

First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist
Newsletter, February 2005

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Rev. Terry Burke, Minister
Rev. Marshall Hawkins, Affiliate Minister
Karl Haakonsen, Standing Committee Chair
George Wardle, Trustees Chair
Emily Lichtenstein, Director of RE

Ellen McGuire, Music Director
Janna Frelich, Soloist
Robin Teague, Director of the Children's Choirs
Philomena O'Donnell, Head Usher
Monroe Hyman, Building Use

Thoughts From Terry

You have probably seen photographs, or saw for yourself in person the horrible fire that destroyed the sanctuary and organ of First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain. Standing Committee Chair Karl Haakonsen and I walked over after our monthly board meeting as firefighters continued to spray water on the building. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured.

When our second (current) meetinghouse was being built in 1853, we worshipped at First Baptist. In gratitude we gave the congregation a communion service, which they still use. After juvenile arsonists struck First Baptist in 1975, the Baptists worshipped at our church for a time. Now we are honored to welcome the congregation of First Baptist and its minister, Rev. Ashlee Wiest-Laird, to our sanctuary. They will be worshipping at 1 PM; we wish them all the best as they re-gather as a community!

Greetings from Emily, Interim Director of Religious Education

What a strange week it's been! All of this snow has thrown off my normal routines in ways both wonderful and terrible. Much shoveling, nightmare driving, and missed meetings, but also more sleep, more time at home, and best of all, the incredible beauty and peace of a blanketed world. Like so many things, the joy of snow days is best enjoyed when shared with children. I hope you all have had a chance to see this week through their eyes – the gift of an unanticipated vacation in a world transformed into a giant playground!

Over the past few months, since I last wrote this column, our RE program has been filled with special events. First, there was our wonderful Christmas pageant in mid-December. Many, many thanks to Thalia McMillion, our director and producer extraordinaire, for enabling our children to shine in this magical production. Then, to end the holiday season and welcome in the new year, Nancy Marshall led our children and youth in their own version of the now-traditional Burning of Grudges ceremony.

Just as we were getting ready to resume regular classes at the beginning of January, world events intervened, making it necessary for us to abandon "business as usual." Led by RE Committee Chair Andree Zaleska, our RE teachers developed a special tsunami awareness focus day and fundraising event. Working together, our children and youth created beautiful handmade note cards to sell at coffee hour to raise money for the victims of the South Asian tsunami. This project continued on through Martin Luther King Day, creating a bridge for the children between the work that King and other civil rights leaders did to combat injustice, and what they too can do to make the world a better place.

The plan for last weekend was to resume our RE classes at last. It seems, however, that nature had other plans for how we would spend the end of January, which brings me back to my opening thoughts. I do hope that you and your family were able to celebrate the changes in your schedule brought on by this week's weather. I am a firm believer in disruption as a spiritual practice!

We should truly be back on track this week (January 30), with Children's Chapel, regular winter term classes for all ages, and a pre-semiannual meeting lunch prepared by our youth group to benefit tsunami victims. See you Sunday!

- Emily Lichtenstein, Director of Religious Education

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Coming Up at First Church:

This Sunday, January 30, Hear George Wardle on the history of First Church - Learn the stories of the portraits in the dining room, learn why Elfie Barnard hated pineapple. Amaze and delight your friends with neighborhood trivia, make big money on Jeopardy (well, maybe not, they are unlikely to present "Susannah Pemberton" as an answer, but, if they do, you'll know the question). All this can be yours on Sunday at 9:30 in the Dining Room.

The book group turns to romance and wit, reading Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* at 7:30, *Weds Feb 2*, in the Morse Room. Then we leap across centuries and continents, reading Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, a tale of friendship and forgiveness in modern Afghanistan at 7:30, *Weds March 2*, in the Morse Room. Everyone is welcome to come to any or all meetings, and to suggest the sort of book you'd like to include.

How will you celebrate Venetian Carnival this year? Jamaica Plain has its own *Dimanche Gras* (Mardi Gras on a Sunday!) before Lent begins: The Venetian Renaissance Feast, on *Sunday, Feb. 6, 3:30-5:30 pm*. (Plenty of time to get home before the 6:30 pm Super bowl Kickoff!) Tickets, available during coffee hour on January 30, are \$20, \$10 for children under 12, \$30 to be a supporting donor, \$50 to be a sustaining donor, all to benefit First Church and the Children's Choir program. You can also get tickets by emailing Kay Mathew at kaymathew@juno.com before Wednesday, February 2. Because of food planning tickets will not be sold at the door.

First Church Word Lover's contest! Do you have a favorite saying that sums it all up? Our Wayside Pulpit Quote of the Month Contest may be just what you've been looking for! To enter, simply send your quotation (20 words maximum – less is better), with its attribution, to ELichtenstein@verizon.net, or write it down and hand it to Emily at coffee hour.

Annual First Church Retreat

“Is love a four letter word for God? Is God a three letter word for love?”

So asks a famous “Sacred Song” by the late Duke Ellington. Just in time for Valentine’s Day, the theme of our church retreat will be on growing in loving relationship with God and with other people.

Facilitated by Rev. Terry Burke and Rev. Carl Scovel

Friday, February 11th after dinner through February 13th after lunch

How did a collection of sexy poem, written and recited 3 millennia ago, become to this day! – the basis for deep spiritual reflection. Was it all just sublimation, repression or misunderstanding? (How could they have been smarter than us?) On Saturday morning we’ll take a long, hard and interesting look at the book that had the hardest fight getting into Jewish and Christian scriptures – the Song of Songs!

Rev. Terry Burke and guest facilitator Rev. Carl Scovel will be leading a guided retreat at the Campion Renewal Center in Weston. The theme for our annual weekend of pause and reflection will build off Duke Ellington’s song, helping us look at how to nurture loving relationships--...how do we love?, ...how do we forgive?. Our retreat facilitators provide a program with readings, music, and their own knowledge and experiences that guide our personal explorations.

- Led by our own Rev. Terry Burke and guest facilitator, Rev. Carl Scovel
- Friday, February 11th, after dinner through Sunday, February 13th lunch
- Campion Retreat Center, Weston, Massachusetts, only 30 minutes away
- Cost \$200 per person, including all meals and private, simple room

The Center is situated within a natural reserve area, with acres of wooded trails and a lake for wandering meditations and reflections. It has been a chance for people to have time alone as well as time together as a group. Each day begins and ends with a spiritual service, and we may arrange to meet with the leaders for spiritual direction. Willing participants also meet with each other to explore our spiritual journeys.

Respond with full or partial payment **NO LATER THAN Sunday February 4th.**

Full payment is due on or before the start of the retreat. Some scholarship assistance is available. Please mail check to me at the address below, made out to First Church UUJP, and write **Retreat** on the memo line or elsewhere on the check.

Please let me, Mary Brady, know if you are interested or have any questions. I will keep you posted regarding details, and arrange for rides to and from the Center if you prefer. You can email Mary at Mbrady1983@aol.com.

Food Pantry needs canned foods and jars of food for distribution to the hungry. All donations must be pest proof. We will deliver food each month to the Sojourner House, who, in turn, distributes it to the Roxbury and Jamaica Plain community. Our next delivery will be on February 13. Please bring food in on any Sunday and place it in the back of the Church. Thank you from the Social Justice Committee

GBIO Dues

It was decided in 2002 that First Church become a member congregation of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. GBIO has been a powerful advocate on behalf of social justice, targeting specific issues such as affordable housing, fair treatment of nursing home workers, fair lending policies in banks and others. It does so because it has the power of large numbers by pooling many religious institutions such as ours.

The cost of this membership is one percent of our annual budget, which is approximately \$1900 for us this year. As in years past, we are asking for people to contribute toward this membership as separate from your pledge for the operating budget. The cost per member is between \$25 and \$30. If you can give more, thank you, if you cannot give that much, any amount will help. In gratitude and fellowship, Karl Haakonsen, Chair, Standing Committee.

Future Offerings

SAVE THE DATE! On Sunday, March 20 at 3:00 pm, we will host a screening of ***One in Eight: Janice's Journey*** followed by a panel discussion with breast cancer and environmental activist organizations. The event is free and open to the public. The *One in Eight* Task Force is looking for folks who are interested in volunteering that day to help with this event. Please contact Cindy McKeown at camworkz@aol.com.

WWW.firstchurchjp.org

The website for First Church is up and looking great! Please take some time to look it over and see what it has to offer. It is an work in progress and already filled with calendar items as well as information about our RE program, our church community, church governance, history, etc. This user-friendly website has already brought in new visitors to the church!

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Church Administrator: Jean O'Leary is in the church office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 3:30. You can reach her at the main number (617) 524-1634

February 2005, Calendar

- 2 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
7:30 pm On-in-Eight Task Force Meeting
8:00 pm Bible Study Group
- 3 Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 6 Sunday** 11:00 am Service:
3:30 pm Renaissance Feast!
- 7 Monday** 7:30 pm Building Committee Mtg.
- 9 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
Ash Wednesday
- 10 Thursday** 7:30 pm Finance Committee
- 13 Sunday** 8:30 am Religious Education Meeting
11:00 am Sermon by Rabbi Victor Reinstein
12:30 pm Social Justice Committee Mtg.
Canvasser Training
- 14 Monday** **Valentine's Day !**
- 15 Tuesday** 7:00 pm Standing Committee Mtg.
- 16 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
8:00 pm Canvasser Training
- 17 Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 20 Sunday** 11:00 am Forgiveness
- 21 Monday** **President's Day/School Vacation Week**
- 23 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Meeting
- 27 Sunday** 11:00 am Rev. Victoria Weinstein,
First Parish in Norwell
12:30 am Canvasser Training