



April 2008

First Parish News

Upcoming Events:

- April 6th
Sunday Service 10 am
"A Generous Heart"
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- April 13th
Sunday Service 10 am
TBA
Rev. Stanley Dahlman
- April 20th
Sunday Service 10am
"Pack Light – The
Passover Story"
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- April 27th
Sunday Service 10am
TBA
Johanna Conant,
Guest Speaker

First Parish Website:
northfieldunitarian.org

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First Parish of Northfield Unitarian Monthly Newsletter

Announcements

Preview of upcoming services:

- | | |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May | 4 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
11 Congregational Meeting
18 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
25 Leslie Fraser |
| June | 1 Annual Meeting
8 Stephanie Ciccarello
15 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
Followed by end-of-year picnic |

COFFEE HOUR

Please remember to sign up - We are always looking for volunteers to bring refreshments for our coffee hour following each Sunday service. Please remember to use the sign-up sheet in the downstairs hallway.

FOOD COLLECTION

Remember to bring canned or dry goods (each Sunday) for the hungry in our own Franklin County. The youth will collect these foods as part of our Sunday Offerings and will be taking these contributions to a local food pantry.

As you may remember, last month our collection went to Katie's Cupboard, a local food pantry run by local folks!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Concert at TCC April 19, 7pm

Featuring

Lynne Walker
Charles Hunting
Dennis Ainsworth.

\$10 donation suggested



TAG SALE Saturday, May 10th

As you are cleaning out your closets, cupboards and storage areas put aside any GOOD ITEMS for our sale!! If you have any questions, please call Marie Ferre or Betty Gibson.

Summer Solstice Fundraiser Saturday, June 21st

Featuring **local produce** and **local cooking**. Money raised will benefit Loaves and Fishes and Katie's Cupboard.

Looking for co-chair & committee to help organize this. Please contact Ruth Potee.

Keep Us In Mind!!

Fair weather painter looking for summer employment..(interior/exterior)... Experienced and reasonable. Looking for painting during July, but also if you have something you want done in the spring, let me know. I'm ready to break out from winter!! We also have a strapping 16 year old boy (Nick) looking to earn spring and summer money doing yard work and odd jobs....AND we have competent, trained babysitter(s) (Marykate is more available than Sophie) on hand to take care of chidcare needs....

Call Steve and Carey

Minister's Corner

OK, you First Parish folk, tell me, are the snow piles outside our door are ever going to melt? Are there really spring bulbs waiting to push up from the frozen earth? As your minister here in Northfield I now understand why April starts with a holiday dedicated to making us laugh. Believing in spring, believing in flowers, believing in growth makes us all look like and sound like fools.

Join me, oh faithful fools, as we turn the calendar page to the month of April. Join me in welcoming in the spring rains (and mud) and also in continuing to envision, to dream, about the new life of our First Parish. In January I invited the congregation to consider what or who is most important in your life and how well you are honoring that "most important" factor. And then, to think about your life as a church member or friend and to reflect on how you are helping the church move toward what is most important. In February and March the Parish Committee followed up on that dreaming time and talked about their love for the church and their dedication to keeping the mission and vision alive and well. We hope to bring this conversation to the congregation in May (when those flowers are really blossoming!). This will be a time for everyone to give their input into what First Parish means to you and how you are supporting this community of faith (and fools?)

This month, in advance of our May discussion you will be receiving a letter from the Parish Committee and the Board of Trustees, daring you to think and dream deeply about First Parish. Because the fiscal year of our church begins in July, you are asked now, in April, to pledge financial support for the upcoming year. Now is the time to consider what First Parish means to you and to your family. Is this a place that has become a spiritual home to you and yours? Is this a place that is a loving center in the center of our village? Is this a place where you are free to speak and act as your conscience demands? Is this a place that encourages you, comforts you, and challenges you to grow spiritually? If you say yes to any of these questions, this is the time to promise to renew your commitment to this place, these people, by submitting your generous annual pledge.

Most people I know feel shy to talk about finances – their own or the finances of their church. But when we do risk talking about the cost of keeping our building open (and beautiful, safe and warm) we learn about what we are called to do. When we risk talking about the costs of keeping our ministries going (our religious education, community meals, Unitarian Universalist worship, and sponsorship of AA meetings and support of our local food pantries...) we learn about what we are called to be. And then, shyly and bravely

we can talk amongst ourselves about how we can be most generous in supporting First Parish. When times are tight, and they are, it seems foolish to talk about being generous in supporting our church. But when times are tight, and they are, the need for this church community is even greater. If you and your friends or family has found First Parish to be a haven in tight and troubling times, this is a good time to pledge your financial support. Together we can dream and do what we are called to do.

In faith,
Reverend Marguerite

This Month in Unitarian Universalist History

This monthly column is dedicated to celebrating some milestones and anniversaries from Unitarian Universalist history. The information is taken from the book [This Day in Unitarian Universalist History](#) by Frank Shulman and this month there is also information taken from a paper presented at the Northfield Historical Society in June 1945.

April 2, 1794

William Cullen Bryant, one of the literary greats of America was born in Cummington Massachusetts. He is remembered chiefly for his poetry but also edited the [New York Evening Post](#) for nearly 50 years. He was a member of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City and advocated for women's rights and the abolition of slavery.

April 9, 1959

The pioneering American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and active Unitarian, died on this day at age 89.

April 19, 1839

Eliza Jane Reed Sunderland was born in Huntsville, Illinois. She was the wife of Jabez Thomas Sunderland (who was the minister of First Parish of Northfield 1872-1876.) Eliza Sunderland was a lay leader in local church work and in the denomination and often preached at Unitarian and Universalist churches. She represented Unitarian women of America at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Illinois in 1893.

April 30, 1909

On this day in Northfield Massachusetts there was a notable celebration at the Town Hall. It was the 40th anniversary of what was known as the floral ministry of Charles W. Mattoon at First Parish Unitarian Church. It was exactly 40 years ago from this date that he had begun every Sunday to decorate the pulpit and platform of the church with flowers and plants from woods and greenhouse. He also sent a wreath or some floral offering to every family in town in church he learned a death had occurred.

Conversation Circle – There is a Place For You!

Everyone is invited to participate in our April Conversation Circle. We will be meeting on Tuesday April 15th (7PM) in the Webster Room for a structured conversation about a topic that will touch on our spiritual understandings of life. Last month we talked about "our religious roots" as individuals and how our religious history informs us today. There will be time for listening, silence, personal sharing, and responding to the topic of the evening. Cookies too! Please come and join us for this opportunity in the middle of the month, middle of the week, to get to know each other and ourselves a bit more. Pass this information on to any friend (involved in the church or not) who might be interested but who is may not be receiving our newsletter.

Thank You for Hosting!

Thanks go out to Betty Gibson and Tammy Pelletier for their hospitality to the Franklin County Interfaith Council. The Council met at First Parish on March 27th for a delicious potluck dinner and meeting. We heard about hunger in Franklin County and the variety of programs that are available to address this great need. We also talked about upcoming ecumenical services for peace and another service to remember the Holocaust. The members of the Council (lay and clergy from a wide variety of faith groups) all commented on the cozy and welcoming environment of our Webster Room and a few took tours of our Sanctuary (cold but lovely still!) Betty and Tammy kept the coffee pots filled, washed up our table settings and demonstrated again how First Parish knows how to put on a party! So thank you for hosting the group. Perhaps this will become another First Parish sponsored annual event.

An Invitation From UUMassAction

You and everyone in your congregation are invited to the State House in Boston for the Second Annual UULobby Day on Thursday, April 3rd, 10:30 to 3:00. We'll learn how to make a difference on UU's two top issues this year - "Global Warming" and "Hunger and Poverty." (At last year's Lobby Day, we made a crucial difference in the victory of "Marriage Equality"!) We'll hear great speakers, including UUA President Rev. Bill Sinkford; we'll be trained on key issues and legislation, and then go in groups to visit our legislators. To RSVP and reserve lunch, go to www.uumassaction.org and click on "Lobby Day."

