

# FIRST PARISH OF SUDBURY CONNECTOR

Issue: March 29, 2009

Connector Deadline: each Wednesday at 5:00pm for the next week's issue

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## MAKING MEANINGS

*Ecclesiastes* reminds us that "For everything there is a season." This past winter has been a season of extraordinary loss for First Parish. In acknowledgement of that reality, we pass on to you the following reflections (her own and others') Katie Lee shared with us at a recent meeting of the Pastoral Associates.

Grief touches grief.  
People we care about are grieving.  
Because we care, we are grieving too.  
Our whole congregation is grieving.  
And when anyone feels another's grief, it touches our own.

**Katie Lee** writes:

...my *real* prayer wheel is a kind of nest in my heart. There, I store the names of people and hopes and needs. There, I commit their prayers – and mine – (regardless of the language that they or I might use) to that place in my heart. I do this, knowing that, in the very act of going about my day, of living, of my beating heart, I am on some level of consciousness, committing my spiritual energy to all that is stored there. More than that, I imagine that the very act of breathing in and breathing out is a process of breathing in the needs and breathing out spiritual sustenance and nourishment. I am sending the needs spinning out into the cosmos.  
*[from the February newsletter column]*

Sometimes the nest in our hearts overflows and cannot hold any more. Then we must pause and breathe for ourselves, put ourselves in that nest, commit our own spiritual energies to what *we ourselves* must place in the nest. We must renew our spiritual sustenance and nourishment.

Don't worry that all the cares and needs in the nest will be neglected. Your spiritual energies – along with those of many, many others – continue spiraling out into universe.

**Maya Angelou** writes (from "Celebrations"):

*When great trees fall,  
rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down in tall grasses,  
and even elephants lumber after safety.*

*When great trees fall in forests,  
small things recoil into silence,  
their senses eroded beyond fear.*

*When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe briefly, our eyes, briefly,  
see with a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory suddenly sharpened,  
examines, gnaws on kind words  
unsaid, promised walks never taken.*

*Great souls die and our reality, bound to  
them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls, dependent on their  
nurture, now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed  
and informed by their  
radiance, fall away.  
We are not so much maddened  
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance  
of dark, cold caves.*

*And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always irregularly.  
Spaces fill with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.*

**Rabbi Rami Shapiro** writes:

*Life and death,  
a twisted vine sharing a single root.  
A water bright green  
stretching to top a twisted yellow  
only to wither itself  
as another green unfolds overhead.*

*One leaf atop another  
yet under the next,  
a vibrant tapestry of arcs and falls  
all in the act of becoming. Death is the passing of life.  
And life  
is the stringing together of so many little passings.*

*The Pastoral Associates Group:*

*Annmarie A      Fred P  
Audrey K        Paul R  
Polly M         Dawn S  
Bruce P*

**PEOPLE WE CARE ABOUT** 

*This column seeks to share news (happy, sad, exciting events) of our lives so that we may support each other as we travel this road together. May it be so.*

*This column is not available in our online version of The Connector. Please contact the office for help. Thanks.*

message of Jesus' death and resurrection?

*Celebrating Easter and Spring* by Mark Harris and Carl Seaburg offers some comforting answers. Unitarian Universalists can find meaning in the Easter holiday by reframing and redefining our understanding of "resurrection". As I've done with other religious terms like communion and prayer, I turn to the dictionary for guidance in seeing the term beyond the Christian understanding. My pocket dictionary defines resurrection as "rising from the dead" and "revival after inactivity or decay". There are many examples from modern life. The book closes with, "We can make the resurrection a reality in our lives ... The traditional cry of 'he lives' becomes 'we live'."

To further support my feeling that my Easter day need not be a ghost of the Christian celebration my extended family hosts, I looked to our Pagan ancestors. Books like Mrs. Sharp's *Traditions* by Sarah Ban Breathnach and *Circle Round* by Starhawk, Diane Baker, and Anne Hill highlight that many pieces of the Christian Easter celebration are taken from Pagan rituals that were being celebrated long before Jesus was even born. The earlier festivals were held near Spring Equinox in honor of Eostre, the old German goddess of light, to celebrate the death of winter and the rebirth of Spring. The most popular Easter symbols (colored eggs and the Easter bunny) trace back to Eostre's spring festival.

With all these sources of valuable information, it leaves us liberal families with ample support to create an Easter holiday that matches our religious beliefs. The celebration of Easter comes from our deep roots of honoring Earth Centered Traditions and our heritage of branching off of Christianity. Naturally, how we celebrate the holiday might vary somewhat from our Pagan and Christian ancestors because our individual and collective theology has evolved though the years. But what is most important to remember is that the true meaning of any religious holiday rests in our own hearts and souls ... ready to be discovered, defined, and celebrated in our own unique ways.

*Loving blessings, Roberta ♥*

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**R.E.FLECTIONS BY A CHALICED.R.E.AMER**

I am often heard saying that religious words are ours to define. One of the great things about the Unitarian Universalist faith is the freedom to discover and believe in our own religious truths. It is so easy to get held back with the definitions from our childhood religion or of those in mainstream American culture. From communion and prayer to God and Jesus, there is pressure in our society to believe certain "truths" about what these words mean. It is wonderful to have a safe haven in our religious home where we can be affirmed that these words are more universal than the Christian definitions of them.

Easter can be a confusing time for some families. What parts of the Easter story do we believe and not believe? A Watertown parent came to me years ago asking to better understand the Unitarian Universalist celebration of Easter. She particularly appreciated how the UU faith transformed the Christmas message into a symbolic celebration of the birth of every child. But how do we transform the Easter





**WORSHIP AT THE  
MEETING HOUSE**

*Sunday, April 5, 10 am*  
**Under our Feet**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Inspired by John Hansen Mitchell's book, *Ceremonial Time*, Rev. Crane asks us to pause and appreciate the ground "under our feet." It has supported and sustained life for centuries. It has been, is now, and will continue to be a habitat for vegetation, for creatures of the earth and air, and for humans – a habitat where life may grow and flourish. With the help of the First Parish Landscape Committee, she will focus on two parcels of land: first, the so-called "Rocky Plain" upon which our European forebears built the current First Parish Meetinghouse (as well as the one that preceded it) and, second, the lot at the corner of Pratt's Mill and Dutton Roads where, under the auspices of Habitat for Humanity, people of the surrounding community are building an affordable home for two families.

*There will be a Hearthside Chat at 11:45 to have a conversation about the day's topic and the issues it raises.*

*Sunday, April 12, 10 am*  
**Wake up, Earth Spirit! Wake up!**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane & Ms. Roberta Altamari

This Easter Sunday, as Christians around the world celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, we at First Parish of Sudbury will explore earlier religious rites of spring that, each in their own way, also celebrates life after death. This service is designed for people of all ages and will include stories, congregational and choral singing, and much more. Rev. Crane cautions those who fear this will not be a true Easter service. "Don't be fooled, this service is not about bunnies. In virtually all of the world's great religious traditions, there are stories that illustrate the continuing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. We will be exploring the deep vein that informs them all and celebrating this wonderful season of rebirth."

**Upcoming Worship Services**  
watch for information in future Connectors

- ♥ Sunday, April 19: Mr. Henry Noer, speaking
- ♥ Saturday, April 25: 4:30pm, Village Worship: Celebrating Earth Day
- ♥ Sunday, April 26: New Member Sunday

**LITTLE THINGS WE DO ...**

***Why those microphones really do make a difference!***

Almost every Sunday there are folks in the Sanctuary who are grateful for the hearing assistance provided by the special earphones that plug into our sound system. And, most Sundays we record the service for those who wish to listen to our service on CD (or now, podcast).

Even though folks speaking loudly and clearly, during Milestones for example, can be heard by many in our sanctuary, people using listening devices can **only** hear what is spoken into a microphone. It doesn't matter how strong a voice you have—it's the microphones that make it possible for everyone to hear.

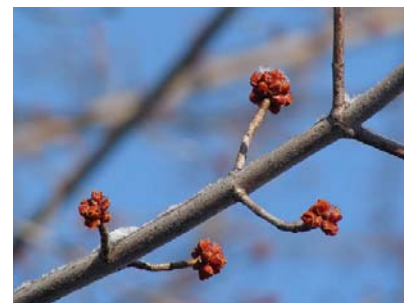
We are so grateful for the quality of the sound system and assisted listening devices, and grateful to you for understanding the need for using microphones so the systems can work.

**VERMONT SENATE VOTES TO LEGALIZE  
SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

On March 23 the Vermont State Senate voted with overwhelming support to pass S.115 - the bill to legalize same-sex marriage in Vermont. 26 Senators (out of 30) cast their vote in support of marriage equality. This is a monumental victory for Vermont and for LGBT equality.

Next, the bill will advance to the House of Representatives where a vote is likely to happen sometime this week. While we are confident in its passage, we still need to assist our neighbors to the north to pass this bill. After that, the bill will be enacted into law, absent a veto from the Governor. Once that happens, Vermont will be the first state to recognize marriage equality through direct legislative initiative.

For more information about how you can help Vermont win marriage, from our Boston office - or even from your own home, contact: please contact: RyanBrown@MassEquality.org or (617) 878-2309.  
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**FAITH IN ACTION NEWS****Walk for Hunger - Sunday May 3**

Join members of the Faith in Action Committee and other friends in the Annual Walk for Hunger. For many years, First Parish has sent a team of walkers raising money for this worthy cause. We would welcome any one of any age who would like to join us on the walk, or make pledges to support the Boston Food Bank. Our goal this year is \$6500.

With poverty and unemployment rising at unprecedented rates and 522,000 people across the state struggling to put food on the table, this year's Walk for Hunger is more important than ever. Since 1969, The Walk for Hunger has relied on support from religious organizations. Over the years, that support has grown from one to more than 1,000 religious and community organizations that come out to protest the social injustice of hunger in our midst. With the economy struggling, every dollar, every mile, and every volunteer hour counts for our neighbors in need. Your pledges feed people through emergency food programs throughout the state and through many food programs in schools, after school programs, and pediatrician offices, which integrate help into the ordinary fabric of everyday life.

For more information, visit [www.projectbread.org/walk](http://www.projectbread.org/walk) or call Sherri C or Beth R.

**First Parish Build Day at the Habitat House**

The weather was warm-ish and sunny on Saturday March 14 when the First Parish Habitat build team met at the Dutton Road site to put up siding, chip ice, saw and sweep. It was an enjoyable day, and everyone got to use power tools! Katie Lee came to visit, the Curtis Angels brought us lunch, the FP youth made cupcakes and we worked alongside other faithful volunteers, including the women whose homes these will be. We were all so invigorated, we are thinking of building again.

**Join the UU Mass Action Rapid Response Network**

Do You Wish to Work with Other Unitarian Universalists to get our UU Principles Implemented in Massachusetts?

If so, please join the UU Mass Action Rapid Response Network by contacting Nancy Banks, Executive Director of UU Mass Action at [nancy.banks1@verizon.net](mailto:nancy.banks1@verizon.net). Doing so means that you will be e-mailed about pending Massachusetts legislation that pertain to our UU principles, and that you will be asked to notify your legislators about your stand on them. This network has already been instrumental in getting good environmental legislation passed.

You will not be expected to respond to any request with which you disagree or for which you have no time. But you should know who your state senator and state representative are and how to contact them. You can find who they are by "googling" Massachusetts General Court. (Our legislature's correct name is The General Court.)

**AWAKENING THE DREAMER SYMPOSIUM APRIL 26**

The Awakening the Dreamer Symposium is coming to Cambridge! Deftly blending music, video, discussion, and guided meditation, this exciting interactive experience breaks the trance of materialism, individualism, and hopelessness that grips nearly all of us at least some of the time. In its place, the Symposium lifts up the vision of "an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, and socially just human presence on this planet."

Sunday, April 26, 2-5 pm, the Awakening the Dreamer Symposium will be presented at First Parish in Cambridge (<http://www.firstparishcambridge.org/>), 3 Church Street, in Harvard Square. Admission is free, but registration is requested.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dave Pomerantz at (914) 584-9054 or [david.pomerantz@greenpeace.org](mailto:david.pomerantz@greenpeace.org).

**WHAT FOLKS THINK OF THE CONNECTOR**

**Thank You** to the 85 people who responded to the survey about The Connector and how you get your information!

**A few bits of information learned:**

70% of those who responded read **each** issue; another 20% read **most** issues.

75% read it the day it arrives; 17% read it during the week it arrives.

68% of you who responded named The Connector as your primary source of information about FPS. The next best sources are the Sunday News and other email communications sent directly to members and friends.

How often would you prefer to receive it—weekly or bi-weekly? Your responses were just about neck-and-neck on this. We will take this question under advisement considering other factors, and will let you know!

And, for those of you responded that you can't open the attachment, please contact Donna in the office, or Fran at [connect@fpsudbury.org](mailto:connect@fpsudbury.org). We'll figure something out. We are committed to getting you the information you need to know, one way or another!

***THE IDENTITY PROJECT***

The Committee on Ministry would like to thank those of you who shared your thoughts about your First Parish experience as part of our First Parish of Sudbury Identity project. We heard from you in earnest during the February 1 worship service. During the service, cards were distributed on which we were invited to write something or draw something that reflected our personal experience as part of the First Parish of Sudbury community. We were also invited to reflect on how we see First Parish at our best as well as areas of improvement and new possibilities for our church community.

Stories and conversations took place outside of the worship service as well. Some people have sent us their individual stories; others have talked informally with each other and submitted the ideas and thoughts from their conversations via email. At some of the recent in-home dinners, the gathered groups volunteered to talk about their First Parish experiences and share their ideas with us.

This effort is part of the charge of the Committee on Ministry which meets monthly to monitor and evaluate the ministry of the congregation as well as that of the settled minister. Every few years we must assess the overall ministry of First Parish. In previous years we have utilized various mediums for assessment including surveys and focus groups. We were particularly intrigued by one of the congregational goals set by the Board of Trustees for this year, "Articulating our identity." With the support of the Board of Trustees, we decided to try something new in this year's assessment of our church's overall ministry.

We were guided by the Appreciative Inquiry process which asks appreciative questions such as "What really works here? What do we want more of? It is based on the expectation that change requires positive energy and hopeful images of the future.

The response has been remarkable. So far, almost 100 people have participated in this project. If you have not already participated, we encourage you to do so. Here are the questions to consider:

How has First Parish of Sudbury affected your life?  
 What would you have us continue and/or expand?  
 What would you have us start/add?  
 What would have us stop/discontinue?

You may participate in any way that works for you. Here are a few suggestions:

- You may write your story and send it via email or snail mail
- You may request that a member of the Committee on Ministry interview you one-on-one.
- You may talk informally with a friend or another First Parish participant, make notes about your mutual thoughts and ideas, and send them to the committee.
- You may draw a picture, or use any creative medium to illustrate your thoughts.

Dotty R is collecting the information. You may send information to her by email, or U.S. mail, or phone: (contact info available in the FPS directory or by calling the office.). You may also contact Dotty, or any other member of the Committee on Ministry if you would like to request a one-on-one interview. Members include: Dianne H, Tom Y, and Bridget H, ex officio liaison from the Board of Trustees.

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 Website: [www.fpsudbury.org](http://www.fpsudbury.org)  
 Office hours: Monday - Friday 9:00-11:30am

We embrace diversity and, as a Welcoming Congregation, are intentional about welcoming the presence and participation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in all aspects of congregational life.

Minister: *Rev. Katie Lee Crane* email: [minister@fpsudbury.org](mailto:minister@fpsudbury.org)  
 Director of Music: *Debra Morris-Bennett* email: [musicdir@fpsudbury.org](mailto:musicdir@fpsudbury.org)  
 Director of Rel. Exploration & Youth Advisor: *Roberta Altamari* email: [dre@fpsudbury.org](mailto:dre@fpsudbury.org)  
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 Administrator: *Donna Scalcione* email: [office@fpsudbury.org](mailto:office@fpsudbury.org)  
 Chair, Board of Trustees: *Annmarie Allen*

*First Parish of Sudbury Events  
March 29 – April 11, 2009*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><u>Mar 29</u> 10:00a Sunday Worship Service 11:45a Equity Fund Discussion 11:45a Community and Hosp. Comm. meeting 4:00p Our Whole Lives program</p>	<p><u>Mar 30</u></p>	<p><u>Mar 31</u> 12:00p Tuesday BYO Lunch</p>	<p><u>Apr 1</u> 7:00p Quilters</p>	<p><u>Apr 2</u> 1:00p Meditation 7:30p Low Carbon Diet Group</p>	<p><u>Apr 3</u></p>	<p><u>Apr 4</u> 12:00p Memorial Service for Eric M</p>
<p><u>Apr 5</u> 10:00a Sunday Worship Service 11:45a Hearthside Chat 4:00p Our Whole Lives program 6:30p Youth Group Party! Reduce, reuse, recycle, and partee!</p>	<p><u>Apr 6</u> 7:00p RE Committee 7:30p Sudbury Town Meeting</p>	<p><u>Apr 7</u> 12:00p Tuesday BYO Lunch 7:30p Committee on Ministry</p>	<p><u>Apr 8</u> 7:00p Quilters 7:30p Bible Conversations</p>	<p><u>Apr 9</u> 1:00p Meditation 7:30p Board of Trustees</p>	<p><u>Apr 10</u> 7:00p Chalice Circle 7:00p Parent and Youth Movie Night: featuring Grease</p>	<p><u>Apr 11</u> 10:00a TempoTime program: music &amp; movement fun, craft, and snack 2:00p Memorial Service for Kurt H</p>

**Mark Your Calendars:**



**Saturday, April 25**  
*Outdoor Cleanup Day*  
9am-2pm

**Saturday, April 25**  
*Village Worship & Potluck*  
4:30pm

**Sunday, May 3**  
*Maypole Dance*  
after worship service

**Sunday, June 7**  
*Annual Congregational Meeting*  
11:30am

**Sunday, May 10**  
*Music Sunday*  
*“Holocaust Cantata”*  
(more info coming soon)