

First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist

June Newsletter, 2008

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Rev. Terry Burke, Minister
Rev. Marshall Hawkins, Affiliate Minister
Rev. Patricia Brennan, Affiliate Minister
George Wardle, Trustees Chair
Andrée Záleská, RE Director
Jean O'Leary, Church Administrator

Ellen McGuire, Music Director
Janna Frelich, Soloist
Giulia Norton, Standing Committee Chair
Philomena O'Donnell, Head Usher
Monroe Heyman, Building Use

Thoughts From Rev. Terry Burke

I first learned of torture when I was very young. I saw the film *The Guns of Navarone* in a theater with my family. Bad guys, the Nazi Gestapo, tortured people. When I was much older, I read *Gulag Archipelago*, and learned about some of the Cheka/NKVD/KGB's techniques. Torture was done by oppressive regimes, like Stalin's Soviet Union. Some people say that we've always tortured, too. Perhaps that's true. However, I am deeply ashamed that our President and many other political leaders condone the use of torture in the struggle with deadly extremists.

My fearless Quaker friend Martha Penzer recently send me information that June is "Torture Awareness Month," in a campaign sponsored by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (www.ncrat.org). On their website I found this prayer from Rabbis for Human Rights, an organization recommended by my good friend Rabbi Victor Reinstein of Congregation Nehar Shalom. I suggest that you place this prayer on your refrigerator this month and adapt it to your own use and spirituality. Please remember on occasion those tortured with our tax dollars.

Hashkiveinu: Asking God to shelter with the promise of peace all those who suffer

Allow us, Adonai our God, to sleep peacefully, and to awaken to life, our Sovereign. *Spread over us Your canopy of peace, restore us with Your good counsel, and save us for the sake of Your name.*

Shield us.

Remove from us enemies and pestilence, sword, starvation, and sorrow, and remove the evil forces that surround us.

God of all flesh,

Hear the voices rising up to you in the dark of night:

Shouts issuing from the mouths of those suffering from violence,

Fear-filled cries of those threatened by their interrogators,

Broken sounds rising from the lowly.

Listen to the bitter cry of those who are tortured.

Give them and us hope.

Cause all of us to lie down in peace and raise us up to peace.

Shelter us

in the shadow of Your wings, for You are the God who watches over and delivers us

and You are the merciful and compassionate Sovereign.

Ensure our going and coming for life and peace, now and forever.

May You

spread over us Your canopy of peace.

Barukh Aatah Adonai

our Protector, who spreads the canopy of peace over us, over Jerusalem and over the entire world.

Amen.

Terry

Greetings from Andrée, Director of Religious Education

Dear RE Friends:

As I said at the Annual Meeting, we've had an exceptionally good year in RE. Attendance was high, our classes were full, and new people were trying out our program. We experimented with 5-Senses Sundays for a new kind of intergenerational worship, and were successful in breaking the mold of the old Family Sundays. More of these will follow, and we'll fine-tune the services based on your suggestions.

The model Spirit Play lessons have gone exceptionally well—the proof is in the simple fact that the kids are riveted by the storytelling, and follow it with 25 minutes of sustained—and quiet!--personal work, making an art “response” to the story. We will be switching to full-time Spirit Play for ages 4-10 next year, and I expect this to be a real asset to our church. Volunteers are needed to learn stories, help redesign the space we will use for the class, and facilitate publicity in the community about the new program. Contact me if you have any time this summer to help us out.

As the younger children transition into this new curriculum, our Middlers (10-12) will continue their more sophisticated explorations of the great questions of life and religion. Thanks to teachers Chuck Collins and Suzanne Demarco, their numbers have also expanded, and they are well on their way to undertaking our first Coming of Age Program within a few years.

I'd like to thank the other teachers and program volunteers now for their enthusiasm and hard work for our kids:

The Preschool Class was taught by Chris Toppin, Valerie and Kevin Marren and Marie Power. The 1st-3rd Graders by Larry Zaborski, Laura McCord and Libba Ingram. And Alice Hawley bravely took on a tough multi-church OWL class. Blessings and thanks to you all!

I look forward to a warm, happy summer, and to next year.

Best wishes,

Andree Zaleska

Coming Up at First Church

The book group meets through the summer, on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 in the Morse Room. Our next books are:

~**June 3**, *The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art* by David Lewis-Williams. I assume the title tells it all.

~**July 1**, *Three Cups of Tea*, David Oliver Relin's book about mountaineer Greg Mortenson's initiative to build schools, particularly for girls, in Afganistan.

~**August 5**: *The Golden Compass*, the first book in Philip Pullman's anti-totalitarian trilogy. Yes, it did come out on the big screen this winter, but don't let that keep you from the book.

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Food Pantry: When you come to church each Sunday, please remember that we feed homeless families at Sojourner House, as well as neighbors who come to church during the week, looking for help with food. Canned and jarred goods and unopened boxes are good, but no fresh food. Thank you for your continued acts of kindness.

Yard Sale Countdown! Eight Days Left!

Donations Now Accepted! We are collecting items after services or by appointment

Wanted: Books (fiction, non-fiction, biography, picture), furniture, collectables, kitchen/dining.

Not Accepted: Clothing, broken items, computer equipment (monitors, printers, etc.) or TVs (Hazardous waste!) No mattresses, textbooks, computer books, magazines, encyclopedias or travel guides. No cosmetics or toiletry items. Nothing edible (EW!), no used candles, and no medical equipment (EEK!)

We Need You! We need many folks to help with: Sorting and pricing, set up, sales, and clean up. Let me know how you can help! Talk to me at church or email me at alice.phoenix@fmr.com. Call me to make an appointment for pick up.

Denominational Affairs Committee

What is the Denominational Affairs Committee?

The mission of the Denominational Affairs committee is to strengthen the connections between our congregation and the member congregations of the Mass Bay District and the Unitarian Universalist Association. This will be done by encouraging participation in denominational events; keeping the congregation informed of regional, district and continental issues and gathering opinions of the congregation for the UUA through congregational discussions.

Who is on it?

Karl Haakonsen – Chair, Cherisse Haakonsen, George Wardle

General Assembly of Congregations

For anyone who has not yet attended a “GA,” We encourage you to attend – it could be the spiritual experience of a lifetime. It is also the annual meeting of delegates of congregations that come together to decide where Unitarian Universalists stand on the important issues of our day and what the priorities of the Association should be for the near future. For more information, see <http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/index.shtml> or contact Karl Haakonsen.

FIRST CHURCH CONNECTS WITH THE HOMELESS POOR: On Sunday, 22 June 2008 the congregation of First Church will provide luncheon for 150 homeless women and men at the fountain adjacent to the Park Street T station in downtown Boston. The luncheon will follow an outdoor worship service, which begins at 1 PM at the same location. The worship-and-sustenance program, called Common Cathedral, is an inner city venture of Ecclesia Ministries, an ecumenical organization. The Social Justice Committee is organizing this effort. On June 22nd, a SJC team will gather at our church at 10 to make sandwiches and prepare other parts of the meal. We will carpool with the luncheon fixings to the Park Street location, arriving not later than 12:30 p.m. Note: Participation by First Church members is limited, because the Common Cathedral congregation tends to feel overwhelmed by too many visitors. Note also that, because of the schedule, First Church volunteers will not be able to attend the 11 a.m. service in Jamaica Plain. Interested? To volunteer, or to secure more information, contact Marshall Hawkins, David Parke, or any member of the Social Justice Committee.

Jamaica Plain Forum-June Schedule

"The Defining Moment for Climate Change" with Bill McKibben

Sunday, June 8th, 7:00pm

Sanctuary

As a part of our continuing series on climate-change, join the Jamaica Plain Forum for a conversation with Step-It-Up! global warming activist, Bill McKibben after the Bikes Not Bombs Bike-A-Thon and 1st annual Green Roots Festival.

Bill McKibben is an environmentalist and writer who frequently writes about global warming, alternative energy, and the risks associated with human genetic engineering. Well known for his lead role in the Step-It-Up campaign, Bill comes to the Jamaica Plain Forum to share his experiences organizing mass-climate action from the ground to Capitol Hill.

Bill has written a dozen books, including *The End of Nature and Deep Economy: the Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. In March 2008 *The Bill McKibben Reader*, a collection of 44 essays on various topics, was published. He is a frequent contributor to various magazines including The New York Times, The Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Orion Magazine, Mother Jones, The New York Review of Books, Granta, Rolling Stone, and Outside. He is also a board member and contributor to Grist Magazine.

(Note: Rhythm and Muse Bookstore in JP will have Bill's books available for purchase at the event.)

"14 Hands, 7 Toolbelts, and 1 New Orleans Family: A Report Back from Post-Katrina Louisiana" with First Church's Rick Yoder!

Friday, June 27th, 7:00pm

Parish Hall

Did you know that, since Hurricane Katrina, JP-area building trades people have made several trips to rewire the replumb flood-damaged homes on the Gulf Coast? In fact, a crew of seven local electricians, plumbers, and carpenters just returned from New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward. Come hear the stories and watch a multi-media presentation of storm-ravaged neighborhoods, recovery efforts, and the faces of marginalized minority residents who are fiercely determined to rebuild their community.

"Wake Up the Politics"

Saturday, June 28th, 7:00pm

Sanctuary

Will 2008 be a turning point for progressives in America? How can we use the widespread thirst for change to achieve important progressive goals like health care for all, a clean environment, and a global position of careful leadership?

Patrick Kennedy, William McNary and Gloribel Mota join us to discuss these essential questions in the lead-up to this critical presidential election.

Patrick J. Kennedy is serving his seventh term as the representative from the First District of Rhode Island. Congressman Kennedy is a lifelong progressive and a leader in the areas of health care and the environment.

William McNary, the President of USAction and Co-Director of Citizen Action/Illinois, has been called one of the most electrifying and inspirational speakers of our time.

Gloribel Mota is a dynamic community activist and advocate for the residents of East Boston.

Throughout her career Ms. Mota has been committed to social and economic justice. She has worked to expand affordable housing in the neighborhood, provide access for all families to affordable health care, promote small businesses in our community, and engage citizens in civic life.

June Calendar 2008

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| 1 | Sunday | Welcome Breakfast 9:30 AM
Service: Facing Indifference-Roisin Foley 11:00 AM
Organ Tour in loft 12:30 PM |
| 2 | Monday | Building Committee Mtg. 7:30 PM |
| 3 | Tuesday | Book Group 7:30 PM |
| 4 | Wednesday | JP Clergy Vigil between PO & JP Licks: noon-1:00 PM |
| 5 | Thursday | Choir Picnic/Rehearsal 6:00 PM |
| 6 | Friday | Fair Sale Preparation |
| 7 | Saturday | SPRING FAIR-Yard sale, vendors, barbecue: 10-4:00 PM |
| 8 | Sunday | Last Regular Church Service 11:00 AM
Church School Play
Church Picnic
Social Justice Committee Mtg. 12:30 PM
JP Forum: Bill McKibben in Sanctuary 7:00 PM |
| 10 | Tuesday | Church Council "Calendar" 7:00 PM |
| 11 | Wednesday | JP Clergy Vigil between PO & JP Licks: noon-1:00 PM |
| 15 | Sunday * | Summer Service: Robert Amelio & Tim Williamson 11:00 |
| 17 | Tuesday | Standing Committee Mtg. 7:00 PM |
| 18 | Wednesday | JP Clergy Vigil between PO & JP Licks: noon-1:00 PM |
| 20 | Friday | Youth Night |
| 22 | Sunday * | Summer Service: Lyra O'Brien 11:00 AM
Cathedral on the Common 1:00 PM |
| 25 | Wednesday | JP Clergy Vigil between PO & JP Licks: noon-1:00 PM |
| 29 | Sunday * | Summer Service: Peter Connolly |

*** Note:** Summer Services are held in the Parish Hall rather than the Sanctuary