



# The Parish Record

The First Church and Parish in Dedham

[www.dedhamuu.org](http://www.dedhamuu.org)

Volume CXXVI, No. 13

March 29, 2006

## Calendar

### April

- 1, Saturday: Church Work Day
- 1, Saturday: 6:00 PM: Celebrate Fools Parade
- 3, Monday, 6:30 PM: Aerobics
- 5, Wednesday, 6:30 PM: Aerobics
- 1, Saturday: Church Work Day (rain date)
- 8, Saturday, 6:00 PM: Cottage Meeting: Location Ollie and Liz Ames' Home
- 11, Tuesday, 7:30 PM: Parish Committee
- 13, Thursday, 8:00 AM: Building and Grounds
- 16, Sunday, 3:00 PM: Missing Links
- 20, Thursday, 7:00 PM: Membership Committee
- 21 – 23, Friday to Sunday: Cakes Retreat at Stonehouse

The Parish Record is published biweekly.  
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The next deadline for submissions (the New Year's Issue) is April 9. Send notices directly by e-mail to:

[tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org](mailto:tylercarpenter@dedhamuu.org) or call me with questions: 617-816-9728.

## Sundays in the Meeting House

April 2, 10:00 AM: Stewardship. The sermon will be "Commitment" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross.

April 9, 10:00 AM: Palm Sunday. The sermon will be "Cleansing" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross.

April 16, 10:00 AM: Easter Sunday. The sermon will be "Rebirth" by Rev. Dr. Robert R. N. Ross.

## Focus on Religious Education

When do we meet:

**Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** – 10 AM: We start in the meeting house. (No teaching). OWL meets from 10 to 12

**Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>** – 10 AM: Teaching Sunday, OWL meets from 10 to 12.

Youth Group meets from 7 to 8:30 PM

On Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup> for our social service project we sorted, counted and rolled all of the coins from the Guest at Your Table Boxes. The grand total of \$168.00 will be sent to the UUSC. We talked about ways the money may be used to help those in need.

The younger children read Rainbow Fish, a story which illustrates the value of sharing what you have. They then made their own paper fish complete with beautiful scales.

Mark your calendars: on Sunday, April 23rd, we have a very special social service activity planned. We will be making bowls to use for an Empty Bowls lunch (more information later).

Susan Sennott, Director of Religious Education

### Fun and Food for Thought

The social gatherings or “cottage meetings” sponsored by the Search Committee have been a great success. So far, 32 people have attended the first two gatherings. Not only has everyone had a great time socializing, we on the committee have benefited greatly from hearing the opinions offered concerning our next minister. Thank you!

In addition to the remaining scheduled gathering on the evening of April 8 at the home of Olly and Liz Ames, we have planned another get together after church on April 9 in the Alliance Room to accommodate those whose schedules prevented them from attending other gatherings. We encourage everyone interested in discussing the ministerial search to come—no invitation is needed.

Remember to check out the Search Info Board at Coffee Hour. The current question posted there is: “What would attract someone to the ministry at First Church?” Let us know what you think.

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### Meditation Group Forming

Last summer, Jeff and I went to the All Star I Conference on Star Island thanks to the generosity of the Alliance Star Island Scholarship. One of the highlights for me was being part of a mediation group. We met every morning and meditated for 20 minutes as a group. Meditating with a group really helped me stay focused on meditating for a longer period of time and thus helped me to grow in the discipline of meditation. We also discussed this idea at the Value’s Analysis Part 2 on Sunday, 3/19. If anyone is interested in forming a meditation group that would meet weekly and meditate for a specified period of time, please contact Carol Dixon Hutton [carolhdixon@gmail.com](mailto:carolhdixon@gmail.com) or (781) 461-0522 or the church office. No experience is necessary. Once we see who is interested we can figure out a time.

Thank You

Carol Dixon Hutton

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### Easter Flowers

There will be a sign up sheet in the dining room on which to sign up for Easter flowers. Flowers are usually given in memory of someone and money is given to buy the plants. The plants are put in front of the pulpit on Easter Sunday and people who have signed up can take a plant after the service. Please give your money to me by April 9<sup>th</sup>. Easter is Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions, please call me at 781-762-3546. Thank you all,

Susan White.

## All Around the Church Community

### Remember the Trading Post

As you clean out your closets and basement this spring and summer, remember the Trading Post. The TP is the generator of much of the fun and fund\$ at the December Holly Fair. The books, toys, Special Items and even many of the items on the Gift Table are funneled through the Trading Post, and are sent on to the proper department. So we really need all your “trash and treasures” One person’s trash is another’s treasure, remember?

However, this year, could you Please Hold Your Donations, If Possible, Until Later in the Fall. We understand that the Parish Players are going to do a theatrical production sometime in the fall. They assure us the stage and auditorium will be available for the Yankee Trading Post come the first week in December, but the stage must be empty for them during the fall. If AT ALL possible, could you find a nook or cranny at your house to store your donations to the Trading Post until after the play. If you can’t do that, call Beppy Martin, and I will arrange to store them somewhere on the church grounds (sky hook, shed, cellar, somewhere). We really want and need those donations, so don’t toss them. I even have a little space in my garage. But if you can keep them, at your house until near fair time, that would be great.

Please do not put things on the stage. If you have donations you need to get out of your house right away, call Beppy Martin (781-326-2288) and I will arrange something.

Beppy and the Trading Post crew

## From First Church Green

### *First Church and Parish Value Analysis Action Items*

Congratulations to everyone for excellent work a week ago Sunday! Members of the First Church and Parish congregation met after worship on March 12<sup>th</sup> to address high priority goals generated from the first two Value Analysis workshops, identify actions in support of particular goals, and seek individuals willing to be responsible for driving the needed efforts. These goals included:

- Goal 1. Improve the financial planning/reporting process, including the stewardship campaign, a fair compensation package, and keeping the congregation better informed about its financial state.
- Goal 2. Increase church membership and increase participation in the RE program.
- Goal 3. Improve the effectiveness of governance: the interrelationship of the Parish Committee and the Deacons, and the functions of standing committees; make needed revisions to the By-laws.
- Goal 4. Create an appropriate conceptual model for the congregation – a mission and vision that can be shared with the outside community to clearly represent the values for which we stand.

Goal 5. Make needed improvements to the physical plant and landscaping.

Goal 6. Encourage greater participation by the congregation in worship services.  
Institute 'Joys and Sorrows' in some worship services.

Goal 7. Work to make the congregation a more loving family.

Goal 8. Get the congregation more involved in meaningful social action. Make the church and its activities more visible in the immediate community.

In addition, Dr. Ross proposed an additional objective that he committed to drive:

Goal M. Set up a Caring Community that broadens participation in and improves responsiveness to congregational and community needs.

Participants did wonderful work in identifying action items. The discussion of both the congregation's needs and various strategies to address them was thorough and constructive. People felt it would be best to concentrate on a manageable subset of goals. Some actions identified will clearly have impact for more than one goal. The following summarizes the actions proposed, including those individuals willing to be responsible for driving them.

**Goal 3. Action 1.**

Develop a working Guide to Committees that describes the major responsibilities of each committee, its officers, term limits, and other needed information about the work of each committee and its interrelationship with other committees.

*Beppy Martin and Sarah Person agreed to drive this effort. Rob will share a general Guide to Committees he has developed for congregations in transitions who need to restructure their committees or provide descriptions of the nature of committee work and responsibilities in greater detail than currently exists.*

**Goal 8. Action 1.**

Create a Wayside Pulpit and other signage on the Church Green to advertise events going on at First Church and Parish.

*Natalie Jensen and Eileen Sullivan will drive this effort.*

**Goal 8. Action 2.**

Develop a Fair Trade project oriented toward youth culture and youth participation, similar to ones that exist in Brockton or in conjunction with the UUSC.

*Della Lawhon-Schneider will drive this effort. Rob will provide contacts with appropriate outside community agencies as the nature of the project gets defined.*

**Goal 8. Action 3.**

Create a meaningful church-wide social action project for the year or for a special day event in which there is wide congregational involvement. Such a project might be done in conjunction with the UU Urban Ministry or possibly involve tutoring or mentoring activities. One or more worship services will be integrated with this project, emphasizing the spiritual dimension of the needs it addresses. There will be a write-up of project activities in the local newspaper as a way of making First Church and Parish activities more visible to the community.

*Carol Hutton will drive this effort. Rob will provide contacts with the UU Urban Ministry as the project gets defined, and will work to develop appropriate worship services based on the project.*

**Goal 6. Action 1.**

Try out a 'Joys and Sorrows' segment in the worship service to occur after the Announcements on the first Sunday of the month. A condition of participation will be that this is understood as a time for personal sharing and not political announcements. This will begin when the church has obtained a hand-held wireless mic in the same frequency as one of the lapel mics so that the existing wireless system can be used.

*Rob will guide this effort and seek feedback on how well it works through the Worship and Music Committee.*

**Goal 6. Action 2.**

Try reducing the number of cushions in the pews of the Meeting House to encourage people to sit more closely together.

*Jeff Hutton and Carol Ewing will drive this effort.*

**Goal 6. Action 3.**

Place a 'Call Book' in the vestibule to the Meeting House so the minister or appropriate committee chair can be made aware of someone who would like to receive a call.

*Carol Hutton will drive this.*

**Goal 7. Action 1.**

Create an adult discussion group looking to share an opportunity for spiritual exploration.

*Rob will start such a group. This goal is timely since after the sermon on March 12, a number of members indicated they would like to form a group to explore the question 'What is faith and how can it become a source of strength in one's life?' The nature of this group will be more one of creative exploration, although if the group desires an educational component, this can be part of it as well.*

**Goal 7. Action 2.**

Start a Meditation Group.

*Carol Hutton indicated she would be willing to drive this effort.*

**Goal 7. Action 3.**

Rework the Pledge Card so that it can include questions directed at determining the spiritual interests of individuals as well as an indication of time-commitments people can make in providing direct services for the needs of the congregation in addition to their financial pledge.

*Eileen Sullivan and Judy Barrington agreed to drive this effort.*

**Goal M. Action 1.**

The model of a Caring Community described in a newsletter this fall is the basis of a way to widen participation in the caring work of a congregation by broadening the kinds of tasks and 'caring acts' needed both within the congregation and in the community,

*Rob will seek members of the congregation who are interested in putting this model into effect and he commits to driving this effort.*

In addition to the action items for which individuals committed their involvement, several other action items were proposed that are still in need of people to support them:

**Goal 1. Action 1.**

Establish a Finance Committee as a standing committee.

**Goal 7. Action 4.**

Create an expression in some form of what kind of vision and mission makes First Church and Parish unique.

*This will naturally involve a congregation-wide activity that Rob will organize when enough people are ready to pursue it.*

**Goal 7. Action 5.**

Participate in the ‘Odyssey Project’ that examines a congregation’s own history.

*This project uses a visible timeline display that gives a congregation an opportunity to identify key points of change in its own history and allows people to comment on their perception of the impact of these events or occurrences. The congregation then goes through a series of reflections on collected commentary. Rob can present the structure of this project as interest in it is expressed.*

One immediate overall observation is that Goal 7 (Work to make the congregation a more loving family) received a lot of attention. There is a message in that.

A second general observation is that a relatively small number of people have committed themselves to working on these actions. The number of people involved needs to expand – if not in a leadership role, then in participation.

Rob will communicate with each action-team leader to determine appropriate times when their team can report back to the congregation on their progress. It is very important to monitor progress in any improvement initiative. Therefore, action-teams will devise their own milestones and completion dates so that good intentions do not gradually dissipate into the air.

This is only the first of a number of such meetings we will hold, so those unable to attend this meeting will be given more opportunities to provide their input in the future.

Again, congratulations on an excellent start.

Rob

