

NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES
The First Religious Society in Carlisle
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
Volume XXXIV No. 11
February 2010



“The Suffering of Strangers”

Our hearts grieve for Haiti. The earthquake on January 12th has brought the island nation into focus for many of us who knew relatively little about it. The enormous toll of death, injuries, dislocation, and suffering are hard to comprehend. In disasters of this scope, when immediate neighbors and community resources are largely destroyed, the circle of neighbors expands to include compassionate strangers. People like us, distant yet connected.

The immediate need was for money, to support relief efforts in addition to governmental pledges and resources from many nations. Despite our economic hardships in this recession, people in the United States have donated quickly and generously as individuals and organizations. In our service on January 17th we collected over \$3,000 in donations for Oxfam. Union Hall Coffee House is contributing the earnings from the café on Saturday night. This was a time when “checkbook activism” was the way to go.

A disaster highlights connections that have been present but not much noticed. Many people in this community have long supported programs in Haiti such as Partners in Health, Oxfam, Habitat for Humanity, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and have volunteered in Haiti to offer services in medical, building, infrastructure or humanitarian work. A disaster creates new connections. My son Drew, who is in the US Navy, is taking part in our military response of delivering supplies. Haiti is now part of our lives in a closer way.

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Upcoming Worship Services

February 7, 2010, 10:00AM

“Do You Have a Jeffersonian View of the Bible?” Rev. Diane Miller
A sermon for President’s Day, about the President who took scissors to Holy Writ. A Chinese New Year celebration, led by Junior Youth and Alison Saylor, will be our Message for All Ages.

February 14, 2010, 10:00AM:

“Standing on the Side of Love” Rev. Diane Miller. A sermon about the UUA effort to broaden the circle of love. The Environmental Action Committee will describe their Valentines to Congress social justice project.

February 21, 2010, 10:00AM

“A Moral Imperative” Rev. Diane Miller
What is your theology of creation? Climate change is a moral question that we must address. The Jazz Group: John Lyons, Harvey Nosowitz and Stewart Roberts will play.

February 28, 2010, 10:00AM

“A Dialogue on Ministry” Rev. Diane Miller and Linda Simmons, Student Minister. Reflections on call, formation, and practicing the arts of ministry. Molly Sorrows will present the Message for All Ages on the UUA Fifth Principle.

The human suffering there brings to mind the biblical story of Job in the land of Uz. Why did he lose his children and possessions and suffer horrible illnesses? Three friends who sat with him insisted that Job was being punished for a sin. I heard their voices this past week when Pat Robertson announced on TV that the earthquake happened because Haiti entered into a pact with the devil long ago. This is another “blame the victim” statement, turning those who suffer into sinners in the hand of an angry God.

Our theology does not give a simple answer to suffering. But we do give a response. Compassion, action, generosity, commitment and caring. Our connections with Haiti are far more visible to us now, part of the interdependent web of all life, and the earth. As we sing together,

*O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,
a song of peace, for their land and for mine.*

Diane Miller

Planning for Upcoming Services: For a service honoring different types of families, Diane is looking for three church families who would like to speak for five minutes in an upcoming service about your family – “typical” family structure or “atypical” family structure. Nuclear, blended, adoptive, single parent, two moms, two dads, intergenerational, international, and so forth. Please contact Diane Miller.

Who Are We?

You are invited to participate in the Path to Membership class on Saturday, March 6, 9:00am -12:30pm. This is an introductory program condensed into one session. We cover The First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalism, programs, theology, history, and organization. The class is designed to answer your questions, and serve as a basic orientation to this congregation. There will be an opportunity to sign the membership book for those who wish to become members of the church. Rev. Diane Miller leads the class, which is sponsored by the Membership Committee. We will begin in the third floor Conference Room and midway take a break for brunch together. Childcare is available. In order to prepare the brunch and childcare, please reserve by Tuesday, March 2. Call or email the church office with names of adults attending, and names and ages of children. We ask that you bring a snack for your children, in case they do not want the adult brunch.

Staff and Office Hours

Church Office Hours: The church office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 8:00am and 1:00pm. The office is closed on Wednesday. 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. Call her directly to schedule an appointment or leave a message. Wednesday is her day off.

Director of Religious Education: Molly Sorrows, DRE and Youth Advisor, can be reached by phone at church, 978-369-5180 or frs@uucarlisle.org.

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 frs@uucarlisle.org.

Student Minister

Linda Simmons

Minister Emeritus:

Dr. Eugene R. Widrick

Lay Minister:

Sally Hayen

Parish Committee

At our January 21st meeting, the Parish Committee received Molly Sorrow's resignation, effective in June, at the end of the current church year, from the position of Director of Religious Education and Youth Advisor. Molly will complete seven years in these roles at FRS. She has worked tirelessly to develop a flexible program that engages children and youth of all ages while meeting the realities of floating attendance numbers and age group variations. Additionally, the OWL program has expanded to include parent education and co-ordination with neighboring UU churches. FRS has been fortunate to have Molly's skills and energy as a member of the staff, and her talents will be missed. We know everyone will join us in wishing her continued success as she pursues a teaching career in math and science.

The Parish Committee will be consulting with the Clara Barton District Program Staffer, Deborah Levering, for advice on structuring the job to meet the needs of FRS while being attractive to candidates. We will keep you informed with regular updates in newsletters and bulletins. In the meantime, we are glad to have Molly leading our religious education program for the next five months.

The Parish Committee also met with Lenny Johnson to discuss Building and Grounds projects, and reviewed our student ministry program with Linda Simmons.

Religious Education

Soup & Games Night, Saturday, February 27, 5:00 – 7:00pm. All are welcome! Games for adults and kids. Interactive full group games at 5:00pm. Homemade soups & fresh bread at 5:30pm. Board games, Twister, and other small group favorites after supper. Come relax and visit together!



New Books: We have several new books on the church library shelves in the downstairs meeting room. Thanks to Ed LeClair for 6 books on spirituality, including *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest* (W. Muller), *Zen and the Art of the Internet* (B. P. Kehoe), and two books on walking meditations and labyrinths. These are on the right hand shelf, under the label “Meditations and Spirituality.” Check out our collection!

Our People

Information available on printed version of newsletter.

FRS Programs



Union Hall Coffee Houses, February 20 and February 28

- **Frank Vignola's Hot Club, Saturday, February 20 at 7:30pm**, doors open at 6:30. In celebration of Django Reinhardt's 100th birthday, guitar virtuoso Frank Vignola, a leading proponent of Reinhardt's gypsy jazz style of playing, has assembled a topnotch quintet for a searing tribute to one of his earliest musical influences. Tickets are \$25. Go to www.unionhallcoffeehouse.com to order tickets or for more information.
- **Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, Sunday, February 28 at 7:30pm**, doors open at 6:30. Scottish fiddle and cello music of unrivaled beauty, eloquence, and passion. Tickets are \$25. Go to www.unionhallcoffeehouse.com to order tickets or for more information.

FRS Website: Thank you to Bob Luoma for his continued work on our church website. We are presently working on the website and have made significant changes. We ask that committee members especially look at the new sections describing committee work and give feedback to your committee chair. Please submit input to: Susan Emmons, Ellen Huber, Mary Hult, Molly Sorrows and Kathy Varney.

Directory Changes: Would you please check your directory listing to see if anything should be changed or added and, if so, let Kathy know (frs@uucarlisle.org or 978 369-5180) by February 16. Or you may make changes or additions to the list which will be available at coffee hour over the next few weeks. A list of additions or corrections will be included in the March newsletter. After March you may still send changes or additions to Kathy and periodically she will list them in the newsletter. Also, if you are not presently on the weekly e-mail list but would like to be, please let Kathy know, frs@uucarlisle.org.

Outreach

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) have a joint fund for relief. To donate by check, please make it payable to "UUSC/UUA Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund" and mail it to UUSC, P.O. Box 844001, Boston, MA 02284-4001 or go to a www.uusc.org for a secure website to donate on line.

“Thank you First Religious Society for your tax deductible donation of \$174.94 to The Sharing Foundation on 12/22/2009. Thank you very much to the RE Program for funds raised, and to Social Action for the match.” The Sharing Foundation, P.O. Box 600, Concord MA 01742 www.sharingfoundation.org.

Homelessness Forum *How Faith Communities can help End Homelessness: A New Vision.* Family homelessness has more than doubled to over 3000 families in Mass. shelters or in motels nightly, due the current severe economic crisis. **Rev. Liz Walker will be the keynote speaker** at the sixth annual forum of the *Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness*, on Sunday, February 28th at First Parish in Concord, 20 Lexington Rd., Concord, from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. Elizabeth Curtis, director of the Mass. Interagency Council of Housing and Homelessness, and Mary Doyle, from the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership / Metro Boston Regional Network, will describe the goals and progress of the new Mass. regional programs in ending homelessness. Both speakers will focus on ways our congregations and our individual church members can become involved in these programs to end homelessness.

Habitat for Humanity Work Day Saturday, February 27: With the arrival of the new year, we need to think about getting busy again supporting Habitat by pounding some nails. While we have been in a reflective phase, Habitat has been working away in Bedford. They have completed a new house next to the farm house. That house is the first one in over 10 years that we at FRS have not helped to build. We have not been sitting on our hands completely. Donna Carter and Frank Rigg have been attending monthly meetings held by Bill Mersch, a former president of the Lowell Habitat. The meetings are addressing the question of commitment by those churches supporting Habitat. In addition the Senior Youth Group, assisted by Nina Benkley, Linda Simmons, Molly Sorrows and Sally Zielinski designed and built a Cambodian ginger bread house as part of an exhibit and fund raiser of gingerbread houses representing the more than 70 countries in which Habitat International has helped to build homes. Habitat is constructing a one story addition on the rear of the Bedford farm house, converting it into a duplex. The new unit will be all on one floor so that it will be handicap accessible. The partner family has a son with cerebral palsy who is confined to a wheel chair. We are planning a work day on Saturday, February 27. Jim Comeau, the construction supervisor, thinks that there will be both indoor and outdoor work on that date. I am hoping we can supply 6 people to work on February 27. In addition it would be great if FRS could also provide lunch. Please phone George Bishop in the church office at 978-369-5180 to tell me that you will plan to work on that date. We are hoping for a good response so we will know that FRS is still solidly behind Habitat for Humanity and the Lowell Chapter.

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 the church office.



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 February 18, 2010.
- To receive the weekly email send the church office a note frs@uucarlisle.org



Parish Committee

Contact information available on printed version of the newsletter.

Church Treasurers

Contact information available on printed version of the newsletter.

Standing Committees

Contact information available on printed version of the newsletter.

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

Contact information available on printed version of the newsletter.

The First Religious Society - FEBRUARY 2010



	1 7:00pm Environmental Action Committee	2 7:00pm Music & Worship Committee	3 Noon COA Robbins Brook Luncheon 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4 7:30pm Social Action Committee	5 9:30am COA Line Dance 7:00pm Womenspirit Potluck Union Hall	6 7:00am Mensgroup
7 10:00am Morning Worship Service 11:30 Infinity Garden Task Force upstairs meeting room 6:00pm OWL for 8th graders	8 7:00pm Buildings and Grounds Meeting	9 7:30pm Knitting	10 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 7:00pm Membership Committee	12 9:30am COA Line Dance 6:00pm Contra Dance	13 10:00am Democratic Town Committee Upstairs mtg rm
14 10:00am Morning Worship Service 6:00pm OWL for 8th graders 6:00pm Senior Youth	15 7:00pm A Year to Live adult education class	16 10:00am A Year to Live adult education class	17 7:00pm Carlisle Climate Action Committee 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18 11:45am COA Luncheon 7:00pm Parish Committee meeting	19 9:30am COA Line Dance 1:00pm Gleason Library Program	20 7:30pm Union Hall Coffeehouse
21 10:00am Morning Worship Service 6:00pm OWL for 8th graders	22	23	24 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	25 8:00pm Cambridge Society for Early Music Concert	26 9:30am COA Line Dance 7:00pm Beekeepers	27 5:00pm Soup & Games Night
28 10:00am Morning Worship Service. 7:30pm Union Hall Coffeehouse						

The First Religious Society
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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 FEBRUARY 18, 2010