

October– 2011

First Parish News



Upcoming Events:

- October 16th
Sunday Service 10 am
Rev. Marguerite
Sheehan Welcoming
Pot Luck
- October 23rd
Congregational
Meeting (Fair
Planning)
- October 30th
Sunday Service 10 am
Guest Speaker
- November 6th
Sunday Service 10 am
Rev. Marguerite
Sheehan Animal
Blessing
- November 13th
Sunday Service 10 am
Chalice Circle
- November 20th
Sunday Service 10 am
Rev. Marguerite
Sheehan
- November 27th
Wreath making and
Potluck

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First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

First Parish Happenings

Open House Service

First Parish will be holding an Open House service on Sunday, October 16th followed by a potluck in the Webster Room. All members of the congregation are encouraged to invite family, friends and others from the community at large to join us to learn what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist and how they may become a member.

Stephanie

UUWorld Magazine

If new members of First Parish would like to receive this magazine, I need to send your mailing address to the UUA for you to be eligible. Please email me your information and I will submit it to UUA. HLA57@comcast.net

Thanks, Helen Adams, Clerk.

Notes from the RE

We have begun the year with a new curricula that focuses on the seven principles and so far, our Sunday mornings have been busy and fun. Teaching, with Ruthanne, all the children rather than splitting up the group seems to have made a big difference and we no longer need to worry about the space issue. The children seem to like it and this past Sunday (Oct 9), we had our first outside visitor. Robin McKeon introduced the children to mindfulness and we did some activities around experiencing the moment by practicing being quiet, listening with our eyes shut and even the pleasures of slowly eating a single raisin. A good lesson for us all, it turned out great and a great addition to our week of looking at principle #3.

We are looking forward to Marie Ferre's visit in late October when she talks about headstones and some important UUs and perhaps a walk to the cemetery. We are still hoping for a special visitor for November and have an empty calendar in the new year, so be brave and sign up to share something of yourselves with the children.

Deb and Ruthanne

NOTES from LYNNE

**A Sunday 'Musicale'
At First Parish Unitarian Church
A benefit concert
for the United Way Fund for
Franklin County flood victims,
And the continuing restoration of the
Historic First Parish Clock Tower**

Sunday, October 23rd at 2:00 pm

Featuring Students of
Joseph Marchello, Instructor of guitar,
piano and composition
Lynne Walker, Instructor of piano and
voice
Co-Directors of

**Music For Life Studios
Northfield, MA
"Providing quality music instruction
since 1990"**

Beginning to Advanced students, Children
and Adults
playing Music from Bach to Boogie,
Spirituals and Original Compositions

**All are Invited
Bring Family and Friends
Free Will Donation
Refreshments**

50/50 CHARITY POKER NIGHT

OCT. 15TH
(7:30 PM TO 10:30ish)

1st Seasonal 50/50 Charity Poker Night

As a new fund raising idea, the Unitarian Church will play host to a Charity Poker night on Oct 15th from 7:30-10:30ish. The concept is that players will buy into the game for a Minimum of \$10.00 (Maximum \$20.00) Players will be given chips in value from 5cents up to \$1.00 chips and they can play at any table (approximately 5 players per table) 50% of ones' winnings for the night will be donated to their favorite charity, 50% will go to the "house", in this case our house of God (or great Celestial spirit, or _____). It will be dealers choice on the type of game played.

(insert preferred name here)

There has been great initial interest and I think we will have a full house on this but it requires recruitment from everyone. A flyer is attached that you can re-print and post at work, hand out to friends, or email on to those you know who might have an interest. We will limit the tables of 10, each with 5 players (50people). If you are not interested in Poker but want to help out let me know. We may need help in set up and take down, ensuring guest are well fed with homemade snacks, perhaps live guitar entertainment if anyone is so inclined?? (At least a good IPOD music mix to satisfy all ages).etc.

Suggested 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
Angel fund for ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease)

SNACKS, SODA, MUSIC PROVIDED

PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

TURNERS FALLS

On October 22, 2011, First Parish Unitarian Church will have a vending booth selling our famous panini sandwiches and whoopee pies at the 2nd Annual Pumpkin Festival in Turners Falls. Set-up begins at noon that day, with the festival running from 3pm-9pm. Cleanup is immediately after. We should be able to make a sizable amount of money due to the large numbers of people that attended last year. I am looking for volunteers to join a "Pumpkin Fest" committee. As you might imagine, we will need many hands in order to make this a financial success. It should also be lots of fun! Please talk to Carey Baskowski (cbaskowski@gmail.com) if you are interested in being a part of this committee, as I would like to meet soon so we can begin our planning. Thanks so much!

OTHER HAPPENINGS

The Hampshire Mosque invites you to the last installment of our fall lecture series:

Understanding Islam on Wednesday,

Oct. 19, at South Congregational Church in Amherst, Ma.

with guest speaker, **Dr. Ali Hazratji**.

Date: Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2011

Location: South Congregational Church,
Fellowship Hall
1066 South East St. Amherst,
MA 01002
Next to the Munson Library,
South Amherst Common

Topic: ***Shari'ah: Law for living.
Facts and fiction***

Guest speaker: Dr. Ali Hazratji

Time: 6:30 to 8:30pm

RSVP: interfaith@hampshiremosque.org

This event is FREE and open to everyone.
Please RSVP so that we are able to
accommodate everyone planning to attend.

****Refreshments will be served****

Minister's Column

I recently read a reflection by Helen Keller about how she, a woman who was blind from birth, could “see” the world of nature. Because I think that even we, who live in this paradise of the Pioneer Valley, often do not see our surroundings, I wanted to share it with you. It might shed some light for us on other ways that we may experience our worlds.

“I, who cannot see, find hundreds of things to interest me through mere touch. I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch, or the rough shaggy bark of a pine.... I feel the delightful, velvety texture of a flower, and discover its remarkable convolutions; and something of the miracle of Nature is revealed to me.”

Something of the miracle of nature is revealed to us through sight and touch, through fragrance and through sound, and through the touch of the cool air on our exposed skin. And something of the miracle of nature is also revealed as we bring ourselves closer to the people who walk with us. As we come closer to each other and are willing to touch and be touched by their presence, we learn not only about the other person but also about ourselves. We learn what turns us away, what entices us to come closer, what irritates us and what puzzles us. While the glory of nature can and hopefully does move us to give thanks for the beauty of this earth, I am even more passionate about how the up close and personal “touching” of people stretches our souls.

That is one of the reasons that we at First Parish do not just worship out in nature but also worship in our Sunday services, in our community dinners, in our committee meetings, and in every time we rub up against each other.

While some times these personal encounters are painful (when we are impatient with each other, when we disagree with each other, when we find ourselves judging each other..) if we take each encounter as a gift, we open ourselves up to the reality of our own limitations and the possibility of becoming something new. First Parish is a living, breathing laboratory for spiritual growth. Come on in and invite yourself to grow!

This month we are opening up our doors and welcoming our friends and neighbors to our “laboratory.” On Sunday October 16th we are having an Open House during our Sunday service and our coffee hour. We will not be putting our the church silver (although we do have an incredible silver communion service hiding out in the locked safe – now that is something to ponder on – communion locked away?) No, we will be welcoming visitors with our own simple and complicated selves. What will visitors experience when they touch our church? Will they find us to be welcoming and wanting to know about them? Will they learn about Unitarian Universalism not just through a sermon but through the way we take their hands?

I am looking forward to this Open House because it is one more way that we at First Parish can open our doors and open ourselves to the big wide world around us. So please, come to church on October 16th (and on every other day we gather!) and bring a friend or a neighbor. Invite them to your church and be open to how you and they are touched in this encounter. Just as fall brings us a glory of color, an Open House will bring us a glory of encounters!

Peace, Reverend Marguerite