Sunday Services – 10 a.m.

**December 17**

“Think on These Things”
“Whatever is good, whatever is honorable, whatever is excellent, think on these things”, said the Apostle Paul to the Philippians. The children of the First Parish Church School present a service dedicated to the ideas and values that they have been thinking about every week in Church School. We hope all will join us!

Ushers: Jim Pickel and Nancy Fuller Pulpit Arrangement: Carrie Brandon
Chalice Lighter: Youth Group Coffee Hour: Netta and Paul Vercollone

**Christmas Eve, December 24**

_Rev. Victoria Weinstein, preaching_

5:00 and 7:30 p.m.

“Dreaming of Angels, Waking To Life”
Join us for our beautiful candlelight service celebrating Christmas in story and song. **There will be no service this morning.**

Ushers: 5 p.m. The Bourque Family 7:30 p.m. Kelly, Maureen and Hugh Fanning & Jim Pickel

**December 31**

_Rev. Victoria Weinstein_

“The News of the Year in Religion”
New Year’s Eve Day is the perfect time to consign all that you want to cast away from 2006 to the flames of the Burning Bowl. We will share our annual ritual, and reflect on the most fascinating news of the year in religion: Pope Benedict’s contretemps with the Muslim community, the Christian Coalition’s decision not to hire a social justice-oriented minister as their Executive Director, the dramatic fall of Ted Haggard and other high and low points of 2006.

Ushers: open Pulpit Arrangement: open
Chalice Lighter: open Coffee Hour: Pearl Jayko and Jean & Stan Wilderoter

**January 7**

_Rev. Victoria Weinstein_

“Ten Commandments Sermon Series, Part II”
Don’t miss the second sermon in our series. This one deals with taking the Lord’s name in vain, and keeping the Sabbath holy. See you there!

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**FIRST PARISH CHURCH**
_of Norwell, Massachusetts_

24 River Street, P.O. Box 152
Norwell, MA 02061

**Office Hours:** 9-Noon, M&F
9-1, T,W, Th

**PHONE:** 781-659-7122
**FAX:** 781-659-7939
**E-MAIL:** office@firstparishnorwell.org

**HOMEPAGE:**
[www.firstparishnorwell.org](http://www.firstparishnorwell.org)

**Minister:** Rev. Victoria Weinstein
In an emergency, call the Parsonage: 781-659-7288

**Director of Religious Education:**
Stuart Twite, 781-837-8791

**Director of Youth Programming:**
Jennifer Anderson 617-763-2799

**Music Director:** Gingy Grimes

**Parish Committee:**
Chris Silva, Chair (Home) 781-871-6819

**Committee Members:**
David Dube, John Meddaugh, Jim Pickel, Cathy Phillips, Sally Turner and Derek Sulc

**Treasurer:** Marta Reese
**Collector:** Jeannette Mitchell

**Minister Emeritus:** Richard M. Fewkes

The deadline for the next issue of THE SPIRE is Sunday, December 31*, 2006. 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 I really wanted to call this Christmas Eve’s sermon was “Jesus Was No Angel.” I knew you would think it was funny – and theologically interesting – but the trouble is, my sermon titles go into the local papers and are seen by folks who do not always have as good a sense of humor as you do!

At the end of last year I preached a sermon called, “Please Do Not Pray For Each Other.” It was, of course, a jokey take-off on a study that came out that claimed to prove, once and for all, that prayer is of no medical benefit to people recovering from heart surgery, and might even have a negative effect. The study was silly and deserved to be mocked, and so I mocked it. You all got the joke. We had fun that day. Some people in town, however, thought I was seriously recommending that the congregation not pray for each other. “Those crazy Unitarians!” A neighbor stopped me in the street to ask about it. I thought, “Whoops, I’d better be more careful with those sermon titles!”

So many dozens of people come through our doors on Christmas Eve who have no church home of their own and who feel – at least once a year – the urge to join with a spiritual community that meets regularly to contemplates the deep and mystical realm of life. Some pastors I know call these folks, “C & E Christians” (Christmas and Easter Christians), and one of my friends calls them “God’s All-Stars.” I call them potential friends and members of our congregation. I hope you will, too, and allow your heart to be filled with awe and appreciation on Christmas Eve when our little meeting house if packed to the gills with people who need to hear that wonderful and crazy story about the angels and the star in the East, and the little baby born in Bethlehem. I’d still like to use the funny sermon title, but I don’t want the neighbors to think we’re making a joke of Christmas.

Hope to see you and your children there, and that you have a beautiful holiday season wherever you are.

In faith, hope and love,
Vicki

Caring Corner

The Caring Committee is considering organizing itself around the following ministries: Friendly Visitors & Callers, Volunteer Drivers, Grief and Bereavement Support, Life Transition Support (e.g., loss of employment, new baby, divorce, moves), and Meals Coordinator. As our congregation ages and the natural crises in life arise, the church must take up the shared ministry of pastoral care with more intentionality and organization. Please see Rev. Vicki if you would like to be involved in training for these various positions, which require nothing more than a willing heart, a generous ear, and a few hours a month.

Sweet the Sound will be offering a concert of holiday music at Old South Church at 2 pm on Saturday, December 16th. Old South is right off the Copley Square T station.
Meetings...

Activities Committee, Sun., Jan. 7, 11:30 a.m. in the Fogg Parlor
Alliance Board Meeting, Wed., Jan. 3, 10 a.m. in the Fogg Parlor
Alliance Meeting, Wed., Jan 17, 10 a.m. in the Parish Hall
Caregivers’ Group, Tues., Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m. in the Fogg Parlor
Finance Committee, Tues., Jan. 9, 7:15 p.m. in the Fogg Parlor
Parish Committee, Tues., Jan. 16, 7:00 p.m. in the Fogg Parlor
Preschool Board, Tues., Jan 16, 7-9 p.m. in the Parish Hall
Service Committee, Sun., Jan. 14, 11:30 in the Fogg Parlor

Winter Weather Closing Alerts...

First Parish Norwell is registered with several news outlets to provide activities cancellations in the event of inclement weather. You can get this information on

- WATD radio in Marshfield (95.9 FM)
- WCVB Channel 5 television or their website www.thebostonchannel.com
- WHDH Channel 7 television
- WRKO Radio (680 AM)

Both Channel 5 and Channel 7 have an option, available on their website, to register with them to receive closing information delivered to you automatically by email or cellphone.

The Women's Group's Pot Luck Christmas Party

Women's Group’s Pot Luck Christmas Party
THIS Friday, December 15, 6:30 p.m.
At the home of Ellen Fulton-
121 Old Oaken Bucket Road, Norwell
You make it—we’ll eat it pot luck!
Bring a Yankee Swap gift of $8.00 or less!
All women of First Parish are invited!
RSVP to Ellen: efulton9@comcast.net

Caps for Newborns

All caps being knit or crocheted for newborns should be brought to church by the end of December. Place them on the Service Committee table or give to Joanne Howard or Sue Robinson. Hats will be shipped on January 2nd to be distributed by Save the Children to babies around the world. Thanks for your participation.

There are a number of dishes that have been left in the kitchen. They are next to the microwave. If any that belong to you are missing, please rescue them before they get recycled!
Meetinghouse Organ Project featured on local cable station

*Detwiler’s Journal* for December features the Meetinghouse Organ Project. In this 30 minute program Bob Detwiler interviews Dexter Robinson about the history of the organ and the current project. The program includes a couple short excerpts of the video Dexter created and showed to parish members last year.

The local cable station for Norwell, Hingham, and Hanover will broadcast the program beginning December 18 for about a month. The schedule is as follows: Monday, 6 pm. Hingham and Hanover; Wednesday, 6 pm., Norwell and Hanover; Tuesday and Thursday, 9 am, Norwell, Hanover, and Hingham.

**Save these dates – Organ Project Fund Raising Events!!!**

On Saturday, February 3, 2007, join us for a dinner in the Parish Hall along with musical entertainment by *Alex Gordon*, piano and *Alex Bourque*, saxophone.

On Saturday, March 17, 2007, our beloved Interim Music Director, *Rogerio Santos*, will be performing an exciting piano concert at the James Library. Proceeds from the concert will benefit the Organ Restoration Fund. Tickets are only $20 apiece and Bob Detwiler will be selling them at Coffee Hour, or you can buy them from the Church Office during the week. I am sure they will go fast, so please buy your tickets ASAP! Checks should be made out to "First Parish Church" with "Organ Fund" in the bottom left hand corner.

Thanks - Peg Carpenter
Vice-Chairperson of the James Library Board of Trustees.

Service Committee
“…to minister to each others needs and to those of humanity…”

Opportunities for Outreach through your Service Committee

**Guest at Your Table:**
Guest at Your Table boxes were distributed on Sunday, November 19th. As you set your dinner table and put coins in your box each evening, remember the needs for affordable, clean water; for workers’ rights; for civil liberties and the democratic process throughout the world; and the rights of vulnerable people after disasters.

On December 17th bring back your boxes – exchange your coins for a check made out to UUSC - and add it to those from your fellow members and from UU’s all over the nation. Remember, if your check is for $40 or more ($20 for seniors and $10 for students and youth), you automatically will become a member of the UUSC. Gifts of $75 or more from a family or individual will be doubled through a matching grant. There has never been a more important time for us to raise our voices together loudly to defend justice and basic human rights.

**Louison Center:**
The Service Committee is again sponsoring our Christmas gift giving for homeless family members at the David Jon Louison Center in Brockton. This year there are 40 men, women and children on our list, in 14 families. Names, ages, sizes, needs and wishes are available – contact Dave Dube. Gifts must be dropped off at the Parish Hall no later than December 17th.
Participation in this inter-generational project is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family. Our Second Sunday Outreach for December will benefit the Louison Center.
Mitten Tree:
At the Family Holiday Service on December 17th we will continue our tradition of “decorating” our Mitten Tree with hats, scarves and mittens that we bring to the service. These needed items of warmth will be distributed by the Youth Group to children in the South Shore area at both Carolina Hill, a shelter in Marshfield, and South Shore Headstart.

December 17th is the important date for all of the above!!

Louison House to receive $1000 from First Parish
Thanks to your continuing generosity, contributing more than $900 on Second Sunday, a gift of $1000 will be sent to the David Jon Louison House for their ongoing operations. Added to your bountiful gifts for individuals, the families at the Louison will have a most wonderful holiday.

Music at First Parish CD is still available!
There are still a few First Parish Music CDs available. Don’t miss out on this opportunity to enjoy music performed at First Parish over the past thirty years. The CD which makes a great stocking stuffer includes choir, hand bells, organ, harpsichord, and instrumental music from J.S. Bach to Scott Joplin. Also included are Christmas selections by Alex Bourque and Kelly Fanning, spirituals, and other choir and organ favorites. Some long time Parish members have described the CD as “fabulous, not to be missed” and “inspirational”. You can check out the contents of the CD and listen to excerpts by using the following link:
www.firstparishnorwell.org/fpnmusiccd.html
The CD may be purchased during coffee hour or from the church office. The cost is $10. Long distance members and friends who wish to purchase a copy should contact Dexter Robinson (781-294-8840, email: dексsue@comcast.net)

Super Heifer Committee

Heifer Gift Ark- Get Your Holiday Presents Here!
As of Sunday morning, Dec. 10, Chris Kitchenham’s Heifer thermometer said that we have raised $3,583.23 for our Heifer Gift Ark! WOW!!

There is still time to buy animals or shares of an animal for loved ones, teachers, friends, etc. Animals can be purchased next Sunday (at the all-Church Christmas Party after the Family Christmas Service) and anytime up until Christmas by calling Bev Gardner at 781-829-0932. You will receive a unique gift card explaining about Heifer International for your honoree!

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

The Super Heifer Committee
Bev Gardner (chair), Stuart Twite, Marcia Babcock, Audra Shattuck, Elizabeth Lewis, Barbara Meacham, Elizabeth Robinson, John Meddaugh, Lisa Messersmith, Melody Barlow, Jen Anderson and Carrie Brandon
Religious Education at First Parish

“Think on These Things”

“Whatever is good, whatever is honorable, whatever is excellent, think on these things”, said the Apostle Paul to the Philippians. The children of the First Parish Church School present a service dedicated to the ideas and values that they have been thinking about every week in Church School. Please join us for this celebration of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education, our wonderful teachers and, most importantly, our Unitarian Universalist Sunday School Children!

Sunday Morning, 10am December 17th

Attention Church School Families! Please make every effort to have your children at church by 9:30 on Sunday so that we can practice and line up. Many thanks to you all!

Don’t forget your Guest at Your Table boxes (turn your coins into checks please, and write your name on the box) and mittens for our mitten tree. Both will be collected at the Family service on the 17th.

White felt squares are available for your family to add to our family banners in front of the church. Pick one up at the office or RE table on Sunday, Decorate it with your family name and return it by Friday, Dec. 22nd and it will be up for our Christmas Eve Service. Call the office or email me (DREStuart@aol.com) for more information.

We may be having a surprise visitor on Sunday following our Holiday Service. All I can tell you is that he is quite jolly...Hope to see you all on Sunday!
Join us for one of our traditional candle-lighting services with special music, carols and the warmth of community. The service will conclude with our candles burning, singing “Silent Night”.

Christmas Eve
December 24th
5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in the Meetinghouse

James Library & Center for the Arts

This fall has been one of our busiest to date — from the recent Holiday Trunk Show and Silhouette Day to music classes and special storytimes for the First Parish Preschool. We thank the First Parish community for their support.

Take a look at our winter calendar (www.jameslibrary.org) and enjoy one of our upcoming events. Celebrate the New Year with a rousing presentation of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Pirates of Pencance* held at First Parish on January 28 with music direction by Pam Wolfe.

Best wishes for the holidays from the staff, volunteers and Board of the James.

South Shore Cluster Dinner
Thursday, Feb. 1, 2007
UU Church of Weymouth, Rte 3A at Sea St.

LIFE IN THE WORLD’S POOREST COUNTRY
Laura Bacon reflects on 2 ½ years as a Peace Corps worker in Niger, the world’s poorest country (UN Human Development Report, 2005).

Social at 6:30, dinner ($8) at 7, program at 8, out by 9.