

August 2007

The Spire

The Newsletter of the First Parish Church of Norwell, Massachusetts

781-659-7122

August 2007

Vol. VI Issue 1

Sunday Services – 10 a.m.

September 9:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

and Misty-Dawn Shelley, Student Minister

“Sacred Stories, The Scripture of Our Lives”

Homecoming Sunday

Human beings are meaning-making animals, and we do so in a variety of ways: through art, through procreation, through private reflection, and mostly through telling stories. What are the sacred stories of your life? As Unitarian Universalists, what sacred story are we claiming to be part of?

Ushers, pulpit arrangement donations, Coffee Hour Hosts and Chalice Lighters are needed for upcoming services. Please let us know if you can help. 659-7122

September 16:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“Sacred Places: On Pilgrimage”

For Hindus it is the Ganges River. For Muslims, Mecca. For Jews and Christians, Jerusalem. For some of us in this church, Walden Pond. Why do people leave their homes and undertake long and sometimes dangerous journeys to visit a special place where nothing in particular is happening? How does going somewhere special get you somewhere special?

Our Second Sunday offering will go to our Partner Church in Transylvania, a place of Unitarian Universalist pilgrimage.

September 23:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“Sacred Work: On the Slow, Hard Turning”

Yom Kippur, the high holy day of the Jewish year, invites the faithful to *tshuvah*, turning the heart and mind to more virtuous life. This is, in fact, the work of the religious person and the religious community. *Hashivenu, Adonai eilecha vena tshuvah.* (Turn us toward You, and we will return.) Have you ever tried to turn from dysfunction toward wholeness? Have you ever tried to change a character defect? Why is it so hard? Come and support one another in this essential human work.

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John Meddaugh, Chair

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Melody Barlow, David Dube,

John Meddaugh, Cathy Phillips,

Jim Pickel, Derek Sulc

and Sally Turner

Treasurer: *Marta Reese*

Collector: *Jeannette Mitchell*

Minister Emeritus:

Richard M. Fewkes

The **deadline** for the next issue of THE SPIRE is **Sunday, September 16th**. Submissions may be emailed as an attachment to: office@firstparishnorwell.org, or dropped off in hard copy or disk at the church office.

In the Spirit

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

August 5, 2007

It's another beautiful, sunny weekend and I hope many of you are out in it doing things you love: boating, gardening, visiting friends, reading on the beach, or just taking a moment to breathe deeply, put down the newspaper, unplug the computer and television and smell the roses (or, as Mother Nature would have it right now, the tomatoes and the basil).

I just spent four days in Yardley, Pennsylvania taking care of my nephews Nicholas and Lucas, reading "Hurry Up, Superman!" to them a dozen times a day, changing diapers, making them laugh uproariously over my gorilla routine (don't ask), coloring, fighting pirates, being covered with "Finding Nemo" stickers, and watching them gleefully splash around buck naked in their little inflatable pool. Grandma Shirley and I tag-team: she prepares meals while I play with the boys, one of us escapes for a few hours while the other holds down the fort (how do single parents *do* this?). Nothing else could have been better for my mental, spiritual and emotional well-being than leaving all deep thoughts and worldly concerns behind and savoring time with those two precious munchkins.

While in Yardley I was reminded of a spiritual truth that it is all too easy for me to forget: if I cease to worry about the world for a few days, the world still goes on. I do not hold up bridges with the strength of my concern, I do not stop wars with the intensity of my convictions, and I do not keep sociopaths from committing evil harms with the depth of my protective love. This is God's truth. It is also true that I do not cause the zinnias to grow with my desire that they will, and I do not make the sunset more beautiful by the passionate appreciation. That is also God's truth. Lately when people ask me for my definition of God I answer, "God is that indescribable magnificent force which keeps the world going without any of my help."

That doesn't mean I shouldn't water the zinnias or maintain an intensity of convictions, it just means that I can turn my thoughts entirely and exclusively to pirate action figures for a few days now and then, and that it's probably a good idea to do so. Jesus once said this beautiful thing to his friends, "My peace I give to you. My peace I leave with you. Not as the world gives, do I give you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." That blessing, a few pirate action figures and the company of two toddlers is some of the best soul medicine I can think of. I wish the same for you.

In faith, hope and love,
Vicki

CARING CORNER

Our condolences go to **Marlon Taylor** on the death of his mother, Pearl. Pearl Schneider passed away peacefully at the age of 84 on Wednesday, August 1st in Marlborough, MA. Reverend Vicki will lead a memorial service at our church on August 25th at 11 a.m. followed by refreshments in the Parish Hall.

Deane Howard is home recovering from a very successful back surgery. Our healing thoughts and prayers are with him.

Would those individuals (**Jen Anderson, Melody Barlow, Judy Bond, Lib Callahan, Gina Mood, Carol Sullivan, Mary Lou Sutter**) who kindly agreed to serve on the Pastoral Associates Caring Team please e-mail Reverend Vicki with your availability for our first meeting? Are you free on Wednesday or Thursday night, Sept. 19 or 20th? Let me know at REVictoria@msn.com. We will have two or three training sessions and then follow up with meetings on a regular basis (every four to six weeks).

ALLIANCE NEWS

All are invited for a very special September meeting of the Alliance. John Galluzzo, educator at the Mass. Audubon Society will present the slide show "Birds of A Feather."

John, co-author of the "Images of America" series, travels all over the South Shore educating the public about local wildlife and local history. The meeting is on Wednesday, September 19th in the Parish Hall with refreshments at 10 a.m. provided by the Alliance board. Save the date (it's more than a month away) and come and bring a friend.

MINISTRY OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS

Through August 24, please contact Melody Barlow at 781.834.3543 or mbarlow@cookandcompany.com if you have pastoral news that seems important to share with Rev. Vicki. In the event of an emergency (death or life-threatening illness of a church member, unforeseen disaster) Melody will know where to reach the minister.

Rev. Vicki hopes that you will keep Melody informed of other pastoral news (transitions, minor illness or non-life threatening injury, crises in members' extended family, etc.) so that Melody can keep a list of such items and check-in with Vicki on an occasional basis.

Please note that Vicki saves all her church-related e-mail to read and respond to when she is back from vacation/study leave in August.

Ya Gotta Regatta!

The annual family **First Parish Canoe/Boat Regatta** on the North River will be Saturday, August 25th meeting at 10:00 am at the boat landing on the Marshfield side of Bridge Street at the Union Street Bridge. If anyone needs info on renting canoes or needs a spot on a motorboat please contact Scott Babcock at 781-659-2956.

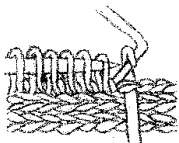
Bring a picnic lunch to eat when we stop at Couch beach; there is swimming there.

If rain is in the forecast, check with Babcocks for a decision about a rain date. The rain date has been set for the following day, Sunday, August 26th.

Save The Date!**Saturday, September 22, 2007****Sixties Birthday Celebration
to fund the Organ Project**

Mark your calendars and plan now to join us for food, wine and rock 'n roll! To celebrate our husbands' 60th birthdays this year we are sponsoring a fundraiser for the Organ Project. The South Shore classic rock band **Union Jack** will perform rock hits from the '60s, '70s and '80s including music from the Rolling Stones, The Who, Aerosmith, Van Morrison, Tom Petty and many more. In addition, buffet food, birthday cake, a beverage bar and dance floor will be provided. Join us for this "special moment of life's passage" and don't forget your dancing shoes. We will honor all those 1947 babies who will cross over into the '60s this year. All proceeds from ticket sales will go directly to the Organ Project Fund. Let your gift to our "Fab Four" and your favorite '47 baby be the gift of wonderful music for years to come at First Parish on a totally renovated and updated organ. More details to come.....later.

Marie Miller, Roberta Fairbanks,
Sue Robinson and Debi Meddaugh

**First Parish Knitters**

Did you knit any Comfort Dolls this summer? There is still time to do so before we gather our dolls together to be sent to AIDS orphans in Africa. Samples of the dolls are on the Service Committee Table along with a pattern to knit. This doll, made from leftover pieces of yarn, can be knit in about an hour. Return finished dolls to the table and they will join others being sent to Africa in September.

Recycling at its best!

Do you have any pint or half-pint jelly or canning jars that you can't bear to toss and would love to see re-used? Mary Lou Sutter cans boxes and boxes of jars containing fresh delicacies every year for the Harvest Fair and would love to take those jars off your hands to re-use for the food table at the Fair. You can bring them to the church office or give Mary Lou a call.

From John Marsh

I am pleased as punch to tell you that starting in September I will begin another two year interim ministry. This one will be in Arlington, Massachusetts. The Arlington Church was organized in 1733. It has around 350 members. It used to have a traditional New England meetinghouse building. Then it had a big fire and now it has a modern structure.

The church is about three miles from the home of my sister Susan and her family in Belmont. By serendipity, they will be going to Germany for six months beginning in August, and I will be using their home during that time.

I will still be commuting home to Rochester where Aidan and Robin will continue in high school and where Alison will continue to work at Strong Hospital. Mostly I will be flying back and forth, but when the leaves are turning, and the apples are just right, I will make the trip by car, if not bicycle.

I have greatly enjoyed my two years as interim at May Memorial in Syracuse and the congregation seems to feel likewise, at least they seem determined to pack as many calories as possible into me during my last month here.

Yours, John

Harvest Fair Moved to November 17! (and other newsworthy Activity Notes!)

At the Activities Committee meeting on June 3, and a summer July 18 meeting on the Harvest Fair and Spring Market plans for this church year were made.

Urgent needs of the Committee are:

- Someone to help with Publicity
- Craft workshop leaders (teach us what you know). See dates below & talk to Sue Robinson.
- Chairs for the April Art Show and the March 23 Easter Breakfast.
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- ❖ 10:00 am, Sat. Aug. 25 North River Regatta - Marcia & Scott Babcock coordinating. Meet at the Union St. Bridge, Bridge St. Rain date Sun. Aug. 26.
- ❖ Sat. Sept. 22 - Rock & Roll Concert/Organ Fundraiser to be funded and coordinated by Sue Robinson, Marie Miller, Roberta Fairbanks & Debbie Meddaugh. This will be a party to celebrate anyone who turns 60 this year (or recently did).
- ❖ Sat. Sept. 29 - Golf Tournament & Dinner to be coordinated by Deane & Joanne Howard. The golf will be at 1:00 at Squirrel Run in Plymouth and the dinner in the Parish Hall.
- ❖ Sat. Oct. 20 - Circle Dinner Date. Mary Mercier to coordinate.
- ❖ Sat. Nov. 17 - Harvest Fair (note the new later date). This is a wonderful, fun, community building fundraiser. Volunteer and become part of the church family.

We will have some fall workshops leading up to the fair. You are needed!

Tuesday, September 11, 9 a.m. - ornaments - Sue Robinson

Saturday, September 15, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, September 25, 9 a.m.

Saturday, September 29, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, October 9, 9 a.m.

Saturday, October 13, 9 a.m. – crystal and bead ornament hangers – Deanna Riley

Tuesday, October 23, 9 a.m.

Saturday, October 27, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, November 6, 9 a.m. - sweet bread making

Sunday, November 11, 1 p.m. - dried arrangements - Sue Robinson, Margy Miola

2008

- ❖ Sat. Jan/Feb. - Birthdays Potluck Supper coordinated by Joyce & Jim Pickle.
- ❖ ? March - Canvass Supper to be coordinated by the Finance/Canvass Committee
- ❖ Sun. March 23 - Easter Breakfast. **A coordinator is needed.**
- ❖ ? April - Art Show Sale & Appraisal - **A coordinator is needed.**
- ❖ May 10 - Astronomy Night to be coordinated by Rosemary Gentile.
- ❖ ? May - Circle Dinner to be coordinated by Mary Mercier.
- ❖ ? May - Spring Market - to be coordinated by Bev Gardner

Peg Kitchenham is stepping down as chair of the Activities Committee so she and Chris can travel, (but they remain as members of the Committee). In the absence of anyone willing to serve as chair, Linda Goodwin agreed to serve as Convener. She will send out e-mails to remind people of meeting dates, and if you send an item to her, she will put it on the agenda. We are grateful to her for being willing to do this coordinating job.

District Wide Kick-off Event for Social Justice

Put on your dancing shoes and come on Saturday, September 1, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. to a concert by the popular rock & blues band, "Connected," at the Beal House on Main Street, Kingston to benefit a Peace Corps water/sanitation project initiated by Gretchen Snoeyenbos, Silver Lake 2000 graduate, to upgrade the regional hospital in Dioila, Mali, West Africa!

All ages are welcome to this event, photos of her project will be displayed and suggested donations are as follows: \$5 children/students/senior citizens, \$10 all others.

This concert is sponsored by the Kingston Unitarian Universalist church as a kick-off social justice event beginning a year of activity in the Unitarian Universalist Ballou-Channing District focusing on Water: A Basic Human Right.

Throughout Africa, but especially in the Sahel region below the Sahara desert, access to clean and abundant water is highly compromised and, with the effects of global warming, becoming increasingly so.

Gretchen is at the mid-point in her 2 year commitment as a water & sanitation Peace Corps volunteer in Dioila, Mali and is focusing on rudimentary sanitation as one of her primary goals. She has had a year-long correspondence with Bob Dray's fifth grade class at Halifax Elementary and they have been able to talk to her occasionally on the phone as well as write letters.

For more information, contact:
Ellen Snoeyenbos 781-294-1091
ellens8@yahoo.com

Regional Fall Conference is October 27

Mark your calendar! UU Districts from the New England area are gathering in **Worcester** on **Saturday, October 27** for a powerhouse regional conference that will feature great UU speakers like Moderator **Gini Courter** and UUA finance guru **Wayne Clark**.

Help Young Adults Going Off to College Remain UUs

The Church of the Larger Fellowship can assist a high school graduate maintain their UU identity and UU community connection when they go off to college. A special CLF program called Church of the Younger Fellowship at <http://uucyf.org/> as material about spirituality, community and forming a UU campus community and much more. Give a graduating young adult a way to maintain his or her Unitarian Universalism by telling them about this site and giving them a membership in the Church of the Larger Fellowship. Go to <http://www25.uua.org/CLF/> for more information.

Religious Education at First Parish

Welcome to Lifespan Religious Education!

From the DRE,

What, you may ask, is Lifespan Religious Education, and how is it different from what we are now doing at First Parish? We have, of course, been a community of teachers and learners from our youngest to our most venerable parishioners for some time. What has really changed is that the Religious Education Committee and the Adult Learning Committee decided at the end of last church year to merge and form a new (you guessed it) Lifespan Religious Education Committee. We made this change in the never ending effort to provide the very best religious education opportunities for all of our parishioners. We are thrilled that Patti Walters has agreed to stay on as chair of this new committee and Melody Barlow, late the chair and sole member of the Adult Learning Committee will serve as Vice-Chair. We hope to create a greater continuity, and a wider range of offerings with everyone on the committee looking at the big picture of Religious Education. If you would like to be a part of this exciting committee, please contact Patti Walters or myself (DREStuart@aol.com).

An Exciting Year Awaits our Church School Children!

I have written in these pages often about the changing nature of church school. Sunday morning, a time once reserved in our society for church and family, is now a busy time full of athletic practices, games and many other activities. In what has become a difficult juggling act, our students and teachers find themselves torn between providing opportunities for their children to participate in such activities and going to Church School. Yet our curriculum is geared to those who can regularly attend with many lessons building weeks past. In an effort to provide the best possible religious education in this situation, we are dramatically changing our church school practices this year.

Each week will consist of a self contained lesson that will be the same for all church school children (preK-6th Grades). Each week will include common worship, stories, varied activities in which older children will help the younger, and music. Look for many more details both on email and at the beginning of the church school year. If you have questions in the meantime, don't hesitate to ask!

And please consider teaching once in awhile—we would love for you to share your talents with our church school children.

Old favorites and exciting new series: Adult Learning

1. Among the returning classes and series in our Adult Learning Program this year will be: Bernie Gardner and Jim Pickel on some aspect of the world of science and the environment
2. Bible Study: We will continue our Bible Study the first and third Sundays of each month
3. Book Group: A wide variety of books are discussed in this monthly group
4. New England Religion Potluck Series: This year's theme will concern the Transcendentalists
5. Third Thursday Poetry Night: This group meets at the James each month to read and listen to poetry.
6. Sunday Evening Sitting Group: This meditation group meets each week
7. Saturday Morning Yoga with Ed Milano:

Several new programs are in the works. Look for them as the church year starts!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

2007-2008 Kick-off Barbecue

Come help plan the year's activities!

WHEN: Monday, August 27th, 6 PM

WHERE: The Gustafson home in Marshfield, at 78 Deerhill Lane

WHO: Those in grades 10 through 12*

WHAT: Salad, dessert or any friends who might be interested in joining us this year

RSVP by August 25 to Jen Anderson, Youth Director. She can be reached at 617-763-2799 or saccharine.half@gmail.com.

Hope to see you there!

*Fear not, freshmen---we are planning a celebration especially for you! Watch this space for details!