

First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist

October 2007 Newsletter

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Rev. Terry Burke, Minister
Rev. Marshall Hawkins, Affiliate Minister
Rev. Patricia Brennan, Affiliate Minister
Giulia Norton, Standing Committee Chair
George Wardle, Trustees Chair
Andrée Záleská, RE Director

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

Thoughts From Rev. Terry Burke

What a joy our reconvening service on September 23rd was! Our preacher, Barbara Prairie, quoted the title character from Wendell Berry's *The Memory of Old Jack*, "Settle for the half-assed, and by God, admire it!" Led by Standing Committee chair Giulia Norton, the congregation and I exchanged vows expressing forgiveness, and rejoicing to begin anew. The Reverend Joe Basset charged me to share my spirituality in straightforward writing, like the 18th century minister Samuel Willard. The Reverend Patricia Brennan charged the congregation to be more and reach out more. The Reverend Marshall Hawkins led the prayerful laying on of hands, where we asked for the blessing of the Spirit upon our mutual ministry; older church school children joined in. The music was wonderful: Janna Frelich sang "Bless This House," and the choir "More Love," with a tenor solo by Tim Williamson.

The congregation and I also exchanged gifts. I gave the congregation a communion chalice, a seder plate, and a meditation bell. The congregation gave me a spectacular hand painted stole made by a fiber artist. One side has iconic images and the reverse pieces of fabric representing different aspects of my life. Inside the stole was placed a piece of interfacing with the signatures and names of church members, so I will carry you with me when I wear it.

Then we ate and ate. We had a great feast, with a cake portraying an icon. Thank you to all who helped with our reconvening, and helped to create our Sunday celebration! I give thanks that we now begin a new chapter of our journey together! Yours, Terry

Greetings from Andrée, Director of Religious Education

With a healthy start in mid September, the RE program now has three classes running each Sunday morning, along with babies and toddlers in the nursery. Youth Group starts up this month with two events: an October 14 meeting with other local UU youth, and a film night on Oct. 19. Stay tuned for more youth action as we plan our year!

A multi-church OWL program is also taking place on Sunday afternoons. OWL stands for Our Whole Lives, and is a much-lauded sexuality and relationship curriculum for middle-school aged children. Please let me know if you have a child that you would like involved in this program.

The RE Committee meets monthly to supervise and guide the work of the RE program. New members are welcome. We are currently reviewing a bold new curriculum and style of teaching, based on Montessori methods, and considering implementing in the winter. Input from the congregation is especially welcome at this time.

Best wishes, Andree Zaleska, Zaleska@aczaleska.com

Our Gift to Terry

As many of you know the church gave Rev. Terry Burke a beautiful handmade stole as a reconvenanting gift. Many have asked about the art work on the stole as well as the significance of the design. The following is a description sent by the artist, Stephanie Robertson - www.fabricsinger.com.

I painted the fabric with images from the icons you sent me, and that served as the very background layer. The top layer of the images of faces are silkscreened on. I took the faces from the icons and replicated them with drawings, then I made silkscreens from the drawings. I like working with layers of colors, and tried to use colors that represent the colors I saw in the icons. Ironically, and I had not planned for this, the faces became the faces of many people/all people. I fell in love with the layering and this idea of all being connected and kept pushing it.

The colors on the reverse side were used because they worked with the colors on the printed side. However, the colors also are deep and resonant for me. They are very grounded and grounding. I also think of them as being the colors of the elements- earth air fire and water. Earth of course is the brown colors, red is the fire, and blue is both air and water in this case.

Lastly, I wanted the piece to have a feeling of antiquity with a contemporary twist.

Coming Up at First Church

Animal Blessing October 7th

Woof! Meow! Our annual blessing of animals and stuffed animals will be after church on October 7th at 12:30PM. Come enjoy this delightful service in front of our church and bring a friend (two or four legged).

Spiritual Autobiography Class

Drawing on Dan Wakefield's book *The Story of Your Life*, Rev. Burke will be leading a class on writing your spiritual autobiography. The sessions will be on Wednesdays at 7:30PM beginning on October 10th. The five sessions will be on October 10th, 17th, 24th, and November 7th and 14th. There will be no class on Halloween. Sign up in church or on line - speak with Terry for questions.

Social Justice Committee Survey

The Social Justice Committee needs your help. We are conducting a survey to help us understand what the congregation feels is important for the committee to be working on. It is a very quick and painless! There are two ways you can fill it out. Tucked into the order of service on Sunday will be a paper version of the survey; there will be boxes available for returning the completed form. Or you can fill it out online--just copy the Internet address below, paste it into your browser and hit return. This will take you to an online form. Thank you for your help! The Internet address is:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=XKgg9ReZWb0gObJPu_2b5gxw_3d_3d

Membership corner

Discussion Group: For those contemplating religious choices, Unitarian Universalism offers an appealing alternative to religious denominations that stress theological creeds over individual conviction and belief. In a "Chosen Faith", John Buehrens and Forrest Church explore the many sources of the living tradition of their chosen faith. Please contact Cherisse Haakonsen, chair of the membership committee at cherprieve@yahoo.com to sign up to be part of the discussion on this thought provoking book. Copies will be available upon request. The first group meets on October 16th at 7:00 pm at the Church.

Greeters: When a visitor or member enters the doors of the church, a greeter is waiting to provide a warm and genuine word of welcome. Greeters serve on the frontlines of the church's hospitality ministry and provide a positive first impression for guests and a "glad to see you again" feeling for regular attendees of the church. Greeters have a key role in setting the tone for the experience many people have at the church. When newcomers enter the church doors and only see a crowd, greeters can make the church feel warm and personal. YOU (*imagine a finger pointing at you*) can be this person...contact Cherisse at cherprieve@yahoo.com to let her know which Sunday you can do this noble task, and she will guide you through Greeters 101!

JP Forums

Thursday, Oct. 4th: Aviva Chomsky, "21 Myths about Immigration"

According to Aviva Chomsky, the current immigration debate is "rife with myths, stereotypes and unquestioned assumptions" about the history of immigration and how American society, economy and laws function. She argues that the historical structures that have privileged white people in the U.S. continue to shape social realities and immigration policy today. Chomsky is an immigrants' rights activist, professor of history at Salem State College, and author of the new book "They Take Our Jobs: Twenty Other Myths About Immigration."

Friday, Oct. 12th: Please Vote For Me (Documentary screening)

Want to find out how democracy really works...then head to China! Three eight-year-old students—a charismatic challenger, a ruthless incumbent, and a thoughtful outsider—all campaign for the coveted position of class monitor in a third grade classroom in Wuhan, China. Hot debates. Backstabbing. Alliances. Move over Little League, real sport is coming, and it's called democracy. **JP Forum seeks your stories from China!** We are seeking a First Church member who would like to share their experiences of China, and help facilitate an informal group discussion after the film. If you, a family member, or friend are interested in this opportunity, please contact Sarah at jamaicainforumsarah@gmail.com or 617-541-0500x302

Friday, Oct. 26th: Miss Navajo (Documentary Screening)

How many beauty contestants can say "I competed in a pageant where I butchered a sheep?" Crystal Frazier can. Follow this introverted, self-proclaimed tomboy as she makes bread, weaves a rug, sweats her way through a language quiz—and that's just the first day—on her quest to be the new MISS NAVAJO.

~All Jamaica Plain Forum events will begin at 7:00pm and take place in the Parish Hall~

October 2007 Calendar

10/1	Monday	Building Committee Meeting 7:30pm
10/2	Tuesday	Book Group 7:30
10/4	Thursday	Choir Rehearsal 8:00pm JP Forum: Myths About Immigration, Aviva Chomsky 8:00pm
10/7	Sunday	World Communion Sunday-Happy Birthday Rumi 11:00am Blessing of Animals and Stuffed Animals
10/8	Monday	COLUMBUS DAY
10/10	Wednesday	Adult RE: Spiritual Autobiography 7:30pm
10/14	Sunday	RE Committee Mtg. 9:30am Sermon: Association Sunday; Roots & Wings 11:00am Social Justice Committee Mtg. 12:30pm Finance Committee Mtg. 12:30pm
10/16	Tuesday	New UU Class 7:00pm
10/17	Wednesday	Adult RE: Spiritual Autobiography 7:30pm
10/18	Thursday	Choir Rehearsal 8:00pm
10/19	Friday	Youth Film Night 7:00pm
10/21	Sunday	Membership Committee Mtg. 9:30am Sermon: Harry Potter Magic 11:00am OWL at Theodore Parker Church 4-6pm
10/23	Tuesday	New UU Classes 7:00pm Standing Committee Mtg. 7:00pm
10/24	Wednesday	Adult RE: Spiritual Autobiography 7:30pm
10/28	Sunday	Membership Committee Mtg. 9:30pm Sermon & Minister: TBA (Terry away) 11:00am
10/31	Wednesday	HALLOWEEN!

Birthday Parade

Sophia Buzelle, 10/6; Sam Oldshue, 10/6; Natalie Eldridge, 10/9; Ezra
Alexander 10/15; Rachel Burger, 10/17; Susan Collins, 10/19;
Roy Mitchell-Brenc, 10/25