



NEWSLETTER

Unitarian Universalist

Gathered 1630 ∞ *Gathering Today in Friendship,*

On Call



Thank you for the response to my sermon "A Common Word Among Us." As I expected, very few of us had ever heard of this outreach of peace and understanding from representatives of all branches of Islam. So many people asked for more information, I thought you should know that there is a website, containing the original letter from the 138 Islamic clerics. You can go to www.acommonword.org and there you will find everything you need to learn more.

I will keep trying to make sure that there is a response from our own denomination, along with steps from our own church. Marc, a new member, had a great idea, which was to create a place on our website with local media outlets you can write to, a suggested text that you can adapt to your own voice, and a e-mail that you can forward on to other people on your own computer list. We will get to work on that, so stay posted. The more, the merrier; the more, the merciful...

The topic of questions had been a running theme so far this year, no more so than on the Question Box sermon service. Rosemary and I enjoyed the good questions, the adrenaline produced by the process, and the kind response. Every year at that service, we always receive questions about Unitarian Universalism and the special nature of our free faith tradition. So we thought it was past time to host two after-church events that can go a long way in answering questions that you might have:

The first is, Introduction to Unitarian Universalism, on Sunday, January 27 at 12:30 pm in the Auditorium. This will be a basic introduction to Unitarian Universalism for those new to our faith. If you have been attending for less than a year, this is the place to come to get your questions answered. RSVP to ruth@firstchurchboston.org

And also, several weeks later, we will have a "follow up" -- Orientation for New Members on February 10. with Rev. Stephen Kendrick and Rev. Rosemary Lloyd. See you there, and at the big SHAKE OFF THE CHILL celebration on February 2. It should be fun, even if, like me, you find dancing to be a foreign language!

Blessings,

66 Marlborough Street Boston, MA 02116
Tel: 617-267-6730 or 800-359-1630 Fax: 617-536-5895

Volume 1, Issue 2

January 17–31, 2008

Services

January 20, 2008

"Deep In My Heart"

Rebekah Ingram
Marshall Hughes, soloist

January 27, 2008

"Public Faith"

Rev. Rosemary Lloyd

February 3, 2008

"A Perfectly Good Sermon"

Rev. Stephen Kendrick

Sunday morning worship services are broadcast live at 11:00 am every Sunday on WERS 88.9 FM. Listen if you can't be here!



R.E. Views:
Director of Religious Education,
Ruth Owen

New! Online Parenting Group Forming Now

If you would like to enjoy the support of a group of parents at every stage of the parenting journey but you find it hard to get to meetings, this group is for you. Together, we will read a chapter a week in **At Work in Life's Garden: Writers on the Spiritual Adventure of Parenting** by Sarah Conover, and engage in weekly, online discussions of topics relating to all aspects of parenting. The book is a series of vivid personal essays by an amazing, ecumenical group of contemporary authors such as Barbara Kingsolver, Anne Lamott, Alexandra Fuller, Scott Russell Sanders, Beth Kephart, Barry Lopez, and many others. They explore the endless surprise and spiritual enrichment of parenting, even at its most difficult.

Each week we will read one essay, I will post questions for reflection, discussion and reaction to the group and you will have a chance to write your thoughts and experiences and read what others have to say. The essays are touching, challenging and provocative and I'm sure everyone will have a lot to say. On **Sunday, January 27 at 10:00 am**, we will meet together once as a group to meet one another face to face (so we know who we are talking to) and to establish guidelines for the conversation. There will be coffee, bagels and childcare available. If we are snowed out we will meet the following Sunday. It will be a closed group once we get started; you have to sign up to participate. The book is available online from the UUA bookstore: <http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=307>

Congregation Artists Reception

There will be reception for the artists and those who wish to fete them Sunday, January 20, after coffee, from 1pm-2pm. Come to see and praise the artists of the works you have been admiring for the past month.

Snow Festival Sunday, January 20

You've hoped for it, dreaded it, shoveled it, and slipped and slid in it, now it is time to celebrate it – snow! On Sunday, January 20 the Children and Youth RE Program will be celebrating snow. We will celebrate the uniqueness of each snow flake, we will make art out of snow (the real stuff if we have some, paper mache, if not), we will write songs and poems to snow and we invite you to participate too. We will be holding an "open mike" performance during coffee hour for anyone who would like to read, recite or sing about snow. So, please make your calendars and join us.

Introduction to Unitarian Universalism Sunday, January 27 at 12:30 pm in the Auditorium

A basic introduction to Unitarian Universalism for those new to our faith. If you have been attending for less than a year, this is the place to come to get your questions answered. A short video will be shown, and Rev. Stephen Kendrick and Ruth Owen will address your questions. Please note that this Introduction is for new people. RSVP to ruth@firstchurchboston.org Please indicate in your reply whether or not you need childcare.

Adnan will be presenting a talk as part of the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations Lecture Series. The topic is *"Four Gates and a Gatekeeper: Reflections on Anatolian Sufism Through The Poetry of Yunus Emre."* Boston University, room 625, School of Theology Bldg. February 6 at 4:00 pm.



Music at First Church

Dr. Paul Cienniwa

As we begin 2008, I am happy to announce the upcoming schedule for our volunteer ensembles along with some special musical events. There are a number of highlights this season. On February 17, the **Ringing Society** will perform with the First Church Choir in a traditional Thai folksong. At Easter, the **Singing Society** and will be joined by string quartet for Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Mystical Songs*. All members of First Church can join in our second annual **Hymn Sing** in March, and we will once again be enchanted at a **Spring Musicale** in May.

Ringing Society

handbell ringers of all ages

Jan. 27—10:30 rehearsal/ring at 11:00

Feb. 17—10:30 rehearsal/ring at 11:00

March 23 (Easter)—10:30 rehearsal/ring at 11:00

April 20—10:30 rehearsal/ring at 11:00

June 1—10:30 rehearsal/ring at 11:00

Singing Society

open to all adult singers

March 9—noon rehearsal

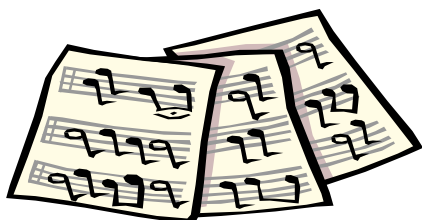
March 16—9:45-10:30 rehearsal

March 23 (Easter)—9:45 rehearsal/sing at 11:00

May 4—noon rehearsal

May 11—noon rehearsal

May 18—9:45 rehearsal/sing at 11:00



Children's Singing Society

children ages 5 and higher

March 30—noon rehearsal

April 6—noon rehearsal

April 13—10:30 rehearsal/sing at 11:00

May 25—noon rehearsal

June 1—noon rehearsal

June 8—10:30 rehearsal/sing at 11:00

Special Events

- **Hymn Sing**, Wednesday, March 12, 7pm
- Paul Cienniwa **Harpsichord Recital**, Wednesday, April 23 (presented with the Learning Community), dinner 6pm, pre-concert lecture 7:30pm, recital 8pm
- **Spring Musicale**, Wednesday, May 21, 7pm

Upcoming Concerts at First Church

- **Annual Martin Luther King Day Concert** with Marshall Hughes and Friends, Jan. 21, 4:30pm, 617-445-7669
- **Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble: Young Composers Festival**, Jan. 27, 6:30pm panel discussion, 7:30pm concert, \$20 general admission; \$15 students/seniors, 617-482-3852, www.dinosaurannex.org

First Church Musicians in Concert

Carrageen (Irish/Scottish music with First Church member Willa MacAllen), Sun., Jan 20, 1:30pm, Goddard House, 105 Chestnut Street, Brookline, www.goddardhouse.org

Music at First Church on You Tube!
<http://www.youtube.com>



Rosemary's Reflections

I always enjoy the Sunday after New Year's Eve when Stephen and I step out of our robes to respond to your questions during our Question Box sermon. We have time to get to just a few of the questions on Question Box Sunday, so we review all the questions afterwards to see if there are some themes or probing questions that merit a sermon in themselves. I am always interested to see the range of questions that are on your minds, from social justice and spirituality, to theology and church praxis. I hope to take up a number of your questions in upcoming sermons.

In case you are interested, here are the questions that were submitted:

1. How do we better tap into the yearning of our members for social justice and translate it into social action?
2. Was Vince Lombardi right? Is God too busy to care about football?
3. How does God keep track of everyone?
4. Why am I here? Why are each of us here? What am I looking for? What do we want from First Church?
5. Why do we place obstacles in our own paths?
6. Are there strategies employed so successfully by non-denominational Christian mega-churches that can be adapted by UU parishes to help grow our numbers?
7. What, for you, is the mission of UUism and how well is First Church living it?
8. Stephen: How did you do with your red bracelet? (This pertains to a sermon on being complaint-free for 21 days. Stephen, and many others, wears the bracelet to help him give up gossip and complaining.
9. How would you describe the spiritual component of social justice?
10. When is "maturity" fully realized and/or achieved?
11. What are your thoughts and vision of how we can build a more racially diverse community?
12. How large should our free faith be and become? And does it matter?
13. Why does the natural world play such an important role in the UU church?
14. Remember Christianity? Whatever happened to it?
15. Is UU Christianity an offshoot of Christianity?
16. If there isn't a heaven, should one be good anyway?
17. What are we to make of the preacher as a political actor?
18. Who was Reinhold Niebuhr? Why don't we hear more about his theology?

One of the chief characteristics that I love about Unitarian Universalism is that we are welcome with all of our questions. Thank you for sharing your questions and your pursuit of Truth with all of us.

Yours in peace,
Rosemary

Caring Church News

If you have cares or concerns, a celebration or joy to share, please send an email to **Rosemary** at Rosemary@firstchurchboston.org

Social Justice Committee News

If you would like to receive Social Justice news and announcements via email, please let Robin Tanner know at rtanner@hds.harvard.edu

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO)

Members of the Committee will be involved in various GBIO activities this month. Bob attended a meeting on January 16 of the task force on elder care issues, particularly services provided by health care assistants.

Upcoming...

Iris and Bob will be attending the GBIO Annual Leaders Retreat on January 27-28. For anyone in the congregation interested in learning more about GBIO, this retreat is an incredible opportunity to be in conversation about important issues such as healthcare, elder care and youth safety in a multi-faith setting. The retreat is open to all. Please speak to Rosemary if you are interested in attending.

Rosemary Lloyd is a member the Clergy Task Force, which is developing a theological statement to bring to the Delegates Assembly in May when GBIO will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

UU Urban Ministry, Roxbury (UUUM)

The Action for Justice Team continues its involvement with the UU Urban Ministry:

With help from the entire congregation, the Holiday Angels project was a success! First Church gave holiday gifts to every middle school student in the Urban Ministry's Roxbury Youth Program, an after-school program serving middle and high school students. Thank you to all of you who contributed, especially Carole and Richard, Susan, Natalie, and John who organized the project.

Carole and Richard, Natalie, Daphne, and Rebekah attended the Roxbury Youth Program holiday party in December to distribute First Church in Boston's gifts to the youth, and to celebrate their academic and leadership accomplishments.

Upcoming...

The Action for Justice Team will be attending Poetry Slam, an "open mike" evening with the Urban Ministry youth at First Parish in Concord on Friday, February 1 at 6:00 pm. If you are interested in attending, we will be coordinating a carpool, departing from First Church in Boston at 5:00 pm. Please contact Daphne or leave a message for Rebekah Ingram at 617-267-6730 to reserve your space.

The next meeting of the Social Justice Committee will be on Sunday, February 3 at 9:30 am in the Conference Room of Park House. All are welcome.

A Note from Rebekah Ingram

As much as I have loved being a graduate student, I confess that I am really excited by the fact that only one course remains between now and my graduation in June! While in the throes of writing the last few pages of my final paper, I realized that I prefer to write sermons than final research papers. This wasn't always the case, so I take it as a sign, if you will, that I am ready to be a full-time, ordained minister!

It's a wonderful feeling when you realize you're ready to move onto something new or different *and* you have some idea what that might be. It can seem fortuitous, lucky, or simply "meant to be." Recently, this happened to me.

Since I will be devoting significantly less time to coursework during this last semester at Harvard Divinity School, I have accepted the opportunity to work at the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury as their Volunteer Coordinator, a new position. What does that mean?

Cont. on p. 6

Book Club News

Evening Book Group

The next book group meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 14, at 7:30 pm**. The book is *“Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation”* by Peter L. Bernstein. All are welcome. Please call the church office for more information.

Daytime Book Group

Meets Tuesday, January 29 at noon in the parlor.

For January, we will be reading *“1,000 Splendid Suns”* by Khaled Hosseini. Contact ruth@firstchurchboston.org



A Banner Year!

David, chairman of the Denominational Affairs Committee, is soliciting your creative ideas for a new banner to represent First Church in Boston at the 2008 General Assembly. Each year, members of UU congregations from across the country and Canada convene in a different city for General Assembly, a convention of liberal religionists who study, worship, sing, and strategize together for a more just and loving future. Each congregation is represented by members and a **colorful banner** which is carried in an opening procession and hung in the convention center during General Assembly.

For several years, First (and Second) Church had a banner prototype designed by Tom. Now is the time to create a new banner reflecting our (new) name and Welcoming Congregation status to be carried with pride at GA in Fort Lauderdale this June. First it needs to be designed and made. Please contact David by phone in the evening or see him after church to start the process. Or leave a message with Rev. Rosemary Lloyd that you are interested in helping to make this our BANNER YEAR!

Rebekah Ingram, cont. from p. 5

It means that I will be working to strengthen, nurture, and support the relationships between the UU Urban Ministry and the fifty-five or so area congregations that are connected to this unique (and uniquely UU) urban ministry.

I feel truly blessed to be able to begin this new ministry position while I continue to complete my internship at First Church. And this means that I will not journey to some distant parish upon graduation. It means I will remain near; it means I will continue to see many of you as First Church's commitment and connection to the Urban Ministry grows.

See you on Sunday,
Rebekah

Newsletter Deadlines

January 31—February 14, 2008:

Monday, January 28

February 14—28, 2008

Monday, February 11

Email Joan@firstchurchboston.org by 9:00 am

JANUARY 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5
6 9:30 am Social Justice 12:30 pm Fundraising Committee	7 2:00 pm Women's Spirituality 6:30 pm Women's Spirituality (2 groups)	8 6:00 pm Standing Committee	9 10:00 am Membership Committee 6:00 pm Films at First	10 7:30 pm Evening Book Group	11	12
13 9:15 am Caring Network 9:30 am House Committee 12:30 pm ARE Committee	14 6:00pm Purls of Wisdom	15	16 6:00 pm Films at First	17 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	18 10:00 am Historic Bostons	19
20 9:15 am Men's Group 12:30 pm Fundraising Committee	21 Martin Luther King Jr Day Church Office closed	22	23 6:00 pm Films at First	24 6:00 pm Worship Committee	25	26
27	28 6:00pm Purls of Wisdom	29 12:00pm Daytime Book Group	30 6:00 pm Films at First	31	<hr style="border: 1px dashed gray;"/> <p>Sunday Services are held at 11:00 am every Sunday, followed by Coffee Hour. All visitors are warmly invited to attend.</p> <hr style="border: 1px dashed gray;"/>	

Rev. Stephen Kendrick, Senior Minister, pannabeth@aol.com
 Rev. Rosemary Lloyd, Associate Minister, rosemary@firstchurchboston.org
 Ruth Owen, Director of Religious Education, ruth@firstchurchboston.org
 Dr. Paul Cienniwa, Director of Music, paul@firstchurchboston.org
 John Benson, Chair of Standing Committee, John.Benson@state.ma.us
 Joan Whalen, Administrator/Events Coordinator, joan@firstchurchboston.org
 Bill Rabbitt, Facilities Manager/Lead Sexton, billrabbitt@gis.net
 Rebekah Cutler Ingram, Intern, ringram@hds.harvard.edu
 Robin Tanner, Intern, rtanner@hds.harvard.edu

Church Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 9:00– 5:00 pm

Please check this box and return this page to the office if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

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