

# **2010 ANNUAL REPORTS**

**for the  
62nd Annual Meeting  
Sunday, January 30th, 2011**



**The First Parish of Westwood, United Church  
340 Clapboardtree Street  
Westwood, Massachusetts 02090  
Rev. Christopher Dodge, Pastor**

*Please bring your copy of this report  
to the Annual Meeting in the Meeting House immediately after worship.  
(Snow Date: Monday, January 31st at 7:30 PM)*

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# The Mission and Vision of First Parish of Westwood, United Church

## PREAMBLE

First Parish of Westwood, United Church will be recognized throughout the community for its vibrant, contributing and welcoming congregation, worshipping God and seeking to understand and do His will in our lives, in the community, and in the world.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of First Parish of Westwood, United Church is to worship God; to bear witness to the glory of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit; to support each other in Christian living and reinforce our individual and collective faith through worship, education, fellowship and service to the needs of our community and in support of the church's wider outreach.

## VISION STATEMENT

- Our *Congregation* is growing and made up of people from many different denominational backgrounds. We are inviting, open, friendly and affirming. Individual members take an active part in local social and political groups helping to provide moral leadership within our community. We seek to grow in the knowledge and understanding of God's will as taught in the Scriptures and recognize our responsibility to demonstrate that understanding through our actions.
- Our *Worship Service* will be in accordance with, and faithful to, our belief in God: Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. It celebrates the human and divine nature of Jesus Christ. Our worship combines prayer, music, and preaching based on the Scriptures and encourages spiritual growth and congregational participation. Our worship service is challenging, inspirational and reassuring.
- *Education* at First Parish will involve extensive participation at all age levels. It teaches Christian values and provides spiritual nourishment through an understanding of the Bible, and includes programs to help children, youth and adults more effectively deal with present-day issues and concerns. Particular emphasis is on a youth program that reaches out to the community in a social environment that stresses Christian ethics.
- Our *Outreach Program* provides an understanding of, and an increasing commitment to, outreach needs locally and throughout the world. It includes interfaith participation with other congregations to identify and resolve community societal problems. The laity is actively involved in visitation and programs for seniors and shut-ins.
- Our *Pastoral Leadership* exhibits strong attributes in preaching, teaching and counseling. It effectively comforts, motivates, inspires and spiritually leads the congregation. Our pastoral staff will be complemented by a committed congregational leadership with responsibility and authority delegated to individual committees. Within the pastoral leadership are professionals whose involvement includes religious education and assistance in visitations and outreach.
- Recognizing its historical heritage, First Parish will develop and carry out social and religious *Programs* designed to provide fellowship and enrich the life of the Church and the community.
- Our church supports the maintenance and improvement of comfortable and adequate *Facilities* for worship, education, administration and congregational activities.

4/4/93

**SIXTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING**  
**THE FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UNITED CHURCH**

Under the authority of the constitution of First Parish, United Church, notice is hereby given that the Sixty-Second Annual Meeting of the First Parish of Westwood, United Church will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2011 at 11:00 AM in the Meeting House. The meeting will take action upon the following agenda:

1. To hear and act on the Minutes of the Sixty First Annual Meeting held on January 31, 2010.
2. To hear and act on the reports of Ministries, Officers and Committees.
3. To hear and act on the Treasurer's Report.
4. To hear and act on the Auditor's Report.
5. To hear and act on the Nominating Committee's Report.
6. To hear and act on the Proposed Budget for 2011.
7. To hear and act on a Proposed Amendment to Article VIII, Section 1 (Annual Meeting) of the By Laws.
8. To hear and act on a Proposal to form a committee to examine next steps in the consolidation of First Parish's properties.
9. To hear and act on any other matters which may properly come before this meeting.

In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held at 7:30 PM in the Parish Hall on Monday, January 31, 2011.

*Judy Thomson*, Clerk

**SIXTY FIRST ANNUAL MEETING  
THE FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2010**

Moderator Bob Deininger called the meeting to order at 11:27 a.m. in the sanctuary after the Sunday morning worship service. This is the 280<sup>th</sup> year of the church, but the 61<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of First Parish Church.

It was moved and voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the Sixtieth Annual Meeting, held on January 25, 2009 and the minutes from the Special Congregational Meeting held June 3, 2009.

**Article 1.** The minutes of the Sixtieth Annual Meeting held on January 25, 2009 were approved as corrected.

**Article 2.** The minutes of the Special All Parish Meeting held on June 3, 2009 were approved as printed.

**Article 3.** It was voted to dispense with the reading of the reports of the Ministries, Officers and Committees. It was voted to accept the reports of Ministries, Officers and Committees as printed.

**Article 4. Treasurer's Report**

Cathy Ellis reported as follows:

- First Parish ended the year with a small surplus of \$136.
- At last years meeting we voted a budget with a deficit of \$27,419. At that time an appeal was made to the congregation which raised an additional \$27,207, balancing the budget.
- In addition to our pledges we raised \$14,500 in various outreach offerings to support Pine Street Inn, One Great Hours of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, Pen-nies for Peace and World Wild Life Fund. The Pumpkin Patch raised \$3,500 for Outreach and for the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Meetinghouse, we raised over \$24,000 to improve our church.
- Our Ministries and staff worked hard to stay within their budgets this past year. Snow removal exceed budget by \$2,500 and our maintenance expenses were over budget in part due to \$5,500 spent on tree removal.
- The cost to paint the Meetinghouse last summer was \$45,000. \$35,000 came from the Catherine Barlow Special Purpose Fund and \$10,000 from a generous gift from a neighbor of First Parish.
- Cathy thanked Judy Holbrook for all of her work with our church finances.
- Cathy thanked Shirley Defeo for her services as Collector for 5 years, ensuring that our contributions have been safely guarded and recorded correctly.

There were no questions and it was voted to accept the Treasurer's report.

**Article 5. Auditor's Report**

Robbie Werth reported that she had examined the financial records for 2009 and that they were in good order. She commended the Treasurer on her excellent records. Bob Deininger thanked Robbie and Jim Richey for their work. It was voted to accept the auditors report.

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### **Article 6. Nominating Committee Report**

Martha Crawford presented the Nominating Committee report as printed on page 16 of the 2009 Annual Report. She pointed out that to be sure that we complied with the constitution and bylaws the year a person started serving in that position appeared after their name. She asked everyone to add Sue Burgess's name to the Sanctuary Guild. The nominations were seconded and the slated was voted unanimously.

### **Article 7. Budget**

Bob Deininger presented the 2010 budget.

- He summarized the explanation of the budget process that appeared in the Annual Report. Initially there was a deficit of \$52,852 due to a decrease in pledges of 19% compared with 2009.
- The Church Council met January 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Council discussed ways to raise more money. The possibility that Clear Wireless might use our steeple could not be considered in the budget. Three decisions did affected income. One was to ask members to pay their UCC membership dues which was estimated to bring in \$3,000, the second was to reallocate our invested funds to increase income which was estimated to bring in \$1,150 and the third was to use \$2,000 from the Ruth Doorly Fund to offset part of the Christian Education Administrator's salary.
- The Council had to make a number of difficult decisions. Bob called the congregations attention to the two columns for the 2010 budget in the Annual Report. The first column showing the proposed budget and the second the desired budget. He pointed out the following changes:
  - Reduce the Church office hours to four days a week.
  - Eliminate the 3% cost of living increase for Church staff.
  - Eliminate the 2% merit increase for the Music Director.
  - Reduce by \$1,000 the budget of Mission and Service.
  - Hold services in the Parish Hall in February and March.

#### Discussion:

- Judy Holbrook said she had every confidence that the work of the office can be done in four days and if additional income becomes available that it should not be used to increase the hours the office is open.
- Elvin Fowell said that if 100 people contributed \$52.85 we would not have to have any cuts. He also suggested that the Church help those unemployed to get jobs as they then could pledge more.
- Bob Deininger said if more funds become available the Church Council will consider what to add back to the budget.
- Fred Rice said he would favor having services back in the Sanctuary.
- Jane Smith was assured that the special purpose funds used, that is the Barlow and the Ruth Doorly were used in line with their intended use.
- Betsey Dakin raised a concern about parking on the Church side of the street and crossing while services are being held in the Parish Hall.

### **Article 8. Other Matters**

- Dix Howard asked if there were plans to replace the doors of the Meetinghouse. Nancy Hyde

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January 2010 Minutes  
(Continued from page 6)

said that some of the money raised would be used for that purpose.

- Bob Deininger thanked Martha Crawford and Shirley Defoe who have completed their terms as Clerk and Collector.
- Jim McKenzie praised Bob Deininger for his leadership during a difficult year and thanked the Church staff.
- Chris Dodge said that we should not be surprised at having to cut back our spending as corporations and individuals are also cutting back due to the economy. He reminded the congregation of the hundreds of hours the Church Council spent working on the budget.

Rev Chris closed the meeting with prayer.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon

Respectfully submitted:

*Martha S. Crawford*

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## PASTOR

2010 at First Parish could not have been what it was without the time, talent and treasure of so many. Words of gratitude should be spread wide and far by all of us. But in particular I want to lift up our dedicated staff of Judy, Donna, Marge, Denis, Josh, Joanna, Karen and Cathy. I find myself blessed to work with all of them. I am also most grateful for those who serve in various capacities as our lay leadership. All of that time and energy is an investment that bore fruit in this past year and will continue to do so in future years.

As I look back on this past year a few moments stand out in my mind.

We worshipped in the Parish Hall for the season of Lent. Aside from attempts to curb heating costs or the weekly task of setting up chairs (and not very comfortable ones at that), I think there some important things to glean from the experience. Being in a different space and then returning to the Meeting House on Palm Sunday accentuated one of the central themes of Lent, namely fasting. This change of venue also created a more intimate worship space as we all sat a lot closer together. And everything was happening in one building so our accessibility improved as it relates to Church School and Coffee Hour.

The season after Epiphany found us reflecting on vertical habits of our faith, while Lent changed our focus to horizontal habits of our faith, with the latter accentuated by a weekly Mission Opportunity. As with every season on the church year, our worship is deepened by beautiful gifts of music. And it was wonderful to hear the results of a collaborative effort with the choir of the United Church of Walpole in this season.

As a culmination to the Church School year and their Pennies for Peace Mission Project, a Peace Garden was created in front of the Meeting House, marked by a Peace Pole and stepping stones with symbols of peace. This is a wonderful visual reminder for all who enter the church and for all who pass by on the streets of one of the central messages of the Gospel.

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Pastor  
(Continued from page 7)

The All Church Retreat held at Hale Reservation was a simply glorious event where those gathered were fed by the beauty of God's creation, fellowship and prayer. We considered Sabbath – our struggles to keep it and its power for us. Hopefully this retreat is the beginning of a yearly tradition and one that will grow.

As we look to our budget for 2011, and our assets, I walk away from the past year and into this year with two words on my mind – Viability and Vitality. There is a difference between “existing” and being “lively and animated”. Some of this is impacted by the energy, the gifts and the giving of time by staff and members. Some of this is impacted by our stewardship – both individual giving and the use of church resources. Like so many other churches in Mainline Protestantism, we are in a time that was unexpected to many but clearly very foreign to us all. But the Bible reminds us we have been in a place like this before. Being vital to those who walk in our doors, to our community and to the world will take work and will no doubt require leaps of faith. The Bible reminds us of that too!

As we move into this coming year, I very excited about people's interest in seeking out more opportunities for spiritual nurture. I am excited by Big Story Sundays, our current approach to living into a commitment to intergenerational worship. I am excited about the energy forming around Junior High Youth Fellowship. I am excited about conversations with First Baptist Church and St. John's Church to seek ways to collaborate in Senior Youth Fellowship and in worship. I am excited about continuing conversations on the meaning of membership and discerning God's vision for us. I am aware that these conversations can be time consuming, but they are timely as we look to who we are and whose we are. I am aware that they can be hard and ask hard things of us, but I also believe that they can be life giving. I believe this because the Bible tells me so! Our conversations are not unlike those ancient ones of the Bible. So the ancient answers within the Bible will continue to be our best answers for the present and the future.

Peace,  
*Pastor Chris*

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## MODERATOR

In thinking about the moderator's report for 2010, I was reminded of the words of a poem by Eugene Sander:

*“What is this Church?  
A place of love and gladness  
Where all may meet to seek the common good;  
A source of strength to face each doubt and sadness,  
Where every dream is known and understood.*

*What is this Church?  
Ask those who came before  
And found themselves by walking through its door.  
Here in this Church we raise our joyous voices  
To praise the God who lives within each heart;  
The way is long, but every soul rejoices  
When we press on, together, not apart.*

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Here in this Church, we join the growing throng  
That seeks the right and fights against all wrong.

*What is this Church?*

A place of perfect freedom  
To follow truth wherever it may lead;  
To celebrate the best there is within us  
And find the best in every faith and creed.

*What is this Church?*

A place to see the light  
That shines forever through the darkest night.”

First of all, I would like “to celebrate the best within First Parish” which is our talented and dedicated staff. Thank you Reverend Christopher Dodge, Judy Holbrook, Donna Bertazzoni, Joshua and Joanna Hawkins Nannestad, Rev. Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker, Margery Eramo, Cathy Ellis, Martha Crawford and Denis Wholey. One of the initiatives that we have worked in 2010 is to develop a personnel policy to ensure that First Parish is being consistent with the job descriptions, compensation practices, and annual reviews of First Parish Staff. Thank you to Nancy Whitney who was a great help in this area.

Another initiative that started in 2010 but will continue in 2011 is to work on “knowing and understanding the dreams” of First Parish. In other words, we will be discerning a vision for First Parish. A small team consisting of Bob Deininger, Pastor Chris, Dave Blomquist, and Amie Colcord formed and met a few times. We will work with the congregation to listen and “discern God’s spirit for the future of First Parish.” We have already examined First Parish’s “mission field”: the demographics, ethnicity, and faith involvement within a 5 mile radius of Westwood. In the spring and fall, we hope to complete the following activities:

- A series of all church meetings will be focused on First Parish’s history, our values, and growth areas (strengths, areas for improvements, dreams)
- A survey of the congregation regarding our mission, education, fellowship, and worship activities asking for a rating of importance (1 – 5 scale) on “what people believe we ought to do as a congregation” and “what each person is willing to commit time, talent, and treasure toward.”
- The vision team will then design either a word or a phrase or an image the captures the essence of First Parish’s vision, develop an action plan, and ask the congregation to discuss and approve the vision.
- The vision will then be communicated through the Spire, worship bulletins, new member orientations, etc. The vision will be used as a decision-making tool (e.g., “will this activity help us make the vision a reality at First Parish?”) and continually reflect on how the congregation interprets and lives the vision.

The end result of the visioning process will be a renewed faith that God’s spirit is alive and well at First Parish, a deeper understanding of what is important to the congregation and what is not, and a greater sense of purpose and direction for First Parish that can be clearly articulated to current members and prospective members.

Balancing the budget or adjusting expenses to meet income continues to be a challenge but we are fortunate that the entire church council is committed to helping First Parish live within its means. We

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Moderator  
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will continue to ask members to cover the fellowship dues to the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC and Metropolitan Boston Association as well reduce our membership roles by moving parishioners from active to inactive.

I didn't accomplish everything that I set out to accomplish in 2010, and look forward to focusing on the following:

- Assess the effectiveness of the current organizational structure
  - One idea that Chris had that we will be examining is changing the term of ministry members from January through December to September through June. This will better align with the programming for the church year
- Review the Constitution and By-Laws
  - It has been five years since we revised the Constitution and By-Laws and we need to examine what's working well and what needs improvement
- Develop a policy for bequests
  - First Parish was blessed with a bequest from the estate of Roy London which was unrestricted. This has prompted us to question how we deal with unrestricted bequests and whether we consider donating a portion of the bequest to organizations or causes outside of First Parish as part of our mission work.

I would like to gratefully recognize the hard work of our treasurer, Cathy Ellis who has diligently served for five years and will be "passing the baton" in 2011.

I would also like thank the Church Council, ministry chairs, members, and everyone who contributes time, talent, and treasure in the areas of worship, mission, education, fellowship, and stewardship/finance/operations. We hope that our work continues to make First Parish "a place of love and gladness where all may meet to seek the common good; a source of strength to face each doubt and sadness, where every dream is known and understood."

Finally, I appreciate your patience, support, and confidence in me during my second year as moderator.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bob Deininger*

Moderator

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## MUSIC DIRECTOR

Overall, the dedicated volunteers and staff members of the music ministry are performing their tasks and roles admirably. While we uphold cherished tradition and best practices, we have made a few judicious changes so that we may best enrich worship as the church itself changes.

The most essential and important function of our ministry is to lead and enrich worship. The Senior Choir does this week after week, with very few exceptions, and I am grateful to them for their continued offering of time and hard work. In the fall we changed rehearsal to Sunday after worship. Although this robs us of some fellowship time with the congregation, the new schedule allows several singers to join us that otherwise could not. The choir will sing from the front of the church more often

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*Music Director  
(Continued from page 10)*

when the new organ console is fully connected. The Festival Choir idea from 2009 has carried forward, which allows us to welcome a few more part-time singers once a month.

The Junior Choir sang through the spring as normal, and then their role also went through some changes this fall. To avoid wearing out the same few young families with eager singers, we changed from a weekly rehearsal to a multi-faceted approach. The Junior Choir still rehearsed and sang for Christmas Eve as normal, but the rest of the year's musical experiences centered on Festival Choir and Big Story Sundays. This new plan began in September, so we are watching to see its effects. When the choirs are not available, I thank the singers and instrumentalists who make worship special through their offering of solos or quartets.

Special services and concerts included the return of Synergy Brass to Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols and a shared concert at the First Parish in Walpole. Looking ahead to March 6, we will welcome that choir to our meetinghouse for a similar event. A few members of the Junior Choir participated in the Choristers' Guild Festival this spring, and a few members of the Senior Choir joined in the Interfaith Service at the Temple.

The Music in the Meetinghouse Series continues, thanks to the Larson Fund, the London fund, and the Memorial music funds. We hosted performances by the New England Brass Band, Synergy Brass Quintet, Southern Rail Bluegrass Band, and opera singer Aliana de la Guardia. This year, more than ever, our concerts drew very small audiences. Some concerts drew more from the community than from First Parish - it is one of our stated goals to bring the community into the meetinghouse through this series, but the lack of audience members has a long-term effect on our ability to hold these concerts. Accordingly, I am making the concert series smaller, both in number of concerts and high-profile artists.

We also continue to actively promote the meetinghouse as a concert, rehearsal, and recording space, which brings both some funds and wider recognition to First Parish in the Boston musical community. A core of volunteers including Marge Eramo, Pam Kane, and Martha Crawford makes these concerts run smoothly. Anyone who wishes to volunteer to help with publicity or long-term planning would be most welcome!

Thanks to everyone for supporting the music ministry!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Josh Nannestad*

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### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR**

*The biblical meaning of peace makes it a rich metaphor pointing to the most profound of human longings: the desire for safety, harmony, prosperity, health, well-being, and the absence of war. This one word points to a vision of the way the world ought to be.*

- James Rowe Adams

The voices of children were raised in multiple acts of shalom at First Parish this year. In joyous wor-

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ship, in generosity of spirit, in interfaith conversation, through the spiritual practices of creativity, learning, prayer and laughter the children led us on an adventure of expressing faith through peace-themed projects.

It began when they chose their mission project: Pennies for Peace. We read the books of Greg Mortenson, *Listen to the Wind*, *Three Cups of Tea*, and *Stones into Schools*. That led to experiential lessons and appreciation of the Central Asian cultures for which we were raising money. We looked at the impact that education can have on building a more peaceful world. We prayed for children who have no schools or teachers. We learned the power of a penny in other parts of the world and gave to our mission project throughout the year, especially during Lent, raising over \$250 to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Each class created their own vision of peace through conversations about what peace means to us as individuals, as a society and as a church. We looked at scripture, at Jesus, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm through the lens of peace. Classes designed original graphic peace-themed symbols. We incorporated our collective meditations into the worship service on Church School Day through both language and art. The children shared their ideas for how to make peace in their lives (homes, families, school, community). All ages were encouraged to join in the making of origami peace cranes and tracings of peace doves to be used during that service. The class symbols were reproduced in mosaic on stepping-stones. They became a permanent installation in our new peace garden outside the Meetinghouse. The garden also includes a peace pole displaying the prayer 'May peace prevail on earth' in eight languages. The theme was revisited in the fall the when the children planted bulbs in the peace garden on United Nations Day.

The church school saw some traditions modified and improved this year. A popular mission took on a broader vision when the Mini-Walk for Hunger to support Project Bread became an intergenerational, interfaith event. We joined with congregations from across Westwood in this annual effort to end hunger in Massachusetts. Our first outing produced a lot of interest, attention and donations. Thank you to all children, youth, and adults who participated: walkers, organizers, entertainers, and volunteers.

Our annual gift of Bibles to third graders was enhanced in two ways. The Ministry of Education and Discipleship decided to give New Revised Standard Versions of the Bible, consistent with the version we use in worship. The particular edition is geared to younger readers, with useful icon-highlighted callouts that draw attention to key verses within the text, as well as maps, chapter introductions, essays and a glossary. The children also receive a companion paperback to help them learn how to navigate the Bible.

Intergenerational Worship continues to evolve. In an effort to include children in meaningful ways and address concerns of practicality and practicability the idea of Big Story Sunday has been developed. Representatives from both the Education and Worship Ministries assist in the planning of monthly worship experiences that center on stories that are foundational to our faith. Every attempt is made to craft worship experiences that are so compelling that families of all ages will make every effort to try to attend.

Safe church policies also continue to be enhanced. Steps toward CORI certification were completed  
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in 2010. Beginning in 2011 all Church School teachers and helpers, nursery volunteers, and youth workers will be CORI'd.

All this could never be accomplished without the dedicated work of all our teachers, helpers and volunteers. Education and faith formation programs could not thrive without the gifts of dedicated teachers. We are blessed with an exceptional staff that provokes our children to love and good deeds, to know God and find ways of practicing their faith in the world. Supporting the teachers are the members of the Ministry of Education and Discipleship, without whom this program would not exist. My continuing gratefulness and awe belongs to Nancy Brind for her passionate enthusiasm, wisdom, and creative leadership.

Peace,  
*Donna Bertazzoni*

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### FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE

*Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute and many others. They put them at his feet and he cured them.  
Matthew 15:30*

Rather than reiterating the accomplishments of Health Ministry this year, I have chosen to reacquaint you with the purpose of having a Health Ministry and a Faith Community Nurse (FCN) within a congregation. I have been in the FCN position since 2002 and have tried with God's help to emulate the following tenets.

Healings are the centerpiece of Jesus' ministry on earth and a model for the church's healing ministry. Jesus' healing stories provide a clear perspective for seeing the interconnection between mind, body and spirit. In the story of healing of the paralyzed man (Mark 2:1-12) Jesus forgives when you expect him to heal and heals when you expect him to forgive. Healing and forgiving are simply two aspects of the larger whole. (Example taken from Faith Factor in Healing by Thomas A. Droege, PhD).

Healing does not necessarily mean curing. Health ministry in a congregation involves spiritual and emotional healing that can occur during illness even when curing of the disease is not present. More than one-fourth of the New Testament is taken up with the physical healings and the entire Scripture is permeated with spiritual, mental, and emotional healings. Many scriptures, both from the Old and New Testaments, speak to the importance of health ministry in congregations. Some scriptures on love, faith, healing, unity, wholeness, caring, truth, reconciliation, joy and ministry are:  
*Kings 20:5; 2 Chronicles 7:14; in Psalms 5:1-6, 11, 12; 16:7-11; 27:13-14; 119:110-112; 121:1-8; in Proverbs 4:20-27; 12:18, 13:17, 15:13, 17:22; Ecclesiastes 3:1-14; Zechariah 7:9-10.*

There are many more in the New Testament that I will share with you at another time.

Since any given congregation represents a significant influence in the daily lives of its congregants, the local congregation is a logical place to provide health ministry. Its effectiveness is measured by having the right person with the right approach empower and encourage people to take better care

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of themselves. This is what I have attempted to do over the last eight years.

In American society the church is one of the institutions that strongly influences people's values and life choices. Scientific and medical research today acknowledges a person's sense of meaning and purpose in life is a powerful force for healing and health. A faith stance in life fosters hope, positive self-image, and a sense of responsibility. It deepens a person's awareness that there is no wholeness apart from the care of others as modeled in the life of Jesus.

Through the congregation, a person receives strong social support when enduring the hardships of life, and therefore is less susceptible to illness than persons who do not have this sense of belonging and care. The deliberate development of health ministries within the congregation helps focus the members' awareness on the essential Christian ministry of health and healing.

When health ministries are an essential part of congregational life the members:

- Find opportunities to volunteer to help those who are in the hospital, are home-bound or living in residential care facilities.
- Have the opportunity to learn about wellness and disease prevention. Healthy life style choices are promoted through monthly articles in the Spire.
- Appropriate resources and advocacy are provided to individuals and the community. Resources are available through the numerous periodicals found on the book cart and the Health Ministry bulletin board both of which are found in the Parish Hall.

I hope that the above information provided in part from the Health Ministries Association training manual gives you a better understanding of the foundation of Health Ministry and Faith Community Nurses. In the coming months, I will expand on the aspects of Health Ministry through Spire articles. I will leave you with this wonderful understanding of the difference between curing and healing by Fred Reclau.

### **Cure vs. Healing**

*Cure* alters what is; *Healing* offers what might be.

*Cure* is an act; *Healing* offers what might be.

*Cure* acts upon another; *Healing* shares with another.

*Cure* manages; *Healing* touches.

*Cure* seeks ultimately to conquer pain; *Healing* seeks to transcend the pain.

*Cure* ignores grief; *Healing* assumes grief.

*Cure* encounters mystery as a challenge for understanding; *Healing* encounters mystery as a ready channel for meaning.

*Cure* rejects death and views it as defeat; *Healing* includes death among the blessed outcomes of caring.

*Cure* may occur without healing; *Healing* may occur without cure.

*Cure* separates body from soul; *Healing* embraces the soul.

*Cure* tends to isolate; *Healing* tends to incorporate.

*Cure* combats illness; *Healing* fosters wellness.

*Cure* fosters function; *Healing* fosters purpose.

My thanks to Pastor Chris for his continued support, and to Dave Blomquist for his ministry to

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members who are ill or unable to be out and about and to all of you who have contributed to the Prayer Shawl ministry.

May each and every one of you be blessed with good health in 2011.

Faithfully,  
*Margery Eramo*, RN, CHM  
Faith Community Nurse

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

The Ministry of Education and Discipleship included 6 members this year: Brian Bayer, Nancy Brind, Christy Baldwin, Andrea Deininger, Lucinda Linde (adjunct member), Robin Ostrander and Tricia McKim and Beth Roper, some of who resigned at various points in the year. We had excellent guidance and leadership from Donna Bertazzoni who helped us focus our energies and provided crucial support so that we could accomplish our goals.

One goal for the year was to continue increasing our outreach to people from outside the First Parish community by offering enriching opportunities for children and adults alike. One way in which we achieved this was through our annual Mini Walk for Hunger in support of Project Bread. Our goal to participate in and help organize a town-wide interfaith Mini-Walk for Hunger was realized in May of 2010, under the skillful guidance of Robin Ostrander who worked with the Interfaith group to organize this wonderful event. We had a great turnout of over 65 individuals from our local churches and the community. The total raised for Project Bread by the Interfaith Walk for Hunger was \$4,700, and we look forward to another successful Miniwalk for Hunger on May 1, 2011.

An important new addition to the spiritual enrichment for our Church School program has been our "Big Story Sundays", which occur on the first Sunday of every month and are created and facilitated by Donna Bertazzoni. During this time, the children meet at the Parish Hall first while parents proceed to the Meeting House for Worship. Under Donna Bertazzoni's able leadership, the children are led and engaged in an interactive worship activity based on various themes including All Saints Day, The Church Year, the Baptism of Jesus, Beatitudes, Exodus, etc. Afterwards, the children process to the Meeting House to rejoin their parents for communion. Donna has organized this collaborative effort with the Worship committee and it has been well received by all!

In June, the Ministry organized Church School Sunday, a worship service created and led by the Church School. The theme was based on Peace, and what that means to the children. It was the culmination of the children's year-long focus on peace, including their offerings which raised approximately \$600 for Pennies for Peace. Each class created a stepping-stone with a symbol of peace on it to place in our new Peace Garden in front of the Meeting House, complete with a Peace Pole. Many hours of hard work by all the committee members, teachers and other church members resulted in a very meaningful service. This was followed by an Ice Cream Social following the service, supported by the Ministry of Spiritual Life and Fellowship's able scooping talents. At Homecoming Sunday in Sept 2010, the Ministry co-led the All Church Cookout along with the Spiritual Life and Fellowship Ministry.

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**The Church School** was well staffed again by many capable teachers. Donna Bertazzoni has worked hard to maintain enough teachers for each class, but due to another shortage of teachers this fall, the Ministry agreed to again combine some classes. We currently have five Church School classes down from 6 last year and 7 classes the year prior: Nursery (ages 2 and under); 3, 4, 5 & 6 yr olds; 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Special thanks go to Brian Bayer for again being a great Nursery staffing coordinator. All Church School teachers were recognized with special thanks in June on Church School Sunday.

**The Junior High Youth Fellowship** in the Spring of 2010 was led by Tish Verizino and Joyce Cannon, and participated in a sandwich making day for Rosie's place. JYHF kicked off the 2010/2011 church year led by Dottie Vancura, Nancy Brind and Amie Colcord by participating in a Fast Food Progressive Dinner in Norwood, with 15 Middle school kids participating. They also performed a service project for the Family Outreach gift program at Christmas by collecting stocking items and stuffing stockings for the 9 children in the families First Parish provided gifts for. Following the Carol Sing and Living Nativity, they served and cleaned up the ziti dinner provided by the Vaccaros, in conjunction with the gift-wrapping evening. The Senior High Youth Fellowship was again led by Sharon Hobbes and Steve Hurley, and are sharing in Extreme Breakfasts.

**The Communion Class** included eight children this year. It was taught once again by Jeannie Germano and Steve Werth, whose ministry adds depth to the Christian education and fellowship of our children. Pastor Chris and Sharon Hobbes taught the **Confirmation Class**, with 12 youths confirming the baptismal promises made on their behalf and 10 becoming members of First Parish.

**Adult Education**, with Brian Bayer and Pastor Chris' leadership, offered learning opportunities during Lent and Advent. In keeping with the Lenten theme of horizontal habits, sessions explored our relationships to others and our responsibilities as people of faith. In Advent we looked at themes of an adult Christ at Christmas based on essays by Ray Brown of three biblical Christmas stories.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Nancy Brind*, Chairperson

*Brian Bayer, Andrea Deininger, Christy Baldwin, Lucinda Linde, Robin Ostrander*

Ministry Members

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## SENIOR HIGH YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Senior High Youth Fellowship continued to be a steady part of the First Parish Community and we have seen an increase in youth attendance at various worship services throughout the year. The Extreme Breakfasts on Sunday mornings during worship have continued to be the foundation of the program and are used as a focal point for our SHYF programming. Important issues have been discussed. We have been quite pleased with the response from the kids. Sharon Hobbs and Steve Hurley have continued with leadership in the fall of 2010.

In the fall of 2010, Pastor Chris, Donna Bertazzoni, Steve Hurley, and Sharon Hobbs met with parents and senior high students to look at the program and re-evaluate the offerings. Students were interested in maintaining the Extreme Breakfasts. There was also a hope that we would find a mis-

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SHYF

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sion trip to participate in and also that we could join with some other Protestant churches in town to do some events to promote friendly relationships among our youth. Fellowship/ mission and worship events are in the planning stages for 2011.

Steve and I are pleased that the SHYF program continues to be important to the youth of the church. This church is blessed with amazing youth who enrich the lives of the church and the adults who are blessed to work with them on a regular basis with their generous hearts and their love for one another. It is a gift for us to work with them.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon Hobbs and Steve Hurley*

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## MINISTRY OF MISSION AND SERVICE

2010 was another busy and productive year for the Ministry of Mission and Service. As always, the congregation was very generous with their time and financial resources in support of a variety of outreach efforts. Additionally, the Ministry made a number of donations in support of a variety of local, national and international causes.

During the Lent season, Mission and Service provided outreach opportunities for parishioners of all ages. The entire congregation participated in a Food Drive for the Westwood Food Pantry and clothing and supply drive for Candles to Crayons, an organization that supports children who are homeless or in need. The middle school children made sandwiches for Rosie's Place. Our High School students brought food donations to the Westwood Food Pantry and helped restock the shelves. Finally, everyone pitched in to donate items for and assemble 70 health kits for Church World Service. These health kits were made available to those affected by natural disasters in Haiti and Chili.

In October, Church members generously offered their time and energy to the "Pumpkins with a Purpose" annual mission fundraiser. We were raised over \$4300 which will be used to support and fund our 2011 outreach efforts.

At Christmas time, First Parish once again adopted 6 families through SNCARC and made Christmas possible by providing gifts, gift cards and household essentials. In addition, the congregation provided gifts for children who are seriously disabled and reside at the Mass Hospital School. Church members bought many of the gifts and funds raised from our 2009 "Pumpkins with a Purpose" project were used to complete the shopping. Finally, Alternative Gifts raised just over \$300 this year.

As in 2009, Mission and Service operated on a tight budget but with the funds from Pumpkin sales (in addition to the allocatable funds); we were able to financially support local and international charities. Local charities receiving donations this year included Westwood Community Chest, Westwood Food Pantry, SNCARC/Harris Fund (South Norfolk County Association for Retarded Citizens) and Hale Reservation. In addition, donations were made on behalf of parishioners participating in the Pan Mass Challenge and once again, a donation was given in support of the Church School's walk

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for hunger. The Pine Street Inn, Rosie's Place, Boston Living Center and Cambridge Housing Assistance, all Boston based charities, were given donations. Mission and Service continues to support MA Bible Society, MA Council of Churches, the Southern Poverty Law Project (teaching tolerance), Partners in Health (providing health care to people living in extreme poverty in Haiti, Peru and Africa), the New England Seafarers Mission, NW Coalition for the Homeless and Honduras Hope.

First Parish was once again able to meet our broader financial goal to provide funding to UCC's Church's Wider Mission, The UUA Service Committee, City Mission, Hospital Chaplaincy and Westwood's Interfaith Organization.

In 2010, over \$11,000 was collected from our special offerings (Easter, Christmas, Alternative Gifts, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, Christmas Family appeal and Haiti relief).

The Ministry of Mission and Service continues to be extremely grateful for the generosity and support of the Congregation, in spite of the very challenging economic climate.

Respectfully submitted:

*Tish Verzino* (Chairperson)

*Martha Crawford. Michael Gettings. Cheryl Gorman. Doug Joseph. Peg Underhill*

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## SPIRITUAL LIFE & FELLOWSHIP

The Committee was comprised of brand new members this year and they did an outstanding job. It's amazing what new-talent can produce, just like the Pats.

The most significant event of the year was the Retreat which was held at Hale Reservation in October. This provided an opportunity for those who attended to share thoughts and ideas with each other. And we had a wonderful facilitator who walked us through various exercises and got us thinking about life from various perspectives. This was a very satisfying exercise and proved that members of the congregation were definitely in store for a repeat performance of some sort next year.

Another main point that we addressed this past year was the size of the coffee-hour. We downsized it significantly for several reasons: 1) it was becoming very costly to set-up a Sunday coffee hour, 2) people were refraining from signing up for coffee hours, and 3) there were only 4-5 families who were rotating through and serving the coffee hours.

Now the coffees are smaller and easier to prepare. There is a more social atmosphere where people are getting to know one another. However, we still have the problem of people not being willing to sign up to serve the coffee hours. We will have to make an effort to get people interested somehow.

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We also put on a Pot Luck supper over the year. These were good intergenerational events for members to just come and enjoy life with one another.

Just remember, it's the Fellowship that keeps us all together.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Bill Holbrook*

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## MINISTRY OF WORSHIP

The Ministry of Worship continued its many endeavors, meeting monthly with Rev. Christopher Dodge, to coordinate much of what transpires each week during our church service and special liturgies, such as Palm Sunday, Easter, Christmas Eve services. This year members of our group joined with the Christian Education Ministry to plan intergenerational "Big Story" Sundays and with Spiritual Life and Fellowship to plan the Sabbath Retreat at Hale Reservation. We strive to provide meaningful worship services for all.

So very much goes into planning and executing each service, and our First Parish community contributes to our worship experiences in so many ways. Each month when the ministry meets we review any feedback we have received. We take seriously, any and all commentary from members and we decide if changes need to be made. There are so many First Parish members that help shape the services in a myriad of ways. Mike Ellis continues to be the master of the reader schedule. We are thankful for him and the many other people in the congregation who have volunteered their time and talents as readers during our weekly and special services, such as during Hanging of the Greens and Maundy Thursday. In 2010 we instituted a schedule of greeters so that there is a designated person to greet parishioners as they enter the sanctuary. We appreciate the smiles and kind words of all those who have volunteered in this capacity. The ushers, under the coordination of Bill Holbrook, help keep us "organized." The Sanctuary guild, led by Ron Arntz, is a group of "unsung heroes" who also help to organize the church, polishing and renewing our space. Every week we enjoy the donations of chancel flowers. Louise Domina provides her time to coordinate the flower schedule. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated church members that contribute to worship services with their leadership, feedback and time!

And speaking of time and talents, we are blessed to have such a fine music program. The Worship Ministry continues to work with our music director Josh Nannestad. We are fortunate to have Rev. Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker, Joanna Nannestad, and the very dedicated choir members. This year Josh continued the Music in the Meetinghouse Series and brought back Synergy once again at Christmas.

2010 brought a welcome addition to our weekly services. We now have complementary lectionary and pew bibles so we may follow along with the weekly reader. Many thanks to the Bertazzoni family who donated the red NRSV bibles from memorial funds held in honor of Scott Bertazzoni.

At the close of this year I would like to thank all members of the church staff, but, in particular Rev.  
(Continued on page 20)

Dodge and Judy. Judy continues to work diligently in running the daily operation of the church and provides our ministry with administrative support. Reverend Christopher Dodge has worked closely with our ministry providing pastoral leadership. Throughout the year Rev. Dodge led us in numerous discussions, educating us in matters of theology and spirituality. He has boundless creativity and is highly dedicated to providing us with stimulating, thought provoking, and reflective services.

This year will end the tenure of three long-time members, Allison Bayer, Jim McKenzie and myself, Barb Worth. I would like to thank both Allison and Jim for their dedication to this group over the past years. Jim had served as chairperson for many years and had helped direct this committee through the interim search committee process, tenure of Rev. Stryker, and the transition to Rev. Dodge's present ministry here at First Parish. Jim has been appreciated for his wealth of knowledge of church history and his strong leadership qualities.

Respectfully submitted,

*Barbara F. Worth*

*Allison Bayer, Roger Christian, Pam Kane, Jim McKenzie, Judy Thomson*

Ministry Members

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## ALTAR FLOWER COORDINATOR

31 generous parishioners took pleasure in donating altar flowers for Sunday services in 2010. In addition, Clapboardtree Nursery School and 8 flower endowments provided arrangements.

Westwood Gardens Florist continues to try to accommodate our needs with quality and variety, and also when we make special requests. They serve us while still keeping the cost very low, and most of the time they succeed in pleasing us. A unique situation occurred this year when arrangements were mysteriously becoming dehydrated. Apparently the culprit was a new type of container being used. The problem was addressed immediately, and we hope, resolved.

Summer Union services continue to solicit and enjoy homegrown flowers from parishioners' backyard gardens. The white artificial arrangement is available for the altar midweek and any other time it's needed. It should be used.

If you would like to donate flowers in memory of or in honor of a loved one, or to commemorate a special occasion, please contact me at 781-326-7640.

Respectfully submitted,

*Louise F. Domina*

## USHERS

We thought that last year was the training period with Rev. Chris; we figured that this was when we would learn from each other to minimize the number of times we might step on each other's toes. But it turns out that 2010 was more of a 'teaching-year' for Rev. Chris. This year he not only taught us how and when to light candles, but why it should be done that way. This was true with other small elements of usher duties; it's a case of refining each of them.

As usual, the Usher Teams are doing very well. They can, however, use some assistance. There are two teams that are short personnel and need support immediately. Plus we can always use individuals who would like to volunteer to usher on a temporary-basis. So please think about either one of these options. You'll really enjoy it and you'll get to know the members of the congregation.

Thank you, Ushers!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Bill Holbrook*

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## SANCTUARY GUILD

The Sanctuary Guild continued its quiet "behind the scenes work throughout 2010.

There are 6 teams of 2-3 persons. Each team takes 2 months during the year. Their duties are to keep the sanctuary and the rest of the Meeting House ready for Sunday worship – such as taking care of the little, seldom thought about details like dusting, neatening the pew racks, removal of unused communion cups, and old bulletin, polishing brass, etc.

The Sanctuary Guild and roster is posted in the Parish Hall lobby.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Ron Arutz*

## MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee's purpose is to encourage gifts to First Parish in memory of loved ones, and to decide, along with surviving family members, the appropriate uses for gifts received.

Members of the Committee are Ron Arntz, Dave Blomquist, Shirley DeFeo, Jane Forsberg, Marj Higgins and its Chairman, Betsy Dakin.

Gifts this year have been made in memory of Emma Lloyd, the mother of Barbara Hayes.

Pew Bibles in the same version as the Lectern Bible were given in memory of Scott Bertazzoni. Another expenditure this year was an upgrade to the church's sound system in memory of Carl and Earlene Witt.

Scholarships are awarded according to the number of applications and the amount of interest available. This year three scholarship applications were received and \$100 was awarded to each student. The Committee this year voted to only award scholarships to graduating high school seniors who will be starting college in September. Contributions to the Scholarship Fund's endowment are always welcome, whether as a memorial to a loved one or to show our support for First Parish's students.

Most of the Memorial Funds are endowed ones, meaning that the principal can not be spent. With today's low interest rates, some of the funds' annual earnings were too low to fund their intended purpose. In such cases, transfers need to be made from the General Memorials Fund. We did that this year with the Scholarship Fund and the Flower Fund, which is for the endowed annual altar bouquets. This year the Garden/Landscape Fund ran out of funds to pay for seasonal flowers that adorn our property. Fortunately parishioners donated enough funds to pay for seasonal plants for a few more years. Al Fowell also donated and planted many flowers.

There was no concert funded by the Music Fund this year. The Mather Bible Fund did have enough money to pay for the Bibles the church gives to the third graders each year.

For more information about all of the Memorial Funds, please request a booklet about them from the Church office.

We thank Ron Arntz for engraving brass plates for the pews and other items.

Respectfully submitted,

*Betsy Dakin*

**2010 CHURH MEMBERSHIP**

**Membership as of December 31, 2009.....359**

**Additions:**

By Confirmation.....10

**+10**

**Subtractions:**

By death.....4

By resignation.....4

Made Inactive.....5

**-13**

**Membership as of December 31, 2010.....356**

Active Members: 356

Inactive Members: 100

Perm Inactive Members: 21

Adherents: 43

Prospective Members: 104

**The Parish Record:**

Baptisms: 1 Weddings: 2 Funerals: 2

**Member Deaths:**

Edna Matthei (3/8/10)

Louis Karl Stuntzner (4/23/10)

John Danforth (11/11/10)

Barbara Perry (11/29/10)

**Member Resignations:**

Scott Sullivan

Maureen Sullivan

Jamie Osenton

Jessica Osenton

**Made Inactive:**

Bob Mancini

Cara Mancini

Claire Mancini

Melissa Mancini

Laura Stanton

**Members Received:**

**(5/23/10 - Confirmation)**

Joshua Belinsky

Eric Burgess

Bridgett Fiumedora

Jennifer Hichar

Nathan Hyde

Sara Hyde

Claire Underhill

Alyssa Verzino

Jacqueline Whalen

**(6/6/10 - Confirmation)**

Steven Kane

Respectfully submitted

*Judy Holbrook*

