



DECEMBER 2, 2009

MAKING MEANINGS
REV. KATIE LEE CRANE

Simple gifts. To me, these are gifts that cost little – of me or of the environment – but are immeasurably filled with love and human connections. One such gift was the doll. Years ago, when I still lived on the Vermont Farm, my soon-to-be sister-in-law found a china doll's head among some rubble by the brook. We cleaned it up and her little face was so beautiful. We imagined a little girl who had perhaps lived on that farm decades before who had loved that doll until all that was left was her bald head. "I'm going to re-create this doll and give it to your first-born child," I joked. The doll's head lay in a drawer, waiting.

When the first baby was announced, I got to work. I researched the origins of the head – not a valuable antique, but a popular style of an earlier era. I found a source where one could buy the cloth body, china hands and feet, and curly brown hair. I called the former owners of the farm – two maiden ladies, professional nurse educators, long retired, who had come up to the farm every summer starting in the late 1930s to get away from the heat of New York City. Did they know anything about the doll? "No," they acknowledged, but they did know that the place we found it had been a dumping area for the owners before them (and likely many before that). The farm buildings dated back to the 1830s.

I took the doll – now embodied – to show "The Ladies" as we lovingly called them. They were fascinated and, like me, so emotionally attached to the farm that we spent an afternoon spinning out stories about the doll and children who may have played with it. That's when The Ladies pulled out an old trunk filled with, among other things, antique doll cloths, inherited and lovingly preserved. Together we began outfitting the doll. Soon she had a civil war-era silk dress that a distant relative had made by hand.

Next, my friend who is a costume designer helped me design and make the doll's period-perfect under clothes. And finally, I wrote the letter that I hope will travel with the doll wherever she goes; it chronicled how a-not-yet-mother found its head and how my friends and I "brought her back to life" for a just-born little girl. It told the story of the people who had loved the doll back into being – and, in the process, loved each other. My financial investment was minimal; the story was (and still is) priceless.

Join us on Saturday, December 12 for our "Simple Gifts" Village Worship (an interactive worship service for people from teeny tiny to great and grand). Then come to the Simple Gifts Swap. I don't guarantee you'll find a valuable treasure, but I can assure you you'll have the invaluable experience of giving and sharing love and connections. Believe me, you'll feel "you've come down right."

Katie Lee

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Worship at the Meetinghouse

Sunday, December 6, 10 am

Festival of Revelry

Tom K, the Hop Brook Morris Dancers, Candyrapper Sword Dancers, and many more revelers

Winter is upon us. It is that time of year when darkness triumphs, the time when we stay awake at night, dancing, singing, reveling to bring back the light, to call the sun from the womb of night. There will be the traditions – the Mummer’s Play, the Morris and Sword dancers, and the Lord of the Dance leading us *all* in the dance. In fact, after so many years, this whole service has become a First Parish tradition. But there is always the promise of something new and different. Bring the family. Bring the neighbors. Help us bring back the sun!

Today we will share the offering with the Heifer International. Read more about Heifer on page 5.

There will be a New U gathering in the Brackett Room at 11:45 for newcomers and long-timers alike.

Sunday, December 13, 10 am

Fleeing to Freedom

Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Salām. It is the Arabic word for “peace.” Curious, isn’t it, at a time when the dominant holy days and holidays focus on peace and hope, we are mired in a culture of fear. When other holy days commemorate the freedom of religion – freedom won in battle – we still battle one another in the name of religion. There is an unusual confluence of religious events this season: the Hajj, a Muslim’s once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca, followed by Hijra, the Islamic New Year; the eight nights of Hanukkah; and, of course, the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus, known to many as the “prince of peace.” Can we mine these ancient and powerful stories for a larger narrative about the freedom to believe as we do *and* live side by side in peace? People say it is impossible, that the fear is too deeply rooted in centuries of violence and struggle. Must we accept that answer?

There will be a Hearthside Chat at 11:45 in the Brackett Room to have a conversation about the day’s topic and the issues it raises.

First Parish of Sudbury's Pastoral Associates

Annamarie A, Audrey K, Polly M, Bruce P, Fred P, Paul R, Dawn S

In the event of a pastoral need, please call any of these Pastoral Associates.



Saturday, December 12, Village Worship 3:00 pm

Simple Gifts

Ms. Roberta Altamari & Rev. Katie Lee Crane

This is a season for giving. And stores will want us to buy more stuff, charities will want us to send more money, and the holiday buzz will pressure us to do more, eat more, drink more, spend more. Is this what we want? Is this what *anyone* needs? Is this consistent with our most deeply-held values? Let's pause to consider all the ways we can truly give from the heart, give gifts that matter to our friends, to the earth, and to the most vulnerable among us. Let's give gifts of faith and hope and love this season.

There will be a **simple gift swap** following Village Worship.

Join us as we focus on the joy and fun of creating
a simple holiday with family and friends.

See page 7 for more details.



Holly Fair – Saturday, December 5

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

A joyous introduction to the holiday season and just the place to find
unique decorations or gifts
fresh table arrangements, wreaths and roping,
homemade goodies and holiday treats,
a gifts again table,
a lunch of homemade soups and breads, and
children's activities.

Thank you to all who have joined the Holly Fair Support Team! Whether
as a crafter, worker or as a shopper, we look forward to seeing you at
the Holly Fair on Saturday, December 5th from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Holly Fair Coordinators and Supporters



Contacts: **Minister:** Rev. Katie Lee Crane- minister@fpsudbury.org.....**Ministerial Candidate in Residence:** Beverly Waring – office@fpsudbury.org...**Music Dir.:** Debra Morris-Bennett – musicdir@fpsudbury.org...Dir. of Religious Exploration & Youth Ministry: Roberta Altamari – dre@fpsudbury.org.....**Community Life:** Fran Sharp – connect@fpsudbury.org...**Administrator and Newsletter Editor:** Donna Scalcione – office@fpsudbury.org... **Office:** 978-443-2043 **Web address:** www.fpsudbury.org

Coming up in Religious Exploration:

The Second Chances Second Fridays support group for people who are divorced or divorcing will be meeting Friday, Dec. 11 at 7:30pm. Our discussion topic will be surviving and enjoying the holiday season. Please pass the word to anyone you know who might appreciate being a part of this group. They need not be a First Parish member to attend.

TempoTime, our music and movement program will happen Friday, Dec. 11 at 10 am. Fun, fun, fun for young children ages 1 and up with their parents or caregivers. Please pass the word to anyone you know who might enjoy this wonderful, free program. They need not be a First Parish member to attend.

Are you ready to help in our Religious Exploration program? Talk with Roberta or any member of the RE Committee

January Collegium – Sharing Our Own Odysseys

Leslie Marmon Silko says in her poem “Ceremony” *Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive.* We’ll have both!

In a year when we are exploring spiritual and religious odysseys in our worship services, we are offering a special Winter Collegium in January to tell and listen to personal stories about our own religious and spiritual journeys.

The Collegium will meet from noon to 2 pm in the Brackett Room on Sundays, January 10, 24, and 31 (we will skip the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend Sunday). We will share a light lunch of soup and bread as a volunteer – who has advance warning and helpful guidelines – shares something of her own journey or his own wanderings (and wonderings). To participate, you must register in advance. Participation will be limited to 20. Sharing your own story (or a piece of it) is optional; bearing witness to another’s story is a blessing for all. This is a committed group and you will be asked to attend all three sessions unless illness or emergency keeps you away.

See full details and a registration form on our website at www.fpsudbury.org or ask the office.

Open Session on First Parish Finances Dec. 6 at 11:45

Do you want to be informed about First Parish finances and the potential short-fall for the 2010-2011 budget? Then come to the open informational session on finances this Sunday, Dec. 6 at 11:45 in the second floor office workroom.

As you know, our current budget has a \$20,000 deficit. If SED rental is discontinued at the end of the school year and no replacement is found, we may have an annual deficit of \$71,000.

Sudbury Extended Day (SED) has for many years been a highly valued and much appreciated tenant at First Parish. Their mission offers a valuable service to the community and is an important match to our own mission. The rental income from SED is also a very valuable part of the financial support of First Parish.

This year SED has been affected by the implementation of an all day kindergarten program in the Sudbury Public Schools, and may continue to be impacted as the program is more fully implemented. We don’t know yet the degree to which SED, and consequently First Parish, will be affected, but we are very concerned about the possible loss of some or all of SED as a valued tenant. SED has given us an early notice of possible reductions of their space needs, and therefore we are trying to project the impact on our own financial condition should this happen.

The answers are not clear yet. The concern is real. The possibilities to avert a crisis are many. Everyone’s input and involvement is crucial. The Finance Committee and other leaders want you to be aware and to know that the process is transparent and available to you.

Will you choose to be informed and participate? If so, a good first step is to come to this meeting on Sunday, Dec. 6.

First Parish Holiday Gift-giving

Sharing the Plate with Heifer Project International

At our annual Festival of Revelry, we will share one half of the gifts collected in the offering to support Heifer International which provides livestock and training so that impoverished families around the world can earn extra income for health care, shelter and education for their children. Each gift multiplies because every family that receives a Heifer animal promises to *Pass on the Gift* by giving one or more of their animal's offspring to another family in need

Our Christmas Gifts go to MetroWest Free Medical Program

This year, the offering collected at all three Christmas services will be given in its entirety to the MetroWest Free Medical Clinic. Our state professes to have accessible health care for all, and yet thousands of people in Massachusetts don't have access to the health care that they need today. The MetroWest Free Medical Program, hosted by Congregation Beth El in Sudbury and First Parish in Framingham, Unitarian Universalist, provides free medical care to more than 1,200 MetroWest neighbors annually.

In addition to our financial support, these clinics need volunteers such as licensed physicians, nurses and social workers, and other health care professionals who can provide patient care during the Tuesday and Thursday evening programs. They also need people to staff the patient registration desk and others to serve on set-up crews. Off-site volunteer opportunities include assistance with marketing, website, or tax preparation, or host a "friend and fundraiser" in your home. For more information, to volunteer, please contact the office.

Invite a Guest at Your Table – and donate to UUSC

It's a long-time, annual tradition, supporting the partner programs of UUSC (our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) by "banking" what you'd spend to feed one guest at your table each day. It's fun, easy, and it's amazing how even a \$40 gift can help educate an Afghan child for a year. Here's how it works:

1. Pick up your UUSC Guest at Your Table Box if you haven't already.
2. Take it home; put it on the table or where you eat most often.
3. Go to the computer (www.uusc.org) and learn more about how UUSC helps its partners around the world speak up for rights like:
 - The right to a living wage
 - The right to acceptable, accessible and affordable water
 - The right of marginalized and oppressed people after natural or man-made disasters
4. Every day imagine the life of one of your "guests;" compare it to your own.
5. On December 20, bring in your generous check; *make it out to First Parish of Sudbury (with UUSC in the memo line)*.
6. Enjoy the holidays knowing how much your gift will change lives of this year's guests at your table.

Be a Secret Santa

Only one week left to pick out your Secret Santa child (formerly "Undecorate the Christmas Tree"). We are off to a great start, but there are still some children left who need your help to make this season of giving a happy one. Names can be selected from the table in the Parish Hall after worship on Sunday, Dec. 6. In addition there is information such as their favorite colors, sports, hobbies, their sizes, their needs, and their hopes. Won't you pick up a name or two and buy an appropriate gift? All gifts must be new and may be brought to the office weekdays from 9-12 or on Sundays by Dec. 13. Santa's helpers arrange to have the gifts delivered. Full instructions are also available from Sherri C.



Women: Drop by Dec. 13

All women are warmly invited to drop by the Women's Alliance Holiday Open House Sunday, Dec. 13 from 4:00-7:00 at the home of Amy P. in Sudbury. No previous attendance at any Alliance event necessary. If you can, please bring a store-bought or home-made appetizer, dessert or beverage. No business meeting, just a relaxing evening to talk, laugh, share and enjoy each other's company.

"The New U"—for newcomers and longer-timers too: Sunday, Dec. 6 at 11:45

On the first Sunday of each month, we offer a chance for our new friends and visitors to meet with our minister, Katie Lee, Fran Sharp (community life), and Roberta Altamari (religious exploration and youth ministries). All are welcome and childcare is provided. This is a great chance to hear about First Parish, our mission, programs and ways to be involved. For more information, contact Fran Sharp at connect@fpsudbury.org or 978/443-2043.

4th Tuesday Lunch discussions

Join us for our next 4th Tuesday lunch gathering on January 26 at noon in The Commons. Rev. Judy D will lead the discussion on healthcare. Watch for more information coming in the next Connector. We will not hold a 4th Tuesday lunch on December 22.

Endings & Beginnings – Send the names, bring the photos

This year, on Sunday, January 3, we will honor those who died and celebrate those who were born throughout 2009. Plan ahead. Don't let the busyness of the holidays distract you from remembering to tell us the loved ones you would like us to name at this moving ritual. All we need from you is this: name (pronunciation, if needed) and either "born" or "died." Send it to minister@fpsudbury.org or drop it off at the First Parish office.

We especially encourage you to bring a photo of those you are honoring so that our altar table may be filled with their beautiful faces.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

If worship services and other events at First Parish need to be cancelled due to severe weather or other emergency situations, here's how you can find out:

By phone—check the recorded message at the First Parish number, 978/443-2043.

If events **for** Sunday have been cancelled, the message will state that.

First Parish website—go to www.fpsudbury.org. The front page will show information about the emergency closing.

WBZ Radio website—If for any reason you can't access our First Parish website, you can go to www.wbz.com, click on "School Closings from the WBZ Storm Center" button, click on "Religious" and scroll down to look for "First Parish of Sudbury."

By radio—listen to news radios 1030 AM WBZ Storm Center at :05 and :35 past the hour for the cancellation of our Sunday worship service only. Other events cannot be listed. If the weather is bad enough that you think a meeting or event might be cancelled, please contact the meeting leader.

Worshipping Together at Christmas



Christmas Eve Family Service at 5 pm.

Please join us for a multigenerational celebration of the birth of Jesus worshipful for children through seniors. We will share the nativity story, explore ways Christmas is celebrated around the world, and enjoy some favorite holiday carols before closing our time together with our beloved "Silent Night" sharing our light ritual.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7 pm.

Join us for the traditional Christmas Eve worship with music, candle-lighting, readings, a short reflection by Katie Lee, and, of course, the much-loved candlelight ritual ending with Silent Night. Children are welcome at this service.

Christmas Morning Service at 10:00 am.

Join our minister and friends by the fire for an informal time of carols, stories and sharing on Christmas Morning.

This year's Christmas offering – all the gifts collected on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day – will go to to the MetroWest Free Medical Program to support their free medical clinics at Congregation Beth El in Sudbury and First Parish in Framingham, UU.

Worshipping with our Framingham Friends - Sunday, December 27 at 10 am

First Parish in Framingham, 24 Vernon Street, hosts Sudbury & Wayland

It is our annual holiday tradition to share this last service of the calendar year with our Unitarian Universalist neighbors. There will be no worship service at First Parish of Sudbury on this day

Simple Gifts: Village Worship followed by Gift Swap: Saturday, Dec. 11 at 3:00pm

'Tis a gift to be simple. During this time of readying for the holidays, many of us at FPS eagerly look forward to our traditional Simple Gift gathering. We get together on a Saturday afternoon for Village Worship and our joyful gift sharing, along with cocoa and cookies. What could be better? You exchange the mall and frenzied shoppers for our own cozy Parish Hall and each other!

Here's how it works: between Sunday, Dec. 6 at noon and Saturday, Dec. 11 at 10:00 am, all are asked to bring gently used gifts (household items, games, toys, jewelry, books, etc) to the Hudson Road lobby. These are things you are glad to give, and in good condition. Also please bring any wrapping paper, ribbons, and gift bags to donate.

On Saturday, Dec. 11, come to Village Worship at 3:00 (see also page 3). Then we will begin "the shopping". Kids will go first, assisted by non-parental adult elves. Then the adults get to shop. It's really fun, it's really heartwarming, and best of all, no money changes hands. It's reducing, reusing and recycling at its best—sharing with others in our First Parish community. There's only one rule: what you choose to take away must be a gift for someone else.

So, bring your donations, mark your calendar, and spread the word. The best deal around this holiday season is the Simple Gifts Village Worship and Gift Swap at First Parish. For more information, contact Fran Sharp.

Free House Cleaning Helps Women with Cancer

If you know a woman currently undergoing chemo for any type of cancer please pass the word to her that there is a cleaning service that provides free housecleaning once a month for 4 months while she is in treatment. All she has to do is sign up and have her doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. *Cleaning for a Reason* will have a participating maid service in her zip code area arrange for the service. For details visit <http://www.cleaningforareason.org/>

FPS Calendar Dec 2, 2009 to Dec 26, 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>Nov 29</u>	<u>Nov 30</u>	<u>Dec 1</u>	<u>Dec 2</u> 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Dec 3</u> 10:00a Greens Prep 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation 7:30p Choir	<u>Dec 4</u> 8:00a Greens Workshop & Set up for Holly Fair	<u>Dec 5</u> 10:00a HOLLY FAIR
<u>Dec 6</u> 10:00a REVELS Worship Sv 11:45a Rental: Morris Dncers 11:45a The New U: discussion for newcomers and longer-timers\, too 11:45a Open Information session about F P Finances 3:00p Rental 4:45p Rental: Morris Dancers 6:30p Rental 7:00p Youth Group	<u>Dec 7</u> 12:00p Rental: SED 6:00p Rental: Yoga 7:00p Board of Trustees	<u>Dec 8</u> 6:45p Tuesday Night Meditation 7:00p Rental	<u>Dec 9</u> 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Dec 10</u> 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation 7:30p Choir	<u>Dec 11</u> 10:00a TempoTime 7:00p Chalice Circle 7:30p Support group for people who are divorced/divorcing	<u>Dec 12</u> 3:00p Village Worship & Simple Gift Swap
<u>Dec 13</u> 10:00a Worship Service 11:45a Hearthside Chat 11:45a Landscape Com. 1:00p Rental Poetry Society 3:00p Rental 4:00p Women's Alliance Open House - off site 4:45p Rental: Morris Dancers 6:30p Rental 7:00p Youth Group	<u>Dec 14</u> 6:00p Rental: Yoga 7:30p RE Committee	<u>Dec 15</u> 6:45p Tuesday Night Meditation 7:00p Rental 7:30p Worship Associates	<u>Dec 16</u> 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Dec 17</u> 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation 7:30p Choir	<u>Dec 18</u>	<u>Dec 19</u>
<u>Dec 20</u> 10:00a Worship Service 11:45a Hearthside Chat 3:00p Rental 6:30p Rental 7:00p Youth group field trip	<u>Dec 21</u> 6:00p Rental: Yoga	<u>Dec 22</u> No 4th Tues. Lunch 6:45p Tuesday Night Meditation 7:00p Rental 7:30p PAG	<u>Dec 23</u> 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Dec 24</u> 5:00p Christmas Eve Family Service 7:00p Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<u>Dec 25</u> 10:00a Christmas Morning Service	<u>Dec 26</u>