

## October 2008 Newsletter

### First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist

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

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



### Thoughts from Terry

Today felt like a cool fall day, that wonderful season in New England. I went on the bus for jury duty at the West Roxbury Courthouse, bringing with me about three days of church and personal work for my expected wait. I love times of enforced concentration when I am free from distractions.

About twenty-five years ago, Ellen and I moved to JP after I started working at the church. We were assigned the West Roxbury Courthouse as our polling place for voting. After wandering around Centre Street in West Roxbury, we discovered that the courthouse was a short walk from our apartment. Of course, our church historian George Wardle can explain how JP was once part of the town of West Roxbury.

We moved to Roslindale almost 20 years ago when we bought our home. Back when we lived at Forest Hills, most of the shops had a depressed, run-down feel to them. I remember an old barbershop, which had a worn hobbyhorse for small customers in its window. Nowadays, most of my time at Forest Hills is spent going through the T station.

Today I arrived at the courthouse way early from my bus ride. A cleaning man explained to me that the doors didn't open until 8AM. So I took a walk, visiting the exterior of the nearby Ukrainian church. Then I walked past the now largely prosperous shops on Hyde Park Avenue. With time on my hands, I went into one that was new to me, Java Jo's.

While ordering, I asked the woman behind the counter, "How long have you been here?" She must have thought that was some sort of pick-up line, and replied, "Why are you asking?" I replied, "This is my first time here," and she snarled, "Less than a year." As I sat at my table, a political operative was using the shop as his office. During his long cell phone call, he instructed his minion to place their flyers at eye level on the light poles. I wondered if that was legal. When it was time to leave, I asked for the rest room key, only to find that the facility was out of order. A different employee offered me the key to the staff restroom, and I decided that the new place wasn't so bad after all.

Fall is a time of change. Change is good, bad, or indifferent, but inevitable. We live amidst falling leaves and falling financial institutions. In the maelstrom of change, we have a Holy Center that we share in our spiritual community. See you in church this fall!

Yours, Terry

## RE News

I was laughing inside last week during Spirit Play, watching Larry Zaborski very reverently tell a UU story called “Sources”, which used a felt cutout of a tree and many different religious symbols to show all the various inputs of our faith. All the branches as well as the roots of the tree ended up adorned with symbols.

“Dang—that was long!” Larry said afterwards. It does take a while to acknowledge every potential source of religious and humanist wisdom! I do believe the kids will need that story to be retold...perhaps a few times...

That’s what we’re doing now: telling and retelling stories. The *Spirit Play* curriculum now in place for 4 to 10-year-old children tells the stories of the major world religions, using concrete objects to illustrate them. Repetition is an important part of this teaching philosophy—you could say it takes the place of *explanation*. There is no explanation of the “meaning” of stories in Spirit Play, only thoughtful wondering.

Our 11 to 13-year-olds are moving, meanwhile, into a more intellectual understanding of religion. With a curriculum called *Neighboring Faiths*, they will spend the year studying religions as varied as Catholicism, fundamentalist Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. Along with their peers at the First Parish Brookline, they will take field trips to visit representative churches and temples in the area.

All are welcome on the children’s journeys of faith! I held the first **training for Spirit Play teachers this past Sunday, 9/27, at 12:30 on the stage**. All who are curious are welcome to join. Neighboring Faiths teachers Chuck Collins and Suzanne Demarco can use help from anyone who has practiced a different faith, as guests in their class, as well as adults interested in chaperoning field trips.

As always, come to me with your suggestions, time, materials and input.

Best wishes,  
Andree Zaleska, DRE  
[Zaleska@aczaleska.com](mailto:Zaleska@aczaleska.com)

### Wish List

Donations of nut-free snacks to the RE program: chips, popcorn, cookies, crackers etc.  
Toddler toys in good condition for the nursery  
Any art supplies

**What was an “Inkling”?** Terry Burke will lead a five-session class on the British literary/drinking club that included **C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams**. The Oxford Group would meet either in Lewis' college rooms or at the Eagle and Child Pub (always know to them as "the Bird and the Baby") to talk, tell jokes, and hear from one another's most recent writings. Works including *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Lord of the Rings* were first heard by fellow Inklings. We'll learn about the group and some of its famous members, read excerpts from their words, and perhaps celebrate the Inklings with a pub field trip. **The first session is Wednesday, October 1st at 7:30PM at church**. Please email Terry or leave a phone message if you plan to attend so that he can plan on the number of handouts. If you would like to attend but can't make it to the first meeting, let Terry know.



## Blessing of the Animals

After church on October 5th, we will celebrate our annual blessing of animals and stuffed animals in the front yard. Bring your furry or feathered friends, or that special Teddy Bear who shares your life. As usual, there will be animal crackers and Goldfish crackers for the humans attending. Join in the fun!



## Church Book Group

The book group rounds out its first decade reading A Strong West Wind, by Gail Caldwell, and Falling Man, by Dan DeLillo. For the past few years, we've met on the first Tuesday of the month, in the Morse Room at 7:30 PM, and that's the plan for this year. As always, anyone interested in any given book is welcome to come to that discussion. There are no entrance requirements, membership fees, poll taxes, or other

impediments. On October 7, we'll discuss Caldwell's memoir of growing up in Texas in the 50's and 60's. If it is anywhere as insightful and beautiful as her essay on rowing, it will be a great read. On November 4 (or, possibly, the 11th), we turn to DeLillo's novel about individual experiences and reactions to the bombings of 9/11. Upcoming books: Roland Merullo's Breakfast with Buddha and Gustave Flaubert's, Madame Bovary.

## "Sunday Night aLive" Coming to First Church-October 26th

Beginning on Sunday October 26 First Church will be offering an alternative evening worship service called "**Sunday Night aLive**". This service will take place on the last Sunday of each month, beginning at 6:00 pm. Meeting in the parish hall, the service will be non-traditional, utilizing contemporary music, participation from those who attend, artistic images, prayer and more. Dinner will be served following the service. Childcare will be provided. The service is open to all, and is particularly geared toward serving young adults in the community (people in their 20s and 30s). Please tell young adults about this new offering from the church. Those who would like to cook some food for the event can contact Cherisse Haakonsen.

## Monthly Potlucks at First Church!

Our first **Second Sunday** potluck gathered over 25 people to eat good food, enjoy one another's company, and learn about the Green House Project from Andree Zaleska and Ken Ward. Come join us for the next potluck on Sunday **October 12<sup>th</sup>**-topic to be announced!



## Membership Announcements:

### Greeters this week, Sunday September 28:

Cherisse Haakonsen (Head)

Anne Rogers

Erikka Adams

**October 5, 9:30 am: Committee meeting** at 9:30 am – all are welcome. If you would like a copy of the agenda, please email Cherisse by October 2<sup>nd</sup>: [cherprieve@yahoo.com](mailto:cherprieve@yahoo.com)

**October 19, 9:30 am: Newcomer's Breakfast:** Everyone who has visited/visits the church, and would like to get to know our church community better, our activities, committees etc, this is a great opportunity to do so, while enjoying a delicious breakfast prepared by the members of our church community. All committee chairs are encouraged to attend! Please RSVP: [cherprieve@yahoo.com](mailto:cherprieve@yahoo.com) by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Fun times!

**11:00 am: Welcome New Members:** During the Service we will welcome our newest members, as they sign our historic membership book and “officially” join our church community. If you would like to become a member of our church community, send an email to Cherisse at [cherprieve@yahoo.com](mailto:cherprieve@yahoo.com), or see me at Church.



**October 26: Visitor's Day:** Let's make this a day of celebration! Please bring at least one person to this service that promises to be fun and a great way for visitors to meet and get to know us. Coffee hour will be in honor of all our visitors!

**Join Terry Burke** before church at **9:30AM** on the 26th for a talk on **"What is Unitarian Universalism?"** Terry promises to share some of the best of UU jokes.

## GBIO Campaign to Defeat Question 1

First Church is a member of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO), which works for social change in and around the city. GBIO is now organizing to defeat Question 1, a ballot initiative in the November election. If passed, this would eliminate the state income tax, reducing the state budget by 40 percent. It would remove over \$12 billion from the budget, causing drastic cuts in social services. This initiative should be taken seriously--it has a real chance of passing. Current polls show that about 50% of voters would vote "yes". Gov. Deval Patrick has asked for GBIO's help to defeat this initiative. GBIO plans to get 15,000 voters to pledge to vote "no" on Question 1. Of this amount, First Church has promised to collect 400 pledges. We need your help to do this! We'll be collecting signatures on pledge cards at church and we also need folks to get cards signed from among your circles of family and friends. If you're willing to help, please contact: Marshall Hawkins; David Parke; Priscilla Morris; or Peggy Hopper. Spread the word--Vote No on Question 1!

October 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Prayer Group 6pm  7:30 Adult RE: The Inklings Terry Burke	2 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 	3 JP Forum: "Rhizome Collective" Parish Hall	4
5 Membership Com. 9:30 Church Service 11 Sermon: St.Francis World Communion Animal Blessing	6 Building Committee 7:30	7 7:30 pm Book Group 	8  Prayer Group 6pm  7:30 Adult RE: The Inklings Terry Burke	9	10 JP Forum: "Lioness" Parish Hall	11
12 sermon: Guilt  12:30 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday Potluck	13 COLUMBUS DAY 	14	15  Prayer Group 6pm  7:30 Adult RE: The Inklings Terry Burke	16 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 	17	18
19 9:00 R.E. Cte. -Newcomers Breakfast 9:30 am Book Signing -Spirit Play -GBIO Sunday -Social Justice 2:30 -JP Forum Songfest	20	21 Standing Committee 7 PM	22  Prayer Group 6pm  7:30 Adult RE: The Inklings Terry Burke	23 8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 	24 JP Forum: "Salud!" film & discussion Parish Hall	25
26 -UU Talk with Terry 9:30 -Visitor's Sunday -Sunday Nite aLive 6:00 PM service 7:00 PM Potluck	27	28	29 Prayer Group 6pm  7:30 Adult RE: The Inklings Terry Burke	30  Organ Event TBA	31 HALLOWEEN 	