



March 2008

First Parish News

Upcoming Events:

- March 2nd
Sunday Service 10 am
“Partners Near and Far”
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- March 9th
Congregational Gathering
“An introduction to Sign Language”
- March 16th
Sunday Service 10am
“Spring Breakup”
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- March 23rd
Easter Sunday 10am
“Stop, Look and Celebrate”
Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
- March 30th
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:

April	6 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	13 Rev. Stanley Dahlman
	20 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	27 Johanna Conant
May	4 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	11 Congregational Meeting
	18 Rev. Marguerite Sheehan
	25 Leslie Fraser

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!

A Thank You

Thanks to Tom White, a local potter, First Parish has two of our very own chalices. Tom is a good friend of First Parish and gave them in memory of Bill Randall. They will be used on a regular basis in our weekly services.

Webster Room

The Parish Committee decided that we will continue meeting in the Webster Room until Easter (March 23rd). Starting Easter Sunday we will be back upstairs in the Sanctuary!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday – March 1st 5:00 pm

A Community Pot Luck & Game Night at First Parish – If this sounds like a good time – I'm sure it will be!! Why not get out of the Winter Blahs by coming to First Parish for some delicious food, fun games and great company. . . .Bring a dish to share and your favorite games - Coffee and tea will be provided.

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.

Might be just what you're looking for!

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

The month of March will begin on Saturday March 1st at First Parish with our festive intergenerational community games and potluck evening. We hope that this will be a time when First Parish members can get together with other friends and neighbors in Northfield, to play games, share delicious treats and get to know each other in a playful way. Perhaps this will be the beginning of another church tradition. If you are reading this before March 1st, plan to come and invite a friend! Take this as an opportunity to open our doors and show our community spirit.

On March 23 we will gather as a church community to celebrate Easter. Easter is a complex day. It is celebrated close to the Spring Equinox and shares much of that Pagan focus on the increase in daylight (the rising "son") and the balance (equal) of day and night. For some families Easter includes bunny rabbits and Easter eggs and not too long ago it was an excuse to buy a fancy hat to wear to church. When I think about Easter I enjoy all these associations but what is more important to me is the season's encouragement to stop for a moment, to look deeply at suffering in our world, and to celebrate that part of our humanity that helps us rise up and start again. It is truly a miracle, and one that happens on a regular basis; love can survive death.

Here is an Easter poem by the Reverend Richard Gilbert. It speaks to the call to life that is available to all of us, catching us by surprise, when we are deep in sorrow. For those of you who are grieving at this time of year or who know someone who is grieving, may this poem bring you a hint of joy. Gilbert titled his poem "A Tomb is No Place to Stay."

A tomb is no place to stay
Be it a cave in the Judean hills
Or the dark cavern of the spirit.

A tomb is no place to stay
When fresh grass rolls away the stone of winter cold
And valiant flowers burst their way to warmth and light.

A tomb is no place to stay
When each morning announces our reprieve
And we know we are granted yet another day of living.

A tomb is no place to stay
When life laughs a welcome
To hearts that have been away too long.

Join me at First Parish for our Easter service. If you are an early bird, join me as well in the Ecumenical Sunrise Service, as we welcome in this day with our Northfield neighbors. I look forward to hearing the Alleluias ringing across the Northfield hills.

In faith and peace, Rev. 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.

March 3, 1568

The second religious debate between Unitarian Francis David and Calvinist bishop Peter Melius opened at Gyulafehervar, Transylvania. The debate lasted 10 days and tradition has it that after returning home from the debate, Francis David preached standing on a round rock and all who heard him concerted to Unitarianism. The series of debates began at the Diet of Toda and ultimately resulted in the conversion of Prince John Sigismund of Transylvania to Unitarianism. After Sigismund's death in 1571 his successor had Francis David arrested and thrown in prison where he died.

March 11, 1965

James Reeb, a Unitarian minister died in Selma Alabama, after being attacked by segregationists for his participation in a civil rights march. He was one of more than 125 Unitarian ministers who answered the call of Martin Luther King's call to march in support of voting rights for black Americans. On March 25th of the same year Viola Fauver Gregg Liuzzo, an active lay Unitarian leader was murdered in Selma for her participation in the march.

March 19, 1899

Margaret Barr was born in Menston in Warfedale, Yorkshire, England. She devoted her life to working with the Unitarians in Khasi Hills, in the state of Meghalaya in northeast India. Her work stressed education so that poor people could have their own leaders, schoolteachers, midwives and healthcare workers. She was greatly inspired by Mohandas Gandhi whom she met many times. She died in August 11, 1973.

Conversation Circles

Tuesday March 11th at 7PM we will be hosting the first of what we hope will be a monthly series of conversation circles at First Parish. The conversation circles will be facilitated small groups focusing on helping us to reflect, speak, and listen to each other about our various religious and spiritual beliefs and experiences. This is a great opportunity to reflect on our own questions and to learn more about the diverse beliefs and concerns of other church members and friends. It has been my experience that most churches, even those who adhere to a specific creed are filled with a variety of different opinions and understandings about life's big questions, but there is often no constructive forum for listening and learning from each other. This is one way that we at First Parish can create an atmosphere where we can have respectful conversations on all kinds of topics.

Interfaith Council of Franklin County Comes to First Parish

First Parish is a member of the Interfaith Council of Franklin County. This council is a group of individuals and faith group representatives who gather monthly to reflect on and sometimes take group action on a variety of social justice issues (poverty, peace, homelessness etc.) in Franklin County. In our last newsletter I wrote about the two gatherings in March on Reconciliation that the council is sponsoring. This month I would like to invite First Parish members and friends to attend the monthly potluck and meeting starting at 5:30 on March 27th at our very own church! This is a great opportunity to meet people from other faith traditions, and to host the group at First Parish. I am looking for a "few good friends" to help set up tables and make coffee, stay for the meeting, and clean up. The group brings a delicious potluck meal so you get fed as well! Let's take this opportunity to be neighborly, further the work of this group and introduce people to our church. For more information about the council check out the website www.interfaithcounciloffranklincounty.org

For more information, or to confirm that you would like to attend our conversation circle on March 11th and/or attend and help out at the Interfaith Council potluck meeting on March 27th please speak to me in person or give me a call or email.

In faith and peace,
Rev. Marguerite