

Pilgrims' Progress

First Parish Church of Brunswick, Maine
United Church of Christ

March 2008

No. 5003

From the "Transition Steering Committee"

The Transition Steering Committee would like to thank everyone who attended and participated in the discussion on February 3, which helped us hear various perspectives on the resignation of Rev. Kalajainen, and began to identify some issues that the congregation should address during the interim time. The Committee has carefully considered these comments and opinions, and invites continued input and participation from the Congregation.

The Transition Steering Committee is engaged in a search for an interim pastor. Several profiles of candidates from the Maine Conference office have been received and reviewed, and interviews with selected prospective candidates are being scheduled and will begin on 3/25. A search for additional candidates is also being continued. The Committee is looking for someone who has experience with a congregation and staff of our size, years of interim experience, especially in managing different points of view; and knowledge of organizational issues such as council governance and staff evaluation process. Input from the Congregation on the important qualifications that we should seek in the interim pastor is most welcomed and desired; please forward your thoughts to us as soon as possible. The existing Church Staff is also being consulted for their input.

As part of our interim preparation, we are employing the assistance of Larry Peers, a Senior Consultant with the Alban Institute. The Alban Institute was founded in 1974 as a resource for congregations and provides consulting, research, educational resources to congregations nationwide. More information is available at www.alban.org

One of the first steps during this consultation is a congregation-wide listening process at First Parish Church. Consequently, we want to especially invite you to participate. Whether you have a position or not on recent events in the congregation, you are still asked to participate so that we can have a cross-section of perspectives on the various points of view and experiences of members of our congregation. This will also allow us to identify those aspects of our congregational life that are strong and those that may need attention.

You are asked to reserve 1 ½ hours for this small group of 8 to 10 people. During the first half-hour you will fill out a questionnaire. Then, over the next hour you will participate in the small group interview process facilitated by Larry Peers. You are invited to sign up a time slot that is convenient for you and to join a group where you feel comfortable talking.

The groups are scheduled for **Sunday, March 2, 12-5 pm; Monday March 3, 12-5pm; Sunday March 9, 12-5 pm and Monday, March 10, 9am -5 pm.** We ask that you reserve the Sunday time slots for those who cannot easily make it to the Monday sessions. Jane Connors will maintain the register for these meetings.

The consultant will also be meeting with the Staff, the Council, and the Transition Committee during these visits to First Parish Church.

On **Sunday, March 30th**, Larry Peers will be giving a report and recommendations to the congregation that will incorporate what has been learned in these listening groups and other interviews with the staff and leaders of the congregation. This advance work will be passed along

to the interim pastor in order to help the pastor to more quickly understand and address our situation.

The Committee will provide updates on the transition process in the Sunday worship bulletins, Pilgrims Progress and the First Parish website www.firstparish.net.

Faithfully,

The Transition Steering Committee

Bill Ferdinand, chair, Jo Bradley, Ron Kurtz, Mary Melquist, Carol O'Donnell, Tom Weddle, Len Westra

Mary's Musings

Thank you to the Transition Steering Committee for all their efforts in arranging for a consultant and in looking for an interim pastor. I appreciate all the ways people have stepped forward to assist in this time of transition. Some of the parents have volunteered to help with Youth Group this spring. Some of the clergy of the congregation are helping with pastoral visitation. The Deacons are helping with plans for worship, including people to assist in worship and guest preachers over the next few months.

One of the ways I hope everyone will assist in this time of transition is to participate in one of the small groups with the consultant. My hope is that this work with the consultant will move us into the interim process in a very constructive and fruitful way.

In recent weeks there have been new people entering our community. Some of them have expressed interest in joining our congregation. During Parent Conversations on Thursday evenings, I have been talking with the parents about membership. On Palm Sunday, March 16, we will be receiving new members into our community. There will be an orientation session on March 2 for any who wish to attend. If you are unable to attend that meeting, but would like to discuss membership, please feel free to contact me directly.

Mary

New Member Orientation

Have you thought you might like to become a member of First Parish Church? There will be a New Member Orientation Luncheon held on March 2 directly after worship in Fellowship Hall for those who are interested in joining First Parish, or for those who would like more information. If you decide to join, you may receive the right hand of fellowship on Palm Sunday, March 16. Please call the church office to reserve for the luncheon and request childcare, if needed.

Holy Week Services

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|-----------------|---|
| March 20 | Maundy Thursday Service of Communion in the Taize style
7:30 pm in the sanctuary |
| March 21 | Good Friday Service of Tenebrae with music by Senior Choir
7:30 pm in the sanctuary |
| March 23 | Easter Service at 9:00 am
Music by Senior Choir, Westminster Choir and Chapel Ringers |
| March 23 | Easter Service at 11:00 am
Music by Senior Choir, Junior and Cherub Choirs and Parish Ringers |

Church School News

Susan Fitzgerald
sfitzgerald@firstparish.net

Palm Sunday Sweet & Greet Sunday, March 16 after church in Fellowship Hall

Families of all stripes are invited to join us for a quick sip and a bite and a chance to re-connect with other church school families.

Lenten Images

When you close your eyes and think of “Lent” what images come to mind? Stop by the bulletin board in Pilgrim House to see several artists’ images. Perhaps one will particularly resonate with you as you journey through this Lenten season. Or feel free to add your own to our collection!

Lenten Labyrinth Good Friday, March 21 12 Noon to 7 pm

Just as our Lenten journey is a time to center and focus ourselves on our relationship with God, so the labyrinth pathway carries us to the center and back out again. The labyrinth provides a peaceful space & time to suspend life’s busy pace and listen for God. A labyrinth tend-er (host) is always available to answer questions and help orient you.

IT IS TIME FOR EASTER FLOWERS - MARCH 23

Deadline is Monday, March 17

It is time to order your Easter Flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one to be used to enhance the beauty of the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 23. The price is \$20 and we will have a variety of spring flowers including lilies, daffodils, tulips and hyacinths. Please complete the form below and mail to the church office with your check payable to First Parish Church by Monday, March 17.

In memory or honor of _____
(please print!)

Given by _____ (will not be listed in program)

Phone _____

Please feel free to take your flower after the 11:00 am service on March 23 if you would like it. Others will be given to folks who have recently lost a loved one, those who have been ill and those who cannot get to church.

Report for Stewardship and Finances

On Feb. 10, 2008, the regular semi-annual meeting of the First Parish Church was held in the Sanctuary immediately after Church Services to hear the 2007 financial report and to approve a budget for 2008.

2007 Financial Report

\$625,964.00 of pledge income was received in 2007, which is nearly \$10,000.00 more than 2006. Although when the “books were closed” in early January pledge income was nearly \$16,000 lower than the budgeted goal, the Stewardship Committee has since followed up with members regarding fulfillment of '07 pledges and this gap has been narrowed to \$8,500.00. This is a “slippage” of just 1.3 percent, which is remarkable for any institution largely supported by member pledges. On the expense side, costs for the year were slightly ahead of budget. Therefore, the funds available to add to the Replacement Reserve for long-term maintenance was reduced by approximately \$24,000.00.

Giving to special offerings was significant in 2007. The Local Benevolence Fund received over \$20,000. The Christmas Offering was the largest ever at \$11,195. The congregation raised \$48,700 to build a Habitat House. Thank you for your generosity.

2008 Budget

The Prudential and Stewardship Committees, in conjunction with the Church Council, feel strongly that the proposed budget is a "forward looking" plan thus enabling this church to not only continue, but also to expand, various aspects of ministry identified by the congregation as important to the future .

Budgeted expenses for 2008 include \$80,000.00 of severance costs, which were agreed upon by Rev. Kalajainen and the Council. The Prudential Committee and Church Council strongly believe these costs should be carried in whole in the '08 budget, even though they are significant. There is also \$10,000.00 budgeted for senior pastor search expenses, and \$50,000.00 budgeted for payments to the Interim minister and consultant who will help guide the congregation through the transition period. In addition, the budget covers expenses for staff, building, and committees at existing levels and our benevolence support has been maintained at our past amount.

At the meeting, Mark Wild, stewardship chair, outlined where the church stands to date regarding '08 pledges and how the congregation can achieve the budgeted pledge income amount. The '08 budget calls for \$635,000 of pledge income. At the date of the meeting, there is \$513,000 of pledges in hand. In addition to that, the church historically receives \$25,000 of “regularly given, but not pledged” income. It is not unusual at this time of year that some folks who pledged the prior year have not yet pledged for the current year. Even with the pledges we anticipate will still come in, there is a pledge income gap of \$38,700. The Stewardship committee will continue the “fall” annual campaign throughout the coming months and will update the Prudential Committee and Church Council as to current pledge income projections. This follow-up will include letters, phone calls, and updates from the pulpit. The Church Council will make final budget recommendations, in concert with the Prudential Committee, at the semi-annual meeting in June 2008.

There was strong support from those present and the congregation unanimously approved the budget by a voice vote. Copies of the complete Annual Report for 2007 including the 2008 Budget, as approved, are available in the Church Office.

Respectfully submitted by,
John C. Bauman, Treasurer
David Knight, Prudential chair
G. Mark Wild, Stewardship chair

Windows on Islam Continues with Book Groups and Dessert Potluck

Have you finished *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by Mohja Kahf yet? What have been some of the surprises you've encountered about Islam, about the life of a Muslim immigrant in America, or about yourself?

Come join other church and parish members to share your reflections and seek more information. This is an opportunity to learn others' reactions, make new friends, and to connect the dots from some of the other activities of this winter's Windows on Islam program.

Choose the date and time below that best fits your busy schedule. Then please call the host to let her know you're coming so she can brew enough cups of coffee.

Monday, March 3 6:00 PM	Linda Hornbeck, 12 Munroe Lane, Topsham 841-4040 (sandwiches will be served so you don't go hungry!)
Tuesday, March 4 2:00 PM	Anne Woodbury, 167 Reach Road, Harpswell 833-2806
Wednesday, March 5 3:00 PM	Jeanne Clampitt, 25 Thornton Way #207, Brunswick

Also, pencil this date on your calendar: **Saturday, March 15, 6:30 PM.** We'll have a **dessert potluck in Fellowship Hall** and a panel discussion by practicing Muslims, followed by questions and answers. All are welcome.

Christian Outreach Updates and Opportunities

THE CARPENTER'S BOAT SHOP

The Carpenter's Boat Shop receives benevolence funds from First Parish Church.

The program was established by Bobby and Ruth Ives in 1979. Bobby sang in the First Parish Church Choir while attending Bowdoin College. He completed graduate studies in theology, was ordained a UCC minister and served Monhegan Island, New Haven and Round Pond congregations before starting The Boat Shop.

Bob created his own ministry while working with young people who lived in the Ives' home. The apprentices now live in a nearby farmhouse. They build fine wooden boats and furniture while building their own lives into ones of peace and love. Bob continues his ministry without Ruth, who passed away a year ago.

Apprentices are people in transition. Today the apprentice community may consist of ministers on sabbatical, students on break from academic studies, business people looking for balance in their lives and retirees looking for new skills. All are expected to be involved with community service while at The Boat Shop.

The Boat Shop is supported by the sale of the boats (see below) built by the apprentices and by generous gifts of many people. For more information, visit the FPC website and click on the dove, or go directly to the Boat Shop's website at

www.carpentersboatshop.org

Wanted: porta cable sawzall, food processor, “one-way” brand lathe, Baldor bench grinder, DMT coarse diamond stone, 6” adjustable combo squares, Brush hog – field mowing unit 5 foot, lawn and garden tractor (Toro), corded 1’2’ drills, jig saw, lathe turning tools, tormek sharpening system, 3’ metal rulers, quick grip clamps. (Heavy duty, commercial grade, or contractor grade tools.)

For Sale: Catspaw dinghy with sail and oars, Maine Coast peapod with oars, Monehegan skiffs with oars, ladder back chairs, Adirondack chairs. FMI check the Carpenter’s Boat Shop website.

One Great Hour of Sharing **Sunday, March 16**

First Parish Church joins its fellow members of the United Church of Christ in five offerings throughout the year to support critical funding for the United Church of Christ and its ministries. One of those offerings is ***One Great Hour of Sharing***. As each of us gives to *One Great Hour of Sharing*, we together help families and villages around the world to build lives and communities that are healthy, safe and sustainable. Sharing our resources through this offering will help create sustainable sources of income for rural villages; provide micro-credit to women to start poverty-escaping businesses; teach trades and job skills to people maimed by landmines; offer children a chance to survive past the age of 5 and go to school; help rebuild communities ravaged by natural disasters; resettle refugees into new lives – AND SO MUCH MORE! Please join your friends and neighbors on March 16th in the UCC’s *One Great Hour of Sharing*. Together we can make a difference.

A THANK YOU NOTE

Dear Parishioners,

On behalf of the Town of Topsham and the recipients of your gifts, I would like to thank each of you again this year for your thoughtful generosity. The Giving Tree that you sponsor each year is a wonderful act of kindness and goodwill towards others.

The holiday season can be a very difficult time for some of our Topsham neighbors and your generosity helps to make the season brighter. This year nine families benefited from your gifts.

A special thank you goes to Kathy Lyon and Tim Glidden for organizing such an enormous task and delivering all of the gifts. It is amazing that they volunteer to take this on year after year. I appreciate your choosing to partner with the General Assistance office again this year. I truly enjoy taking part in such a positive effort.

Sincerely, Linda Dumont
General Assistance Coordinator

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Part of the journey of prayer and faith is to recognize that we may never know how our love and care will touch or change another person's life. Through the shawl knitting ministry we can learn to trust the truth that God works through us when we care for friends and strangers alike. Since March 2004 a total of 73 prayer shawls have been presented to folks by the First Parish knitters and truly appreciated by all the recipients. For anyone interested in knitting, we have Homespun yarn and instructions available at the church office or you may call Jane Primmer 725-8912 for further information.

Habitat’s ReStore Celebrates First Year

Habitat's ReStore, located at 108 Centre Street in Bath, has been open almost a year and has had a very successful start. You will find great bargains on Construction Material, Furniture, Kitchen Cabinets, Appliances, Plumbing, Electrical Supplies and other home supplies. It's the perfect place to start when you have a renovation project in mind or if you have furniture or home construction materials to donate (we can pick up!). People moving into the area have found an excellent source of material for their new houses and those moving into smaller homes, or out of the area, can take a deduction for the items that they give to the ReStore. Remember, a purchase from the ReStore is not only a great value to the buyer, it is a tremendous help to the people in our local community as all proceeds from the ReStore go toward building Habitat houses in our area. The ReStore will be having its First Anniversary celebration from March 27 to 29 – please join us for special sales and activities!

FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL – February 12, 2008

See full Minutes, and summaries of reports on Pilgrim House bulletin board
Brief Review of Informational Meeting of February 3, 2008

In general the consensus was that it was a successful meeting, accomplishing the dual purposes of allowing the lay leadership an opportunity to share more of the process leading to Rev. Kalajainen's resignation and permitting Church members, who wished to share an opinion or question, an opportunity to do so. All agreed that the Facilitator, Susanna Liller, did an excellent job. The Council was grateful for the courteous and polite manner in which each person respected the views of the others.

There was also appreciation for the thoughts shared by the Rev. David Gaewski, Conference Minister. From the notes on the easel that morning, the Transition Committee will make available in the Church Office a copy of the survey conducted by the Personnel Committee and the ten contractual responsibilities of the Senior Pastor, as agreed to in his Employment Agreement, dated August 1, 2003.

At least 288 people attended the meeting [a few more came after the initial count was taken]. Special thanks were offered to Erv Snyder and Tim Glidden for their excellent presentations.

Transition Committee Update

The Transition Committee led a discussion about the importance of frequent and thorough communication with the congregation as we move forward. The group will write the lead article for the March *Pilgrims' Progress* and will send out an all-church mailing. This will include information on our consultant, Lawrence Peers, and his scheduled time with us; an explanation about his small-group discussions; an outline of the issues that the Committee will be looking at (including those raised at the Informational Meeting); and an update on the group's progress toward hiring an Interim Pastor.

The council briefly discussed some of the qualities sought in a possible interim minister. These included: ability to be flexible and work with First Parish Church where it is right now, experience and training in interim ministry, a willingness to work within the framework of the Vision Task Force Report, and the skill to facilitate good working relationships among staff, lay leadership, and the congregation.

Bill Ferdinand shared Dr. Peers' schedule: March 2 and 3, holding meetings with members of the congregation, the staff, and the Church Council. He will return March 9 and 10 for more small group meetings. He will present his report to the Church Council on March 25 and to the full congregation on March 30.

Documentation Discussion

The Council briefly discussed documentation of meetings. It was agreed that the Clerk would post on the Pilgrim House bulletin board the minutes of any all-church meeting, such as the

recent February Semi-Annual Meeting held on February 10th. These are also always published in the next Semi-Annual Report. The Council also confirmed that all motions made in executive sessions are printed and available.

Other Business

There will be a New Member Orientation on March 2 after church, and new members will be received on March 16, Palm Sunday.

Much of the March Council meeting will be devoted to the architects' report to the Long Range Planning Committee about utilization of facilities.

Respectfully submitted, Lou Harding, Clerk

The next regular Church Council meeting will be held on **Tues., March 11, 2008 at 7:00 PM** in the Chapel. Chapel. All are welcome to attend.

Family Choir Suppers

We will continue with our Choir Dinners in the Vestry at 6:00 p.m.
in-between Cherub and Junior Choir rehearsals.

Here are the menus for the upcoming weeks:

March 6	Chili and Corn Bread
March 13	Shepherd's Pie
March 20	Maundy Thursday - No Dinner this week
March 27	Sweet and Sour Meatballs with Rice

We always have peanut butter and jelly with whole wheat bread available for those who do not like our menu choices, and we compliment our meals with green salad, breads, and a dessert.

If you haven't joined us, please come and give it a try! It is a wonderful way to meet other choir families in a warm and welcoming setting.

PARISH NOTES

- ◆ Please remember in your prayers: Loren Arford, Lois Mundy, Barbara Crockett, and Robert Laws.
- ◆ Sympathy is expressed to family and friends of Ed Parsons who died on February 19, 2008.
- ◆ Sympathy is expressed to family and friends of Alice Dove who died on February 21, 2008.
- ◆ Sympathy is expressed to family and friends of Laura Price who died on February 25, 2008.
- ◆ We rejoice in the birth of Ruben Parry Widmer, son of Glen and Kim Widmer on January 10, 2008. Proud grandparents are Lois and David Widmer.
- ◆ Congratulations to Tom and Ellie Peterson who will be married sixty years in April. They were married on April 3, 1948 in Kenilworth, Illinois.

“Meals in the Freezer” Program We can use a few more soups, stews and casseroles for our program. The freezer is located at the top of the stairs in Pilgrim House. If anyone is in need of some meals, please feel free to check the freezer at any time.

Interfaith Service of Remembrance and Peace

March 19th marks the 5th anniversary of the Iraq War. Area ministers and laypeople will hold a service of remembrance and peace on March 15, at 12:00 noon at the First Parish Congregational Church on Maine Street in Brunswick, Maine. This interfaith service will remember soldiers and civilians who have died in the five years of the Iraq War. Refreshment and fellowship will follow the service. All are welcome. FMI: 833-5125

In recognition of **National Sexual Awareness Month**, April 2 through 27, Sexual Assault Support Services of Mid-Coast Maine (SASSMM) and Bowdoin College will host Susan Hess' tapestry exhibit "*I'm Nobody, a Journey of Healing*" illustrating Emily Dickinson's poetry as it follows Susan's healing journey from child abuse. If you wish to be a sponsor or attend the opening (\$10) on April 4, from 5 to 8 PM, at Smith Union, please call Susan at 371-9064.

The El Salvador Team left on their mission trip on February 22. The work camp group includes Pete and Evan Didisheim, Mikel and John Williams, Matt Horgan, Jonathan St. Mary and Valerie Ricker. They will have stories to tell upon their return.

EarthCare Tip for February

The EarthCare Team thought it might be interesting to see what Bowdoin is doing to help the environment. They are well into the 2008 waste-reduction/recycling competition with Bates and Colby. Keisha Payson, Bowdoin's environment guru, had this to say to them: "As we compete to see who can recycle the most while sending the least to the landfill, please consider waste reduction tip number 1."

Get in the habit of taking reusable bags with you when you go shopping. While we may not always remember a reusable bag, each time we do remember it means one less bag entering the waste stream.

According to the World Watch Institute, factories around the world churned out a whopping 4-5 trillion plastic bags in 2002, ranging from large trash bags to thick shopping totes to flimsy grocery sacks.

Each year, Americans throw away some 100 billion polyethylene plastic bags. (Only 0.6 % of plastic bags are recycled.)

Oratorio Chorale Spring Concert

The Oratorio Chorale, under the direction of Peter Frewen, offers an uplifting Spring-is-coming concert displaying the partnering of brass, winds, and voices through the music of Anton Bruckner and Giovanni Gabrieli. Accompanied by the Maine Chamber Ensemble, the Chorale presents the majestic "Mass in E minor" by Bruckner and three joyous works by Gabrieli: "Jubilate Deo", "In Ecclesiis", and "Hodie Christus Est". Concerts will be presented on Saturday March 8 @ 7:30 pm at First Parish Church in Brunswick and on Sunday March 9 @ 3:00 pm at Sacred Heart Church in Yarmouth. Tickets are \$15 in advance; \$20 at door, students half-price. FMI call 207-725-1420 or visit www.oratoriochorale.org.

Maine Handbell Festival in March

The Parish Ringers and Chapel Ringers of First Parish Church and the Town Lyne Ringers of the Foreside Community Church in Falmouth are jointly sponsoring the 16th Annual Maine Spring Ring on March 29 at the Greeley Middle School in Cumberland. Over 135 ringers from Maine and N.H. gather together for a day of practice and classes and then perform a concert at 4:30 pm. Admission is free, but donations will be taken after the concert. All are welcome.

Boston Handbell Festival Trip

A Handbell group from Camden has organized a day trip to the Boston Handbell Festival concert at the Old South Church in Copley Square on May 20. The cost is \$69 pp and \$49 for students, and includes: Concord Trailways round trip, admission to Harvard Museum, and admission to bell festival. They will leave Brunswick at approximately 12:15 and return about midnight. You will arrive at the Harvard Museum in Cambridge to see the famous glass flower exhibit by 3 pm, have dinner on your own and listen to the concert at 8 pm. Deadline for the payment is April 20. FMI, please call the church office at 729-7331.

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 and Interim Parish Ringers Director
Kathleen Grammer, Interim Minister of Music (kgrammer@firstparish.net)
Andrea Printy, Interim Organist
Pam Morneau, Interim Cherub and Junior Choir 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

Office is located at 9 Cleaveland Street, Brunswick Maine 04011
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Our buildings are accessible to the physically challenged.