



The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

www.dedhamuu.org

Volume CXXX, No. 8

April, 2010

Sundays in the Meeting House

April 4, 10:00 AM: "An Easter Faith"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

This is an intergenerational service

Unitarian Universalists often have trouble making sense of the Resurrection of Jesus and so Easter the oldest celebration in the Christian Tradition is often a complex and confusing holiday that we come to celebrate together each year. This Easter we will explore various stories and legends about Easter and attempt to discern what an Easter Faith might be for us.

This is an intergenerational Service. The Children's choir will practice at 9:30 and sing as part of worship. All are invited to bring Easter Eggs to decorate our Easter Trees. **There will be an Easter Egg Hunt for children following worship.**

April 11, 10:00 AM: Folk Music Sunday

The Music and Worship Committee will lead this service.

Children will begin in worship and be sung to their classes.

Sam King will ruminate about the American Folk Music Tradition and several members will share their musical gifts on this our Second Annual Folk Music Sunday.

April 18, 10:00 AM: "Our Earth, Our Home"

The Rev. Rali Weaver will preach.

Children will begin in worship and be sung to their classes.

On this 40th Anniversary of Earth Day we try to listen closely to the messages our Earth has been trying to send us about our responsibility for her care and rejoice in the gifts she offers to us. Joys and Concerns will be shared during worship.

This Sunday we will welcome and celebrate new members.

April 25, 10:00 AM: "Prophetic Listening"

The Rev. Victor Carpenter will preach.

Children will start in the Dining Room and be sung to a Cool Deed.

Our liberal religious tradition has long honored the prophetic voice of the righteous individual who speaks "truth to power"; Servetus and Priestly, Channing and Parker, John Haynes Holmes and Jack Mendelsohn come readily to mind as embodiments of this tradition. The very idea of prophecy bespeaks the raising a higher standard of truth by means of courageous proclamation.

But where does prophecy start? What prompts the individual voice to speak when others are silent? What is the gift that empowers the individual to proclaim what others ignore or simply shrug off? Can one develop a capacity for "prophetic listening"?

Calendar

Passover Seder: April 2, 5:00

Folk Music Coffeehouse: April 10, 7:00

Welcoming Session: April 11: Noon

Solid Disco Gold: April 17, 5:00

Game Night: April 24, 7:00

Folk Music Coffeehouse: May 1, 7:00

Choir Rehearsal: April 1, 7:00

Parish Committee: April 6, 7:00

Cakes: April 16, 6:30

RE Committee: April 20, 7:00

"Articulating Your Faith": Every Monday at 7:00 (April 12 through May 3).

"Great Thinkers": April 27, 7:00

Youth Group: Sundays at 6:00

Aerobics: Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:30

Meditation: Thursdays, 7:30

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

From the Minister

“Taxes, after all, are the dues that we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

It has always seemed a bit unfortunate to me as a member of a Unitarian Universalist Church that Stewardship Campaigns and Membership Events take place around the same time of year as tax season. Given this turn of simultaneous events it would be easy to unconsciously view pledges as taxes for membership in an organized society (as the quote above suggests).

That said I am always surprised at how many people are willing to pledge to an institution that they are not ready to join or to get involved and donate time and energy without signing the membership book, taking on the membership responsibilities without the membership privileges.

When I was in San Francisco I met a woman named Doris who had been attending that UU church since 1965 (the year I was born). When I first arrived there as the intern I thought she appeared to be the most dedicated member I had ever met. As a retired office administrator she volunteered nearly a 30-hour workweek to answer phones at that busy church and respond to all visitors.

When I began to work with the membership committee I was surprised to find that her name could not be found on the membership list. She was not an employee, and she was not a member and yet she dedicated her time and energy to the work of the church.

When I asked Doris about this she responded that she wasn't much of a “joiner” and that she didn't really see (in those nearly 40 years) any reason to join despite the fact that she came to church every Sunday, volunteered 4 or 5 days per week and financially contributed what she could.

It seemed to me at the time that this made her a real Unitarian Universalist (which at the time I had deemed the “disorganized religion”). As time has gone on though I have wondered what if anything might encourage someone to join a UU Church.

Being part of a non-creedal non-doctrinal church does not require allegiance to any particular form of thought or belief. It is only our belief in the democratic process that is the privilege and responsibility of membership. Everything else is free.

Over the coming weeks as we enter our Stewardship campaign and celebrate new members I hope you will discover all the myriad of reasons and ways that people come to Unitarian Universalism. If you are already a member I hope you will affirm your commitment to our democratic process as we move toward our Annual Meeting on May 16th. And if you are new to Unitarian Universalism I hope you will find reasons to commit yourselves to our common goals in whatever form fits for you.

Rali

Rev. Rali Weaver is the Senior Minister at First Church and Parish in Dedham.
She can be reached at raliweaver@yahoo.com

From Our Ministerial Student

“Come Sing a Song With Me”

One of my favorite hymns in our hymnal is “Come Sing a Song With Me.” In addition to enjoying the tune, I love the lyrics, especially the refrain: “And I’ll bring you hope, when hope is hard to find, and I’ll bring a song of love, and a rose in the winter time.” I wonder sometimes though: is hope that hard to find?

On a very deep level, I believe hope is something we live and breathe every minute and every hour of every day, and yet are usually not aware of it. In good times, if we were not hopeful that the future would continue to be good, why would we continue on? In bad times, if we were not hopeful that at some point the future would be better, again, why would we continue on? It is most always not a conscious decision we make, yet being hopeful is ingrained in our very moving forward through life, day in and day out, year after year. People battle major illness, both physical and psychological, because of hope. People battle great oppressions and injustices, because of hope. Hope is the reason we get up in the morning. It is the reason we fight despite tremendous obstacles and odds. It is the reason we live.

And yet, while that deeper hope never deserts us, there are times where we do lose some more immediate, conscious level of hope around our day-to-day circumstances. We fall into bouts of despair and sadness, where nothing seems right, where we’re stuck a rut, where it seems like nothing is ever going to change. What can one do, when stuck in a feeling of hopelessness?

The different verses of the hymn provide some answers. “Come sing a song with me.” “Come dream a dream with me.” “Come walk in rain with me.” “Come share a rose with me.” All speak to deeper connections. Singing a song with another human being creates a bond between you. The invitation to dream with someone else, to let them take you on a journey of imagination and creativity, is a chance to connect with a deep and meaningful experience. Taking a walk in the rain allows you to both spend time with another person and connect with nature. And sharing a rose, appreciating the beauty and simplicity of a blossoming flower, is yet another occasion for inspiration and connection.

I encourage you to take a minute or two to think about the things, people, places or activities that inspire you to be hopeful. When you are in one of those times when hope is hard to find, it can be very helpful to already have an idea of what song to sing, whom to dream with, where to walk in the rain, or what kind of flower to look at. At the very least, know that you can turn to our church community for a song of love, each and every Sunday. We are here for each other.

Peace and love,

– Seth

Seth Carrier is a ministerial student at Andover-Newton Theological School. He is interning here at First Church for the 2009-2010 academic year, and can be reached at sethcarrier@gmail.com

Focus on Religious Education

Spring is here!! And that means... the glorious return of the Baltimore Orioles! No, no, not the baseball team. I mean those brilliant little birds that return about this time from their migration, flashing their bright yellow-orange hue as they tirelessly build their orb-shaped nests, resting only to sing what is, in my opinion, the most beautiful hymn to Springtime. I must look quite the fool every time I jump and point and shout "Look! There's one!" but I can't help myself.

On my regular drive home I pass under an oriole nest that has been hanging from a high tree over a main street since last year. It boggles my mind to think that through blinding snowstorms and tremendous winds, that tightly-woven little sanctuary remains intact. I cannot help but wonder at the glory of nature that allows such skill and talent in these magnificent little architects to rival the strongest weather. It gets me thinking about the "Intelligent Design" community; scientist who, through all their analytical thinking, can't get past the incredible patterns and creations of nature and think, "Something intelligent must have done that!!" The mutations that caused evolution are just too good to have been completely random, they argue.

While I empathize with that wonder (look at an apple leaf and you will see that its veins look just like the tree it came from), and agree that the creations of nature are truly amazing (why do bees build homes that look just like plant cells under a microscope?), I don't find it necessary to visualize an intelligent force separate from Nature itself. How do we define "intelligent" anyway? Why superimpose our human model of intelligence on a force which is so much bigger than us? We often use metaphors to understand the planet we live on: Mother Earth, The Web of Life, Gaia, even a complex and finely-tuned machine. All these images suggest something that is a complete system, self-sustaining, yet vulnerable. But before we impose images from our human way of seeing the world, can we not just accept that nature works the way it is supposed to, and that the repeated patterns and occasional mutation are just signs of the unnameable, vast, wonderful, magical and holy universe of which we are so lucky to be part?

It's an interesting theory, though. By the reasoning of Intelligent Design, someone smart meant for two male penguins to fall in love and raise an egg together.

Sunday April 18th, after church will be our next brainstorming session to rewrite the Religious Education Mission Statement. Our existing statement was written in 1993 (two years after I graduated!) and a lot has changed since then. The RE Committee needs your input to create a statement that will be the guidepost for our Children's RE program, a statement that reflects who we are as a congregation and what we value. If you cannot attend the meeting but would like to give your input please contact Aoife Barrington-Haber: faeriecool@hotmail.com.

Now is the time to think about teaching or volunteering next year! Anyone who has been attending regularly for one semester is encouraged to sign up to teach. Remember the Rainbow Fish story? Some of our teachers will be carrying a fish at social hour, so please feel free to ask them about their experience. We also need people to substitute or assist during group activities. Let me know and I will find a way to get you involved
Aoife

Aoife Barrington-Haber is our Religious Education Director. She can be reached at faeriecool@hotmail.com

All Around the Church Community

Stewardship 2010

The Stewardship Campaign for 2010 has begun! It kicked off on Sunday, March 28th with a brief introduction during the service and a stirring sermon by Rali Weaver about how Stewardship offers a chance to dream a bigger collective journey. The service was followed with a lengthier discussion about stewardship and the budget during a delicious luncheon hosted by the Women's Alliance. Copies of the draft Fiscal Year 2011 budget are available at the church. The Campaign goal is to raise \$100,000 by April 25th in time for the full congregation to vote on the budget on Sunday, May 16th.

Financial pledges from members and friends (you don't have to be a member of First Church and Parish to pledge) pays for two out of every \$3 spent during the church year. We pay our minister's salary, the salaries of our Music Director, Director of Religious Education, office manager, child care provider and custodian. We pay for the lights and the heating oil. We pay for the supplies for the classrooms, the paper for the order of service and the coffee. But most importantly, we are paying for the maintenance of a community that sustains us all.

Someone approached me after the budget discussion on Sunday and asked what dollar amount he should pledge. We talked about the amount he knew he would give a week and that he planned to attend services every week. I told him that he should multiply that amount by 10 or 12 months and consider it his pledge. He was appreciative of the openness and frankness of our budget discussion and said he was excited to pledge.

On behalf of the entire Stewardship Campaign Committee - Steve Davey, Grace Pena, Virginia Hickey-Ferentinos, Jane Kelley and Betsy Hetzler - we look forward to a vibrant and fun Stewardship. We hope you will join us for the April 17th Solid Gold 70's themed dance party at the Parish House from 6pm-8pm. Please seek any of us out if you have any questions.

Allison Staton and Kerrie Gallagher
Stewardship Campaign 2010 Co-Chairs.

All Around the Church Community

Dedham Crossroads Coffee House

On the heels of last year's successful folk-music coffee house that featured Jud Caswell, Dedham Crossroads will begin holding regular Coffee Houses in the Parish House.

We've scheduled coffee houses on Saturday evening, **April 10th**, as well as **May 1st**, and **May 22nd** from 7 to 11pm. First Church will sell refreshments at these events. Contact the Church office at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org or sign up in the Dining Room to assist with selling or baking for these events.

Welcoming Congregation

Two final Welcoming Congregation Events will take place on **April 11th** and **May 2nd**.

Since last spring's Annual Meeting Our Congregation has been undergoing a process to examine our bias and open our hearts wider to all people. The Welcoming Congregation process is a fully volunteer process, and yet our commitment will be a congregational one, voted at our Annual meeting in May. If you are a member or friend of First church we hope you can attend one or both of these sessions to discuss your thoughts and ideas upon these important topics. For more information about these events watch our calendar at http://www.dedhamuu.org/welcoming_congregation_events or the weekly emails that come from firstchurch@dedhamuu.org.

Solid Gold Dance

Saturday, April 17th from 6pm to 8pm! Come dance to your favorite disco tunes from the 1970's! In celebration of First Church and Parish - both its wondrous past and exuberant future - the Stewardship Committee is hosting a free dance in the Parish Hall on Saturday, April 17th from 6pm - 8pm. Regardless of whether you have pledged or not please come and dance the early evening away. Light munchies will be provided but dancers should plan on bringing their own beverages. Sequined outfits and platform shoes are optional.

Please call the church office (781-326-7463) to RSVP for the April 17th dance. For questions about Stewardship please contact either Allison Staton (phone: 781-686-1021 or amitchells@yahoo.com) or Kerrie Gallagher (gallagherk@rcn.com).

Game Night

On **Saturday, April 24th, from 5pm to 8pm**, we'll have an evening of fun and competition. Bring your cooperative nature and your competitive spirit.

Jenny Carlson and Steve Davey are organizing this fund raising event to support the 2009/2010 operating budget of First Church. This event is open to the wider community. Volunteers are needed to help run games, cook hamburgers and hot dogs and set up and clean up. Please sign up in the Dining Room or contact the church office at firstchurch@dedhamuu.org if you can help.

**Minutes of the Parish Committee Meeting
February 2, 2010**

Present: Judy Barrington, Audrey Cecil, Carol Dixon, Jeff Hutton, Claudia Leone, Grace Pena, Michael Roberts, Eileen Sullivan, Jeff Tegnell, Rev. Rali Weaver

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

Unison Affirmation. Opening words by Judy Barrington.

Minutes of 1/05/10– Motion made to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Second, motion carried.

Ministers Report- Rali reported on the passing of Francis Brooks and her memorial service on January 20th.

The Meeting House had an issue with condensation so the heat had to be left on for a few days, which may be reflected, in the next heating bill. A second AA group will use the auditorium with arrangements being made so as not to conflict with other building usage. Winter services in the Parish House have been well attended.

Some issues have arisen regarding all church emails since we switched web servers. This will need to be discussed by the Parish Committee. Also needing discussion is the idea of having a carefully monitored church credit card for use in emergencies such as a recent plumbing crisis at the Parsonage.

Rali will be away March 12th. Our student minister, Seth Carrier will preach.

Work of the Parish Committee –

Finance Committee- needs to meet

Stewardship - Alison Staton and Kerry Gallagher will co-chair.

Membership - Doug Howell and Kathy Widger will join the committee.

Personnel – will meet.

Ministry – hasn't met yet.

Nominating – Liz Ames was added as RE rep on the committee.

Church organizational booklet was reviewed. Copies will be made and kept:

1 in church office

1 in dining hall

2 for PC co-chairs

2 for new members joining PC

Committee Chairs will be asked to provide a summary of the work of their committee to be added to the booklet in the spring

Treasurer's Report – Michael Roberts provided both a written and an oral report about the finances of the church. He formatted the items in chronological order according to date, which made it easy to track the business of the church. Sharing the Place raised over \$500 for Haiti relief. The Treasurer's Report was approved. Seconded, and passed.

Building and Grounds – Jeff Hutton reported that B&G did not meet this month. A plumbing issue was dealt with in the Parsonage. The Book Bin is ready to go. Placement of the bin needs to be determined.

Fund Raising –

No January fund raising events.

A Comfort Food Church Supper will take place this month.

UNO Pizza event will take place this month.

A church wide meeting was held last month to solicit ideas for fund raisers and some wonderful ideas were suggested including: Summer Fun Auction, Wii bowling Night, Trivia Night, Coffee House, musical concerts by church members, Accapella Concert showcasing area schools, Square Dance, Movie night, Clothing Swap, Fair Trade Coffee/Tea.

R.E. Committee – Many events will occur in February including Spirit Play training, Cool Deeds for Cradles to Crayons, a bake sale, a food drive, and Coming of Age will be meeting mentors.

Old Business – Dedham Village AA has changed the time of their second AA meeting. We will be voting on being a Welcoming Church at the Annual Meeting on May 16th.

New Business –

Email - All church email password holders will be minister, church secretary, newsletter editor, and both Parish Committee co-chairs.

Church credit card – Treasurer will contact Sovereign Bank about details and will email the Parish Committee with info.

Summer services will be discussed at the next meeting.

Wayside Pulpit will be discussed at the next meeting.

Next meeting will be March 7, 2010 at 7pm.

Kerry Matthews will offer the opening words.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey H. Cecil