

Lo, the Earth Awakes Again!
Alleluia

Spring is here! And with it, comes a season of rebirth and resurrection. People and animals emerge from their winter homes; sprigs of green emerge from the earth; color splashes the landscape; and the sun returns. Just like the nature that abounds within and among us; we too, will emerge from the Davis Memorial, our cozy and brown winter home which has held us through the long winter and return to the lightness and brightness of our beautiful sanctuary. I love that this congregation returns to the sanctuary on Easter; a fitting liturgy which celebrates and mimics the perfection of the earth's seasons, each necessary to the other.

As you will see from this newsletter, there's a lot going on here! Just as the congregation literally moves into its spring-time home so, too, does church life begin again in a season of rebirth and renewal. This is as normal and necessary to the life of a congregation as it is to the rhythms of our own lives and the cycles of the earth's seasons. The congregation is emerging from a time of hibernation; a time of self-examination and reflection and moving into a time of action and experimentation. Much like the waters of the spring rivers which pick up their pace in flowing toward the sea so, too, does congregational life pick up its pace. I invite you to read the rest of this newsletter thoroughly, pick a place by the stream which seems warm and inviting, and jump in!

Change, then, mourning into praise, Alleluia
And, for dirges, anthems raise, Alleluia
How our spirits soar and sing, Alleluia
How our hearts leap with the spring! Alleluia

In faith,
Rev. Michelle



CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday, Apr. 1, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ "Holy Fools," a celebration of laughter in the sacred - led by Rev. Michelle

11:15 a.m. ~ **Special Congregational Meeting** following church service - voting on warrant (quorum needed)

Wednesday, Apr. 4, 2012

6:00 p.m. **Parish Committee Meeting**

Sunday, Apr. 8, 2012

6:10 a.m. ~ **Easter Sunrise-Interfaith Service behind Petersham Curling Club** - led by Rev. Michelle

Sunday, Apr. 8, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ "The Resurrection of A Community," an Easter celebration of re-birth as we return to worship in the sanctuary - led by Rev. Michelle

Sunday, Apr. 15, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ Regional Association Sunday at the First Church Unitarian Universalist of Leominster

Tuesday, Apr. 17, 2012

1:00 p.m. ~ Soul Collage at the Country Store

Thursday, Apr. 19, 2012

5:00 p.m. **Yom HaShoah: "Lest We Forget"** - A meditative service of remembrance for those who died in the Nazi death camps. Thursday evening, 5pm. - led by Rev. Michelle

Sunday, Apr. 22, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ **Peace and Social Action Sunday**

Biblical Herbs presented by expert gardener, Lynne Hartman: a hands-on spring workshop on culinary, medicinal, and ornamental herbs.

In the Davis Memorial, 10:00 - 11:00

Sunday, Apr. 29, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ **"Music for My Soul"**

A celebration of the ways in which music informs our spiritual lives and deepens our theologies. Jointly led by Rev. Michelle and members of First Parish.

Sundays, 9:00 - 9:45 a.m.

Silent meditation in the Davis Memorial

Notes From Rev. Michelle

Does Music Soothe Your Soul? – Rev. Michelle is gathering several members of the congregation together to lead a worship service on April 29th. Please let her know if you are interested in joining in!

Soul Collage Goes to the Country Store - Soul Collage is a fun and meaningful way of accessing one's own inner wisdom through an intuitive process of choosing images and pasting them together on a 5x8 card. Anyone who can cut or tear images from a magazine and use a glue stick can do this – no artistic talent required! Please see Rev. Michelle if you have any questions or would like to know more. Tuesday, April 17th at 1pm. Come early and have lunch at the Country Store! A \$1 donation per card would be greatly appreciated to defray the cost of cards and supplies.

Faith Formation Pilot Program – The congregation is in the process of

exploring the possibility of a 6 week faith formation pilot program. The teachers, children, and curriculum are already organized and plan to start mid to late April. Please see a member of the parish committee *before* April 4th to share any questions or comments you may have. Members of the parish committee are: Penny Blum, Phil Hubbard, Sally Sennott, and Genevieve Fraser.

Freely Gathered: Districts Assembly
April 28, 2012 - 1:00 to 5:00 PM
First Unitarian Church, 90 Main
Street, Worcester, MA

You are invited to attend the first ever joint assembly of the Clara Barton and Mass Bay Districts! Join UUs from 118 congregations and beyond for an afternoon of celebrative worship, music and fellowship that asks you to consider these questions "What would it feel like to be free? What is my call? Am I prepared to answer that call?" This event is free of charge. For more details and to register, go to www.cbd-mbd-uua.org.

Easter Memorial Plants
Sunday, April 8, 2012

Each year on Easter, we like to decorate the sanctuary with blooming spring plants, in memory of loved ones who are no longer with us. If you would like to donate a plant (*suggested donation of \$10*), please contact Pam Chevalier or Barbara Corey, and we will pick one out for you. You can also bring your own plant to the church on Saturday April 7, and we will include it in this very special arrangement. The names of remembered loved ones will be included in the Easter order-of-service. Please let Pam or Barbara know of any

names you would like included in this list.

Notes from the Parish Committee

The Annual Meeting Report is now available. It is on the table in the Davis Memorial. We invite you all to take a look and bring one home.

There are a few outstanding pieces of business that will require a special congregational meeting this spring. We will let you know the date and the agenda as soon as it has been finalized.

The Clara Barton District workshop on March 3rd was very inspiring. Rev. Michelle, Penny Blum and Pam Chevalier attended. Large and small churches from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island were represented. The speaker, Rev. Stephan Jonasson, was very entertaining and had lots of practical ideas for inspiring and supporting growth. We came home energized and ready to try out some of his suggestions.

I was very excited to hear that we have a newly formed social action committee that will work to provide programming for the fourth Sunday each month. Many thanks to everyone involved. Social justice is obviously a strong component of the work of this church.

I hope everyone has been enjoying the beautiful weather. I hesitate to say spring is here because you never know in New England, but the bulbs in my yard certainly think spring has arrived.

Penny Blum
Parish Committee Chair



The Congregation's Developmental Goals:

- To increase attendance and membership with a diversity of ages
- To foster a spirit of reconciliation among all members and friends of the congregation
- To provide multigenerational experiences through worship, programs, and activities, sharing our liberal religious traditions and values



YOGA WITH LINDA April 2012

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m.

**Apr. 3, 5, 17, 19, 24, and 26
No classes Apr. 10 and 12**

**Chair Yoga: Mar. 4, 8, and 25
No class Apr. 11**

\$5 per class

**For more information, contact Linda at:
lckabo@verizon.net
978-434-1598**

Warrant For the MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

April 1, 2012

11:15 A.M.

In the Davis Memorial Building

To vote on the following articles:

1. To approve the 2011 annual meeting minutes.
2. To discuss the purchase of a dishwasher.
3. To elect a Treasurer.

4. To elect a Social Action Committee.
5. To elect an additional Membership Committee member.
6. To remove Michael Huppert's name from the Parish Committee. Due to a misunderstanding, it was wrongly assumed that Michael had accepted the nomination.
7. To discuss and vote on a policy whereby expenditures above \$1000 which are not included in the annual budget require congregational approval, and that the addition of line items to the annual budget require congregational approval.
8. Any other items that may lawfully come before this meeting.
9. Minister's contract renewal.

Elizabeth Davis, Clerk

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, P.O. Box 305, Petersham, MA 01366.

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