

First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist
Newsletter, April 2005

P.O. Box 186, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 – (617) 524-1634

email: Firstchjp@aol.com

web site: www.firstchurchjp.org

Rev. Terry Burke, Minister
Rev. Marshall Hawkins, Affiliate Minister
Karl Haakonsen, Standing Committee Chair
George Wardle, Trustees Chair
Emily Lichtenstein, Director of RE

Ellen McGuire, Music Director
Janna Frelich, Soloist
Robin Teague, Director of the Children's Choirs
Philomena O'Donnell, Head Usher
Monroe Hyman, Building Use

Thoughts From Terry

"When that April with his showres soote (sweet)
The drought of March hath perced to the roote...
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmers (pilgrims) for to seeke strange strandes (shores)"

So begins Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, written over 600 years ago. Chaucer's varied band of pilgrims was traveling to Thomas a Becket's shrine in Canterbury. Nowadays, most of us don't greet spring as a time to go on a holy road trip.

Still, the transformation of spring reminds us of the importance of our own spiritual journeys. I will be leading a group to explore the BIG spiritual questions, "Building Your Own Theology," starting Wednesday, April 27th at 8PM for five sessions. Questions like, 'What is the meaning of my spiritual journey?' 'Is there a God, and what are different ways we could look at God?' And 'What happens when we die?' Our wonderful prayer group also meets weekly from 7-8 PM Wednesdays for your spiritual growth. And of course, we gather to share our struggles and faith Sundays at 11 AM. Welcome to spring, pilgrims!

Yours, Terry

Greetings from Emily, Director of Religious Education

Springward, ho! Despite the ceaseless grayness of the past two days, I am full of hope for longer, brighter days of earthly renewal. Speaking of hope, it was wonderful to see so many of you in church for Easter Sunday, and to share with our children their visions of hope and their excitement on this special day. I love to see how the older children support the younger ones by hiding the eggs for the hunt, and then helping them to find their fair share. By the way, if any parents would like to revisit the book that I read aloud at the service, its called The Tin Forest, by Helen Ward and Wayne Anderson, and you can find a copy at the JP public library. The pictures are worth a closer look.

Our spring term is off to a great start. The youngest children, led by their indefatigable parents Larry Zaborski, Wilfrido Sotysik-Espanola, Kevin Marren, Valerie Marren, Mary Barton and Laura McCord, will be continuing their study of the works of Dr. Seuss. A recent highlight for this group was a visit from some very small hamsters and some even smaller paramecium (with microscope!), to complement the lesson that "a person's a person no matter how small" found in Horton Hears a Who. As the weather improves, this group will be turning its attention to the great outdoors, exploring the interdependent web of life and perhaps experimenting with some planting of their own.

Our UU Superheros continue to learn about the amazing feats of remarkable individuals whose achievements embody our UU principles. Spring term teachers Nancy Waters and Joan Ellis are now leading this group. Recently they have been talking about singer songwriters Malvina Reynolds and Pete Seeger. Like the younger group, they too will be soon moving on to some nature-focused activities to round out the year.

The older children continue to work through the huge topics of creativity, self-discovery and religion, and they continue to amaze with their beautiful art work and insightful discussion. Most recently, they produced lovely illuminated manuscripts illustrating their favorite Bible verses. We are very excited to have the team of Kip Keith (making a return appearance!) and Robert Amelio (debuting!) as our spring term teachers for this group.

The Youth group is fully immersed in their photo-documentary project. As they create a record of the families in our church, they are also thinking about essential questions about families, such as what a family is and what a family does. If you have not had your picture taken by our intrepid Youth photographers, please plan to do so after church on April 3. We need everyone's participation to make this project a success!

Please join me in thinking warm thoughts!

- Emily Lichtenstein, Director of Religious Education

Coming Up at First Church:

Youth Group To Hold Family Photograph Sessions

If you and your family have not had the pleasure of having your picture taken by our team of ace you photographers, why don't you plan to do so after church this Sunday, April 3. Please join us for a potluck lunch and *photo shoot* session at coffee hour. No food contribution necessary – just bring yourselves!

Building Your Own Theology, a course on exploring the big questions of faith and life, will begin at the church on Wednesday, April 27th, and run for 5 sessions. Led by Rev. Terry Burke, the group will meet at 8pm at church. Speak to Terry for more information.

Upcoming Membership Committee Events (all at 9:30 am in the Dining Hall):

April 10: Terry Burke will tackle the question “What is Unitarian Universalism?” You’ll hear some jokes, you’ll learn about the Baltimore Sermon, you’ll learn about the Principles and Purposes, you can ask some questions, and have a chance to figure out why people do this UU Church thing!

April 17: George Wardle – History of First Church. First Church is interesting and unique; Jamaica Plain is interesting and unique, and it’s fun to learn about where we come from.

May 1: Newcomers Breakfast – Food, fun, friends – not to be missed. This is a good time to find out “what does church membership mean?”

RSVP’s are nice, but not essential (they get you a name tag). You can email dear_abby2@yahoo.com.

Announcements

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AND FIRST CHURCH-Update and Information:

Cooperation between First Church and First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain
In order to keep church members informed, here is a list of items discussed during recent meetings, both among First Church liaisons and staff, and then between the two churches.

Time of service: Since the fire in January, First Baptist Church has been meeting in the First Church sanctuary on Sundays at 1 pm. However, from May 15 through June 12, First Baptist will probably be meeting BEFORE the 11:00 First Church service, at 8:30 or 9; they will be out of the sanctuary by 10 am. We will see how this works out.

For the Summer Services June 19-Labor Day, First Baptist Church will probably meet at 9 (in the Sanctuary or Parish Hall), and First Church at 11 in the Parish Hall.

Parking in the front yard: If you must park in the front yard of the church, please park on the left (Holbrook Street) side near the dentists’ office. Please do not park directly in front of our entrance, or on the grass. Please park elsewhere if possible - in general, parking inside the fence is discouraged for Baptists AND UUs. EXCEPTION: if you need to use the handicapped access ramp, please park wherever it is convenient for you! The Baptists have created a banner, which they have put on the front fence announcing their presence in the building; First Church will continue to use the corner signboard.

Several joint ventures are in the works between the two congregations:

- A joint choir Sunday, in which both choirs will sing together at both services;
- The Baptists will make contributions to the First Church collections of food for the Food Pantry at Sojourner House;
- The Baptists would like to contribute goods and volunteers to the June yard sale at First Church;
- There may be a joint Potluck Dinner;
- First Baptist Church is warmly invited to First Church’s special Holy Week and Easter services.

Liaisons from First Church to First Baptist Church are Monroe Heyman and Rev. Marshall Hawkins. Please speak to them if you have concerns. Another joint meeting will be held in June, to evaluate the working relationship between the two churches. We all at First Church are pleased to have an opportunity to extend a hand to our neighbors at this difficult time.

UU Offerings

Applications for UU Women's Issue Internship

Applications are due April 1, 2005, for the UU Women's Federation Clara Barton Internship in Women's Issues. The Clara Barton intern is part of the UUA's Social Justice Internship program, located at the Washington Office for Advocacy in Washington, DC. The goal of the UUA Social Justice Internship Program is to combine service, learning, and faith development in order to produce energetic young adults with the professional skills and strength of character to be lifelong leaders in Unitarian Universalism and working for social justice.

All of the Social Justice interns do advocacy work, direct service, and theological reflection. The Clara Barton intern works on issues that have a significant or disproportionate impact on women, which includes reproductive freedom, sex education, and violence against women. The direct service work is designed to engage interns in personal relationships with local communities, in order to see how legislation affects real people's lives at home and abroad. Theological reflection--led by a UU minister--helps interns gain a deeper understanding of how their work affects (and is affected by) their personal and UU values.

Term and Pay: Internships last from late August 2005 through mid-August 2006. The yearly stipend is \$28,000 with benefits (including health insurance). Housing is not provided. Qualifications: Applicants must be US citizens, Unitarian Universalists, and 18 years old by the start of the internship. Priority will be given to young adults, students and seminarians. Successful applicants will have good writing skills; passion for both advocacy and theological reflection; the ability to work independently; and some experience with both a UU congregation or organization and some type of lobbying or justice organizing. For an application <http://www.uua.org/uuawo/new/article.php?id=87>.

Canvass Update

As of today's mail, 25 pledge cards have come in - this is great - the canvassers and the canvasees are working hard at it. But, we've got a long way to go! If you're a canvasser, don't sit on those cards, and if you haven't heard from anyone, please let the Canvass Leadership know - contact David Dorney daviddorney@msn.com, Abby Krueger dear_abby2@yahoo.com, Penny Wells pennywells@aol.com, or Janine Zieg zieg@comcast.net- And, if you've never had a canvass visit, they're fun, even if you can't pledge, we'd love to talk about how church is going.

Future Offerings

2005 Massachusetts Bay District Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 9, at the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury. For more information on the meeting and for registration call 617-484-0396 or go to their website: www.mbdoua.org.

One in Eight: Janice's Journey will be shown on Friday, April 1st from 7:00 - 9:00 pm, hosted by First Parish in Needham, Unitarian Universalist (23 Dedham Avenue, Needham, MA, 781- 444-0823) After the screen there will be a panel discussion with representatives from the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition, Silent Spring Institute, Hurricane Voices Breast Cancer Foundation, and the Young Survival Coalition. Panelists will talk about links between breast cancer, health and environmental issues, and audience members will have the opportunity to participate in activities to help make a change. There will be a reception following the presentations. The event is open to the public, and there is no charge; however, donations are appreciated. For more information, please visit <http://www.oneineight.net/>. This program is funded in part by the Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility

GBIO Update

The **Greater Boston Interfaith Organization** (GBIO), of which First Church is a member, is gearing up for an **Action on Thursday, May 26th** to launch the **Health Care Campaign**. The turnout goal from the GBIO membership is **1000** people strong. The Action will be held at **Temple Israel in Brookline** at the corner of Longwood Avenue and the Riverway from **7:00 to 9:00 pm**.

The May Action is an opportunity for us to add our voices to the call for expanding access, reducing costs, and improving the quality of health care in Massachusetts, particularly for the working poor. GBIO is joining with Health Care For All in support of a bill recently filed in the Massachusetts legislature: "An Act to Improve Health Access and Affordability" (House Docket #2569, Senate Docket # 806). Among several health reform initiatives available for consideration, GBIO has chosen the Access and Affordability Act because it has a strong likelihood of gaining public support and being passed in the legislature.

In preparation for the May 26th Action, First Church delegates to GBIO are distributing a **very brief health insurance survey** to the congregation. We want to know about your health insurance concerns. We will summarize the survey results and prepare a statement for a GBIO delegate assembly/press conference on April 12th at Greater Love Tabernacle Church at 101 Nightingale Street, Dorchester, from 7 – 9 pm. The press conference is about the Citizens Bank rollout of special benefits for GBIO members and Action quotas. Each GBIO organizational member will give a Health Care Campaign Action quota from his or her congregation along with a statement about why this health care measure is important to us. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey (available in **hard copy Sunday April 3 & 10**). Thank you in advance for your participation, and please let any of the First Church GBIO delegates--Marshall Hawkins, Peggy Hopper, Nancy Ahmadifar--know if you would like to attend the April 12th (Citizens Bank) or May 26th (Health Care) Action.

Spring Fair! June 4th – Soon it will be time to sort your clutter, and start planning to eat barbeque, but before then, help us to find vendors for the spring fair. We'll be renting spaces on the front lawn to artists and crafters. It's a great setting and last year we got very good feedback. So tell your friends to email JPCRAFTSFAIR@YAHOO.com or they can call the church (617) 524-1634) and leave a message in box #5.

Miscellaneous

Two functions to Benefit for First Baptist Church:

Concert/Auction, Friday, April 8, 2005, 9:00 pm, 403-405 Centre St, The Milky Way, Hyde Square, Jamaica Plain. ADMISSION: \$12 For tickets/information, please call church office at (617) 524-3992. A benefit concert featuring the Carla Ryder Band and her husband Chris Roussin, lead singer of the Quick Ones. Carla and Chris are members of First Baptist. The auction features gifts, services and merchandise donated by various community businesses, restaurants, and individuals

Chance of a Lifetime! Two Red Sox Grandstand Box Seats, Opening Day, April 11, 2005 at Fenway Park. A limited number (250) raffle tickets will be sold at \$250/each. The prize: Opening Day Red Sox vs. Yankees box seats on the 1st base line, Section 15! Drawing to be held Saturday, April 2, 2005 at FBCJP (you need not be present to win). A once in a lifetime opportunity to see Yankees vs. Red Sox, Schilling vs. Johnson, the World Series banner unfurled, and our favorite team ring ceremony!! Tickets valued at \$3,000 each. Great odds!! Any questions or ticket reservations may be directed to Linda Karpeichik via e-mail l.karpeichik@comcast.net or by phone (508) 485-3171.

Request for Committee Reports: Our Annual Meeting is May 22, 2005. This is a request for the various church committees (Standing, Social Justice, Building, Finance, Religious Education, and Membership) to begin preparing their reports for the Annual Report. Please try to have them available by May 8th so that they can be ready for the meeting.

The First Church Social Justice Committee joins Sojourner House in thanking First Church members and friends as well as First Baptist members and friends for their generosity in making food donations to Sojourner House this Easter. In a letter just received from Sojourner House, Brian McShane writes...." The majority of our donations come during the holidays. However, at this time of year donations are not so common. That is why your generosity could not have come at a better time. This is especially true, as the vast amounts of snow these past months have prevented us from restocking our in-house food pantry as regularly as we would like. Our families and the surrounding community alike will benefit greatly from your gift."

April 2005, Calendar

- 3 Sunday** 8:30 am RE Committee Meeting
11:00 am "Make 'em Laugh – Humor and Hope"
- 4 Monday** 7:30 pm Building Committee Mtg.
- 6 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 7 Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 9 Saturday** 8:30 am 2005 District Annual Meeting-MBD of UU
- 10 Sunday** 9:30 am "What is Unitarian Universalism" – Rev. Burke
11:00 am "End of Life"
- 13 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 14 Thursday** 7:30 pm Finance Committee Mtg.
- 17 Sunday** 9:30 am History of First Church – George Wardle
11:00 am Rev. Carl Scovel preaching
12:30 pm Social Justice Meeting

School Vacation Week – 18 thru 22

- 21 Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 23 Saturday** **Passover Begins at Sundown**
- 24 Sunday** **Passover**
11:00 am Pulpit exchange with Rev. Richard Kimball,
First Parish UU, Saugus
- 26 Tuesday** 7:00 pm Standing Committee Meeting
- 27 Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
8:00 pm Building You Own Theology – Rev. Burke

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Church Administrator: Jean O'Leary is in the church office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 3:30. You can reach her at the main number (617) 524-1634.