



Volume 331 • Issue 9 • May 2010

From the Parish Committee

By Lisa White, Parish Committee

Just weeks away from First Parish's annual meeting, it's a good time to summarize all that we've done in anticipation of the May 16 vote on the covenant.

As the Parish Committee designed the process last summer, we agreed on a goal for the covenant project: it was to strengthen our community and its role in the world. We'd accomplish this by engaging in a process to define how we live in covenant with one another.

The process formally began in the fall, when both Parisa and ministerial intern Eric Dawson set the stage by preaching sermons on covenanting.

In January, we had the opportunity to participate in listening circles. In this setting, we shared our thoughts about what is holy and how we can honor the holy through our actions. Around a quarter of the congregation offered reflections that provided the raw material for Melinda Collins's skillful synthesis into a cohesive summary.

Next came the narrowing phase. A Common Hearth in February gave attendees the opportunity to provide feedback in response to this summary. During this evening, those in attendance pulled prominent ideas and recurring themes from the document, refining it even further.

A drafting committee then spent many hours meeting together to decide on the specific language. What words would best express how we live out our faith in community with one another?

In mid-March, the committee shared this draft covenant with the congregation. The drafting committee solicited feedback in a comprehensive manner. Each household was mailed a copy, and the draft was printed in the order of service. Congregants could respond to the draft covenant through a variety of methods: attending meetings, via email, or through personal conversation with any of the members of the drafting committee: Elaine Craighead, Diane Fallon-Johnson, Cynthia Guise, and Chris Pitt.

The committee took all of our feedback under consideration, and the April 25 service was devoted to the proposed final covenant.

The language presented on April 25 is what we will be voting on at our annual meeting. In preparation for the meeting, spend some time becoming familiar with the language, remembering that this is a covenant, not a creed. Consider how well the proposed covenant honors and reflects your sense of what this community is and what it aspires to be.

When we vote, it is important to remember that a consensus, not unanimous agreement, will be sufficient to make a decision. Just as important as the final decision is the fact that

each individual has the opportunity to participate and live in our community in love, acceptance, and compassion.

So mark Sunday, May 16 on your calendar now: attend the annual meeting after the service, and cast your vote.

The Parish Committee can be reached at parishcommittee@fpmilton.org

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Sunday, May 16th

**Immediately following
worship in the
Meetinghouse**

**Luncheon to follow
in the Parish Hall**

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER

Parisa Parsa



There is an odd and mysterious power that comes with the role of minister. Unfortunately, it's not the ability to read the mind of God, or discern the one true path through life's turmoil and heartache. It's not the ability to pull in an extra run for the home team, or fend off a recurrence of cancer. It's the ability, with my sheer presence, to make people feel guilty for not attending church.

Sometimes I'll be out running errands like a regular person and run into one of you at the market or at the playground, at the bank or at the gym. I'll be glad to see you, and say so, really meaning only that. For a moment, I get caught up in just the joy of seeing someone unexpectedly and forget this strange power. If you haven't attended church in a few weeks, you'll go into an explanation of what has kept you away and I will try to make you feel better by offering my understanding and asking for an update on how you're doing. I go out of my way to try to undo the power in those moments, because I can feel that it comes between us. When I run into you around town, I just want to be a person and want to know you as one, too.

I understand that there are seasons in one's life when church is more or less important. I know that work schedules can get in the way of church attendance, and that making a living has to take precedence. I know that some of you desperately want to be at church and can't make it sometimes. I certainly don't think that having your minister judging you for your attendance makes anything any better, or offers a compelling reason to come to church. So as much as I want to tell you that when you don't come, you miss something important, and the rest of the congregation misses you, I

usually hold my tongue lest my words magnify existing guilt and build a bigger barrier to participation.

Knowing the danger of putting this out there for the life it may take on beyond my intentions, I will say that I believe your presence and participation at our Annual Meeting is crucial.

There is such a history of low participation in this essential moment in our governance at First Parish that in a congregation of 223 active members, the number required in our bylaws for a quorum is 20. That's not quite nine (9) percent! I know we can do better, and we owe it not just to ourselves but to the future of our congregation to turn out in much higher numbers than the bylaws require for this Annual Meeting.

Many of us were attracted to this faith because we are mistrustful of authority in general and religious authority in particular. But when we are asked to be the governing group, many of us also shy away from participation. We say that it's because there is so much competing for attention in our busy lives, and that is true. But I wonder if that is all of it. I don't have a theory to offer, just my wondering. My wondering is deep, I think, because the answer may be that there is no particular reason – that in fact, no one considers their decision not to participate in a calculated way that would make it possible to offer an explanation. So allow me to give the simplest explanation I can of why it matters, and matters deeply, that we come together for this meeting each year.

Our faith has no creed, and it is democratic. We share a broad faith in the promise and potential and sacred spark held in each person. Our *participation*, our *engagement* with one another is the primary way our faith is lived. It's how we discover the truth as it is

being made known to us: by offering one another our deep attention and regard, communicating clearly our own positions, and listening deeply to the feelings and sensibilities of others. Our Annual Meeting is our truly democratic moment in a faith that deeply connects with the importance of each person's voice in community. It is our moment to affirm and celebrate our leaders who have done the hard work of making the daily and weekly decisions that keep this community alive and thriving through the years. It is our moment to ask questions and speak honestly and respectfully of the things that most concern us. This year, our covenant is a subject of discussion and perhaps a vote. There is no more important thing at the center of our faith community. That community is not complete without *you*.

Please plan to attend our Annual Meeting. It is a business meeting, and it is a religious obligation.

Yours in faith,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Parisa".

First Parish in Milton

warmly invites you to celebrate the ordination of

Eric David Dawson

Sunday, May 30, 2010

two o'clock in the afternoon

535 Canton Avenue
Milton, Ma. 02186

A joyful reception to follow

Clergy and seminarians are invited to robe and process, gathering at 1:30pm.

Child care is available. Please call ahead to let us know your needs.

617-698-6329

CHILD DEDICATION SERVICE!

On Sunday, May 23rd during worship we will be celebrating the naming and dedication of new babies in our midst. If you are a parent of a new baby and are interested in being part of this ceremony or would like to schedule one sometime in the future, please contact the Rev. Parsa at minister@fpmilton.org or 617-379-1492. For participation on May 23, she will need to hear from you no later than May 1.

French Exchange Student

20 y/o female looking for a host family from mid July to mid August.

Interested hosts should contact Marie-Laure Brown at 617.696.8125 or marie-laure@bostonbrowns.org

SUNDAYS IN MAY

May 2

Music Sunday

From Bach to Rock:

The Meetinghouse Choir and Hunsaker soloists will lead our annual Music Sunday with songs spanning three centuries, led by UUA Credentialed Music Leader Emma Jean Moulton.

Come celebrate the joy of music with the Meetinghouse Choir and readings about the spiritual importance of music from Rev. Parsa.

May 9

Mother's Day

A celebration of the gifts of mothers, led by Joe Ayoub, Anne-Marie Barron, Dottie Pitt, and Amy Kavadlo.

Join other First Parish members in Dorchester for the Mother's Day March for Peace! We will meet at Townfield Park, Fields Corner, Dorchester at 8:15 a.m. – look for others wearing First Parish T shirts! Those who wish can meet at church at 8am and carpool, or meet at the Central Ave trolley stop to take the T to Fields Corner. We will make it back in time for worship at First Parish.

May 16

May 23

Water Has Held Us

The Rev. Parisa Parsa

We celebrate the life-giving and healing properties of water this morning in worship, and will share in the ceremony of naming and dedication of some of our newest additions.

May 30

In Memory

The Rev. Parisa Parsa

On this Memorial Day, we will reflect on some of the lives that have ended in the past year: famous, infamous, and in between.

2pm

Ordination of Eric Dawson

It is this congregation's unique privilege to ordain ministers to serve our larger faith. This afternoon, we will gather to make official the vote taken in January to ordain Eric Dawson to the Unitarian Universalist ministry. Please plan to attend this sacred celebration!

Eloisa Elena Barraza was born at 5:09 am on April 17. She weighs 9 lbs, 12 oz, and is 21 inches long.

Congratulations to Robin, Andres, and Cecilia on their new addition!

BUILDING & GROUNDS WORKDAY

Saturday, May 22nd 9am-2pm

All are welcome to come and help create a handicapped parking space in the lower parking lot, paint the front of the carriage house shed and perform various tasks in preparation for summer.

Community service hours are available and a light lunch will be served. Call 617.698.6329 or e-mail ops@fpmilton.org for more information.

Religious Education Registration Form 2010-2011

Please register all children including nursery ages through senior high youth

Please return this form ASAP to: Jeannine Heynes, RE Assistant, First Parish, 535 Canton Ave. Milton, MA

Or register on-line: http://firstparish.homestead.com/re_registration.html

Please note: your registration form will be considered incomplete if you have not filled out both sides in their entirety.

Date _____ Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Address: _____ Phone: home _____ work _____ cell _____

Email Addresses: Adult 1 _____

Adult 2 _____

Child's Name	Birth date	Grade in Fall 2010
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please list allergies and/or medical issues the RE program may need to know about.

What do you need your children's teachers to know about your children in order to best serve their needs?

JUNIOR/SENIOR YOUTH GROUP REGISTRATION

Name of youth _____

Age _____ Grade (fall '10) _____ DOB: ___/___/___

Youth email address _____

Allergies/Health issues?

I hereby give permission for my son/daughter, _____, to attend activities and outing under the auspices of the First Parish in Milton Youth Group.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Volunteer Registration

First Parish's Religious Education program is a cooperative program that relies on every parent with a child to teach in it at least once every two years. Teacher development and training is offered every year. Everyone has something to offer our First Parish children and youth! See Jeannine Heynes or Alyson Allen with questions.

Teachers teach in teams of two each semester, and are required to commit to the entire semester. Teachers of grades 1-7 will have the first Sunday of every month OFF for full hour children's church services (one teacher per class must be in the service for "crowd control", but no special preparation is expected), and typically have one other Sunday off per month. If you cannot teach on one or more of the teaching days during the semester (there are around 10), you may ask Robin to find a sub for you. Please sign up for one semester of teaching below.

Semester One: Mid September - December

Semester Two: February – May

YES, I would like to volunteer as a Religious Education teacher!

Name	Teaching semester	Ages I would like to work with
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Do you wish to teach with your spouse/partner on a team? (circle one) Yes No No preference

Class/curriculum desired _____

Second choice _____

Check special events (not an exhaustive list) below that you are willing to volunteer for:

_____ Assist with children's church service (supervision, music, etc.)

_____ Halloween party

_____ Help with the holiday pageant

_____ Holiday party

_____ Drive youth to off-site events and field trips.

_____ Advise senior high youth at a weekend-long Mass Bay District youth conference.

_____ Easter egg hunt

_____ Other special events

If you have any questions about the religious education program or volunteering in the religious education program, call Jeannine Heynes, Religious Education Assitant, at the church: (617) 698-6329 or email reassitant@fpmilton.org.

EVERY SUNDAY

8:45 am –Meetinghouse Choir Rehearsal

9:00 am –Silent Prayer & Meditation: Children’s Church

10:30 am –Worship

11:30 am -Social Hour in the Parish Hall

11:45 am -Children’s Choir Rehearsal: Children’s Church

SPECIAL EVENTS

MUSIC SUNDAY

Sunday, 5/2 in Worship

BELTANE

Sunday, 5/2 @ 3pm in the Parish Hall and Courtyard

FRIDAY FILM

Friday, 5/7 @ 7pm in the Parish Hall

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Sunday, 5/16 immediately following worship in the Meetinghouse

ERIC DAWSON ORDINATION

Sunday, 5/30 @ 2pm in the Meetinghouse

SUNDAY

2

3:00 pm, Beltane, Parish Hall and Courtyard

9

9:00 am, Building’s and Grounds, Library

12:00 pm, Religious Education Committee, Library

16

10:00 am, Worship, First Congregational

23

11:30 am, Annual Meeting of the Congregation, Meetinghouse

12:15 pm, Parish Committee, Chase Parlor

30

2:00 pm, Eric Dawson Ordination, Meetinghouse

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

<p>3</p> <p><u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u></p>	<p>4</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, JR OWL, Youth Room</u></p>	<p>5</p> <p><u>6:45 pm, YAC, Youth Room</u></p>	<p>6</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, SR OWL, Youth Room</u></p> <p><u>7:00 pm, Membership Committee, Library</u></p>	<p>7</p> <p><u>7:00, Friday Film, Parish Hall</u></p>	<p>8</p>
<p>10</p> <p><u>7:00 pm, Social Action, Library</u></p> <p><u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u></p>	<p>11</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, JR OWL, Youth Room</u></p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, SR OWL, Youth Room</u></p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>17</p> <p><u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u></p>	<p>18</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, JR OWL, Youth Room</u></p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, SR OWL, Youth Room</u></p> <p><u>7:00 pm, Caring Committee, Library</u></p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p><u>9 am, B&G Workday, Grounds</u></p>
<p>24</p> <p><u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u></p>	<p>25</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, JR OWL, Youth Room</u></p> <p><u>7:00 pm, Worship Committee, Activity Room</u></p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p><u>6:30 pm, SR OWL, Youth Room</u></p> <p><u>7:00 pm, Worship Committee, Activity Room</u></p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>31</p> <p><u>MEMORIAL DAY</u></p>					



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From The Planner

U = Usher, C = Chalice Lighter, F = Flowers, H = Host Team, A = Announcements

AT BAT

May 2

C: Grady Stoodt
F: Jeff Stoodt & Lisa White
U: Jeff Stoodt & Lisa White
H: Jenifer Pinks, Jay Beaulieu,
Alyson Allen & Rosine Afshar
A: Anita Penta

May 9

C: Nicholas Govindin
F: Amy Norton
U: Chris Pitt & Steve Weiser
H: Howe Allen, Tim Evans, Tasha &
Mike Bello
A: Brian Kelley

May 16

C: Shareen Alosebai

F: Liz O'Rourke Harris
U: Liz O'Rourke Harris & Mark Whall
H: Maria
A: Anita Penta

May 23

C: TBA
F: Tracey Robinson
U: Elaine Craghead & Tracey Robinson
H: Cathy Bly, Anne-Marie &
Bob Buckland
A: Lisa White

May 30

C: TBA
F: Judith Darrell Kemp
U: Cathy Bly & Scott McIsaac
H: Charlie Franich, Ruth Hannon &
Dessie Longinidis
A: Mark Ostrem

ON DECK

June 6

C: Second Grade Class
F: Susan Monack
U: Roger & Courtney Gray
H: Alison Zippay, Jim Kelley,
Deb Alosebai
A: Melinda Collins

June 13

C: TBA
F: Carrie Lamont
U: Will & Monique Gregg
H: Gillian & Matthew Najarian, Richard
Venable & Deb Larson Venable
A: Jim May