

The Spire



The Newsletter of
First Parish Unitarian Church

24 River Street

P.O. Box 152

Norwell, Massachusetts 02061

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January 11, 2012

Volume X Issue 8

www.firstparishnorwell.org

Sunday Services – 10:00 am

Rev. Dr. Victoria Weinstein preaching
unless otherwise indicated.

January 15: “What Will Happen To That
Man... and To Me?”

Following a conversation begun by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King in his last sermon on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we reflect on the age-old question, “who is my neighbor?” Rev. Weinstein preaches in tandem with Meghan Vesel, a seminarian at Episcopal Divinity School and intern at the Brazilian Immigrant Center in Allston.

January 22: Stuart Twite, pulpit guest
“Walking the 2 by 4”

What football coach Jimmy Johnson, Henry David Thoreau, and Jane Austen teach us about living a good life.

January 29: “The Energy of Prayer”

What is prayer? The Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn will be our spiritual guide for this morning’s reflections. You will leave the service with some simple prayer practices from the Buddhist tradition that may help you cultivate calm, compassion and peace in your life.

February 5:

“Happy Birthday to Us, and Who is ‘Us’?”

Join us as we honor the 50th anniversary of Unitarian Universalism. What led the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America to become the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961? What did each contribute to our evolving faith Tradition, and what does it mean to us? And who is “us” anyway? What are we to one another, and who are we when we gather? Join us for the rest of the story and for a special appearance of The Old UU Guy’s!

OFFICE HOURS:

Closed on Mondays

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9 am-1 pm

Friday: 9 am-12 pm

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donna@firstparishnorwell.org

Parish Committee 2011-2012:

Chair: Marie Miller

Members:

Bernie Gardner, Deane Howard, Don Messinger,
Bob Neely, Sue Robinson and Patti Walters

Treasurer: Marta Reese

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Richard M. Fewkes

The deadline for the next issue of THE SPIRE is
Monday, January 23, 2012 (email version).

Submissions may be emailed to:

office@firstparishnorwell.org, or dropped off in
the church office.

IN THE SPIRIT

I kind of like this Tim Tebow guy. I find his extravagant shows of piety endearing because he seems to be genuinely religious, not just a show-off. I am impressed by his good works through his charitable organization, which put his money where his mouth is, so to speak. Tebow claims to be a virgin (another expression of his Christian commitment) and likes to sprinkle his web site and speech with Scripture references. He certainly is a terrific football player, and if he thinks that God helps him win games I don't think he much cares whether or not I agree with his theology. His worldview works for him, and I find him a refreshing alternative to the womanizing, materialistic, hot-rod-driving, hard-drinking honcho persona adopted by most of the big football stars.

I wonder why people feel the need to express such venom toward Tebow. He's not hurting anyone, so far as we know. He's a bit overdramatic with his kneeling power prayer position but that's no crime (even though Jesus taught his followers to be low-key about praying, and not to do it in public). It seems to me that mockery and derision are such popular sports that we participate in them without thinking. I would love to see Unitarian Universalists be the reasonable, kind and relaxed people in the room when the Tebow-mocking begins, and to say, "That's the emotional style of the religious group that Tebow's part of. Evangelicals are devoted to publicly professing faith: that's what they do. That's what's cool about America. He can do that, and you and I don't have to if we don't want to. You could argue that Tim Tebow represents a dangerous cohort of Christians who are trying to influence public policy, but again - that's America. He is free to work

toward a vision of society informed by his religious beliefs and so are you and I. We may vehemently disagree on issues of policy, but that doesn't need to translate to jeering at each other's modes of worship or prayer.

I wonder how much better the world could get for us and our children if we honored being kind over being right. Now there's an experiment for the new year! I'm not very practiced at this myself but I'm going to be trying it out now and then. It will be hard but I think it might be exciting, too. I like a good challenge and it's a good thing I have so many gentle and kind people around me in our church to observe and learn from. I've got my eye on you, gentle and kind people. Thank for being you. You are the best spiritual teachers the world has got going for it.

In faith, hope and love,
Rev. Vicki



CARING CORNER

We mourn the passing of Dick Gaudette, who died in Florida on January 4. Visitation will be on Wednesday, January 18 at Davis Funeral Home in Plymouth. The funeral will be at the church on **Thursday, January 19** at 10 am.



Have you been receiving all-church emails and the emailed mini-Spire? If your email address has changed recently or you would like to be added to the distribution list, please let Hope know at office@firstparishnorwell.org.



ALLIANCE NEWS

The Alliance program originally scheduled for January 18 has been cancelled.

The February book review will be on **Wednesday, February 15**, at 10 am at the home of Winnie Lou Rounds in Scituate. (This is a change from the Alliance Program booklet.) Winnie Lou will share with us her many wildflower books as well as her passion and knowledge about them. Please call Helen Keeler (781-837-8248) for info or directions to Winnie Lou's home.



GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Congratulations, First Parish! This year we were able to raise **\$1500** through our Guest at Your Table program. Your generous gifts for Guest at Your Table are unrestricted, which means that UUSC will use the donations where the need is greatest. It is never too late to contribute and to become a member. Please send your donation to UUSC directly online at www.uusc.org/givetoguest, or make a check out to UUSC and send it to the church office. Remember, our gifts of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched dollar for dollar, thanks to the generosity of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y. As your UUSC local rep I appreciate the continued support from my congregation. Thank you, Sue Robinson



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Beginning with this issue of the Spire, we will be introducing you to some of First Parish's newest members. You may know their faces, or their names because some of these folks have been attending for some time. They have all signed the book within the last two years.

The Bannon Family



Anna Joy was a First Parish baby, attending with her mom and dad 25 years ago. She started coming again two years ago with her husband Steve. Their family has been expanding since. Shown here with Mom and Dad are big sister Eleanor and baby Emily. Anna Joy says it has been wonderful to experience First Parish with her family. "It's a another stage of my life that has helped me to grow and introduced me to new people and experiences". Anna Joy has recently joined the membership committee. The Bannons live in Norwell.

David Bond



David grew up in Norwell and hails from Hanover. He has been coming to First Parish for three years, and became a member last year. He started coming to church, joining his

wife Judy and son Jim who were already members. He has ushered, helped with coffee hour and pitched in at the Easter Breakfast. He is looking forward to helping wherever help is needed. David appreciates the open-mindedness and positive attitudes of members; the enthusiasm and intellect of Reverend Vicki; the great music and the "old friends he has met". Welcome to First Parish, David.



James Library & Center for the Arts

Friday, January 13 - 7:30 pm

Mid-Winter Shorts – free! An evening of short stories read aloud by their authors: Deedee Agee Sprecher, Jocelyn Emerson, Esther Maschio and P.B. O'Sullivan. Refreshments.

Saturday, January 21 - 3:00 pm

Les Sampou in concert. Tickets going fast for this concert by one of the area's most popular singer-songwriters. Rockin' blues and Americana. Tickets \$22/\$20 senior/\$10 student. Save \$2 on adult tickets with advance purchase by calling 781-659-7100.

Sunday, January 22 - 3:00 pm

A conversation with Richard Dyer, former music critic of the Boston Globe. \$10. Free for members of the Stewards of the Steinway. Refreshments will be served.

Need a new book for the new year? Some titles at the James include: Death Comes to Pemberley by P.D. James; Cat's Table by Michael Ondaatje, Out of Oz by Gregory Maguire and Cinderella Ate My Daughter by Peggy Orenstein.

ALL-CHURCH SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!

During the fall of 2011 your Parish Committee initiated an All-Church Survey to poll the congregation about several issues vital to the current and future goals of the church. As a covenanted religious community, we seek to have as much participation in decision making as possible. Your individual ideas and goals are part of that process of moving "Forward Through the Ages" together. The complete report shows the "hard numbers" of 132 respondents to the 19 questions on our survey. You may request either an email copy or a hard copy of the report from Hope in the church office.

Your Parish Committee has been reviewing the survey and will continue to use it to guide us into the future. We are sharing individual comments and concerns (both positive and negative) with appropriate persons and committees within the congregation. The expectation is that individuals and committees will use the survey information in their future planning for First Parish. Due to the confidential nature of the written responses, individual comments are not part of the report.

We thank all of you who participated in this richly rewarding process. We have much to share with one another and great respect for the process of walking together in our Unitarian Universalist faith. The Parish Committee hopes this survey will provide guidance to all of us as we build the future of First Parish together.

In the bonds of fellowship and love,
Sue Robinson and the entire Parish Committee



HELEN FOGG SERVICE COMMITTEE

January's Second Sunday plate collection came to \$855 for the fuel assistance program at the South Shore Community Action Council, which covers most of the communities where our parishioners live. If you wish to add to the amount, please bring a check marked "Outreach-fuel assistance" to church next Sunday or mail it to the church office. The Fogg Service Committee has voted to raise the plate money to \$2,000 since there is such a life-saving need for this money. It is relatively warm now, but who knows what will come. Your Fogg Service Committee has added \$263 to the November Second Sunday collection for our sister church in Kadacs, Romania. This money adds to the money for the students of the church and for their interim minister.

Would you like to help the Fogg Service Committee decide to which organizations, fund-raisers and charities we give our church-allotted budget for outreach? Please join us! We do more than just allotting money! Check out our table in the Parish Hall (red table cloth in the corner next to the Fogg Parlor) to see the Committee's Mission Statement and Goals on the wall. We meet once per month, right after the Second Sunday church service. We'd love you to join us; the more energy, the better!

Bev Gardner, Chair
Scott Babcock, Vice Chair
Marcia Babcock, Noel Constantino, Pat Bordewieck, Paul Bourque, Carrie Brandon, Pat Crumley, Barbara Meacham, Mary Mercier, Dorothy and Bill Montuori, Sue Robinson (Parish Committee liaison), Amy Stephenson, Jack Wallace and Jane and Stan Wilderoter

SOLAR PANEL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Limited Liability Corporation, Seventh Principal Norwell, which was formed to place solar panels on the church roof and promote alternative energy use is open to investors at this time. We would welcome and need additional investors. An agreement has been signed with the Parish Committee and a committee is being formed to explore installation methods. If you are interested, please contact Larry Baker, larry@lawrencebaker.net or Bernie Gardner, 781-829-0932 or w1az@comcast.net.



RE EVERYDAY!

It is difficult to believe that we are into our second trimester of Church School. We made the switch last Sunday and our new teachers were wonderful! They are: Anne Johnson, Ken Johnson, Elizabeth Robey, Ellie Handleman, Clayton Handleman, Jen Sulc, and Derek Sulc. We also thank our excellent first trimester teachers. They were: Mary Nickerson, Elizabeth Robey, Laura Page, Eric Page, Sue Keady, Tony Keady, Patti Walters, and Carrie Brandon. Thanks to all for doing this "noble work." If you have been away for awhile (or even for years!) we would love to see you back.

Adult Learning

We are happy to announce that Melody Barlow will lead the next two sessions of "A Panorama of Life", our Bible Study group. We are talking about the Prophets and are using Reading the Bible Again For the First Time by Marcus Borg as the springboard of our discussion. We will

meet on **Sunday, January 15** at 9am in the Fogg Parlor. We would love to see you. No prior attendance or acquaintance with the Bible is necessary.

Our First Parish Book Group will discuss The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa. This is a fascinating read and we hope to see you on **Wednesday, February 1** at 7pm in the Fogg Parlor.

Many blessings,
Stuart

Habitat for Humanity is building a house in Norwell this year, and they would like a liaison from each church. Is there someone at First Parish who might be interested in being that person? They are also looking for a person to work on a big fund-raiser coming up in May. This person would work only on the fund-raiser. It would be wonderful for us to have someone from our church on either/both committees! Please contact Bev Gardner at 781-829-0932 or bevgardner@comcast.net.



Ushers, pulpit arrangements and chalice lighters are needed! There are also still some openings for Coffee Hour hosts and hostesses. Volunteer today by contacting the church office or by signing up at Coffee Hour.

“ARE YOU OK?”

The Plymouth County Sheriff's Department provides this *free* program that promotes your wellness and safety. It offers comfort, security and autonomy for senior citizens, the disabled and those who live alone and lack a support system. Participating individuals receive a phone call at the same time every day, at a time they select. All calls are monitored by a communications officer. When a call is placed, the participant hears a recorded voice asking “Are you OK?” If a participant answers yes, the call is ended. If the answer is no, the communications officer will determine the nature of the problem and take appropriate action. If there is no answer, or if the line is busy, the computer will automatically call back. If there is still no response, then the communications officer will contact a designated family member or friend. The communications officer may also ask local police to check a person's home. If you are going to be on vacation or out at an appointment, you may stop the calls for a day or longer by contacting the ARE YOU OK program.

For more information, contact the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department “Are You OK” Office at 508-830-6256 or visit www.pcsdma.org. To enroll in this *free* program, contact your local police department, your town's Council on Aging, or the Sheriff's Department to request the one-page application.



MEMORABLE BOOKS

At the First Parish Book Group on January 4, we had an interesting, enjoyable and spirited discussion about the books that had most influenced us. We thought we would share a partial list of some of them. What books most influenced YOU?

Little Women

Youngblood Hawk – Herman Wouk

Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys and Cherry Ames

The Good Earth – Pearl Buck

What to Listen for in Music – Aaron Copland

The Wind in the Willows

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain

Travels with Charley – John Steinbeck

The Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged – Ayn Rand

Les Miserables – Victor Hugo

To Kill a Mockingbird

Cry the Beloved Country – Alan Paton

Walking Across Egypt – Clyde Edgerton

Grapes of Wrath – John Steinbeck

The Sea Devil – Lowell Thomas

Having Our Say – The Delaney Sisters Tell All

The Demon Haunted World – Carl Sagan

Pillars of the Earth – Ken Follett

The Gallaudet Dictionary of American Sign Language – edited by Clayton Valli

The Prophet – Kahlil Gibran

the poetry of Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman and Mary Oliver

The Plum Flower Dance – Afaa Michael Weaver

Maus – a graphic novel about the Holocaust

A Streetful of People – Winston Estes

The Outsiders - S.E. Hinton

The Winds of War – Herman Wouk

the works of Thoreau and Emerson

The Third Eye – T. Lobsang Rampa

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THE SPIRE

**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



SPIRE DEADLINES

The Spire deadlines for the rest of the church year are as follows:

January 23 (mini-Spire)

February 6 (hard copy)

February 20 (mini-Spire)

March 5 (hard copy)

March 19 (mini-Spire)

April 2 (hard copy)

April 16 (mini-Spire)

April 30 (hard copy; last issue before Spring Market)

May 14 (mini-Spire)

May 28 (hard copy)

June 11 (mini-Spire; last issue of the church year)

The Summer Spire will be mailed in mid-August.