev. Marguerite has taken part in during the month) is submitted to the Parish Committee at our monthly meeting. A copy of this report is available by contacting Betty Gibson.

### The Loaves and Fishes

This is a successful, ecumenical program which helps many families and individuals from Northfield during times of financial emergency needs and provides immediate, confidential and local help without the necessity of filling application forms and waiting for approval.

A combination of a Grant and annual fund-raising efforts of the 3 area churches provide for the funding of this program. Representatives from the Trinitarian Church, St. Patrick's Church and First Parish oversee the allocation of the fund.

The Loaves and Fishes Mission Statement is: "*To provide financial assistance to alleviate hunger and provide other essential assistance for families and/or individuals. This assistance is respectfully given to all applicants and without discrimination in regard to race, religious affiliation (or no affiliation), national origin, gender, age sexual orientation, veteran status or physical handicap.*"

If you would like more information about the program or would like to make a donation, be in touch with our representative, Tammy Pelletier or the program's contact person Ruth Gallagher, Treasurer.

# Minister's Corner

Many thanks to everyone who participated in our Installation of the Ministry service on Oct.7. From my point of view and from the feedback I have received the service was a success. It was a success I believe because it reaffirmed the commitment to ministry that this congregation has already made, as attested by our Statement of Fellowship. When we read the words of this statement on Sundays it is easy to gloss over the words, repeating them without much thought. Yet it is a powerful and a demanding statement and one that I encourage everyone to contemplate how well we are doing what we profess:

Love is the spirit of this church  
And service is its law  
This is our great covenant  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek the truth in love  
And to help one another.

As we enter the winter holiday season we are called as a community of faith to look closely at how we both give and receive in our world. We are called to look at how we teach our children, by our modeling and by our direct instruction, the expression of gratitude and the life of service ("love is the spirit of this church and service is its law.") In the spirit of love and service we at First Parish will be participating this season with many Unitarian Universalist churches in the Guests at Your Table program. This is an education and action program by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Each household will be given a box in which their family is encouraged to contribute financially to the UUSC which then distributes these funds to people in need all around the world. You will be hearing more about the Guests At Your Table throughout the month of November. Deb will be helping our children distribute and collect these boxes.

Another service that we are bringing back to First Parish is an ongoing food collection. The youth in the church will be collecting, each Sunday service (starting on Nov. 18) canned or dry goods 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. In this way all of us will be given the chance to offer something from our hearts and from our homes to our greater community. Cary and Tammy have agreed to work with the youth on this collection.

We are called to "help one another" and one of the best ways of helping ourselves is to help those around us. We do this in a big way in our Annual

Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Let's do it in some small but consistent ways as well. In these and so many other ways we participate in bringing peace on earth. What greater work can we do?

In faith,  
Rev. Marguerite

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## Committee on the Ministry Comes to First Parish!

The Parish Committee has appointed a new committee to help with communication between the minister and the congregation and to provide another avenue for assessing the ministry of our church. According to the Department of Ministry and Professional Leadership of the UUA, the role of the Committee on the Ministry "is to help strengthen the quality of ministry for the congregation. Its main task is to monitor, on a regular and continuing basis, the effectiveness of the congregation's ministry."

Our committee members (chosen with input from Rev. Marguerite and the Parish Committee) include Walt Anson, Helen Adams, Mary Anne Ladd and Rev. Marguerite. We will be meeting monthly and will use our time to check in on how the church ministry is going, supporting Rev. Marguerite on her professional development and conveying concerns raised by the congregation. As Rev. Marguerite is also an interfaith chaplain with the hospice program, our Committee on the Ministry can also participate in helping to support and evaluate her community ministry. This is a confidential committee so that all parties feel confident in their ability to share information in a thoughtful process.

How can First Parish members and friends be part of this work? 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 input will be then reviewed at our monthly meetings or at an earlier date if need be. The Committee on the Ministry is intended to be a safe and sensitive and productive place to reflect on concerns about the church ministry. On Oct 7<sup>th</sup> First Parish celebrated the formal installation of our church ministry. This committee is one way that we acknowledge and care for our minister and our ministry.

In faith, Rev. Marguerite (for the Committee on the Ministry)

## Upcoming Events

## Christmas Fair Saturday, December 1, 2007

### Thanksgiving Meal Thursday, November 22, 2007 1:00pm First Parish, Unitarian Church

With Thanksgiving only one month away, the UU turkey crew is seeking volunteers and food donations for the annual ecumenical community Thanksgiving meal.

Last year was a great success. With the help of so many people from all local churches, 60 people were served a wonderful traditional Thanksgiving meal of turkey and all the fixin's.

People who came for comfort and a sense of community, as well as families who likely had no other options of a holiday meal for themselves and their children, dined, laughed, and shared a wonderful afternoon. Volunteers also delivered 20 meals to elders, and homebound who were most grateful to share in the holiday bounty.

Even though contributions of money are never solicited many felt compelled to do so, and the \$250.00 collected was then contributed to the Loaves and Fishes Fund, an ecumenical fund for Northfield families in need. And so "bounty" came full circle and touched the lives of many more! While donations of desserts and side-dishes are always appreciated and take a great deal of pressure off a small cooking crew, a commitment of time and assistance is also needed to feed so many in such a short period of time. It is not necessary to commit to the entire afternoon to be incredibly helpful.

- An hour of being a greeter (approximately 12:30-1:30) frees another person to prep food.
- An hour of serving (1-2:00pm) allows someone else to set up the dessert table.
- An hour of clean-up (3-4:00pm) helps others leave a little earlier – which is always greatly appreciated.

We hope you will choose to be involved in any capacity that you are able, and thank you for all that you have done for previous meals!

To volunteer to help, to contribute food, or to attend dinner please call:

Walt Anson  
Tammy Pelletier

The Christmas Fair will be coming soon!! There will be craft-making sessions, cone wiring, wreath making, just to name a few.

Making the Fair a success takes the effort of everyone at First Parish.

You will be receiving details of upcoming workbees, etc. soon.