

Message from the Minister

Our culture considers Christmas a day. By the time January arrives, Christmas has been packed up, taken down, and stored away for the next December. It wasn't until I was an adult that I realized that on the calendar of most branches of Christendom, Christmas begins on December 25th and ends on Epiphany, January 6th. Epiphany marks the arrival of the magi. The English song about the "Twelve Days of Christmas" suddenly made sense. In many cultures, the extended Christmas celebration provides time for visiting with friends and family. Once I became a minister, I gladly embraced this tradition, since it is the stretch after Christmas that I savor as family time and a chance for a holiday. Although I am not packing gold, frankincense, or myrrh in my suitcase, I'll be following a star to central Kansas, to visit family after our Christmas Eve services and back for New Year's Day.

Like many Christian feasts and festivals, Epiphany has its roots in earlier traditions. In pre-Christian Greece, epiphany was used to describe events when Gods and Goddesses manifested themselves to human beings on earth. In our era, the word has taken on a secular meaning of insight. It was the writer James Joyce who intentionally carried the term from his Roman Catholic heritage and applied it to literature. I read in the *Writer's Almanac*: He explained to his brother Stanislaus that epiphanies were sort of "inadvertent revelations," and said they were "little errors and gestures — mere straws in the wind — by which people betrayed the very things they were most careful to conceal." He also wrote that the epiphany was the sudden "revelation of the whatness of a thing," the moment when "the soul of the commonest object ... seems to us radiant."

A local writer once set out to capture the whatness of living, and declared in *Walden*, *I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.*

James Joyce's *Dubliners* ends with a story set at a party for the Feast of the Epiphany, "The Dead," and that story ends: "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead."

May you front the essence of life in this coming year, may you know the whatness of living. May epiphany be yours, grand or small, when the holy manifests itself and your own soul magnifies creation. í í Diane

Upcoming Worship Services

January 1 "Celebrate the New Year with Jazz and Waffles!" A brief service of readings and New Orleans style gospel music from the FRS Jazz Group (John Lyons, Harvey Nosowitz, Stew Roberts, and Suz Von Bernuth), expanded with Kevin Bergquist on trombone, and high school seniors Katherine Sorrows on trumpet and Kevin Barrow on clarinet, will lead off in Union Hall. Next come waffles for breakfast. No nursery or religious education — all ages are welcome. This festive New Year service is thanks to the Music and Worship committee, our FRS Jazz group and the Membership committee. Bring a waffle iron if you have one.

January 8 "Immortality of Another Kind" Rev. Diane Miller. A reflection on the Common Read book by Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. The choir will sing an arrangement by Marguerite Shaw of "Dark of Winter." Christy Barbee will present a Message for All Ages about Restorative Justice. "First Sunday" when the children will begin together in Union Hall.

January 15 "Freedom Riders: Taking Risks for Justice" Rev. Diane Miller. Drawing on the Civil Rights stories and the question of courage, risks, and what is required to change a nation, or to change one person's heart.

January 22 "Fifty Years On" Rev. Eugene (Woody) Widrick, Minister *emeritus*. 50 years on, reflections on merger and hopes for the future. Exchange student Nazik Matiyeva of Turkmenistan will present the Message for All Ages.

January 29 "A Nation of Immigrants: Where Do We Go from Here?" Rev. Diane Miller. With immigration policies tearing families apart, our congregations are preparing to gather in June for a Justice GA (General Assembly) in Phoenix. How does this affect us? Is there a moral imperative on this issue?

Message from the Director of Religious Education

Happy New Year!and on January 23 Happy Chinese New Year, the year of the dragon.

Every year we climb up the ladder to the church attic and find the kingly cloaks, glittery angel wings and shepherd head pieces to help us portray the events that are told in the bible concerning events that surrounded the birth of baby Jesus. Although most lines are scripted, there is enough ad libbing to make us laugh, and several beautifully sung solos to bring a tear to the eye. Thank you to everyone who helped make this ðthe best Pageant everö.

Although spring is my favorite season, I appreciate the winter to do the planning for both the church and my own landscape and gardens. January and February are the months that work for me to write or edit Pageant scripts. This spring we will be modifying and then performing an Environmental Pageant ðCoral Carbon Bluesö. Diane Miller asked us to consider performing Coral Carbon Blues written by David Burrows. Last year the Junior Youth Group saw this Pageant performed at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn. This Pageant helps explain the damage to the coral reefs and the creatures that live there from pollution and other consequences of human activity. On the special Sundays where we combine classes we will continue our environmental studies to include growing and composting experiments. These experiments will lead into our creating together a church vegetable garden and Infinity Garden annual flower beds.

Regular RE classes will continue with Bible stories. Adult members of our congregation will visit the classes, often as a character from the bible. High school student Nazik Matiyeva will talk of her native country Turkmenistan on 1/22 and Jesus perhaps accompanied by some disciples will visit the classes on 1/29. These visits supplement the wonderful bible story classes planned and executed by our talented RE teaching teams.

Strategic planning of curriculum and budgets for RE next year will get underway soon. If you have an interest in influencing the important work of teaching our youth, please contact me.

Director of Religious Education: Alison Saylor can be reached by email at 978-369-5180 or by EMail at DRE@uucarlisle.org

Message from the Student Minister

Meg Barnhouse wrote an interesting article for uuworld.org on December 19th about the nativity scene.

If this topic seems behind the times for a January newsletter, please don't forget: the 12 days of Christmas *start* on December 25th, and will be in full swing as this arrives in your mailbox. In her article, Rev. Barnhouse, senior minister at First UU in Austin, Texas, writes that it is unlikely that Joseph and Mary stayed at a commercial inn. ðFor a descendant of David to be turned away from staying with family in the City of David would have brought unthinkable shame on the whole town.ö The houses of ancient Palestine usually had two rooms: one for the family to sleep in and one for guests. The beauty of the Christmas story, in this setting, is the loving accommodation made for Mary and Joseph. This was a miracle, indeed, but hardly a rarity.

For me, this instantly rang true as a proper and inspiring story of the birth of Jesus. Anthropologically, we know that human kinship networks can and do provide the level of generosity necessary to meet the needs of others. In the traditional reading of the Christmas story, humans are shamed for not welcoming the Divine in more freely. The innkeeper who rejects Mary and Joseph because they do not have enough is a cautionary tale to all of us against being uncharitable. We should feel bad for our selfishness, the message goes. But in the telling of it that attempts to be accurate to Palestinian culture of that era, ðthe Divine comes to birth when you have finally found your people.ö

The theme of important births happening when and only when people are ready for them, when we have paved the way for new truths to enter our lives, recurs throughout the Bible and other sacred texts. Ishmael and Isaac are born to Abraham and Sarah only after they have covenanted with God and waited many years, becoming old (and faithful) in the process, for example. The phrasing of this principle that comes to mind often for me is in Khalil Gibran's *The Prophet*: ðNo man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half awake in the dawning of your knowledge.ö May we proceed together into the new year with openness to what is yet to be revealed to us. ---Bucky

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

FRS Programs and Announcements

Christmas Day Community Dinner was a happy and delicious gathering with 34 people in Union Hall. Nancy West wrote an article for the Boston Globe that featured the FRS Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners initiated by Mary Zoll. You can find it in the December 22 Globe.

Behind the scenes: Thanks to **Dave Erickson** of the Environmental Action Committee, for doing the church recycling for December; Thanks to **Janice Kissinger and her entire supporting cast and crew** for another very successful Greens Sale ó the Hall looked beautiful and the event went off without a hitch; **to all behind the scenes and on stage who made another wonderful Winter Holidays Concert**; to **Frank Rigg** for doing the Message for All Ages last Sunday, to **Dik Dagavarian** for introducing the FRS to what is now called St. Paul's Kitchen at Eliot Church and for his continued involvement with this program in Lowell; thanks to **Alison Saylor** for another successful Christmas Pageant: it managed to be moving, spiritual and hilarious all at once, no small feat, and to **Margaret Darling** for the music; to **Margaret Darling, Marguerite Shaw, Diane Miller, Dian Cuccinello, Ellen Huber, Mary Hult, Steve and Sue Kirk and Max Barber** for caroling at the VA Hospital during the holidays; to **Heather Hedden and Pam Fox** for chaperoning the SYG movie in December and to **Alison and Mike Saylor** for hosting the event and to **Bucky Rogers** for planning SYG activities; to **Roger Goulet** for having reprinted notecards of his original watercolor painting of the church building; to **John Redding** for facilitating the Carlisle Resilience group meetings and Yahoo site; to **Bryan Sorrows** for purchasing and setting up the new printer/copier and to **Susan Emmons and Katherine Sorrows** for writing clear instructions as to its use; to **Mary Hult and Helen Lyons** for their Stocking Stuffing efforts; to **Leslie Thomas** on behalf of the Farmers Market, for donating a box of apples to coffee hour last month; to the **Music and Worship Committee, Marguerite Shaw and the choir, and all the guest musicians** for two beautiful Christmas Eve services; to **Tom Rourk and crew** for all the work on the Christmas Day dinner.

Many thanks to all the donors to the Green Sale Raffle. Many of the donors have been generous with their gifts for many years. Several were FRS people. **Dian Cuccinello** once more made an incredible basket. This year's was a tribute to Julia Child and happily the winners were FRSers--the Heddens. The gifts of the **Fox family, Natalie and Kevin Brown, Kerry Kissinger, Ray Taylor, Jon Saphier and Roger Winsby (The Second Wind) and ceramics artist Suzanne Hill** were also much appreciated. From outside the church the donors were:

Serafina's Ristorante of Concord (co-owner/chef Erica Cannarozzi grew up in the FRS), Augusta's Sub Shop of Billerica (co-owner/manager Mary Bishop is Nadine and George Bishop's daughter-in-law), The Toy shop of Concord, Pedal Power of Acton, Vanderhoof's Hardware of Concord, Dante Confections of Billerica, Nashoba Brook Bakery of West Concord, The Grasshopper Shop of Concord, Kimballs of Westford, Trail's End Cafe of Concord, Colonial Spirits of Acton, La Provence of Concord, Concord Liquors, The Cheese Shop of Concord

If you have an opportunity, please express your thanks to these people and businesses for making the raffle a success.
(Signed) Ellen Huber

“The reality is that changes are coming... They must come. You must share in bringing them. ~John Hersey”

Join me, Fontaine Richardson, **March 3, 4, and 5** to participate in lively and purposeful change discussions for the next decade at FRS. Change discussions, what we might want to change, set our goals for desired changes and embrace the changes that will come to us.

Moving to the 21st century: We plan to shift our monthly paper newsletter to a digital format in 2012. Over the coming months, as we are upgrading and reviewing our technology, we will work out the details of how we will distribute the newsletter. In the meantime, please update your email address(s) with the church office. If you use more than one address, let us know if you want the newsletter sent to multiple addresses. If you want to continue to receive a printed newsletter by mail, please let church administrator Ann Quenin know. You can call her at 978-369-5180 or email her at frs@uucarlisle.org

Coffee Hour Goodies: For the next several Sundays, people with last names beginning with certain letters will be asked to provide goodies for the main table at coffee hour. Here's the line-up for January:

January 8: Last names beginning with A ó D January 15: Last names beginning with E - H

January 22: Last names beginning with I ó L January 29: Last names beginning with M ó R

Please bring finger foods that are easy to eat while simultaneously holding a cup of coffee or tea in one hand. And thank you for participating!

(Signed) Anne & Richard Ketchen, Co-chairs, Coffee Committee

Defibrillator in Union Hall. An Automated External Defibrillator (A.E.D.) is installed on the wall in Union Hall, to the right as you enter through the double doors. Look for the red heart logo. In the event that someone collapses, the first step is to call 911. If more than one person is present, one should start CPR while someone else quickly retrieves the defibrillator. Make a point of knowing where the defibrillator can be found.

Environmental Action Committee News: The Environmental Action Committee (EAC) is once again sponsoring the Carlisle Winter Farmer's Market for monthly Saturday mornings in Union Hall. The goal is to support local, sustainable food and crafts year round. The Winter Market will continue this year ó upcoming dates are **January 21**, February 18, March 10 and April 21. The EAC will be selling coffee, tea and other fair trade items at the market.

Social Action Committee: St. Paul Feeding Ministry, Eliot Street Community Supper in Lowell. On **Friday, December 30** FRS Carlisle once again prepared and served dinner for 100 needy folks in Lowell.

The Coming of Age program for high schoolers will be offered by the First Religious Society in January through May this year for youth in grades 9 to 11. The major aspects of this program are pairing youth with adult mentors; discussions that emphasize self-awareness and confidence-building; service to the church and community; and a culminating affirmation ceremony. For more information see:

<http://www.uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/45052.shtml>.

If you would like your youth to participate, please contact Bucky Rogers (youth@uucarlisle.org).

“Music at the First”, our concert series continues: save the date. On **Friday, January 6, at 7:30 PM**, Music at the First will feature the Arcturus Chamber Ensemble - a group led by violist Sarah Darling. Tickets are \$10 and a reception will follow in Union Hall, offering an opportunity to meet and talk with the musicians. More about this concert will appear in upcoming FRS weekly e-news bulletins.

WomenSpirit Retreat Weekend - January 13-15, 2012 - Senexet House, Woodstock, CT. Our annual retreat weekend is a relaxing, restorative weekend and a great way to recover from the holidays and prepare for the new year ahead. Weekend includes delicious meals (that we don't have to prepare), discussions, walks, time to read, write or just chill out. Wonderful women, a warm holding environment. Email Sue Kirk for agenda and details - sukirk@aol.com or 978-371-0176.

Circle Dinner – January 28th: Join us on Saturday, January 28th for our annual Circle Dinner Extravaganza which starts in Union Hall at 6:00 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 beginning in January. If you'd like to sign-up by phone or email or have any questions, please contact Sue Kirk at 978-371-0176, email: sukirk@aol.com

Edible church landscape The children will learn about organic and sustainable growing of flowers and vegetables with hands-on activities of growing seeds, making compost and planting, weeding, watering and nurturing these plants in the church landscape. The purpose will be to both beautify the church landscape and harvest crops that can be eaten by the growers, sold to raise money for charity, or given to the Open Pantry of Greater Lowell. Experience has shown us that better love and attention is given to small garden areas that ðbelongö to an individual, a committee, or a family. We will be growing annual flowers, kale, pumpkins, winter squash, brussels sprouts, peas, and if there is an interest, also okra, potatoes and yams. The flowers are for the Infinity Garden, the peas will be an early crop to be ready for Old Home Day, and the rest will be harvested in the fall. This is a ðheads-upö of awareness, so look for more detailed plans to emerge in the next few weeks. Contact Alison Saylor for more information dre@uucarlisle.org

Notes of Appreciation

The Rev. Mark Kiyimba is back in Kampala, Uganda after visiting many UU congregations in the US, including FRS. He wrote: ðPlease send my warm Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year 2012 Greetings to all the Church members. Please thank them a lot for me for the support and Love they showed.ö

Angela Smith, Carlisle Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator, wrote to thank the FRS staff for ðgoing the extra mile to help us whenever we have a COA program at FRS. í Thank youí for your kindness and support.ö

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 in need of this support, or know of someone who needs this support, please contact Sally Hayden at 978-369-7591.



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: Ann Quenin, 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 us at frs@uucarlisle.org.
- The next newsletter deadline is January 23, 2012.
- To receive the weekly enewsletter send the church office a note at frs@uucarlisle.org

Parish Committee

Parish Committee Co-chair: Michael Dundorf 978-390-9505, email: mdundorf@comcast.net
Parish Committee Co-chair: John Lyons 978-369-1216, email: johnalyons@comcast.net
Parish Committee: Paul Morrison, Muggsie Rocco, John Lyons, Christine Lear, Eric Darling, Michael Dundorf, Mary Hult

Church Treasurers

Mary Hult 978-369-0448, email: mphult@comcast.net
John James 978-369-1296, email: jjames3@mac.com

Standing Committees

Activities Committee: Janice Kissinger 978-369-8968, email: janicekissinger@aol.com
Buildings & Grounds Co-chairs: Ann James 978-369-1296, email: ajames3@comcast.net
Susan Emmons 978-369-7921, email: susansemmons@comcast.net
Environmental Action Committee: Dan Scholten 978-369-1209, email: dks@mitre.org
Lisa Sama 978-692-6592 email: lmsama@comcast.net
Finance Committee: Joe Sheedy 978-256-5068, email: jos.sheedy@verizon.net
Music and Worship Committee: Tom Rourk 978-369-5366 email: tfrpiano@comcast.net.
Membership Committee: Sue Kirk 978-371-0176, email: sukirk@aol.com
Pastoral Concerns: Sally Hayen 978-369-7591
Religious Education Committee: Susan Lohrer 978-369-1612, email: sulohrer@comcast.net
Social Action Committee Co-chairs: Ellen Huber 978-369-6678, email e2huber@verizon.net

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

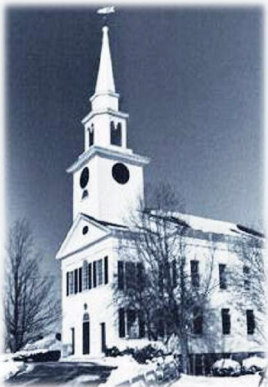
The First Religious Society–January 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10am Jazz and Waffles+. Union Hall	2 7pm EAC	3 9:15am Carlisle Resilience/Ferns 7pm M&W upstairs	4 11am-3pm Robbins-Brook lunch & seminar/UH 7pm dance rehearsal/UH 7:30pm Choir practice	5 3:00pm COA tap class UH	6 9:30am COA Line Dance UH 7-10pm Arcturus recital and reception	7 7am Mens group/UH
8 9:00 Nursery 10:00am Worship Service 5-9pm OWL UH & Conf. rms	9 Staff 10:45-noon 7pm: B&G downstairs	10 9:15am Carlisle Resilience/Ferns	11 7pm dance rehearsal/UH 7:30pm Choir practice	12 3:00pm COA tap class UH 7:30pm KISS (offsite)	13 9:30am COA Line Dance UH 6:30pm: potluck and Contra dance/UH Womenspirit Retreat	14 Womenspirit Retreat
15 9:00 Nursery 10:00am Worship Service 5:30	16 Staff 10:45-noon	17 9:15am Carlisle Resilience/Ferns	18 7pm dance rehearsal/UH 7:30pm Choir practice	19 11:30am COA luncheon/Union Hall 3pm COA tap class UH	20 9:30am COA Line Dance UH	21 9am-1pm Farmers Market/UH
22 9:00 Nursery 10:00am Worship Service 11:30 tech committee mtg 6:30-8:30 pm Coming of Age program meeting 5-9pm OWL	23 Staff 10:45-noon	24 9:15am Carlisle Resilience/Ferns 7-10pm Gleason Library Event/UH	25 7pm dance rehearsal/UH 7:30pm Choir practice	26 3-4pm COA tap dance/UH 5-11pm C.E.M Society/UH	27 9:30am COA Line Dance UH 7-9pm Beekeepers/UH	28 1-3:30pm private recital/Sanctuary 6pm Circle Dinner
29 3-6:15pm Dance Rehearsal/UH	30 Staff 10:45-noon	31 9:15am Carlisle Resilience/Ferns 7pm Gleason Public Library event/UH				

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NEIGHBOURS & FELLOW CREATURES

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 JANUARY 24, 2012
SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS TO ANN QUENIN IN THE CHURCH OFFICE.