

The Spire

The Newsletter of the First Parish Church of Norwell, Massachusetts

781-659-7122

November 26, 2008

Vol. VII Issue 7

Sunday Services – 10 a.m.

November 30:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“A New Kind of Happy”

Nothing says "happy" like the holidays during a serious economic slump! Relax. There's no need to put a fake smile on your face or to feel or be anything different this season. And you may, in fact, be happier than you think.

December 7:

Church School

“What are We Waiting For?”

The season of Advent is one of anticipation and waiting. On this, the second Sunday in of Advent, our First Parish Sunday school will illuminate four of the great “gifts” that we look forward to during this Holiday Season.

December 14:

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

“A Moment With the Skin Horse: Does It Hurt To Be Real?”

Looking at a moment from the beloved children’s classic, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, we will reflect on what it means to be authentic within community. Our Second Sunday Offering will be taken to provide holiday cheer to foster children in the care of the Department of Social Services. Teens are particularly welcome to this service.

Newcomers are welcome to join a brief, informal “New To UU” session in the church office at 11:20.

How to Lead a Worship Service A Workshop with Rev. Victoria Weinstein Sponsored by the Sabbatical Committee Wednesday, December 10, 7-8:30 p.m.

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.

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of Norwell, Massachusetts
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 781-659-7288

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Stuart Twite, 781-837-8791
drestuart@aol.com

Director of Youth Programming

Jennifer Shattuck
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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, December 7th**. 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

So, how are things? I am concerned, of course, about your stress level regarding the economy and wondering if you're facing unemployment, worried about paying for your children's education, or dreading the arrival of your next gas bill or credit card statement. Can you pay the mortgage? Do you have an able-bodied, employable family member or friend living with you who isn't pulling their weight financially, and do you need support in speaking truth to that person about the situation? Are you feeling the need to take a second job yourself, and worried about how this might affect your family, your sense of identity, or your quality of life?

These are just some of the questions and concerns that can arise during tough economic times. If you'd be interested in joining a group of other parishioners for conversation and support, please let me know at victoria.weinstein@gmail.com and I'll add you to a list that Judy Bond, Chair of the Pastoral Caregivers is compiling.

How to deal creatively with the holidays when the bank account is low and savings or retirement accounts draining or drained? Here are some ideas I've heard from various sources: save the exchange of gifts just for children, share a big potluck meal and watch a movie together, cut back on costly foods and beverages and have fun starting a new tradition (chicken thighs are much less expensive than duck or a whole turkey! Or go vegetarian!), take a "staycation" instead of traveling (and apply the money saved to paying down a credit card balance), see if you can find a desired gift item for free on Freecycle.com, skip sending cards this year and save both postage and some trees (send e-mails instead, with photos enclosed, and explain why you're doing so). Tell the children that your family is slowing down and simplifying this year in order to save money and to better appreciate and savor what you already have: it's a fact of life they'll be able to accept if you explain that the season is really about peace and giving of ourselves, anyway. You may find that the children are excited about the prospect of giving to others. If so, the local papers are full of suggestions for places that provide opportunities to do so.

As for myself, I am taking a break from hosting Thanksgiving dinner this year and going to a friend's house. Since I begin my sabbatical on December 29 (or thereabouts, but definitely by January 1), I am having an extremely minimalist Christmas, if any at all! Just as it is always a joyous occasion putting up the tree, it can be wonderfully liberating to leave the decorations in boxes for a year, and to not have a pile of envelopes to address. Peace, peace on earth... and in all our hearts.

In faith, hope and love,
 Vicki

Caring Corner

Our Minister Emeritus, **Dick Fewkes**, is recovering at home from a successful surgery to repair his good heart. Our healing prayers are with him.

Healing thoughts and prayers are with **Mark and Judy Whitcher** as their 2-year old grandson Ian struggles with cancer.

Condolences to **Kim and Jack Arouca**, a former member of the church, on the death of Kim's father Joseph Santosuosso.

First Parish Holiday Project over subscribed!

Your Helen Fogg Service Committee has chosen children in foster care as the focus of this year's Holiday Project and we are pleased to announce that the response from all of you has been wonderful. For several years parishioner Betsy Gordon has been helping to collect gifts for individuals, specifically teenagers, who are in foster care in the greater Boston area. This year we took on the responsibility of 25 of these children.

On Sunday, November 16th, parishioners chose all 25 children! Two additional children have now been added. Each has a "necessity" (primarily an item of clothing) plus two other "wants and wishes." We ask you to provide new items, placed in a gift bag but NOT wrapped, by December 14th – Second Sunday. Feel free to join with a friend to make this a special Christmas for these children. The "Second Sunday" open plate collection in December will also be used for this project.

Contact Sue Robinson for further information or to select a child in advance. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Harvest Fair Gift Baskets

What a wonderful success! Thank you to all the people who donated the wonderful baskets! So far, we have raised \$957. Check out the remaining baskets at Coffee Hour on Sunday! They are wonderful - The "right" person simply has not come by yet to see them!

There will be one issue of The Spire published in the month of December. The deadline for submissions is Sunday, December 7th. Please include information for all events and announcements through the beginning of January. The following issue will be mailed on January 7th.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT/TEA LUNCHEON

**with
THE BROAD COVE CHORALE
Margo Euler, Conductor**

**Wednesday, December 10th
10:30 a.m.**

Alliance members bring a dozen Christmas Goodwill Cookies to the Parish Hall by 9:45 a.m. Alliance meeting starts at 10 a.m. to be followed by the concert at 10:30 Luncheon to follow concert

This year's concert is a wonderful combination of performance music by the Broad Cove Chorale, audience singing and poetry. 2 interludes for solo piano by our talented pianist Mark Goodman will feature Bach and Brahms. The concert is called O WONDROUS NIGHT: the Nativity in Word and Song. Larry Collins is our reader and the poetry spans the centuries from Ephraim of Syria (300 A.D.) to W.H.Auden.

Meet Our New Members



Noel Constantino

Noel Constantino has been so active at our church it is hard to believe that she chose to join our congregation just last year. Noel has been contributing her musical talents to the church choir every Sunday and has been active on the First Parish Activities Committee. Noel is also very active within the community; she is a volunteer with hospice and the Cohasset Sea Chest and she coaches computer skills with Senior Net at Massasoit Community College. Noel resides in Rockland and likes to tell people that she is “rich in family” with 4 children, 4 step-children and 14 grandkids.



Noah and Laura Lydiard

Noah and Laura Lydiard have been coming to First Parish Church since 2004 and chose to become members of the church last year after the birth of their daughter, Rose. Rose was dedicated at FPN last February. The Lydiards, who are new to Unitarian Universalism, live in Weymouth but make the weekly trek to Norwell because of the warmth and welcoming environment that FPN provides. Please welcome Laura, Noah and Rose when you see them next Sunday.

Helping our Minister with Travel Costs during Sabbatical

As you all know, Rev. Vicki will be embarking on her sabbatical after Christmas.

Vicki has several big educational and travel plans. She will begin her sabbatical with a 3-week stay in Amarillo, Texas, where she has volunteered her services as a Visiting Minister to a Unitarian Universalist fellowship. She will fly from Texas to Nicaragua for a Spanish language intensive that she hopes will result in fluency in that language. After working on her doctoral dissertation in the late winter, she will take a “dream trip” in late April with the Society for Biblical Studies, to visit important sights from pre-Christian and Christian religion in Turkey and Greece. Finally, Vicki will fly from Athens to Romania and visit our Partner Church in Kadacs, Transylvania for the first time.

The experiences that ministers have on sabbatical certainly enrich their ministry with their congregations. Accordingly, it is customary for parishes to help with the travel costs during sabbatical. Rather than look to the operating budget of the church, your Finance Committee felt it would be more appropriate to solicit private gifts from our parishioners.

If you are interested in making a contribution toward Vicki’s sabbatical, please send a check made out to First Parish Norwell with a notation in the memo line, stating “Minister’s Sabbatical Fund”. Additionally, please feel free to make a contribution in check or cash during coffee hour, where Melody Barlow and I will be available.

A Sabbatical Brochure outlining further details of Vicki’s plans and church operations during her absence be available at the beginning of December.

– Marta Reese, Church Treasurer

Women's Group Christmas Party

Our traditional Pot Luck and Yankee Swap Christmas party will be on Friday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 at Bev Gardner's house, 209 Washington Street, Pembroke. It's a "you-bring-it, we'll eat it" pot luck. Drinks will be provided.

Bring a gift for the swap-\$8 or under-or find something nice at your house which you no longer need but think someone else will like! Also, please bring something for the Norwell Food Pantry.

VERY IMPORTANT - RSVP to Bev at bevgardner@yahoo.com or 781-829-0932

All women of First Parish are invited!

LOOKING FOR THAT PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT?

We will offer Heifer International animals for sale again at Coffee Hours until Christmas. You will receive a unique gift card explaining about Heifer International for your honoree, and your "gifted" animal will go to a needy family somewhere in the world!)

Prices-

Heifer	\$500
Share of a Heifer	\$50
Water Buffalo	\$250
Share of a Water Buffalo	\$25
Llama	\$150
Share of a llama	\$20
Goat, Sheep or Pig	\$120
Share of a Goat, Sheep or Pig	\$10
Tree Seedlings	\$60
Share of Tree Seedlings	\$10
Trio of Rabbits	\$60
Share of Rabbits	\$10
Honeybees	\$30
Starter Flock of Chicks, Ducks or Geese	\$20

Welcoming a Guest at Your Table

Each year at this time, friends and families in our congregation participate in the UU tradition of Guest at Your Table.

By bringing home a beautiful Guest at Your Table box, families and individuals learn about how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee puts our shared principles into action in the United States and around the world. Through a potent combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots organizations, UUSC promotes **economic rights**, advances **environmental justice**, defends **civil liberties**, and preserves the rights of people in times of **humanitarian crisis**.

Sharing our blessings through Guest at Your Table ensures that UUSC's human-rights work continues, while building UUSC membership. UUSC members are vitally important, as UUSC is an independent, membership-based organization that receives no funding from the UUA or the U.S. government.

Through the booklet *Stories of Hope* we connect with people in the United States and around the world who are working hard to advance human rights - and protect their own rights - in partnership with UUSC.

In each household, the Guest at Your Table box is placed in a prominent spot, often at the family meal table. When family and friends gather to enjoy their blessings, they can reflect on the contributions of their Guests and share generously. Each week, we can choose a different story to read, bringing our Guests to life and helping to celebrate our own rights.

If you would prefer not to bring home a box, you can take a donation envelope or support UUSC directly online at www.uusc.org.

Our Guest at Your Table program began during our family Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 23rd. Contact Sue Robinson, your UUSC rep, for further information.

Religious Education at First Parish

Church School Families!

We are excited to be conducting the December 7th Worship Service ! I invite all who are able, to attend church on Sunday Nov. 30th when we will hold a rehearsal. If you are not able to attend, you are still very welcome to be a part on the 7th! I will email the program to everyone next week so that you will be able to practice at home. Each class will put on a 2 or 3 min. presentation on the 7th. I hope to see you then! Many blessings, stuart

Adult Learning!

The First Parish Book Club Discusses:

Red House: Being a Mostly Accurate Account of New England's Oldest Continuously Lived-in House

By Sarah Messer

We will meet at 7:00pm in the Fogg Parlor on Wednesday, December 3rd Refreshments will be provided. Hope to see you there!

Take Another Look...

and join us for conversation on the big questions of life. All too rarely in this busy and information packed world is there a chance to sit and talk about **why we are here**, or **what is our purpose**. On the **First** and **Third** Sundays of each month at 9:00am in the Fogg Parlor, a group meets for such a discussion using the Bible as its springboard. Not a purely academic exercise, this group seeks to **understand** but also to **apply** "time tested and approved" **spiritual principles** in our **daily lives**. Give it a try!

If you would like more information, or need a Bible, please see or contact:

Stuart Twite (DRE), H-781 837 8791, Church- 781 659 7122 , DREStuart@aol.com

For more Religious Education, go to RE Everyday at:

<http://www.firstparishnorwell.org/reeveryday.html> (on the First Parish Website)

Take a Breath(er) Thursdays

Do you wish you could find a way to bring more mindfulness, serenity, and meaning to your daily living? Would you like to gather with others who are looking to do the same thing?

**Join Melody Barlow for basic meditation and discussion on:
Thursday evenings at 6:30 in the Parish Hall!**

**If you have any questions, contact Stuart Twite (DRE), H-781 837 8791,
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Blurb
December 7

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FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN
24 River Street – P.O. Box 152
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THE SPIRE

As is our tradition here at First Parish, we plan to decorate the meeting house with poinsettia plants for our 2 Christmas Eve services. Beginning December 7 we will have order sheets in the Parish Hall for you to order your plants in red, pink, or white. You may also order through the church office by calling 781-659-7122 or emailing office@firstparishnorwell.org. The plants can be taken home at the end of the Christmas Eve service you plan to attend. Any plants leftover will be delivered to our shut-ins. Thank you for helping make this season festive!!

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