



SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2009



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THIS SUNDAY’S WORSHIP SERVICE

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 10AM

MS. DAWN SHILTS

WITH MS. PERRY DESMOND-DAVIES, SINGER-SONGWRITER

When you hear the words "live in the moment" what do you think of? Do these words hold meaning in your life? How can we "live in the moment" when our days are full of things to do and places to be? Ms. Dawn Shilts, member and trustee of First Parish will share her thoughts about these questions and more. The service will include musical offerings by Ms. Perry Desmond-Davies.

In her sermon on May 24, “A Moment is a Memory, a Moment is a Moment, a Moment is a Life” Shilts will reflect on how and why even just a single moment can be meaningful and perhaps even shape the moments to come in our own life and the lives around us. In the spirit of Memorial Day, she will also lead participants in a "living in the moment" opportunity to remember those who are no longer with us. What we may need in order to be open to the moment is to practice living in the moment.

Dawn Shilts has been a Unitarian Universalist for about 12 years. She wonders if during her earlier "unchurched" years, she was really a Unitarian Universalist at heart but didn't know it! She encourages others to take a look at www.uufaq.com/ (Frequently Asked Questions about Unitarian Universalism) to see if they might identify as UUs. Dawn lives with her family in Sudbury. They have been renovating an 1847 farmhouse for the past several years with the goal of "bringing it back to life".

Perry Desmond-Davies is a lifelong New Englander who's been a performing singer-songwriter for the past 15 years. Her original compositions are "...an honest brand of contemporary acoustic music about life stories that listeners can relate to." She is currently working on a new studio album, and has previously released a live-recording CD, "This One's for You".

Making Meanings

In her collection *Mars and her Children*, Marge Piercy includes this poem: "Report of the Fourteenth Subcommittee on Convening a Discussion Group." I write this column as Sudbury residents are poised for an extended Town Meeting and this congregation is readying itself for our annual congregational meeting on June 7. And budgets are on everyone's mind.

Ah, how I love pure democracy, but, oh, how it can try the patience! Listen to these excerpts:

*This is how things begin to tilt into change, how coalitions are knit from strands of hair, of barbed wire, twine, knitting wool and gut, how people ease into action arguing each inch, but the tedium of it is watching granite erode. Let us meet to debate meeting, the day, the time, the length. Let us discuss whether we will sit or stand or hang from the ceiling or take it lying down. Let us argue about the chair and the table and the chairperson and the motion to table the chair. In the room fog gathers under the ceiling and thickens in every brain. Let us form committees spawning subcommittees all laying little moldy eggs of reports. Under the grey fluorescent sun they will crack to hatch scuttling lizards of more committees. ... This is true virtue: to sit here and stay awake, to listen, to argue, to wade on through the muck wrestling to some momentary small agreement like a pinhead pearl prized from a dragon-oyster. I believe in this democracy as I believe there is blood in my veins, but oh, oh, in me lurks a tyrant with a double-bladed ax who longs to swing it wide and shining, who longs to stand and shriek, **You Shall Do as I Say, ...!***

But that's not the way it works.

Every registered voter of the town, every member of the congregation has a voice and a vote. And it is both our duty and our privilege to exercise both so, together, we make decisions for the common good.

You may not realize how this town-meeting form of democracy is tied to both this town's and also our Unitarian Universalist history. In 1638, the first Europeans settled the land they called "Sudbury Plantation." Here, they wanted things to be different.

Reacting to the various monarchies and hierarchies of their homelands – they were determined to govern themselves. They divided the common land among the citizens and devised the town meeting as a forum for decision-making. It was one of the earliest forms of unrestricted democracies and, some say its principles influenced our national model "of the people, by the people, for the people...."

Perhaps these Sudbury citizens also influenced others in neighboring towns because, in 1648, the New England Puritans adopted a similar form of self-government in a landmark document called The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline. Each congregation was a gathered community, equal in spiritual standing; in essence they adopted a democratic form called congregationalism.

Why all this history? To remind ourselves to use our voice and our vote at this year's congregational meeting on June 7. Only we the members of this congregation may adopt a budget, accept or reject changes to the Equity Fund charter, and elect officers to lead us in the coming year.

Sure, it's tempting to skip out on a June day, but little is more important in the life of this congregation. To govern by the people is a privilege; to participate in the process is both a right and a responsibility.

I admit there are times when I want to shriek: **YOU SHALL DO AS I SAY!** But, I won't. I show up because I believe in democracy as I believe there is blood in my veins. So I'll see you at the congregational meeting. It's that important!

Katie Lee



**CANVASS AND BUDGET UPDATE
FROM THE TRUSTEES**

The Trustees would like to update you about our financial situation in advance of our annual meeting June 7.

The Canvass is coming in below last year's and also below what we need to be able to present a balanced budget. Last year, we had pledges from 123 individuals or families. This year, we have 126 pledges. There were some who could not pledge for financial reasons and some who have left First Parish, but this has been matched by those who are new to the church or those who have pledged again after not pledging last year. We have seen the impact of the economy primarily in decisions to decrease pledges, but not too many who did not pledge at all. The total pledged is \$180,870. This reflects about a 7% decrease from last year's pledges of \$193,603. Given the economic climate, this is a very good result and shows that the congregation maintains its support for First Parish. We had anticipated that pledges could drop as much as 10% to 20%.

In addition, Sudbury Extended Day, our primary tenants, will be renting less space as their enrollment has dropped dramatically as a result of Sudbury going to full day kindergarten. We anticipate that this will reduce our income by about \$10,000.

We would like to report that the expenses to date for this year have been well managed and we appreciate all of the work and support that you all do in the efforts of being in community at First Parish. Looking forward, we will need to look very carefully at expenses, trying to minimize them while maintaining the programs and ministry which are vital to our congregation.



THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE TASK FORCE, which was charged with examining the reformulation of the UUA's General Assembly process, has released an interim report to the UUA Board of Trustees. The report, which was presented to the Board at its April, 2009 meeting, can be found online at:

http://www.uua.org/documents/boardtrustees/5thprinciple/090417_presentation.pdf

**STILL TIME TO JOIN IN AN OLD-FASHIONED
HOOTENANNY**

...and wild and crazy drum circle. June 6, 2009, 6 – 9:30 p.m., Parish Hall, hosted by Auction donors Bonny L, Steve J, and Dave and Alex A. \$15 p/person, picnic-style buffet supper included. Children are welcome to participate (no childcare available). Bring instrument(s), drum(s) if you have them, and put on your dancing shoes.

Call Elaine or Ted J to reserve your spot(s). Payments to be made to First Parish and marked "Auction".

TRAVELING?

If you need a ride to or from Logan Express or to or from Logan Airport, the following persons have donated their services to benefit First Parish – all you have to do is call them to arrange your trip, and make the fixed price donation to First Parish. Each trip is one way (arrange for 2 trips for round-trip) except where noted.

Logan Airport (tolls included) valued at \$75 per trip

Paul A – 2 persons with luggage. \$60 each way (limited to 2 trips)

Cilla R – up to 4 persons with luggage. \$60 each way (limited to 2 trips)

Sharon K – up to 6 persons depending on luggage, any time. \$60, one way only, to or from airport (1 trip).

Logan Express (Framingham)

Bruce L – round trip for up to 4 persons with luggage as arranged one month prior to departure. \$60 round trip (limited to one roundtrip)

Mary Ellen F – mini-van accommodation, prior to 6 a.m. coffee is appreciated. \$30 each pickup or drop off (6 available).

Telephone numbers are in the directory. Please call Elaine Jones for Paula A's number.

MESSAGE FOR HABITAT VOLUNTEERS

At last! We are beginning the landscape work at Habitat (corner of Pratt's Mill and Dutton Roads).



Monday, May 25, 1 to 4 PM

We will be on site to do the basic work to prepare for planting the gardens. We hope that you and your family can join us to: dig, rake, haul dirt and bricks, spread, pound, push, pull and a whole lot of other action verbs. Bring rakes, wheelbarrow, shovel, knee pads, garden gloves and any other handy tools you may have for gardening jobs. Mark your tools with your name so we don't get them mixed up. Any questions, call Marge L.

THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ARE CO-SPONSORED BY OUR WELCOMING CONGREGATION COMMITTEE AND OUR YOUTH MINISTRY ...

Sunday, May 31st at 6:30pm ... a multigenerational screening of the movie, "Milk". Note that this movie is rated R for language, sexual references, and brief violence, so teens need their parents' permission to see it. It's a powerful movie about gay rights and the first openly gay man to be elected to a major political role.

Sunday, June 7th at 6:30pm ... a multigenerational screening of the documentary "Gay Youth". Powerful movie about how much the support we offer gay teenagers can make a dramatic difference in their young lives. No ratings, but Roberta suggests "no younger than teens" since some content is heavy (references to a youth committing suicide). Important and affirming message and this movie was shown during our 2009 OWL program.

Saturday, June 13th from 10am to late afternoon ... Gay Pride parade in Boston. Multigenerational event perfect for most ages that is VERY fun and affirms the inherent rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people. We will join the many other friends/allies of this community to march in the parade!! I have the FPS "welcoming congregation" rainbow flag t-shirts ... the first 20 FPS youth that sign-up get a t-shirt.

BOSTON PRIDE PARADE, SAT. JUNE 13

Come be a part of First Parish's contingent as we march on Saturday, June 13 in Boston's Pride Parade for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) awareness, dignity, and understanding. You'll have a fun and meaningful day. For more information, contact Peg E or Donna S for details about the day.

Boston hosts the largest Pride celebration in New England (12,000 marchers last year and over 750,000 in attendance). Come proudly carry our First Parish banner and get energized by the cheering crowds, the music and costumes, the floats and marching bands, and the Pride Festival at the end of the Parade. All ages and diversities welcome!

Carpools will leave the FPS parking lot at 10am on June 13, and anyone interested in driving in together should coordinate with Peg E

Discuss the Candidates For UU President

Laurel Hallman and Peter Morales

- **Tuesday, May 26 at noon in The Commons during Tuesday BYO-lunch**
- **Sunday, May 31 in the Library at 11:45am**

SEEKING DONATIONS OF RUMMAGE FOR THE "IT'S NOT YOUR MOTHER'S RUMMAGE SALE"

SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE



Saturday, June 20, 2009,
10:00am-2:00pm

Clean out your cellars, attics and garages, and donate your unused and unwanted "stuff" to the Women's Alliance Rummage Sale.

Since this is definitely *Not your mother's* RUMMAGE SALE, **we will accept only items that fit into a full size paper grocery bag (even if an item fills the whole bag).** All items must be clean and in good repair. All categories are welcome: toys, games, clothing, shoes, jewelry, household, office, music, books (but not textbooks)...everything and anything...as long as it fit into a full size paper grocery bag.

Drop off begins Sunday, June 14th in the old South Foyer of the meetinghouse, or make a plan with Donna for an earlier date (dscalcione@verizon.net or 978-443-2043.)

Thanks for helping the Alliance do good works at First Parish and in the wider community.

First Parish of Sudbury's Pastoral Associates

Annmarie Allen, Audrey Kipp, Polly Meltzer, Bruce Porter, Fred Pryor, Paul Reising, Dawn Shilts

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