

THE HERALD

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Minister's Musings

People go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.

So here's an interesting riddle for you: what do the words above and the Puritans who founded this church have in common? The answer is Augustine of Hippo, the great Bishop from North Africa who is one of the major intellectual influences on how the West developed. Augustine started off life as a pagan philosopher and "playboy" and became one of the most influential theologians and writers in history. Later thinkers influenced by him are almost too many to count: everyone from Thomas Aquinas to Martin Luther to John Calvin, to say nothing of more modern thinkers such as Bertrand Russell and Frederick Nietzsche.

His major work was *The City of God*, which he wrote as the Roman Empire was crumbling. In this landmark work, he used the metaphor of the journey and argued that each of us in this life must make a spiritual pilgrimage from the City of Man to the City of God, from selfishness to compassion, from evil to good. He also penned one of the first autobiographies as a literary form while a monk in Hippo, whose sentiments and writing leaps off the page almost as if it were written last year. The words above are one of many quotable excerpts from his autobiography, *Confessions*. (Another one is his famous and oh so human prayer contained therein: "O God, give me chastity and continence, but not yet!")

And what does all of this have to do with our Puritan founders? We know that the original settlers carried very few books over by boat in 1629. After all, there was not a lot of room for such extravagances as a library aboard a small, wooden ship. However, one of the volumes that did make the voyage was a 1617 edition of *The City of God*, along with a copy of John Calvin's *Institutes of Religion*, himself greatly influenced by Augustine. The notion of the soul's journey has been an abiding image down through the ages and centuries.

With that in mind, we will be celebrating journeys old and journeys new this winter. **On Sunday, January 17, we will host an Archives Open House** for members and friends who would like a tour of our collection. Then, a few weeks later, I will begin a brief five session program on *Spirituality and Autobiography*, in which participants will be invited to write a small piece about our own journey and read short excerpts from other writers about their spiritual path – including Augustine's. To sign up, speak with me or call the office.

I wish you much peace and happiness at the turning of this year and decade. See you in church,

The Ames Covenant

In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of humankind.



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Epiphany Sunday Service, January 10 - see page 2
- ◆ Low Carbon Discussion Group - see - page 2
- ◆ Holistic Moms come to the First Church - see page 3

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First Church Events for January 2010

Wednesday, January 6

▲ *Religious Education Committee meets, 7:00 p.m.*

Sunday, January 10

▲ *Epiphany Sunday Service with Communion, 10:30 a.m.*

▲ *Youth Group meets, 7:00 p.m.*

Sunday, January 17

▲ *Service Commemorating the Life of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.; 10:30 a.m.*

Join us for a morning of worship with Reverend Barz-Snell and The First Church choir in honor of the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



▲ *Archives Open House, during Fellowship*

Join us in the Archives! See article on page 7 for further info.

Tuesday, January 19

▲ *Alliance luncheon with Jewish studies, noon*

The Alliance continues its monthly lunch-and-learn sessions on Jewish Studies as related to Christian practices, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 19. Bethamy Weinberger and our pastor will lead the discussion. Tea will be provided. Bring your own lunch.

▲ *Holistic Moms, 7:00 p.m.; see article on the next page for further information*

Wednesday, January 20



▲ *Low Carbon Discussion Group, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.*

Join us for a monthly meeting for people wanting to find ways to reduce their energy consumption and carbon footprint in their homes and lives. Based on the book, The Low Carbon Diet, "a thirty day program to lose 5000 pounds," we will gather to learn and share practical ideas about reducing our use of energy from fossil fuels. Among other events, this ongoing group will watch short films and programs about ecological issues and consider how our personal everyday choices can make a difference.

We will learn how to:

- ▲ Calculate your CO₂ footprint with an easy-to-use "carbon calculator"
- ▲ Create "cool household systems" that save the Earth while saving you money
- ▲ Take on "cool lifestyle practices" that reduce CO₂ emissions without cramping your style
- ▲ Form a Low Carbon Diet "EcoTeam" with friends, colleagues, co-workers or your faith community

For more information or to sign up, go to www.firstchurchinsalem.org or the sign up sheet in the Barnard Room.

Sunday, January 24

▲ *Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.*

▲ *Youth group meets, 7:00 p.m.*

Sunday, January 31

▲ *Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.*

January 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<i>All Sunday Services begin at 10:30 a.m.</i>					1	2
3 <i>Sunday Service with Janus Ritual</i>	4	5 <i>Alliance luncheon, noon</i>	6 <i>MPIC meets, 6:30 p.m.</i> <i>RE Committee meets, 7:00</i>	7	8	9
10 <i>Epiphany Sunday Service;</i> <i>Youth Group, 7 p.m.</i>	11	12 <i>Alliance luncheon, noon</i>	13 <i>Salem Mission dinner, 4:30;</i> <i>Standing Committee, 7:00</i>	14	15	16
17 <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday Service</i>	18	19 <i>Alliance luncheon, noon</i> <i>Holistic Moms, 7:00</i>	20 <i>Low Carbon Discussion Group, 7:00</i>	21	22	23 <i>Salem Mission dinner, 4:45 p.m.</i>
24 <i>Youth Group, 7 p.m.</i>	25	26 <i>Alliance luncheon, noon</i>	27	28	29	30
31						

Holistic Moms Comes to The First Church

The Holistic Moms Network is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization connecting parents who are interested in holistic health and green living. They encourage moms to trust their instincts, parent from the heart, use their innate sense of what is best for their children, live in balance with the Earth, and learn about the pros and cons of all healthcare and parenting options. Grandparents, partners, and other caregivers are also welcome! Even future parents will find that this can be a great place to learn and make new friends! Moms-to-be and new moms are encouraged to attend, ask questions, and seek to be informed. They will be meeting on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. here at The First Church. Come on out, get connected to other like-minded moms and dads, and catch the excitement of their community!

To learn more about the Holistic Moms Network, please visit their national organization's website at www.holisticmoms.org.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, January 3 -

▲ *Sunday Service with Janus Ritual*

Tuesday, January 5 -

▲ *Alliance luncheon, noon*

Wednesday, January 6 -

▲ *MPIC meets, 6:30 p.m.*
▲ *RE Committee meets, 7:00 p.m.*

Sunday, January 10 -

▲ *Epiphany Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.*
▲ *Youth Group, 7:00 p.m.*

Tuesday, January 12 -

▲ *Alliance luncheon, noon*

Wednesday, January 13 -

▲ *Salem Mission dinner, 4:30 p.m.*
▲ *Standing Committee meets, 7:00 p.m.*

Sunday, January 17 -

▲ *MLK Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.*

Tuesday, January 19 -

▲ *Alliance luncheon, noon,*
Jewish studies
▲ *Holistic moms, 7:00 p.m.*

Wednesday, January 20 -

▲ *Low Carbon Discussion Group, 7:00 p.m.*

Saturday, January 23 -

▲ *Salem Mission dinner, 4:45 p.m.*

Sunday, January 24 -

▲ *Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.*
▲ *Youth Group, 7:00 p.m.*

Tuesday, January 26 -

▲ *Alliance luncheon, noon*

Sunday, January 31 -

Master Plan Committee Update

The MPIC is looking very closely at a recommendation to undertake a project that would accomplish Phase 1 of the Master Plan during calendar year 2010. As you will recall, Phase 1 includes the tower expansion of the church, addresses space and egress problems we currently suffer, provides many of the infrastructure improvements we require for the next century, and gives universal access to the building.

Menders, Torrey and Spencer have proposed a project plan that would see a six month (twenty-six week) construction, beginning either May 1 or June 1 and concluding November or December, taking advantage of our relatively light summer schedule.

This plan, while very exciting, creates two major challenges for us: financing the project, and dealing with the disruption the project will cause to regular operation of the church. Our current available funds are not sufficient to complete the project, so we are looking at ways to make up the difference that do not complicate or undermine our operating needs. It is prudent to anticipate the need for a capital campaign at this point, about which more will be said in the next few weeks.

Logistical challenges must be anticipated and planned for as well. Regardless of the actual start and end dates of the project, several of our programs will be inconvenienced or displaced for a significant period. Workable solutions will need to be planned before we proceed with the project. To that end, the MPIC will seek input from all of the affected organizations within the church in the next few weeks.

It should be pointed out that while we are working diligently to provide the groundwork for such a project, the decision to go forward can only be made with the approval of the Deacons, who are responsible for the silver funds; the Standing Committee, our governing body; and ultimately the congregation as a whole, within which we would seek consensus that the project would be in the best interest of the First Church.

The next meeting of the MPIC will be Wednesday, January 6th, at 6:30pm at the church. We welcome all questions and input! Please also feel free to address any questions or concerns directly to me or any member of the MPIC.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Palmer



From the Property Committee:

We ask the church family for their cooperation in not blocking the circular driveway in front of the church before, during and after Sunday Service. Taxis and other vehicles require access to assist our members, friends and families getting to and from church. If someone can't get around you or has to drive onto the grass to get around your parked vehicle, then you are blocking passage and need to find a different parking spot.

Your cooperation is always appreciated!

Jamie Tanch
First Church Property Committee



Special Thanks to all for making the season bright...



It goes without saying that the holiday season here at The First Church requires the help and support of many talented members. We would like to thank a few of them here:

- ♣ **Max Burbank**, for once again writing and directing the Christmas Pageant.
- ♣ **Valentina Burbank**, for “herding cats” during the Pageant rehearsals and being a cheery, non-anxious presence.
- ♣ **Julie and Chris Anderson**, for once again coordinating our Annual Stocking Project (see article in this month’s newsletter)
- ♣ **Mike Cluck**, for again donning the “special red suit” at our Christmas party.
- ♣ **Mimi Ballou and Joan Hannah and Sandra Biondo**, for leading the charge in decorating our Meetinghouse so festively for the season.
- ♣ **Joe Perron**, for efficiently and quickly erecting and decorating not one, not two, but three Christmas trees in the Meetinghouse and Cleveland Room.
- ♣ **Don Glover**, for playing the organ on Christmas Eve.
- ♣ **Paul Madore and Members of the First Church Choir**, for singing and enlivening our services with the harmonies of the season.

The First Church celebrates the holidays splendidly because of the contributions we all make and the gifts that we bring.

Around the Parish

Eric Kenney recently heard from longtime church member **Hazel Gravely** who now lives on the South Shore. She recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Happy Birthday Hazel!

New church member and Salem State professor, **Rebecca Hains** (Soprano) will have her local debut with the Salem Philharmonic Orchestra this month as their featured soloist. Break a leg, Rebecca!

Come Meet Our New Members....

Eric and Justine Bassett

Eric and Justine have lived in Salem since 2002, after living in Boston, Maine, Seattle, and Washington, DC. Eric is originally from the Washington, DC area, where he and Justine met while both in graduate school in international affairs. Justine grew up in New York City and later moved with her parents to rural Maine, where they ran a sheep farm. Eric has worked in organizational strategy and marketing; he is currently employed at a Boston-based market research and consulting firm focused on helping colleges to operate more effectively. Justine most recently ran her own kids' design firm and prior to that, managed technology transfer projects in Asia and Europe. Eric and Justine have three children: Emma and Ryan (twin 8-year-olds) and Lily (almost 2).

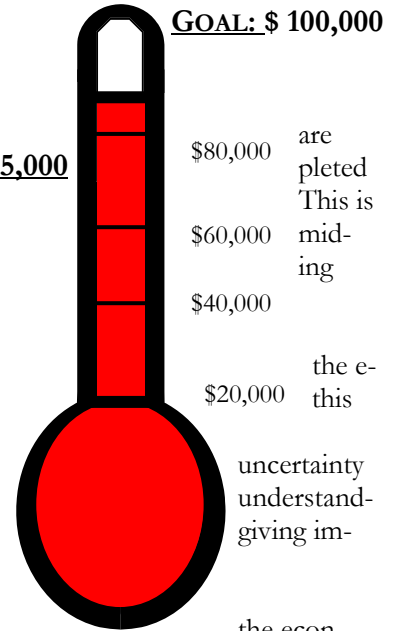
Preliminary 2009 Stewardship Results

A drum roll please.....

As of this writing, Member/Friend contributions for 2009 approximately \$85,000! **THANK YOU** to those who completed their pledges or made year-end contributions to the church. a huge improvement over the \$70,000 in contributions we had by November. We will report the final numbers and some interesting statistics in the next (February) Herald.

\$85,000

GOAL: \$ 100,000



As most of you know (and if you don't, you haven't been reading Herald, the Herald or the weekly Orders of Service!) our goal for year was \$100,000, so we reached 85% of our goal. Last year, Member/Friend giving was about \$90,000, but considering the surrounding the economy, the \$5,000 difference from last year is able. A February finance report should detail how the decreased expected the final 2009 operating budget of the church.

With the increased optimism provided by the "green shoots" in economy, we hope to translate that optimism into meeting and hopefully exceeding the "growing" needs of our church and its community in 2010.

The Stewardship Committee:

- Bill Henning
- Eric Kenney
- Rick Nye
- and Steve Palmer

Fellowship

Thanks to everyone who has donated their time and talents by hosting Fellowship so far during this church year. Your efforts are truly appreciated!

Fellowship Hosts are needed for the month of January - and beyond! Please consider hosting Fellowship in the month to come! Feel free to team up with one or a few others to make it fun. Or, if you don't feel like you are the "hosting" type, consider being a Fellowship Hour "Angel" and simply donate a few funds. Please let us know if you can help out on any of the following dates, either for the adult table, children's table, or both!

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| January 3 | <i>Jennifer Barz-Snell & The Fellowship Committee</i> |
| January 10 | <i>The Waxman-McLaughlin Family, & Duncan and Cindy Cox</i> |
| January 17 | <i>The Bob's, host still needed for the Children's Table</i> |
| January 24 | <i>The Brandenburg's, & Claire Donaldson</i> |
| January 31 | ~ open ~ |
| February 7 | ~ open ~ |
| February 14 | ~ open ~ |
| February 21 | ~ open ~ |
| February 28 | ~ open ~ |

Flowers

Thanks to everyone who has donated flowers so far this church year. Your efforts have helped to beautify the Meetinghouse each Sunday, and enhance our morning worship.

Donations of flowers are needed for the month of January - and beyond. Special wording can/will be placed in our weekly Order of Service in honor or memory or a loved one, or to commemorate an important event. You can use the church florist, for a cost of \$45.00, or bring your own arrangement.

Arrangements can be simple or elaborate - the choice is yours!

Please consider a donation of flowers. See the sign up sheet in The Barnard Room on Sundays during Fellowship, or contact the church office with any questions you might have at 978.744.1551/
firstchurch@nii.net

From the Stewardship Committee

Why We Make an Annual Pledge to The First Church

At the beginning of December 2009 all members and friends of The First Church should have received a mailing from the church that included a pamphlet titled “Your Pledge Matters” and a 2010 pledge card. Pledging is a very important process for the church as it helps us determine how much the church can spend on maintaining, and hopefully growing, its programs and initiatives in 2010.

As of this writing, we have received about 16 pledge cards (THANK YOU!) compared to the approximately 100 pledge cards that were mailed. In 2009 we received 52 pledges in total. Please let us know how much The First Church Matters to you and help our planning by returning your pledge card as soon as possible. If you have any questions about pledging or need a replacement pledge card, please contact anyone on the Stewardship Committee.

The Stewardship Committee thought it might help to hear why other members/friends make an annual pledge to The First Church:

“As an interfaith family, it was very important to us to find a faith community that not only inspired us but also had the spiritual breadth and depth to comfortably embrace our different religious backgrounds. Having young children made this need even more profound, as we considered how best to offer them a spiritual path that honored the worth of many traditions. First Church has not only met these needs but has gone far beyond our expectations by proving to be a vibrant, enthusiastic community that we and our children have found welcoming, inspiring and thought-provoking in the best sense.”

Nicole McLaughlin & Ben Waxman

“I like the sense of community that Jeff encourages. I like the feel of different people from different backgrounds all working together towards good.”

Joan Hannab

“We feel very lucky to have been accepted into the family of The First Church in Salem; giving to the church is integral to being a part of that family. We know that our monetary support helps keep the church organization run smoothly and enables the church to contribute to the larger Salem community.”

Tommy Leon & Don Glover

“It is important for me to support the First Church as it is the necessary crutch that is so important in nourishing my religious beliefs and gives me the support I need!”

Mimi Ballou

“We pledge because we want to support this very important community which nurtures our spiritual growth, challenges our complacency, and connects us to the world outside ourselves.”

Steve and Katherine Palmer

Sincerely,

Bill Henning, Eric Kenney, Rick Nye and Steve Palmer

Archives Open House: Sunday, January 17: during Fellowship

Come visit our Archives! Located in the church basement, our Archivist, Kobi, will be on hand to answer your questions, and to tell you what our archives is all about. There will also be a new exhibit on the Salem Fire of 1914.



Stocking Project Thanks!

Thank you to all of our Stocking Project sponsors and donors. This year, the First Church community was able to help a record 32 families – an accomplishment to be very proud of! A special thank you to Jeff Beale and the Schultz Family for donating 30 grocery gift cards so that each family we assisted will be able to have a holiday dinner.

2009 Donors and Sponsors were:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▲ Bob Allen and Bob Soucy | ▲ Harten Family |
| ▲ Anderson Family | ▲ Hedstrom Family |
| ▲ Jean Arlander and Betty Nichols | ▲ Bill Henning and Thomas MacDonald |
| ▲ Mimi Ballou | ▲ Keenan/McLaughlin Family |
| ▲ Barz-Snell Family | ▲ Russell Lane and Lynn Taggart |
| ▲ Bassett Family | ▲ Richard Lheureux |
| ▲ Jeff Beale | ▲ Christina and Charlene Long |
| ▲ Rick Belejack and Alan Towne | ▲ Barbara Maitland |
| ▲ George and Ellen Brandenburg | ▲ Mele Family |
| ▲ Burbank Family | ▲ Morganstern Family |
| ▲ Mike Cluck | ▲ Newhall Family |
| ▲ Peter A. Copelas | ▲ Jim Ognibene |
| ▲ Joe Deegan and Bryant Winberry | ▲ Palmer Family |
| ▲ Deering Family | ▲ Schultz Family |
| ▲ Claire Donaldson | ▲ Hobbie Sides |
| ▲ Fortin Family | ▲ Jamie Tanch |
| ▲ Fritz Family | ▲ Truong Family |
| ▲ Greel/Wathne Family | ▲ Veno Family |
| ▲ Ruth Griffen | ▲ Waxman/McLaughlin Family |
| ▲ Richard and Joan Hannah | |



The Salem Mission

Thanks you everyone who donated items for our food drive for The Salem Mission this past November and December!

Volunteers are needed on a monthly basis at The Salem Mission. Members and friends of The First Church serve dinner twice a month - on the second Wednesday of the month, and also, on the fourth Saturday of the month, from 4:45 - 6:45 p.m. You can help out by shopping, or serving dinner that night, or both - the choice is yours! Contact the church office at 978.744.1551/firstchurch@nii.net to volunteer, or see the sign up sheet in the Barnard Room during Fellowship hour.



We wish to thank the following volunteers for the month of December:

Ellen & George Brandenburg, Ruth Griffen, Bill Grover, Alan Hanscom, Richard L'heureux Paul & Sara Massari, Betty Nichols and Liz Nugent.

We wish to thank the following volunteers for the month of November:

Charlie Bean, Sue Linder-Bean, Trish & Abby Casale, Duncan Cox, Heather Davis, Joe Deegan, Peter LeBlanc, Betty Nichols, Elizabeth Nugent, Alison Palmer, Bryant Winberry and. Brendan Yandle



From The Religious Education Director

Our fabulously talented First Church RE Players outdid themselves with this year's Christmas Pageant! Congratulations to all! They are a funny and talented bunch of kids! Thanks to Max Burbank for the all the work he puts into this event. We truly appreciate him!

Our Christmas party was fun for all. Even Santa had a blast! We have excellent volunteers, friend and parents who care very much about this community and pitch in to make our big events successful. Even snowstorms two years in a row have not stopped our special Christmas Sunday events from going on! Heartfelt thanks to all.

Religious Education at the First Church is ready to jump into 2010! We are looking forward to the relative peace and quiet of the winter months. The children are enjoying looking at the Bible through a Unitarian Universalist perspective. We all have lots of fun in class each week. Look for our 2010 calendar in the mail.

Our growing program depends on volunteers helping out in the classrooms each week. With six separate groups on Sunday mornings and 26 Sundays left in the Church School year, there are many opportunities! If you are a parent of a child in the RE program, we need you to volunteer periodically in our classrooms. Members of the Religious Education Committee will be recruiting and signing up "classroom angels" during Fellowship throughout the winter.

All the important events that make First Church's holiday traditions special for our children simply would not happen without the strong and loving support we get from the congregation. As the Religious Education program continues to grow, we thank you for your dedication and commitment more than ever. Thanks for all you do for our great kids!

Happy New Year,

Deb DiGiulio,
Religious Education Director

Volunteers Needed!

All of our classes need volunteers. Our Navigators class (grades 4 and 5) needs several adults each Sunday in January to help with some great and creative lesson plans. You do not have to have a child in this class to help out!

Please let us know asap if you are able to help. You can team up with a friend or spouse if you like.

The dates for January are:

- **Jan 10**
- **Jan 17**
- **Jan 24**
- **Jan 31**

Thank you for your support of our children,

Deb DiGiulio
Religious Education Director

Youth Group News

The First Church Youth group continues to meet in January! The group is available for grades 8 - 12, and meets in the church basement, Willson Hall, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., on the following dates in January:

- **Sunday, January 10**
- **Sunday, January 24**

2010 at a Glance!

Friday, February 5th

- Family Fun Night: Beach Party! 6:00 p.m.+

Sunday, February 14th

- Chocolate Sunday

Sunday, February 28th

- Youth Sunday rehearsal

Sunday, March 7th

- Youth Sunday rehearsal

Sunday, March 14th

- Youth Sunday rehearsal

Saturday, March 19th

- Youth Sunday rehearsal, time ~ tba

Sunday, March 20th

- Youth Sunday

Palm Sunday, March 28th

- Egg Dying
- Eggstravaganza

Easter Sunday, April 4th

- Easter Egg Hunt

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ONE OF THE OLDEST
PROTESTANT
CHURCHES GATHERED
IN NORTH AMERICA,
SINCE 1629

Minister: Reverend Jeffrey Barz-Snell

Director of Music: L. Paul Madore

Director of Henny Penny: Kerry Martin

Director of Religious Education: Deb DiGiulio

Chair of the Standing Committee: Peter A. Copelas

Archivist: Kristin Kobialka

Sexton: Joe Perron

Starlings in Winter

Chunky and noisy,
but with stars in their black feathers,
they spring from the telephone wire
and instantly

they are acrobats
in the freezing wind.
And now, in the theater of air,
they swing over buildings,

dipping and rising;
they float like one stippled star
that opens,
becomes for a moment fragmented,

then closes again;
and you watch
and you try
but you simply can't imagine

how they do it
with no articulated instruction, no pause,
only the silent confirmation
that they are this notable thing,



this wheel of many parts, that can rise and spin
over and over again,
full of gorgeous life.

Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,
even in the leafless winter,
even in the ashy city.

I am thinking now
of grief, and of getting past it;

I feel my boots
trying to leave the ground,
I feel my heart
pumping hard. I want

to think again of dangerous and noble things.
I want to be light and frolicsome.
I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of nothing,
as though I had wings.

~ Mary Oliver ~