



DECEMBER 15, 2010



Worship at the Meetinghouse

Sunday, December 19, 10 am
A Breathless Expectancy
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

On Tuesday, at exactly 6:38 pm Eastern Standard Time, we will mark the Winter Solstice. We who live in the Northern Hemisphere will experience the longest night of the year.

Today, as the world around us reaches its pinnacle of holiday noise, we will pause and sink into the womb of darkness with a breathless expectancy. We will live with the paradox of unknowing coupled with wisdom. And we will dwell in that place... waiting, wondering.

NOTE: The Dec. 12 sermon that was cancelled because of icy roads is available at www.fpsudbury.org and in print in the lobby.



Soulful Solstice – Friday, Dec 17 at 7 pm

A rich and meaningful solstice service will mark our 20th anniversary of winter solstice services here at First Parish. The previously published plan of caroling is postponed. If you'd like to help to lead this service, please contact Roberta today.

Sunday, January 2, 10 am
Endings & Beginnings
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

We begin the new year with the tradition of naming and honoring those who have died during the past year and celebrating the arrival of those just born. You are invited to **send names in advance** (though they will be accepted on that day) and to **bring a photo of the loved one who is being named**.

First Parish of Sudbury's Pastoral Associates
Audrey K., Polly M., Fred P., Paul R., Dawn S.
In the event of a pastoral need, please call any of these Pastoral Associates.

Worship at Christmas on pg. 2

★ HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE ★

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Worshipping Together at Christmas

Christmas Eve Family Service Friday, December 24 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, and enjoy some favorite holiday carols before closing our time together with our beloved "Silent Night" ritual.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Friday, December 24 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 Saturday, December 25 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 the MetroWest Free Medical Program to support their free medical clinics at Congregation Beth El in Sudbury and First Parish in Framingham, UU. See page 5 for details.

Katie Lee invites "Elfs" to help on Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

If you are planning to attend the 7 pm Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve, there are opportunities for individuals and families (subsets or extended) to light a candle, do a reading, or help in other ways...

If you can join us on Christmas morning for our popular, intimate and informal Christmas Day worship service and would accompany or make music, read, or help in giving shape to this informal worship service...

Contact Katie Lee – you can help make it special!

Worshipping with our Neighbors Sunday, December 26 at 10 am, First Parish in Wayland

First Parish in Wayland, located at 50 Cochituate Road (Rte. 20 & 27 in Wayland Center), hosts the Unitarian Universalist congregations and guests from Sudbury & Framingham. The sermon will be given by Mr. Michael Hall, the Ministerial Intern in Framingham.

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 Sunday, December 26.



R.E.flections by a chaliceD.R.E.amer

Roberta Altamari
Director of Religious Exploration
and Youth Ministry

The holiday season is here, and with it comes many good wishes for peace, love, and joy in our lives. There are also many messages telling us to buy lots of stuff so that we can have a happy holiday, but most of us know that “things” don’t bring us real happiness. The popular workshops and writings about “unplugging the Christmas machine” make that explicitly clear. The best way to find happiness this time of year is to spend quality time with our loved ones doing meaningful activities that we enjoy.

Life is not perfect and “happily ever after” doesn’t exist in the real world. Visions of perfectly happy Christmas celebrations are fictional creations. Reality brings us illness, memories of lost loved ones, financial challenges, family conflicts, and more. Pain and suffering are natural parts of life just like joy and love. One does not exist without the other. We must look at our lives gently with realistic lenses as we ask, “Is this the way I want to celebrate the Christmas holiday? Is this the experience I want to be sharing with my loved ones?”

At my family’s Thanksgiving dinner, my sister got upset when she discovered that I don’t believe my daughters doing community service at a homeless shelter once a month is earning them a ticket into heaven. She continued in an almost righteous interrogation asking me if I at least believe in Jesus. To which I replied, “Yes, I believe Jesus was an amazing teacher and religious leader of his time and stories about him continue to inspire me today. But I don’t believe that Jesus rose from the dead and became part of the God trinity, hence the whole ONE God, Unitarian title, in the name of my religion.” She said, “But he is Christ ... hence the Christ in Christmas. How can you dare celebrate Christmas if you don’t believe Jesus is Christ? You can’t just pick and choose the good Christian holidays and drop the bad ones.” I replied with my classic Unitarian Universalist “Christmas elevator speech” telling her that Christmas is a celebration of all life, a time to honor that the birth of every child is holy. She kept pushing her Trinitarian belief and I closed the subject when I declared, “How can you judge me when so many Americans celebrate Christmas without once uttering the name Jesus? I think it’s time to call Jerry (our atheist brother who hates religion) into this discussion.”

Whew! I learned two years ago from a similar exchange to never talk politics at a family dinner. And now I learned to never talk religion either. Neither of us left feeling happy. She actually led me to second guessing my intentions and to wonder if I am being a hypocrite by celebrating Christmas when I’m not a Christian. It took me a few days for the emotional drama to settle and my critical thinking to kick back in. That was when I realized, “No! Just because my beliefs are not Christian, it doesn’t mean I can’t honor the birth of Jesus.” My celebration of Christmas includes taking time to appreciate both the miracle of life and the messages Jesus taught.

Jesus was an amazing man who lived a life of compassion not because he was trying to earn a ticket into some afterlife, but because that was the way he wanted to live his life in here on earth. His commitment to helping those less fortunate than himself and those who were marginalized in his society was impressive. I’m sure his work wasn’t easy. I often wish I had the strength, commitment, and courage to live my life the way Jesus lived his, constantly and consistently helping those less fortunate than ourselves, especially those persons marginalized and alienated from society. For now, I will continue to be inspired to try.

continued on next page

Roberta's column continued

As the end of 2010 approaches, I look to the spirit of Christmas as I plan my holiday season. I want to take some time to celebrate life and let my daughters know that I love them more than words can say. I want to take some quiet time to reflect on loved ones lost and maybe share some stories about them so that they continue to live on in our hearts. I want to take some time to help people who are less fortunate than me. I want all of my friends and co-workers to know that I am grateful that they are in my life. That includes you!

What do you want your holiday season to be like? Turning off commercial and family messages, what is your dream for how you want to spend your Christmas holiday? I sincerely hope you can see your wishes here reflected in your celebrations this year.

Warm blessings,
Roberta ♥

Coming up in Religious Exploration

Christmas Eve nativity pageant

Thanks to everyone who signed up to have a role in the nativity play happening during our 5pm Christmas Eve service. If you missed signing up and want to join the multigenerational pageant, contact Roberta today. We will be rehearsing during our "all kids together special Christmas celebration" on Sunday, Dec. 19 at 10:15am (during regular R.E. time and for a short while after) and on Thursday, Dec. 24 at 9am.

You are invited to be a part of a First Parish Play!

We are very pleased to invite you (yes, everyone, of any age, is welcome) to join us in performing an original play created and directed by the wonderful Alorie P. The play is called "Noah and the Floating Zoo" and includes speaking parts, chants, dancing, and music. We would love to have you share your talents with us in the play!

We will rehearse from 11:15 am to Noon on the following Sundays: Jan. 9, Jan. 23, Jan. 30, Feb. 6, Feb. 13, Feb. 20, Feb. 27, March 6, and March 13. We will conclude with a dress rehearsal at 9 am on March 19th and the performance will be a part of the inter-generational service on March 20th at 10 am.

There are a variety of parts to choose from:

Noah's Family Members include the more serious roles with speaking and singing opportunities.

The Sinners include the more comedic roles with chanting, speaking, and singing opportunities.

The Animals include non-speaking parts, but these characters can sing and dance if they want.

The Musicians include talented instrumentalists who can accompany the singing parts.

The Helpers include those adults who want to "help" with rehearsals but not be in the show.

Please RSVP to Roberta Altamari at DRE@fpsudbury.org by Friday, Dec. 17 with your interest. Let us know what type of part you would like to play and if there are any rehearsal dates that you know you won't be able to attend.



Women's Alliance Invites All Women Sunday, Dec. 19

The Women's Alliance invites all women to a **Holiday Gathering** (no business meeting) for pot luck appetizers and desserts from 5-8 pm on Sunday, Dec. 19 at the home of Bridget H., Sudbury. No RSVP needed. Newcomers and all are warmly welcome to drop in and enjoy good food and stimulating conversation. For more details, call the office at 978-443-2043 or email peggid@verizon.net.



*"You can't resign from the Alliance
(because every woman is automatically an Alliance member).
You can only be more, or less, active."*

Secret Santa Deadline Dec. 19

Thank you to all those who agreed to purchase Christmas gifts for the First Parish Secret Santa project. The **gifts MUST be returned to the church on Sunday December 19th right after the service.** They will be picked up at that time for delivery to their destinations. If you have any questions, concerns, or logistical problems, please call Sherri C.



Warm Clothing Collection Continues

You can drop off your warm clothing items for donation in the First Parish Lobby and at WUMB Member Concerts through mid-January. Please make sure all items are in good condition. Thank you.



Share the Plate Dec 24 & 25

The **MetroWest Free Medical Program** is in its 6th year of offering free healthcare services to low income individuals who lack health insurance or access to a doctor. Through the dedication of more than 200 volunteers, the MWFMP has provided general medical and specialty care to more than 1300 patients from Sudbury, Framingham, Marlborough, and surrounding towns this year. Financial contributions support the purchase of the medications, equipment, and supplies which are necessary to support volunteers in their efforts. In 2011, the Program plans to expand health education services for patients with chronic disease. In addition, we're training more volunteers to assist patients with enrollment in health insurance to help get our neighbors reconnected to the health care system.



4th Tuesday Lunch Resumes January 25

No Lunch & Discussion in December.



In the Spotlight:
Welcoming Congregation Committee

WCC is actively recruiting allies!

Our congregation strives to be welcoming to all people, particularly those who have felt unwelcome in other religious places because of different racial, ethnic, religious, economic, and other diversities. Through the denomination's Welcoming Congregation Program, we overtly express a specific welcome to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons.

WHO ARE WE?

We are church members and friends of all ages and personalities, backgrounds and orientations, allied together in the struggle for equal human rights specifically for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals. Current active members are: Donna Scalcione, contact person; Betty B., Judy D., Peg E., and Bunny M.

WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

- To make First Parish a place where all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are comfortable and welcome
- To encourage dialogue and trust between individuals
- To integrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender life-issues into FPS programs, activities and structure
- To promote a change in homophobic attitudes within our congregation, our communities and society in general

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Host occasional evening programs, worship services and social action opportunities, in collaboration with our minister, other staff and congregational leaders
- Help to educate and provide emotional support for those who may be struggling with these complex issues within our congregation and in the wider community
- Organize a group to march in Boston's annual Pride Parade, carrying our First Parish banner and/or wearing our FPS rainbow flag t-shirts
- Contact local, state and national legislators to make our views known

IF YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE OR CONSIDER GETTING INVOLVED in some way, for a one-time event or ongoing, contact Donna Scalcione, 978-443-2043 or office@fpsudbury.org

Save the date of Wednesday, January 26 at 7:30 pm when WCC will host speakers from MassEquality and the Interfaith Coalition for Transgender Equality on the topic of Passing the Transgender Civil Rights Bill in Massachusetts: What It Means and What Must Be Done to Get It



Coffeehouse on the Rocky Plain Coming Saturday, Jan 22

Save the date to support this enjoyable fundraiser and come hear Camille Breeze, a folk biker, singing with John Boehmer, and Jon McAuliffe, singer-songwriter. More details in the next Connector.

In-Home Dinners 2011

In-Home Dinners for everyone, organized by the Community and Hospitality Committee, are **Saturday, January 29, Sunday January 30 and Friday February 4.** What are In-Home Dinners? They are Pot Luck Dinners of 8-12 people held in individual homes. There are options for family dinners with kids, dinners for just adults, a Sunday-after-Church brunch, and more! More details to follow, or contact Sue C. or the office.



Still Time to Join a Chalice Circle

Look for someone wearing a button "Ask me about Chalice Circles" or speak to Katie Lee. Chalice Circles are small, committed groups of no more than 10 people who meet monthly for two hours. A trained convener leads the meeting using a prescribed format. The format requires that only one person speak at a time and that there be no cross-talk.



Chalice Circles provide an opportunity for exploration to those seeking spiritual growth, those looking to know themselves better and those who simply want to discuss questions of faith and meaning. You won't be judged, you won't be given advice, you won't be challenged. You will be heard. You will be supported. You will be energized by compassionate listening and the genuine relationships that grow in the circle.

From now **until January 3**, Chalice Circles have an open enrollment period. Although a person may join a Chalice Circle at any time during the year, this is the time that each Circle intentionally opens up: 1) to welcome any who would like to explore joining a Chalice Circle, and 2) offering current participants the chance to opt out, change circles, or recommit. For detailed information about Chalice Circles, see: <http://fpsudbury.org/wiki/Public/ChaliceCircles/>

Meet our Ministerial Settlement Representative on January 30

We will welcome the Ministerial Settlement Representative, Laura Graham. Ms. Graham will be preaching that day; following worship she will meet with the Trustees and Nominating Committee to review the next steps in the process of finding a new minister.



**Faith
in Action
News**

New Ways to Participate in the Water Conservation Project

There are many new ways for members and families to participate in the First Parish Water Conservation Project. The Conservation Project leaders heard your feedback and are now offering more ways for you to participate.

You can, as we have been advertising since the beginning of this project, commit to using 10% less water than your average use over the past two years (2009-2010).

If you have already installed low flow shower heads and other water saving devices and are careful about not over-watering your lawns and gardens, you may qualify for special recognition. If your water bills in 2011 demonstrate that you have used an annual average of less than 55 gallons per day per person in your household, you will be recognized as a "Super Saver". If you would like to share your favorite conservation tips with members of the congregation, you can sign up as a "Conservation Mentor".

If you are willing to post a "Conserve" sign in your yard, you can sign up as a "Conservation Advocate" and we will provide you with a small lawn sign.

If you reside in a condo, apartment, or for other reasons cannot meter your own water use, you can still sign up as a "Conserver" by pledging to take "Actions to Conserve Water". No matter how many ways you chose to participate, your decision will help protect the flows in our local rivers and hopefully save money by reducing your water bills.

For more information contact Tom A. or the office.

Can you Sew?



Are you willing to sew button (on Sanctuary pew cushions)?

If sew, 😊 please contact Donna in the office.

Quote to Ponder

In this time, heavy with expectation,
may we accept ourselves as we are, and not as we think we should be;
may we accept others as they are and not as we want them to be;
and may we accept the moments of this time and of this life as they are,
and not as we wish they were,
so that we may meet each other as we are
instead of as we are not.

author unknown

News from the Wider-Community



Two Job Openings at First Parish in **Wayland UU** - part-time short-term Parish **Administrator** January-June 2011. (Donna has the full job description.) Send cover letter and resume via email to ksawyer@uuwayland.org – indicating “Part-time Administrator Application” in the subject line. There is also an opening for a part time **Youth Coordinator**. Email bwaring@uuwayland.org for details.

New Year’s Eve **Labyrinth Walk** Dec. 31 from 5-7 pm at First Universalist Society of Franklin, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin. See the flyer on the bulletin board or visit www.fusf.org.

Free **online event**, “The Advent of Evolutionary Christianity: Conversations at the Leading Edge of Faith,” featuring 30 Christian thought leaders in the nexus of science and religion who exemplify by word and deed that religious faith can be positively strengthened and enriched by a science-honoring, evidential evolutionary view of the world. The series started already but goes through Jan 6. Register at: <http://EvolutionaryChristianity.com>.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

Find out if worship and other events at First Parish are cancelled:

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

First Parish website -- Go to www.fpsudbury.org. The front page will show any closing.

WBZ Radio website -- 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 1030 AM *WBZ Storm Center* at :05 and :35 past the hour for cancellation of our Sunday worship service only. NOTE: Other events cannot be listed. If you think a meeting or event might be cancelled, please contact the meeting leader.

The Connector is a publication of First Parish of Sudbury Unitarian Universalist, 327 Concord Rd., Sudbury, MA 01776
We are a diverse and welcoming community of spiritual seekers; we strive to learn together and support one another as we celebrate life’s important moments and serve the larger community.

Submissions to *The Connector* go to Administrator at 978-443-2043 or office@fpsudbury.org by 5:00 pm on Wednesdays.

- Minister Rev. Katie Lee Crane: minister@fpsudbury.org
- Music Director Debra Morris-Bennett: musicdir@fpsudbury.org
- Director of Religious Exploration Roberta Altamari: dre@fpsudbury.org
- Community Life Coordinator Bev Baker: connect@fpsudbury.org

Copies of selected worship services are available on our Website and in print in the foyer, or you may request a print copy or CD recording from the office

Web address: www.fpsudbury.org **Phone:** Office 978-443-2043, Fax 978-443-4391

Next Deadline is 5 pm Dec.22
for the *Connector* coming out Jan. 4.
Send to administrator office@fpsudbury.org or phone 978-443-2043

FPS Calendar Dec 15, 2010 to Jan 8, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15 7:00p Rental	Dec 16 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation 3:45p Daisy Troop 7:30p Choir	Dec 17 7:00p Soulful Sundown Solstice Worship	Dec 18
Dec 19 10:00a Worship Service 11:00a Secret Santa Gifts Due Today 11:45a Hearthside Chat 5:00p Jr. High Our Whole Lives class 5:00p Women's Alliance Holiday Gathering See pg. 5 6:30p Rental 7:00p Sr. High OWL class	Dec 20	Dec 21 6:38p Winter Solstice 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilting 7:30p Choir	Dec 22 7:00p Rental	Dec 23 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation	Dec 24 5:00p Family Worship Service 7:00p Candlelight Worship Service See pg 2	Dec 25 10:00a Christmas Morning Gathering see pg 2
Dec 26 10:00a Joint Worship Service at WAYLAND UU No svc in Sudbury 6:30p Rental	Dec 27 7:00p RE Committee	Dec 28 7:00p Rental	Dec 29 7:00p Rental	Dec 30 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation	Dec 31	Jan 1
Jan 2 10:00a Worship Service 11:45a Hearthside Chat 11:45a Welcoming Congregation Committee 4:45p Morris Dancing 6:30p Rental	Jan 3 12:00p Rental: SED 6:00p Finance Committee 7:00p Board of Trustees	Jan 4 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilting	Jan 5 7:00p Rental	Jan 6 1:00a Mindfulness Meditation 7:30p Choir	Jan 7	Jan 8