

Of Money, Insanity, and Thriving

November is our Canvass season, and it is time once again to think about our annual pledges to the congregation. (November 7 is Canvass Sunday.) As you know, this is a difficult economic time. It's a challenging time, financially, for many of us. It's a challenging time for the congregation, too. Our income is smaller, while our expenses go up. The deficit created is shaping up to be bigger this year than in the past couple of years. It feels like a tough time to talk about pledges and money... again.

But maybe we're thinking of it all wrong. Maybe we're exhibiting insanity, Einstein-style. What do I mean? Albert Einstein is credited with saying, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Along these same lines, I am reading a book that is gaining popularity in Unitarian Universalist circles: *Kicking Habits: Welcome Relief for Addicted Churches*, by Thomas G. Bandy. This year, starting with our Canvass season, I want us to take this question very seriously: Are we an addicted church?

In this book, Bandy writes about *growth* as what "occurs when a living organism truly 'thrives'". He shares this story:

"... within weeks of the birth of our first child, our family physician began to become alarmed. She regularly compared the height, weight, and physical development of our infant daughter to charts tracing typical development. Our daughter was always lighter, shorter, smaller, and generally 'atypical'. We were worried. In the language of pediatricians, our little girl was 'failing to thrive.' After several months of this, our family physician sent us to [outside experts].... At last, the chief pediatrician came into the room. She had a big smile on her face. 'Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Bandy!' she said. 'After extensive tests we have determined that your daughter *is not failing to thrive... she is naturally petite!*'"

Bandy goes on, "Thriving congregations... do not have to be big. They may be petite or small... and this characteristic is often influenced by the demographic realities" It might be the case that the demographic realities of our congregation will keep us on the small side, or "naturally petite". But that doesn't mean that we can't be a thriving congregation! Our first goal should be just that – to thrive, to grow in spirit. We need to be, as Bandy puts it, "in vigorous conversation with ... the spiritually yearning and institutionally unhappy public." We need to end our addiction to doing things as we have always done them.

I hope that we will face the future together fearlessly, with love and excitement, with the urge to thrive! We *can* be a thriving congregation, no matter how petite. We thrive when you participate – when you come on Sunday to worship; when you share your gifts of talent. We thrive when all of us participate in the ministries of this church – reaching out to the "spiritually yearning" people in our larger community of all ages! We thrive when we stop fretting about our physical size and start focusing on the size of our *love* and *ministries* in the world. Let us thrive!

With hope,

Lara



CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday, Nov. 7, 2010

10 a.m. ~ "Canvass Sunday: Passing the Buck", with Rev. Lara Hoke

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2010

7:00 p.m. ~ Alliance Meeting

Friday, Nov. 12, 2010

6:30 p. m. ~ Parish Committee Meeting

Sunday, Nov. 14, 2010

10 a.m. ~ "Moving Beyond the Lightbulbs—Waking Up to the Possibilities!" with Ms. Nancy Banks, guest preacher

Sunday Nov. 21, 2010

4 p.m. ~ "Interfaith Thanksgiving Service", with Rev. Lara Hoke and our friends from the Orthodox Congregational Church and St. Peter's Church.

Friday, Nov. 26, 2010

6:30 p. m. ~ Parish Committee Meeting

Sunday, Nov. 28, 2010

10 a.m. ~ Peace Sunday: Quaker Perspectives on Peace, with Ms. Jane Manring

Worship Notes

On **November 7**, we will have our annual **Canvass Sunday**. It's time once more to think about our hopes and dreams for this congregation. Please come and ponder what it means to make a pledge to this congregation, especially in these tough economic times. Lara's sermon is entitled **"Passing the Buck"**.

The service starts at 10 a.m. – don't forget it's time to "fall back"; **set your clocks back** on Saturday night! Carolyn Holstein will play organ and piano. Please join us!

On Sunday, **November 14**, our guest preacher tradition continues. Ms. Nancy Banks, Executive Director of UUMassAction, will be our guest. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. exhorted people "to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas ... and to face the challenge of change." For many of us the challenge can be daunting, but on this Sunday we will explore how we as a faith community can wake up to the possibilities of action that are needed today. The service is entitled **"Moving Beyond the Lightbulbs—Waking Up to the Possibilities!"** will begin at 10 a.m. All are welcome! Nancy Banks is the Executive Director of UUMassAction, a state-based advocacy network that brings the moral voice of Unitarian Universalist (UU) values to the public arena in Massachusetts. Banks has been an active UU for more than 20 years and has served in her home congregation, First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, as president, chair of the ministerial search committee and on numerous church committees. She has also served on the Clara Barton District Board of Directors. Banks was an elected member of the Acton and Acton-Boxborough school committees for three years and worked as a project manager for Verizon for 22 years. Howard Apley will be back to play piano. Please join us!

On Sunday, **November 21**, the service starts at 4 p.m. – it is our annual **"Interfaith Thanksgiving Service"**, with Rev. Lara Hoke and our friends from the Orthodox Congregational Church and St. Peter's Church. Carolyn Holstein will

be back to play organ and piano. Please join us! (There will be no 10 a.m. service on this Sunday.) Lara will preach a youth-friendly homily. This is one of the most lovely services of the year, so don't miss it!

On Sunday, **November 28**, we will have our second **Peace Sunday** of the year. The speaker will be Ms. **Jane Manring**, who will share with us the Friends' (Quakers') perspectives on peace and working for peace. She will also show us a Quaker-style silent meditation, as we work on our "inner capacities" for creating peace; peace in our own lives is a necessary condition for creating lasting peace in the world. Please join us at 10 a.m. and learn more. All are welcome!

Notes from the Parish Committee

Please come to our Nov. 6th fundraiser! Kay Berry and her committee are working hard to organize the "Attic Treasures and Teahouse" event to take place in the Davis Memorial and the church dining room on Saturday, Nov. 6th. After you visit the Art Show in the Town Hall, stop by the church for great bargains and a delicious lunch.

Betty Davis and Russ Kennedy are co-chairing the Pledge Drive this year. Your support is needed to pay for our minister's salary, to give stipends to guest preachers and Peace Sunday presenters, to maintain the church buildings, and to do the good works that make us Unitarian-Universalists.

On Nov. 21st, Rev. Hoke will lead the special interfaith service celebrating Thanksgiving. Our interfaith connections are strong in Petersham. The four services we share each year are so

meaningful, and the combined choirs are wonderful.

We'll be having our Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24th at 7:00 p.m., with Eric Wasileski, a special friend of the congregation, as our guest preacher. Music is being organized by Kay Berry and Rev. Hoke.

The holiday season is a special time to be together, and it's wonderful to have the pews filled. Come to church and bring a friend!

See you in church!

Pam Chevalier,
Parish Committee Secretary

Peace Sunday

Joanne Foster, Executive Director of the House of Peace and Education in Gardner, was the guest speaker at our October Peace Sunday. The House of Peace and Education was founded in 1996 in response to the poverty and growing trend of violence in the greater Gardner area. The program works to end the cycle of poverty and domestic abuse by empowering women and children who have been caught up in the cycle. Realizing that the best path out of poverty is education, the women's program offers education, job training, resume and interview training, and training in appropriate business social skills in a seven-week program, followed by a year of support. The organization also offers programs for children from kindergarten through high school, giving them after school tutoring and mentoring, as well as building their self-confidence while teaching them social skills. High school students are offered leadership training and opportunities for leadership roles in public service.

Graduate students often return to the program as tutors and mentors. The program works closely with the schools to identify at risk children who are most likely to benefit from the programs.

The House of Peace and Education will sponsor "Celebrating Women: An Evening with Liz Walker (award-winning television journalist, documentary film producer, entrepreneur, humanitarian) on April 28, at the Colonial Hotel in Gardner. There are brochures on the table in the downstairs dining room and cards with more information posted on all of the church bulletin boards. For more information, visit www.hopegardner.org.

Petersham Branch Alliance

The Alliance will meet on November 10 at 7 p.m. the 11th being Armistice Day now called Veterans' Day!

On December 9 a special treat for all! Anyone who loves animals and good photography: women, men and children will enjoy this program, so save the date!

Petersham resident and Mass Wildlife photographer Bill Byrne will present a well illustrated program of natural history encounters along Massachusetts wetlands and hillsides. Osprey, eagles, bears, bats, reptiles, goshawk, moose, and much more, as well as some research updates, will be covered. Enjoying wildlife and living with wildlife can sometimes be a challenge. During the presentation, helpful guidelines will be offered with the hope that some of your question may be answered.

Also on that night, we will draw the winner of the Raffle for Scholarships: Prizes are heating oil, a hand-knitted

sweater and a \$50 gift certificate to Picasso's Restaurant. Tickets are available from Alliance members or on the night of Bill Byrne's program.

Join us for an interesting evening with Bill!

The Alliance recently took four truckloads of household goods to the Veterans' Homestead in Gardner, to provide much needed items for the disabled veterans who are going to be living at the Homestead with their families. The Lions Club, St. John's Episcopal Church, and many individuals contributed to this effort.

Call Barbara Hanno at 978-724-0219 if you have any questions.

Anne Perkins



ATTIC TREASURES AND TEA ROOM

On Saturday, November 6, we will have an **Attic Treasures and Tea Room** in the Davis Memorial and the church dining room from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Attic Treasures will include flea market items. Individuals may rent tables for \$10.00 to sell their items or may donate items to the church table. To reserve a table please call Kay Berry at 978-724-6610.

Two Barbara Ellis paintings (donated by the Ellen Moriarty family), a roll top desk, and a piano are some of the items that will be part of a silent auction. Some items will have a minimum bid attached to them.

We will also have a 50/50 raffle that day.

The Tea Room, chaired by Pam Chevalier, will have soup, sandwiches, and desserts as well as beverages. The Tea Room will be open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pam is accepting help and items for the Tea Room. Her number is 978-724-3466.

If you are able to help set up the Attic Treasures and Tea Room on Friday, November 5th or work on the flea market table or clean up on Saturday, please let Kay know. Thank you very much.

Kay Berry
Penny Blum



YOGA WITH LINDA **November 2010**

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m.:

Nov. 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, and 30

NO CLASSES Nov. 23 & 25

\$5 per class

**** Please note:**

**There will be no Wednesday classes
through the fall and winter.**

For more information, contact Linda at:

lckabo@verizon.net

978-434-1598

JERRY BRUNETTI

"HUMAN HEALTH AND SOIL HEALTH"

NOVEMBER 5TH AND 6TH

**Barre Congregational Church,
30 Park Street, Barre, MA**

Jerry Brunetti went to see a doctor for an MRI, after back injuries from a car accident in the late 1990's were plaguing him and causing him pain. Much to his surprise, after the MRI, Jerry learned that he had **Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma**, a type of cancer that attacks the lymphatic system. Jerry had a tumor in his abdomen. The car accident, it turned out, saved his life.

Brunetti is founder of **Agri-Dynamics**, of Martins Creek, in northern Pennsylvania (a company which provides consulting and holistic products for livestock and animal health, and soil consulting). Although he had many experiences in his childhood that he believes contributed to compromising his health, he did not feel sick when he received his diagnosis. He had already spent his adult career as a consultant, working with farmers to improve their soils so as to grow more nutritious forage, feed, and crops. By then, nutritious and healthy food had become an integral part of his personal and professional life.

As a result of his Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma diagnosis, he was given six months to live. Jerry rejected the prescribed aggressive chemotherapy treatment in favor of a holistic approach. As Jerry explains - "Traditional chemotherapy is designed to shrink tumors. I wasn't interested in shrinking my tumor. I was interested in my entire immune system. I wanted to live." And so Brunetti embarked on a largely

holistic approach, in keeping with his life-philosophy. Through Jerry's alternative detoxification approach, coupled with his strict (and ongoing) regimen of complete nutrition (including nutrient dense foods and beneficial fats and proteins), Jerry was successful in curing himself of his lymphoma.

It is now 11 years since Jerry was first diagnosed. Jerry's bout with cancer solidified his belief in **nutrient dense foods as the solution to curing and managing chronic diseases which plague our society**. He believes farms should be treated as our "FARMacies," and that folks should start viewing diet as a critical disease-management component of a healthy lifestyle. "This is not hippie, tree-hugger, granola-crunchy stuff that I'm talking about," Brunetti asserts. "It's all in the conventional medical literature. Doctors just don't always know where to look for it."

Soil, Brunetti believes, is at the core of his nutrient-dense diet crusade. **Developing farms that produce wide varieties of produce rich in vitamins and minerals is a crucial step to curing what ails us**. Jerry hopes that farmers and consumers across the nation will begin looking at whole organ-ism agriculture, starting in the soil.

The Northeast Organic Farming Association, Massachusetts Chapter is proud to introduce Jerry as its **Fall Advanced Growers Seminar** speaker. This two-part seminar, to be held on **Friday and Saturday, November 5th and 6th** at the **Barre Congregational Church**, presents a practical and integrated approach for improving human health through improving the health of our soils. Friday evening's talk from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, "**The Medicine that Starts in the Soil**," will emphasize

what people can do through diet to improve health. Saturday's full day seminar from 8:30am to 5:30pm, "**Soil as a Super Organism**," will illustrate practical techniques that farmers and gardeners can employ to realize Hippocrates' directive, "Let food be your medicine."

The seminar is applicable to growers, nutritionists, medical practitioners, and health-conscious consumers. Pre-registration is required. The registration cost for the seminar is \$30 for Friday and \$100 for Saturday. Members of any NOFA chapter or MOFGA also receive a discount of \$5 for Friday and \$10 for Saturday. Registration information and further details at: <http://www.nofamass.org/seminars/fallseminar.php>.

For more information about the NOFA/Mass Advanced Growers Fall Seminar with Jerry Brunetti, please contact Ben Grosscup, who is the NOFA/Mass Extension Events Coordinator, at ben.grosscup@nofamass.org, or call (413) 658-5374.

Family News

Ellen Moriarty, beloved long-time member of our congregation, has begun to require a nursing home level of care. Because of this, she has moved from Leominster Crossing (assisted living) into the Highlands nursing home in Fitchburg. The address:

Ellen G. Moriarty
4th Floor The Highlands
335 Nichols Rd
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Thank you for being a loving and caring congregation.

Honors

C. Dana Tomlin was recently inducted into the Geographic Information Systems Hall of Fame at the URISA conference in Orlando, Fla. He was given this award because of his extensive contributions to the advancement of the industry and his serving as a role model to students in the field.

Care Packages

The Peace Group will continue sending care packages to the service people on a regular basis. Contributions are welcome, as are donations for postage for the packages.

Addresses for the soldiers to whom we are sending packages are available at the Davis Memorial.

There will be baskets for donations in the front entry of the church, and also in the Davis Memorial.

New Directory

We are planning to revise and reprint the Church Directory this fall. If any of you have new addresses, or additions or corrections to be made to the directory, please send them to the church office. There is a printed copy of the current directory available in the church dining room for making changes.

Newsletter

Material for the newsletter may be emailed to the firstparishnt@verizon.net, or can be placed in the wall file outside the Church office. Please make a note stating that the item is for the newsletter, or you can mail your item to: First Congregational Parish, News Team, PO Box 305, Petersham, MA 01366.

Friendly Reminder: Please send in your newsletter items ***on or before*** the ***Monthly Deadline Date, which can be found on the front page of the newsletter.***

Our church newsletter is edited and mailed by volunteers. We are always happy and grateful to receive contributions towards the expenses of paper, printing and mailing, as well as general news and news of families.

Thank You,
The Newsletter Team,
Kay Berry
Don Eaton
Robert Hall
Kathy Ballou ~ Editor

<p>If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically instead of by regular mail, please email us at firstparishnt@verizon.net and let us know.</p>
