



On Call

The other day I spied a new book subtitled “A History of Collective Joy,” covering the long history of people gathering to have a rollicking good time. Mardi-Gras and other big celebrations are covered, and I thought to myself, what a good idea! What would life be worth if we had no opportunities to enjoy, with exuberance, the sheer jumping joy of *being* alive?

I realize that religion and Collective Joy have never really gone together—especially in Boston, where the Puritan heritage still lurks. No, religion is generally seen as solemn, glum, serious—and Lord knows, there is a lot in this world that calls for seriousness. But, I’ve always liked the story of Groucho Marx, who was greeted as he came out of an elevator by a Roman Catholic Priest who cried, “I want to thank you for all the joy you’ve brought into our life.”

Groucho answered, “And Father, I want to thank you for all the joy you’ve taken out of it!”

Still, I have always felt that we U-U’s have a special gift for allowing joy to be part of our common life. We like each other, and think that the church is a good place to have a good time...Friendship and happiness seem essential to us in terms of what we come to church to experience.

We should do more of it, this Collective Joy thing. So shake off the chill, everyone—you deserve a little warmth, some laughter and much, much joy. Maybe like me, you’re no dancer, but that’s alright. Kicking up your heels is almost as holy as dropping to your knees. I believe God made us to bring happiness to this life, and to one another.

See you in church,



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Volume 1, Issue 3

January 31—February 14,
2008

Services

February 3, 2008

“A Perfectly Good Sermon”

Rev. Stephen Kendrick

February 10, 2008

“The Great Conspiracy”

Rev. Stephen Kendrick

February 17, 2008

“The Shadow Knows”

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

Got Cake? How About Cookies?

As many of you may know, First Church member Jamie is training to run the Boston Marathon this spring to raise money for the Boston Living Center. Our youth group would like to support Jamie in his efforts so we will be having a bake sale after church on Sunday, February 10. So, bring your wallet and your sweet tooth and support our youth and help cheer Jamie on. If you would like to contribute baked goods to the sale (even if you are not a youth) please contact Ruth.

Uncommon Cents Announcement

David M. was the lucky winner of the drawing for our coin collection project, "Uncommon Cents." We raised a total of \$312.21 which David chose to send to Horizons For Homeless Children, an organization in Roxbury that helps parents learn how to be nurturing and involved in the growth and development of their children, and helps them learn and grow through job training, GED and college courses to break the cycle of homelessness. Thank you, David and thank you to everyone who contributed.

Needed: Outreach Help from Members

*Where do you look for information about events (not just church related) you might want to attend?

*How do you hear about interesting activities?

*Do you know a contact person at any of those sources?

If you know of people who might be particularly interested in the types of things that happen here at First Church, please let us know who they are and how we might reach them.

If you have personally done publicity for an event or organization, and have a special tip to share, please do. **Ruth Owen** and **Mary Lou**, a member who is volunteering for this outreach, are currently putting together some lists and ideas so that more people can learn about church activities and events. We have most of the "standard" news sources already on the list. But we need your **HELP TO EXPAND INTO NEW PUBLICITY TERRITORY!** Can you share?

All information and ideas will be gratefully received and added to our pool of knowledge. Please e-mail to ruth@firstchurchboston.org. If email doesn't work for you, can you drop a written note off at the church office?

Films At First

February 6

Time of Fear

During World War II, Japanese-Americans were removed from their homes and interned in camps. Footage of teachers and internees makes time stand still as the subjects relive their most poignant experiences from that dark era. (2004)

February 13

The Line King

Hollywood caricaturist [Al Hirschfeld](#) turned simple pencil-to-paper drawings into lively cartoons of some of the entertainment industry's most popular names. His unique style is easily recognizable, down to the famous hidden placement of his daughter Nina's name on every drawing. This Academy Award-nominated documentary takes a look at Hirschfeld's career. (1996)



Music at First Church Dr. Paul Cienniwa

The local chapter of the American Choral Director's Association (ACDA) recently held a workshop for choral directors in Shrewsbury. The range of topics, from Jewish to Brazilian to gospel music, was so diverse that I couldn't resist attending. After running into several of my UU musician colleagues, I saw that I was not alone in viewing the offerings as being particularly appropriate to the UU musician.

David Coleman, the Gospel Choir director at Tufts, led the workshop on gospel music. Aside from leading us in some wonderful singing, David explained his approach to bringing gospel music to college students. Importantly for this UU musician, he touched on how to reconcile this decidedly Christian music with people of other faiths.

He said that gospel music, while being Christian, stressed two main universal principles. First, "you are not alone." Gospel stresses the belief that we are loved and that someone is watching out for us. Second, all gospel music encourages and uplifts the spirit—regardless of faith.

We are not alone, and we are to be encouraged and uplifted. What wonderful messages for any person of faith!

David left us with a contemporary gospel song that affirmed gospel's message:

I need you. You need me.
We're all a part of God's Body.
Stand with me. Agree with me.
We're all a part of God's Body.

It is God's will that every need be supplied.
You are important to me. I need you to survive.
I pray for you. You pray for me.
I love you. I need you to survive.
I won't harm you with words from my mouth.
I love you. I need you to survive.

Sounds good to me.

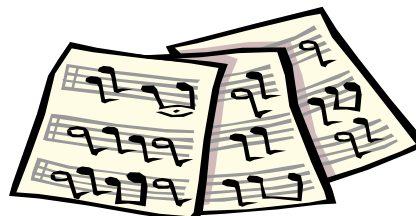
Upcoming Rehearsal

Ringling Society

Open to handbell ringers of all ages

Feb. 17—10:15 am rehearsal/ring at 11:00 am

Join the Ringling Society as we ring for a traditional Thai piece, "Ngam Sang Duan," sung by the First Church Choir.



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



Rosemary's Reflections

In my sermon last Sunday I confessed that, until very recently, I haven't paid significant attention to the political and humanitarian concerns of the people of Africa. I recognize that I sometimes suffer from "compassion fatigue" and end up making choices about what news I let in and what I try to shut out. My attention shifted in the past month as post-election violence has erupted in Kenya because I know someone who lives in Kisumu.

I don't know how it is for you, but I seem to become more engaged with an issue when I have some sense that it affects me personally, or when I think I can personally effect an outcome. In other cases, I become interested or involved because I have a personal connection with someone who is affected by events, policies, or circumstances that could be changed if more people were invested in creating transformation.

I began to let the news of Kenya in to my consciousness because years ago I met a woman from Boston who now lives and works with her family in Africa. She emailed last night that people were being killed with machetes at the bus station, and she could hear gun shots very close to the house where she lives with her husband and 2 young sons. This was happening in the third largest city in the country! Imagine if we heard that was happening at the Park Street "T" stop...

While we haven't heard of machetes being used locally, there are gun shots very near by. In Kenya, young men are hungry for work and for hope. Young men in Boston are, too. And in both places they are killing each other. But if we don't know them personally, are we going to care enough to get involved and help effect systemic change?

Through partnerships with UU Urban Ministry and GBIO, First Church members and friends are making personal connections and deepening their investment in youth safety and ending violence. You can, too. Whether your personal concern is improving access to health care, aging with dignity, curbing global warming, housing the homeless, or welcoming veterans all the way home, your interest and investment--your public faith, witness and action--are welcome and needed.

Yours in faith,
Rosemary

Caring Church

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.



The next meeting of the Social Justice Committee will be held on Sunday, February 3 at 9:30 am in the conference room at Park House. We will be receiving reports on the activities at UUUM and GBIO as well as preparing the committee budget for the coming fiscal year. All are welcome to attend.

GBIO News

Iris attended the Health Care session of the GBIO Annual Leaders Retreat on January 28. As a result of GBIO's efforts with partners, over 300,000 individuals now have health insurance coverage through Commonwealth Care under the state's new Health Care Reform law. As GBIO is interested in learning how many people (number, not names) from each of its institutions have benefitted, would you please let Rosemary know if you or a family member have been so insured? Thank you!

Make It Personal

- Do you have stories or experiences of caring for an elder?
- Have you been frustrated trying to access care for yourself or someone else?
- Do you have ideas about what would make it easier or help you feel more supported?

Whether you are an (almost) elder or a family or professional care provider, you can help set the agenda for Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) advocacy and service in the coming year.

Please join us at our next Aging With Dignity forum:

Sunday, February 24, at 12:30 in the auditorium.

A light lunch will be served.

For more information:

rosemary@firstchurchboston.org

Standing Committee Update

Your Standing Committee last met on January 8 and will next meet on February 5. We've been working on plans for the *Shake Off the Chill* party/fundraiser, led by Grace. Festive plans have been made, to appeal to a wide variety of congregation members, with a silent auction of goodie baskets, including good tickets for a July 12 Red Sox game. Beyond the significance of this as a "Bon Hiver" party to get us through another New England winter, it is important to the balancing of the Church's current budget because the cost of utilities and of health care coverage for our staff has outpaced even inflation. Meanwhile, our financial management has this year benefited from the hard work of Jack, with a consultant's help, overhauling the Church's financial recordkeeping so as to improve the records our new bookkeeper will be able to use.

At the February 5 meeting we will be discussing a new proposal from Paul Cienniwa about use of pre-recorded music at services of our Church. We will also be discussing ways in which the Church can further its evident *openness* to members of our congregation and to the public, such as possibly using glass entry doors or painting the existing entry doors "Rudolph red," and/or providing orientation signs in the Narthex for the Chapel, Auditorium, and rest rooms. We'll also explore use of banners and/or sandwich boards on Sundays to make it more apparent that the service of a Welcoming Church is being conducted within, and the possible use of video and blogging to provide more people convenient access to our community. Also, Ruth Owen has launched a search for a new leader for the Young Adult group.

Currently an energy audit of the Church is also underway to identify opportunities to cut down our energy use and utility bills. This can lead to reducing our Church's "carbon footprint." The findings will be made public to you, as will ways you can cut *your own carbon footprint* at home.

Chair, Standing Committee of the First Church in Boston

Book Club News

Evening Book Group

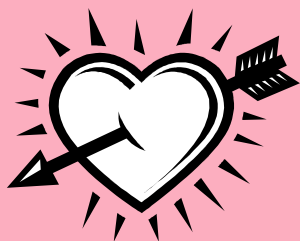
The next book group meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 14, at 7:30 pm**, at Helen Savage's house. The book is *"Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation"* by Peter L. Bernstein. All are welcome. Please call **Helen Savage** for more information.

Daytime Book Group

Next book group meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 26, at noon** in the parlor. For February, we will be reading *"God is Not Great"* by Christopher Hitchens. Contact ruth@firstchurchboston.org



*Early Valentine's Day
Ministers' Tea
(with a South African flavor)
Thursday, February 7
5:00—6:00 pm*



Please join us in the Parlor as we say "thank you" to all the volunteers at First Church

**All church members
welcome!**

Beginning on Sunday, February 3, a new **Writer's Room Group** will be meeting in the Parlor from 12:30 to 2:00 pm. We are inviting experienced writers to join us the first Sunday of each month to talk about writing and to share our works in progress with each other. For further information please call **Natalie** or the church office.

The next meeting of the **Men's Group** will be held in the conference room at Park House, on Sunday, February 17 at 9:15 am. Dudley will facilitate the discussion of the topic *"How does one navigate one's life through global climate change, given the economic and environmental impact of such change?"* All men of the church are invited to attend for good food and conversation. Contact **Bob** or the church office for further information.

Newsletter Deadlines

February 14—28, 2008

Monday, February 11

February 28 -March 13

Monday, February 25

Email Joan@firstchurchboston.org by 9:00 am

FEBRUARY 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 6:00 pm "Shake Off the Chill" event
3 9:30 am Social Justice Committee 12:30 pm Writers' Group	4 2:00 pm Women's Spirituality 6:30 pm Women's Spirituality (2 groups)	5 6:00 pm Standing Committee	6 10:00 am Membership Committee 6:00 pm Films at First	7 5:00 pm Ministers' Tea 6:30 pm Women's Spirituality Group 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	8 4:00 pm Young Adults Winter Conference (all weekend))	9
10 9:15 am Caring Network 9:30 am House Committee	11 6:00pm Purls of Wisdom Knitting Group	12	13 6:00 pm Films at First	14 Valentine's Day 7:00 pm Young Adults Group 7:30 pm Book Group	15 10:00 am Historic Bostons	16
17 9:15 am Men's Group 10:30 am Ringing Society 12:30 pm ARE Committee	18 President's Day, Church Office closed 6:00 pm Hour of Silence	19	20	21 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	22	23
24 12:30 pm Adult ARE meeting	25 6:00pm Purls of Wisdom Knitting Group	26	27	28 6:00 pm Worship Committee 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	29	

10 cont.
12:30 pm
Canvass Committee
12:30 pm
Member Orientation
12:30 pm
Music Committee

Sunday Services are held at 11:00 am every Sunday, followed by Coffee Hour. All visitors are warmly invited to attend.

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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