



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXX, No. 3

November, 2009

Sundays in the Meeting House

November 1, 10:00 AM: "For All The Saints"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will lead worship.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to their classes.

In our liberal church context Saints are not necessarily someone better than ourselves but are represented by all of those who walk among us. This Sunday we will explore how we view Saints in Unitarian Universalism, and celebrate all of those who have come before us. You are invited to bring pictures and remembrances to share of those who have passed (both recent and long past) as part of this service.

There will be a Boston Symphony Orchestra Concert at First Church at 3 PM. Please see the Parish Record for Details and sign up for your free ticket.

November 8, 10:00 AM: "Changing Our History"

Seth Carrier, our Ministerial Student will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to their classes.

What patterns are created by the stories we tell? Do those who tell the story shape history? On this the 371st Anniversary of our founding date we will explore the stories we tell and how they might liberate or restrict our future.

November 15, 10:00 AM: "What Keeps Us Separate?"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to a Cool Deed .

This Sunday we will examine poverty and prejudice and meditate upon the lines that divide our society and ask if there is anything we can do about it. There will be an opportunity to share your Joys and Concerns as a part of Worship this Sunday.

Following Worship there will be a Special Congregational Meeting to consider entering into an agreement with the Dedham Food Pantry to use part of our space for their work.

November 22, 10:00 AM: "We Gather Together "

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

This is a Family Service children are invited to bring their families and stay for worship.

This time of year we gather with friends and family and at church to celebrate the season. On this day we will explore the value of gathering together and celebrate all of the blessings that we are thankful for. As part of worship this Sunday we will participate in a Bread and Cider Communion to celebrate the gifts of the season. All are invited to bring bread that is part of their own family tradition to share at this service and during Social Hour.

November 29, 10:00 AM: "What Does It Mean To Forgive?"

Our Student Minister, Seth Carrier will preach.

Children will start in the Meeting House and be sung to their classes.

We ask people to forgive us on a somewhat more frequent basis than many of us are probably happy or comfortable with. This is natural, as we are all human and make mistakes, and sometimes need to ask others for forgiveness. But is forgiveness really for the person seeking forgiveness, or for the person doing the forgiving?

Calendar

Harvest Dinner: Nov 17, 6:30 pm

Also...

Lantern Walk: Oct 26, 6:30

Parish Committee: Nov 3, 7:00

Music & Worship: Nov 10, 9:00 am

RE Committee: Nov 10, 7:00

Cakes: Nov 20, 6:30

Holly Fair Preparations start Nov 25

New UU Classes: Every Monday at 6:30.

Youth Group: Sundays at 7:00

Aerobics: Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:30

Meditation: Thursdays, 7:30

And...

Holly Fair: December 5

**Please see our website
for the complete and
up-to-date calendar**

If you do not receive our weekly church emails and would like to please contact the church office by phone: 781-326-7463 or by email: firstchurch@dedhamuu.org

From Our Minister

On November 15th we will have a congregational meeting to vote on the possibility of our Parish Committee entering into a letter of agreement with the Dedham Food Pantry to allow them the use of the Larcom Room for a period of three years. As your minister this is very exciting to me for several reasons.

First and foremost this represents an opportunity for us to exercise our fifth principal: “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.”

Of course our use of the democratic process in a matter as important as whether or not to allow the Food Pantry to use our space is a way of ensuring several of our other principals are adhered to.

For instance by opening the dialogue to include as many interested voices as possible, we are living in right relationship to our value to affirm and promote “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations”. And should we collectively decide to go ahead with the offering of our space to the Dedham Food Pantry we would also in many ways be recognizing the “inherent worth and dignity of every person” both through our efforts to come to this decision collectively as well as our efforts to walk with the food pantry and their clients to keep the food pantry open and to feed hungry families.

This is where all of you come in. Just as in every election process, in order for the democracy to work we need everyone to participate.

It is hard to believe it was just one year ago this November that our current president was elected. Now whether you voted for him or whether you didn't whether you support his presidency or not the important thing to recognize is that it was through the collective process that Barack Obama was elected. Voter turnout on Election Day 2008 was the greatest it has been for 40 years.

I imagine some of the voter turn out had to do with the competitive agendas of the two parties and I imagine some of the voter turn out had to do with the Obama/Biden campaign's concerted effort to get out the vote.

For our purposes I hope to see many of you on November 15th not because the idea of inviting the Dedham Food Pantry to use our space is contested, but because it is something we care about we want and want to lend our voices to this important decision.

In the coming weeks you will receive more information about the Parish Committees planning to make this dream of the Food Pantry on our property a reality. As you have thoughts and ideas I hope you will share them with me, or any of the Food Pantry Planning Committee Members: Sharon Lane, Eileen Sullivan and Carol Dixon-Hutton.

We have much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Season not the least of which is this community we share and our shared commitment to serving the common good. I am most grateful for all of our efforts and each of you. Happy Thanksgiving.

Rali

From Our Intern “Speeding Along”

Life seems to go by at such a fast past these days, I have to work to remind myself sometimes to slow down, and breath. For those of you who were in church this past weekend and heard me preach my first sermon in Dedham, slowing down and breathing would have helped – I heard lots of helpful feedback about speaking too fast! I think my speed of delivery in the sermon can be seen as a metaphor for the speed of my life, and of many of our lives these days.

I am taking a class this fall that focuses on spiritual practices, and we have completed ten minute meditations in different formats twice over the past three weeks. One of the things I noticed today was that I felt a different sense of relaxation in the room, when none of us had anywhere to be or anything to do after the meditation. Often I’ve felt when participating in shorter meditations in the past, especially in worship, that there is an energy that people sometimes bring of “all right, let’s get this over so we can get on to the next thing.” I recognize for sure that I’ve brought that energy myself on more than one occasion.

So what does it mean to slow down in life, to take a breath, to pause and be fully present – and how do we make that happen? For me, it is a matter of intentionality and prioritization. There are many things that grab at my attention – I juggle classes, homework, volunteering, being a student minister here in Dedham, and working for my interfaith fellowship on a regular basis. If I am not really careful to intentionally make time to pause and rest, to in fact prioritize some relaxation time, it just doesn’t happen. And then a strange, or perhaps not so strange thing happens at some point. I can go days of just getting stuff done, and I love all these different tasks and activities I have chosen to undertake – but if I don’t schedule some down time, no matter how much I love what I’m doing, I get burnt out, and start not wanting to do anything.

The trap I fall into is faulting myself for not being productive. When I have a long to do list, and end up socializing or just goofing off for a few hours, I find myself chiding myself for “not having been productive today.” I have started to remind myself, when I find that I am saying that “I wasn’t productive,” to re-evaluate relaxing, and say instead, “Actually, relaxing is in fact a needed and helpful activity, and this is in fact productive, just in a different way from accomplishing tasks and errands.”

So I encourage us all to take a moment to reflect, and perhaps bring a small amount of intention to being “relaxing” productive at some point in the next couple of weeks. Take a moment or two to just be, to soak in your surroundings, and to just – breathe.

peace and love,

- Seth

Focus on Religious Education

This past July Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. was returning to his Cambridge home after an overseas trip to find his door jammed shut. After struggling to get it open he was confronted by Sgt. James Crowley who had received a report of possible break-in. Now, imagine being worn out from a trip and frustrated at not being able to get into your house. Now imagine being a Cambridge police officer who has no doubt seen the violence of which people are capable. Gates, who is African American, felt the sting of apparent racial profiling. Angry words were exchanged. An arrest was made. Defenders of racial equality around the country expressed their outrage at this incident.

Upon hearing a summary of this event, President Obama, a friend of Gates, said he thought the police sergeant acted “stupidly,” but admitted he did not know all the details. Defenders of Crowley responded in an uproar. Everyone was angry about this whole mess.

So what did our president do? In a move that, for me, earned him the nickname “Principal Obama,” he basically said, “You and you; My office. Now!”

OK, it was more of a cordial invite, really; Let's sit down with a couple of beers and talk this out.

What a revolutionary idea! He took this one small incident, which was fueled by years and years of racial inequality in our society, and seized the opportunity for dialogue, hopefully to begin a process of understanding and healing.

This is what I thought of on September 10th when the Nobel committee announced the winner of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. It is ironic that the majority of Americans seemed flummoxed by this announcement, while the outsiders could recognize his “extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.” Oh, to have been a fly on the wall during that “beer summit,” to have witnessed that ground-breaking conversation, after which Crowley reported he wished to move on from the past month but that he and Gates would meet again to continue the dialogue. Oddly enough, most reporters seemed focused on what kind of beer they would consume.

What does this have to do with religious education? Our UU RE program is unique in that we teach not just about God but about respect for each and every person, about social justice and making the world a better place. Offering fair and kind treatment to all, believing in our ideas and acting on them; these are easy things to keep in your head, but often more difficult to exhibit in our actions. What if someone bumps into you in the grocery store or cuts you off on the road, and your child is right there with you? Do you immediately lay blame on the offender, or do you pause for a breath and seek to understand why that person might be having a lousy day? I encourage all of us (myself included) to be the change we want to see in the world, as Gandhi once said. Obama is not just a president but a father to two young girls who understands well the importance of setting an example.

May peace be in your hearts and in your actions,

Aoife Barrington-Haber

All Around the Church Community

Good and Welfare

Please hold in your hearts and minds and prayers all parishioners who need our love and support at this time.

We hope you will remember especially

Francis Brooks
C/O Clark House Assisted Living
30 Longwood Dr
Westwood, MA 02090

Dorothy Clary
Forest View Nursing Home
50 Indian Neck Road #118
Wareham, MA 02571

Marge Wiren
C/O Ellis Nursing Home
135 Ellis Avenue
Norwood, MA 02062

If you have pastoral needs please don't hesitate to contact Rev. Rali Weaver raliweaver@dedhamuu.org or 617 459 5979. If you have time and would like to help out a friend or neighbor of First Church you might consider joining the Parish Community Network Committee and/or filling out a form to be found on a side table during Social Hour.

Building and Grounds Needs Your Help.

There are a million jobs to be done to keep our building and grounds cared for and we need your help. All levels of interest, experience and time availability are accepted. You could join our meetings and help with long range planning and prioritization of needs or you could lend a hand by doing one task of your choosing. The next Building and Grounds Meeting will be held on Monday, October 19th at 7 pm at the Parish House. Please see Sam King or Jeff Hutton for more details.

Mark your calendars for Fall Clean Up Days.

We need help around the grounds the more the merrier! Please join us on Saturday, Saturday, November 14th from 9 to 12. Caring for our building and grounds is an intergenerational activity.

If you do not receive our weekly church emails and would like to, please contact the church office at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org

All Around the Church Community

Upcoming Events – Mark Your Calendars!

Sunday, November 1st, 3:00
Boston Symphony Orchestra Comes To First Church!

BEETHOVEN String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat, Op. 74 Harp STRAVINSKY Three Pieces for String Quartet HONEGGER String Quartet No. 2 in D Sheila Fiekowsky, violin Bo Youp Hwang, violin Rachel Fagerburg, viola Alexandre Lecarme, cello This concert is supported by the Dedham Institution for Savings Foundation, in memory of R. Willis Leith, Jr.

Please Call **617-266-1200** to reserve your free tickets!

Cakes

Cakes is a welcoming group of women. We celebrate with each other in high times, support each other in low times, and challenge each other with the stories of our lives. The trust we share gives us a deep sense of community.

We meet regularly on the third Friday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving we will each be keeping a gratitude journal this month and will share from them at our November 20th gathering.

Please contact Vicky Berg if you plan on coming so that she knows how much pizza to get. v.berg@juno.com

Please Help the Alliance

On Saturday, Nov. 7th, First Church will be hosting **The Descendents of Colonial Ministers**. We will be providing a morning coffee hour and a luncheon.

The Alliance is organizing these events but we need help from the congregation to make the day enjoyable for this group. I realize that this event falls on the same day as the Harvest Supper and some of you may be helping with that, but if you could help at all it would be greatly appreciated.

Tasks that can be done ahead of time:

Baking for coffee hour, Making Apple for luncheon

Friday night: Set up tables

Saturday

8:30-10:30: Prepare and serve Coffee etc.

10:30-2:30: Prepare, serve, cleanup Luncheon

There will be a sign-up sheet in the dining room or call Judy Barrington at 781-762-2742.

Dedham Food Pantry Information Session

Carol Dixon and Judy Barrington, as representatives of the Parish Committee, gave a presentation at the October 4, 2009 Special Congregational Meeting summarizing the Parish Committee's deliberations about offering space to the Food Pantry. Their report included an accounting of the Parish Committee's involvement thus far and a list of pros and cons that the Parish Committee considered. Another information session was held on October 18, 2009 to further discuss the issue and to solicit the view of the congregation upon the proposal that "First Church and Parish move to offer the use of the Larcom Room to the Dedham Food Pantry on a short-term basis (3 years) subject to acceptance of a mutually negotiated contract."

A lively discussion ensued with some of the following points being raised:

Short-term vs. long-term issues

The Food Pantry, in their original request, stated that they are looking for a minimum five-year lease. They are currently seeking a three year agreement. The Parish Committee has considered two possibilities, one of them short term and one of them long term. The short-term option would be to enter into an agreement allowing the Food pantry temporary use of the Larcom Room. The long-term option includes working with the Food Pantry, and the larger Dedham Community, to raise funds to develop a permanent space for the Food Pantry.

What space are we talking about?

The Larcom Room (former nursery) is basement space under the classroom wing of the Parish Hall. It could be used as a temporary space for the Food Pantry. There was also a far range proposal that the crawl space under the dining room be excavated and built out as a permanent home for the Food Pantry in the event that a successful fund raising effort happens.

What entrance would be used?

There are two entrances to the Larcom Room. There is an entrance door on the R.E. classroom wing that opens onto a staircase going down to the Larcom Room. There is also a bulkhead entrance on the parking lot side of the R.E. classroom wing. The first mentioned would most likely be the door used.

Where would a stair lift be installed?

A stair lift could be installed on the main staircase going down to the Larcom Room.

What lavatory would be used?

The downstairs bathrooms would be used. Lynn Rogal clarified that a Food Pantry volunteer would escort clients to the restroom facilities the same way they do now at the current Food Pantry, thereby ensuring that individuals would not have open access to the rest of the Parish Hall.

Is there wheelchair accessibility now at the Food Pantry?

No, there is no handicapped access to the Food Pantry at this time.

Dedham Food Pantry Information Session

What changes would need to be made to the security system?

Sam King indicated that with our recently installed alarm system, a new keypad with it's own code, could be installed at the entrance door. The Food Pantry is willing to pay for a new keypad if required for security.

What about heating costs?

The Food Pantry has not had to pay heating costs while using the space at St John's Church. Sam King suggested that McFarlane Oil, a Dedham company, be approached about contributing to the community effort to help the Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is prepared to assume the cost of heat and electricity.

If the Food Pantry were to be in the Larcom Room, would First Church have the ability to use the space when needed for church activities?

Lynn Rogal said that the Food Pantry would not exclude use of the space by First Church. No permanent shelving would be constructed to alter the space but the moveable metal shelving they use to create shopping aisles would need to be left in place. The Food Pantry only uses the space two times per week – on Thursday 3-5pm when they stock the shelves and Saturday 8-11am when the Food Pantry is open to serve clients.

How would the Food Pantry handle some of the other concerns that were raised by the Parish Committee?

Lynn Rogal said that Food Pantry has not had liability insurance where they are now but they would obtain liability insurance as requested. She also said that the Food Pantry would approach the town of Dedham about plowing services. They are also prepared to enter into a contractual agreement with First Church about use of the space.

How does someone qualify to use the Food Pantry?

The Food Pantry does not qualify individuals. There are four local service agencies that qualify and refer individuals to the Food Pantry. The individuals must be Dedham residents. The Food Pantry receives new referrals every week. Some of the families are employed full-time but unable to make ends meet. There are currently over 200 families utilizing the services of the Food Pantry with 35-40 families served each week.

How has the Food Pantry worked out Saturday use of facility conflicts with St. Johns?

Food Pantry clients are permitted to use the Food Pantry two times per month on alternating Saturdays. When conflicts have occurred, the Food Pantry has not opened on that particular Saturday and clients have been notified in advance and permitted to come to the Food Pantry on another Saturday during the month.

What if there were additional costs beyond the ones we have already anticipated?

It would provide an opportunity for further community building.

Dedham Food Pantry Information Session

What process would enable the church to move forward with considering the material discussed today?

Posting of a Warrant for a congregational vote.

Dissemination of information about this issue to the congregation at large

Congregational vote.

How many people work at the Food Pantry?

They are open Saturdays from 8am-11am. One Trustee, 4-5 volunteers and 3-4 student bag carriers work each Saturday.

What types of equipment would the Food Pantry bring?

They have 1 Refrigerator and two freezers that would need to be moved. They are looking for new supermarket shelving, as the current shelving is very old.

What types of electrical circuits are in the basement room and are they sufficient for the needs of the pantry?

We believe there are sufficient outlets as Whole Food used that room this summer. A member of the Food Pantry Subcommittee will investigate further. If not we may have to upgrade the electrical in that area.

What other options is the Food Pantry considering?

The Food Pantry is exploring an option of handicapped accessible space at a local retail mall. This would be their first choice because of the accessibility options. However, for the long term the Food Pantry would like to partner with a church and locate a permanent handicapped accessible home.

The following motion was made at the October 3, 2009 meeting:

A recommendation to the Parish Committee to bring before the congregation a proposal to donate the Larcom Room space to the Dedham Food Pantry to meet their short term needs and that the Parish Committee, in addition, make every reasonable effort to inform the congregation of this proposal. Second. Passed.

The Parish Committee met on October 6, 2009 and passed the following motion:

Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting September, 2009

Present: Judy Barrington, Audrey Cecil, Carol Dixon, Jeff Hutton, Sharon Lane, Claudia Leone, Kerry Matthews, Grace Pena, Eileen Sullivan, Jeff Tegnell, Rev. Rali Weaver

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

Unison Affirmation. Opening words by Sharon Lane

Minutes of 7/07/09 – Motion made to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Second, motion carried.

Ministers Report- Rali attended a workshop this summer on Spiritual Transformation. Summer services occurred this year and went well. Whole Foods rented our space for a three-day training. Issues arose around payment for cleaning during the summer and also some issues around broken toilets and inadequate adult bathrooms.

Marge Wiren continues at Ellis Nursing home. Francis Brook fell and is in Clark House.

The new ‘space sign up form’ will be sent to all Committee Chairs.

Work of the Parish Committee – Identification of chair/committee members for the Finance Committee, Stewardship Committee, Nominating Committee, Membership Committee and Personnel Committee will be updated at the October meeting.

Treasurer’s Report – Michael Roberts was not able to attend tonight but he provided notes for discussion.

We will review July/August budget at next month’s meeting.

A question was raised about ordering envelopes for pledge offerings. We will continue to use the envelopes we have on hand.

Building and Grounds –No formal report was presented however we heard that the water line to the Parsonage was replaced and the carpet in the Parsonage is scheduled to be changed in late September. Jeff Hutton will speak with B&G about the Parish Hall downstairs toilet and locks issue.

Fund Raising –

- September Yard Sale 9/26/09. Individuals may rent tables for \$30.
- A Silent Auction of Red Sox and Patriots tickets will take place on the first Sunday of the year.
- Fall Fair will be 10/17/09. Liz Ames will chair this event. She is looking for someone to work with her to learn the job and become the chair next year, as this will be her last year as chair.
- UNO Pizza – Friday 10/2/09. We will receive a certain percentage of the proceeds from sales that are accompanied by fund raiser tickets. The tickets will be available for distribution to friends and neighbors prior to the event.

R.E. Committee – Rali met with Aoife Barrington-Haber, our new Acting RE Director. They are working on a schedule and planning for the year.

Old Business –

A Special Meeting of the Congregation will take place on October 4, 2009. Natalie Jenson and Doug Howell will conduct the auditors report. The Warrant will be issued one week before the meeting.

There was a \$15,000 surplus in last year's budget because we did not have an RE Director. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the Parish Committee recommend the following for approval by the congregation at the special meeting: To fully fund the minister's salary at \$51,135.87 plus FICA and the secretary's salary at \$8,200 and put \$9,000 toward repayment of the endowment loan.

The Dedham Food Pantry's search for a new space was discussed again. We learned that they have had two offers of space that are less than ideal. It was decided that the Parish Committee would bring the issue to the larger congregation at the Special Meeting. A sub committee including Audrey Cecil, Kerry Matthews, Carol Dixon, and Judy Barrington was formed to prepare an informational presentation for the meeting.

New Business – A motion was made, seconded and passed giving special recognition to Mike Dewar for his long term service to the church as treasurer. Claudia Leone will draft a letter of appreciation.

Next meeting will be October 6, 2009 at 7pm.

Judy Barrington will offer the opening words.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:03pm

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey H. Cecil