

The Spire

The Newsletter of the First Parish Church of Norwell, Massachusetts



781-659-7122

September 17, 2008

Vol. VII Issue 2

Sunday Services – 10 a.m.

September 21:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“On Liberals and Labels”

Commission of Religious Education Teachers

Danish philosopher and theologian Soren Kierkegaard observed, “Once you label me, you negate me.” Today we will remember the victims of the shooting at the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee, the question of what happened there, and clarify how religious liberalism differs from political liberalism.

September 28:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“Voice Still and Small”

This summer, I met with a group of First Parish women to teach them a Quaker process called Clearness Committee, which is centered on the practice of communal discernment. We all have to make many decisions in our lives; how can we bring spiritual groundedness and wisdom to those moments? Come benefit from learning the difference between deciding and discernment.

October 5:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“Irreverent Reverence, Or What’s the Sense of Humor?”

The death of comics George Carlin and Bernie Mac this summer deprived us of great irreverent genius. Religious communities are not known for their devotion to laughter, but they should be. Come here more about the Gospel According to George and Bernie, and explore the humanizing power of humor.

Ushers, pulpit arrangements and Coffee Hour hosts are needed!

Volunteer today by calling the church office 781-659-7122,
or by signing up at Coffee Hour!

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drestuart@aol.com

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Jennifer Anderson
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saccharine.half@gmail.com

Music Director: *Gingy Grimes***Parish Committee:**

Jim Pickel, Chair
 (Home) 508-746-4647

Committee Members:

Melody Barlow, Deane Howard,
Marie Miller, Cathy Phillips,
Derek Sulc and Sally Turner

Treasurer: *Marta Reese***Minister Emeritus:**

Rev. Richard M. Fewkes

The **deadline** for the next issue of THE SPIRE is **Sunday, September 28th**. 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

What a fast-paced and exciting time it is! We have re-convened our regular church programs after a summer of very successful lay led worship services and we're going gangbusters. Jim Pickel is our new Parish Committee chair and Joyce Pickel is our new Worship Committee chair, so as some of us have been joking, "We're all in a pickel now!" Bless their hearts. They exemplify the admirable commitment we see from so many in our congregation.

I am working closely with all the church leaders, and especially with Stuart Twite, to prepare for my sabbatical. It's coming up so fast I can't believe it. December 28 will be my last service with you until the very end of the program year. While I feel an urgency to organize, coordinate and plan every last detail before I leave, I know that everything will be fine, that we have amazing leadership at First Parish, and that my attempt to anticipate every question or need in advance of my departure is unreasonable and unnecessary. As Dick Fewkes and Jan Knost have reminded me, you are a healthy and strong congregation and have accommodated ministerial sabbatical or absence for family reasons before, and have done so graciously and well.

Two quick pastoral pleas for you, Church: first, please remember to wear your nametags on Sundays. Whether you've been coming for twenty years or for twenty days, please do this for each other. We need to know one another by name.

Second, during this red-hot campaign season, let us be more than civil in our conversations about politics – let us be genuinely respectful. We are not compartmentalized beings and should not expect that the subject of politics will not come up when we are together. Political convictions are connected to moral and ethical issues that we address as a religious community. There is nothing wrong, illegal or unethical about discussing politics in church, and there is nothing wrong with having an opinion. There is something very wrong, however, when we claim to "affirm and promote" each person's search for truth and meaning, but then behave in an intolerant fashion when we don't all arrive at the same truths.

Breathe deeply, and savor this time of harvest.

In faith, hope and love,

Vicki



Caring Corner

Our caring thoughts are with **Mary Eliot** who is convalescing from a broken leg. She is at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, Rm. 526W, 125 Nashua Street, Boston. Her phone number is 617-573-7408.

We wish **Diane Nadeau** good luck and godspeed as she moves to Sedona, Arizona to be with her parents. We'll miss you, Diane!

Our condolences are with **Alison Weathersbee** and her family on the death of her father after a long illness.

We note with great sadness the passing of our friend and long-time member **Caryl Gaudette** on August 27th. Caryl passed away quietly while sitting in a chair on her porch, having suffered no illness and having lived well into her 90's. She did not want a memorial service and is buried in the First Parish Cemetery in the family plot.

Please hold **Ellie and Dick Fewkes** in your thoughts and prayers. Ellie is being cared for comfortably at home in the end stages of Alzheimer's disease.

WANTED: MUSICIANS - YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART!

Now that our beloved organ is on Sabbatical for the year, I could use some volunteer musicians to spice up the music on Sunday mornings.

Do you play an instrument? Do you sing? Do you have some music you'd like an opportunity to perform? I'd be happy to accompany you on piano (or not).

Please let me know if you'd like to share your music with First Parish. It could be fun!

Gingy Grimes, Music Director

How To Write And Deliver a Sermon A Workshop with Rev. Victoria Weinstein Sponsored by the Sabbatical Committee Saturday, October 25, 9-10:00 AM

Preaching is one of the most challenging, inspiring and fulfilling aspects of ministry, and does not require that you be ordained to do it! Give the gift of yourself to the congregation through a sermon. Come to this workshop and explore potential topics, learn how to organize notes and start writing, and receive a bit of training in how to comfortably "take the pulpit."

Please contact Rev. Vicki, at Victoria.Weinstein@gmail.com or call her at the church office 781.659.7122 to sign up. We are hoping for 6-10 participants who will be willing to preach during Rev. Vicki's sabbatical.

How to Lead a Worship Service A Workshop with Rev. Victoria Weinstein Sponsored by the Sabbatical Committee Tuesday, November 11, 9-11 AM

In two hours together, we will go over our Order of Service, explore and explain all of the elements of our worship, learn how to transition from one element to the next, and gain the confidence and knowledge to lead the congregation through a Sunday morning service.

Please contact Rev. Vicki, at Victoria.Weinstein@gmail.com or call her at the church office 781.659.7122 to sign up. We are hoping to train 3-6 lay liturgists who will be willing to work with Stuart Twite and lead a service during Rev. Vicki's sabbatical.

Baby Care is really Baby/Toddler

Care and can be fun! This year we are asking parishioners who don't currently have young children to help out with the young ones. All we ask is one or two Sundays during the church year-get there 9:45 and stay in the room until the service is over and the children are picked up. There will be toys, books and snacks provided! Please sign up at Coffee Hour with Baby Care Coordinator, Bev Gardner. Choose a Sunday, ask a good friend to help out (or do it with an assigned partner) and be ready for some fun! (There will always be at least two of you in the room!) Men are invited as well-Jack Wallace has already volunteered!

James Library & Center for the Arts

New Board Members- **Sue Sulc and Deanna Riley** were elected to the James Board of Trustees at the July James Library Board meeting. Welcome Sue and Deanna and thank you for serving on the board!

Storytime Series - The monthly preschool storytime series will begin on September 23. The first storytime will be led by **Lorna Phillips**. The Tuesday morning series held at 10 a.m. will feature songs and stories for children ages 3-5. All are welcomed. Call 659-7100 to sign up.

Upcoming programs-

Visit www.jameslibrary.org to see details on all 2008-2009 programs. The upcoming season includes a wide variety of programs - concerts (folk, Celtic and classical), literary events (a "visit" from Eleanor Roosevelt) and a lyceum about Anne Bradstreet by **Rev. Vicki**. To receive a ticket brochure in the mail, please call the library.

From the Music Director, Giny Grimes

Next Sunday morning, September 21, I'd like to give everyone the chance to feel the joy of singing in the choir! We'll be singing an anthem based on a well-known hymn, so you can sing the melody or read the music, either one.

If any of you would like to join the choir for one Sunday only, show up at 9:30 next Sunday morning for rehearsal and then join us up front as we sing the anthem.

Children bring your parents and visa versa. Join us for "Choir-for-a-day" and bring joy to your day!

Choir member testimonial: "You have no idea how much better you sound when you sing with a group. They carry you right along."

Green Sanctuary wants to know what YOU think First Parish can do to be more environmentally friendly! If you aren't sure WHAT that means, stop by our table at coffee hour and find out what Green Sanctuary means for you. Look out this month for our Parish survey in which we will ask you, our parishioners, about your environmental practices. Don't worry, there's no homework (yet!). Our next meeting won't be until October, so if you would like to be involved now and aren't already receiving our emails, please contact Elizabeth Robinson at eerob@freepalettefarm.com.

Membership Committee News

At the Membership Committee's recent kickoff meeting, the discussion ranged far and wide around ways that we can help to welcome new members and visitors, while recognizing the continued presence and contributions of existing members. We decided to implement two plans that we hope will contribute to these goals: Sunday morning greeters, and "New to UU" sessions.

When you arrive for service on Sunday mornings, you should expect to see one of the members of our committee at either entrance to the Meetinghouse. For existing members of First Parish, it will be a chance for us to say "Good morning, we're glad you're here". For newcomers, it will be a chance to be shown where the service is held, and guided to the ushers who can give them an order of worship and help them solve the mystery of our "one-way" pews.

On September 28 and October 26 at 11:20, Rev. Vicki will lead information sessions she is calling "New to UU". These will be brief sessions to allow newcomers a chance to find out just what it means to be a UU at First Parish. No sign-up is required. The invitation to attend one of these sessions will be extended during the morning service, and anyone who wants to come is welcome. If these sessions prove useful, more will be scheduled.

We'd be glad to hear your input on these or any other membership issues. Feel free to speak to me or any other member of the Membership Committee. Members are: Chris Kitchenham, Frank Callahan, Harry Heineman, Russ Haskell, and Julie McOsker.

George Goodwin, Membership Chair

Meetinghouse Organ Project Update

By now most of you have noticed that the Meetinghouse organ has been disassembled. Dexter assisted with taking the organ apart and made several historical discoveries in the process. The names of the builders are visible on the inside of the case as well as another person who worked on the organ in the 1950's.

Work on the project continues. All of the pipes for the new division for the second keyboard have been purchased. Darron Wissinger, the builder, spent considerable time during the summer in the design phase. This is a computer assisted engineering process of fitting all of the existing pipes plus new ones into the existing case and space behind it. He also finished building a small box around the new blower, which supplies the wind power to the instrument. He will be taking a small number of pipes at a time to his workshop for cleaning and adjusting.

The capital campaign is now in its final year and will end in March, 2009. To date \$164,000 has been raised from donations and pledges towards the goal of \$180,000. It is not too late to make a donation which will be matched 150%. This means that a \$1000 donation becomes \$2500 with the matching donation from Fogg funds and 50% matching from the Detwilers. Donations of \$500 or more will be permanently recognized on a plaque. We only need to raise a little over \$6300 from donors which, with matching grants, will achieve our goal.

Be sure to join us at the Harvest Dance on Saturday, November 1, 7-10 pm, sponsored by the Music Committee with proceeds benefiting the Meetinghouse Organ project.

Organ Committee: Paul Coolidge, Bob Detwiler, Marie Miller, Dexter Robinson, Chair

**First Parish Fogg Lecture Series
partners with
UCC Missions and Outreach Team
to present Charlie Clements
Sunday, October 26th, 2008, 6:30 p.m.
at UCC Norwell**

Themed Gift Baskets were a hit of last year's Harvest Fair. Thank you to all who donated a basket and items on a theme! Please consider doing a basket for us to sell at this year's Harvest fair. Use your own basket or use one of ours.

To make it easier for you and for those of us who package your baskets- We have learned that **baskets in the \$15-45 range sell best**. Buy carefully-selectively-look for sales! We try to offer the baskets at an attractive price.

Keep a list of everything you are donating for the basket. This will help us when we type up a tag with the names of items on it.

New, non-perishable items only, please!

Suggested themes or types which were successful in former years-Baby, Movie Time, Tea Time, Pet (Dog, Cat, Bird) Lover, Beauty, for a certain age girl or boy.... Bev Gardner 781-829-0932 Deanna Riley 781-837-4964

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE HARVEST MOON DANCE !!

The Music Committee is sponsoring a *Harvest Moon Dance* on Saturday, November 1, 2008 from 7-10 PM in the Parish Hall. Roger and Claire Vaka, professional dancers, will instruct all participants in dance lessons, which include mambo, waltz, fox-trot, tango, rhumba, cha-cha, swing and more. The admission fee of \$15 will benefit the Organ Restoration project. Light refreshments will be served. All adults are welcome, singles, couples, triples; a partner is not necessary!

Dr. Charlie Clements, renowned human rights and health advocate and president and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, will be speaking at UCC Norwell as the guest of the UCC Mission and Outreach Ministry Team in collaboration with First Parish Fogg Service Committee.

Charlie Clements began his career as a pilot during the Vietnam War and attended medical school after leaving the military service. His reputation as a human rights activist started during the U.S. intervention in El Salvador during the 1980s. At that time he provided health care and preventive medicine to rural communities caught in the cross fire of their civil war. He saw first hand how the policies of our government can exacerbate the oppression of the people in Central America. He served as liaison to the International Committee of the Red Cross for Prisoner of War-related matters. More recently his efforts raise international awareness about access to water as a human rights issue and the danger of landmines. Charlie Clements has served as a consultant to the Pew Charitable Trusts, is the author of *Witness to War*, printed in four languages, and served as a special guest at the signing of the peace accords in Mexico City, ending the bloody civil war in El Salvador. Today Dr. Charlie Clements travels frequently around the globe putting into action the dignity and worth of all individuals as president of UUSC. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a nonsectarian organization that advances human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world envisioning a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights. We, at First Parish, are honored to co-sponsor Dr. Clements. He will be speaking at UCC Norwell on Sunday, October 26th at 6:30 p.m. Plan to join us for an inspiring evening and open discussion.

Religious Education at First Parish

From the DRE,

Many thanks to the Lifespan Religious Education Committee, our lead teachers, and our teachers this Sunday, for a wonderful start to the church year. We have made a fairly smooth transition back to our more traditional form and curriculum and I am very much looking forward to a year of teaching and learning for everyone.

I am also these days, mindful of how deeply important are the lessons that we try to teach and embody in our church school. The very real, sincere, and heartfelt cultural differences in our nation and world are, right now, being intensified and coarsely used in the name, sadly, of healing those very divisions (I speak, of course, of the Presidential election campaign.)

What can we do? One daily and practical answer is to live our Unitarian Universalist Principles as best we can moment by moment. It may not seem much—doing the next right thing does not feel revolutionary. In fact, it often seems tedious and ineffectual. I have really come to believe, however, that it is everything. It is living a vision of a good life.

One such vision was written by the 19th Century Unitarian William Henry Channing and it serves as our theme for the year:

My Symphony

“To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not, rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common--this is my symphony.”

WILLIAM HENRY CHANNING



Begins Sunday Sept. 21st!

A Panorama of Life (Our First Parish Bible Study)

Join us for our study of LUKE/ACTS. If you have been reading the Bible for years or have never read a word you are very welcome! We meet on the first and third Sundays of each month at:

9:00am in the Fogg Parlor.

If you need a Bible or have any questions, please contact stuart twite at:
Home: 781 837 8791, Church: 781 659 7122, Email: DREStuart@aol.com



Meets Wed. October 1st!

The First Parish Book Club (in concert with the Green Sanctuary Program)

Discusses: Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver

We will meet at 7:00pm in the Fogg Parlor on Wednesday, October 1st.

The **JAMES LIBRARY LYCEUM** returns!

WITH:

POETRY AS PILGRIMAGE:

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ANNE BRADSTREET

PRESENTED BY **REV. VICTORIA WEINSTEIN**

ANNE DUDLEY BRADSTREET WAS THE FIRST PUBLISHED WOMAN POET IN AMERICA AND AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN AMERICAN LITERARY HISTORY. IN THIS FASCINATING LECTURE, REV. WEINSTEIN EXAMINES BRADSTREET'S POETRY AS INTERIOR SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE, A CREATIVE OUTPOURING COMING FROM HER EXPERIENCE AS COLONIAL WIFE, MOTHER, DAUGHTER AND SPOUSE OF POWERFUL POLITICAL MEN (BOTH GOVERNORS OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY), AND SURVIVOR OF A TRAUMATIC 77-DAY CROSSING FROM ENGLAND TO THE NEW WORLD ON THE SHIP ARBELLA.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10 AT 7:30 P.M

AT THE JAMES LIBRARY

A Flash of Lightning

A Study of Shantideva's

Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

What awakens compassion in you?

How can we cultivate true compassion in a difficult and dangerous world?

How can we raise the level of our lives?

Join us for a study of Shantideva's

Guide to the Bodhisattva's

Way of Life, and explore these and many other fundamental questions.

Sessions will take place on Wednesday evenings: Oct. 8th, Oct. 22nd, and Oct. 29th at 7:00pm in the Fogg Parlor.

The text: Shantideva, "The Way of the Bodhisattva" Padmakara Translation Group (trans.) Shambhala Press

For more information, a copy of the book, and to SIGN UP please contact Stuart Twite (DRE) at

DREStuart@aol.com, H:781 837 8791, Church: 781 659 7122