



First Church in Jamaica Plain Unitarian Universalist

November 2007 Newsletter

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Thoughts from Rev. Terry Burke

By Terry

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Thoughts from Terry Burke
- 1 Greetings from Andrée,
Director of Religious
Education
- 2 Membership Corner
- 3 Denominational Affairs
Update
- 4 Coming Up at First Church
- 4 JP Open Forum Updates
- 5 Miscellaneous/Birthdays

I love fall in New England. One of my children has a theory that your favorite season will be the one you were born in. My birthday comes around in November. I find that day to be an annual reminder to take stock, to examine the different aspects of my life, and to think about what I want to do with whatever time (hopefully long!) remains to me. When I was young, my father and I talked about traveling to India. He had served in the Army Air Corps during World War Two, and was curious how things would have changed in the intervening years. I started working at the church, we had children, and the years flew by. By the time I realized that we'd better take that trip to India, my father's health wouldn't permit it. It's good to act on your dreams.

Another place I've always wanted to visit is Jerusalem. People call the Holy Land the Fifth Gospel; seeing the scenes of the Biblical stories gives a deeper meaning to them. During my Lily Grant funded sabbatical in 2001, part of the itinerary included our family traveling to Israel. Violence flared up in the region, and we spent Easter week in Venice instead. I was supposed to have a few days in Israel after visiting St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai, but escalating tensions caused the cancellation of all El Al flights from Cairo to Tel Aviv. So I never made it to Jerusalem.

Please see *Thoughts from Terry* started on page 2

Greetings from Director of RE

By Andree

*"Terry, Ellen and Andree
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services meant to
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SECOND SUNDAYS SONGFEST: Each month on the 2nd Sunday afternoon, from 4-5:30 there will be folk-singing for all ages in the Parish Hall, led by two local guitarists. This event is a fundraiser for the RE program and the cost is \$4/adults \$3/children, but only \$10 for a whole family. Please pass the word to friends and neighbors—all in the community are welcome. The first Songfest is Nov. 11, 4-5:30pm.

5-Senses Sundays: The latest in intergenerational worship at First Church, Terry, Ellen and Andree are creating occasional services meant to captivate all ages by appealing to taste, smell and touch, as well as sight and sound. There will be innovative music, shorter sermons, and something to do with your hands. Please join us for the first of these on **Nov. 4, All Souls, All Saints**. The service will encourage the use of all five of our senses in worship, and will also include our annual procession to the graveyard.

You are encouraged to bring a photo of a loved one or pet who has died (you can take your photo home afterward); materials will be available to draw a picture or write a name to add to our Memory Tree for the service. Please join us!

(There will be no RE classes, and families are encouraged stay through the whole service if possible. There will be babysitting in the nursery.)

Membership Story of the month

By *Cherisse Haakonsen*

“Lyra joined the hippie counter-culture in the 1970s”

Who told it: Lyra O'Brien, who was given her name in a dream by a woman who told her to start using it whilst learning about what gave her joy in life, first walked through the doors of First Church in JP in early spring of 2007, and has been a regular, and a very welcomed part of our church community since then.

Her childhood: As a child she attended an Episcopal church in small-town Connecticut. Her family was very involved in that church community where her father, who was the senior warden for numerous years, served under three ministers. For 50 years, her mother has been, and still is a part of the Altar Guild. Lyra sang in the junior choir and adored one of the ministers from the 1950s, Maurice Foulkes.

As an adult: Lyra joined the hippie counter-culture in the 1970s and learned about various religious traditions, being especially interested in Carl Jung's theories and work. She received a B.A. degree in 1978 from Goddard College (Adult Degree Program, Plainfield, Vermont). There she finished several independent studies on spiritual topics of interest as well as studying counseling. After this she spent nine years doing re-evaluation counseling, also known as co-counseling.

In 1978 she met her husband, and they lived in Somerville and soon began attending the Harvard Epworth Methodist Church in Harvard Square, led by the “excellent” Edward Mark. They both sang in the choir and were married there in 1981. For seven years they were a vital part of the congregation until 1988 when they moved to Jamaica Plain because of a new job opportunity for her.

Please see *Membership Story* on page 3



Thoughts from Terry from page 1

Looking through a brochure from the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, the Episcopal monastery on the Charles River in Cambridge (a church member put me on their mailing list), I noticed a two-week program in Jerusalem. Located at the Anglican college in the old part of the city, the group would take place during the first two weeks in February. A close friend had done this same program many years ago and loved it. Earlier, I'd looked into studying at the ecumenical center of Tantur in Jerusalem, but they required a longer commitment, one to three months. After discussing the matter with church leaders, I decided that I could take two weeks for continuing education, and made reservations at St. George's.

So I'm planning on doing this introductory program to the Holy Land, its sacred sites and history and conflicts. And I feel good about acting on one of my dreams. This fall is a good time to begin anew to live out our dreams as individuals and as a congregation. What's your Holy Land?

Yours, Terry

Denominational Affairs Update

By Karl Haakonsen

Deepest gratitude to all who participated in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations' first annual *Association Sunday* on October 14th 2007. Our contributions will help to bring our message of peace, justice, and religious inclusiveness to the world, at a time when it is sorely needed.

For those here that Sunday, we learned that 50% of all funds raised on Association Sunday will support our unprecedented partnership with Time magazine to help bring Unitarian Universalism into the national dialogue on the religious issues we care about. Of the other half of funds raised, 25% of the money will provide resources for our ministers of color and the congregations who call them. The final 25% will come right back to our districts for grants in support of individual congregations' growth and outreach projects.

Thank you again for your exceptional support. By November, we will know how much our congregation raised. We will keep you posted. And if you weren't able to be with us on Association Sunday, you haven't missed your opportunity to contribute. "Now is the Time! You can make a contribution to strengthening our faith by going to the UUA web page at <http://www.uua.org/giving> or calling toll free 888.792.5885. We are better together.



Membership Story from page 2

The search: She began attending a twelve-step recovery program in the mid-1980s, and added another program in 1988, whilst continuing to be active in both, exploring and enlarging her relationship with a Higher Power through the Steps. In 1990 she joined a women's group at the First Church of Cambridge UU, having experienced a conversion experience, and threw herself wholeheartedly into becoming Pagan. For several years Lyra was active with the Earth Spirit Community which was then in Medford. She picked up singing again, and sang in their performing chorus for several years whilst continuing to have important growth experiences.

In 1993 a group known as Vy'omen's Lodge began holding large worship circles for women in Watertown, inspired by the work of archeologist Marija Gimbutas. She has been involved with them ever since and became one of the organization's leaders (one of eight women at the current time) about six years ago. They continue to hold large open circles (one of which is offered also to men and children each year). Her husband is involved with this circle.

Today: For Lyra spiritual growth is the most important activity of her life. She looks forward to learning more about the UU faith and becoming a member of First Church in Jamaica Plain on November 4th as she continues to seek and learn what gives her joy in life. What a joy it is to welcome Lyra into our church community

"For Lyra, spiritual growth is the most important activity of her life."

Coming Up at First Church

Nov. 6th: Book Group

The book group will discuss Grace Paley's Little Disturbances of Man, a collection of short stories. Read one! Read them all! You are welcome to join for any or all discussions. 7:30pm in the Morse Room.

*GIVE THANKS THROUGH GIVING TO OTHERS!

On Sunday, **November 18th**, the Social Justice Committee will be delivering Thanksgiving baskets to Sojourner House, the family shelter that we, as a congregation, have "adopted." Sojourner House serves up to nine resident families, "graduate" families of the program, and the neighborhood poor through their Sojourner House Food Pantry.

The Social Justice Committee asks members and friends to help by in bringing food to the church for the Thanksgiving baskets. (canned goods any time, perishables to be brought in the morning of the 18th - leave food in the marked rear pews).

Suggested items:

Turkey - frozen; Gravy - canned or jarred; Potatoes and sweet potatoes - fresh, dried, or canned; Rice, pasta, macaroni and cheese; Cranberry sauce; Canned and fresh vegetables; Piecrust - mix, frozen or pre-made; Stuffing mix; Sugar, flour, cake mix, biscuit mix; Fruit - fresh or canned

The baskets will feed families for the Thanksgiving holiday and for several days.

One Family Petition:

One Family, Inc. is a nonprofit foundation established to combat homelessness. We at First Church have worked with them in the past, including obtaining from One Family a referral to work with Sojourner House. One Family is conducting a petition drive to preserve Section 8 housing. It's very simple to sign it. Just go to www.onefamilyinc.org, look in the "Get Involved" column on the right-hand section of the page, and click on "Sign the National E-Petition to Save Section 8." Thanks, from the Social Justice Committee.

December 1st: Holiday Fair

You probably woke up this morning thinking "30 days til the Holiday Fair", how can I stand the suspense? Well there are a few things you can do to make the time go fast - First, figure out what you will wear. Second, tell all your friends - it is a great opportunity to spend time with someone, invite someone to lunch - Monroe's making hummus, there will be chili, and who knows what else we can talk people into. Third, take a pile of flyers at church on Sunday, and be sure there is one in your library, school, gym, supermarket, and other places of interest. Fourth, decide what vital role you wish to play - do you want to cook on site? Bake at home? Greet? Cashier? Set Up? Clean Up? Do a supermarket run? When you figure your answer, let Abby know dear_abby@comcast.net.

By following the above steps you will be able to withstand the long wait for the Great Event.

Executive Summary: December 1, 2007 11 to 5 - over 35 crafters (plus more at Eliot School and Footlight Club), Food, music, fun!

For other First Church upcoming events, see our **online calendar** at

<http://plus.calendars.net/Firstchurchjp>

JP Open Forum Updates

Thursday, Nov. 1st: Frances Moore-Lappe: "When Hope Triumphs Over Fear: An Invisible Global Revolution": Why are we seeing dramatic disillusionment with our own democratic process, and how can we stop it? Frances Moore Lappe, best-selling author of "Diet for a Small Planet" and 17 other titles, has some suggestions. In contrast to the current "thin democracy," Lappe explores a burgeoning new worldview that empowers individuals and emphasizes community.

Thursday, Nov. 8th: SICKO (Documentary Screening) Michael Moore's most recent film explores the dark corners of the healthcare industry. We will discuss current healthcare initiatives in the Massachusetts legislature.

Friday, Nov. 30th: An Unreasonable Man (Documentary Screening)

This film takes an unsparing look at Ralph Nader, one of the most important and controversial political figures of our time. Discussion to follow.

Romanian classical musician looking for short-term Jamaica Plain rental

A young string player from Romania who has been traveling/performing in Maine in a program to bring classical music to rural areas will be arriving in the Boston area soon to study music and she is looking for a short-term rental or rooming situation. Her host in Maine is a fellow U-U in the Dover-Foxcroft area (where Sidney Mitchell, former First Church in JP chorister, now resides). If you know of a rental or have a spare room in your house to host a young musician, please email Janna Frelich at jmfrelich@rcn.com or email Sidney Mitchell at blackflybait@gmail.com.

Seeking a Screen

The Jamaica Plain Forum is seeking a portable movie screen for use during our free documentary screenings and community discussions at First Church. Please contact Sarah with any leads or ideas at jamaicaplainforumsarah@gmail.com.

**November Birthdays**

Simon Zalesky 11/2
 Mary Brady 11/2
 Brendan Halpin 11/6
 Ana Lucia Bishop 11/8
 Matthew Brenc 11/10
 Terry Burke 11/12
 Lily Burger 11/13
 Sara Lopez-Wheeler 11/14
 Emily Wright 11/15
 Benjamin Zaborski 11/15
 Julia Barton-Biegelson 11/17
 Mort Ahmadifar 11/18
 Ken Kenschaft 11/18
 Kuba Zalesky 11/25

Rev. Terry Burke, Minister
 Rev. Marshall Hawkins, Affiliate Minister
 Rev. Patricia Brennan, Affiliate Minister
 Jean O'Leary, Church Administrator
 Philomena O'Donnell, Head Usher
 Monroe Heyman, Building Use

Ellen McGuire, Music Director
 Janna Frelich, Soloist
 Giulia Norton, Standing Committee Chair
 George Wardle, Trustees Chair
 Andrée Záleská, RE Director