

First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist
Newsletter, November, 2004

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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

From "An Election Sermon," preached on October 31, 2004

...Jesus preached about what he called the "Kingdom of God, the breaking into this world of God's reign of love and justice and forgiveness. In our first reading today, Jesus blesses children and says one should be like a child to be part of the Kingdom of God. I assume Jesus would be concerned about the millions of children in our country who are hungry, homeless, and need health care. Twelve million children live in poverty in this country. IN AMERICA! WWJD - "What Would Jesus Do" concerning the election? I don't know. I have an idea based on the Biblical material that I've just discussed, but I can't say for sure. Be very wary of political types who tell you they know what Jesus, religious figures, God think.

In the current UU World magazine, UU minister Forrest Church quotes the philosopher Nietzsche, "When fighting monsters, we must avoid becoming a monster." That Religious Right man or woman potentially sitting in our pew is not a monster or an enemy, but a stranger. In many traditions, Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist, the stranger is regarded as holy, teaching us something about God or ourselves. Certainly the stranger is someone to welcome and provide hospitality to. Opposed as I am to the actions of the Religious Right, we should not demonize their individual adherents. The radical Civil Rights leader Will Campbell used to shake up rallies by beginning his speeches, "I want you to know first off that I'm pro-Klansman." After a pause he'd add, "I completely oppose the Klan, but I'm pro-Klansman because I'm pro-human being." As with Tatyana's nightmare in Eugene Onegin, the monsters ultimately have a human face. We can oppose the Christian Right without denying dignity and respect to its individual members, even if that dignity and respect is not reciprocated.

I can't tell you definitely "What Would Jesus Do" concerning the election, but I think it's a good guideline to vote for those who are pro-human being. Echoing the great 19th century Unitarian William Ellery Channing, may we use our free minds, and set no bounds to love, recognizing in all human beings the image of God and the rights of God's children. Yours, Terry

Greetings from Emily, Interim Director of Religious Education

Our church school year is off to a roaring start! During the religious education hour, from 11:00-12:00, three classes and a nursery group are underway. Our youngest class, The Chalice Children, are completing a month-long unit on friendship and caring for others, featuring their own teddy bear friends from home. The six-eight year olds are working with a curriculum entitled "UU Super Heroes." Every week they are introduced to another Unitarian Universalist "super hero" whose life embodies our UU principles. Ask one of our children to tell you about King Sigismund, history's only Unitarian king. Our nine-eleven years olds are engaged in a yearlong exploration of creativity, its role in religion and in self-definition.

The "middlers" and high school students have been meeting right after church, during coffee hour. Our intrepid teens and pre-teens have already held a sleep over at the church, attended an overnight Youth Con in Brookline, and held a very successful bake sale to aid Haitian hurricane victims. We are also so grateful for their help as teaching assistants in our nursery and younger children's classes.

On October 17, current and future RE teachers came together for the first *Teacher Training Workshop* of the year. The collective wisdom and insight of this group was truly inspiring. Be assured that our children are in very good hands. If you missed the workshop because you had not decided that you would like the opportunity to teach our wonderful children, don't worry, we still have teaching openings for this year's winter and spring terms, and the workshop will be repeated in early January! So you still have plenty of time to talk to me about becoming a teacher.

Many thanks to all of you who have made me feel so welcome during my first two months at First Church. I am especially grateful to the teachers and youth advisors – Elizabeth Hawley, Larry Zaborski, Mary Barton, Laura McCord, Valerie Marren, Andree Zaleska, Beth Burlingame, Tara Casey, Kip Keith, George Wardle, Thalia McMillion and Janna Frelich – who make my job so easy. As always, I'd love to talk to you about any RE related questions, thoughts or concerns, and can be reached at ELichtenstein@verizon.net.

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Coming Up at First Church:

Mass Bay District of UU Churches is having a Religious Educators Fall Conference entitled "Using the Arts to Engage the Whole Congregation" on *Saturday, November 6, from 8:30-4*. They are featuring a number of exciting workshops. For more information, contact MBDUU at 617-484-0396 or email them at www.mbdoua.org. You can also contact Emily Lichtenstein for details.

"Coffee Hour Feedback Group on the GBIO Organized Money Campaign" will be on *Sunday, November 7, at 12:30 pm*. We are gathering input on the next phase of the campaign. GBIO delegates will be hosting Coffee Hour and bringing special treats.

The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization is in negotiations with Citizens Bank regarding special "products" or services that Citizens could provide to us as GBIO members (e.g. reduced auto insurance rates, special mortgage rates). GBIO wants our feedback to help set priorities. Please come and put in your two cents!

Unitarian Universalist Bible Study is back! We gather at 8 pm on Wednesday, November 10, to explore the Book of Job. Speak to Karl Haakonsen or Terry Burke for more information

Fabulous Organ Concert: *Friday, November 19, at 8 pm.* Please join us! This is a great opportunity to invite some friends to your house for dinner, come to the concert, and enjoy gourmet desserts afterwards (included in the cost of the tickets)! Tickets are \$25 to benefit the First Church Organ Restoration Fund and are available at coffee hour, or by calling First Church and leaving a message in the Organ Recital mailbox or by emailing organrestoration@yahoo.com. All proceeds from the tax-deductible purchase of a ticket (\$25) go to establishing the First Church organ restoration fund. *Please try to purchase tickets by November 14 so that we can better plan the dessert portion of the evening.*

New CD coming soon features the choir, organ and soloists Janna Frelich and Tim Williamson. Please speak to Cathy Baisly or email her at organrestoration@yahoo.com for more information. Cost for 1-2 copies is \$15 each; 3-9 copies, \$12 each; 10 and more \$10 each. Please make checks payable to First Church Organ Fund.

The holiday fair is scheduled for December 4, 2004 (Saturday) please save that date, and the night before, so you can help with set up. And, save your money, you'll want to buy lots of gifts there. The notices just went out to all our prior vendors, but we'd love some new vendors - if you or a friend has a craft you'd be interested in selling contact Abby about renting a table or send an e-mail to: JPCRAFTSFAIR@Yahoo.com

Basement Clean-up Plans: The Building Committee has agreed to rent a dumpster to discard trash from the yard sale which is in the basement (and other places). We will have the dumpster delivered on Friday, November 12, and will have a "Blue Jean Sunday" on *November 14th* to throw stuff out.

The Cookie Contest at the Holiday Fair is an inspiring event. Despite allegations of impropriety in prior events (the sponsor of the contest has an excessive number of trophies), the pure love of butter and sugar remain a beautiful thing. And, this could be the year ... if the Red Sox can make it to the World Series....

Now, everyone wants to win, but if you believe you could sacrifice your chance at the Coveted Wooden Spoon Trophy, perhaps you would like to judge. Imagine how good it would look on your resume! How can you get this amazing position? Well, like so many other of life treasures, apply! Submit an essay explaining why you should be selected as a cookie contest judge. The essay should be no more than one letter size piece of paper (or it may be submitted in interpretive dance). It should explain your

qualifications as a cookie contest judge, including your history with eating cookies, any advanced degrees in cookie consumption, prior cookie experience, and cookie related passions.

Because of their special relationship with cookies, children are encouraged to apply. Pre-writing children may draw a picture of cookies, and will be asked to bring a chaperone to the judging sessions. *Please submit by November 21* to dear_abby2@yahoo.com, or give to Abby Krueger (she will not be selecting the judges, as she intends to win, but will comply the applications). You must be able to attend the fair (December 4) in order to participate in this role.

Thanksgiving Baskets: First Church members and friends will again this year have an opportunity to share with homeless moms and their children, as well as with others who depend on Sojourner House when we deliver Thanksgiving baskets to Sojourner on Sunday, November 21st. Please pick up a list of needed foods at the next coffee hour. For further information see Judith Garfunkel or anyone from the Social Justice Committee.

Book Discussion Groups: Everyone is welcome to come to one book group discussion or many. There's no hazing or commitment. Our next book is Sarah Orne Jewett's classic description of everyday life in a 19th century Maine coastal village, The Country of the Pointed Firs. Join us on *Monday, November 22 at 7:30* in the Morse Room.

On *Monday, January 3*, the book group will discuss Pulitzer Prize winning Jhumpa Lahiri's, The Namesake, a description of a multigenerational transition from Calcutta to Cambridge. Take a break over the holidays to read, and join us at 7:30 in the Morse Room.

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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.

November, 2004, Calendar

- 1 Monday** 7:30 pm Building Committee
- 3 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
8:00 pm Mysticism in World Religions-Final Class
- 4 Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7 Sunday** 11:00 am Service: "All Souls Graveyard Service"
12:30 pm GBIO Coffee Hour Focus Group
- 10 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 11 Thursday** 7:30 pm Finance Committee
- 14 Sunday** 8:30 am Religious Education Meeting
11:00 am Karl Haakonsen Preaching
12:30 pm Social Justice Committee Mtg.
- 16 Tuesday** 7:00 pm Standing Committee Mtg.
- 17 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 18 Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 19 Friday** 8:00 pm 150th Organ Recital & Reception
- 21 Sunday** 11:00 am Thanksgiving Sermon
- 24 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Meeting
- 25 Thursday** **Thanksgiving Day**
- 28 Sunday** 11:00 am Waiting in Darkness Sermon
No RE or Children's Activities