

Now is the Time!

Dearest Ones,

As you will see when you open this newsletter there is a lot going on in our congregation! The "Planting Seeds" mindfulness program for children is back and we will continue to support them throughout the year as they open up and grow their program. The "Interpreting the Bible" class is now large enough that we are offering two sessions. I will be leading us on a field trip to the Fruitlands Museum, a historic Unitarian site. The Membership Committee will be sponsoring a potluck. We now have a choir for every 3rd Sunday of Worship. A community-building puzzle table is in place. We'll be hosting trick-or-treaters at Halloween. The list goes on and on!

The words which keep floating into my mind are: Now is the Time! The congregation is building in energy and programming. Great things are happening here. Relationships are becoming stronger and healthier. Congregational process has been greatly improved. Spirits are being nourished and minds are getting fed. Plans are underway. Now is the Time!

This congregation took an immense risk, with a great deal of courage and heart, to thoughtfully choose to spend down the congregation's endowment in the hope of doing this developmental work together. And it is happening. Now. The energy is building and we are officially underway. If you have been thinking about getting more involved in the congregation, now is the time. Now is the time to feel empowered, to share your gifts and talents, to show up and be heard, to share of your resources, to be a part of creating the vision of tomorrow as, together, we build a congregation that is healthy, vital, and nourishing to all who come here and allow themselves to be known.

For those of you who have been away for a time, you will find that the congregation has changed and that there are new ways of doing things that may feel a bit strange. For those of you who have been actively involved as leaders in our developmental work, you will find that continuing our commitment to right relationship requires some vigilance lest we fall back on old habits. For all of you, this is an invitation to join in the creation of authentic and occasionally disappointing human relationships as we build on our common vision for a healthy, vital, and nourishing congregation.

The first step of this process is to welcome everyone into the listening circles which will be happening later this month. (more inside) The listening circles are an opportunity for each and every voice to be heard. Our goal will be to listen deeply to each other as we share from the heart. There will be no room for discussion or debate, just deep listening. This is your invitation to share your voice and engage in the spiritual practice of listening to others.

In faith and love,

Rev. Michelle



CHURCH CALENDAR

Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2012

6:30 p.m. Parish Committee Meeting

Sunday, Oct. 7, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ "Until All Live Free"

With the approach of National Coming Out Day, Rev. Michelle will share some of her experiences in working for social justice.

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Planting Seeds

Sunday, Oct. 14, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ Prison Ministry with the Rev. Jason Lydon. Worship Leader: Penny Blum. Followed by travel to the regional potluck and small group ministry program of the NCMUUC.

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Planting Seeds

Thursday, Oct. 18, 2012

6:00 p.m. ~ Petersham Branch

Alliance Meeting in the Davis Memorial

Sunday, Oct. 21, 2012

10:00 a.m. ~ Music Sunday. Worship Leader: Penny Blum

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Planting Seeds

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012

2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Interpreting the Bible in the Davis Memorial.

Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012

6:00 p.m. Potluck Dinner and Listening Circles in the church dining room

Sunday, Oct. 28, 2012

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

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Planting Seeds

Sundays, 8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

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

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**.

We have enough people signed up to offer both sessions of the Bible class - at **2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.** in the Davis Memorial.

This is an academically-focused class and is open to all in the area regardless of faith tradition or lack thereof, so please spread the news.

Notes from the Parish Committee

At the Parish Committee retreat in August, we talked about some ways we could inject more fun into the church year. We are planning a number of events to be held throughout the year including a game day, a picnic and a coffee house. These events will be announced in the newsletter as dates are finalized.

Karen McArthur of Congregational Finance is in the process of conducting a stewardship review of the church's finances. The Parish and Finance Committees will be meeting electronically

with Karen in October to review her findings and suggestions. We will be receiving a written report which will be made available.

Penny Blum, Parish Committee Chair

Planting Seeds is Back!

An ongoing workshop for children based on the "Planting Seeds" curriculum by Thich Nhat Hanh will begin October 7th. The program invites children ages 5-11 to explore and experience mindfulness, meditation, and movement practices for themselves under the guidance of Christine Word, Jody Bird, and Jeanneane Pugliese. They will meet in the Davis Memorial on Sunday mornings at 11:00 am. The program is free and open to all children on a drop-in basis.

The program will be held on **Sunday mornings at 11:00 am.**

Fall

October 7, 14, 21, 28
November 4, 11, 18
December 2, 9

Winter

January 13, 20, 27
February 3, 10, 24
March 3, 10, 17

Spring

April 28
May 5, 12, 19, 26
June 2, 9, 16, 23

Field Trip to the Fruitlands Museum

Join us for a group jaunt to the Unitarian-inspired and historic utopian community of the Fruitlands in Harvard, MA. We will learn about some of our Unitarian and Transcendentalist history and have an opportunity to experience walking on a labyrinth. People of all ages are welcome! As rates vary according to the group's size and ages and whether we will eat lunch on the grounds, please contact Rev. Michelle if you are interested by October 7th. All children under 5 are free and senior rates are available.

Saturday, October 13th. The museum will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Potluck Supper October 27 **In the Church Dining room**

The Membership Committee invites you to attend a potluck dinner at the church on Sat., October 27 at 5:30 p.m. Please bring a hot dish or dessert to share with others. Don't forget to supply your own place setting and dish to make clean-up easier. Drinks will be provided.

After the potluck, at approximately 6:30 p.m., three listening circles will be chaired by members of the parish committee. The listening circles will be held in separate rooms of the church and members will be given the opportunity to speak on three questions which relate to the future of the church in years to come.

Please be part of this fall get-together and participate in the life of the church.

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 October 2012

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Yoga classes

**Oct. 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 23, 25
NO classes Oct. 18 & 30**

**Chair Yoga: Oct. 3, 10, 24
NO classes Oct. 17 potluck s& 31**

\$5 per class

For more information, contact Linda at:

**lckabo@verizon.net
978-434-1598**

We're on Facebook! "Like" us at:
First Congregational Parish, Unitarian in
Petersham.

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
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Robert Hall
Kathy Ballou ~ Editor