

NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES
The First Religious Society in Carlisle
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
Volume XXXV No. 4
December 2010



Message from the Minister

“Each Night a Child is Born is a Holy Night”

December is a festive time at the First Religious Society! We give an interfaith bow to the many religious holidays and traditions of this season. Some would consider us downright pagan in our gleeful celebration of greenery and lights -- symbols of life, warmth, light, and survival in the time of cold and dark. There is even a newish weeklong celebration, called Chalica, a Unitarian Universalist observance in the first week of December.

Here at FRS we focus on the advent anticipation of Christmas, with its legends of the birth of Jesus, and recognition of the universal miracle of new life. Our December services tell the story in several ways.

Last December the pageant coincided with a big snowstorm. Those who were able to get to church filled in the pageant roles for those who couldn't make it. My son Graham and his wife Cori were here that Sunday. I recall resisting my impulse to ask the young couple to stand in as Mary and Joseph. It would have given me great pleasure to see them act out the parenting role in the pageant, but it seemed better not to slip into giving a suggestive nudge about having a baby, so I was happy to see Graham put on a shepherd costume. As it turned out, this December they are expecting a daughter, and becoming their own tableaux of the holy family.

I will be visiting them in Kansas City, Missouri, twice in December -- before and after Christmas. I am full of anticipation for the birth of a granddaughter, which perfectly suits the Advent season. Every birth is a miracle, and each night a child is born is a holy night.

---Diane

P.S. Eugene “Woody” Widrick, minister emeritus, is available in my absence. Laura Scholten and Bucky Rogers will be coordinating the pageant on December 19. Matt Meyer will be leading the service on January 2nd.

Welcome to our newest member, Ann Barbour, who signed the membership book on November 21st.

Upcoming Worship Services

December 5 “Chalica!”

Rev. Diane Miller

Q: What Is Chalica? A: Chalica is a weeklong Unitarian Universalist holiday practice. Chalica is a newish holiday practice – should it become a tradition?

December 12 “As Jesus Prayed”

Rev. Diane Miller

Protestants call it the Lord's Prayer. Catholics refer to the Our Father. John Dominic Crossan describes it as “a prayer from the heart of Judaism on the lips of Christianity for the conscience of the world.” He views it as the greatest prayer and the strangest prayer, with an important message for us.

December 19 The Christmas pageant preparations are underway.

We will celebrate the spirit of the season with a lively pageant! Children will get their costumes during RE classes. Both the Pageant Rehearsal and Pageant Presentation are on Sunday, December 19th.

December 24 Christmas Eve Services

3:00pm A family-friendly service for all ages.

5:00pm Festive Christmas music followed by lessons and carols in candlelight.

December 26 “Waffles and Wisdom”

An informal service led by Diane Miller, with a holiday breakfast in Union Hall, 10:00 AM

January 2, 2011 Guest service leader, Matt Meyer, returns for a service of song and story.

Message from Bucky Rogers, Student Minister

In the spring of 2006, Rev. Joseph Santos Lyons (then a student at Harvard Divinity School) organized a UU Young Adult Prophets Conference. It was a formative event in my journey towards ministry in many ways. That was the first weekend I became aware of the UUA's Black Empowerment controversy. It was the first time I had heard about the utopian communities of 19th century Massachusetts and their founders, such as Hopedale and Adin Ballou, Brook Farm and George Ripley, and Fruitlands and Bronson Alcott.

Two speakers still stand out in my mind from that weekend. One is Rev. Jack Mendehlsson, of whom I had cause to think this week when he was quoted in the concluding remarks for my UU Polity course, having written: "A UU minister is a person with a pincushion soul and an elastic heart." These are words that will stick with me for decades to come, I have no doubt. The other speaker is our own former interim, Rev. Victor Carpenter. Both these dynamic and inspiring leaders spoke about the empowerment controversy from their personal experiences. On a bright, unseasonably warm spring afternoon in Cambridge, I found myself transported back to the July 1969 General Assembly in Boston, where weather, racial tensions, and conflicting institutional visions scorched participants' endurance. There is much to be proud of in our UU heritage regarding the Civil Rights movement (including the martyrdom of Rev. James Reeb who was killed in a march in Selma in 1965). However, the black empowerment controversy is for the most part a cautionary tale rather than a triumph.

And while it is important to learn from such instances, we must also continue to focus on what sustains us. We are now unmistakably entering the harsh winter months of frigidity and waning sunlight that brought down the utopian communities of the decade now 170 years past. Our religious tradition that gave rise to those efforts would not still exist if we could not find ways to celebrate its triumphs as well as learning from its failures. In the spirit of celebration, I look forward to enjoying festivities such as the Greens Sale and the Christmas Pageant with you during this joyous month.

---Bucky

Staff and Office Hours

Church Office Hours: The church office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 8:00am and 2:00pm. To reach Kathy Varney in the office call 978-369-5180 or email frs@uucarlisle.org.

Minister: Reverend Diane Miller can be reached at the minister's office number 978-369-0284, 617-851-8222 (cell) or minister@uucarlisle.org. Call her directly to schedule an appointment or leave a message. Wednesday is her day off.

Minister of Music: Marguerite A. Shaw can be reached at the church 9:00am-2:00pm daily or by phone at 978-369-5180, or email music@uucarlisle.org.

Director of Religious Education: Laura Scholten can be reached by email at lscholt123@yahoo.com or 978-430-9138

Student Minister: Bucky Rogers can be reached by email at youth@uucarlisle.org or 207-660-1348.

Minister Emeritus:
Dr. Eugene R. Widrick

Lay Minister:
Sally Hayen

GREENS SALE

Saturday December 4, 10:00am-2:00pm

Deck the hall with boughs of holly, 'Tis the season to be jolly.

Our most popular Greens Sale requires lots of volunteer hours. Please attend all our workshops! The day of the Greens Sale is lots of fun so come on out to help. Also bring your family to enjoy this beautiful event. We'll have Santa, lobster salad, music by Savoyard's Chorus and gorgeous holidays decorations everywhere at reasonable prices.

Wednesday, December 1, Christmas Greens Arrangements Workshop All Day in Union Hall

Thursday, December 2, Wreath Decorating Workshop All Day in Union Hall

Friday, December 3, Set up and price items for Greens Sale 8:00am in Union Hall.

Friday, December 3, Pre-order pick up at 5:00pm in Union Hall

Saturday, December 4, Greens Sale 10:00am to 2:00pm in Union Hall



WINTER HOLIDAYS CONCERT

December 5 at 7:00 pm

Our annual celebration of winter holidays: Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa
Choral and instrumental music, vocal solos, handbells, jazz group,
audience singing of songs and carols, rhythm instruments for the children

A reception in Union Hall follows the concert
Free and open to the public, the program is child-friendly,
usually no longer than 1 hour 20 minutes

RE Notes



House of Hope Stockings: On December 12 the RE youth with help from Mary Hult and Helen Lyons will stuff 61 stockings for 30 children, 23 moms and eight dads living at the House of Hope in Lowell. The stockings were made by the Sharing Foundation sewing project in Roteang, Cambodia. To cover the cost of the filled stocking we'll be seeking a \$10 suggested donation per stocking. All financial contributions will be appreciated.



The Christmas pageant is December 19th- preparations are underway. We will celebrate the spirit of the season with a lively pageant! Children will get their costumes during RE classes. Both the Pageant Rehearsal and Pageant Presentation are on Sunday, December 19th. Rehearsal begins at 8:30 (with staggered later arrival times for little children; your specific arrival time will be communicated to you directly) for a run-through, and the pageant will be the prominent feature of the 10:00 service.

FRS Programs



Join us for Caroling at the Bedford VA! Margaret Darling will be leading Christmas carols at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Bedford on Thursday, December 16 at 10:30 a.m. We'd like to get together an enthusiastic group of FRSers to join in the fun! We'll meet at FRS at 10:00 and carpool. Song sheets will be provided - just bring your voice and your smile! Contact Margaret.



The Social Action Committee is once again working with a Social Worker at the Butler Middle School for our Christmas project. We will be looking for individuals to provide gifts for specific children of needy families. When the names of the children with specific suggestions are received, we will notify the congregation for volunteers to provide these gifts. For questions, contact Dollina Borella.

Carlisle Winter Farmer's Market in Union Hall Saturdays 9am to 12pm: Save these dates; December 18, January 22, February 19, March 19, April 16. Enjoy local, seasonal produce, eggs, honey, crafts and other delectable treats. For more information contact Leslie Thomas. Sponsored by The Environmental Action Committee.



Carlisle Community Christmas Day Dinner, December 25 at 4:00pm: Come for a coordinated pot-luck dinner on Christmas Day, December 25, 2009, at 4:00pm in Union Hall, 27 School Street, Carlisle, MA. Sign up for the food you will contribute to the traditional holiday dinner. Free, but you do have to register at 978-369-5180 by Wednesday, December 22. We need to know the number of people coming (the number of vegetarians and the number of meat-eaters), what you will bring, how you will help (set up, clean up), and your contact information (phone and email please).



Attention! People who like to sing but have small children are invited to bring their young ones at 9:15 on Sunday mornings to our child-care area located on the lower level adjacent to the church office. You can then come to the sanctuary and rehearse with the choir and sing for the morning service. The rehearsal ends at 9:45 leaving time for you to look in on your child/children before the service begins. There is always one adult and two youth Religious Education assistants providing the child care. **Questions?** Contact Marguerite Shaw by email music@uucarlisle.org or by phone at 978-369-5180. Singing is good for your physical and mental health - lowers blood pressure and makes you feel happy.



Book Collection for MCI Concord's Library: MCI Concord is always in need of new or gently used books for its library--current fiction, mysteries, adventure, spiritual/religious, self-help, how-to and sports books. No magazines. Our FRS Social Action Committee liaison to Concord Prison Outreach, Steve Kirk, will be collecting books in December. From December 6 through December 11 bring your donations to the office, if it's open, or to a labeled box outside the side door of the church. You may also bring them to church on Sunday, December 12. Please contact Steve if you have any questions.

St. Paul's Feeding Ministry: FRS will be serving dinner at the Eliot Church in Lowell on Friday, December 31. The menu will be lasagna, salad, bread milk and dessert. We will need volunteers to prepare the food ahead of time as well as to serve on Friday. Sign-up sheets will be available at coffee hour after church beginning November 28. Please contact Dik Dagavarian with any questions.

Habitat for Humanity: Seven members/friends of FRS worked in Bedford on Saturday Nov 20. Working were Frank Rigg, John Redding, Michael Dundorf, Diane Dionne, Dik Dagavarian, Angelo DeBenedictis and George Bishop. Lots of good work done outdoors on a brisk day. Details in next month's newsletter.

Help Families Affected by Domestic Violence over the Holidays: As many of you know I work for a domestic violence agency called REACH. Each year we have a holiday gift program for the families we work with. This year we have over 200 families we are helping with gifts for the holidays. We need more donors and so if you are willing and able to help that would be wonderful. To go directly to the REACH webs site holiday program go to www.reachma.org/holiday.html. Thank you so much. Muggsie Rocco

UUCARLISLE.ORG: Check out the new features on our website. The Calendar has up to date listings of events. Under the Worship tab you will find a section of recent sermons. Another tab lists the Sunday morning volunteers by week – Greeter, Flowers, Coffee Hour, Membership Greeter, Music and Worship Coordinator. There is also a section on “What to Expect When You Volunteer.” If you have changes to the schedule, let Kathy Varney know and she will update it.

FRS Blog: Volunteers are creating a blog to be linked from our website. Watch the weekly e-newsletter for more information.

Environmental Action Committee (EAC) Endorses CASSE: The EAC voted to endorse the “Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE)” position by signing on at their website, *steadystate.org*. CASSE promotes the goals of environmental sustainability and population stabilization, believing that perpetual economic growth is neither possible nor desirable. Individuals are encouraged to read their online position statement and consider signing on.

Thank you for Common Cathedral Support: Twenty enthusiastic youth and adult volunteers had a fun and rewarding day, bringing food and fellowship to the congregants at Boston’s Common Cathedral, ministry for the homeless on Dec 14. It was a beautiful day, we were appreciatively and graciously welcomed as we served a plentiful lunch of sandwiches, homemade cookies, fruit, granola bars and birthday cake -- all generous provided by dozens of FRS families. We also brought 60 beautiful scarves, hats and slippers -- hand knitted over the past year by our Knitting in Service Society (KISS) -- for the ministers to later distribute as Christmas presents to their congregants. Many thanks to you all for supporting this program, now in its sixth year.

Announcing the publication of the hard copy edition of Woody's book: Life Wins! A Collection of Essays and Sermons by Dr. Eugene R. “Woody” Widrick is now available for purchase as an e-book or paperback from Amazon.com. This book is a collection of sermons and essays from over 20 years of the ministry and spiritual leadership of Dr. Widrick, or “Woody” as everyone knows him.

Pastoral Concerns

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 Sally Hayen at 978-369-7591, Sally_Hayen@vmed.org.



We Are a Welcoming Congregation

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.

Communications

- Neighbours & Fellow Creatures is a monthly publication. To submit items for publication send to: Kathy Varney, Administrator, P.O. Box 817, Carlisle, MA 01741, 978-369-5180, frs@uucarlisle.org
- If you would like to be added to or removed from this mailing please email the church office at frs@uucarlisle.org.
- The next newsletter deadline is December 20.
- To receive the weekly email send the church office a note frs@uucarlisle.org



Parish Committee

Parish Committee Co-chair: Michael Dundorf
 Parish Committee Co-chair: John Lyons
 Parish Committee: Paul Morrison, Muggsie Rocco, John Lyons, Christine Lear, Eric Darling,
 Michael Dundorf, Mary Hult

Church Treasurers

Mary Hult
 John James

Standing Committees

Activities Committee: Janice Kissinger
 Buildings & Grounds Co-chairs: Ann James
 Susan Emmons
 Environmental Action Committee: Dan Scholten
 Finance Committee: Tucker Kelly
 Music and Worship Committee: Tom Rourk
 Membership Committee: Sue Kirk
 Pastoral Concerns: Sally Hayen
 Religious Education Committee: Susan Lohrer
 Social Action Committee Co-chairs: Ellen Huber
 Max Barber
 Union Hall Coffee House: Dian Cuccinello

For a complete calendar of meetings and activities here at The First Religious Society please go to the church calendar on the website:

<http://www.uucarlisle.org/calendar.html>

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.

Hospitality Committees

Coffee Committee Co-chairs:
 Anne and Richard Ketchen

Greeter Committee:
 Eva Herndon, Nancy West,
 Karen Dunkers, Tom Dunkers

Flower Committee:
 Donna Carter, Alison Saylor,
 George Bishop



The First Religious Society – December 2010



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Greens Sale workshops 7:00pm RE Committee/ ground floor 7:30pm Choir	2 Greens Sale workshops	3 5:00pm Greens Sale Pre-order pickup	4 10:00am-2:00pm Greens Sale
5 9:15 Nursery 10:00am Worship Service 7:00pm Winter Holidays Concert	6 10:00am Sort through Greens Sale items 7:00pm Environmental Action Com	7 6:00pm Town Tree Lighting 7:00pm Music &Worship/ upstairs meeting room	8 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	9 10:30am COA Wreath Making/UH	10 9:30am COA Line Dance UH 6:30pm Contra Dance/ UH	11 7:00pm BeeKeepers/UH
12 9:15 Nursery 10:00am Worship Service/ RE Stocking Stuffing 3:00pm Recital/Sanctuary	13 7:00pm Buildings and Grounds Com/ ground floor	14	15 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	16 11:30am COA Luncheon/UH 3:00pm Girlscouts/UH 7:30pm KISS Knitting/offsite	17 9:30am COA Line Dance UH 6:00pm Recital/ Sanctuary	18 9:00am Farmer's Market/UH
19 9:15 Nursery 10:00am Worship Service/ Christmas Pageant 7:00pm WomenSpirit/ offsite	20	21 7:00pm Parish Comte	22 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	23	24 9:30am COA Line Dance UH 3:00pm Christmas Eve Service 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service Set up for Christmas Dinner	25 4:00pm Christmas Dinner/UH
26 9:15 Nursery 10:00am Informal Waffles and Wisdom Service	27	28	29 No Choir Rehearsal	30	31 9:30am COA Line Dance UH St. Paul's Feeding Ministry	

The First Religious Society
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The First Religious Society in Carlisle, Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

WE ARE LOCATED AT 27 SCHOOL STREET 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."

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE DECEMBER 20, 2010