



## From the Parish Committee

By *Christa Ayoub*

We are now well into fall with a landscape of brilliant color, late nights finishing homework and early mornings awakening in the dark. I miss the light, but I look to the shorter days and longer nights as a time to turn inward and reflect on where I am and where I may wish to go in the next few months. My family and I have been members of First Parish for 12 years now. It is a good time to reflect on what being part of this community has meant and what I would like it to mean in the future.

I am excited to be part of this congregation, as we have now begun our journey towards a deeper understanding of covenant, the use of symbols in our meetinghouse, and the meaning of membership. The process leading to a reconsideration of our covenant and the use of symbols is an opportunity to explore together how we live our lives and what it means to be in community with each other.

At our last meeting, the Parish Committee discussed various means by which to offer opportunities for church members to engage in discussions revolving around covenant and meaningful membership. A sermon on Radical Hospitality and a Common Hearth with UU Minister Victoria Weinstein that focused on the historical and theological meaning of covenant has opened the dialogue. Small Group

Ministry will begin in November. These groups of 6-8 people are a wonderful opportunity to engage in conversation on meaningful questions of the spirit. Listening Circles will begin in January. The Listening Circles are also small groups designed to closely examine what it means to live in greater connection with each other. The Parish Committee is also working on other events to engage us all in this process. We hope you will join the conversation. Please check the bulletin boards, website and newsletter for upcoming opportunities.

Expanding on the topic of community, the Parish Committee is also working on ways to keep the membership informed of upcoming work. The intention is to keep members connected and tied into staff efforts. Hopefully everyone has admired the beautifully refinished floors in the Parish Hall, noticed the new cost saving paper towel dispensers in the restrooms and the improvements in the room used for Spirit Play. We will let you know of any and all upcoming projects and we look forward to the exciting conversations ahead. We will be listening.

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## Sundays in November

### November 1 Remembrance Sunday

Loss is a constant presence in our lives. This Sunday we remember those who are lost to us, but whose memories live in our heart. Please bring a picture of those you are mourning and those you miss to add to a special altar. Eric Dawson is leading worship

### November 8 “Liberating Christ”

The sermon title is borrowed from Lisa Isherwood’s book by the same name. Many folks associate the word Christ with the person of Jesus. But Christ is not Jesus’ last name—it is a title, or a faith claim made about him. The sermon will explore this idea of “liberating Christ” and how we might find liberation ourselves.

The Rev. Frank Clarkson is minister of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Haverhill. He received his M.Div. from Episcopal Divinity School in 2004 and was ordained to the UU ministry in 2005. For three years he was the assistant minister at

**Sundays...continued next page**

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER PARISA PARSA



### Many Thanks to Give

I couldn't have known when I planned my maternity leave how apt it would be to set my return to Sunday worship on our annual Thanksgiving Sunday. Giving thanks is a spiritual practice I try to keep up even if I'm doing no other, and I like to think I've gotten pretty good at it. And still the last few months have been a whole new lesson in the humility that comes with being showered with blessings beyond imagination.

You all know about the most obvious blessing: the birth of our son Darius. What you may not be as aware of is the incredible gift this congregation has been to us, and in how many ways. There have been many tangible gifts: adorable baby outfits and playthings and practical necessities; twice-weekly delicious meals from a variety of kitchens; cookies and cards. With each of them, and with each good word or smile of excitement we've received, Enrique and I have marveled at the thoughtfulness and intention it took for those gestures to reach us – planning to double a meal, packaging it up and getting it out the door; stopping at a baby goods store; baking up a batch of cookies; choosing or making just the right card. We know how busy your lives are, and to know that you took the time to send these outward expressions of care to us has wrapped us in an enormous, warm embrace. We have needed that embrace, and appreciated it immensely.

At some of the more difficult moments in this adjustment, we have simply looked at each other and said: just think how many people are watching out for us right now, literally and figuratively. As I have sat doing the full-time job of nursing an infant,

I've usually had my thank-you notes close at hand. This has also meant the church directory is always within reach. So as I sat holding Darius with only one free hand, I meditated on the names of all of you in the directory and sent you my gratitude and love. For those of you I knew were going through tough transitions of your own, a special prayer was added. You all have been prayed over. In alphabetical order. Enrique and I have agreed that our gratitude demands that we live up to the love that surrounds us. It's a challenge and a blessing at once, and we will strive to share the blessing as widely as possible.

It will be a joy to stand before you and lead worship again on November 22. It will be an even greater joy to see your beautiful faces, shake your hands, give you hugs and hear your news. My, *our*, great thanks go to all of you for being the loving community you are, and for the gift of this time for our family to dwell deeply in the blessing of Darius' new life and the new life for all of us that has come from his birth.

See you in church on the 22<sup>nd</sup>!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Parisa". The script is cursive and elegant.

### Sundays... continued from page 1

the North Parish of North Andover. He lives with his wife Tracey and their two teenagers, Will and Emma.

### November 15

Andrew Tripp, ministerial intern from First Parish Reading is leading worship.

### November 22

#### Oh We Give Thanks!

Our annual Thanksgiving service for all ages will celebrate the heart of gratitude in story and song. The Rev. Parisa Parsa and Robin Baraza will lead worship and Emma Jean Moulton will lead the Meetinghouse Choir and the congregation in song.

#### 4pm

Milton Interfaith Clergy Association's Thanks for Giving service  
First Parish will once again host this lively interfaith gathering of thanksgiving. Please join the Milton community in honoring our greatest volunteers!

### November 29:

#### "We Need Not Think Alike to Love Alike"

The Rev. Parisa Parsa

The famous statement of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Unitarian Francis David is stretched to its limit when we encounter our nearest and dearest whose political and/or religious ideologies clash with our own. This first Sunday in Advent we will explore the themes of hope and patience as we prepare ourselves for holiday gatherings. How can our Unitarian faith help us stay connected with integrity?

# Intern-al Musings



## Mistakes Were Made

By Eric Dawson,  
Ministerial Intern

My daughter and I were in my home office doing our work (mine: reading an article on spirituality and leadership; hers: helping Ariel from the *Little Mermaid* identify the right letters from her treasure trove). My role was to check her work when it was done.

She wrote an "S" (apparently Ariel has a shovel) backwards. When I pointed this out she said, "That's OK daddy, kids learn by making mis-

takes. Sometimes kids make mistakes while drawing and writing." She was clearly repeating a message that she had picked up at school, one that was important in letting her try new things without a fear of failure.

Of course kids aren't the only ones who learn by making mistakes. We all do. But how does a community like ours acknowledge our mistakes as learning opportunities? How do we share and talk about the mistakes we make in our journey together in a way that leads to learning and avoids repeating them, either individually or collectively? How do we apologize and get frustrated and forgive and what do those terms mean within a church

community, rather than a family or workplace?

I read about an organization that gave out two awards each month (restaurant gift certificates and/or the best parking space at the office) to the person who had achieved the biggest accomplishment AND the person who had made the biggest mistake that the organization could learn from. What might it look like for us to invite in this question on a regular basis: what is the biggest mistake we've made and how can it open up a door to learning?

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

## Social Action News

Please mark your calendars for the annual Handcrafting Justice Holiday Sale, which will take place on Saturday December 5 from 9 am-2 pm and Sunday December 6 from 11:30 am -1 pm. This is a chance to do some holiday shopping while supporting a fair trade organization which provides local artisans around the world the opportunity to work in safety and dignity. Come early for the best selection of handbags, Christmas

ornaments, jewelry, cards, scarves, toys, linens and much more. If you would like to volunteer to help with the

sale, please contact Elise Henricks at [tonyelise@earthlink.net](mailto:tonyelise@earthlink.net).



**HANDCRAFTING  
JUSTICE**  
*Give the gift of hope*

## T-Shirts & Totes

We are still selling First Parish T-shirts and handy tote bags. This is a great way to show your support for First Parish and to get word out about the wonderful community we have here. Money raised from the sale of the items will be used to fund ongoing Social Action projects including Father Bill's soup kitchen and the Channing School project. Adult T-shirts are \$20, kids \$15, tote bags \$15. The items will be available at Social Hour, or email Elise directly at [tonyelise@earthlink.net](mailto:tonyelise@earthlink.net).



**Nurture Your Spirit  
Help Heal Our World**  
**firstparish** IN MILTON, MA  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

# Religious Education



Dear Members and Friends of First Parish,

I am delighted to inform you that I, too, will be adding another little UU to our religious education program next fall. I am pregnant with our second child, due to join us in April, some time after Easter.

We are excited (if not a little overwhelmed) about this new transition in our lives, and we are happy to share it with all of you, our First Parish family. This has been a difficult fall for me and for my family. Beginning full time divinity school was hard in and of itself, and being in my first trimester

made it more exhausting than I thought possible. The support of this community has really helped me breathe through it, and my work here continues to provide stability and energy. Thank you for that.

Parisa and I will make plans for my leave when she returns in November. If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please feel free to call me or email me at the church.

In appreciation and love,

Robin

*Robin can be reached at 617.698.6329 or [dre@fpmilton.org](mailto:dre@fpmilton.org)*

## Save the date Circle Supper

Very soon the membership committee will be inviting the congregation to participate by either hosting or attending a Circle Supper. Those who host will simply open their home on November 21<sup>st</sup> and those who attend will bring a pot luck contribution. The results will be an unpredictable sort of wonderful. While sharing a home, favorite recipes and warm spirits we will each have an opportunity to spend time together and to get to know each other a little better in new settings.

Those who host will have an option of selecting a theme which could include anything from an intergenerational event to a common interest and the membership committee will make it all come together. Keep your eyes and ears open, the planning will begin late in October!

## Sign Up for Small Group Ministry!

First Parish will be launching Small Group Ministry (SGM) groups this fall. The hope of our SGM work is to build on the rich legacy of our shared ministry by creating small, spiritual communities within First Parish to deepen our connections with one another and ourselves. Often referred to as "book clubs without the books," SGM is, in fact, much more: it is an opportunity to talk spiritually with BIG questions (transitions, joys, renewal) and to do it with a group of fellow travelers. It is another opportunity to deepen your own ministry here at First Parish.

Groups meet twice a month for two hours in someone's home. A topic is introduced and discussed as well as an opportunity to check in

on your life. You can sign up on-line at <http://firstparish.homestead.com/smallgroups.html> or email Jeannine Heynes [membership@fpmilton.org](mailto:membership@fpmilton.org)

## Common Hearth

**November 11<sup>th</sup> Parish Hall, 6pm**

"A Faith for a Few?" Rev. Mark Harris will look at our Unitarian and Universalist origins, when a small group of Italian humanists fled persecution and landed in Poland and Transylvania and forged a faith grounded in freedom, reason and tolerance. They were a learned group. Did they create a faith that only appeals to educated elites, or is that merely the stereotype we have accepted? We will look at some of the religious and political passions that fueled the growth of our two traditions. From radicals in England to evangelical

Universalists to modern UUs who have often grounded their faith in a search for justice, we will reflect on the course of our UU history, and where it has brought us today.

Mark Harris is a former minister in Milton (1989-1996). After his settlement here, he served at the First Parish of Watertown. He was also minister in Palmer, MA, and Director of Information at the UUA. He has a special interest in England, and had three brief ministries there - two in Sheffield and one in London. His spare time is either taken up with teaching, writing about UU History, or being involved with his four sons, ages 11 to 30. He is an adjunct professor at Andover Newton Theological School and the author of the Historical Dictionary of Unitarian Universalism.

## Ministerial News

By Mary Blanchette,  
Chair of the Ministerial Internship Committee

I would like to let you know that Eric has recently completed a major milestone in his journey to becoming a minister of the UUA.

Eric went before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, a group of ministers, on September 26<sup>th</sup>. It was the final and most important step towards fellowship. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of determining Eric's suitability for becoming a minister. There were 34 pages of sample questions provided to Eric from which he studied.

### The questions were chosen from 8 categories:

1. World Religions
2. Polity
3. Sermons
4. Racial issues
5. Religious Education
6. Religious History and
7. Theology

As you can see, this profession is not for the faint of heart.

Eric has been preparing for 2 years for this interview and he earned the highest possible score.

We have benefitted greatly from having Eric with us and we are honored and privileged to have supported him in his desire to become a UU minister.

We would like Eric to know that we celebrate his achievement and appreciate his many talents.

**CONGRATULATIONS ERIC!**

# Notes from the Organ Loft.....



By Emma Jean Moulton, UUA Credentialed Music Leader

**The month of November** is one of many moods. It begins with the remembrance of those who have gone before us, includes Thanksgiving for the blessings we share, and ends with the first Sunday in Advent as we prepare for Christmas. The last issue of American Organist included an editorial from the chaplain reflecting upon the importance of the church's celebrating what the Hebrew bible calls the "cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). Through a sense of communion with those who have gone before us we gain a sense of interconnectedness that lifts us up out of our daily lives. As we sing, we harmonize and make music with the past as we look toward the future. "All the congregation members, all the choirs and directors, all the organists, all the instrumentalists who have preceded us through the centuries are our musical partners." (Thomas H. Troeger) We join "the choir invisible Of those immortal dead who live again In minds made better by their presence..." (George Eliot)

**The Children's Choir** was terrific at the Blessing of the Animals service, and we look forward to hearing them again at the Thanksgiving service, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Parents of young singers, watch for notices from Pat Neves and Debby Alsebai. Children's Choir rehearses after church in the Children's Church.

**Many thanks** to singers Jennie Mulqueen and Claudia Wellington, pianist Tim Steele and Chuck Hagenbuck, percussion, for their musical contributions to First Parish services during October.

**Emma Jean** will be leading the

Interfaith Community Choir at the Thanks for Giving service, Sunday, November 22. If you would like to join with other singers from the MICA (Milton Interfaith Clergy Association) houses of worship, come early for rehearsal at 3:00pm. This well-attended service begins at 4:00pm.

**The Meetinghouse Choir** rehearses every Sunday morning beginning at 8:45am. Do you like to sing? Do you enjoy hearing the choir? Then come and join us! In addition to our regular Sunday music, we will soon be preparing music for the Christmas Eve Hunsaker Music service. This year we will sing from, "The Seven Joys of Christmas" by Kirke Mechem, accompanied by harpist Martha Moor.

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

## 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, 11/06 @ 7pm in the Parish Hall

### Common Hearth

Wednesday, 11/11 @ 6pm in the Parish Hall

### Circle Supper

Saturday, 11/21 @ 6:30 in the Parish Hall

### Thanks-for-Giving Service

A community worship service led by  
the Milton Interfaith Clergy Association  
Sunday, 11/22 @ 4:00pm in the Meetinghouse

### Save The Date:

### Membership Breakfast, Holiday Greens & Fairtrade Sale

Saturday, 12/5 in the Parish Hall, Campus Wide

## Sunday

1

10:30 am, Children’s Church,  
Children’s Church

8

12:00 noon, Religious Education  
Committee, Library

12:00 noon, Orientation for Small  
Group Ministry, Chase Parlor

15

22

12:15 pm, Parish Committee,  
Chase Parlor

4:00pm, Thanks-for-Giving Service,  
Meetinghouse

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>2</b> <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	<b>3</b> <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <u>6:30 pm, SR OWL , Youth Room</u>	<b>6</b> <u>7:00 pm, Friday Film, Parish Hall</u>	<b>7</b>
<b>9</b> <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	<b>10</b> <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	<b>11</b> <u>6:00 pm, Common Hearth, Parish Hall</u> <u>6:45 pm, YAC, Youth Room</u>	<b>12</b> <u>6:30 pm, SR OWL , Youth Room</u>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>16</b> <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	<b>17</b> <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <u>6:30 pm, SR OWL , Youth Room</u> <u>7:00 pm, Caring Committee, Library</u> <u>7:30 pm, Worship Committee, Activities Room</u>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <u>6:30 pm, Circle Supper, Parish Hall</u>
<b>23</b> <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>	<b>24</b> <u>6:30 pm, JR OWL , Youth Room</u>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <u>THANKSGIVING</u>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>30</b> <u>7:15 pm, Yoga, Parish Hall</u>					

## Friday Film Night screens French Film, *The Class*

Based on a novel written by a French schoolteacher, *The Class* achieves a classroom reality like no other film in recent memory. Francois Begaudeau struggles to motivate his inner-city middle school students, who come from a wide variety of backgrounds. By using actual students in the story, director Laurent Cantet creates what *Rotten Tomatoes* calls “a hybrid of documentary style and dramatic plotting.”

Roger Ebert wrote, “The movie is bursting with life, energy, fears, frustrations and the quick laughter of a classroom hungry for relief. It avoids lockstep plotting and plunges into the middle of the fray, helping us become familiar with the students, suggesting more than it tells, allowing us to identify with many points of view. It is uncannily convincing.

“*The Class* ranks with the very best films every made about teaching,” wrote Michael Sragow in *The Balti-*



*more Sun*, “and it’s unlike any English or American film about teaching ever made.

Winner of the 2008 Palm d’Or, the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival, *The Class* (rated PG-13) is a must-see. Come to First Parish Milton at 7 on Friday November 6 and get schooled

in Academy Award nominated storytelling. An animated discussion follows the film, and babysitting is available upon request.

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*Jeff Stoodt coordinates Friday Film Night and can be reached at [jslw@comcast.net](mailto:jslw@comcast.net)*

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## CONTRA DANCE

Fun and fellowship was had at the Contra Dance held on October 17th.



Photography - Oliver Heynes

# BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

As always, our **Blessing of the Animals** service (held on Oct 11th) was full of energy and creatures of all shapes and sizes! Whether we brought a long time family dog, hermit crab, hamster, favorite stuffed animal, or a picture of a past loved pet, our church was filled with joy and friendship, illuminating the interconnections of our world. We were

**Photography - Oliver Heynes**





Photography - Oliver Heynes





Photography - Oliver Heynes





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## From The Planner

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

### AT BAT

#### November 1

F: Amy Kavadlo  
U: Lauri Webster, Karl Pastore  
H: Barbara Nathan, Kathy Blythe,  
Marie-Laure Brown  
A: Matthew Najarian

#### November 8

F: Libby Wasilewski  
U: Jen Pinkus, Jay Beaulieu  
H: Dale Golembeski, Amy Kavadlo,  
James May, Bary Blanchette  
A: Anita Penta

#### November 15

C: Olivia Malmstrom  
F: Barry Hume, Miguel Rodriguez  
U: Joe & Christa Ayoub  
H: Donna Malliaros, Lisa Beck, David  
Goodrich, Linda Goodrich  
A: Brian Kelley

#### November 22

C: Emma Allen  
F: Emma Jean & Donald Moulton  
U: Emma Allen, Alyson Allen  
H: Tat & Laurie McCorry, Brian &  
Marianne Cummings  
A: Charlie Franich

#### November 29

F: Susan & David Morse  
U: David Morse, Joe O'Malley  
H: Michael Chinman, Vicky Falcon  
-Vinke, John Vinke  
A: Lisa White

### ON DECK

#### 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 Candelight service 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