
First Parish of Sudbury News

September 21, 2008

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Making Meanings

When we applied for a Woburn Grant (which we received) to fund the position of Community Life Coordinator, we stated:

We feel called and committed to radical hospitality in our congregation. For us, it is both a spiritual and ethical imperative that gets to the core of what it means to be human and living in community.

Some of you have asked: "What IS radical hospitality?" Isn't hospitality simply being nice to one another? Why do we have to suggest that it's radical – that sounds so extreme. It's not extreme, but it is courageous. It's not always easy to reach out to someone and ask: "May I know you better?"

It's also not a new idea. The concept of hospitality as a spiritual imperative grows from just about every great religious tradition.

Wisdom stories throughout the ages teach us the importance of welcoming the outsider, the pilgrim... to see the holy in the stranger.

In a little book called *Radical Hospitality*¹, the authors point out "we are all guests, all travelers, all a little lost, and all looking for a place to rest a while." They say this kind of hospitality is about connecting with people – the ones at our gate and those a world away.

So it's about reaching out. About listening. About stretching (sometimes) outside our comfort zone when we encounter those whom we perceive to be different from ourselves. It's about opening up to the possibility that we may find more similarity

than difference or, even, that we may find genuine difference to be engaging and life-enhancing.

This kind of hospitality is about listening, a special kind of deep attentiveness to all that live - a sharpening of the ears of the heart.

When we listen in this way, listen as a spiritual practice, we hear how people really feel, find out who they really are. "When we listen like this," say the book's authors, "the sound of another's suffering changes everything." Sometimes, they acknowledge, it unsettles us; often it makes us take a stand for justice.

I would argue this is a call and a commitment in our congregation. We live it out when we stand for economic justice, for freedom of religion and speech, for sharing the common wealth for the common good.

The rainbow flag represents this kind of hospitality. So does the elevator and the assistive listening devices. And, yes, the Green Sanctuary initiative is a kind of radical hospitality to our earth and all living things. And the work that some of you do in prisons, at shelters, and food pantries and You know it is a very long list.

We may start out thinking we can help someone or something, but inevitably we grow from the experience as much as anyone whom we've "helped."

Listen. It will break your heart, but it will also give you heart. And, it will give you more - it will give you life.

Friends, let us heed the call and make the commitment to be a people who practice mutual reverence as a way of being human.

¹ Father Daniel Homan, OSB, and Lonni Collin Pratt, *Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love*, Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2002

~ Katie Lee



R.E.flections by a chalice D.R.E.amer

Roberta Altamari, Director of Religious Exploration
and Youth Ministry

I'm honored and thrilled to be writing my first column for our newsletter! Welcome back to another incredible year at First Parish!!

We officially started the year with our annual "ingathering water service". As I processed through the congregation and then sat up front, I was very nervous. I thought, "Will this community like me? How will I ever follow in the footsteps of their many well-loved religious educators?" Before these fears could get me too distracted, I looked out into the sanctuary. Right in front of me sat some of our youth. I looked at them and they smiled at me. I smiled back and one of them made a silly face that almost made me laugh out loud. And that was exactly when I "knew" that I'd be just fine! Maybe even really good!!

These youth and the many friendly people I met after the worship service reminded me of one of my guiding work principles ... that most people come to church for "connection". They have other goals and interests, but "connection with people and families who have similar values" is often the #1 reason. It's important to remember this in all that we do at First Parish.

I went to the district's workshop on Hospitality (in August with a First Parish team) and this was one theme they highlighted. We learned of Malidome Some who is sharing inspiring messages about the "life philosophies" of his village in West Africa ... Community is the flower of belonging. We each have a purpose and we are drawn into community to serve one another and the world.

The next day, I attended our summer worship service led by Dawn and Sarah Jun Shilts and was likewise impressed in countless ways. One message shared was inspired by Malidome. What is our one beautiful gift we are going to share? We meditated on that and then brought our gifts symbolically together as a whole in the form of a puzzle frame. Our children can fill in the puzzle illustrating the gifts they want to share. The most amazing thing is that the "community" puzzle reminds us that we create a magical synergy together as our collaborative and collective whole is more powerful and special than what any one of us can do alone. I have a wonderful feeling that this "synergy of our gifts" theme will revisit us many times this year as we come together to connect, worship, seek, explore, work, and act.

Loving blessings,

~ Ro ♥

First Parish of Sudbury's Pastoral Associates

| | |
|------------|---------|
| Annmarie A | Bruce P |
| Audrey K | Fred P |
| Linda L | Paul R |
| Polly M | Dawn S |

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

People We Care About



This column seeks to share news (happy, sad, exciting events) of our lives so that we may support each other as we travel this road together. May it be so.

This column is not available on our website version. For more information, please contact Donna Scalcione in the office.

*If you have news for this column, please send it to our
Community Life & Communications Coordinator,
Fran Sharp, at connect@fpsudbury.org*

UU Kids in Action

Sunday, October 12th will be our first special Social Justice Sunday. About once a month, our children and youth will be engaging in projects during regular church time that help make our world a better place. Other projects will also be available through out the year to participate in as well. Check out the Children's Social Action page in the RE section of our website (at www.fpsudbury.org) for more details ...
... in the words of Anne Frank, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."



**Worship at the
Meeting House**

Sunday, September 21, 10 am
Free the Spirit – Hear the Call
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Katie Lee reports that people often say: “I’m not religious, but I’m spiritual.” So today, she will ask what does “spiritual” look like? What does it mean to be a spiritual person? And what do humans do to nurture, grow, salve, or quiet the questing or questioning spirit, the broken or restless spirit, the soaring or stuck spirit? She will encourage all of us to explore whether it is part of human nature to feel called to make life meaningful?

There will be a Hearthside Chat at 11:45 to have a conversation about the day’s topic and the issues it raises.

Sunday, September 28, 10 am
The Many Voices of Islam
Ms. Karen Hernandez-Andrews

On Sept. 28 we welcome Karen Hernandez-Andrews to our pulpit. Her sermon will explore the many voices of Islam – including the moderate, extremist and the Qur’anic voice - all voices which are heard, and not heard, daily, throughout the world, in many different contexts.

Ms. Hernandez-Andrews graduated from Andover Newton Theological School in May 2007 with an M.A. in Theological Research in Christian-Muslim Understanding. Currently, she teaches at local churches and schools, as well with various organizations about Islam, Christian-Muslim relations, Al Qaeda, and Discrimination Against Muslims Post 9/11.

There will be a Hearthside Chat at 11:45 to have a conversation about the day’s topic and the issues it raises.

**NURTURE Your Spirit.
Help HEAL Our World.**



Sunday, October 5, 10 am
Rolihlahla – “Shaker of Trees”
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Nelson Mandela begins his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, with these words: *Apart from life, a strong constitution, and an abiding connection to the Thembu royal house, the only thing my father bestowed on me at birth was a name, Rolihlahla. In Xhosa, Rolihlahla literally means “pulling the branch of a tree,” but its colloquial meaning more accurately would be “troublemaker.”* What’s in a name? Some of Mandela’s friends and followers would say he’s lived up to his name through the many storms he’s lived through... and caused. Today we will explore the role of “troublemaker” in human community and ask: who are today’s “shakers of trees?”

There will be a Hearthside Chat at 11:45 to have a conversation about the day’s topic and the issues it raises.

Sunday, October 12, 10 am
The Bold Ones: Telling the Truth to Power
Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Throughout our religious history, Universalists, Unitarians and, now, Unitarian Universalists have spoken out on the issues of the day: Abolition, Women’s Rights, Civil Rights, and, more recently, a woman’s right to choose, the death penalty, gay marriage, environmental justice, just to name a few. It is our right to speak freely in the public square. Is it also our duty to bear witness to and advocate for the values we hold dear? In an election season, how can we – a people of diverse theologies and wide-ranging opinions – bring our truths to the public forum?

There will be a Hearthside Chat at 11:45 to have a conversation about the day’s topic and the issues it raises.

Saturday, Nov. 1, 4:30 pm
Village Worship: “Turning of the Seasons”

Save the date for our first Village worship, which will be on Saturday, November 1st starting at 4:30pm in The Commons. The theme will be “Turning of the Seasons” as we honor our UU source of Earth Centered Traditions by worshipping the ancient Celtic spiritualities that Halloween, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day are all routed in. See Roberta or Katie Lee to volunteer to help with the worship.

Four Open Chalice Circles in October



Sign up now!

In October, four Chalice Circles will hold open houses so that anyone may try out this form of spiritual exploration. Often called “Small-group Ministry” or “Covenant Circles,” these are gatherings of six to ten people committed to meeting together for two hours each month. A trained convener leads the group and follows a prescribed format that encourages deep listening and thoughtful attention to what each person says.

For details about Chalice Circles, you have several options:

- ✚ Go to <http://fpsudbury.org/wiki/Public/ChaliceCircles/> ;
- ✚ Pick up a Chalice Circle Brochure and other details in the foyer at First Parish;
- ✚ Look for testimonials scattered through this newsletter;
- ✚ Stop someone on Sunday wearing a button that says: “Ask me about Chalice Circles.”

You must sign up for the Circle of your choice no later than **September 26**. If you are available to visit more than one open circle, please indicate all possible choices and rank your preferences. You will be assigned to one. To participate, phone or send an email message to Rev. Katie Lee Crane at 978 443-2043 and minister@fpsudbury.org with all possible options. She will follow-up with details about the circle you will be invited to attend. These are your options:

Wednesday, October 1 at 7:15-9:15 pm
 Friday, October 3 at 7:00 – 9:00 pm
 Monday, October 21 at 7:15 – 9:15 pm
 Tuesday, October 22 at 10 am – noon

If you are interested in participating in a Chalice Circle but cannot attend one of the open circles in October, please call Katie Lee and she will discuss other possibilities with you.

Board of Trustees Report

by Ginny Steel, Clerk

Each summer the Board of Trustees retreats from the nitty-gritty of normal life and emerges with a renewed vision of where we are and a clear set of congregational goals for the coming year. Katie Lee and other staff members participated in this inspiring process which resulted in a document which not only states this year’s goals, but goes on to give each one a spiritual framework and a set of potential action items.

Here are the goals themselves, along with Katie Lee’s philosophical setting for each one.

1. Clarify who we are in 2008 and identify who we want to be by 2018. Communicate [this] both within and beyond the Meeting House walls.

We are Unitarian Universalists gathered together as First Parish of Sudbury. Building on a history that reaches back to the early 17th century, we are re-visioning our faith community to meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

2. Deepen and expand Community Engagement

Hospitality is the spiritual and ethical practice of mutual reverence. We ask: “May I know you better?” We welcome engagement with people we do not know and may not understand.

We let other people into our hearts, and allow ourselves to be planted in theirs.

We connect with our neighbor and with others a world away on a level that stirs everyone involved.

We commit to a lively, courageous, bold way of living our values that demands that we take chances and change.

3. Commit to safety and sanctuary

We ensure that this building and this congregation is a sanctuary where all who engage here may trust that this is “holy ground,” where human actions and interactions – both individually and in relationship – will be guided by the principles of justice and hospitality.

Chalice Circles

“There’s so much pressure in our society to put on a happy face and keep conversations superficial, and the Chalice Circle gives me permission to speak my truth with relief, and allow others’ truths to comfort and inspire me.”

– a Chalice Circle Member



Connections...
People...Mission...Community

Well, here I am ... beginning my third staff position at FPS. (Do you suppose that's some kind of record?)

As much as I loved serving First Parish as a co-DRE for two years and Congregational Administrator for six years, my new position here is truly a calling for me. What makes it so?

I believe that helping people **connect** is holy work. Connect with whom, with what? Connect with other people who are companions on our paths and in our lives. Connect with guiding ideals, such as our UU principles. Connect with our mission, knowing that when we work together our efforts are greater than the sum of the parts. And, connect with spirit—the spirit of love and life, or Higher Power, or God, or ...

I am here to help connections happen. I will be working hard along with the rest of you to “welcome the stranger” (see Katie Lee’s column on p. 1,) and help newcomers to First Parish and UUism connect with like-minded people and with activities and initiatives that help us get to know them better and them to know us better, so that soon there is no “them”. And, I will be helping enable everyone here—newcomers and long-timers alike—connect with our mission and ministry by engaging with our community in ways that feed the soul.

Just for starters, here are a few ways for you to connect with others in our community. If you would like to discuss these, or other opportunities further, please give me a call at 978/443-2043 or email at connect@fpsudbury.org.

- ☞ Tuesday Lunches—brown-bag eat & chat with Katie Lee, Roberta, and me every Tuesday from 12:00-1:00 in The Commons.
- ☞ Hearthside Chats—after many of our Sunday worship services to discuss the day’s topic and the issues raised. Watch the newsletter, Sunday News bulletins, and FPS online calendar (www.fpsudbury.org: news: calendar) to see on which Sundays Hearthside Chats will take place.
- ☞ Chalice Circles—monthly groups in which to explore topics deeply. See page 4 for more information.

~ Fran

Coffee House and Open Mike Night

Benefit for Sudbury Habitat Home Project
and FPS Women’s Alliance
Saturday, November 8th, 2008 7:30 pm

Featuring:
The Nashville Clippers; Peg E; Leslie B

Admission: \$12
Refreshments Available starting 7:00 pm
Contact: Judith C

Chalice Circles

“I look forward each month to a dedicated time to explore my thoughts and feelings and to listen deeply to the thoughts and feelings of others about a topic that I may never have taken the time to consider before.”

— a Chalice Circle Member

Want to listen to Sunday’s Worship Service or read it?

There are several options to hear or read a sermon you missed or to listen again. Print copies are available in the foyer, usually by mid-week following the service. Recordings of the services are available on CDs which members and friends may borrow from the First Parish office.

Starting in October, all services will also again be available on our First Parish website. These will be located on a password-protected section of the website exclusively for members and friends. Selected services will also be posted on the public part of our website along with occasional podcasts in both locations.

We have made these changes to abide by copyright laws that protect the intellectual property rights of those whose words we speak and music we play and sing.

If you cannot find something you’d like to read or hear, just call the office and we’ll do our best to find what you need.

Multigenerational Connection:

Join us for a FUN & FREE Night Out on Friday, October 10th starting at 7pm in The Commons. Potluck dessert and bring clothes you no longer want to put in our “store” where others can shop for free (or offer a small donation to the work of UUSC). No rsvp necessary, but contact Roberta with questions.



107th Annual Harvest Craft Fair Saturday, October 18th, 10 am-4pm

On the weekend after Columbus Day, First Parish's Harvest Craft Fair is THE place to be! Call your friends and neighbors, and mark the fair on your calendars. And, pick up Flyers at the end of September to post where you work, at schools, etc. Let's try to bring record numbers of people to this fun and delicious fair-- our second largest annual fundraiser. Over 60 original crafters will display items including jewelry, country decor, paintings, quilts, wood carvings, pottery and photos. Our famous lunch of homemade breads and soups will again be a main attraction. We average over 600 fair-goers including many from outside the church community, including the juried artisans.

For the fair to be a raging success, we need YOUR help and attendance. First Parish charges a \$3 admission for persons over 12, sells the lunch and beverages, and sells baked goods, jams and jellies provided by generous donors like you. The Meeting House Preservation committee also has their products available, which benefit the building.

Whether or not you can help out at the fair, please take the time to come for a delicious lunch and see all the wonderful wares being sold by our talented crafters.

Please Help by...

- Baking all kinds of pies, cakes, cookies, brownies and other goodies -- the Bake Table ALWAYS sells out at this fair, so the more we have, the more money we make.
- Jams and Jellies -- if you put up any jams, jellies, chutneys, etc -- please donate some of your efforts to the fair. These go very quickly and we get good prices for them.
- Soups & Breads-- Contact Elaine J to volunteer a batch of soup or chili or loaves of homemade bread for the lunch. Elaine also organizes the kitchen serving staff, so contact her to volunteer for that also.
- Volunteering! -- call or email Beth R or Sherri C to volunteer, or sign up on the sheets posted in the Parish Hall

Chalice Circles

*"The Chalice Circle is an oasis in my life –
a place I go to be, not to do."*

-- a Chalice Circle Member

What Kind of Volunteer Help is Needed on Fair weekend?

- Assist with setup on Friday the 12th between 3:30 and 7 pm. There are many tasks of all levels of difficulty and strength required. **Helpful children are especially welcome at setup.** Crafters begin coming to do their setup at 7pm. so we need to have most of our work done by then. Your co-chairs and others will be there to direct efforts.
- Participate in clean-up! If ever there was a time when many hands make lighter work, this is it! We need to get everything back to "normal" before Sunday morning. Help with clean up, then adjourn to somewhere with us for pizza and libations. We use the SED room and must return it to "normal" after the Fair Saturday.
- We also need people during the fair to staff the admissions, Jams & Jellies, and lunch orders tables

Based on our average attendance, for every hour you volunteer, it earns about \$50 for the church -- pretty good wages.

Thank you for supporting our congregation.
Sherri C, Beth R, and Elaine J-- co-chairs.

Youth



Ministry

Many of our youth met on September 7th for an enthusiastic kick-off to what is going to be a fabulous year in our Youth Ministry. From worship to social action to fun connecting, they shared lots of great ideas for a wide-variety of projects this year. Stay tuned to the Youth Ministry part of our website for their evolving schedule and plans ...

The next big group activity will be **Popcorn Theology** for all youth 13 and older on Sunday, September 28th at 6:45pm. Based on a popular UU curriculum, we watch a movie and discuss any issues the movie raises that are relevant to us as Unitarian Universalists. This one will be a showing of August Rush, the 2007 drama about an orphaned musical prodigy uses his gift of music to find his birth parents.

Faith in Action News**~ Back-to-School&Trick-or-Treat for Sandra's Lodge**

- ♥ This year Sandra's Lodge is also asking us to help the kids feel special at Halloween. They desperately need new or fairly new costumes for kids ages 1-10. Can you help a young child's fantasy come true?
- ♥ We'll collect school backpacks and costumes at First Parish—backpacks through September and costumes through October. You can also make a monetary donation and we'll do the shopping—simply write a check to First Parish with Sandra's Lodge in the memo line. See Ginny D or Beth Rif you have any questions.

Thanks for helping with the school days and holidays for these kids!

~ Share the Plate – October 5

Please plan to generously support Sandra's Lodge, Hestia House, and Olivia's Place. These are Emergency Family Shelters operated in Waltham, MA by the Middlesex Human Service Agency, Inc since 1999. There are many homeless families living at the shelters, with an average stay of 8 -12 months. There are almost 100 children at the shelter, of which about 40 children attend school in their home district. Besides supplying the residents with basic shelter and meals, these facilities provide services of case management and housing advocacy, which enable the families to move forward in attaining a more self-sufficient lifestyle.

We have supported Sandra's Lodge for six years with our backpack drive and Share the Plate contributions. Our Oct. 5 collection continues that support by purchasing Halloween costumes for the youngest children at the shelter, so they can participate in the celebrations at school.

~ Rescuing America's Health Care

Sunday, October 19, 2008 2:30 P.M.
at The Goodnow Library, Sudbury

sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Sudbury

Dr. Arnold Relman will discuss reforms needed to improve the U.S. health care system. In his book, *A Second Opinion: Rescuing America's Health Care*, Dr. Relman focuses on the impact of the commercialization of medicine, the merits of a single-payer plan, and the need to provide care that benefits patients.

Dr. Relman was formerly Editor-in-Chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Medicine and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School and Senior Physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

For more information, contact Judy D

Chalice Circles

"I am stunned by how a simple format of intentional soul-searching opens our hearts."

— a Chalice Circle Member

Getting Ready for the Holly Fair

Time has a way of flying by and the Holly Fair will be here before you know it.

This FUNdraiser depends on the efforts of First Parish members and friends for everything we offer for sale. Beginning in October, we will be meeting on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00-3:00PM (following the brown bag lunch) to work on various exciting and fun projects that we have planned. No special talent is required! We will also meet on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00PM in The Commons. The quilters will be there alongside us as we work on our various crafts for the Holly Fair. Come and enjoy spending some time together either working on one of our planned projects or on your own creative and meaningful works of art. Our work together will intermingle with our words and camaraderie. We look forward to seeing you!

We invite you to collect some of the following supplies for the group to use this fall: wishbones so that we can continue the tradition of Sylvia's wishbone ornaments; pint size glass Miracle Whip salad dressing jars (those that a canning jar lid will fit onto); coffee cans for the Cookie Walk; and your old jeans (not too dirty or stained...but a few holes are ok!).

We are looking for another co-chair or two. Please do not be shy. Call us and we can discuss it. It is a fun a easy fair to coordinate. And many hands make light work.

Look for more details about the Holly Fair in upcoming newsletters.

Dawn S, Cilla R and
[wouldn't your name look great here in the next newsletter?!]

Two gifts add up to one special treat

Have you noticed the beautiful photo of First Parish in winter hung at the stair landing near the entrance to the foyer? It is a gift from Ted and Elaine Jones. And, it's a gift with a story. Apparently, Robert Cooke, a photographer from Stow, stopped at Town Hall with samples of his work to be considered for the Sudbury town report. Elaine Jones, a member of First Parish and an employee of the town noticed, in particular, the photo taken in last winter's ice storm. "Oh," she said, "First Parish would *love* that photo. Some time later, Mr. Cooke arrived with a print as a gift to First Parish.

Then Elaine and Ted J had the photo framed and Terry L hung it for us. Please take a look. It is quite lovely. Thank you Robert Cooke and Elaine & Ted. The framed photo is a wonderful addition at First Parish of Sudbury.

Buddhist Meditation study & practice group

Thursdays, 1:00-2:30pm
starting October 2



This group provides a setting to learn about and to practice meditation and, for those who are interested, to receive support for the development of a regular meditation practice at home. Together we will explore fundamental aspects of the teachings of the Buddha, as they apply to everyday life. These meetings are open to people with little or no experience in meditation as well as to experienced practitioners -- anyone who is simply curious and would like to come check it out is most welcome.

Each Meditation study and practice group meeting will include:

~ a meditation period of 20-30 minutes, with simple instruction and guidance

~ a time to reflect on & discuss a short reading - we will be investigating subjects such as:

- Slowing down
- Cultivating compassion - for self & others
- Wise speech
- Patience
- Working with anger & other strong emotions

Readings will be from Jon KabatZinn, Jack Kornfield, Pema Chödrön & others

~ time for questions and discussion of participants' experiences of meditation either at home or during the class

We will also take time to discuss the benefits of meditation, which include the cultivation of insight and compassion, as well as increased physical, emotional and mental well-being.

Laine G will be the group facilitator. Laine has been a student of Buddhist teachings for 18 years and has taught meditation in various settings. Over the years she has studied and practiced in the Zen and Vipassana traditions.

*For more information about the group call
Susan McK or Fran S.*

First Parish of Sudbury Unitarian Universalist
327 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA 01776
978 443-2043, fax: 978 443-4391
Website: www.fpsudbury.org
Office hours: Monday - Friday 9:00-11:30am

We embrace diversity and, as a Welcoming Congregation, are intentional about welcoming the presence and participation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in all aspects of congregational life.

Minister: *Rev. Katie Lee Crane*
Director of Music: *Debra Morris-Bennett*
Director of Rel. Exploration & Youth Advisor: *Roberta Altamari*
Community Life & Communications Coordinator: *Fran Sharp*
Administrator: *Donna Scalcione*
Chair, Board of Trustees: *Annmarie Allen*

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