



The Clapboardtree Spire

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

September, 2011

WELCOME BACK!

After an incredibly quick, and rather hot, summer, it's almost time to gather again for worship and fellowship at First Parish!

Homecoming Sunday is Sept. 11th.

- Join us at 10AM for a communion worship service in the Meeting House
- Church School classes begin this Sunday too – so get ready to kick off another great year.

Come to the All-Church Picnic

On Sunday, Sept. 11th everyone is invited to cross the street after worship for an All-Church Cook Out – “burgers & dogs” with all the fixings, hosted by the Ministry of Spiritual Life & Fellowship and the Ministry of Christian Education.

- Each Ministry is asked to appoint two members to help (one with set-up (9AM) and one with break-down (12:30)). Chairpersons, please contact Bill Holbrook with volunteers' names.
- The congregation is invited to bring a dessert or a non-mayonnaise salad to share. Donations may be left in the kitchen before worship.

Questions? Contact the church office. We can't wait to see everyone back on Sept. 11th!

CATCH UP ON YOUR GIVING

Have you been away for the summer? Have you gotten behind in your pledging or giving to First Parish? Like past summers, our income is very lean in the summer. But unfortunately, our expenses never go on vacation.

As you return to First Parish in the fall, please help the church by getting up to date on your pledges or giving. If you need to know where you stand with your pledge or giving, you can contact the church office for a copy of your statement or email treasurer@firstparishwestwood.org.

Thank you!



ALL CHURCH RETREAT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2011 9AM-5PM AT HALE RESERVATION

Again this year, we are excited to offer a retreat open to all individuals and families of First Parish, - an opportunity to take some time away to enjoy fellowship with one another, learn and commune with God. Last year's retreat was a huge

success – and we want *you* to participate this year!

We will meet at Hale Reservation on Saturday, Oct. 29th from 9AM-5PM. Since we have to plan for inclement weather, we are limited to 40 people for this retreat. All

ages are welcome, including children. Hopefully you can make the whole day, but if you cannot, we are pleased to offer a half-day option.

Watch the weekly Sunday announcements and emails for additional details.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

September 1	Patricia Wright
September 2	Allie Damren, Caroline Kendall Jack Kendall, Elizabeth Vaccaro
September 4	Samuel Cutler
September 5	Lilianna Bayer
September 8	Regan Wagner
September 10	Daniel Bailey
September 11	Marj Higgins, Daniel Powers Ashley Walker
September 13	Alexander Peters, Laura Peters Michael Stefans
September 14	Gwen Anderson, Ralph Sautter
September 16	Barb Worth
September 17	Thomasine Berg, Nancy Dempze, David Porter
September 19	Colin Roper, Jim Weatherbee
September 20	Andrea Deininger, Jennifer Werth
September 21	Sharon Keleher
September 23	Geoffrey Morrison, Elisa Walsh
September 24	Chris Burgess, Martha Crawford Jed Delisle, Kyle Sullivan
September 25	Christopher Abbadessa Louisa Genest
September 27	Donna MacClary, Jake Pfaff
September 28	David Blomquist, Pat Johnson
September 30	Ashley Candella, Brian Daley Luke Gaydos

Anniversaries

September 8	Roger & Anne Christian
September 9	David & Janice Russell
September 10	Chris & Debora Pfaff
September 17	Lee & Karina Adourian Lisa & Chris McKeown Eric & Suzanne Peterson
September 20	Dennis & Melanie Cabral
September 25	Jim & Linda McKenzie Ron & Joy Sudduth
September 27	Peter & Pam Kane

LIFETIMES

Born:

- On June 16th, *Grace Tyler Rutan*, granddaughter of Cyndi Gardiner, born to her son Brad and his wife Jean;

Married:

- on June 25th, *Rev. Christopher Dodge and Lynne Daige*, at First Parish

Died:

- Judy Thomson's mother*, in mid-August, in Toronto following a brief illness;
- Karen Westerfield Tucker's mother* on August 27th, and her father-in-law in early August.

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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Parish Nurse:	Margery Eramo
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FROM PASTOR CHRIS



Every day, I set aside a few minutes to read and reflect upon a daily devotional I receive via e-mail from the United Church of Christ. These devotionals help me to deepen my relationship with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I share with you the following devotion that reminds me why I believe in Jesus Christ and why worship is an important part of my faith journey. This reflection is written by Martin B. Copenhagen:

"Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation." — Psalm 111:1

This fall, a beloved saint in our congregation, Marjorie Scoboria, died just short of her 104th birthday. The Sunday before her death she was in her usual spot in the congregation in the fourteenth row on the left. (Did you think we preachers don't notice that sort of thing?) She was offering her witty little quips to those around her, standing for the hymns. In other ways, however, she was limited in how she could participate. In recent years, her eyesight and her hearing were almost completely gone, but she continued to come to worship every Sunday.

When I asked Marjorie about that (after all, if I were over a hundred years old, I think I would stay in bed every once in a while), she looked surprised by the question, and replied, "Because I need to be in the congregation with the people."

Woody Allen famously said, "Ninety percent of life is just showing up." But he's wrong. Ninety percent of life is showing up over and over again. People sometimes speak of "going to church" on Sunday morning, as if the church had some kind of existence without the people, or as if it were a building.

We all know the children's game, "Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people." That may be a good game, but it is bad theology. As Marjorie knew so well, the church is the people. So you have to show up. It's not a church until you get there.

Peace,
Pastor Chris

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP

September 11

- Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Choir resumes (9am rehearsal in Choir Loft)
- 9/11 Remembrance

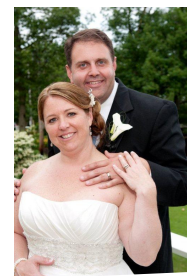
September 18

- Blessing of Church School Learners and Teachers

THANK YOU

Lynne and I are so appreciative for the outpouring of support and well wishes as our wedding day approached. And it was great to see that some of you could be present at our wedding ceremony here at First Parish. We were truly overwhelmed by the generosity of the congregation in your gifts to us

Since our honeymoon in Aruba, it seems that the summer has gone by quickly for us as Lynne, Nick and I have spent time settling in to the parsonage together.



Is a devotional reading part of your daily routine? If it is, bravo! If it is not, consider giving it try. It will ground you and deepen your spiritual life.

A wonderful resource for this spiritual practice is the *Still Speaking Daily Devotional* from the United Church of Christ. These daily meditations, sent via email, are based on a scripture passage. They are brief (no more than 250 words) and conclude with a short word of prayer. It only takes a few minutes. They are written by pastors and church leaders across our denomination, with 2 or 3 of them right from our own Massachusetts backyard.

To sign up, go to www.ucc.org. At the bottom of the page, look for "Feed Your Spirit" and click on "Daily devotions to start your day off right"

Throughout the fall, we will closely follow the Hebrew Bible readings in the Revised Common Lectionary. These will take us into the books of Exodus, Joshua and Judges.

We will follow the Israelites through their times in the wilderness and consider what that has to do with our lives and the life of First Parish. Watch the weekly email blast for weekly "sermon teasers"

FROM MODERATOR BOB DEININGER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MACUCC ANNUAL MEETING

As moderator, one of my privileges is representing First Parish at the MACUCC Annual Meeting. One of the highlights of the Annual Meeting held on

June 18th was the keynote address by UCC General Minister & President Geoffrey Black. Reverend Black outlined the UCC's Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals (BHAGs). However, we should probably refer to them as Big, **Holy**, Audacious Goals. The following goals define "what the UCC is and what it will become":

- A growing church, a growing movement "to be conversant with all faith traditions; to be spiritual and missional about our capacity to serve God."
- Widely recognized witness for peace, justice, equality and inclusivity; we will do this unashamedly, unapologetically and without fear.
- A catalyst for excellent leadership in every setting of ministry
- An environmental steward central to our understanding and practice of Christian faith
- Relevant to and reflective of the age and racial/ethnic demographics of this nation

Black indicates that "we need to take these goals and turn them into plans that are measurable and for which we can be held accountable to you. This is the time to become completely engaged in making this the church that God has called us to be." As we think about First Parish's vision and mission, let's consider how we can help the UCC achieve these goals.

Two other initiatives discussed during the Annual Meeting were **Mission:1** and **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence**. Reverend Dodge has participated in the **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence** program which develops, promotes, and sustains pastors through new clergy groups, clergy communities of practice, and continuing education and learning events. I hope First Parish will participate in **Mission:1** which is a UCC initiative for the first 11 days of this November (11-1-11 to 1-11-11).

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Moderator
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Mission:1 will be a coordinated campaign to gather more than 1 million food and household items for local food banks and ask local congregations to advocate for hunger-related causes.

Crossroads: Save the Date

On behalf of the MACUCC, First Parish will be hosting an informational meeting on *Crossroads* on Sunday, September 25 from 2:30 - 4:30 PM. Crossroads, is a new ministry of the MACUCC which seeks to engage congregations in an intentional season of assessment and discernment. Crossroads is designed for churches that are dealing with the following issues:

- Decline in worship attendance
- Significant building issues (too much space, inadequate parking, deferred maintenance)
- Aging membership
- Changing neighborhood
- Decline in financial resources

Crossroads will help local churches answer “What is God calling our congregation to do and be in this time and place?” with 6-9 month program called *New Beginnings*. Please save the date as it would be great to have as many lay leaders as possible attend and learn more. More information is available at www.macucc.org/crossroads.

In faith,
Bob Deininger, Moderator

FROM OUR WIDER CHURCH

Being part of the something bigger is a blessing! Being part of a bigger church let's our ministry reach farther than we could on our own. Being part of a bigger church offers us the advantage of resources, programs and professionals that help us to achieve excellence in our service to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Being part of a bigger church let's us hear our Still Speaking God in ways even deeper than what we might hear in our own church community. Being part of the United Church of Christ is a blessing!

Two expressions of our wider church met this past summer. In June, the MA Conference met in Sturbridge. At this annual meeting, sister churches from across the state gathered shortly after the devastating tornadoes that affect our neighbors in this state. An appeal to UCC churches just prior to the meeting, culminated in a dedication of \$48,000 for tornado relief. Along with that support came countless prayers for comfort and recovery and hundreds of hands willing to work on clean-up efforts. Mirroring the experiences of many congregations, a budget was approved that included difficult cutbacks in staff, programming and mission. A true blessing at this meeting was the kick-off of a Capital Campaign for the Pastoral Excellence Program. With a goal of \$3.5 million, \$610,850 had already been pledged. This program provides resources to pastors in our Conference that encourage excellence in ministry and support in leadership that is taking churches into “uncharted waters”.

Dick Harter, the chair of the Board of Directors, offered these words at the meeting, challenging delegates to think about how much their churches have already changed over the past 10 years.

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“God does not promise freedom from change or freedom from challenge. God does not promise freedom from tornadoes or economic dislocation. These are real. These are with us. But, God does promise to care for those that respond to God’s call. We, you and I are heirs of this promise here in Massachusetts. We have been called, and gathered into churches from the Bay to the Berkshires. These gathered communities are precious to God, and to us. But they are not unchanging.”

The General Synod met in July in Tampa, FL. This biennial gathering of the UCC from across the nation took up many matters of business from approving a new governance structure at the national level to many matters of social concern and justice. To see the work of the General Synod, go to www.ucc.org and click on the General Synod link. To see more about the work of our MA Conference, go to www.macucc.org and click on the Annual Meeting link.

While we are a church that is congregational in governance, meetings of the wider church hold an important role. Like any local congregation, they are a gathering of faithful people that have sought to discern the speaking of God through the Spirit. And while they cannot speak for a local congregation, they are called to speak to the congregations. So we are called, as covenant partners, to listen in good faith just as they are called to listen to us. What a blessing!

NAME TAGS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Knowing who we are worshipping with is an important part of growing together as a community and being hospitable. Often we make the assumption that “everyone knows who we are”. But in most churches that is the exception rather than the rule.

Again this year, beginning on Sunday, Sept. 11 – Homecoming Sunday, everyone is encouraged to find their name tag on the board as you enter the narthex...and to wear during

worship. If you do not attend Coffee Hour, please return your tag to the board as you leave church. If you do attend Coffee Hour, please wear your name tag across the street and place it in the basket near the door as you leave. Your name tag will be back in the Meeting House the following week for you to wear again.

If you do not find a permanent name tag with your name on it, please sign up on the request list so one can be made for you.

CPR TRAINING AVAILABLE AT FIRST PARISH

On Saturday, October 22nd, an American Heart Certified CPR Training Program will be offered at First Parish from 10AM-2PM in the Parish Hall.

The cost will be between \$25 and \$35 per person, based on the number of people who enroll.

The event is open to all, and pre-registration is required. First Parish staff, church school teachers, and parishioners are particularly urged to attend, as well as friends from the local community.

For questions or to register - contact Marge Eramo.





Donna Bertazzoni
Church School

Welcome to another year of faith formation at First Parish!

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irene gave some of us a wild end to the summer; let's hope that by the time everyone gets this that their power has been restored, maybe along with a bit of faith. I don't know about you, but as I write, my house has been without electricity for two days and it seems that all those biblical light metaphors are taking on a fresh brilliance for me. Without light *any* path is difficult to follow.

CLASSES BEGIN Classes will begin on Homecoming Sunday, September 11.

REGISTRATION 9:45-10:00 AM September 11. Parents - watch for a letter to arrive the first week in September with details and registration forms. Please bring completed forms with you or send them to the office. Additional Registration forms are available both through the education office and the church website, www.firstparishwestwood.org.

HOMECOMING It's been such a long time since we've been together that we're planning a celebration! Classes will be short on September 11 so that we can all gather as a church family for the last part of worship and then for a barbecue on the parish hall lawn. See you then!

FIRST SUNDAYS First Parish is committed to providing welcoming worship services that engage all members of the church family and offering a Communion table that is open to all. We have adapted last year's creative format to encompass more age groups, provide greater opportunity for peer interaction and enable the whole church family to share in Communion together on First Sundays.

Embodying the Christian belief that education is from cradle to grave, during the first part of the worship hour on Communion Sundays children in Primary grades will meet together for worship themed workshops, Middle School and High School students will enjoy fellowship and conversation at Extreme Breakfasts and Adults will experience innovative worship, all beginning at 10:00. Everyone will join together to celebrate Communion.

CURRICULUM Following the example of Jesus, our goal is to maintain an environment of welcome in the Sunday School, the Meetinghouse, and all congregational activities, in which children can come to experience the love of God through learning, community, play and worship. In our classrooms we use *Godly Play* and *Living the Good News*. Both curriculums were chosen because they are experiential and learner-centered. They encourage religious imagination and respect learning styles, appealing to the senses through a wide variety of activities and providing teaching materials that engage the range of ways learners approach the world.

PARTNERS Faith formation is a lifelong journey. As partners in your child's faith formation, we strive to provide a safe, nurturing environment. But we need everyone's help if we want to give each of our children *a path and a little light to see by...to be people who follow a brighter light than the glimmer of their own candle*. At this writing there are gaps in the teaching staff. Can you help? If you think you might be interested in this ministry or have questions, I can be reached at 781.326.3141 or dbzoni@firstparishwestwood.org when the internet has been restored.

Wishing you light and love for the new program year,

Donna

CHURCH SCHOOL UPDATE

Sunday, Sept. 4th: 9:30AM Union Worship

1st Baptist Church; Pastor Chris preaching

Sunday, Sept. 11: Homecoming Sunday

- 9:30-10AM: Church School registration in the Parish Hall
- 10-10:40AM: Church School classes in the Parish Hall
- 10:40-11AM: Communion Worship in the Meeting House
- 11-12: Homecoming All-Church Cookout in the Parish Hall

Sunday, Sept. 18:

- 10AM: worship in the Meeting House
- 10:15-11:20AM: Church School in the Parish Hall

Sunday, Sept. 25:

- 10AM: worship in the Meeting House
- 10:15-11:20 AM: Church School classes in the Parish Hall



HEADS UP ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS & PARENTS!

On Sunday October 2nd, at 10 am, all high school students (Grades 9-12) are invited to meet in the Parish Hall kitchen for an "Extreme Breakfast"! Come hang out, eat, and talk about what the church year might be like for you. Bring your ideas - and a friend!

Then after the worship service that day, high school parents and students will meet in the Stage Classroom to discuss Senior High Youth Fellowship ("SHYF") and what shape it will take this year. We're looking forward to your input!

See you on October 2!

IT'S NEVER TOO SOON TO THINK ABOUT THE FAIR

This year's Holiday Fair will be held on Saturday, November 19th – and as always we will need everyone's help to make it a success. Information will be coming soon regarding meeting dates, when we'll be looking forward to your input and project ideas.

If you are interested in helping out or have any ideas or suggestions, please contact Karina Adourian at 781-407-9230 or at karinaaadourian@yahoo.com.

THE PUMPKINS ARE COMING FRIDAY, OCT. 14TH

It's almost that time again! This year's truckload of beautiful pumpkins will arrive on Friday, Oct. 14th at 4:30PM – and we hope you will be on hand to help unload the truck and put them on display for all our loyal customers.

Again this year the Patch will be open 7 days a week through Oct. 31st: noon to 5PM on weekdays and Sundays, and 10AM to 5PM on Saturdays. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the Parish Hall in mid-September, so save some time now to help raise money for our outreach efforts....

Questions? See Mission and Service Chairperson Tish Verzino.





Welcome back to First Parish everyone; I hope to see you all on Homecoming Sunday, September 11th. I have had a wonderful summer in Plymouth, the Cape for Music Camp and Nova Scotia. It is much too short and winter much too long, but we hardy New Englanders take what we can get! I wanted to share the following with you; it is definitely food for thought and applies to almost all of us.

MEDICALERT

MedicAlert Foundation is one of the largest nonprofit membership organizations in the world, with a mission to protect and save lives.

The MedicAlert® story began in 1953, when a 14-year old girl, the daughter of a surgeon, cut her finger and was taken to a local emergency room for treatment. Her uncle, also a physician, performed a simple test on the young girl before giving her the usual dose of tetanus anti-toxin (commonly given to persons who have suffered a cut or puncture wound). Seconds later, the girl went into anaphylactic shock, a potentially fatal reaction to a severe allergy. After spending several days in the hospital, she recovered, but there was (and is) no drug to cure such an allergy. That incident made the young lady and her family very aware of her vulnerability. “My parents realized that if one tiny drop of the antitoxin had produced that reaction, I’d probably be killed by a full dose,” she recalled. “After that, when I went away from home for a weekend or to a neighboring town for school events, they’d make me wear a paper bracelet describing my allergies.”

When the young lady graduated from high school and headed for college, her parents knew that a more permanent solution than a paper bracelet was needed. They designed a metal bracelet, with the medical symbol of the caduceus (coiled snakes on a staff) and red lettering spelling out “MEDICALERT” on the front, and “allergic to tetanus antitoxin” engraved on the back. A jeweler in San Francisco then crafted the bracelet. As people noticed the young lady’s bracelet and asked how they might get one for themselves or a loved one, the doctor realized that many people with special medical problems might benefit as well, since improper diagnosis and treatment can cost lives. In 1956, the doctor established MedicAlert Foundation International, a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization, investing his own money and contributing countless hours of volunteer time... in the early years, the mail room for the organization was reported to be the family living room! That same year, the physician brothers attended the Congress of the American College of Surgeons in San Francisco: they brought 200 MedicAlert® bracelets and a small engraving machine and demonstrated its use to the physicians attending the conference. “I think,” the surgeon said, “I can save more lives with MedicAlert® than I’ll ever save with my scalpel!”

In the 1960’s, MedicAlert Foundation was relocated to a local hospital, phone numbers were assigned, and a program was launched to provide details on each person’s medical history by phone contact from emergency medical workers. The organization received its first nationwide publicity through a supplement in the Sunday editions of 40 major U.S. newspapers.

By 1970, MedicAlert® was launching its first computerized automation of member records, allowing it to increase its membership ten-fold. Alliances were established with other medical organizations, and it earned the endorsements of three of the most influential associations in emergency medical care. In 1979, actor Ed Asner was named the foundation’s National Volunteer Chairman. Actor Lorne Greene followed Mr. Asner as Volunteer Chairman.

By 1982, MedicAlert accepted an invitation to create a formal working relationship with the World Health Organization, and an international movement began. It has continued to expand globally, so that MedicAlert® members are afforded 24-hour emergency response to relay vital medical information to emergency personnel – secure (confidential) data is contained in a personal health record, and can be transmitted by phone, fax or any internet-connected computer – the emergency re-

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sponse center even provides translator services when necessary!

Bracelets and necklace pendants are available for as little as \$9.95 (the “designer series” can run over \$100!); first year enrollment for the services is \$39.95, and \$25 per year thereafter. Bracelets for common type allergies can also be purchased at any pharmacy.

MedicAlert® provides emergency information by a 24-hour hotline that gives doctors all the information that cannot fit on the bracelet, and they notify the contact person you have listed... A god send!” If you or a loved one has critical medical information that must be known to your caregivers – whenever, wherever you might need care – think about enrolling in such an important, life-saving service, or ask your doctor how else you can assure that such information is available in emergencies.

MedicAlert® can be reached by calling 1-888-633-4298 or visiting www.medicalert.org

Have a healthy Fall,
Margery Eramo, RN, FCN

FIRST PARISH VOLUNTEERS

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sunday, Sept. 11:

Given through the Endowed Memorial Flower Fund by the Grey family, in memory of Ethel & Chesley Newell, and Jeanne Ranger.

Sunday, Sept. 18:

Given by Barbara, Judith and the Gillespie family, in loving memory of Robert & Charlotte Gillespie.

Sunday, Sept. 25:

Given by Marjorie & Bruce Higgins, in memory of Kenneth A. Ball.

USHER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Sept. 11:

Bill Holbrook
Sheldon Blaney
Don Friedl
Lee Adourian

Sunday, Sept. 18:

Dave & Bonnie Blomquist
Chris Pfaff
Don & Karen Wagner

Sunday, Sept. 25:

Martha Crawford
Ron Arntz
Stuart & Carol Maynard

COFFEE VOLUNTEERS

Sign up sheet in the Parish Hall lobby if you can help!

Sunday, Sept 11: All-Church Cookout

Hosted by SL&F and CE Ministry

Sunday, Sept. 18:

????????????????

Sunday, Sept. 25:

The Holbrooks

FOX HILL BIBLE STUDY

The Fox Hill Bible Study group will launch its 2011-2012 season on Thursday, September 8th at 10:30AM at Fox Hill Village.

Pastor Chris Dodge meets with the group at Fox Hill Village each month, September through June. If you live at Fox Hill Village and would like to begin attending the Bible study, please contact Pastor Chris for the meeting location.

WESTWOOD MEN’S GROUP

The Westwood Men’s Club’s first meeting of the 2011-2012 year is Thursday, Sept. 15th at 9:30AM in the Parish Hall. It will begin with coffee and doughnuts for all, followed by a Guest Speaker from Hebrew Senior Life.

Unless otherwise noted, the group meets on the third Thursday of the month, September through May. All retired men of Westwood are most welcome to attend.