

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

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Carlisle, MA 01741

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NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES

The First Religious Society in Carlisle

Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Volume XXXII, No. 7

December 3, 2007



WE ARE LOCATED IN CARLISLE CENTER OPPOSITE THE COMMON, JUST OFF ROUTE 225 AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE ONLY ROTARY IN TOWN. A CLASSIC NEW ENGLAND MEETING HOUSE WITH THE TOWN CLOCK IN THE STEEPLE. COME AS YOU ARE. "LOVE IS THE DOCTRINE OF THIS CHURCH, THE QUEST FOR TRUTH IS OUR SACRAMENT AND SERVICE IS OUR PRAYER."

Newsletter for December 3, 2007

Church Service and Sunday School: Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Coffee Hour following services.

Dates and details of church events on the Calendar on page 7 in this newsletter.

Church Office: 978-369-5180; Fax no. 978-369-1891

Web site: www.uucarlisle.org **E-mail address:** frs@uucarlisle.org

Church Mailing Address: [including minister and all business]

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Union Hall Coffee House: Dian Cuccinello 978-278-5745,

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In The Interim...

They called it "A Service of Grief and Mourning" and that is what it was. Two Unitarian Universalist churches, Boston's King's Chapel and Lexington's Follen Church Society joined to produce an occasion that was profoundly moving in its every detail. There were many "details".

Although there was a coffin present it was not a "funeral"; although there were brief spoken sentiments by family members it was not a "memorial service" or a "celebration of life". Instead there was "grief and mourning", exactly right and fitting for such an occasion.

A young man, really a boy of eighteen had died in an automobile accident. By all reports he was "a golden child", a star whose accomplishments would delight any parent. Gifted in the arts and humanities he shared his many talents with eagerness and tender compassion. His death occasioned wave after wave of the grief and loss that any death, especially an unexpected and youthful death occasions.

A bus has brought the entire string section of the Lexington High Orchestra of which he had been a member, playing string base. They performed Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings". If you know that music you know its power to deepen shared sorrow.

You should also know that shared sorrow is good grief. "Good" in that such grief is an acknowledgement of the human bond with those who are at the epicenter of personal loss. Good grief serves to overcome the personal isolation that the death of a loved one imposes on those closest and dearest to him or her.

And so it was at the Follen Church Society in Lexington that morning. There was acknowledgement of heart-ache deeper than the speaking of it. The service was honest, brave and true. Now the healing can begin.

Victor

Christmas Day Pot Luck

If you (or you and your partner) are alone this Christmas without family nearby, come to a Carlisle Community Pot-luck dinner on Tuesday, December 25 at 5:00pm in Union Hall at The First Religious Society in Carlisle, 27 School Street. No religious traditions. No gifts exchanged. Just dinner in the company of other Carlisle folk. Casual dress. **Reservations required by 12/20 to 978-369-5180.** Leave your name, phone number, whether you are one or two people, what you'll bring for the pot-luck and whether you will help clean up afterwards.

REFLECTIONS by *Molly Sorrows*

One of my favorite traditions in December is the Advent Wreath. It starts with a quiet exploration in the woods to gather greens, where I'm already anticipating having the wreath to enjoy on our kitchen table. We take our greens and join together with others at the church where each family works on its wreath. For me, this is where the mood of the season begins to be set, greeting each other with the first wishes of the Christmas season. We work together choosing how to nestle the white pines into the wire frame, and then slowly select the some more unusual and special greens, berries and pine cones to make it feel just right. As we make our wreath, we are creating something special together as a family.

Finally we place our candles on the wreath and begin to think about and discuss what we will have each candle represent. We choose themes like family, love, music, friends, friendship, caring and hope. We light one new candle each week of Advent, naming it as we light it. Each week we light the candles of the previous weeks, carefully remembering what each represents. The process seems to exemplify traits that I hold dear, and renews my hope that they will be ever-present through the holiday season: patience as we work slowly to make our wreath, thoughtfulness in choosing and placing the greens, respect for what each person wants the wreath to include, the sense of wonder at the beauty and complexity of nature,

and a focus on what is really most meaningful to us as we name our candles.

An advent calendar is another way to focus on the anticipation of Christmas Day and its message rather than on just the day itself. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the traditional advent calendar where you open a paper flap each day leading up to Christmas, and there you uncover a special picture. There is a simple fun in stopping to see what the picture is and think about how it relates to the Christmas story. Perhaps that is too simple for children now, but finding a way for them to slow down and think ahead to why this holiday and season are special is important.

The Religious Education directors in our area have been sharing with each other a calendar of family activities for December, each of us modifying it with some of our own ideas and events for our church. I've made a version for FRS which will be posted on the website, with a few ideas of ways to enjoy true gifts with family and friends. I hope you'll enjoy some of them and will tell me about the activities that are important in your family.

Many of the world's religions have holidays in which lights and anticipation play an important role. I hope that this December, whatever holiday you celebrate, the lights reflect the hope and love in your heart, and the anticipation gives you a chance to slow down and think about what is most important to you.

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Please view the FRS calendar on our website under "Calendar".

All are welcome to attend Parish Committee meetings, except in cases of executive sessions

FRS Committee meetings are open to any interested party. To address a committee on a specific issue please contact the committee chair.

Next Newsletter Deadline is December 10.

If you would like to be added to or removed from the newsletter mailing list please call or email the church office.

**CONCORD PRISON OUTREACH
HOLIDAY GIFT BAG PROJECT**

We encourage you, your faith community, families and friends to join the Holiday Gift Project for the men at MCI-Concord and the Northeastern Correctional Center this year. We hope to have gifts for all 1700 inmates.

We welcome donations of the items below in any quantity.

Each gift bag will contain the following:

- 1 bar of deodorant soap
- 1 6oz tube toothpaste
- 1 pack #6 3/4 envelopes (6 1/2" x 3 5/8")
- 1 writing pad (no wire; 6" x 9")
- 1 pair white socks (no tube socks or knee highs)
- 1 bottle (plastic) shampoo (15oz max)
- 1 stick deodorant (no roll-ons)
- 1 pocket calendar (no wire)
- And a holiday greeting card (Happy Holidays, Seasons Greetings, Merry Christmas; no religious cards), signed with first name(s) only. Handmade cards are appreciated.

If you have any questions please contact Marcella Shepherd at 978-369-2535.

STAFF AND OFFICE SCHEDULE

Church Office Hours: The church office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 8:00am and 1:00pm.

Minister Office Hours: Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Vic is available for emergencies any time. You can reach him by email at victorcarpenter@dedhamuu.org or by phone at 781-648-3861.

Director of Religious Education: Molly Sorrows, DRE and Youth Advisor, can be reached by email (frs_re@comcast.net) or phone (church, 978-369-5180; home, 978-371-2217).

Minister of Music Office Hours: Marguerite Shaw is at the church every weekday between 10:00am and 2:00pm, with occasional exceptions. Call 978-369-5180 or 978-501-4220.

Music Rehearsals Schedule: The Choir rehearses on Wednesday, at 7:30pm. The Sunday warm-up begins at 9:15am.

KIDSKWIRE: Rehearsals are on Wednesday at 3:00pm.

If you have questions about any of the music programs please call Marguerite Shaw.

MESSAGE FROM MARGUERITE

Some people have asked for the words to the song sung by the KIDSKWIRE on November 18th, so here they are:

TWO FIVE O!

Vs. 1: F R S is celebrating a mega anniversary we heard. In this happy song we're contemplating some very funny, strange, descriptive words, very funny, strange, descriptive words: Semi-sept-centennial! Impressive, but it's just too much. JUST TOO MUCH! Demi-semi-septennial! So sorry to say that's simply not enough. SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH! (spoken): Maybe millennial, could be centennial, give-ah-jah-rennial, plan-ta-pa-rennial. HEY!

Vs. 2: We are creatures of tomorrow and went directly to the internet. And with good old Google giving guidance we found a lot of words we can't forget, Found a lot of words we can't forget: Quad-ri-mil-millennial! Now that's a stretch but we don't care! *We don't care.* Semi-quin-centennial! Well, crikey! It seems we're finally getting there! *Finally getting there.* (repeat of spoken words)

Vs. 3: All these crazy words are irritating, so now we're going to tell you what we know: The anniversary we're celebrating is easily described as Two Five O! Easily described as Two Five O! (three additional two five ohs) Two Five O! YES!

The First Religious Society in Carlisle is an inclusive community bound together in the Unitarian Universalist tradition of friendship, free inquiry and service to humanity.

We recognize our commonality as spiritual seekers, and welcome and celebrate the participation of all people, without regard to age, race, religious heritage, political opinion, gender identity, sexual or affectional orientation, socio-economic status, disability or ethnicity.

We are committed to continual learning and growth toward affirmation of the enriching diversity of humankind, and to working to create a more just, sustainable and loving world.

PROGRAM NEWS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Our Annual Stocking Stuffing Project for the House of Hope is on December 9.

Children are asked to bring \$5 to \$10 to contribute towards the cost of the stocking gifts which they will stuff during RE time.

Caroling Time Again! All are welcome to join us for Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 16 at 6:00pm. We'll start in Union Hall to warm up our voices together, and then carol at Carlisle Village Court and return to Union Hall for cider and cookies. Please join us for this festive and fun intergenerational event! Any question, check with Nancy West at NancySWest@hughes.net or call her at 978-369-6515.

Christmas Pageant, December 16

The Christmas Pageant this year will be as it has been for the past several years; a multigenerational, lively, retelling of the Christmas story with costumes, music, drama, and only one rehearsal. Would you and your family like to be part of the Pageant this year? All are welcome to join in. Please contact Alison Saylor at 978-369-1809 or saylorfarm@comcast.net.

Costuming: December 9 from 9:30 to 11:30am.

Rehearsal and Performance: There will be a rehearsal on December 16 beginning at 8:30am but participants should check on staggered arrival times for their assigned part. Animals do not need to arrive early. The performance of the pageant will start at 10:00 during the morning worship service.

Upcoming Services

We will celebrate Advent during the morning worship services in the month of December.

December 9: "Does Your Religion Matter?"

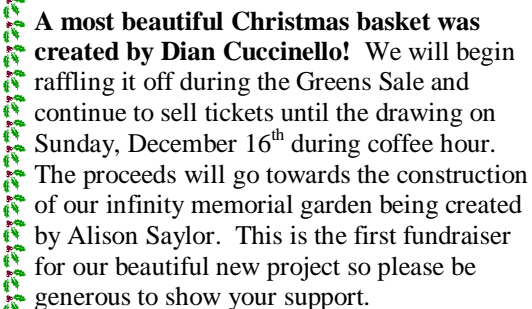
What role does your religion play in your life? A deep well of meaning; a pleasurable distraction from the hurley burley of your days; a breathing space; all of the above? Your answer depends a lot on what you expect your religion to deliver.

December 23: Choose Something Like A Star, Rev. Robin L. Zucker preaching.

In this sermon, two eves before Christmas, we'll explore what it means to have integrity and walk the way of the Magi in an increasingly compromised world; or as Robert Frost put it in his poem, "So when at times the mob is swayed /To carry praise or blame too far/We may choose something like a star/To stay our minds on and be staid."

December 24: Christmas Eve Services

| | |
|------|---|
| 3:00 | Service for All ages |
| 5:00 | The Christmas Story in Lessons and Carols with The First Religious Choir. |



A most beautiful Christmas basket was created by Dian Cuccinello! We will begin raffling it off during the Greens Sale and continue to sell tickets until the drawing on Sunday, December 16th during coffee hour. The proceeds will go towards the construction of our infinity memorial garden being created by Alison Saylor. This is the first fundraiser for our beautiful new project so please be generous to show your support.

THE FRS INFINITY MEMORIAL GARDEN NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has been working hard on planning and beginning to create our Infinity Memorial Garden. Check out the clearing which has recently been done by Bob Wallhagen.

Memorial gifts

We are looking for people to help formulate a plan or policy on how to handle Memorial gifts. This might involve asking other churches how they do this. We plan to have stones, bricks or pavers on which names can be engraved and perhaps also a plaque with names, to be placed in the garden or perhaps inside the church. The name would be of donors wishing to be recognized but especially people to be remembered here. The contributions would be used to maintain the garden.

Fundraising

We would also like to have people interested in helping with fundraising for the construction of the garden.

Please contact us if you are at all interested in helping us!! Alison Saylor is the chief designer and coordinator of this exciting and important project. Contact her with questions or talk to any of us on Buildings and Grounds.

Susan Emmons and Ann James
Co-chairs of building and grounds

PROGRAM NEWS

Circle Dinner Extravaganza - Saturday, January 26th: Join us on Saturday, January 26th for our annual Circle Dinner Extravaganza which starts at Union Hall at 5:30 where we'll have appetizers together. After appetizers we'll head out to our hosts' homes for dinner. The hosts provide the main course, and guests bring the salad, bread, wine or dessert. It's a wonderful way to enjoy the company of old friends and meet new ones even during the cold wintry weather. Feel free to invite a neighbor, or someone you've met through a town activity or a colleague from work. The Membership Committee will make sure you are assigned to the same host. It's a great way to meet some new people. Sign-up sheets will be available at Coffee Hour throughout January. If you'd like to sign-up by phone or email or have any questions, please contact Sue Kirk at 978-371-0176 or sukirk@aol.com.

Pastoral Concerns Committee: We serve as a means of outreach to people in our church who need our special support and friendship. We will arrange rides, visits, childcare, meals or anything else that lends a helping hand during short or long-term crises. If you are or know of anyone in need of this support, please contact Andi Gettys at 978-369-2392 during the month of December.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is looking for comfortable matching chairs to go in the back row of the Sanctuary. If anyone has chairs - such as an extra set of dining room chairs - that might be suitable for this purpose, please contact the church office. Suggestions are always welcome.