



Notes from the Parish Committee

By Michael Grant,
Parish Committee Clerk

This is the year of the Covenant. If your reaction is anything like mine the first time “the Covenant” came up in conversation, it might be along the lines of ‘Huh?’. Over the last year of so, I’ve had many opportunities to go from ‘Huh?’ to ‘Oh!’. I have grown since that time. I have grown to understand the elements which define a Covenant as a road traveled not a destination, as a more a commitment than obligation, as a guide to the actions of individuals and not simply lines on a piece of paper.

In finding that which I would commit to you, my dear friends, it helps to reflect on the things in my life that I treasure. The conflict I often feel during the Christmas season is my starting point...

There are so many lights in the holiday season: colors of the rainbow in hues of reds and greens and blues and white. All contrasted against the dark of a winter’s night. It must be some primal calling which binds us to the twinkling votives shining down upon us for millennia. It’s on these cold clear nights, looking out to the universe, I find it difficult not to feel but like a tiny grain of sand in an endless ocean.

Humbled so, subject to the ebb and flow of life’s events, there is that delicate thread winding through our lives and connecting us as a community. At times this seems like a miracle to me.

What’s more, the perennial irony is that in a season when we most want to come together in peace, a constant barrage of distractions pulls our attention away from the people we care for and love. Have you found that place of serenity?

I think of how much more I’d like to snuggle up in front of a fire with my loved one and renew those deep unspoken vows. To reach out with compassion to our friends who I know are in need. To close the books on another year of my life, taking stock of those moments of satisfaction and disappointment, joys and sorrows, friendships made and friendships lost. To reflect on the community we share and be thankful we are here together

Through some serendipity, it is reading the story of the young musical artist Regina Spektor that serves as my timely reminder of the importance of our self-determination. Her voice the proverbial nightingale’s, she warbles across a tantalizing vocal range. Her songs are laced both with of experiences with heartbreak and the ability to laugh at herself. However, it is her life story which is the true song of triumph. Born in Russia, she emigrated with her family to the United States.

Hers is a story that is ordinary in that it is shared in some small way by all of us. It is an exceptional story in that it is shared in some way by all of us. Like so many of us, she and her family have searched for a better life and acceptance in a (new) community.

Continued on page 3

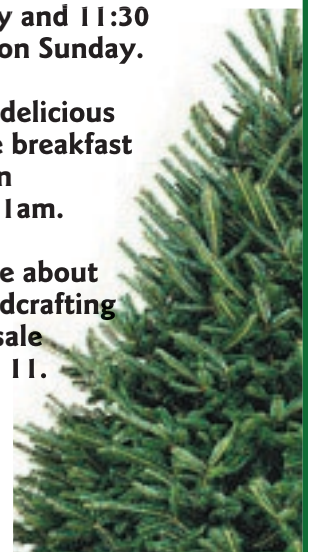
Saturday, December 5th FP Milton’s Annual Handcrafting Justice Sale, Community Breakfast, and Tree Pickup!

Come and pick up your pre-ordered, freshly cut Fraser Fir, holiday tree in front of the Carriage House between 9am-1pm

Shop for beautifully handcrafted, fair-trade goods from 9am-2pm on Saturday and 11:30 to 1pm on Sunday.

Enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast between 9am & 11am.

see more about the Handcrafting Justice sale on page 11.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER PARISA PARSA



Sleigh Bells Ring, Are You Listening?

It's hard to believe it's Christmas time again. No matter how religiously you take the holiday, the air fairly hums with a complicated mix of emotion. The high-pitched buzz of anxiety squawks over us as we try frantically to meet expectations, get things done, and navigate family dynamics. The comforting deep tones of winter hold us and invite us to snuggle in: the smell of firewood in the air; long nights that nudge us toward earlier bed times; holiday baking that seems to make the whole house sweet. The bittersweet tales in holiday specials sing to us of all the complications of human existence: Charlie Brown, Ebenezer Scrooge, and the Grinch ask us to consider our place in things and perhaps begin anew.

The soundtrack to all of this, try as one might to avoid it, is holiday carols. Mostly, of course, Christmas carols. For years I detested them as forced commercial cheer, saccharine and trite and entirely overplayed. Then one year, someone (who obviously didn't know me very well) gave me a CD of Ella Fitzgerald singing Christmas songs, and my whole outlook changed. Here was someone singing so beautifully and soulfully the *meaning* of the songs that I could never hear them the old, trite way again. My transformation was so complete that now I look forward to the Christmas season *especially* for the music. As much as time allows, I scout out new renditions of the old carols from what might seem unlikely sources. The different timbres of the voices in song can make a formerly boring song deeply moving, or invest a heavy song with unexpected joy. Always, there's something new to discover, even in the old, overplayed, trite, and sometimes

theologically challenging words.

Those of you who are in the habit of plugging your ears this time of year are unlikely to be moved by my testimony. But for those of you who are on the fence or already holiday music lovers I invite you to take some quiet time, alone or with companions, to soak in the sounds of the season and really let the music and words carry you to the joy, the yearning, the silliness, the peace, and the challenge of your full humanity. The gift wrapping can wait. The menu planning need not be perfect. The cards don't have to be out on time.

Let yourself go to the place of the spirit, even if it's not the place that commercial holiday cheer would encourage. And listen, listen for the stirrings of your own soul. Whether it's a sleighing song that takes you dashing through the snow or you dwell in the bleak midwinter; if you need to go tell it on the mountain or sing about kings looking out on feasts... wherever the music takes you, give yourself the gift of some time to connect with the sweet melody that is yours and yours alone. And then live it: your own incarnation.

See you in church!

Parisa

Sundays in December

December 6

Keeping Christmas

The Rev. Parisa Parsa

We'd like to keep faith with our deepest values at holiday time, cultivate family traditions that are meaningful, and of course have the yummiest holiday meals. Our faith offers us some resources for keeping Christmas that might even make Jesus proud! We will light our Advent candle for faith this Sunday.

December 13

Gimme, Enough!

The Rev. Parisa Parsa

In the midst of the week of Hanukkah, we reflect on the complicated nature of miracles. We light our Advent candle for joy this Sunday.

December 20

Would You Like to Hold the Baby?

Our annual Christmas Pageant will delight and amaze. Featuring the children and youth of First Parish, lovingly guided by Robin Barraza and accompanied by Joel Hiller. We light our Advent candle for love this morning.

December 24

5pm

Family Service of Lessons and Carols, led by Eric Dawson, Robin Barraza, and Rev. Parisa Parsa

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INTERN-AL MUSINGS ERIC DAWSON



*By, Eric Dawson,
Ministerial Intern*

My daughter often finds her way into our bed in the early morning. As I get up to start my day she'll grab onto my arm, not wanting me to go. So I do what many parents do in these delicate situations: I lie. I tell her that I'm just going to the bathroom and I'll be right back. But of course I don't come right back. Once she falls back asleep I sneak downstairs to begin my morning. Maybe that is why she is so resistant to toilet training: bathrooms are places where daddy goes but never comes back.

It is not always easy setting expectations, particularly with those we love. Our hearts and our heads are often in conflict. Do we commit our time

and money and hearts in the hope that great things will happen? On the other hand, raised expectations can lead to disappointment. So perhaps it is better to commit to very little so that we don't let others down. But being too careful or fearful can't be a strategy for living and loving. Yet how can we commit to anything with so much uncertainty swirling around?

This season is filled with expectations – financial, time, and emotional commitments abound. I hear people speak of the period of time from Thanksgiving to New Years with a touch of dread: how can I fit it all in?

All we are really given in our days in our time and our capacity to decide how to spend it. As you think about these next few weeks, decide the one or two most important (not urgent) ways you

want to spend your time this season. Write it on a Post-it note and put it somewhere you will see every day. Don't look at it as another demand but rather an invitation – an invitation to hold close what is dearest to you. And spend time with those you love, even if it takes a bit to get there. My daughter knows that eventually, even if it takes an entire day of work and school, even if it takes four days of meetings in LA, that I do come back. And she'll be there, wrapped up in the covers, waiting.

*Eric can be reached at 617.698.6329 or
intern@fpmilton.org*

Parish Committee, continued from page 1

The inspiration if take from her experience is a sense of persistence, a sense of community, and a sense of dedication. It becomes exceptional when you stop and think of those people who invited them in, provided shelter, and were willing to

Like Ms. Spektor, our stories are written as much by the decisions we make as by the influence of the people in our lives. Here at First Parish there are many threads weaving our lives together. It is our children who we hope to provide safe passage into adulthood, and the teachers, mentors and friends who help them find their own stories. It is our younger generations, who have the energy and enthusiasm explore new possibilities. It is our older generations, who show us the patience, experience and dedication that serves

as the essential foundation of our community.

Through this amazing blend of people, I believe, comes our understanding that we are stronger when we are together. That we find new meaning through each other. And that our beliefs and convictions give us the determination we need to see beyond the distractions we must overcome. By doing so, we no longer let blare of commercialism tell us what we want and the vitriol of mass media tell us how we feel. Gathering as individuals, within our community we can find the strength and the compassion, the meaning and the questioning, and the commitment to find our way together.

Though life at times can demand so much from us, persevere. There are moments when you may question

“What does it matter?”, and I want you to know that it does! I am made stronger by your efforts and share your desire for a strong and supportive community.

You will undoubtedly read these words at a time when the holiday season is demanding the most from you. It is at this very time which I invite you to stop, take a moment or an hour or more, and think of these things which ground you. Consider sharing this time with others at First Parish through Common Hearth, Small Group Ministries or one of the several other opportunities we have to come together in community.

*Mike can be reached at 617.364.6010 or
ggggqqq@aol.com*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dear Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to Laura and Jefferson Ryder as our youth advisors at First Parish (see letter to the right). Laura and Jefferson have been outstanding youth advisors for our high school youth group. Laura and Jefferson took this job after I approached them in a difficult transition time for the youth group half-way through the 2007-2008 church year. Their steady leadership and loving presence eased the transition and provided stability for the group. Laura and Jefferson nurtured huge growth in participation and enjoyment of youth group activities in the past two years. They have led the group in field trips, worship services, film discussions, and pizza parties. They have slept on church floors at youth conferences throughout Massachusetts. They have counseled and mentored and dried many tears. Perhaps most importantly, they have encouraged youth involvement in all facets of congregational life. Our community has benefited from youth participation in everything from worship leading to babysitting to RE teaching to cooking for events to listening circles and Common Hearth.

We are so grateful for Laura and Jefferson's service to our church, and while we are sad that they have decided that they no longer have the time to give to this particular endeavor, we are delighted that they will continue to be with us in the pews on Sunday mornings. We are also happy that they will have more time to spend with their children Nolan and Acadia.

Laura and Jefferson plan to stay on as our youth advisors until February. The Youth Adult Committee, Parisa and I will begin the search for new youth advisors this month.

With gratitude for the youth ministry we share,

Robin Barraza, Director of Religious Education

*Robin can be reached at 617.698.6329
or dre@fpmilton.org*

Dear First Parish,

When I started attending services at First Parish, my husband, Jefferson, was not quiet ready to commit to giving up his Sunday mornings at home. I would come home with inspirational stories and a bright outlook on the day and would proceed to give Jefferson a play by play description of what Parisa had talked about in her sermon and who I chatted with at coffee hour. It wasn't long before he just couldn't bear to hear it all second hand and started coming with us every Sunday. For those of you who know our crazy life, spending Sundays at church is a big deal; it is the only time all four of us are together for more than a rushed dinner before a game or music lesson. We looked forward to Parisa's sermons and chatting at coffee hour and before we knew it I was teaching OWL and relishing every minute if it.

First Parish is such an incredible community and we became particularly close with the youth right off the bat. We enjoyed helping the youth advisor and looked forward to Acadia doing OWL and being more involved with the youth activities. So, when Parisa and Robin approached Jefferson and me two years ago and asked if we would be interested in taking the newly opened youth advisor positions, it was a natural fit, and I was surprised at how quickly Jefferson was answering yes. The youth were patient and accepting of us and we muddled through those first couple of months. Once we got our feet wet, it was full speed ahead and each month we had a new adventure and it was fun, challenging and exhausting all at the same time! I was introduced to "cons", Jefferson worked on using volleyball as team building, and we took road trips, had snowball fights, created unforgettable youth services that brought tears to the parishioners, scrolled, played games, laughed, ate pizza, drank soda and talked. We talked about funny things, sad things, shared heartwarming stories and shared in each others griefs and happiness.

Jefferson and I started this journey as youth advisors in January '08 and it has been an incredible experience for both of us. The youth at First Parish are bright, funny, caring and vulnerable young adults whose futures will be nothing short of stupendous. They are our "church family;" we worry about how things turn out after a tough "check-in", we can't wait to hear how they did at their games or track meets, on their biology tests, dates, plays and anything else they were excited or scared about. This year we find ourselves pulled in several directions as Nolan dives into travel basketball and Acadia fills her days with HS activities, sports and friends. Our family is the most important thing to us and we feel the need and the want to take a step back, slow down and spend Sundays around the kitchen table catching up on our week's work of stories and get back to game nights by the fire.

So, it is with much thought and a great amount of hesitation that Jefferson and I end our time as youth advisors at First Parish. We are not going anywhere but home and we intend to attend as many services as possible. We will be there to fill in whenever we can and hope to keep up with the goings on with youth group, the youth and their parents.

With Love,

Laura and Jefferson Ryder

Robin Barraza - Laura and Jefferson are so beloved that the First Parish youth group nominated them last year for the Unitarian Universalist Association's Youth Advisor of the Year Award. The letter they wrote is below:

Dear UUA,

The Youth Group at First Parish church in Milton would like to nominate Laura and Jefferson Ryder for the Youth Advisor of the Year Award. As a team, both have demonstrated passion and devotion to facilitating a safe and fun environment for the youth group. Laura and Jefferson came in at a difficult time for our youth group. We had just lost two very close and well loved youth advisors. They made the transition very smooth and surrounded us with love. Laura and Jefferson have really put in the time and effort on top of their already busy lives to think up fun activities. We started off the year with a fun trip to laser zone to help bond us as a group. From then on, we participated in community outreach projects such as cooking and serving at a homeless shelter, walking in the gay pride parade, and lobbying at the state house with promise the children. We will also participate in the walk for hunger, and the walk against domestic violence in support of the Revelus family, who tragically lost three children in an act of domestic violence. Laura and Jefferson have also helped us coordinate community service at our sister school in Hyde Park. We tutor the elementary school kids and help out the facilitator by doing any extra work needed.

Laura and Jefferson have really made an effort to get us involved with the church community. Before the Ryders came, the

Continued on page 8

NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT EMMA JEAN MOULTON



**By Emma Jean Moulton,
UUA Credentialed Music Leader**

Rehearsals have begun for Christmas music! On Christmas Eve the Meetinghouse Choir will sing selections from "The Seven Joys of Christmas", by Kirke Mechem's, known as the "Dean of choral music". We will sing of the joy of children, bells, dance and song, in arrangements of familiar carols. Also included will be the fun of singing a quodlibet (an old musical term for using many different tunes together in counterpoint, against each other). Harpist Martha Moor will play at both the 5:00pm family service and the 10:00pm Christmas Eve James Peter Hunsaker Memorial Music candle-light service.

If you would like to sing in either or both of these services, please contact me (contact info below) and come to choir rehearsals on Sunday morning at 8:45-10:00am.

As a result of the Choir Listening Circle last spring, Emma Jean and the choir have looked for more ways of developing avenues for communication. We had a 100% attendance gathering and facilitated conversation with Francine Crystal at the start of the new season and created a covenant affirming commitment to enhancing

the worship experience for the congregation, respecting the contributions of each other, and being open to the spiritual enrichment which singing in the choir affords. Brian Kelley set up a googledoc site at which the choir can give feedback from the previous week's service. This has given the choir members the opportunity to make suggestions which help them feel comfortable in their role as music leaders in the worship services. Ministerial Intern Eric Dawson has done a wonderful job this fall of informing the choir about the themes of the worship services and the meaning and importance of the musical elements of the service.

Thank you's go to FP members Chuck Hagenbuck, Claudia Wellington and Wayne Johnson for their musical contributions to worship services during the past month.

Note: The Meetinghouse Choir will not meet Sunday, December 27. Tim Steele will provide the music that day.

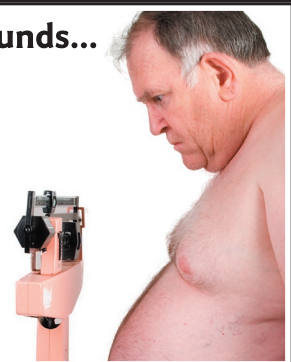
This is the season for concerts! Be sure to check out the bulletin board in the Link for notices of a program for you and your family to enjoy.

*Emma Jean can be reached at
617.698.6329 or emmadon@aol.com*

My New Year Resolution: Lose 5000 pounds...

..of carbon output that is. I'm going to follow the Low Carbon Diet, and if you haven't heard of it already I'll be happy to tell you about it, and perhaps get you interested in joining me and a few others as we work our carbon footprint down. See me at social hour during December and I'll introduce you to the LCD.

*Andy Strang can be reached at 617.696.8514 or
jastrang@comcast.net*



ALL SUNDAYS

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, CC

Special Events

Friday Film

Friday, 12/4 @ 7pm in the Parish Hall

Community Breakfast, Handcrafting Justice Sale, & Christmas Tree Pick-up

Community Breakfast: Saturday, 12/5, 9-11 am in the Parish Hall

Handcrafting Justice Sale: Saturday, 12/5, 9-2 pm in the Parish Hall

& Sunday 12/6, 11:30-1 pm in the Parish Hall

Christmas Tree Pickup: Saturday, 12/5, 9-1pm in the Carriage House Shed

& Sunday 12/6, 11:30-12:30 pm in the Carriage House Shed

Common Hearth

Wednesday, 12/9 @ 6pm in the Parish Hall

Esbat (Blue Moon)

Thursday, 12/31 @ 7pm in the Parish Hall

Save The Date

Annual Budget Drive Fellowship Event

Saturday, 2/6

Sunday

6

11:45 am, Worship Committee, Library

13

9:00 am, Buildings & Grounds Committee, Library

12:00 noon, Religious Education Committee, Library

7:00 pm, Yule, Parish Hall

20

12:15 pm, Parish Committee, Chase Parlor

27

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30 pm, <u>JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	2 6:30 pm, <u>Youth Adult Committee, Youth Room</u>	3 6:30 pm, <u>SR OWL , Youth Room</u> 7:00 pm, <u>Membership Committee, Library</u>	4 7:00 pm, <u>Friday Film, Parish Hall</u>	5 Membership Breakfast, Fair Trade and Tree Sale, see times on <u>left page</u>
7 <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	8 <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	9 6:00 pm, <u>Common Hearth, Parish Hall</u>	10 <u>6:30 pm, SR OWL , Youth Room</u>	11	12 <u>HANUKKAH (begins)</u>
14 <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	15 <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	16	17 <u>6:30 pm, SR OWL , Youth Room</u> 7:00 pm, <u>Caring Committee, Library</u>	18	19
21 <u>WINTER SOLSTICE</u> <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	22 <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	23	24 5:00 pm, <u>Family Service , Meetinghouse</u> 10:00 pm, <u>Candlelight Service, Meetinghouse</u>	25 <u>CHRISTMAS</u>	26 <u>KWANZAA (begins)</u>
28 <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	29	30	31 <u>7:00, Esbat (Blue Moon), Parish Hall</u>		

Finance Committee

A New and Improved Annual Budget Drive!

By Laurie McCorry,
Finance Committee Chair

The Finance Committee has decided to mix things up this year! One-on-one meetings between stewards and church members will be provided for those who prefer this format. However, we would also like to try a new format where volunteers host a pot-luck dinner party for a small group of parishioners. Hosts will provide the main course and the guests will bring the rest. At some point during the evening, a steward will introduce a discussion of First Parish and the ABD. Hosts will choose a date and sign-up sheets for the guests will be placed in the Link. Dinner parties may be held in the home of the host or in the Parish Hall. Please consider serving as a host or as a steward or both! If you are interested, please contact Laurie McCorry (617-696-1854, lmccorry@bhcc.mass.edu).

Save the Date!
The Fellowship Event will be held on Saturday, February 6.
Be sure to polish your dancing shoes!

COMMON HEARTH

Wednesday, December 9 at 6:00pm – dinner

Creative Joy: A Collage Experience

A Spirituality and Art Workshop

with Sandra Shuman, Ph.D.

This workshop will introduce you to new ways in which to express yourself creatively using a wide range of colorful and varied materials. The theme **Creative Joy** is meant to describe not just a subjective state but also the learning process itself. A relaxing guided visualization will stimulate your imagination and spontaneously transport you into a state of “flow.” You’ll quickly get in touch with your “child” side and feel a release of creative energy. Learning how to tap into your inner creative resources in this unselfconscious way can be a profoundly freeing and uplifting experience. Especially by learning to view the whole process as *a practice*—in the same way you might approach meditation—you gain a tangible awareness of how your creativity can provide you with a vital means, perhaps one even more vivid than words, to give voice to deep spiritual feelings.

All the materials, including a large collection of images from magazines, calendars, postcards, etc. will be available, but participants are encouraged to start their own personal “image” collection beforehand, if they want to!

For ages 12 and up. Limited to 20 participants

\$10 fee for art materials at the door.

Letter to the UUA from the Youth Group, Continued from page 5

youth group was not involved in the church community. They encouraged to take part in church services and youth conferences. Because of their encouragement we have led our own church service, aided monthly children’s church services, and have gone to several youth conferences including a social action conference. We as a youth have

grown close with Laura and Jefferson and feel comfortable enough telling them anything on our minds. On several occasions a few of us have turned to them for help and support during tough times. Not only have we grown close to them but they have also helped bond us as a group. Without Laura and Jefferson we would not be a youth

group. Thank you for your time and we appreciate your consideration of Laura and Jefferson Ryder for the award.

Sincerely,

Members of the Youth Group of First Parish in Milton

The Buildings and Grounds Committee thanks:

Rick & Alex Malmstrom, Steven & Alex Zieselman, Ursula, Will & Jack Macmillan, Parisa Parsa & Kian Silva, Barbara Nathan, Beth Gray-Nix, Tom Kemp, Tat McCorry, JB Clancy and Chris Clifford

for their help in raking leaves on Saturday, November 21.

Sincerely,
Roger Gray, Chair

Sundays... continued from page 2

December 24 **10pm**

A Service of Lessons and Carols, led by the Rev. Parisa Parsa and Eric Dawson

Featuring Kirke Mechem's "The Seven Joys of Christmas" performed by the Meetinghouse Choir, directed by Emma Jean Moulton.

Harpist Martha Moor will play at both services.

December 27 **Burning Grudges**

led by Anne-Marie Buckland and Eric Dawson

CHURCH OPERATIONS BILL MACMILLAN



Church Communications

*By Bill Macmillan,
Operations Manager*

Each Thursday, *Jennifer Tegan*, e-mails everyone a "blast" containing late breaking news, upcoming Sunday service content, announcements, opportunities and links for both church and community events. If you would like to submit something or subscribe to the blast, please e-mail her at office@fpmilton.org. The submission deadline is noon on Wednesday.

This newsletter, *The Link*, is published each month and mailed to the congregation. Our goal is for it to be delivered to each home before the beginning of the month and before the 1st Sunday of the month at the latest. We've recently had some troubles meeting this goal due bulk mail procedures at the Milton Post Office and have worked with them to revise deadlines for us to meet the goal. We want to hear from you if your copy is delivered late.

Most of the programming staff and key committees publish articles in every issue but anyone within our community is welcome to contribute content. In the past we've run a recurring editorial called *View from the Pew* which affords members the opportunity to write about something they want to share with the congregation. The newsletter deadline is the 15th of the month and submissions should be e-mailed to the editor and the church office (editor@fpmilton.org and office@fpmilton.org). *View from the Pew* articles should not exceed 400 words.

We accept photos and artwork to

accompany articles but cannot guarantee graphics will be published. All images may be retouched or replaced as needed. When sending graphics, please send as a separate file –do not embed it in a word document.

Some requirements for formatting your article:

- Do not copy and paste content from other sources without removing the formatting and formatting as indicated below.
- Please use 12pt, Arial or Times New Roman font, and avoid bolding and underlining.
- Please keep articles as concise as possible.
- Include a major headline or article heading
- Byline
- Paragraphs (without indents)
- Author notes and contact: first name, last name, can be reached at (phone# xxx.xxx.xxxx) or by e-mail: (email address)

The Newsletter Editor and layout staff, may edit articles or notices as needed and also decide what is published. Bulleted or outline text is welcome but may require reformatting and may appear differently in print.

The church does not publish or post "for profit" business notices or advertisements.

*Bill can be reached at 617.698.6329 or
ops@fpmilton.org*

*Jen can be reached at 617.698.6329 or
office@fpmilton.org*

FRIDAY FILM

On Friday, December 4 the First Parish film series screens a terrific film lost in last year's holiday rush, the blackly comic *A Christmas Tale*. This rollicking glimpse into family at holiday time is, according to Ty Burr of *The Boston Globe*, "a big, fat novel of a movie - a domestic epic that fuses bitterness and forgiveness in completely satisfying ways."

Director Arnaud Desplechin, says Burr, "isn't interested in plot so much as letting his gifted ensemble ricochet off each other." What a cast it is! At the center is Catherine Deneuve as the Vuillard family matriarch and her son, played by Mathieu Amalric (from the Bond film *Quantum of Solace*)—it's their "bitter interplay that carries the film", according to *Rotten Tomatoes*. Also featured is Deneuve's real-life daughter, Chiara Mastroianni.

If you loved Wes Andersen's *The Royal Tenenbaums*, this is the film for you. Dennis Lim (*The New York Times*) writes that it is "a cinema of emotional extremes, filled with wild mood swings between love and hate, comedy and savagery... (Desplechin) prizes density over subtlety, surprise over coherence. While writing he adheres to a principle borrowed from Francois Truffaut: four ideas per minute. This explains the



multiple and sometimes competing layers of meaning in his films..."

Richard Schickel, bristling in *Time* about the film's many layers, offers this praise nonetheless: "This film is a triumph of willed optimism (or perhaps more accurately, of grudging good nature) over unhappy experiences... I've come to think that it is faithful to its essential purpose, which is to disprove the Tolstoyan dictum that unhappy families are each miserable in their own way. We do see something instructive about ourselves in this melodramatically grumbling group. We also appreciate anew that there is nothing like a nice

French meal to steady our nerves and serve as the precondition for achieving at least a provisional resolution of our troubles."

Showtime is at 7. Bring your own holiday food and spirits for some film-viewing cheer. First Parish is located at 535 Canton Avenue.

Babysitting is available upon request.

For more info first friday film nights, contact Jeff Stoodt at 617.696.9774 or jslw@comcast.net

First Parish Member's Page
is now available at fpmilton.org/members

The new webpage has a layer of security designed to keep personal contact information and some business details of the church from the general public. A link to the members page will be included in the weekly e-mail blast each week. Look for the user name and password in the e-mail blast.

The "members area" contains just about every form and report you need from the office, church leadership, religious education, and a periodically updated directory to ensure you have the latest contact information. Try it out and contact the office with any questions, suggestions or comments.

Welcome to the FP Milton Member's Page

Father Bill's Cooking and Serving 2009-10

By Pat Gullivan,
Social Action Committee

For several years, members of First Parish have prepared and served meals at Fr. Bill's Shelter in Quincy. The shelter serves adults and most of the guests are homeless men. Over the past few years the population at the shelter has grown from 70 to 150 guests and the increase in the number of guests now necessitates two seatings.

Currently, FP is signed up for five dates at Fr. Bill's. All of the dates are for the Saturday evening meal except for one Sunday night. Duties include shopping for the meal, cooking (either at the Fr. Bill's kitchen, at First Parish, or at home), and serving dinner and dessert to 150 residents. Usually two or three families team up for the cooking and serving activities. Children as

young as eight have worked at Fr. Bill's but there isn't very much room in the kitchen and care must be taken near the hot ovens.

There is no cleanup required and there is money in the Social Action budget to reimburse volunteers for most of the cost of purchasing the food (approx. \$250/night). Roxie's, which is across the street from the shelter, can provide large amounts of meat if you call ahead to order. They may give you a discount if you mention you are cooking for Father Bill's. Volunteers have also used stores like BJ's and Sam's Club to purchase large quantities at a discount.

There are two serving times for the evening meal. The first one begins at 5:15 PM and the second one is at 5:45. Volunteers can arrive at the Fr. Bill's kitchen as early as 2:30 if you need the time to prepare the meal at the shelter. The kitchen has all the pots, pans, plasticware, cups, plates etc., and there is a staff person on duty in the kitchen to help you out. Dessert used to be served

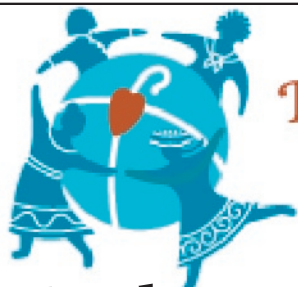
following the finish of the main meal, but now dessert is served at the same time as the main meal. Volunteers are usually finished by 6:45.

We have a number of recipes for large groups and most are casseroles, lasagna, or chili type meals. We often serve these dishes with rice, pasta, or a salad. Fr. Bill's has bread, drinks, and salad dressing. First Parish volunteers usually bake and serve brownies with ice cream for dessert.

It has been a very rewarding experience for families and individuals who have volunteered for these shelter meals and the guests are really appreciative. The following dates are available: Dec. 12, Jan. 3, and Jan. 30, so let us know if you are interested in signing up to volunteer.

For more information,
recipe ideas or to sign up, contact
Pat Gullivan at pl.gullivan@verizon.net
or 617.696.6406

Recipe website:
<http://lotsofinfo.tripod.com/bigrecipelists.htm>



**HANDCRAFTING
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Bill Macmillan, Operations Manager
ops@fpmilton.org

Jennifer Tegan, Administrative Assistant
office@fpmilton.org

From The Planner

U = Usher, C = Chalice Lighter, F = Flowers
H = Host Team, A = Parish Com. Announcer

AT BAT

December 6

C: Kian Silva
F: Elaine Craghead
U: Kim Perez-Gern & Kent Gern
H: Janet Ferone, Mary Doherty,
Roger & Courtney Gray
A: Mark Ostrem

December 13

F: Brian Kelley
U: Ruth Heiden & Marsha Maurer
H: Lynn Stack, Andrew Maloney, &
Amy Givens
A: Melinda Collins

December 20

F: Laurie Macintosh
U: Elise Henricks & Tony Dutzik
H: Mallory Digges, Barry Hume &
Miguel Rodriguez
A: Jim May

December 24 Family Service 5pm

F: Rosina Coolidge
U: Chris Clifford, Laura Sauter,
John & Jane Schaberg

December 24 Candlelight, 10pm

U: Tom & Ellen White **NEED (2)**

December 27

F: Rich & Mary Craig
U: Maria Altamore & Cathy Bly
H: Tim Fitzgerald, John Budron,
Bridget & Nathan Sitkoff
A: Mike Grant

ON DECK

January 3
F: Beth Gray-Nix
U: Tom & Ellen White
H: Peter Schneider, Diane Sawyer,
Amy Norton
A: Christa Ayoub

January 10

C: Katie Steele
F: Lisa Beck
U: Tim Steele & Elizabeth Menne
H: Elise Henricks, Tony Dutzik,

Jennifer & Mike Grant
A: Diane Johnson-Fallon

January 17

C: Andrew Steele
F: Parisa Parsa & Enrique Silva
U: Tom Kemp & Judith Darrell Kemp
H: Karl Pastore, Lauri Webster &
Luke Pastore
A: Diane Johnson-Fallon

January 24

C: Sophie & Atticus D'Alessandro
F: Susan Monack
U: Jen & Mac D'Alessandro
H: Glenn Pavlicek, Anita Penta,
Carolyn Newman & Rick Malmstrom
A: Matthew Najarian

January 31

F: Mallory Digges
U: Diane Fallon-Johnson & Wayne
Johnson
H: Cheryl & Rob Giddings,
Robin Coyne & Rob Savage
A: Anita Penta