

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

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NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES

The First Religious Society in Carlisle
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Volume XXXI, No. 6

November 20, 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 November 20, 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

Church Mailing Address: [including minister and all business]

PO Box 817, Carlisle, MA 01741-0817

Minister: Tim Jensen (study and home) 978-369-0284, (cell) 503-816-2859,

Email: uucleric@mindspring.com

Minister Emeritus: Dr. Eugene R. Widrick

Parish Committee Co-Chair: Suzanne Whitney Smith, 978-369-0922;

swsmeslrs@earthlink.net

Parish Committee Co-Chair: Lisa Sama, 978-692-6592, Email: lms@bostonbits.com

Office Administrator: Kathy Varney, 978-369-5180

Religious Education Director: Molly Sorrows, 978-371-2217,

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Minister of Music: Marguerite Shaw, 978-501-4220; Email: frsmusic@comcast.net

Collector of Funds: Charlie Davis, 978-371-2844; Email: cdavis@modavi.com

Lay Minister: Sally Hayen, 978-369-7591

Membership Contact: Sue Kirk, 978-371-0176

Coffee Committee: Gio DiNicola, Anne Ketchen, Tom Rourk, Suzanne Whitney Smith, Jack O'Connor, Jenifer Bush

THE ECLECTIC CLERIC

"Feast AND Famine"

Thanksgiving is not only a uniquely American holiday, it is also in many ways a uniquely New England holiday. We associate it with the Pilgrims: with a small community of faithful souls who traveled across a dangerous and stormy ocean in search of religious liberty in the New World, and who, with the help of their Indian neighbors, survived a brutal first winter in the wilderness. We associate it with traditional Thanksgiving foods, like turkey, cranberries, and pumpkin pie, and with returning home from far and wide to gather around the family table. And within these associations are contained important values which we also celebrate this day: family and community, faith and liberty, cooperation and shared sacrifice in the face of adversity, gratitude and mutual hospitality in times of prosperity.

The holiday may seem uniquely American, but these values are universal. And our occasional failure to acknowledge this fact can sometimes make Thanksgiving seem like a celebration of traditional America itself, rather than the qualities which have traditionally made America great. And so we spend a day watching football and gorging ourselves in

ways that the Pilgrims could only imagine, content in our smug material prosperity, and grateful for the good fortune of living in what we like to think of as the most powerful nation in the world. A few years ago now I watched with jaw-dropping bemusement as Christian Broadcasting Network investigative reporter Wendy Griffith revealed to viewers of Pat Robertson's 700 Club the scandalous "news" that "the very site where the Pilgrims first worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ is now home to a Unitarian Universalist Church, a denomination that denies Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation."

"What would the Pilgrims think today," the reporter asked, "if they, once again, came to these shores...to find out that their home state was the first in the nation to legalize homosexual marriage?" Her answer to that question was obvious from its tone. Yet lest we forget, I imagine they would have a very similar reaction to discovering that the day after Thanksgiving (sometimes referred to as "Black Friday") is now generally one of the busiest retail shopping days of the year, as well as the unofficial start of a "holiday shopping season" which culminates at Christmas, a holiday which the Puritans themselves refused to celebrate because of its pagan Yuletide associations. But more to the

THE ECLECTIC CLERIC

point, Thanksgiving is really about the power of shared hardship and shared sacrifice to forge bonds of community even between people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Not all of the colonists who crossed on the Mayflower shared the Pilgrims' religious convictions. Half the immigrants died that first winter, when at times the daily ration was reduced to a mere five kernels of maize per person. And without the assistance of their Wampanoag neighbors, whose numbers had already been decimated by European diseases, it is doubtful whether the Plymouth colony would have survived at all.

This Thanksgiving, as we gather around our tables with friends and family to express our gratitude for the blessings we have received, let us also be mindful not only of the sacrifices others have made to make our prosperity possible, but of the sacrifices we are called to make in order to share our prosperity with others. And for our own ability to be generous to those different from ourselves, may we be truly thankful.....twj

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Join Us at Upcoming Greens Sale Events!

Wednesday, November 29
 Christmas Greens Arrangements Workshop
 All Day in Union Hall

Thursday, November 30
 Wreath Decorating Workshop
 All Day in Union Hall

Friday, December 1
 Set up and price items for Greens Sale
 8:00am in Union Hall.

Friday, December 1
 Pre-order pick up at 5:00pm in Union Hall

Saturday, December 2
 Greens Sale
 10:00am to 2:00pm in Union Hall

Winter Holidays Concert
 December 3, 2006
 7:00pm
 In the Sanctuary

Join us for singing, bell ringing,
 piano, jazz trio, flutes and drumming

Please view the FRS calendar on our website under “Upcoming Events”.

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

PROGRAM NEWS *(continued)*

The Social Action Committee will once again ask the members of the congregation to provide monetary donations to purchase Thanksgiving groceries for five needy families in Lowell. A basket for donations will be available during coffee hour, or send checks made out to FRS to Dollina Borella, 254 E. Riding Dr. with notation Lowell Families. Any extra money collected will provide these families with Market Basket gift certificates at Christmas time. The congregation will have the opportunity to provide Christmas gifts for the children of these families. Sign up will be available Nov. 26. How do we get the names of these families? On Sunday, November 5, guest speaker Patty Abissi, Guidance Councilor from the Katherine Stoklosa Middle School in Lowell spoke during Message for All Ages about the school, its' student population, and how she determines which families need our help. Any questions may be addressed to Dollina Borella, 978-371-0149.

Pastoral Concerns Committee: We serve as a means of outreach to people in our church who need our support. We will arrange rides, visits, childcare, meals or anything else that lends a hand during short or long-term crises. If you are or know of anyone in need contact Sally Naumann at 978-369-3314 during the month of December.

STAFF AND OFFICE SCHEDULE

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 ucleric@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

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.

REFLECTIONS by Molly Sorrows, DRE

I have been thinking about a recent conversation I had that meandered through quite a few topics because my friend and I had not had a chance to visit in a long time. While the topics ranged from sports to social action and from mundane household tasks to children's friendships, they all related to trying to be good parents. As we continued the conversation by email, we both realized that at issue was not just trying to be good parents, but to raise our children to be good people.

As parents, we cannot "teach" them anything about this, but we can provide opportunities for them to learn, we can give them support along their journey, and we can try to model the skills we admire. We also have the opportunity to do this with other children as a caring member of their community.

My friend worded the two big lessons for kids as 1. Share your feelings with us so you aren't festering about something, and 2. Ask questions when you aren't sure about anything. These lessons are ones which are re-visited at various stages of childhood development in different ways, and which we even continue to work on as adults. Sometimes it is a struggle to get our heads around an issue that has brought out our strong feelings, but working at it is important, and asking questions, whether of ourselves or of someone else, is often a good way to get there.

In all of our roles in life, whether as parent, child, sibling, spouse, co-worker, friend, neighbor, or even as a stranger, we have challenges in how we interact with one another. How we face those challenges says

a lot about our character and gives us a chance to grow in learning and perhaps become better people.

We can see this is as all part of our spiritual journey as Unitarian Universalists. Our questions carry us on to the next part of our journey which is hopefully always on the path to becoming kinder, more compassionate, more helpful and more loving.

UPCOMING SERVICES

November 22: Please join us for our Thanksgiving Service at St. Irene's Catholic Church at 7:30pm.

November 26: "Labors of Love"
Rev. Jensen

December 3: Matt Meyer, professional percussionist will do the service on December 3 entitled "The Secret of Music". He will also perform in the Winter Holidays Concert on that evening.

December 10: Join us for the Christmas Pageant during the morning worship service.

December 17: Rabbi Daniel Schweber will be our guest speaker.

December 24: Christmas Eve Services
3:00 Service for All Ages
5:30 The Christmas Story
11:00 Candlelight Service

****Sunday, December 24 and Sunday, December 31** the church will be open for hospitality and meditation from 10:30am to 12:00 noon.

Every 3-4 months I travel to Boston (or in June to the site of our General Assembly) to sit at a table with my fellow trustees from across the country. We are joined by UUA President, Bill Sinkford and senior staff from the UUA. Over the course of 4-5 days, we gather in working groups and committees, to worship and share meals, and to sit together as Trustees of our Association.

When I began this “work” my youngest sister asked me only one thing: “Does it nourish you?” After 3 years I would offer a soulful “Yes!” My eyes still cross a bit at the sight of spread sheets and budgets, but my attention span for fiduciary matters has increased greatly. And my energy never wanes when issues regarding justice, growth or mission are on the table.

The Board’s focus these past 3 years has been to better serve our congregations by promoting less “top down” programming and more “lifting up” of grassroots efforts, showcasing and sharing the best practices that already exist in our congregations. We’ve also made major changes in our annual assembly – “GA” – so that it can be truly a gathering of congregational leaders.

We are asking our congregations to be more intentional in sending delegates to GA – not just depending on those who might be vacationing in the area – and in turn, the Board has committed to helping pay registration for congregational presidents. Top-notch speakers, workshops and networking opportunities are being provided, focused on areas of congregational life that challenge and inspire us all: leadership development, membership/hospitality,

collaboration among UU congregations, and witnessing to our faith in the larger world. (visit <http://www.uua.org/ga/ga06/uuu.html> for detailed description and resources from UU University 2006).

Board business is rarely “as usual” these days. At our October meeting we tabled a vote on the fee structure for GA 2007. This followed a “light bulb” moment when the Board was presented with a GA budget which included a poorly attended, highly subsidized “childcare” program. In that moment we realized that our re-visioning of GA needed to include our best offering of children’s programming, not just childcare or babysitting. Why not bring together inspired UU educators and curricula to hold our children in a community of faith and love? The excitement was palpable as we planned our entry into a new era of family-friendly GAs. Stay posted for details!

During the coming months I will share other tidbits of news from the Board, and I welcome your feedback, questions, concerns and ideas. I represent ALL of the congregations in Clara Barton District, and I would love to hear from you! In fact, I could use your help: as a member of our District’s Growth Team I’m preparing an article on summer services and how many of our congregations are expanding their definition of the “church year” to include year-round, full-service programming. What does your congregation currently do in the summer? What are your dreams? Contact me at jshanti@comcast.net or (413-788-7649).

GA 2007 will be held in Portland, Oregon.

Save the Date: WomenSpirit Holiday Dinner on Sunday, December 10. More details to follow. Contact Sue Kirk 978-371-0176 or sukirk@aol.com.

Knitting for the Homeless Continues: A big thank you to all who have made so many warm and beautiful things so far! If you missed Rev. Joan and two men from her congregation who visited FRS last Sunday, you heard how very appreciative and touched they all were with your kindness and generosity. And it goes on! You decided to keep going through the winter. Here are the dates, 7:30 in the conference room at FRS: December 5, January 9, February 13, March 13. I will be mailing a package to Common Cathedral after our Dec 5 meeting so they can be used for Christmas presents there. If you have any more hats or scarves to be sent to them, please get it to me then. Thank you for your enthusiasm for this project, Linda and Lauren.

Circle Dinner Extravaganza - Saturday, January 27th: Join us for our annual Circle Dinner Extravaganza which starts in Union Hall at 5:30 where we'll have appetizers. 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 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.

There will be a family Advent Wreath Making Service on Sunday, November 26 at 3:30pm in Union Hall. Following the wreath making we will have a carol sing. Please bring greens, clippers for cutting if you have them, a holder for the candle in the center and a plate or platter on which to place the wreath. Advent wreaths are a tradition based on religious ancient uses of evergreens and light symbolizing the expectation and hope of the Christmas season and the birth of Jesus. There will be an Advent Wreath in our Sunday services this December. The wreaths are part of home and church observance of Christmas. Please call the church office if you would like to attend (978-369-5180).

During our morning worship service on November 5 we collected \$485 for Cathedral on The Common. Thank you for your support.

The following was the closing message from Dr. Charlie Clements from UU Service Committee on Sunday, November 12. It was submitted to the newsletter by Marguerite Shaw:
*Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief.
Walk humbly now.
Love mercy now.
Do justly now.
You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.*

If you use a “film” camera and have empty film canisters our Music Director would love to have them. Please drop them off in the office or you can give them to Marguerite on Sundays. Thanks!