



DECEMBER 16, 2009

R.E.flections by a chaliceD.R.E.amer



Roberta Altamari
Director of Religious Exploration
and Youth Ministry

The holiday season is here and our annual Revels service kicked off the season of celebrations in a festive way. With the fun, this is also a season to share love and warmth with others ~ taking time out of the frantic pace of life to let your loved ones know how much you care about them; and to not forget those people in the world that are less fortunate than ourselves.

As I met with the children and youth for a recent Social Justice Sunday, we talked about the holidays being a time to share warmth with others. Whether it is in reference to gift giving or helping others, there is no shortage of messages regarding the many ways to share using money. But the truth is that you don't need money to truly show that you care. This is a list that came up with of the many ways you can share your love:

- *sing holiday carols together*
- *bake cookies together*
- *give hugs*
- *catch snowflakes together*
- *give away hot cocoa, candy canes, chocolate, or popsicles.*
- *watch a movie together by the fire with popcorn*
- *give away toys you don't want anymore*
- *volunteer at a homeless shelter*

What a great list the kids came up with! I hope you will be inspired by their sharing and add a few of your own good ideas. And then take some time during this busy season to enjoy actually doing a few.

I often say that the holiday season can kick off a new year of love and compassion. It can be a time of getting inspired during the cold days of winter to look for warmth from sharing love with others. That type of warmth can carry us through the remaining cold days of winter. How might we keep the warmth of love and the spark of connection burning bright for us this winter?

I know one way for me will be to participate in the Interfaith Leadership Training and Service Event co-sponsored by the UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the Interfaith Youth Core. Robyn was the one FPS youth who came forward with enthusiastic interest and some amazing essay responses, and then Robyn and I were selected as one of fifteen teams to represent their congregation at this important event happening in Georgia in January. Robyn and I are very excited about being chosen as we hope this will help us inspire local youth to plant seeds of acceptance of diversity as we all work together to make our world a better place. We hope this interfaith work can help us carry forward all the meaningful and important messages we hear this time of year about love, peace, and connection.

Roberta ♥

Highlights in this Issue

★ HOLIDAY WORSHIP SERVICES	PG. 3
★ RE UPDATE...SIGN UP FOR JANUARY COLLEGIUM	PG. 4
★ PROGRAM COUNCIL REPORT...NEW HELP WANTED SECTION	PG. 5
★ NAMES/PHOTOS NEEDED FOR JAN 3...REACHING STAFF DURING HOLIDAYS	PG. 6
★ CALENDAR	PG. 8



Worship at the Meetinghouse

Sunday, December 20, 10 am

A Great Miracle Happened There

Rev. Katie Lee Crane

Inspired by a story written by Isaac Bashevis Singer, Katie notes that this is a season filled with miracle stories: the lights that didn't go out, the son who is born, the sun that is reborn. The true gifts of the season are its stories, she suggests, and she invites us to consider the miracles in our own lives. Magical moments, timeless memories – these are the stuff of our own stories. Dare we call some of those stories miracle stories, too? Perhaps, she suggests, the real miracle is what meanings we make from a story, not what the story means.

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

Sunday, December 27, 10 am

A combined service with Wayland & Sudbury to be held at First Parish of Framingham UU, 23 Vernon Street, Framingham. All welcome.
An All-Too-Human Jesus
Michelle LaGrave, Intern Minister, preaching

Sunday, January 3, 10 am

Endings & Beginnings

Rev. Katie Lee Crane & Ms. Beverly Waring

We begin the new year with the tradition of naming and honoring those who have died during the past year and celebrating the arrival of those just born. Our worship begins with this ritual. People are invited to send names in advance (though they will be accepted on that day) and to **bring a photo of the loved one who is being named.**

In addition, we will explore the ancient spiritual odyssey of the so-called "three wise men," the Magi, who followed a star in the east. In a year when we are exploring religious and spiritual journeys, this one cannot be overlooked on the day set aside to commemorate this journey: Epiphany. One might say that this is the scientific part of the well-known Christian narrative. The Magi were the scientists of their day and, now, we learn, scientists of our day have some new theories about what may have actually happened.

There will be no Hearthside Chat today.

First Parish of Sudbury's Pastoral Associates

Annmarie A., Audrey, Polly, Bruce P., Fred P., Paul R., Dawn

In the event of a pastoral need, please call any of these Pastoral Associates.

Holiday Services at First Parish of Sudbury

Christmas Eve Family Service at 5 pm.

Please join us for a multigenerational celebration of the birth of Jesus worshipful for children through seniors. We will share the nativity story, explore ways Christmas is celebrated around the world, and enjoy some favorite holiday carols before closing our time together with our beloved "Silent Night" sharing our light ritual.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7 pm.

Join us for the traditional Christmas Eve worship with music, candle-lighting, readings, a short reflection by Katie Lee, and, of course, the much-loved candlelight ritual ending with Silent Night. Children are welcome at this service.

Christmas Morning Service at 10:00 am.

Join our minister and friends by the fire for an informal time of carols, stories and sharing on Christmas Morning.

This year's Christmas offering – all the gifts collected on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day – will go to to the MetroWest Free Medical Program to support their free medical clinics at Congregation Beth El in Sudbury and First Parish in Framingham, UU.

Worshipping with our Framingham Friends - Sunday, December 27 at 10 am

First Parish in Framingham, 24 Vernon Street, hosts Sudbury & Wayland

It is our annual holiday tradition to share this last service of the calendar year with our Unitarian Universalist neighbors. There will be no worship service at First Parish of Sudbury on this day

First Parish Holiday Gift-giving

Our Christmas Gifts go to MetroWest Free Medical Program

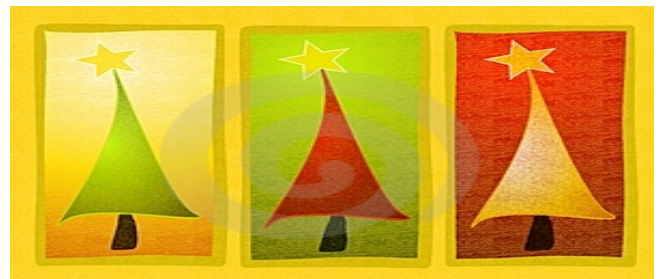
This year, the offering collected at all three Christmas services will be given in its entirety to the MetroWest Free Medical Clinic. Our state professes to have accessible health care for all, and yet thousands of people in Massachusetts don't have access to the health care that they need today. The MetroWest Free Medical Program, hosted by Congregation Beth El in Sudbury and First Parish in Framingham Unitarian Universalist, provides free medical care to more than 1,200 MetroWest neighbors annually.

In addition to our financial support, these clinics need volunteers, health care professionals who can provide patient care during the Tuesday and Thursday evening programs, and people to staff the patient registration desk or to serve on set-up crews. Off-site volunteer opportunities are also available. For more information, to volunteer, please contact Kim Prendergast at kim.prendergast@gmail.com or 617-470-1632.

Invite a Guest at Your Table and donate to UUSC

It's a long-time, annual tradition, supporting the partner programs of UUSC (our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) by "banking" what you'd spend to feed one guest at your table each day. It's fun, easy, and it's amazing how even a \$40 gift can help educate an Afghan child for a year.

On December 20, bring in your generous check; *make it out to First Parish of Sudbury (with UUSC in the memo line)*, and enjoy the holidays knowing how much your gift will change lives of this year's guests at your table.



Coming up in Religious Exploration:

Faith in Action projects for kids and families

In addition to joining the entire congregation in participating in the “Secret Santa ” project and to welcome a “Guest at your Table” to benefit the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, we are also encouraging our children, families, and folks of all ages to go through your gently used books and donating those you don’t want to More Than Words bookstore in Waltham, a program that empowers youth who are in the foster care system, court involved, homeless, or out of school to take charge of their lives by helping to run a business. Our Youth Group visited their store, met a teen worker, and was very impressed with this organization. Books can be dropped off all month at First Parish, so please bring your gently used books in to benefit this great work!

People We Care About

this space blank

Still Time to Sign Up for January Collegium – Sharing Our Own Odysseys

Leslie Marmon Silko says in her poem “Ceremony” *Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive.* We’ll have both!

In a year when we are exploring spiritual and religious odysseys in our worship services, we are offering a special Winter Collegium in January to tell and listen to personal stories about our own religious and spiritual journeys.

The Collegium will meet from noon to 2 pm in the Brackett Room on Sundays, January 10, 24, and 31 (we will skip the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend Sunday). We will share a light lunch of soup and bread as a volunteer – who has advance warning and helpful guidelines – shares something of her own journey or his own wanderings (and wonderings).

To participate, you must register in advance. Participation will be limited to 20. Sharing your own story (or a piece of it) is optional; bearing witness to another’s story is a blessing for all. This is a committed group and you will be asked to attend all three sessions unless illness or emergency keeps you away.

Sign up with Katie Lee or the congregational administrator.



Every Little Bit Helps!

Do you shop at Shaw's?

If you do, and if you have a Shaw's Reward Card, and if you happen to shop on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, and if you signup online at <http://www.albertsons.com/cp/Shaws/>, you can designate First Parish as a Community Rewards partner (you can designate up to 4 partners).

Quarterly, Shaw’s will contribute a percentage of your eligible Rewards Card purchases made on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to your designated non-profit organizations.

Signup today, shop often, and remember that every little bit helps! Please send your questions to Dawn.



From the Program Council: Meeting Fiscal Challenges

by Susan S and Dawn,
Trustees

The First Parish Program Council met in Nov. to coordinate activities, information, and budget. This year, the Council is also helping brainstorm and execute strategies to address First Parish UU's short- and long-range fiscal concerns. We welcome all who are interested. The next Program Council meeting is Jan. 12 at 7 pm in the Commons.

In a nutshell, First Parish UU operated at a deficit last year, and projections show this trend continuing. While there is no immediate emergency, if we continue to operate with a deficit each year, there **will** be an emergency in a few years, especially if we lose our largest renter, SED. The Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, and the Program Council are working hard to communicate the situation to the congregation and to find solutions. So far, a working "guesstimate" of the worst case scenario shows that we need **either** an increase in pledges or members of about 40%, **or** a reduction in expenses of about 37%, **or** an increase in other income of about \$70,000. The solution will, of course, be a combination of these measures. Go to the Program Council's Webpage to see a more detailed explanation of the numbers.

Enthusiastic members of First Parish UU are stepping up to help find solutions for our budget problems. Volunteering on a project is a terrific way to get to know new people at First Parish. In October, the Program Council brainstormed activities. Below are some of the money-raising activities that are in the works. If you have a project you'd like to initiate, join us on January 12 and we'll talk about it.

- Leslie L. and Carolyn L. propose reviving the Canvass Dinner to kick off the pledge drive. Join with other First Parish UU members to hear about and discuss our financial situation, and decide how you can support our beloved community.

- A First Parish UU coffee house fundraiser in March sounds like fun to Leslie L., Kelly, and Julie. If your interests and skills lie in this area, contact one of these women and get involved.
- Our main fund raiser, the Harvest Fair, needs a fifth leader. Are you good at coordinating activities and directing volunteers? This is an especially important and gratifying way to help First Parish UU. The current team includes: Sherri, Beth, Elaine, and Mary Ellen.

If you want to help First Parish UU, but raising money is not your thing, there are niches for you, too.

- Bridget wants to spearhead an effort to improve our website. She is looking for people who want to help with: Web design, marketing, communications/writing, and photography/illustration.
- If you feel strongly about the spiritual growth of the next generation at First Parish UU, then consider joining the Religious Exploration Committee which works with the Director of Religious Exploration, Roberta Altamari, to help organize Sunday morning classes and to direct policy.

Other issues discussed at November's Program Council meeting included signs on the lawn and email communications within First Parish (and privacy concerns). You can read the minutes of the November meeting on our website.

NEW "Help Wanted" Section Coming to the Connector



When you know of a job opening, please email all the details to office@fpsudbury.org for the next Connector. Since the Connector is distributed every two weeks, we hope this will be a timely way to get a big win-win for everyone!

Remember to **Send in Names/Bring Photos** for **Jan. 3 Endings & Beginnings**

Send the names and bring the photos beforehand because on Sunday, January 3 we will honor those who died and celebrate those who were born in 2009. What we need from you is: name (pronunciation, if needed) and either "born" or "died."

Send it to minister@fpsudbury.org or drop it off at the First Parish office. We especially encourage you to bring a photo of those you are honoring so that our altar table may be filled with their beautiful faces.

Next 4th Tuesday Lunch is January 26

Although we will not hold a 4th Tuesday lunch on December 22, join us on January 26 for our next 4th Tuesday lunch gathering at noon in The Commons when Rev. Judy D will lead the discussion on healthcare.



Thank you to all who helped out with the Holly Fair...you helped raise \$3,700⁺ for the work and support of First Parish!

Thank you to the crafters, artists, bakers, soup makers, lunch crew, table workers, greens workshop participants, greens sellers, setup and cleanup crews and all those who donated items! Thank you to all who shopped as well! We had participants of all ages! The sense and depth of our community could be felt in all aspects of the fair. If you would like to share thoughts about your experiences surrounding the Holly Fair, please email to Dawn

Still Reveling

If you enjoyed (or missed) the recent First Parish Festival of Revelry, you can see many of those same dancers at *A Revels 12th Night Celebration*, Sat. Jan. 9 in Watertown. Go to www.revels.org



To Reach Staff During the Holidays...

The First Parish office will close for the holiday at Noon on Wednesday, Dec. 23 and resume a regular schedule on Monday, Jan. 4. There will be a worship service on Sunday, Jan. 3 at 10:00 am as usual. During the work days between Christmas and New Year's the staff will not keep regularly-scheduled office hours. However, they will be working and checking phone and email messages daily. Our minister, Katie Lee Crane, will be on call and available in the event of a pastoral emergency or urgent First Parish business. If you need to reach someone on the staff, please call 978-443-2043 and follow the voice mail prompts to leave a phone message at First Parish; someone will respond.

New Sacred Circle Dances Begin Jan. 9

Come support a new group renting space in our meetinghouse. Dance has been used throughout the ages to honor the divine, to heal, affirm connection to the earth and each other, build community, and celebrate rites of passage and life transitions. Sacred Circle Dances are joyful, meditative, mournful, full of beauty, life and celebration. All dances are taught, and no partner or previous experience is necessary. On Saturday, Jan. 9 from 7:00 - 9:00 pm a new group of Sacred Circle Dances will begin at the First Parish of Sudbury. A donation of \$5⁰⁰-\$15⁰⁰ is requested. Leading the dances will be a Dance/Movement therapist who believes in the power of movement to soothe, energize, excite and transform. For details please call the office.

You Decide...What Should the UUA Commission on Appraisal Study Next?

The UUA Commission on Appraisal (COA) is charged to "review any function or activity of the Association which in its judgment will benefit from an independent review and report its conclusions to a regular General Assembly." *What should the COA study next?* Take our online survey at: www.uua.org/coa before January 7, 2010. To see what the COA has studied in previous years, check out our website for details and reports: www.uua.org/coa.



Let Us Worship

Let us worship with our eyes and ears and fingertips.

Let us love the world through heart and mind and body.

We feed our eyes upon the mystery and revelation in the faces of our brothers and sisters.

We seek to know the wistfulness of the very young and the very old, the wistfulness of people in all times of life.

We seek to understand the shyness behind arrogance, the fear behind pride, the tenderness behind clumsy strength, the anguish behind cruelty.

All life flows into a great common life, if we will only open our eyes to our companions.

Let us worship, not in bowing down, not with closed eyes and stopped ears.

Let us worship with the opening of all the windows of our beings, with the full outstretching of our spirits.

Life comes with singing and laughter, with tears and confiding, with a rising wave too great to be held in the mind and heart and body, to those who have fallen in love with life.

Note this delay:

The next Connector will be published on January 6 (skipping a week).
Deadline is Dec. 30.
Please send submissions to
office@fpsudbury.org. Thanks.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

You can find out if worship and other events at First Parish are cancelled due to severe weather or other emergency situations:

By phone—check the recorded message at the First Parish number, 978/443-2043.

First Parish website -- Go to www.fpsudbury.org. The front page will show any emergency closing.

WBZ Radio website -- Go to www.wbz.com, click on "School Closings from the WBZ Storm Center" button, click on "Religious" and scroll down to look for "First Parish of Sudbury."

By radio -- Listen to 1030 AM *WBZ Storm Center* at :05 and :35 past the hour for cancellation of our Sunday worship service only. Other events cannot be listed. If you think a meeting or event might be cancelled, please contact the meeting leader.

Contacts:

Minister: Rev. Katie Lee Crane - minister@fpsudbury.org

Ministerial Candidate in Residence: Beverly – office@fpsudbury.org

Music Dir.: Debra Morris-Bennett – musicdir@fpsudbury.org

Dir. of Religious Exploration & Youth Ministry: Roberta Altamari – dre@fpsudbury.org

Community Life: Fran Sharp – connect@fpsudbury.org

Administrator and Newsletter Editor: Donna Scalcione – office@fpsudbury.org

Office: 978-443-2043 **Web address:** www.fpsudbury.org

FPS Calendar Dec 16, 2009 to Jan 6, 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>Dec 13</u>	<u>Dec 14</u>	<u>Dec 15</u>	<u>Dec 16</u> 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Dec 17</u> 1:00p Mindfulness Meditation 7:30p Choir	<u>Dec 18</u>	<u>Dec 19</u>
<u>Dec 20</u> 10:00a Worship Service 11:45a Hearthside Chat 3:00p Rental 6:30p Rental 7:00p Youth group field trip	<u>Dec 21</u> 6:00p Rental: Yoga 7:00p Spirit Play Task Force	<u>Dec 22</u> 12:00p No 4th Tuesday Lunch in Dec. - canceled 6:45p Tuesday Night Meditation 7:00p Rental	<u>Dec 23</u> 7:00p Rental	<u>Dec 24</u> 5:00p Christmas Eve Family Service 7:00p Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<u>Dec 25</u> 10:00a Christmas Morning Service	<u>Dec 26</u>
<u>Dec 27</u> 10:00a Joint Worship Service at First Parish UU, 24 Vernon St. Framingham 6:30p Rental	<u>Dec 28</u> OFFICE CLOSED	<u>Dec 29</u> OFFICE CLOSED 6:45p Tuesday Night Meditation 7:00p Rental	<u>Dec 30</u> OFFICE CLOSED 5:00p Connector deadline 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Dec 31</u> OFFICE CLOSED	<u>Jan 1</u> OFFICE CLOSED 7:00p Youth Group Sleepover	<u>Jan 2</u> 12:00a Youth Group Sleepover
<u>Jan 3</u> 10:00a Worship Service 11:45a Rental: Morris Dancers 3:00p Rental 4:45p Rental: Morris Dancers 6:30p Rental	<u>Jan 4</u> 12:00p Rental: SED 6:00p Rental: Yoga 7:00p Board of Trustees	<u>Jan 5</u> 6:45p Tuesday Night Meditation 7:00p Rental 7:00p COA Workshop	<u>Jan 6</u> 10:00a Connector published 7:00p Rental 7:00p Quilters	<u>Jan 7</u>	<u>Jan 8</u>	<u>Jan 9</u>