

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

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NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES

The First Religious Society in Carlisle
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Volume XXX, No. 17

May 15, 2006



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 May 15, 2006

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Service and Sunday School: Sunday at 10:30 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

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THE ECLECTIC CLERIC

"A Word About God"

Theology has sometimes been called "The Queen of the Sciences, but in many ways it might better be thought of as the Science of Imagination: a necessary "next step" which grows out of our reflections about life and our observations of the universe, and a confident trust in the reality of "things felt but not seen." We take values, ideals, and abstract principles which are not visible to the naked eye but rather can only be understood intuitively, and then ponder them systematically through the power of logic and reason until a coherent pattern of meaning emerges. Our images of God, however inadequate they may be, are basically imaginative dreams of a perfect "Being" -- our noblest hopes and aspirations projected to infinity. Or to put it another way, first we imagine ourselves created in the image of God, and then we proceed to create God in our own image.

Realizing that trying to say "a Word about God" is mostly an act of creative imagination in no way diminishes the importance of theology, or diminishes the power that a belief in God often plays in the lives of human beings. Our knowledge of the spiritual reality we sometimes call "God" will NEVER be perfect (at least not in this lifetime), but the fact that we routinely use metaphors to express our EXPERIENCE of the sacred and the holy speaks more to the limitations of human language than it does to the authenticity of the experience itself. Of course, this subtle distinction is sometimes lost on more literal-minded souls, who often ask me (when they learn I'm

a UU minister) "Do you guys even believe in God?" My response is invariably the same. "Tell me what you mean by God, and I'll tell you whether or not I believe it."

Likewise, the language of theological commitment may sound a little silly (or perhaps even a little scary) to our rational and enlightened minds, but in centuries past (and in many cultures still today) an absolute devotion to a shared vision of a Supreme Being was not only the sort of commitment that people were willing to live by, it was also a commitment that people were willing to die for (or at the very least risk death by leaving their safe and comfortable homes and crossing a stormy ocean to establish a new community in the wilderness of a New World). It's a commitment both to an Ideal and to one another: a way of being in the world which does not accept the limits of what we are, but rather strives to fulfill the potential of what we yet may become.

This is the power of the Covenant: a declaration of mutual obligations and responsibilities to one another, as members of a faith community, to "walk humbly together in all the ways of faith known or made known to us" -- to strive for religious authenticity, to be slow to anger and quick to forgive, to be faithful stewards of this institution and this free religious heritage with which we have chosen to identify ourselves, to become truly worthy of the names Unitarian and Universalist, and all that they have historically entailed.

And yet, all of us know that none of us is perfect. We

THE ECLECTIC CLERIC *(continued)*

all fall short of the glory of God -- the fullness of our potential, and the promise of our dreams. Churches are no different. All congregations have their failings and shortcomings, moments in which they are simply incapable of living up to the high ideals to which they aspire. But this isn't really as important as you might think. Because the real power of change lies in the process of becoming: of moving TOWARD the Vision we see so vividly in our imaginations, through our sincere efforts to live in a manner worthy of them.

Our aspiration may well be perfection, but our destiny is simply to "become" more and better than we are -- and it is here that change truly becomes transformative. In the words of William De Witt Hyde's familiar hymn of a century ago: "Since what we choose is what we are, And what we love we yet shall be; The goal may ever shine afar, the will to win it makes us free." Our dreams and our aspirations provide the guidance, but it is only through that willingness to "carry on," to stick with the process as it gradually changes us, that our religion reveals the fullness of its possibilities, and we are transformed through the power of our liberal faith.....twj

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UPCOMING SERVICES

May 21: The State of The Church 2006
Rev. Jensen
Please join us for The Annual Meeting at 4:30pm in Union Hall.

May 28: Li Min Mo, guest speaker. Memorial Day weekend. Li Min Mo is a professional storyteller and artist who was smuggled out of Mainland China in 1952 and is now settled in Cambridge.

Donations to the Immigrant Justice Project will be collected at coffee hour.

June 4: Rev. Susan Criscione, Director, Renewal House will be our guest speaker. She comes to us through Tom Dunkers and his work with Renewal House and the UU Urban Ministry. The Message for All Ages will be a Social Action guest speaker from The Jericho Road Project. We will also have a flower communion.

June 11: We will celebrate Religious Education Sunday.

AIP Ratings Guide

The April/May issue of the American Institute of Philanthropy's Charity Rating Guide & Watchdog Report is now posted on the social action bulletin board in Union Hall.

CALENDAR

Church Office Hours: The church office will be open between the hours of 8:00am and 1:30pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. The office will be closed on Tuesdays.

Minister Office Hours: Tim is generally available at church most mornings when the church office is open and other times by appointment. It is always a good idea to call in advance. You can reach him at 978-369-0284 (study or home), 503-816-2859 (cell) or by email at uucleric@mindspring.com.

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).

Music Rehearsals Schedule

The Choir
Wednesdays at 7:30-9:00pm
Sundays at 9:45am

Family Singers TBA

Handbell Choir TBA

Drumming TBA

Next Newsletter Deadline is May 22.

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

- May 16 "Future of Food" documentary at 7:00pm in Union Hall.
- May 18 Parish Committee meeting at 7:00pm in the conference room.
- May 21 All Church Annual Meeting at 4:30pm in Union Hall.
- May 23 Small Group Ministries at 7:00pm in the conference room.
- May 27 Concert to Benefit Children with AIDS at 7:30pm in the sanctuary.
- May 29 Memorial Day Luncheon featuring ham and bean dinner.
- Jun 1 Music and Worship Committee meeting at 7:00pm in the conference room.
- Jun 3 Mensgroup
- Jun 3 Three-church yard sale here at FRS.
- Jun 8 Membership Committee meeting at 7:00pm in the conference room.
- Jun 11 RE Recognition Sunday
- Jun 11 Womenspirit meeting at 7:00pm in the conference room.
- Jun 22 Strawberry Festival at 6:00pm in the church yard.

All are welcome to attend Parish Committee meetings, except in cases of executive sessions. Committee meetings are open to any interested party. To address a committee on a specific issue please contact the committee chair.

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.

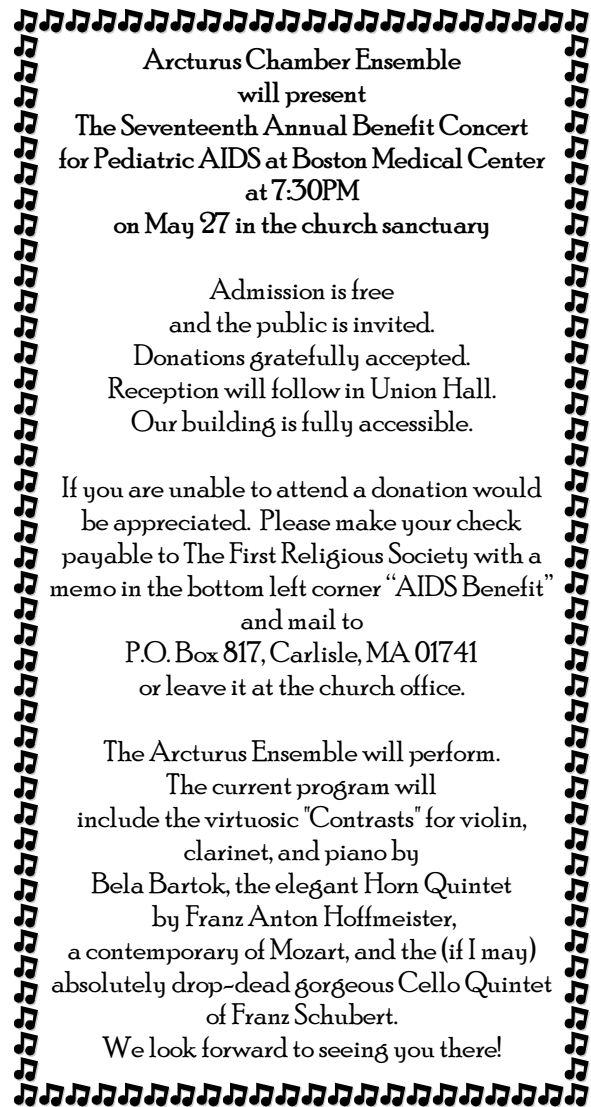
PROGRAM NEWS (continued)

Three Church Yard Sale News: The three church yard sale to benefit The Open Pantry of Greater Lowell will be held at the FRS on Saturday, June 3 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will be in Union Hall if it rains. Please save your unwanted treasures for this event. Donated items (no books or clothes) can be brought to Union Hall between 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Friday, June 2. We are looking for all sorts of helpers on both days. On Friday we need sorters. On Saturday we need people to help set up (beginning at 8 a.m.), to man the tables and to clean up and take the remains to the transfer station. Trucks would be very helpful for the last. Please call Nadine Bishop (369-5080) if you can help or if you have questions.

Don't forget Pass It Forward Day at the dump on May 20. One of the collections being made at that event is kids' clothes which will go to Big Brother/Big Sister. Three church people--Nadine Bishop, Dan Scholten and Marilyn Harte--will be at the dump collecting the clothes which will then be stored at the Stokes/Luoma's until BB/BS picks them up.

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 Tricia Reed at 978-369-0135 during the month of May.

MELODIES FROM THE HEART: Would you like to contribute song books in honor or in memory of a loved one? The new hymnal supplement "Singing the Journey" is full of wonderful songs for congregation and choir. You've heard some of them, and there are many more. The cost for each book is \$15. A bookplate with the name of the person remembered, and the name of the donor(s) will appear on the inside cover of each book. This is a wonderful way to remember those important in your lives - it's a gift that we share and appreciate each time we use the songbooks in our worship services. Sign up sheets are available at Coffee Hour, or you can speak to the Music Director, Marguerite Shaw, any choir member, or simply call the church office at 978-369-5180. Thank you.



Arcturus Chamber Ensemble
will present
The Seventeenth Annual Benefit Concert
for Pediatric AIDS at Boston Medical Center
at 7:30PM
on May 27 in the church sanctuary

Admission is free
and the public is invited.
Donations gratefully accepted.
Reception will follow in Union Hall.
Our building is fully accessible.

If you are unable to attend a donation would
be appreciated. Please make your check
payable to The First Religious Society with a
memo in the bottom left corner "AIDS Benefit"
and mail to
P.O. Box 817, Carlisle, MA 01741
or leave it at the church office.

The Arcturus Ensemble will perform.
The current program will
include the virtuosic "Contrasts" for violin,
clarinet, and piano by
Bela Bartok, the elegant Horn Quintet
by Franz Anton Hoffmeister,
a contemporary of Mozart, and the (if I may)
absolutely drop-dead gorgeous Cello Quintet
of Franz Schubert.
We look forward to seeing you there!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS
by Molly Sorrows

For the Earth Day celebrations in Concord, I joined a choral group and learned a beautiful piece by John Forster and Tom Chapin... "This pretty planet spinning through space, You're a garden. You're a harbor. You're a holy place." Our planet Earth as a holy place was the subject of some of our related religious education classes recently. Tom Hedden brought some ideas from the Environmental Action Committee to our youth. Under the topic of "What kids can do to help the environment," he got us talking about what the environment is, how we affect it, and how we can conserve energy, reduce waste, and recycle materials as part of our every day lives. He brought information from an online encyclopedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org>) to describe the different identification codes on plastics that can be recycled. While you may appreciate that in Carlisle and many surrounding towns we are unusual in being able to recycle so many types of plastics, you may never have looked at a chart that explains exactly how easy (or difficult) it is to recycle certain types of plastics, and what they can be turned in to.

These environmental topics were continued in classes by Heather Hedden, Susan Emmons and Dan Scholten, and included giving compact fluorescent light bulbs to many kids to try at home, singing Pete Seeger's *If I Had a Hammer* with banjo accompaniment, and charting the power usage of common electrical items. While there was no list of what people *should* do, the children found many things that they do which make a difference. They don't litter, they go for walks and enjoy nature, they turn off lights when they are through with them, they reuse scrap paper by writing on the back, they put used paper in recycling bins, they "shop" at the swap shed and even give up things sometimes to be re-used by others. Earth Day was a wonderful time to be reminded that each person, even children, can make a difference and feel good in protecting and enjoying this holy place.

SUMMER SERVICES
by Roger Goulet

There are some Sundays available in our summer schedule, and the Music & Worship Committee urges you to take the opportunity to share your thoughts with your friends and neighbors at the FRS. Your message need not be theological -- the majority of summer services are not. Rather, they are drawn mostly from specialized knowledge such as a career or an extracurricular interest, from life experiences that have taught the speakers something important about themselves, or from books that have had an extraordinary impact on their readers.

A topic, in other words, that is so important to you that you want to tell other people about it. We want to hear about that topic from you. The setting and format are not important. I will conduct a service one Sunday this summer, but I won't be in the pulpit. I'll stand down in front with my notes on a music stand, because I find the height of the pulpit and the distance from my listeners a little off-putting. No music, but I will lead our candle ceremony, because joy and sadness are our constant companions every season of the year.

A final point: do you have a friend or colleague who has impressed you by their knowledge, experience and insight? If so, it's very likely that they will impress us too. Talk to them, talk to me, and we'll see what we can work out. For example, last summer Margaret Darling suggested that we invite her friend Li Min Mo from Cambridge to talk to us, and she proved to be such a compelling speaker that we asked her back for a regular service later this month.

Please contact me, Roger Goulet, 978-369-6825, e-mail goulet27@aol.com, and thanks.

IMMIGRANT JUSTICE PROJECT *by Margaret Darling*

The Southern Poverty Law Center recently launched an important new initiative, the Immigrant Justice Project. This project's mission is to forcefully respond to the rising abuse of immigrants, especially in the South, where the exploitation, mistreatment and degradation of immigrants has become one of today's most burning human rights issues.

As New Orleans is being rebuilt, a new tragedy is unfolding: the exploitation of migrant workers doing backbreaking and dangerous clean-up work. After working seven days a week in difficult and contaminated settings, migrant workers in New Orleans are systematically underpaid for their work, and often are not paid at all. When the checks don't come, workers are left hungry and homeless. Workers face serious health threats from the dangerous work conditions without adequate protection or training. When workers are injured as a result of unsafe working conditions, they are denied medical treatment and workers compensation benefits. Meanwhile, major U.S. companies are lining their pockets while they hide behind the subcontracting system, the workers' fear of retaliation, and the general chaos in the city.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has put together a report, "Broken Levees, Broken Promises - New Orleans' Migrant Workers, In Their Own Words," which is being sent to the press and key government officials. An excerpt from the report follows.

"Cuando los supervisores nos hablaban, parece que les estaban hablando a animales." (*When the supervisors of the company talked to us, it was like they were talking to animals.*) - Cesar, migrant worker in New Orleans.

"The demolition work was the hardest. We tore down everything inside the schools we were cleaning because, in some of the schools, the water had risen up to the roofs.

The companies that came from outside Louisiana caused us many more problems than people from here in New Orleans. When our bosses talked to us it was like they were talking to animals. They abused us just to make themselves richer. At times, I was afraid even to ask to go to the bathroom. We had to always keep working hard. If someone asked for a break, they told him he had two options: to continue working or be fired. People carried on because the desperation to be

paid was so great - to have money for food, to help our families, and for other personal reasons. We know that we have to work, but I believe they should treat us well and with respect like any other person from the United States.

When the company didn't pay us when they had promised they would, I heard of people who didn't have food to eat. I saw people cry as well. I don't know if it was out of desperation or out of hunger. The company had told us that they would provide us food. But we didn't eat. Why? Because when lunch didn't arrive, they didn't care. They would leave us there without food.

At the beginning, when we first started, everyone worked well and everyone looked normal. When three weeks had passed, people looked thinner and looked tired as if they didn't have the hope of anything except to keep waiting for their first paycheck.

I saw something else in people: that they didn't know whether to continue working or to quit. They said, "If I leave they won't pay me and, if I stay, who knows what will happen?" There wasn't any other option because many people didn't have the money to return to the state they had come from. If they didn't continue working for the company they'd be kicked out of the hotel and would have to sleep in the street. And, because of all this, they had to continue. They were forced to do it."

On Sunday, May 28, donations to the Immigrant Justice Project will be collected at coffee hour. Our speaker on that day will be Chinese-American storyteller Li Min Mo. For more information about the Southern Poverty Law Center or this project, contact the Darlings at 978-369-1475 or ericdarling@comcast.net.

PROGRAM NEWS

Memorial Day Luncheon: Do join your friends and neighbors at the ham and bean luncheon in Union Hall after the parade on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29. The FRS will be hosting the meal which, along with the ham and beans, will include potato and tossed salads, home baked rolls, coffee and tea, and fruit crisp for dessert. Pizza will be available for the young folk if they prefer it. The ham and bean lunch will be \$6 and the pizza lunch, including a chocolate chip cookie and drink, will be \$3. Reservations are not necessary. If you would prefer a reservation, please contact Kathy in the church office at 978-369-5180.

Strawberry Festival Activities Thursday, June 22

1. **Biscuit Making Workshop** at 9:00am on Wednesday, June 21 in the kitchen. Please bring biscuit cutters, rolling pins, measuring spoons and cups.
2. **Strawberry Hulling** at 9:00am on Thursday, June 22 in Union Hall. Please bring paring knives and aprons.
3. **Table and chair set up** at 5:15pm on Thursday, June 22 and take down at 8:15pm. Looking for strong men for this project.
4. **Whipping cream helpers** are needed in church kitchen starting at 5:30pm on Thursday, June 22. All will need to borrow 1 or 2 large mixers.
5. **People to serve strawberry shortcake** in 2 shifts. The first shift is from 5:45pm to 7:00pm and the second shift is from 7:00pm to 8:15pm.

"Future of Food" Documentary To Be Shown On May 16th at 7:00pm in Union Hall. Deborah Koons Garcia's revolutionary film brings to light the disturbing truth behind the unlabeled, patented, genetically-engineered foods that have quietly filled our grocery store shelves for the past decade.

- A "must-see" film for anyone who cares about the food their family eats.
- The showing is sponsored by the FRS Environmental Action Committee.
- Refreshments are provided by Whole Foods Market, Bedford and Debra's
- Natural Gourmet, West Concord.
- Ben Grosscup of NOFA/Mass will lead Q&A after the film.

FRS Ramblers Begin 16th Season May 27: For those of you who like to stay in Carlisle on holiday weekends here's a chance to enjoy the trails of Carlisle and do a little socializing too. The FRS Ramblers is a group, open to all, that likes to have breakfast together and then walk at a leisurely pace for about one and a half hours. We meet at the church at 7:30 a.m. For this year's first ramble we will go to breakfast at the Riverview Restaurant in Billerica (the favorite haunt of many Carlisleans and of the Ramblers) and then go for a Carlisle walk. Where we walk will be determined partly by the bug situation. Please call the Emmonses (369-7921) or Hubers (369-6678) by noon on Friday the 26th if you would like to join us. We like to let the restaurant know how many are coming.

**All Church Annual Meeting
Sunday, May 21
at 4:30pm
in Union Hall.**