

Pilgrims' Progress

First Parish Church of Brunswick, Maine

January 2008

No. 5001

Mary's Musings

Christmas Begins

*When the song of the angels is stilled
when the star in the sky is gone
when the kings and princes are home
when the shepherds are back with their flocks
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost
to heal the broken
to feed the hungry
to release the prisoner
to rebuild the nations
to bring peace among the people
to make music in the heart.*

Howard Thurman

No, this is not a misprint. As you receive this newsletter we are still in the season of Christmas, which begins on Christmas day and lasts twelve days until Epiphany on January 6. In our American culture we have an ironic custom of celebrating Christmas before it arrives and then “moving on” to other things as soon as Christmas day arrives. Have you noticed how radio stations stop playing Christmas music after Christmas day? It is a reflection of the way that the culture’s Christmas has become an economic event of the consumer variety. Howard Thurman, on the other hand, in his writing “Christmas Begins,” reminds us that the true work of Christmas is ongoing and is focused on ministry to and with those around us. May it be so with us.

Mary

Church School News

Susan Fitzgerald
sfitzgerald@firstparish.net

Church School Resumes on January 6th, with classes for Nursery through sixth grade.

Epiphany Party
Sunday January 6
after church
Fellowship Hall

Join us for Epiphany Cake. Three pieces will have a token inside, revealing our “Three Wise Ones.” They will be our Magi and host the Mardi Gras parade on Tuesday, February 5.

**Labyrinth Walk
Tue., Jan 22
12 Noon – 8pm
Fellowship Hall**

Please join us for a quiet walking meditation, as we nestle into darkness, then emerge into light. We always have someone present who will be happy to answer questions and welcome you to this meditative time.

**Future dates:
February 19, March 21 and April 22.**

Family Choir Suppers

Late in the summer, Mary, Larry and Ray approached me to ask if I would be interested in preparing a meal on Thursday evenings for the youth choir families between the Cherub Choir Rehearsal and the Junior Choir Rehearsal. I said “yes,” and so began our dinners! Mary has “Parent Conversations” scheduled during choir practice as well. We all felt this would be one way of helping our families enjoy the fellowship of a meal together, as well as a less rushed Thursday evening. The dinners are a great success with 35 to 70 folks each Thursday evening.

We will continue with our Choir Dinners beginning on January 10 at 6:00 p.m. and we will hold them in the Vestry during the winter months to avoid taking off and putting on outdoor clothing.

I am looking for folks who will be willing to help me prepare and serve meals during the coming year. Give me a call at the office if you want the challenge!

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the folks who have helped me this fall and especially Susan Priest, Susan Nourse, Susan Hess (the “Susan Team!”) and Emily White. They have been so wonderfully help and faithful!

—Jane Connors

Tedford Family Shelter *BOOK DRIVE*

The Tedford family residence, located on Federal Street, is in need of books for older youth ages 10 to 18. To meet this need, two members of this year’s confirmation class, are helping out with a book drive. They will set out collection bins on December 16th in the following areas: vestry hallway, church front entrance and Pilgrim House church office. The book collection will continue through the New Year and end on Sunday January 11th. To help folks select a good book for the 10-18 age group, the confirmands are putting together a list of recommendations that will be available with the bins. The book drive is hoping to generate books for a wide range of interests and abilities. Multiple copies of books are desired, as this will allow the reader to keep a book if desired. If you are interested in helping out or would like more information please e-mail Poppy Aford at fordgalaxy@blazenetme.net The First Parish Outreach Committee has endorsed this confirmand project.

The following books and authors are especially appreciated. Any other books that you feel would be appropriate for age group 10-18 are also greatly appreciated.

Series:

The Hardy Boys
Nancy Drew
Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 1, 2, 3, 4
The Clique
Gossip Girl
Alex Rider
Harry Potter
Graphic Novels
Bones
Rangers Apprentice Series
Chronicles of Narnia
Golden Compass
Susan Cooper series
Charlie Bone
Series of Unfortunate Events
Gregor Series
Rowan Hood
Princess Diaries Series

Authors:

Mike Lupica
Gary Paulson
Rick Reardon
Meg Cabot
JK. Rowling
Tamora Pierce

Novels:

Saffy's Angel Bread and Roses Too Becoming Naomi Leon Esperanza Rising
Skeleton Key Thief Lord Double Dutch Heat Travel Team Hatchet The River
Flipped The Named
Blue is for Nightmares
White is for Magic
La Linea

Comic Books:

Calvin and Hobbes, Garfield, Tin Tin, Ysagi
Any graphic novels based on real books would be great

***All-Church Christmas Card Greetings
from your Friends at First Parish Church***

The following persons generously donated to our All-Church Christmas Card Fund. This fund is sponsored by our Christian Outreach Committee and the monies collected go into our benevolence fund and used for gift certificates for local teenagers. Thank you to everyone who participated. We collected over \$500.

Poppy and Loren Arford
Karin and Lauren Baard
Ron and Mary Baard
Kay Bagwell
Krystal Barker
Ann and Bill Barry
Judy and Jack Bauman
David Bellville
Rachel Benner
The Blair Family
Jan and Bill Bodwell
Elliot Bowie
Anne and Gerry Brookes
Val Campbell
Allison and John Chapman
Barbara Clark
Jane and Frank Connors
Louise and Joe Cook
Ray Cornils
Virginia Derr
Carol and Don Doele
Joan and Jim Drake
Hannah Dring
Warren and Marilyn Dwyer
Pat Gaffney
Roy Greason
Barbara Hamlin
Jim and Helen Hildebrandt
Jane and Bill Inderstrod
Mildred Jones
Jack Keiffer
Margot and David Knight
Elizabeth and Bill Knowles
Ron and Elaine Kurtz
Dave and Janet Leland
Judy McCollum
Anne Morham
Dick and Smokey Morrell
Jane Newhall
Liz Newman
Dick and Betty North
John and Betty O'Brien
Carol O'Donnell
Christina Oddleifson
Judy and John Parker
Mark and Melon Patrick
Harriet and Ken Pepper
Tom and Ellie Peterson
Jane and Stan Primmer
Clara Ross
Gil and Carol Schneidewind
Jill Schneidewind

Oren and Penny Schroeder
Dick and Priscilla Smith
Edna Stoddard
Henrik and Nikki Standskov
Jarvis Thayer
Wayne and Ruth Thibodeau
Beth and Len Thompson-Westra
Mary Lee and Jim Ward
Margaret Wetzel
Emily White
Parker and Caroline Wild
Susan and Mark Wild
Bob and Anne Woodbury
Margaret Wyler
Jan York

Windows on Islam Series Offered

What do you know about Islam? Test your knowledge:

- How long ago was Islam founded, and by whom?
- How many countries in the world have majority Muslim populations?
- How many believers does Islam count worldwide?
- What percentage of Muslims are also Arabs?
- Do Muslims live in Brunswick?

You knew some of those, didn't you? (See answers below*) But most Americans are woefully ignorant of this religion which plays such a large role in the lives of our fellow citizens in the 21st Century. So First Parish church is presenting **Windows on Islam** in February and March, complete with videos, ethnic meals, panel discussion, and a Parish Read book, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by Mohja Kahf.

Mark your calendar for Sunday, February 10, after church for the first program. You'll be hearing more about this fascinating and vital topic in church and through the *Pilgrims' Progress*.

*1400 years ago by the Prophet Mohammed; about 50; 1.5 billion, just behind Christianity; 15%; yes

About "Inquiring Minds"

Did you know that this book discussion group is "open" - by that we mean that the group welcomes anyone who has read and would like to discuss a particular book. We understand that lots of folks cannot commit to an entire series of book discussions but might like to participate in one or more discussions during the year. You are always welcome to try out this group and see if it meets your needs; we welcome men and women -all are welcome.

The January (January 21st discussion) book is "Three Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin; quoting from the back cover of the book - "The astonishing, uplifting story of a real-life Indiana Jones and his remarkable humanitarian campaign in the Taliban's backyard." The February book is the parish read - "The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf" by Mohja Kahf- "A refreshingly human look at growing up Muslim in America . . . Kahf is a serious seeker and wrestler of emotions and ideas in clean American prose that shows brilliance." Both books will be available at Bookland (ask at the

desk for the books and discount). If you have questions about Inquiring Minds, call Becky Halbrook at 389-2286.

News From the Church Council - November 11, 2007

See full Minutes and summaries of committee minutes on Pilgrim House bulletin board.

Old Business

Consideration of Dexter Kamilewicz request for use of the sanctuary

Dexter shared with the Council his wish to witness for Christianity in his own church. He requested permission to hold a gathering in the church sanctuary on Saturday, March 15th, from 9 AM to 6 PM. The purpose of the gathering will be to read the names of the dead in Iraq, both Allied soldiers and Iraqis. The reading of the names will be interspersed with brief periods of worship. This is a totally ecumenical endeavor and all would be welcome to attend and participate. Refreshments will be available in the Vestry. Dexter emphasized that this is a non-political activity. There is no organized group sponsoring it. It will be advertised locally.

Several Council members expressed their support of the idea. The date is available on the church calendar. **MOTION:** that the Church Council grant permission for Dexter Kamilewicz to use the sanctuary and vestry of First Parish Church on March 15, 2007, for a service of remembrance and the reading of the names of American servicemen and Iraqis who have been killed in the war in Iraq.

Passed with one negative vote.

Other Business

Prudential Committee

David Knight led a discussion of the proposed Prudential Committee Mission Statement. [Draft Copy is attached to these Minutes.] He went briefly over the items specifying Prudential's role and responsibilities to the Church Council and to the congregation. The Council commended Prudential for producing this excellent Mission Statement. At the January Council meeting, David will present a discussion on the Replacement Reserve/Maintenance Schedule.

Stewardship Update

Mark Wild furnished the Council with an update on the annual campaign. The Church has received 225 pledges amounting to \$411,312. Last year's final totals were 375 pledges for \$600,000+. As in all years, some pledges have not been renewed due to death, moving away, or failing health. We still lack approximately \$200,000. More pledges will come in through the next few months.

There is also concern about pledges for 2007 that have not been fully paid; presently the total stands at about \$60,000. This may be reduced to approximately \$40,000 by January 1, 2008. The letter in October asking for pledges to be paid and further support if possible brought a good response.

Stewardship has assembled all the comments from the back of the pledge cards. These have been shared with the staff for some decisions as to follow-up. There was discussion as to whether pledge reminder notices should be sent in an effort to complete the 2007 pledges. Many agreed that such a reminder might be helpful.

Pastor's Report

Mary spoke about worship attendance; there does not seem to be any drop-off in this area. Many new families are getting involved, particularly through the children's choirs and the *Advent-ure* program. We are benefiting greatly from the strength of the Thursday night Suppers and Conversations with Mary.

Share the Good News – (things that have gone especially well in the last month)

Christian Education – *Advent-ure* – wonderful attendance and participation. Over 90 folks participated! Christian Outreach appreciated the Youth Group making and helping with the All-Church Christmas Card.

David Knight shared the insight that we find we have grown as a team at times of adversity with lots of professionalism; also we have not lost our sense of humor.

Ray shared that this is his last meeting with the Council until May. He is looking forward to his sabbatical time and will hold First Parish Church in his heart during this time.

Respectfully submitted, Lou Harding, Clerk

The next Church Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 8, 2008 at 7:00 PM** in the Chapel. All are welcome to attend.

Mammie's Journal of My Childhood
by Jeanne Tuttle

During World War II Jeanne's Dutch friend, Jolly, was interned with her mother and brother in a Japanese camp in Sumatra. *Mammie's Journal of My Childhood* includes Jolly's mother's daily journal of life in the camp as well as Jolly's extraordinary recollections.

From the book's opening in the Dutch East Indies to the last page, when Indonesia is emerging as a nation, *Mammie's Journal....* introduces the reader to an aspect of World War II and to a period of Indonesian history of which many Americans are not aware. Often heard comments: "A good read! I couldn't put it down! Tears and laughter!" "I didn't know much about that part of the war!"

The book is available at Gulf of Maine or at the church office. (For all books sold at the church, profit is returned to the church.) (\$18.00)

PARISH NOTES

- ◆ Sympathy is expressed to Christopher Casey and his family on the death of his wife, Jean, on December 4, 2007.
- ◆ Sympathy is expressed to First Parish friends of Mira Gearhart who died on October 15, 2007. She attended First Parish Church and was part of our Covenant Group.
- ◆ Bill Whiteside's Memorial service will be held on December 28 (Friday) at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.
- ◆ We rejoice in the birth of Sarah Elizabeth Uebelhoer, granddaughter of Jack and Judy Bauman, on December 6, 2007 in California.
- ◆ Congratulations to Karen Bard and Scott Milliken on their December engagement. A spring wedding in 2009 is planned.
- ◆ Thank you to Whit Jones, son of Rebecca Holbrook and Sam Jones, for being one of the International Youth delegates to the Climate Change Conference in Bali. This was an international student delegation and he joined other students from Australia and Indonesia.
- ◆ Offering envelopes for 2008 are ready and available in the Vestry. If you do not find your envelopes, please call the church office.
- ◆ The deadline for the next *Pilgrims' Progress* is Sunday, January 20, 2008.
- ◆ **"Meals in the Freezer" Program** is up and running! We have had a good response and we now have frozen entrees in our upstairs freezer for anyone who may have difficulty with meal preparation from time to time.

Did you know that our church has a PRAYER VINE? This group of people provides a very important telephone ministry that receives prayer requests and holds the persons in prayer anonymously for a month. If you have a prayer request, have questions or would like to be a part of this ministry, please give Ann Woodbury a call at 833-2806.

FIRST PARISH CHURCH STAFF

Larry R. Kalajainen, Senior Minister (lkalajainen@firstparish.net)

Mary E. Baard, Associate Minister (mbaard@firstparish.net)

Ray E. Cornils, Minister of Music (rcornils@firstparish.net)

Susan Fitzgerald, Christian Education Director (sfitzgerald@firstparish.net)

Jane M. Connors, Executive Secretary (jconnors@firstparish.net)

Karen Leland, Chapel Ringers Director

Carol Elowe, Junior/Cherub Choir accompanist

Homer B. Kenison, Business Administrator (hkenison@firstparish.net)

Carol Doele, Collector (fpcaccounting@firstparish.net)

Jane Newhall, Social Worker

Robert Rowe, Custodian

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Our buildings are accessible to the physically challenged.