



The Clapboardtree Spire

News From First Parish of Westwood, United Church
340 Clapboardtree St., Westwood, MA 02090

February, 2011

2010 ANNUAL MEETING

On Sunday, Jan. 30th First Parish held its 62nd Annual Meeting. In addition to the usual business around Annual Reports and Nominations, the following votes were taken.

- **Article VIII By-Law Amendment, Section 1 (Meetings):**
It was unanimously agreed that the Fiscal Year would remain from January – December but that the Program Year would be changed to run from June to May. Effective 2012, two separate meetings will be held – one in January to discuss financial matters, and one in May to accept new Ministry nominations and celebrate the programs at First Parish. This amendment allows for more concentrated time to complete the financial planning for the next year's budget, and puts the Ministries in synch with the more familiar academic year format.
- **2011 Budget**
The 2011 Budget of \$298,417 was unanimously approved. Total income for 2011 is projected to be \$273,688, which reflects a \$24,000 deficit. If the deficit is not balanced by the end of the year, it will be offset by taking a percentage off all available Special Purpose Funds, Endowment, and Unallocated Interest from Special Purpose Fund investments to generate additional income.
Special fundraisers are one way to offset the deficit. If you have an idea for a fundraiser, please contact Moderator Bob Deininger.
- **Building Consolidation**
The 2011 budget process has brought us to a new sense of urgency around the concept of consolidating our church properties in order to control costs such as fuel, electricity and maintenance, which currently consume about 20% of our budget. To that end, it was unanimously voted to form a Consolidation Committee which will explore the avenues open to us and begin to define the process with which we will move forward. If you are interested in participating, please contact Bob Deininger or Pastor Chris.

POT LUCK SUPPER

Save Sunday, February 13th for an all-church fellowship event – a Valentines Pot Luck Supper! Mark your calendar now, and plan to come to the Parish Hall at 5:30PM for great food and fellowship.

It's a pot luck – so get out those recipes and bring a side dish or entrée to share. Drinks and dessert will be provided. See you then!

SAVE THE DATE

Save Sunday, March 6th at 3PM for a concert by the combined choirs of First Parish of Westwood and the United Church of Walpole, performing the "Gospel Mass" by Robert Ray and selections from the "Pilgrim Psalms" by Ross Lee Finney.

This concert, a continuation of a tradition started last year when both choirs performed Rutter's "Requiem" at the United Church of Walpole, promises to be an equally wonderful event - so mark your calendars now! A free-will offering will be taken at the door.

The Ministry of Spiritual Life and Fellowship will be organizing donations of finger food desserts for the reception which will follow the concert. Stay tuned for how you can help!

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

February 1	Heather Ellis, Karen Ellis
February 2	Louise Domina, Eleanor Johnson
February 3	Bruce Smith, Nick Underhill
February 4	David Aldinger, Marge Eramo Kevin Murray, Russell Verzino
February 5	Matthew Hurley, Tom Miskell Jr.
February 6	Margaret Carr
February 10	Doug Joseph, Pamela Kane
February 11	David Lewis
February 12	Andrew Cutler, Katie Gorman Matthew Hiller
February 13	Amie Colcord, Barbara Delisle Stephen Wright III
February 14	Nancy Lewis, Lauren Werth
February 18	Benjamin Anderson
February 19	Cathy Ellis
February 21	Scott Delisle, Dan Wagner
February 22	Christopher Burgess
February 23	Arthur Millos, Mason Shaw
February 24	Richie Kendall
February 25	Robert Blomquist, Chris Dodge
February 27	Joyce Marsh, Caroline McDonough
February 28	Gordie Bailey

Anniversaries

February 5	Gerald & Caroline Hart
February 22	Philip & Molly Speros



LIFETIMES

Deployed:

- Ben Baldwin: to Afghanistan
- Jim Howard: to Iraq

THE CLAPBOARDTREE SPIRE

The Clapboardtree Spire is published monthly, September - June by and for The First Parish of Westwood, United Church. Material should be submitted to the church office by the third Friday of the prior month. Available monthly at www.firstparishwestwood.org, and via email or mail.

WHO'S WHO AT FIRST PARISH

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THANK YOU TO OUR LAY LEADERS

A huge thank you to all our Lay Leaders – those who give so generously of their valuable time to further the work of the church by volunteering to serve on one of First Parish's many ministries or committees.

Special thanks to the following Lay Leaders whose terms of service have expired:

- **Treasurer Cathy Ellis**, who has served most faithfully for five years – and has agreed to stay on as Assistant Treasurer through June.
- **Collector Martha Crawford**, who has worked tirelessly to keep track of all our members' contributions – and who has served long and hard tracking Mission's expenditures.
- **Ministry and Committee members** Christy Baldwin (CE), Allison Bayer (CE), Brian Bayer (CE), Thelma Bruno (Interfaith), Louise Domina (Church Council At-Large), Linda Johnson (Pastor/Parish), Beth Kendall (Mission), Mark McClellan (SFO), Jim McKenzie (Worship), Robin Ostrander (CE), Beth Roper (CE), and Barb Worth (Worship)

And, as always, a grateful welcome to our 2011 Lay Leaders, listed below:

Moderator: Bob Deininger

Clerk: Judy Thomson

Treasurer: _____

Assistant Treasurer: Cathy Ellis

Collector: Shirley DeFeo

Auditor: Robbie Werth

Nominating Committee:

Pastor Chris, Linda McKenzie, Barb Worth

Church Council At-Large:

Lee Adourian, Marge Eramo, Anne Christian

Ministry of Discipleship & Education

Nancy Brind, Lucinda Linde, Andrea Deininger, Dotty Vancura, Tara Kelly, Nancy Whitney

Ministry of Worship:

Judy Thomson, Roger Christian, Kathleen Davis, Pam Kane, Marge Eramo, _____

Ministry of Stewardship, Finance & Operations:

Jerry Verzino, Barb Delisle, Louise Donovan, Doug Hyde, Dan Hall, Jim Worth

Ministry of Mission & Service:

Peg Underhill, Tish Verzino, Martha Crawford, Doug Joseph, Mary Carol Waters, Nancy Lewis

Ministry of Spiritual Life & Fellowship:

Bob Baldwin, Lloyd Clark, Joyce Marsh, Elizabeth Vaccaro, Bill Holbrook, Dianne Howard

Pastor/Parish Committee:

Pastor Chris, Nancy Brind, Marge Eramo, Roger Christian, Brian Bayer

Memorials:

Ron Arntz, Betsy Dakin, Jane Forsberg, Marj Higgins, Shirley DeFeo, Dave Blomquist

Sanctuary Guild:

Ron Arntz, Sheldon Blaney, Dave Blomquist, Thelma Bruno, June Clay, Shirley DeFeo, Jim McKenzie, Elvin Fowell, David Friedl, Linda McKenzie, Louise Donovan, Sue Burgess

Interfaith Delegate:

Dave Blomquist

Denominational Delegates:

Dave Blomquist, Martha Crawford, Moderator

Flower Coordinator:

Louise Domina

Usher Coordinator:

Bill Holbrook

Rosie's Place Coordinator:

Thelma Bruno

Fair Chairperson:

Karina Adourian

FROM PASTOR CHRIS



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, and Karen. 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.

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 inter-generational 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



Donna Bertazzoni
Church School

*We are separate stars within a mutual night.
Against the encompassing darkness, let us, together, light our candles.*

From *A Slice of Snow*, by Joan Walsh Anglund

At this moment I am feeling fortunate: Fortunate to have a gas fireplace; Fortunate to have warm, long underwear; Fortunate for the strength to shovel away what was plowed in front of my door (not a metaphor); Fortunate that a gas stove can be used in multiple ways; Fortunate to have friends; Fortunate for a power outage in a snowstorm.

My powerless day included a cell phone and a functioning fireplace. Not too tough to take, but it made me appreciate technology. Without electricity and the electronic gadgets it powers, life changes quickly. Basics, like staying warm, communicating, preparing food, and entertainment are impacted. I was inconvenienced, but I had the good fortune to share some time with my daughter. We were never so cold that it was a problem. We enjoyed each other's company. We adapted, thinking about our resources in unexpected ways. Our daylight power outage became an adventure.

It made me think of the blessings we share as a congregation. Blessings promised to us by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The assurances of the Beatitudes: that when we are in our poorest, most disadvantaged state God is our nearest companion, walking with us in our struggles and our pain.

I invite you to come explore these blessings on February 6 when the Big Story is about the Beatitudes.

Blessings,
Donna

CHURCH SCHOOL UPDATE

Sunday, Feb. 6th: Big Story Sunday

- **10:00 AM:** Church School children start the morning off in the Parish Hall and cross the street later to share communion with their families.

Sunday, Feb. 13th:

- **10:00AM:** Worship in the Meeting House
- **10:15AM:** Church School classes in the Parish Hall
- **11:30AM:** Confirmation Class in the Stage Classroom

Sunday, Feb. 20th:

- **9:00 AM:** Festival Choir rehearsal in the Meeting House
- **10:00 AM:** Worship
- **10:15AM:** Church School classes in the Parish Hall

Sunday, Feb. 27th:

- **10:00 AM:** Family worship
- **10:15 AM:** Church School classes in the Parish Hall
- **10:15AM:** SHYF Extreme Breakfast upstairs in the Cottage
- **11:30AM:** Confirmation Class in the Stage Classroom

WHY NOT TRY THE LUNCH BUNCH?

Are you no longer working and available to "do lunch"? On Thursday, February 3rd - and the first Thursday of every month through June - you are invited to come to the Parish Hall at 11:30 AM to join the "Lunch Bunch" for good conversation and fellowship. All ages are welcome. There is no agenda - just a nice lunch and some conversation with fellow First Parishioners.

Just RSVP to the church office no later than the day before to let us know you're coming, and then bring a bag lunch to the gathering. Coffee and dessert are provided. We hope to see you there!

The lunch group will also meet on: Mar. 3, Apr. 7, May 5, and June 2.

SLEDDING SAFETY

Taking the spills out of sledding would be like taking away the snow. Little kids may be perfectly happy to glide down a gentle slope and ease to a stop at the bottom – but such a run may seem tame to those with a few winters under their belts. Many older kids love the feeling of flying down a hill with no guarantee of a clean landing. Left to their own devices, they might straddle a piece of cardboard and ride over a cliff. This is why they aren't left to their own devices. Parents can't crash-proof their kids, but they can draw the line between good winter fun and reckless abandon. It's a line that far too many children cross. According to the National Safety Council, sleds and toboggans send more than 34,000 people to the emergency room each year. Throw in inner tubes, and the number can shoot well past 74,000, according to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. While sledders come in all sizes, 5 to 9 year olds are the most likely to suffer injuries. At this age, kids have a well-developed sense of adventure but little sense of self-preservation.

What kinds of injuries are caused by sledding?

The injuries that happen during sledding depend on the sled, the slope, and the rider. Kids under 5 often ride headfirst on runner sleds, a technique that makes them vulnerable to head-on collisions with trees or telephone poles. Not surprisingly, head, neck, and facial injuries are especially common among young riders. They can also hurt themselves by catching their hands or fingers under the runners.

Older kids like to sit on sleds, which is actually a relatively safe approach. But if they hit a bump at 20 mph, they can easily fly into the air and land hard on their bottoms. For this reason, they are vulnerable to spinal injuries. They can also hurt their arms and legs if they try to break a fall.

How can sledding injuries be avoided?

Here are some tips for keeping your kids safe during the sledding season.

- Make sure children know that sledding can be dangerous. They'll be more likely to listen to you if they know their fun could be cut short by bumps, bruises, or even broken bones.
- Encourage riders to go feet first down the slope by sitting face forward on the sled. This approach will greatly reduce the risk of head injuries.
- Buy your child a classic steerable runner sled. Not only do these sleds have a certain retro chic, they're much easier to control and much safer than toboggans, inner tubes or plastic saucers.
- Check the terrain. Many young sledders think that trees, rocks, bare patches, creeks and other obstacles are just part of sledding. They don't realize how quickly one of these hazards could put an end to the fun. Make sure the slope is gentle, clear from top to bottom, and doesn't end near a road or freeway.
- Keep your child away from makeshift snow ramps. While it may be tempting to go sailing through the air like Evel Knievel, ramps are hazardous and can even be deadly. A 13-year-old Wisconsin girl died in 2002 after her sled hit a snow ramp and went out of control, sending her tumbling through the air until she landed on her head and neck.
- Bundle kids up. Younger children are more susceptible than adults to hypothermia, a potentially life-threatening situation where the body temperature falls well below normal. Be sure to check youngsters often, and bring them in right away if they get wet-water and wind can reduce body temperature quickly. Older kids should dress in warm layers. In addition to protecting your child from the elements, proper winter clothing from head to toe can help cushion falls.

(Continued on page 7)

- Consider buying your child a helmet, especially if (s)he's under 12. Helmets have become standard equipment for sports such as skateboarding and downhill skiing, and they won't seem out of place on the sledding hill.
- Tell your kids to come inside for regular water breaks. Sweating under heavy winter clothing and breathing hard from exertion can cause dehydration.
- Don't forget the sunscreen. Even though there may not be much skin peeking out from under those heavy coats and caps, sunlight reflecting off the snow can burn in a hurry.
- Most of all, watch your young ones to make sure they're following the rules. Better yet, get your own sled and race them to the bottom. Kids may be fearless, but gravity is on your side.

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Happy Sledding,
Margery Eramo, RN, CHM

DID YOU KNOW...

JANUARY MAINTENANCE COSTS

Electricity:

\$3688
(\$3226 for the church)

Snow Plowing:

\$5035

Snow Shoveling:

\$300 (first two weeks of
January only)

FEBRUARY FESTIVAL CHOIR

The Festival Choir will sing on Sunday, Feb. 20th - we hope *you* will join the fun.

Singers of all ages are invited to participate. Rehearsal is that Sunday at 9AM in the choir loft.

Why not give it a try?

WINTER WEATHER POLICY

As we all know, the weather in New England is nothing if not unpredictable, so it's often difficult to decide what's "on" in the face of possibly nasty weather. We hope the following helps:

- *Sunday worship will always be offered*, no matter what the weather, thanks to Pastor Chris' close proximity to the church. However, please use your best judgment about safe travel – but if you can get here, we will worship together.
- *If church school classes are cancelled*, that information will be available by watching the storm cancellations on Channel 7.
- *All other program cancellations* will be announced, whenever possible, on the church voicemail and website (www.firstparishwestwood.org) If no information is available on either of these sources please contact Judy at 617-759-0653.

FOX HILL BIBLE STUDY

Rev. Chris Dodge will meet with the Fox Hill Bible Study group on Thursday, February 17th at 10:30 AM.

The group meets at Fox Hill Village on the third Thursday of every month, at

10:30AM. If you live at Fox Hill Village and would like to begin attending the Bible study, please contact Pastor Chris for the meeting location.

FIRST PARISH VOLUNTEERS

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sunday, Feb. 6th:
Given by Elvin Fowell, in memory of his father, Rev. Myron Fowell.

Sunday, Feb. 20th:
Given by Thelma & Nick Bruno, in memory of Diane Mackys.

Sunday, Feb. 13th:
Given by Ruth Very and family, in memory of Robert Winslow Very.

Sunday, Feb. 27th:
Given by Richard & Diana Lassen, in memory of loved ones.

ROSIE'S PLACE VOLUNTEERS Monday, February 21st

Drivers:
T. Bruno & S. DeFeo

Fruit (canned fruit cocktail: \$5-\$7 maximum)
S. DeFeo T. Berg V. Mather L. Owen D. Howard
T. Bruno

Sandwiches (14 turkey on whole wheat bread)
B. Delisle C. Mather T. Bruno P. Sullivan J. Holbrook
J. Clay J. Germano B. Macdonald M. Speros J. Berg

USHER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Feb. 6:
Doug Hyde
Jerry Verzino
Mike Gettings

Sunday, Feb. 20:
Bob Kadehjian
Bob Robertson
Jim & Linda McKenzie

Sunday, Feb. 13:
Dix & Dianne Howard
Steve & Ingegerd Larch
Ron & Joy Sudduth

Sunday, Feb. 27:
Bill Holbrook
Sheldon Blaney
Don Friedl
Lee Adourian

COFFEE VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, Feb. 6th:
Thelma Bruno and Shirley DeFeo

Sunday, Feb. 13th:
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Sunday, Feb. 20th:
???????????????

Sunday, Feb. 27th:
The Hurleys

LAY READERS & GREETERS

Sunday, Feb. 6th:
• Lay Reader: Brian Bayer
• Greeter: Lloyd Clark

Sunday, Feb. 13th:
• Lay Reader: Kathy Davis
• Greeter: Roger Christian

Sunday, Feb. 20th:
• Lay Reader: Denis Cabral
• Greeter: Judy Thomson

Sunday, Feb. 27th:
• Lay Reader: Michael Ellis
• Greeter: Robin Ostrander

WESTWOOD MEN'S GROUP

The Westwood Men's Group will meet on Thursday, Feb. 17th at 9:30AM in the Parish Hall. All men from Westwood and surrounding communities are welcome to attend.

The February meeting will feature Guest Speaker Vicky Vickray, the new Director of Westwood DPW.

The group's next meeting is on Thursday, March 17th.