



On Call

A friend just said to me, "Is it my imagination, or has February lasted forever?" Well, although it is leap year and February has been graced with an extra day, in point of fact, February has not actually been eternal. Happily, by the time this lands in your mailbox, March will have at last arrived bearing seeds of Spring and the holiday of Easter. Since (and I have never understood this, although it is part of my trade) Easter is a date determined by the phases of the moon

and not history *per se*, this year it arrives as early as it can possibly come. Through the years, I have experienced Easter services that come with snow showers, not springing green grasses and budding trees--just part of that lovely New England character building exercise that we call "the long winter."

Long gray weeks come with a certain discipline--to endure, to maintain a certain steadiness, to hold up others when you see them flagging, to move past sickness and flu and colds, and to even see the beauty of winter whenever we can. All this is easier said than done, as I experienced myself last week after a short siege of illness. I, too, have days of discouragement and times when I wonder, will the sun ever return, will warmth ever sink into my bones again?

Here's the big secret, though: one reason that you may safely rely on us (even when we are suffering from the same slings and arrows of circumstance as you are) is that we get to live and work among you. We get to observe your wisdom, your grace, your grit. I have always felt that I learn infinitely more from you than you could possibly learn from me--but the fact that there are so many more of you than me simply means that my sources of wisdom and refreshment are nearly infinite! Yes, winter goes on a long time here in New England, but happily, I get to share it with you, the deep and wise folk of First Church. I have the great pleasure of being able to give back to you all the love and all the knowledge that comes my way, and that is vast and considerable.

See you in church.



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Volume 1, Issue 5

February 28—March 13,
2008

Services

March 2, 2008

"Once to Every Race"
Rev. Stephen Kendrick

March 9, 2008

"Beloved On The Earth"
Rebekah Ingram

March 16, 2008

"Blank Canvas"
Rev. Stephen Kendrick

Easter Dinner?

Is there someone who can step forward and head up our annual Easter

Community Lunch, and outreach to the homeless?

If so, please notify the Church Office at 616-267-6730

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

The Longest Month

By the time you read this, the longest month will be over. I know according to the calendar that February is the shortest month. But I also know that is a lie, at least it is for me. I have always had trouble with February. It is cold and dark. All the glitter of the holidays is over. New Year's resolutions are forgotten and the only holiday to break the monotony of February is Valentine's Day, a holiday devoted to love and we all know the kind of trouble that can stir up.

A couple of weeks ago I was riffling through resources trying to find something about love, appropriate for a Valentine's Day lesson for the kids, when I came across an essay by Meg Barnhouse. She wrote it in February and I'd like to share a little bit of it here as it helped me with my February blahs. She wrote:

"Maybe I could get really good at loving the world just every other day. Maybe on that day I could love myself as well. Just every other day, let go of self-improvement and challenging other people's mistakes. I invite you to think about doing this, too.

Every other day, maybe we could let go of wondering if we are good enough, of wondering if we are doing it right. Every other day rest, if we can, in the warm animal pleasures of wind, water, food, earth, friends, love, and beauty. Every other day put in abeyance the drive to feel that we are smart enough, thin enough, cool enough, doing enough."

So, I've been trying it. I can't say it has effected a prefect transformation of my mood, but it has helped.

If you'd like to read the whole essay, go to: <http://www.uuworld.org/spirit/articles/90139.shtml>.

And, happy March!

Ruth

Save the Date and Call Lew Lloyd!

By now you should all have received your Learning Community brochures for Spring 2008. One of our special offerings this spring is a trip to see the Boston Ballet at the Wang Theater on Friday, May 16. Lew Lloyd is arranging this outing, which includes a pre-performance talk at the ballet. The program is: George Balanchine's "Concerto Barocco" to Bach's Double Violin Concerto in D, Antony Tudor's "Dark Elegies" to Gustav Mahler's, "Kindertotenlieder," and Twyla Tharp's "In The Upper Room" to a commissioned score by Philip Glass.

The date, May 16, may seem very far away but Lew needs to know now if you are interested in participating so he can arrange group discount tickets. So, PLEASE CALL LEW LLOYD 781-259-0356 (or email him at llloyd38@ix.netcom.com) and don't miss out on this great opportunity.

Daytime Book Group

The daytime book group's book for March is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. We will discuss this book at noon on March 25. But, we have not yet selected books for April and May. We read all categories of books, fiction and non-fiction. We like our selections to relate to a theme. We welcome any ideas and we welcome new members to our group at anytime. If you have suggestions please call **Ruth** at ext 223.



Music at First Church

Dr. Paul Cienniwa

Singing

St. Augustine might have had it right when he wrote, "To sing is to pray twice." (Of course, that would depend on what we are singing!) There are two fantastic singing opportunities coming up at First Church—and St. Augustine might even approve of them.

On **Wednesday, March 12 at 7pm**, the Music Committee is sponsoring its second annual **Hymn Sing**. Those who attended last year found this to be a really joyful event with the opportunity to sing old favorites and enjoy new hymns. We'll meet again in the Chapel and follow the hour of singing with a reception. If you've never done this before, you should try it: newcomers last year were surprised by how much fun they had! Unlike last year, this is not a fundraising event. The Music Committee just wants everyone to have a good time, and we encourage you to bring your friends and family...and a list of hymns you'd like to sing.

Beginning on March 9, the **Singing Society** will be preparing music for Easter. We will be singing from Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* with the composer's arrangement for string quartet and piano. Not only will this be an Easter service not to forget, you can be a part of the music! The **Singing Society** is always looking for new members, so if you have thought of it but haven't had the courage to come, this is the time. We will begin with a brief rehearsal after the March 9 service and move to a more in-depth rehearsal at 9:45 am on March 16. Then on March 23, you'll have the opportunity to rehearse with the strings and sing in the Easter service. All adults are welcome and encouraged to bring their voices for this special **Singing Society**.

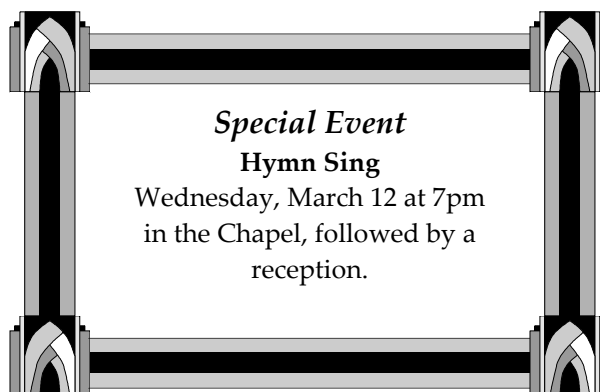
Upcoming Rehearsals

Singing Society

March 9—12-12:30 pm rehearsal, Sanctuary
 March 16—9:45-10:30 am rehearsal, Chapel
 March 23 (Easter)— 9:45 am rehearsal/sing 11am service

Ringling Society

Open to handbell ringers of all ages
 March 23 (Easter)—10:30 am rehearsal/ring 11am service



First Church Musicians in Concert

Weston OperaFest, March 1 and 2, 2008, First Parish Unitarian Church, Parish Hall, Weston, MA. Choir members Christina English and Christie Teeters perform in Douglas Moore's *Gallantry* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. www.firstparishweston.org

Brookline Chorus Presents: *Angels and Demons*, music by Bach and Britten, with choir member Ethan Bremner, Saturday, March 15, 2008, 8 pm. All Saints Parish, 1773 Beacon St., Brookline. www.brooklinechorus.org

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



Rosemary's Reflections

It is always a pleasant surprise to open my email on Sunday evening or Monday morning and discover a note from someone who has listened to our worship service that is broadcast on Emerson College Radio, 88.9 FM. Some people pick up the station as they are driving through on their way north or south. Others, it turns out, tune in regularly to listen at home or work, but have never come to our building. And there are many of you who, for any variety of reasons, can't make it to church, but turn on your computers or radios in time to catch the service. I even heard from one woman who, after going to another church service, turns on her car radio so she can listen to the sermon on her way home!

We are very fortunate that the Rev. Rhys Williams and the lay leadership of First (and Second) Church had the vision – real foresight! – to include a radio broadcast system into the rebuilding after the great fire of March 1968. Our radio program is a great outreach ministry of our spiritual community, and of Unitarian Universalism. We are connected to people we may never meet, or who (like some of you) eventually will walk through our doors and become loved and loving members of this congregation.

I don't understand how the technology of radio works, but thanks to the skills and systems that are available to us, we use that technology to touch people's lives and hearts and help them hear good news and beautiful music week after week.

There are other technologies available to us that can help us share our good news and our spiritual community. I don't understand how the technology of the internet works, but I know we can be using it to great purpose. Some of our great music is already available on YouTube, and our sermons are live-streamed.

But they could also be available any time you want to click online to hear them via podcasts – and other formats that are mysterious to me...

If you have the skills and understanding to help us make it happen, please be in touch. I know how to do email:

rosemary@firstchurchboston.org

See you in church (or listen on the radio or your computer!)

Rosemary

Caring Church

If you would like to visit church members who cannot come to church, please contact **Revs. Stephen Kendrick or Rosemary Lloyd**.

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





Social Justice: Robin Tanner

If you would like to receive Social Justice news and announcements via email, please let **Robin Tanner** know at

rtanner@hds.harvard.edu

The next meeting of the Social Justice Committee will be held on Sunday, March 2 at 9:30 a.m. in the conference room at Park House. Robin Tanner and Nancy Moore will be leading the discussion on the planning for Justice Sunday which will take place at First Church on Sunday, March 30. The Committee will be working with the UU Service Committee to focus on ending the war in Iraq and supporting our troops. If you are interested in participating or hearing more about Justice Sunday, please contact **Robin Tanner** or better yet, come to the meeting.

The Social Justice Committee is putting a team together to attend an upcoming training workshop sponsored by the UU Mass. District on Congregationally Based Community Organizing. The presentations will focus on a three-part training of the underlying philosophy of grassroots community organizing and social justice principles and how our congregation can become more effective and more involved. We will be attending the Workshop scheduled for Saturday morning, April 5 at the UU Church in Reading. For more details, please be in touch with the Reverend **Rosemary Lloyd**.

Men's Group

The next meeting of the Men's Group will be on Sunday, **March 16, at 9:15 a.m.** in the conference room at Park House. The topic is "Personal Goals." Come join us for good food and conversation.

Are you hearing-impaired?

We are in the process of having listening devices installed in the Sanctuary and hope to have them available for trial usage from Sunday, March 2 onwards. Your feedback is encouraged. Please call Bill Rabbitt at 617-267-6730 ext 228 for further information.

**Tired of Dark Winter Paths?
Come to Church on March 2 for
Enlightenment.**

Newsletter Deadlines

March 13–27

Monday, March 10

March 27–April 10

Monday, April 7

Email Joan@firstchurchboston.org by 9:00 am
deadline

Book Club News

Evening Book Group

The **evening book group** will meet on Thursday, March 20, at 7:30 pm. The group will discuss *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, by Jean-Dominique Bauby, late editor-in-chief of the French magazine *Elle*. Call the church office for more information.

Daytime Book Group

The **daytime book group's** book for March is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Next meeting is in the parlor at noon on March 25. Contact **Ruth** at ruth@firstchurchboston.org



Message from the Standing Committee and Treasurer

As we begin this year's Canvass effort, the Standing Committee wishes to convey to all of our members who so generously fund our church, that the last year was, in terms of our bookkeeping, one of challenging circumstances. The overall picture of the church's finances remain very positive, and there is certainly no crisis in assessing our overall picture, but several issues beyond our control very strongly affected the ease and speed of our bookkeeping processes, and we wanted the church as a whole to understand the steps we are taking to address these issues.

As many of you know, for many years we shared a bookkeeper with the nearby Hale Barnard Elder Care services, and that worked well for both parties. However, last year, Hale Barnard parted ways with their bookkeeper, and that sundered our long-time relationship as well. In dealing with the aftermath of that bookkeeper's leaving, we discovered a fragmented bookkeeping arrangement as well as many records being maintained by hand. There was no evident problem with the overall financial picture, no missing funds, etc., but there was clearly a need to replace old practices and install new procedures and more up to date accounting software, in addition to finding a new bookkeeper.

In addition to this, two other factors have made this goal more difficult to achieve. The first was personnel: Before our current Interim Bookkeeper, Maria Fitzgerald, was engaged in August 2007, we worked with two temporary bookkeepers, neither of whom had a transition period with a predecessor. The second dimension was computer software: We found our financial records spread across four different accounting software programs. All our financial data are now being integrated into one bookkeeping system.

In close consultation with the Standing Committee, our Treasurer and our Interim Bookkeeper have worked diligently on this complicated process, which is finally nearing completion. We ask your understanding as we near this goal of re-ordering our accounting practices for the future. Also, if you feel that there have been any errors or oversights in your pledging records, we ask you to simply email or call the Treasurer (as he invited in his letter sent to all pledgers) and he would be happy to correct any problem. As this hard work nears an end, we ask your patience, and we look forward to being able to tell you soon of the completion of this crucial work.

MARCH 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:30 am Social Justice Committee 12:30 pm Kendrick Book Talk	3 2:00 pm Women's Spirituality 6:30 pm Women's Spirituality (2 groups)	4 6:00 pm Standing Committee	5 10:00 am Membership Committee	6 5:00 pm Ministers' Tea 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	7	8
9 9:15 am Caring Network 9:30 am House Committee	10 6:00pm Purls of Wisdom Knitting Group	11	12 7:00 pm Hymn Sing	13 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	14 10:00 am Historic Bostons	15
16 9:15 am Men's Group 9:45 am Singing Society	17 6:00 pm Hour of Silence	18	19	20 6:00 pm Worship Committee 7:00 pm Young Adults Group 7:30 pm Evening Book	21 Good Friday	22
23 Easter 9:45 am Singing Society Rehearsal 10:00 am Communion	24 6:00pm Purls of Wisdom Knitting Group	25 12:00 pm Daytime Book Group	26 6:00 pm Learning Community	27 6:00 pm Worship Committee 7:00 pm Young Adults Group	28	29
30 12:00 pm Children's Singing Society	31					

9 cont.
12:00 pm
Singing Society
12:30 pm
Canvass
Committee
12:30 pm Music
Committee

23 cont.
10:30 am
Ringin Society
11:00 am
Singing &
Ringin
12:30 pm
Community
Service
Dinner

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.

First Church in Boston
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