

**First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist**

**November Newsletter, 2005**

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

email: [Firstchjp@aol.com](mailto:Firstchjp@aol.com)

web site: [www.firstchurchjp.org](http://www.firstchurchjp.org)

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*Rev. Terry Burke*, Minister  
*Rev. Marshall Hawkins*, Affiliate Minister  
*Karl Haakonsen*, Standing Committee Chair  
*George Wardle*, Trustees Chair  
*Andree Zaleska*, Interim RE Director

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

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**Thoughts From Terry**

On Sunday, September 11th, I preached a sermon at our church called, "The Bird on Our Shoulder." As you may recall, it was not only the anniversary of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks, but also immediately after the terrible destruction of Hurricane Katrina. At one point in the sermon I quoted Morrie Schwartz of Tuesdays With Morrie. The dying Brandeis professor says, 'It's like the Buddhists say; we have a little bird on our shoulder. And every day the bird asks, "Is it today? Are you ready? Have you done everything you need to have done?"'

We always have that bird reminder of mortality on our shoulders, whether we choose to notice it or not. However, for many people, the bird seems to have grown huge, with the looming threat of an avian flu pandemic. Experts are saying that this epidemic could compare to the Spanish Flu Epidemic after World War One, with its tremendous loss of life.

The flu epidemic could well happen, and we should do our utmost to be prepared for it. However, I've lived through various "scares" that, thankfully, didn't materialize. Civilization didn't end with Y2K. The Democratic Party convention in Boston was uneventful. We don't have to worry about micro waving our mail. While terrorism is a real threat, I remember being in a small town in New Hampshire after September 11th, 2001, and local authorities were patrolling their water supply for sabotage.

While we need to prepare nationally for a possible flu threat, what is our individual response to such a potential deadly crisis? The author C.S. Lewis wrote that 'the only thing a religious person has to fear is sin.' In a context more Unitarian Universalists would understand, I would say that the thing we have to fear more than death is losing our personal integrity, separating ourselves from God.

Years ago I heard a story from colonial Massachusetts. In the 18th century, a huge volcanic eruption in another part of the world caused a darkening of the daylight in far away New England, so that it was like twilight at noon. People thought it was the end of the world. The General Court, our state legislators, debated whether they should continue working, or return to their homes to pray and await the End. One of the lawmakers argued, 'If the world ends, I want my Maker to see that I was still doing my job.' So the legislature stayed in session and the world didn't end.

Facing a potential disaster, we need to guard our personal integrity and continue to do our work. A broken world needs our work of love, compassion, and justice. Or as the Hebrew scriptures put it, for us "to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

Yours in faith,  
Terry

## Greetings from Andree, Interim Director of Religious Education

Greetings from the new Interim Director of Religious Education! I come to this position from within the church: I've been a church member for six years, my sons Kuba and Simon are involved in the RE program, and I served as the RE Committee Chair for last year. I feel very connected to many of the goals and visions for the program that we formulated while Emily was here, and I hope to move them forward in the coming year.

In other parts of my life I work on translating literature from Czech, as well as other fiction and nonfiction writing projects. I love to exercise—particularly swimming, yoga and kickboxing. I have two little boys who never stop moving and talking. My husband, Petr, prefers to drink coffee and read the paper at 11 am on Sunday mornings, but you'll see him around from time to time. We have been living in JP for 10 years now, and every summer we spend a month in the Czech Republic, where Petr grew up.

The holidays are upon us, RE classes are winding down, and now we can look forward to the Christmas Pageant, with rehearsals starting next week. As always, the RE Program is seeking teachers, substitutes, and other volunteers to work with the children for our next term, starting in January. Please contact me if you'd like to be involved.

I look forward to working with you all.

Andree Zaleska

## Farewell from Emily Lichtenstein

I have always hated saying goodbye. To me, there is nothing sadder than parting from those you care about and really want to stay with. So I usually take the band-aid approach to departures – as in, if you rip it off your skin quickly, it hurts for a second but it's over really fast. This method works pretty well in the moment, but doesn't ease the long term feeling of loss that comes whenever you have to move on and away. This time I think I'll try drawing out the experience a little bit more and see how that goes.

In my life, I have experienced a fair number of changes and separations. Leaving is never an easy thing to do, but I can honestly say that leaving this job has been among the most difficult. In my short stay at First Church, I have felt surrounded by the warmth of this wonderful community. From the very beginning, you welcomed me with unfailing support and positive energy that has made the job a joy. And at the end, you overwhelmed me with such a generous gift and beautiful flowers and a delicious cake! There are very few jobs where you can say that you have gotten back as much back as you have given. Thank you all for providing me with that most unusual experience.

I hope that many of you will be in church this Sunday, so that I can say a personal goodbye to you. And after that, I promise that I won't disappear altogether! I plan not to miss the Christmas pageant, and would love to be on hand to attend other events throughout the year. I know that First Church's RE program will continue to grow and thrive under Andree's most capable leadership, and I look forward to seeing and hearing great things from you in the years to come.

## Coming Up at First Church:

**Join Us For Blue Jean Sunday Nov. 6:** What is Blue Jean Sunday? It is a day when we wear our grubby work clothes and do yard work after church (mostly raking leaves this time) to beautify the grounds and get ready for the change of season. It's a group effort, lots of camaraderie and good exercise too! The church has some equipment, but more would be welcome, if you have some to share. See Alice Hawley or Marshal Mourar if you have any questions. Hope you will join us after the service on the 6th!

**Giving Thanks through Sharing with Others:** Turkey and gravy...mashed potatoes, stuffing and cranberry sauce. It's time for sharing and for giving thanks again! On Sunday November 20th First Church members and friends will be delivering Thanksgiving baskets to Sojourner House Food Pantry for residents, Sojourner House "graduates", and the needy folks that live in the surrounding Roxbury neighborhood.

Please help. Sojourner House staff and the families they care for gratefully accept all donations. Fresh foods, frozen turkeys and foods appropriate to the holiday table are especially welcomed on delivery day. Bring donations with you to church on November 20th and place in the rear pew of the Sanctuary. For further information contact Judith Garfunkel or another member of the Social Justice Committee.

## Announcements

**THANKS to all who contributed to the "hymnals for the victims of Hurricane Katrina" effort.** Your donations allowed us to purchase ELEVEN hymnals that are being delivered in a van-full of supplies, which left Winchester Unitarian Society on November 4th. The hymnals will be given to UU churches in Jackson & Gulfport, MS and Lacombe & Baton Rouge, LA to replace hymnals lost in the hurricane. Each hymnal has an inscription on the opening page indicating it was donated by First Church in JP!! You can be proud to know that our church contributed the greatest number of hymnals to this effort! Thanks, Betsy McDowell.

**Fall Retreat led by Rev. Carl Scovel:** Exploring Discipleship to Christ is directed for UU's and others who wish to explore their discipleship in the company of like-minded, open minded people. We will do this by looking at the impact of Jesus on contemporary or recent disciples and learning what they can teach us about what it means to follow Jesus in our day and age. Three members of last year's retreat will assist Carl Scovel in this retreat. This retreat will be held at the Campion Center in Weston, Mass. from **November 11 through 13th**. The cost of the retreat is \$148 plus a charitable contribution of any amount to a fund of the leader's choosing. Those interested in attending this retreat should contact Carl Scovel at carlscovel@verizon.net, or at 36 Hampstead Rd., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. *And, remember to save the date for our own First Church UU JP retreat March 31-April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006 at Glastonbury in Hingham!*

**Tell all your friends:** December Three, Is the day to Be, In JP!! First Church Holiday Fair, Eliot School Holiday Fair, Holiday Stroll, Mayor's trolley tour, Nuestra Culinary Ventures food fair, work off your calories walking between all the events!

**Adult Ed Class on Spirituality and Contemporary Film:** A new adult ed course will be offered this winter on spirituality and film. Marshall Hawkins will lead the six-week class, which is based on the book "Finding Faith at the Movies." We will watch clips of contemporary films, reflect on them theologically, and look at some biblical passages that relate to those themes. We'll watch parts of six different familiar and fairly recent films. The group will meet Monday evenings in the Morse Room from 7:30pm until 9:00pm beginning on Monday January 8 and ending Monday February 13. Participants are asked to try to commit to attending all sessions, so we can develop a consistent group for good discussion throughout. There will be a sign up sheet at Sunday worship in December. All are welcome!

## UU Offerings

**New Just Works Camp Set For Guatemala** The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is pleased to announce a unique opportunity to travel with UUSC to Guatemala this winter and witness firsthand the impact of your coffee choices on small-scale farmers throughout the world. The delegation will take place January 14-22, 2006.

(Guatemala, cont.)

To date, over 700 Unitarian Universalist congregations, organizations, and individuals have joined with UUSC, Equal Exchange, and our farmer partners in building a fair trade alternative. This winter, UUSC is offering participants the opportunity to meet human rights activists in Guatemala and learn how fair trade promotes human rights. For more information, and for a downloadable flyer about this exciting opportunity, visit <http://www.uusc.org/pdf/delegationflyer093005.pdf>.

**SAVE THE DATE!** On **Sunday, November 13th from 3:00 – 5:30 pm**, First Congregational Unitarian Church in Harvard, MA (9 Ayer Road, Rt. 111 on the Green across from Town Hall, 978-456-8752) will host a screening of the award-winning documentary film, ***One in Eight: Janice's Journey*** followed by a panel discussion with representatives from the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition, Silent Spring Institute, Hurricane Voices Breast Cancer Foundation, and the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden. 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 to follow. **Find out how to take action against breast cancer!** The event is free and open to the public; 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**.

## **And more!**

**The building committee is searching for an architect:** Anyone in the church who IS an architect or has close connections with an architect whom they would highly recommend to help us look at some upcoming projects. Anyone with information can send it to George Smith at [JPGeorge@aol.com](mailto:JPGeorge@aol.com) or to Anne Brown at [izab@rcn.com](mailto:izab@rcn.com) to be passed on to the committee.

**The Holiday Fair needs you:** The clipboards will soon start circulating to get you signed up. Please consider which of the following most appeals to you:

- Help with publicity
- Do a shift in the kitchen
- Cook dishes at home to be sold for lunch (soups, sandwich fillings, Greek Salad (hint to Gwyn)
- Run the kitchen
- Set up (Friday Night, December 2)
- Cookie Judge
- Clean up (Saturday Evening December 3)
- Greeter
- Cashier
- Grocery Shopper
- Costco Shopper
- Money spender at the fair
- Car Unloader (help vendors get their stuff in Saturday AM)
- Vendor Reception (greet vendors, tell them where tables are)
- Balloon Filler
- Car Loader (help vendors fill their cars Saturday PM - no heavy lifting, they will have sold everything!)
- Cookie Baker

Have a creative idea about something we should add to the fair? Let me know!! [dear\\_abby2@yahoo.com](mailto:dear_abby2@yahoo.com)  
And, please tell your friends to come - this is a great event, the whole community is involved, it's a day for people from far a field to come enjoy Jamaica

**Website for UU Singles:** [UUSingles.com](http://UUSingles.com) provides matchmaking services for Unitarian Universalists and other like-minded liberal religious thinkers. They make it fun to meet other singles while promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every individual — a fundamental principle of Unitarian Universalism. Individuals age 18 and older of all sexual orientations are welcome to join. Posting ads is free and membership dues are modest. This matching service offers: Minimal Advertising; Commitment to Social Justice: UUSingles.com donates **10%** of all profits to further the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (<http://www.uusc.org>). Privacy: Your email address will never be sold or shared with another company or organization.

## November 2005, Calendar

- 2 **Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 3 **Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 6 **Sunday** 11:00 am David Dorney: "Holy Place, Holy Time"  
Blue Jean Sunday Yard Clean up  
4-6:00 pm OWL Youth Meeting  
4-6:00 pm Poetry Group (Sanctuary)
- 7 **Monday** 7:30 pm Building Committee Mtg.
- 8 **Tuesday** 7:00 pm Ministry Committee Mtg.  
7:30 pm Book Club
- 9 **Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 11 **Friday** **Veteran's Day**
- 13 **Sunday** 11:00 am Family Sunday, George Wardle:  
Crisis Over the Selection of the Hollis Chair  
12:30 pm Social Justice Committee Mtg.  
4-6:00 pm OWL Youth Meeting
- 15 **Tuesday** 7:00 pm Standing Committee Mtg.
- 16 **Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 17 **Thursday** 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 20 **Sunday** 11:00 am Eating Gratitude  
4-6:00 pm OWL Youth Meeting
- 23 **Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group
- 24 **Thursday** **Thanksgiving**
- 27 **Sunday** 11:00 am Rev. Terry Burke: "The Waiting Game"  
4-6:00 pm OWL Youth Meeting
- 29 **Tuesday** 7:00 pm Church Council
- 30 **Wednesday** 7:00 pm Prayer Group