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# First Parish of Sudbury News

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December 24, 2006

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Submissions to: [office@fpsudbury.org](mailto:office@fpsudbury.org)

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## Making Meanings

It was a regular gymnasium. The lighting was fluorescent and glaring. The heating system sounded like a tornado roaring through every time it went on, drowning out everything else in its wake. It was hardly an ideal setting for the annual Christmas party; it was *very* short on that chestnuts-roasting-on-an-open-fire kind of feeling. What few decorations they had were, well, tired. The bleachers were rolled back, but some sat on them anyway the way kids do at basketball practice. Most of us sat in the folding chairs assembled in a sort-of semi-circle around a small, makeshift stage. The musicians were costumed – mostly funny hats – and playing as we arrived but (forgive me) they weren't very good. I guessed that they probably did the nursing home circuit, mostly. The crackling sound system didn't help.

It wasn't PC. It was blatantly Christmas and blatantly Christian. The guests were mostly from evangelical Christian churches. I can only assume that there were Jews and Muslims and nonbelievers in the assembly, but this night was about Christmas with no apologies.

We'd had to send registration information ahead and, at the door, someone checked our identification. There was one line for us – coming from outside – and one for them – those from inside. But once in the gymnasium, there was no more us and them; we were all together and it seemed like lots of folks knew each other well. There was a palpable sense of eagerness to see one another and to enjoy each other and this event together.

This was the annual Christmas Party at the Northeastern Correctional Center in Concord, a minimum-security prison. It was hosted by the Concord Prison Ministries. First Parish member, Carol J, has been increasingly involved with this ministry and, starting in January, will be running workshops on job-seeking for men who are soon-to-be released. It was Carol who invited us.

When we arrived Carol greeted us warmly then excused herself to speak to friends she saw around the room. Some live temporarily at NCC; others are part of the Concord Prison program. Still others, like us, were just there for the festivities.

The program started with a brief worship service – readings from the Bible in both English and Spanish. Then, an adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* by the fine arts group from Concord's New Life Community Church whose mission it is "to use spiritually uplifting themes to promote life change." In their version of the story Scrooge was there and the "guide" (a sort of amalgamation of Christmases Past, Present and

Future). Every once in a while, the guide burst into a song clearly composed for this particular adaptation, which is also playing to the public at Emerson Umbrella Center for the Arts in Concord. Their message of Scrooge's salvation was overtly Christian. Scrooge kept seeing the error of his ways and the guide kept noting how Jesus' way could save him from repeating the past.

Then came a brief reflection from a local minister. Not surprisingly, he gave a little context to the story of Jesus' birth. He talked about Mary, probably about 14 years old, betrothed to Joseph, an older man, probably 17 or so. They were, according to custom, supposed to live apart and chaste for one year, preparing to wed. Then, the unplanned pregnancy. Certainly the details of the story are familiar enough. Joseph had every right to disgrace Mary when he learned she was pregnant. He could have subjected her to ridicule or, worse, to death by stoning. The message that night was about Joseph – rarely given top billing in the story – but who gives a truly remarkable performance by staying with Mary not only through the pregnancy and birth, but beyond.

It was at about this point in the evening that I had the realization that this was one of the most meaningful things I'd ever done to mark the holidays. I looked at the faces of those who live at NCC now – young men, mostly, different languages, different skin colors, different stories. Yet, that night, I heard the story of Mary and, especially, Joseph as if it could be the story of any one of these young men. Some surely could relate to the cultural context of poverty and the expectations that grew up in families, neighborhoods or gangs; many surely knew the power of the "rules" of the streets. If someone doesn't play by the rules in Joseph's time; stone them. If someone doesn't play by the rules today; shoot them. I could feel the tension between playing by the "rules" and following a way – any way – that bucks those rules. I could feel, deep in my gut, how hard it is to resist the culture of what is and follow your instinct of what's right. For a few minutes I understood the Christmas Story from a whole new perspective. And I don't think I'll forget what I learned at NCC that night.

The warbling singer was pretty bad, as were the so-called refreshments. But the spirit... *hmmmm...* the spirit was everywhere, spreading the true meaning of Christmas. There is always hope. There is always the way of love. There is always one person helping another and learning, in the process, that the help extends both ways.

Katie Lee

## Seekers of the Light



*...a rising, higher than the evening star—a glory given me, shadow and self together.*

*Julia Cunningham, "The Stable Rat"*

The lights are twinkling on the tree on the Common outside my office window. And my e-mail is full of the sorrow of the news of a young person whose pain was so deep and pervasive the only way out for her was to choose death. It is the most poignant illustration of the holidays—light and cheer, sorrow and depression. I can hear Jung saying, "Of course," and see the Taoist masters painting the yin yang symbol. Except in the darkness of yin is a dot of light. Where does that light come from?

I cannot answer the unanswerable, but I do know we are not whole without both light and dark, and not healthy without the balance between them. The verse above was said by a rat present at the birth of Jesus—a shadow being, unnoticed; that is until the baby reaches for him, at which moment he is transformed into a being surrounded by light—not a being *of* light, but one that is both shadow and light together. That is the transforming power of pain and loneliness being noticed and acknowledged. We can never erase the shadow in ourselves or in others, nor would we want to because then we would not be whole. But we can *look*—hard, carefully, fearlessly—and notice another's pain, another's loneliness, another's despair. That simple act transforms.

Noticing, becoming aware, *awakening*, is the great spiritual journey. It can be practiced at every turn. A child's tears, a teen's dark countenance, a partner's silence, a friend's sigh. The homeless guy with the coffee cup on the corner wants a "Hi, how are you?" as much as a quarter, maybe more.

The Buddha's dying words were, "Be ye lamps unto yourselves." I would add, "Be ye lamps unto one another." Don't wait. Wake up. Notice! Reach out. Listen. And please, please accept light from others when yours is low. See the dark in the light and the light in the dark, "shadow and self together." *That* is the glory given us.

Peace, Tracy

### First Parish of Sudbury's Pastoral Associates

Anmarie A	Fred P
Audrey K	Karen R
Linda L	Bev W
Polly M	

*In the event of a pastoral need,  
please call our minister  
or any of these Pastoral Associates.*

## 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 on the electronic version of this newsletter. For help, feel free to call the office.

*If you have news for this column, send it to Karen Reitzi at [reitzi@comcast.net](mailto:reitzi@comcast.net) or to the First Parish Office ([office@fpsudbury.org](mailto:office@fpsudbury.org))*

### 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. Press #1 for General Information. If events for the day have been cancelled, the message on line #1 will state that.

**First Parish website**—go to [www.fpsudbury.org](http://www.fpsudbury.org). The front page will show information about the emergency closing.

**By radio and television**—listen to or watch the WBZ Storm Center (news radio 1030-AM or CBS-TV Channel 4), for the cancellation of our Sunday worship service only. (Other events cannot be listed.)

**Worship at the  
Meeting House**



*Sunday, December 24, 10am Christmas Eve morning*  
**"When Love Unbars the Door"**

Ms. Tracy Duncan and Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Join us on Christmas Eve morning at 10:00 for a celebration of how attention to the beauty in each person and creature transforms us and all those around us. This morning service will include all we've come to love about our family Christmas Eve service--carols, readings, candlelight, and a service meant for people of all ages in our First Parish Family including visitors from near and far.

***This service will be ASL interpreted.***

*Sunday, December 24, 7 pm*  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

In the evening, we will offer the Christmas Eve candlelight service that has become our tradition. The Choir sings, we sing, we hear ancient and contemporary stories, we sit in silence and in the dark and we light up the night with our candles and closing ritual.

*Monday, December 25, 10 am*  
**Christmas Morning Gathering**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

We offer an intimate and informal Christmas morning worship on with carols everyone knows, stories we like to share about our own favorite holiday or the gift of a much-loved poem, reading, story or whatever. Everyone and anyone is welcome to join us and, if you wish, bring a little something to share (food for the soul or food for the body – all is welcome). We'll put on a pot of coffee.

*Sunday, December 31, 10 am*  
**Worshipping with Our Neighbors in Framingham**  
Rev. Maddie Sifantus

We worship at First Parish in Framingham for our annual shared worship with the UU congregations in Framingham and Wayland.

The Rev. Maddie Sifantus, Affiliate Minister, First Parish in Wayland will preach at this service. Her sermon is "Calm on the Listening Ear." There will be childcare for infants and toddlers, and activities for older children.

*Sunday, January 7, 10:00a.m.*  
**Endings and Beginnings**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

We pause at the start of the new year to remember those who died in 2005 and to celebrate those who were born.

*Sunday, January 14, 10:00am*  
**The Inner Light, Quaker Service**  
Annmarie A, John B, Beverly W

With the hectic holiday season behind us, this service will present an opportunity to focus on simplicity, peacefulness, and refocusing on the "inner light" within us. Please join John Brock, Bev Waring and Annmarie Allen as they facilitate a Quaker service. Quakers believe in continuing revelation and, similar to Universal Universalists, believe that people should actively live their beliefs. Traditional Quaker services include substantial amounts of silent listening to allow oneself to open up and hear the messages that come from within and provide guidance on how to live one's life. This service will be in the form of programmed Quaker worship including a blending of readings, song and silent listening.

*Saturday, January 20, 4:30pm*  
**Village Worship, followed by Potluck Supper**  
Ms. Tracy Duncan and more

Plan to join us for next month's Village Worship, our monthly experiential worship in story and song for ALL AGES in The Commons. (January's topic is still being developed—watch for more information in the upcoming ENews Bulletin.)

And, afterward, we'll have a potluck supper together—a great chance to relax and catch up with old and new friends.

*Sunday, January 21, 10:00am*  
**New Member Sunday**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

We welcome new members and consider what it means to join-by-choice an intentional, voluntary community such as our congregation.

*Sunday, January 28, 10am*  
**Moral Values in a Pluralistic Society**  
Rev. Katie Lee Crane and Mr. Henry N

Katie Lee collaborates with Henry Noer to examine the issue Unitarian Universalists voted to study and act upon at their General Assembly in 2005: Moral Values in a Pluralistic Society. After a three-year exploration of this question, "How might the moral and ethical grounding of Unitarian Universalism be given greater voice in the public square," UUs will draft a Statement of Conscience in June at General Assembly.

A "Hearthside Chat" with Henry and Katie Lee will follow. All wishing to discuss the day's sermon and topic are welcome to meet in the Brackett Room at 11:30am.



### ***Christmas Eve Offertory Collections***

As is our custom, First Parish will donate the proceeds from both Christmas Eve services and our Christmas morning service. We will give our total offerings in equal parts to Partakers and The Sudbury Refugee Immigration Ministry Cluster.

§ Partakers is a faith-based, not for profit organization, which strives for reconciliation between prisoners and society. Partakers breaks down the walls that separate prisoners from others by bringing them together and fostering their sense of accountability and responsibility towards one another. Through the Partakers College Beyond Bars program, First Parish is sponsoring an inmate at the Norfolk prison to receive his Bachelor's degree from Boston University while he is incarcerated.

Proceeds from the Christmas Eve and morning collections will go towards helping support Partakers in the important work they do in fostering reconciliation between prisoners and society.

§ The Sudbury Interfaith Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM) Cluster was formed in 2005 and is jointly undertaken by St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, Sudbury United Methodist Church and First Parish of Sudbury. The Sudbury RIM cluster now sponsors a family living in Sudbury while seeking political asylum in this country. It is our way of welcoming these contemporary pilgrims who are seeking freedom in a new land. RIM has eight active clusters in the metropolitan Boston area supporting 25 refugees, and has placed 101 refugees since 2000.

### ***Collegium: Looking at Jesus Again or for the First Time***

Following last year's successful *Conversation about God(s)*, Katie Lee will host a conversation about Jesus four Wednesday evenings in March: March 7, 14, 21 and 28. Up to ten participants will gather together to exchange observations, opinions, ideas, and personal experiences about the man and the myth called Jesus. Katie Lee stresses this: "In this conversation, there are no "experts." What each knows and doesn't know, believes and doesn't believe, is equally valid and important to hear. What each has experienced and chooses to share or not to share is equally valid and important to respect. This is our own First Parish Collegium – a circle of equals – formed to explore a topic of mutual interest.

Attendance will be limited to ten participants. Registration is required and participants are requested to commit to attending all four sessions, barring illness or emergency. Some advanced reading is required. To register, contact Carolyn L.

### **Board of Trustees Report**

by Ginny S, Clerk

***The Town Center Improvement*** process is going well, according to Beth R, who heads the group representing First Parish. You can mark you calendar now for a meeting at FPS on Sunday, January 7, to learn about and discuss the proposal that the Town Center Improvement group will have chosen following all the input it has received. That specific proposal will then be officially voted on by our congregation in **a special meeting on Sunday, January 21** – so you can put that on your calendar as well.

The Trustees devoted an hour of their meeting to a strategic discussion of First Parish's financial realities and objectives, one of this year's congregational goals. The conversation included a discussion of Mike Durall's book, *The Almost Church*, which challenges congregations to pose tough questions such as: ***How can we cultivate a culture of generosity?*** In addition, the Trustees continue to hold themselves accountable to the goal of communicating financial matters more effectively, more often, and more transparently to the congregation at large, another of this year's congregational goals. With the annual operating budget process and the annual canvass/fundraising process both getting underway, the Trustees as well as members of the Finance and the Canvass committees would love to hear any questions, suggestions or concerns you may have (and see p. 8 for budget info.)

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Monday, January 8 at 7:30pm in the Brackett Room. Trustees meetings are open to anyone wishing to attend.



### **Winter Series: Food for mind, soul and body**

Katie Lee will collaborate with several members of First Parish for four consecutive Sundays in the new year beginning January 28 and concluding on February 18. Each worship service will be followed by a light luncheon and a hearthside chat. During the course of these four weeks we will explore diverse topics such as these: *Is there a UU compass for making moral decisions? If so, what is it? What is the earth-centered celebration of Imbolc and how does it tie into our focus on the moral, ethical and justice issues relating to a sustainable environment? What are/were the Gnostic Gospels and why were they left out of the Bible? Do we dare use the word "money" and mean spiritual practice?* Mark your calendars. This series promises to be informative, provocative and nourishing; it will be food for mind, soul and body. No prior registration is required. If you need childcare or transportation, please phone the office to arrange in advance.

## Sudbury Town Center Progress

This fall has seen many meetings of the FPS Town Center Task Force as a committee and with members of the congregation and also with the town's SCIAC committee (see website below.) Each meeting brings new information and an exchange of ideas. At the last meeting with the town they presented a report showing that the intersection of Concord Road and Rt. 27 has three times as many accidents as similar intersections in the area. The town has also modified their proposals and even accepted a new one based on suggestions. We now have access to about 15 poster boards with maps, charts, and before and after pictures for various proposals.

We'd like to summarize our understanding of what the town is proposing and what they would like from us. The town is proposing to straighten out Rte 27. This will make it safer by making lanes clearer, especially for left turns, and will include signals specifically for left turns; the town will also include a right-turn lane with a clearer pedestrian crossing. The town is also proposing to align the southbound lane of Concord Road through the intersection. This will probably require First Parish to give up some land, although exactly how much and where will not be known until a survey of the whole intersection has been completed. In addition, the leading town's proposals include a southbound right-turn lane for Concord Road that would take more of the First Parish lawn.

The town is asking our support to do a comprehensive survey of Town Center and prepare the engineering design. They plan to ask for money for these from the Town Meeting in April 2007. Once the survey is done, FPS will negotiate with the town about what land, if any, we would sell and what we should receive in return. The actual land sale would need to be approved by a Congregational meeting, and then approved by the 2008 Sudbury Town Meeting. Giving our support now means that we are willing to work with the town to improve the safety of the intersection.

The FPS task force will be working on what First Parish should vote for at the **Special Congregational Meeting on January 21st**. The next information session will be January 7th. Please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the task force for more information. The task force consists of Beth R, Bruce and Marge L, Lee S, Deborah K, Sherri C, Henry N and Jan H.

for more information, see  
<[http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/committees/>committee\\_home.asp?dept=sciag](http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/committees/>committee_home.asp?dept=sciag)



## Green Tips

*Each month in the newsletter, the Green Sanctuary team will suggest a monthly tip on what YOU can do to be a greener—that is, more ecologically-minded--Earth citizen. We welcome your input.*

### Save Money On Heating Water For Your Home

*Heating water takes about 11% of home energy costs.*

- ✓ Set hot water heater to 120F. This can save up to save up to 10% of water heating costs compared to a 140F setting.
- ✓ Use low-flow shower heads, which use around 2 gallons per minute. This can save up to half the hot water used for showering. Choose a shower-head that aims the water well.
- ✓ Wash laundry in warm and cold water, not hot. Using only cold water can save up to \$60 a year.
- ✓ An efficient front-loading washing machine generally uses less water than a top-loading model.
- ✓ Run dishwasher only when it is full.
- ✓ New water-saving efficient dishwashers use about a third of the water of the least efficient models.
- ✓ Wrap hot water heater tank in an insulating jacket. (But only if your heater is about 5 years old or more and has no or little insulation. Check your water heater instructions/label first to ensure insulation can be added to avoid problems.)
- ✓ Insulate hot water pipes.
- ✓ Instantaneous (or tankless) hot water heating models can save up to \$50 a year in energy costs, but cost more initially. These are best if gas heated.
- ✓ Solar hot-water heaters are gaining use as an alternative or supplement to conventional hot water heating units. They operate well in New England where they can reduce hot water heating costs around 25% or more.

*It's not that difficult ... being 'green'.  
Just take it one choice at a time.*

### Welcome, New Members

A heartfelt welcome to our newest members—those who have signed the membership book this fall: Jeannette and Terry A, Mary Ellen F, Carol H, Charlie M, Dawn and Reed S, and Jennifer and John S.

Be sure to meet these great folks if you haven't already, and plan to help us celebrate on New Member Sunday, January 21.

## Last Call for In-Home Dinners



If you would like to host or attend one of the In-Home Dinners in January, please let Susan McK know **as soon as possible!**

The time has come to match up the hosts and the diners, so if for any reason you haven't passed your information on, call right away. Be ready with your preferences for the three dates the dinners are offered: Saturday, January 20; Sunday, January 21, or Friday, January 26.

Don't miss this great event, and great chance to meet new folks and catch up with long-timers. Call Susan now.



## December's Invisible Hands Award: "The Photo Directory Team"

This month's Invisible Hands Award goes to a small group of dedicated individuals who have been working very hard for several months on a big job - helping to create our wonderful FPS Photo Directory to be issued in the Spring. On the parts of Mary McC, Cilla R, Ginny S and Bonnie W, many, many collective hours have been spent signing-up FPS members after Sunday Coffee Hours, arranging for notices in newsletters, making innumerable phone calls (and receiving many at home) to schedule and confirm photo dates/times, exchanging dates with other churches, providing FPS members being photographed with coffee & yummy snacks, pleasantly keeping us all on schedule, (even on a stormy day when the power went out!), making sure to include all, laying-out special FPS activity photo pages, and through every step of the way, coordinating with Olin Mills on the details to make it all happen successfully! It has been, and is still, a big job and the directory will have many positive benefits for our members and congregation. We thank you for your extraordinary efforts!

Several individuals have pointed out that Cilla R has been a one-woman powerhouse these months! In addition to her efforts with others on the Photo Directory, she simultaneously spearheaded the Holly Fair! Cilla was seen at one photo session knitting crafts for the Fair, in between arranging coffee and snacks for people awaiting photos, and jumping up to make phone calls to members about their photo times! Many thanks, Cilla, for all you have done for us!

Please notify Sara H when you know of other First Parish members who have contributed in special ways to the life of our congregation.



## Holly Fair—A Great Success, Thanks to You!

### *A Good Time Was Had By All*

All day on Saturday, Dec. 2 people came and went from First Parish carrying wreaths and cookies and gifts, comforted with hot soup from our outstanding kitchens, breathing the heady scents of pine and hemlock, and, best of all, wearing great, big, happy smiles, That's what the Holly Fair is all about. We had such a good time preparing for the Fair and while it was happening. Our workshops were fun and productive and a chance to chat while our fingers were busy. The "craft workshops" turned out earth eco-friendly gift bags, painted, natural and pierced tin tree ornaments, recycled Christmas card boxes and more. So many people made contributions on their own. Two new activities we had this year were a Cookie Walk and a "Make your own greens arrangement". Both were great successes.

The "Greens Workshop" has become a wonderful tradition, and the crew produced some absolutely gorgeous arrangements. The lunch of soups and breads was a showcase of culinary talent. The bake table was laden with goodies. The Gifts Again table offered an eclectic assortment of merchandise. We loved having the Meeting House Preservation sweatshirts and mugs. The youth of our church were a wonderful presence, both at some of our craft workshops and at the bake table. We send a huge THANK YOU to all the wonderful people who contributed time and effort and goods to make the Holly Fair a success and a very happy time. We wish everyone the happiest of holidays, a wonderful New Year and abundant good health.

-- Sharon K, Dawn S, Cilla R

P.S. We'll take the month of January off, but then, starting in February, we will have craft workshops after the Tuesday Brown Bag Lunches for all who would like to come to work on crafts we have available to do, or bring your own, all to benefit next year's Holly Fair.

## First Parish Auction – February 10, 2007

Though we are in the midst of the busiest time of year, please save Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 on your calendars and join us for our annual service auction.

The Service Auction is our largest fund raising event of the year. It depends on Members and Friends donating goods and services from craft items to vacation weeks and then we have a party and auction off these items.

Updated donation forms are available on our website. Your participation is vital. See Bonny L or Steve J if you would like to help or have any questions.

**Endings & Beginnings Service**

Sunday, January 7, 2007

It has become an important ritual on the first Sunday in January to honor those who have died and those who have been born during the past year. If you are new to First Parish, here's how it works--we read these names during our worship service and, when the name of someone we love is read, we stand to honor that person. What often happens is that, when the names have all been read, nearly everyone is standing. It is always a very moving experience.

If someone dear to you was born, or died, in 2006 and you would like their name to be among those read for this service, please send them to Katie Lee Crane as soon as possible, and by Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> at the latest. All she needs to know is whether the person is to be included in births or deaths, and how to pronounce their name.

Please note the date on your calendar, and plan to join us for this special service.

**Staff Holiday Hours**

During the holidays, from December 23 through January 1, 2007, the office will not be open during regular hours. The staff will be working, but at unpredictable times. If you are trying to reach the staff, call the main First Parish number, 978 443-2043, and leave messages in the appropriate voicemail box. The phones will be monitored daily.

In the event of a pastoral emergency or urgent First Parish business, please also call Rev. Katie Lee Crane's home office number, 978 440-8428.

The staff will resume their regular hours, and the office will reopen on Tuesday, January 2.

***We wish you peaceful and joyous holidays!***

**Spirit Play Open House**

Sunday, January 7 at 11:30am.

You've heard about it; now is the time to come see it. So grab your Coffee and come up to The Commons to view and hear from children and Guides just what makes Spirit Play so wonderful. All are welcome, whether you have children in the program or not. Please join us!

**Faith in Action News**

***Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM)*** In July, First Parish joined the Sudbury Interfaith Coalition in hosting a family seeking political asylum under the auspices of the RIM. We help sponsor an Algerian family who fled their home after being threatened with physical harm. RIM provides legal, housing, and financial support for the family until they can become self sufficient. The family recently made a major step toward self-sufficiency when the father, Mohammed, was granted the right to work in this country by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

He is eager to work in any capacity while looking for employment in his field of expertise. He has a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering and a Master's degree in Industrial Safety. He speaks Arabic, French, and English. He is looking for a job as a Chemical Engineer, Health and Safety Engineer, Quality Control manager or Security and Occupational Health manager. The mother is also available for childcare or house keeping services. If anyone can be of help finding part time or full time employment, please call Beth R.

***First Parish's Ongoing Outreach*** First Parish has made the commitment to participate in the Sudbury Interfaith Coalition and help in this worthwhile cause. As described on page 4, half of the donations made at both of our Christmas Eve Services, and the Christmas morning service, will go towards this community service. The other half of the donations made at our Christmas Eve Services will go towards First Parish's commitment to Partakers College Behind Bars program supporting prisoners in their efforts toward self-improvement through education.

***Undecorate the Christmas Tree*** was a big success once again. All 60 names of children supplied by the Framingham DSS were chosen by members and friends of First Parish to receive new gifts this Christmas. All of you who chose names or contributed checks should give yourselves a great big pat on the back for making the lives of these children a little brighter this holiday season.

**Spirit Play Program  
Seeking "Prisms"**

Do you have a prism (of any size or shape) that you would be able to lend or donate to the Spirit Play groups? They will need the prisms by January 28. Please let Tracy Duncan know if you have one they could borrow for a couple of months. Thanks!

## The First Parish Annual Operating Budget

Hey, it's budget season again! That sounds really interesting, doesn't it? In fact, when you look closely, it *is* interesting. The budget is made of two major parts, the income and the expenses. First Parish is here for us, and almost all of the expenditure is to serve us, the members and friends. Here is a breakdown of the expenses, with the line items grouped to show how the money is spent in the major service areas. A service area includes staff salary, benefits, expenses and related programs. It is shown both in total amount and in the amount of the service provided to each person.

We presently have 242 active adult members, so each share is the total divided by 242. Take a look:

This portion of the column is not available electronically. Contact the office for help.

So what is the message? First Parish provides a valuable set of services to its members, including inspiring ministry, religious exploration for our children and youth, enjoyable music and an opportunity to share our values and our support with other people in need. These services are costly, but are only partly paid for by our donations, with about one third being paid by rental and investment income and our fundraisers. The more involved we are in supporting these activities, the more valuable are the services we receive from First Parish. We who serve on the Finance Committee hope that this helps you to understand the finances of First Parish and the value of First Parish to all of us. And by the way, sharing these services with increased membership will not reduce the value of services to the present members and friends - it will increase the value and reduce the average cost.

Ted J, Chair, Finance Committee

First Parish of Sudbury Unitarian Universalist  
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978 443-2043, fax: 978 443-4391  
Website: [www.fpsudbury.org](http://www.fpsudbury.org)  
Office hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am to 1:00pm

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: <a href="mailto:minister@fpsudbury.org">minister@fpsudbury.org</a>
Director of Music: Debra Morris-Bennett	email: <a href="mailto:music@fpsudbury.org">music@fpsudbury.org</a>
Director of Religious Education: Tracy Duncan	email: <a href="mailto:reducation@fpsudbury.org">reducation@fpsudbury.org</a>
Acting Youth Advisor: John Brock	email: <a href="mailto:john.m.brock@gmail.com">john.m.brock@gmail.com</a>
Administrator: Fran Sharp	email: <a href="mailto:office@fpsudbury.org">office@fpsudbury.org</a>
Chair, Bd. of Trustees: Steve Johnson	
Treasurer: Jan Pendleton	