

September 2008

First Parish News



Upcoming Events:

- September 7, Sunday service and RE 10am, "Gathering Again: A Water Communion"
- September 11 at 7pm, Candlelight Peace Vigil, Town Hall
- September 13, ArtsFest Booth
- September 14, Sunday service and RE 10am
- September 21, Sunday service and RE 10am, "We Affirm and Promote" # 1 Principle and Purpose"
- September 27, 6pm Breakfast 8-10am
- September 28, Sunday service and RE 10am

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First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

Announcements

First Parish announcements:

Thank You to Someone(s) With Wings!

In our last newsletter we asked if someone and a friend might take our Sunday food collection under their wings. Happily, Jessie Wiggins and granddaughter Jill, and Mo Spaulding have come forth and are already getting our collection underway. Jessie and Jill will handle collecting the food (that we all bring in!) and Mo will be sure to get it to Katie's Cupboard. As we mentioned, this looks like an especially challenging year for individuals and families as food and fuel costs are all rising. A consistent donation from First Parish may help an elder or a perhaps a family not need to make a hard choice between warmth and nutrition. Thank you Jessie, Jill, Mo and the entire congregation.

Conversation Circles and New to UU

Are you interested in talking with other members and friends of First Parish about The Big Questions of Life (and some small ones too?) How about having a time every month to sit quietly, listen deeply, and reflect in a caring group about spiritual and religious ideas? If this appeals to you, come to the Webster Room on the first Wednesday of the month starting on October 1st at 7PM. The Circle groups are intended to help build community and friendship while exploring issues of faith and action in our lives. Join us and bring a friend

I am also interested in offering a one or two session adult class on being a Unitarian Universalist (New to UU?) This class, in the fall or winter, would

investigate what it means to us to be Unitarian Universalists, the history of our Association and our own First Parish, the variety of theologies that our members identify with and the meaning of church membership. If you might like to participate in such a class get in touch with me and we can look at good times for interested participants. I would love a co-leader for this class too, so if this intrigues you, let me know. — Rev. Marguerite

Water Water Everywhere

September 7th is our Ingathering Service and Water Communion. On this first Sunday of our church year we will gather together to participate in a simple ceremony for which you are invited to bring a small amount of water from your summer adventures (including the many days of rainy weather!) We will blend the waters together, symbolizing the connections of our faith community and the many sources of inspiration that we draw on in our UU traditions. Later on in the year we will be using this water as part of a blessing for any children we are being dedicated in a naming ceremony. (speaking of which, if any parents would like to have such a ceremony this year for your children let me know so we can arrange the details.) Of course, in First Parish style, after our September 7th service we will have a potluck lunch. So along with your water, bring a treat to share!

Candle Light Vigil for Peace

The Northfield Progressive Group is organizing a Candle Light Vigil for Peace in front of the Northfield Town Hall on September 11th at 7pm. All are Welcome!

Minister's Corner

Welcome back to church! I am writing this column on the evening after our incredibly delicious lasagna dinner. My belly is full of delicious flavors. My mind is full of interesting conversations. My heart is full with images of the First Parish adults and children who put on and participated in this wonderful community fundraising dinner. There is no question in my mind that Northfield is blessed to have First Parish as a place to gather, to eat, to socialize, and to meet neighbors and friends. As the first church in the town, we are continuing a long tradition of showing hospitality and gracious outreach. This is as important today in our busy and often alienating life styles as it was back in the Puritan days when Northfield was settled. Maureen Moore's online history of First Parish (read it on our website www.northfieldunitarian.org if you haven't already) reminds us that the first church service in the 1670's was outdoors under a large oak tree. The service was followed by a potluck supper of venison and samp and dandelion greens, corn bread and tea. As the first church year continued the members gathered in each other's homes, preferring the ones with the largest kitchens! And so today we continue this tradition of gathering to worship, to socialize, to eat and the make merry. Thanks you everyone who contributed to this fundraiser and the equally delicious and successful Strawberry Solstice dinner earlier in the summer.

Fundraiser dinners was one of the great suggestions that was dreamed up in our congregational meeting in May when we looked long and hard at our church's strengths and needs and visions for the future. This year we will continue that focused looking and will hopefully put flesh and bones on our dreams for First Parish. We have much to offer our local community and much to offer each other as a worshipping and caring congregation. We are nurturers and dreamers, hard workers and people who know how to have fun. We are dedicated to our children and our elders, our history and our future. We are concerned about the rising costs of keeping our

historic building warm and safe and in good shape but our concerns do not immobilize us. From the long ago days, meeting under the oak tree, to this, our 2008/2009 church year, we are still here, still dreaming, still celebrating, still serving and growing stronger.

Welcome back to church! I look forward to seeing you all

In faith,
Rev. Marguerite

In faith,
Reverend Marguerite

Parish Committee News

Reminder: Following our opening service on September 7th, we will have a Pot Luck Luncheon in the Webster Room. Please bring something to share and plan on staying.

The Parish Committee is finalizing the schedule for Sunday services for the 2008-09 Church year. We have planned Congregational meetings every other month, Marguerite will be preaching twice each month and the remaining Sundays there will be guest speakers. If you have any suggestions for guest speakers, please be in touch with Mary Anne Ladd.

In order to save money on heating oil the Parish Committee voted to have our Sunday services downstairs in the Webster Room from November through March.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, September 13th is the Annual ArtsFest at Green Trees Gallery. As in past years, First Parish will have a Food Booth. I'd be happy to talk with anyone who is willing to help to prepare food and/or help on that day. Please be in touch with Betty Gibson.

This Month in Unitarian Universalist History

This monthly column is dedicated to celebrating some milestones and anniversaries from Unitarian Universalist history. The information is taken from the book *This Day in Unitarian Universalist History* by Frank Shulman.

September 3, 1962

The celebrated American poet Edward Estlin (e.e.) Cummings died at age 67. Cummings was the son of a Unitarian minister in Boston. During World War I, he volunteered for duty in France where he was arrested and imprisoned for treason for corresponding with the anarchist Emma Goldman. He later took up writing and painting and finally poetry, receiving the Bollinger Prize for Poetry in 1957.

September 4, 1965

Albert Schweitzer, a medical missionary and Nobel laureate, died at age 90. He was an honorary member of the Church of the Larger Fellowship (Unitarian). For more information about the Church of the Larger Fellowship (an online UU community!) check out the website <http://clf.uua.org/#>

September 17, 1775

General George Washington appointed John Murray, an early leader of Universalism, as chaplain of the Rhode Island Regiment, over the objection of the clergy.

September 29, 1929

The first service of the Humanist Society, the first independent Humanist congregation, was held at Steinway Hall in New York City on this date. A Unitarian minister Rev. Charles Francis Potter, one of the first signers of the Humanist Manifesto conducted the service and delivered the sermon "A New Faith for a New Age."

Upcoming Sermons

Sept 7 "Gathering Again: A Water Communion"

Sept 21 "We Affirm and Promote" # 1 Principle and Purpose

Oct 1 "Who Is Hungry Here?"

Oct 12 "We Affirm and Promote" #2 Principle and Purpose

Nov 2 "Grumbling in Paradise"

Nov 16 "We Affirm and Promote" #3 Principle and Purpose