

Next Newsletter Deadline: Today-- March 14, 2007

Next E-News Bulletin Deadline: Wed., March 28, 2007

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-  *Budget Roundtable Discussion, March 18, 11:30am*
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Join the Youth for Brunch, Sunday, March 18 following their Worship Service

Following a wonderful tradition, a group of First Parish youth is leading worship on Sunday, March 18. They call their service “An Awkward Silence,” and through theater, music, readings, and reflections they will explore “those moments when our words and our thoughts and our feelings are getting in each others' way.” Afterward, we want to give thanks for their ministry – and celebrate our youth – by hosting a brunch in their honor. For those who must leave shortly after worship, there will be a regular time for coffee and conversation in the Parish Hall. But when the children and their guides complete Spirit Play at 11:30 am, our coffee time will evolve into brunch. Please set aside some extra time to join the youth and their First Parish friends. After “An Awkward Silence,” we will make a joyful noise!

Money Matters—Next Budget Roundtable Discussion Sun., March 18, 11:30

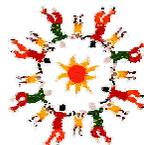
We want your questions and ideas about next year's budget.

Last spring the congregation requested that the budget process happen earlier, with more congregational input and with more transparency. To meet that request, the preliminary budget for next year has been included in the canvass materials you have received and we are holding budget roundtable discussions to explain the budget, to address questions and to solicit ideas.

Two of these discussions have taken place, and the third will happen this coming Sunday at 11:30 after our Sunday service. Please review the budget carefully and join us this Sunday so that you will understand just what it is you are supporting at First Parish and what your strong financial support means to First Parish. Your questions and input will help us shape our final budget.

The informed and active participation of the entire congregation in the budget process is critical to the financial health and strong community of First Parish. Childcare arrangements can be made with advance notice (by Friday) to Ginny D.

***Village Worship
rescheduled to March 31***



Tracy and Katie Lee have rescheduled the upcoming Village Worship, “Someday a Tree,” honoring the spring equinox. Originally scheduled for Saturday, March 24 at 4:30 pm, it is now planned for the following Saturday, March 31 at 4:30 pm. This will give many of us an opportunity to participate in either (or both) the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue (see details on page 3) or the Memorial Service honoring the life of Amy Prince's father to be held at First Parish at 3 pm on March 24. Please make a note of this change on your calendars.



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.

Support the New England Wind Fund—the sooner the better

Normally our “Green Tips” will not be a solicitation to donate money. However, this month is an exception. If you are a Sudbury resident, the warrant you receive for the Sudbury town meeting will have a “stuffer.” The Selectmen approved this request by the Earth Decade Committee. What follows is both a brief explanation, and a solicitation to respond promptly. Links to the website and the donation form are on the Green Sanctuary page of our website. (<http://fpsudbury.org/cgi-bin/wiki.pl?GreenSanctuaryCommittee>)

The New England Wind Fund is a part of the Mass Energy Consumers Alliance and works in unique ways, both in terms of how it awards grants and how your contributions work. First, we are all paying a tidbit into this fund via a charge on every month’s electric bill, labeled “renewable energy.” But the majority of funds available to a town come from donations, which are then matched.

The real benefits come when we, as residents, make tax-deductible contributions to the fund. Each \$50 donated results in 1 mega-watt hour of wind power offsetting a half-ton of emissions from dirty energy sources. (Please note that this is totally unrelated to and not supporting the Cape Wind Project.) The Mass Technology Collaborative (MTC) matches your donation, and all of the matched funds are “earmarked” for the town from which they come, but the town has to get them back by applying to use them in specific projects. The MTC additionally matches your contribution to fund projects to benefit low-income state residents.

But, \$50 isn’t the right amount just now; it is too low. If 170 households in Sudbury join with a \$100 contribution (or pledge \$5/month) **BEFORE MARCH 31**, then Sudbury will receive not only the basic match, but an additional \$50/ household in matching funds. That means if Sudbury gets to the 170 household level (3% of households is the requirement), the town would get about \$26,000 in funds to use on renewable energy projects. The town can then use these funds to make energy saving modifications and reduce our municipal costs. **You get a tax deduction, a greener town, and lower town energy costs all at once.** Currently, Sudbury has an extremely low enrollment (probably less than 20 households). Towns like Newton, Worcester, Northampton and Great Barrington got on this bandwagon early, and are already reaping the benefits.

If First Parish is to be a leader, not only in becoming a Green Congregation, but also in assisting our community to become “greener”, there is no better place to start than taking a leadership role in getting Sudbury up to that 3% threshold. A copy of the New England Wind donation form and summary information is posted on our website on the Green Sanctuary page.

For those members and friends who are not Sudbury residents, all of the information about how and why to join is the same. Framingham, Hudson, Stow, Marlboro, Lincoln and Wayland are all in a similar position *vis-à-vis* needing to take advantage of this opportunity. So, no matter what town you live in, it makes sense to donate. Please take the time to learn more (<http://www.newenglandwind.org/wind/home.php>) and donate. Thank you.

Faith in Action News



Good News to report about outreach!

There are three major sources of outreach that First Parish provides. The first source is the Faith in Action budget. This amount is a separate line item in our operating budget under the Program section, and is dedicated to our outreach efforts. It is used for projects such as supplies for the backpack drive, or for the quilters who make quilts for children in shelters and hospice patients; to sponsor our major initiatives (RIM, Partakers and our work with the Sudbury family); and for grants to organizations to which we belong.

The next aspect of outreach is our Share The Plate program begun in September 2005. Once a month we share our Sunday morning offering with a worthy organization. Faith in Action takes all recommendations from the congregation and finds the best fit in the worship calendar. ***Please let us know of a group that would benefit from our support.*** Through this successful program, we sent over \$7,000 last year to various worthwhile groups including Renewal House, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry, HEARTH - Home for Good, Only a Child, Sudbury Area Food Pantry, Center for Family Connection, Greeley Foundation, Community Change Inc, Ministry for Earth, Framingham Mediation group, and Lena Park.

And the other branch of outreach is through our events and collections, which the congregation has supported. They include:

- ü the Backpack drive – now in its fourth year of providing back-to-school items for the children at Sandra's Lodge
- ü "Undecorate the Christmas tree" – our program of many years to provide holiday gifts to needy children
- ü UUSC Guest At Your Table project
- ü Project Bread-Walk for Hunger
- ü Oxfam through our Empty Bowls project
- ü RIM through "Dumpster Day"
- ü Drives to support the Sudbury Food Pantry, Hurricane Katrina relief, and Sandra's Lodge

We also completed an extensive fundraising project for Mercy Cross High School in Biloxi, Mississippi and sent 60 backpacks filled with school supplies, boxes of art supplies, and finally a euphonium and percussion instruments for the band. The First Parish Quilters created and raffled off the 'Hopeful Hearts' quilt; the children organized a bake sale; and the proceeds of fair trade coffee were included. This just shows how we continue to take it to the world through our faith in action.

Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue, March 16-24

To find out more or to sign up online, go to <http://www.climatewalk.org>.

All at First Parish of Sudbury are encouraged to participate in the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue. The walk is being hailed as "a moral call for swift, bold and comprehensive political action to address global warming" and may become America's largest demonstration against global warming, as participants walk across Massachusetts from Northampton to Boston to focus attention on the issue.

On Saturday, March 24th, the last four miles of the walk (Christ Church, Zero Garden St., Cambridge to Old South Church, Boylston St., Boston), will be followed by a 2-3:00 PM interfaith service and a public rally across the street in Copley Square.

For more information, see the website, above, and contact Bruce L.



See the First Parish Bulletin Board...

For the complete schedule of the **2007 Minns Lecture Series** – four public lectures in Boston and Cambridge from March 14-21 on "The Experience of Religious Varieties: Psychology of Religion for the 21st Century".



Home phone numbers are not included in the E-News Bulletin.
Please check your First Parish directory, or call the office at 978/443-2043 for help.