

## **"Fun and Faith"**

Dearest Ones,

I am both honored and excited to begin this second year of developmental ministry with you. The new congregational year is already well under way and we are off to a great start! To begin the year, your parish committee committed to spending an entire day in retreat together. They laughed and got to know each other better, all the while learning about what was important to each of them in their own spiritual lives as well as their hopes and dreams for the congregation, committing to work together in right relationship and making plans for the coming year.

The theme for the retreat was "Fun and Faith" and I am beginning to think that this may be a fitting theme for our entire year as well. I think that you already know the seriousness of the congregation's situation and that some important questions about financial sustainability lie directly in front of you, first and foremost. There is a lot of work to be done and it will take each and every person doing their part in order to make these dreams happen. We know this. You know this. There is already plenty of room for seriousness.

What I think we could use more of is... fun! Fun and Faith. There is no reason to think that the work of creating a spiritually thriving community of faith, while a lot of work, can't also be fun work! Fun can help to build community. Fun can help us to get to know each other and trust each other better. Fun can help us to feel more energetic and motivated. Fun is an essential ingredient of a spiritually thriving community.

With this in mind, your parish committee and I began planning some fun for the year. Things to look for include: a puzzle table in the Davis (drop by anytime, alone or with friends, and work a few pieces), Halloween trick or treating (we hope to set up a few scenes in the Davis), a drumming workshop, a game day, a picnic, and a UU café (karaoke, poetry readings, sing-alongs, and the like). You can also look forward to an intellectually-stimulating Adult RE class on the Bible and a field trip or two.

I hope you will join in some of the fun which is already planned, either as a participant or an organizer, or even create your own.

To a fun and faithful year!

Rev. Michelle



## **CHURCH CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2012**

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

**Sunday, Sept. 9, 2012**

**10:00 a.m. ~ "Gathering the Waters"**

Water Communion and a sermon by Rev. Michelle LaGrave

**Sunday, Sept. 16, 2012**

**10:00 a.m. ~ "From Reality TV to the Binding of Isaac"**

a sermon by Rev. Michelle LaGrave

**Sunday, Sept. 23, 2012**

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

**Sunday, Sept. 30, 2012**

**10:00 a.m. ~ "And God Said What?"**

a sermon by Rev. Michelle LaGrave

**Sundays, 8:15 - 9:00 a.m.**

Silent meditation in the Davis Memorial.  
Please note new time.

### **Worship Notes:**

**September 9th – "Gathering the Waters"** – We gather together for the first Sunday of our congregational year, gathering our waters of grief and joy, rest and renewal, hopes and dreams for the future as we also gather ourselves. Please feel free to bring a small quantity of water from a place that is important to you. Rev. Michelle will invite you to pour your water into a bowl, one at a time, and share why the water is special or representative of your summer.

**September 16th – "From Reality TV to the Binding of Isaac"** – Perhaps the most well-known and oft-cited of our

Principles, the 1st and 7th cannot stand alone. Rather, they are complements of each other which are held aloft in the tension between the two.

**September 23rd – Peace and Social Action**

**September 30th – "And God Said What?"** – As people who demand a place for reason within religion, Unitarian Universalists often struggle to reconcile the contents of sacred scripture with rational thought. Using Affect Thea/ology, a highly complex system of thought developed by UU theologian the Rev. Dr. Thandeka, we can look at scripture and other aspects of faith without leaving our intellect behind.

### **Announcements and Other Items:**

SAVE THE DATE! Our first field trip to a UU heritage site with Rev. Michelle will be on Saturday, October 13th. More details to follow!

Adult RE Class – "Interpreting the Bible" – As the now infamous Texas politician's quote about the Bible: "If the King's English was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for me." aptly demonstrates, truly understanding the Bible requires more than a surface reading of an English translation. This class will focus on historical-critical methods of reading the text, coming first to an understanding of the importance of ancient oral culture, the development of the first alphabet, the historical/theoretical origins of the ancient Israelites, the manner in which the Bible was written and who wrote it, and the importance of translation theory.

This class will meet monthly on Thursdays, beginning September 27th. Please sign up with Rev. Michelle and let her know if you prefer an afternoon or an evening time slot. If enough people sign up, we'll do both!

### **Remembering Denise and Arthur**

Those who attended the Memorial Service celebrating Arthur's life will remember when Rich Nicoletti spoke so movingly, even though he had not intended to. The previous day the Athol Daily News had published an article observing the 10th anniversary of Denise Nicoletti's death. The connection with Arthur is that the picture of Denise and the children which accompanied the article was taken by Arthur.

But there is a lot more to the story than that! Denise was a valued member of First Parish. She was Treasurer for many years. She co-founded Camp Reach a summer program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute where she was a professor of Engineering. The summer program was to encourage young women to become scientists and engineers by taking courses in math and science. Denise was on her way to the first session in 2002 when she was killed.

The Athol Daily News reported in June 8, 2012: "Last year her (Denise) life's work was honored when her daughter, Celeste, traveled to the White House as Camp Reach received a prestigious award from President Obama. The Camp was named a winner in the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Monitoring. President Obama specifically recognized Camp Reach as playing a "crucial role" in the development of the 21st century workforce. 'It was really

cool being recognized by the President. It didn't hit me until I was there' said Celeste 'It was so inspiring to have my mother's dream come true.' "

And now Denise and Arthur lie peacefully in beautiful East Street Cemetery. RIP.

### **From Anne Perkins and Family**

The Perkins family wishes to thank all those who took part in Arthur's Memorial Service. We were all so moved at the love expressed by all who participated in the music, the remembrances of Arthur, and the celebration of his long and productive life.

One of Arthur's cousins, who is known for having very high standards and not giving away compliments, put it this way in a letter: "There was not, as far as I could see, a single false note in the service, not the least because you obviously had planned the whole thing. Your Minister, Michelle, was superb and you are fortunate to have her. Someone commented when I was singing her praises that memorial services can be deadly when the presiding clergy is unacquainted with the departed and that they greatly benefit when he/she can speak from personal knowledge. All the same, she is really good, knows how to communicate, makes eye-contact, speaks with genuine empathy and has an undeniable pulpit presence."

Thank you to all who took part: Rev. Michelle LaGrave; David Boeri; Rev. John Pastor; Carolyn Holstein, organist; Emily Adair Anderson, voice; Howard Apley; Isaac Bates, piano; and all the members of the Inter-faith Choir; Ellen Woodbury who coordinated with the Fiske Funeral Home; Linda Kabo

who offered to accompany *Jerusalem*, and Chip Bull, who recorded the ceremony for posterity.

### **Membership Committee**

The Membership invites you to a very special occasion: Vespers at the Priory Benedictine Monks in Petersham, on September 19th at 6.30 p.m. After the summer break come and listen to Gregorian Chant in this beautiful setting.

Membership Committee:  
Sally Sennott, Chair  
Linda Kabo and Anne Perkins

### **Notes from the Parish Committee**

Hopefully everyone has had a good summer. It is almost time for the church year to begin. Our first service will be Sunday September 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Parish Committee is continuing to meet with the Finance Committee to review the budget. We have begun brainstorming with the Finance Committee to come up with ideas for fundraisers.

On August 27<sup>th</sup> the Parish Committee and Rev. Michelle met at my house for a day long retreat. We discussed a covenant for the committee and started to share our visions for the church moving forward.

On August 30<sup>th</sup> Rev. Michelle and I attended a District workshop for Presidents and Ministers. It was a chance to discuss the roles of president and minister and how to best serve the interests of the congregation.

I'm looking forward to coming back together on September 9<sup>th</sup>. I hope to see you all.

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**

### **Peter Mayer Concert**

UU Mass Action is excited to bring Peter Mayer to Massachusetts to perform and help us raise money to support UU Mass Action. It cost only \$3000 a month to keep UU Mass Action running but July, August and September are our slowest fundraising months. This Peter Mayer concert will play a big role in helping us keep UU Mass Action going to mobilize Unitarian Universalists to live their faith in the world.

The concert will be held Saturday September 29th at 8pm with the First Parish Bedford acting as our host. We will also be holding an Arts Auction featuring local Unitarian Universalist Artists.

Doors open at 7:30pm

Concert Begins at 8:00pm

First Parish Bedford

75 Great Rd. Bedford, MA 01730

Ticket Price: \$25 purchased ahead \$30 at the door. You can purchase tickets in advance

[www.uumassaction.org/petermayer](http://www.uumassaction.org/petermayer) or by calling 617-971-8731.



## **YOGA WITH LINDA**

**September 2012**

Hello, Everyone

I hope you all had a good summer and are ready for some yoga. I'm having a minor procedure done right after Labor Day, so classes will begin the second week in September

See you there!

Linda Kabo

**Yoga Tuesdays and Thursdays  
10-11:30am**

**Sept. 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27**

**Chair Yoga Wednesdays**

**10-11am**

**Sept. 12, 19, 26**

**\$5 per class**

**For more information, contact Linda at:**

**[lckabo@verizon.net](mailto:lckabo@verizon.net)**

**978-434-1598**

## **Newsletter**

Material for the newsletter may be emailed to the [firstparishnt@verizon.net](mailto: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

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