



The Herald

A Publication of the First Church in Salem, Unitarian

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.

MAY 2011

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Minister's Musings

A longtime employee of the First Church passed away this last month, Mr. Rene St. Pierre. He turned 87 in January. Rene was more than just the longest running current staff member of the church. He was my friend.

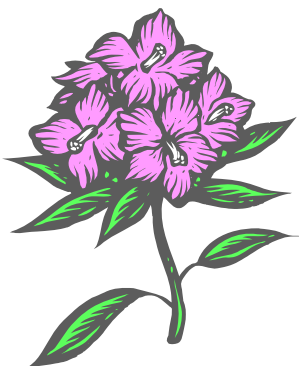


Rene began work as a Sexton at the First Church in 1992. He used to tell me jokingly that he began working at the church just after “cuckoo” had left – except of course he didn’t just say “cuckoo;” he made the sound of a bird – with a big grin on his face. That was Rene: a man whose “default setting” seemed to be a gleam in his eye and a grin on his face.

I arrived in 1998 and both Rene and Al LaChapelle, the other sexton at the time, took it upon themselves to train me on how to operate and run an old New England church. And it was good they did, since there are no classes in divinity school on steam boilers, slate roofs, 1920’s wiring and grounds keeping. Along the way, I was regaled with memories about what it was like to fight in World War II in France (from Al) and in the Pacific (from Rene). I heard countless tales about growing up in Salem and being one of 19 children – and “lucky number 13” at that! And I was instructed on how to cook meatballs, clean tile floors with oven cleaner and who really to call at City Hall if I had a problem. Rene would always hold up a pencil to me and announce that the most important part of it was not the lead but the eraser. “Nobody’s perfect,” he would say. He made my first few years here much easier and far more amusing than they would have been otherwise.

Rene retired as our Church Sexton (a title that means “Caretaker of Sacred Objects”) about ten years ago, but he wasn’t done yet. We had a need for someone who would arrive at the church early on school mornings to ensure the heat was on and stairs were shoveled for Henny Penny, our nursery school. Rene accepted the challenge and opportunity with relish. He loved welcoming the youngest members of our community to their school and they loved him back. Each morning he would greet them as they arrived for school and then, once everyone was in, he would always head upstairs and bid them adieu before he left for the day.

It’s funny how we sometimes measure wealth and accomplishment in this society. Rene St. Pierre lived a rather normal life, but did so with a certain grace, tenacity and a “Henny Youngman-esque” sense of humor. Even people who didn’t like him liked him (if you know what I mean.). A devoted family man, he loved his wife of 63 years. He loved his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He cared greatly for his friends, his community and his country.



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Sunday Highlights in May and June

As always, Sundays in May and June are full of special events that you'll want to make sure to note. Here's a quick overview:

Sunday, May 1 — Annual Meeting

The 382nd annual meeting of the First Church will take place following the morning service. Major decisions await the congregation of the First Church. All members should plan to attend.

Sunday, May 8 — Mother's Day

Fellowship hosted by the Gentlemen of The First Church

Sunday, May 22 — Flower Communion and Sundae Sunday

These two beloved First Church traditions make for an always special day. Bring a flower with you to the service and bring your sweet tooth to Fellowship to support the RE program.

Sunday, May 29 — Memorial Day Sunday

Sunday, June 5 — Church Picnic

Chef Joe will once again be at the grill serving up hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers. Bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share.



Also at the church picnic will be the **Social Outreach Basket Raffle**. In the past, baskets have included such themes as wine, personal care products, children's games, and jewelry. Come see what's in store this year, and take a chance (or many chances.) The money collected goes to the work of the Social Outreach Committee in providing financial assistance to those in our community in need.

Sunday, June 12 — Question Box Sunday

Jeff Barz-Snell answers your questions from the pulpit with his annual **Question Box Sermon**. The box is in the Cleveland Room. Submit your question, mighty or minute, by Tuesday, June 7, then come on June 12 and hear what he has to say..

Sunday, June 19 — RE Sunday

Our annual RE Recognition Sunday. Come join us we honor our youths' accomplishments in the RE program over the past year.

May Schedule of Events

Sunday, May 1

- ▲ Sunday Service, 10:30 am
- ▲ Annual Meeting follows service
- ▲ Youth Group meets, 7–8:30 pm

Tuesday, May 3

- ▲ Alliance Luncheon, noon
- ▲ Spirit Journey, 7 pm

Wednesday, May 4

- ▲ RE committee, 7 pm

Sunday, May 8

- ▲ Sunday Service, 10:30 am
- ▲ Youth Group meets, 7–8:30 pm

Tuesday, May 10

- ▲ Alliance Luncheon, noon

Wednesday, May 11

- ▲ Lifebridge (Salem Mission) Dinner, 4:45 pm
- ▲ Standing Committee, 7:15 pm

Sunday, May 15

- ▲ Sunday Service, 10:30 am,
- ▲ Youth Group meets, 7–8:30 pm

Tuesday, May 17

- ▲ Alliance Luncheon, noon

Friday, May 20

- ▲ Sound of Music Sing-Along, 6 pm

Sunday, May 22

- ▲ Sunday Service, 10:30 am, Flower Communion and Sundae Sunday
- ▲ Youth Group meets, 7–8:30 pm

Tuesday, May 24

- ▲ Alliance Luncheon, noon

Wednesday, May 25

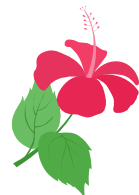
- ▲ MPIC, 6:30 pm

Saturday, May 28

- ▲ Lifebridge (Salem Mission) Dinner, 4:45 pm

Sunday, May 29

- ▲ Sunday Service, 10:30 am
- ▲ Youth Group, 7–8:30 pm



M A Y 2 0 1 1						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 - Sunday Service Annual Meeting follows service - Youth Group, 7-8:30pm	2	3 - Alliance, noon - Spirit Journey, 7pm	4 - RE cmte, 7pm	5	6	7
8 Mother's Day - Sunday Service - Youth Group, 7-8:30pm	9	10 - Alliance, noon	11 - Salem Mission dinner, 4:45pm - Standing Cmte, 7:15pm	12	13	14
15 - Sunday Service - Youth Group, 7-8:30pm	16	17 - Alliance, noon	18	19	20 - <i>Sound of Music</i> Singalong, 6pm	21
22 - Sunday Service, Flower Com- munion; Sundaes Sunday - Youth Group, 7-8:30pm	23	24 - Alliance, noon	25 - MPIC, 6:30pm	26	27	28 - Salem Mission dinner, 4:45pm
29 - Sunday Service, 10:30am - Youth Group, 7-8:30pm	30	31 - Alliance, noon	Sunday Services at 10:30 am			



Around the Parish

Congratulations to **Seth Mascalo** on landing a dream job, of sorts. Seth was hired as an Usher and Greeter at Symphony Hall and will be working much of this year's season of the Boston Pops. Word has it that he's already met and chatted with Keith Lockhart.

Ben Waxman has been busy coordinating and planning the church's participation this year's Walk for HAWC event, scheduled for May 1. For the second year in a row, we are teaming up with our sister church in town, The First Universalist Society.

Sue Kirby and Jeff Barz-Snell both were in attendance at a rally on Patriot's Day in Boston demanding that corporations in this country pay their fair share in taxes. (It was reported last month that General Electric, for example, paid little or nothing in income taxes last year, due to loopholes in the tax code.)

Note to readers: If you would like to see an item in the *Around the Parish* section, simply call or email the church office with you news, or speak with the Minister.

From Religious Education

One quick word about this year's Youth Sunday theme: Living Our UU Faith. Without you, the members of this congregation, giving so much of your time and service to support and sustain the spiritual, physical, and fiscal health of The First Church, our children would not have the opportunity to experience the rich programming we are able to provide them throughout the year. You are role models of how to live our UU faith. Truly, you are the wind beneath our wings.

Our annual Youth Sunday was a success! Thanks to our talented children, and to our teachers, Denise Granniss, Netrista Khatam, Theadora Burbank, and Alina Usmanova. Special thanks to Valentina Burbank who wrote and directed the production, and to Max Burbank for his valuable assistance. Thanks also to Seth Mascolo and Alicia Diozzi.

We have a busy and exciting month coming up. On **May 15** the Religious Education classes will be visiting Green Meadows Farm in Hamilton, MA as part of our humane farming social justice theme. Green Meadows is an organic farm and our students will have a hands on tour where they will learn about renewable farm practices, feed the chickens and see the lambs. We might even get to know some pigs! An informational sheet and permission slip are can be found at the church website (www.firstchurchinsalem.org).

Get ready to SING! On **Friday, May 20**, 6–9:30 pm we will host our first ever *Sound of Music* Singalong! This event is for all ages of music lovers. Children should come in their PJ's and bring a sleeping bag and a pillow to get comfortable. This is a no-one-will-shush-you movie event! Parents should plan on attending with their children. Guests are welcome.

On **Sunday, May 22**, RE will host Sundaes Sunday. We will have tasty ice cream sundaes and other treats for sale during Fellowship to benefit the Humane Society's Fund for Humane Farming. When you participate in an RE fundraising event, you are not only supporting a worthy social justice cause, you are joining with our children as they gain first hand experience putting their Unitarian Universalist faith into action.

Happy spring,
Deb DiGiulio, Director of Religious Education

Music

“Your UU church has a Maundy Thursday service? Where is that coming from?” You have no idea how often I get this, and so I get busy thinking of responses for the next time I’m confronted. You have to understand that I spent the first 25 years of my life as a Roman Catholic and, yes, a Roman Catholic musician. Admittedly, as a church musician, Holy Week was a high point in my life. I truly loved the music attached to Lent, Palm Sunday, etc., and quite frankly, I’d be embarrassed to admit that. Very possibly, the music was even more meaningful to me than the actual liturgy, although I have to admit that all the pomp was pretty special as well. Back in those days, Maundy Thursday was not quite what it is at First Church today, a service that is very meaningful to me as well. Holy Thursday, then, was a grand communion service, the big feast before everything comes crashing down on Good Friday. Tenebrae was Wednesday evening and a meditative service before all the gold and incense of Thursday’s feast.



At First Church, we commemorate the communion feast in an admittedly less grand style, followed by tenebrae, which prepares us for Good Friday and Jesus’ Crucifixion. As a committed Unitarian, I remind myself that we consider ourselves Christian Unitarians at First Church and this service is perfectly in keeping with our values and, yes, our freedom to believe as individually we choose. For some of us this service is a belief, and for others, as it should be, it’s a commemoration of a very important historical moment.

Now, to bring all this back to music: for Unitarians, this is a grand moment to explore the wealth of truly beautiful music of the centuries and to hear it and hopefully be inspired by its ability to move us and give greater meaning to our own personal beliefs. This is my personal motivation in choosing music for a Maundy Thursday service and I hope that those of you in attendance will feel that way as well.

Looking ahead, a happy Easter to all and,

See you in church,

Paul Madore, Director of Music



From the Stewardship Committee

Can you believe that we are one-third of the way through the calendar year already?

Through the third Sunday of April (April 17), we have received the following member and friend contributions:

2011	\$27,367	30% to our 2011 giving goal of \$90,000
2010	\$26,337	31% of total 2010 giving of \$85,060
2009	\$28,764	33% of total 2009 giving of \$87,062

As you may have noticed, we moderated the church's 2011 member/friend giving goal to \$90,00 from the 2010 goal of \$100,000. Given the slowness of the economic recovery and its effect on everyone, we felt it prudent to set our sights a little lower this year. DESPITE the economy, we are running slightly ahead of last year's giving, and hope that the trend will continue. We are at 30% of our annual goal, but should probably be around 33% by now. It is still early in the year and we are optimistic (and faithful) that we can reach our annual goal. **THANK YOU to those who have contributed!**

Contribution statements reflecting giving through the end of April will be mailed in the next couple of weeks. If you have any questions or concerns about the information in your statement, please contact the church

administrator at 978-744-1551 or firstchurch@nii.net. You can also contact any of the Stewardship Committee members listed below. In a "last ditch effort" to help plan the church's financial year, we will be including **one last pledge card** for church members we have not heard from yet.

Speaking of Pledge Cards, the Stewardship Committee is proud to announce that we have met our goal and received **75 pledge cards this year for a total planned giving of approximately \$74,000!** This compares to 67 pledge cards received last year for a total projected giving of \$66,400. Maybe it was the pledge card raffle this year? **THANK YOU** to those who have already submitted a pledge card. For those of you who haven't had a chance to turn in your pledge card yet, **IT IS NEVER TOO LATE.**

Summer Giving: This is just an early reminder that although the church family takes a short break in the summer the bills do not! Please consider making your summer contribution early so that the church can continue to meet its obligations in a timely manner.

A quick note on church attendance: The average weekly church attendance is up through the end of March with 126 adults and children attending this year vs. 114 last year!

Respectfully Submitted:

Robyn Giannopolo
Eric Kenney

Bill Henning
Steve Palmer

The Mass Interfaith Power & Light invites you to its Annual Meeting and Celebration

Sunday, May 1 from 1:00 – 5:00 pm; The Boston Synagogue (55 Martha Road, near North Station)

Keynote Speaker: Roger S. Gottlieb, Worcester Polytechnic Institute Professor and author of: *A Greener Faith, Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*; and *The Spirituality of Resistance*.

Why it's important for religious people to be environmentalists; How religious communities can contribute to the environmental movement. With concurrent workshops on

- Make Your Sacred Space Sustainable Space, led by Tom Nutt-Powell
- Finding the Funds to Go Green, led by Jim Nail
- Education for the Transformation of the Congregation, led by Fran Ludwig

Light refreshments.

Freewill donation.

For more information, see Jeff or go to www.mipandl.org/

From the Standing Committee

Greetings,

The last Standing Committee meeting of the year was dominated by discussion of two recommendations to be submitted to the Society at the Annual Meeting on May 1. The first related to whether the Society should seek recognition from the Unitarian Universalist Association as a Welcoming Congregation; the second to whether the Church should proceed with a modified version of Phase I of the Master Plan adopted by the Congregation in May 2009. The Committee voted to recommend yes on both matters.

Becoming a Welcoming Congregation

For the past year, the Welcoming Congregation Committee has engaged in a variety of activities related to affirming that The First Church is welcoming to people of all sexual and gender orientations. Becoming recognized as such by the Unitarian Universalist Association requires that the Congregation vote to seek such recognition, and the Standing Committee recommends that the Congregation so vote.

Proceeding with Phase I of the Master Plan

At their annual meeting on April 12, the Deacons voted in support of moving forward immediately with a modified version of Phase I of the Plan approved by the Congregation in May 2009. If the Congregation decides to do so, the Deacons also voted to make proceeds from the sale of First Church silver available for the project, and to make a gift of \$25,000 from the Deacon's Fund toward the project.

After many months of working with the Master Plan Implementation Committee to better understand potential costs, considering available assets, seeking input from many of you, and hearing from the Deacons, the Standing Committee too voted to recommend that the Church proceed with a modified version of Phase I of the Master Plan and with an accompanying capital campaign.

It would be impossible to share in this newsletter the level of detailed information considered in this process, so we hope to have a written document available to you before the Annual Meeting. We will send it out by email and also have it available on the Sunday of the meeting. In addition, a presentation will be made at the Annual Meeting. I hope you can make it and will add your voice to this important discussion.

Respectfully,

Nicole McLaughlin, Chair
Standing Committee

Mystic Chorale Spring Concert

Saturday, May 21 at 8:00 pm & Sunday, May 22 at 3:30 pm

Tremont Temple, in Boston, next door to the Parker House Hotel on Tremont Street.
Tickets are \$15.00 in advance or \$18.00 at the door.

This concert will include "Over the Rainbow," in several variations, "God Bless the Child" by Billy Holiday, a few Pete Seeger songs, a few Gospel numbers and a few old standbys. Guaranteed Good time! For more information, see church members and Standing Committee members, Richard L'Heureux and Lynn Taggart.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lifebridge

Thanks to the following who signed up to volunteer to shop or to serve at Lifebridge in April:

George and Ellen Brandenburg, Julia Channing, Mary Collari, Duncan Cox, Richard L'heureux, Michael Mascolo, Betty Nichols, Pete Nugent

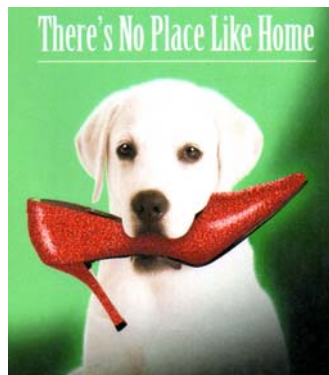
Volunteers are needed on a monthly basis at Lifebridge. Members and friends of the First Church serve dinner twice a month—on the second Wednesday and on the fourth Saturday, 4:45–6:45 pm. To volunteer, see the sign up sheet in the Barnard Room during Fellowship.

Participants in the Palm Sunday Reading of the Passion:

We would like to thank the following church members and friends who participated in this year's reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday. They include *Alicia Dioxzi, Denise Granniss, Chris Granniss, Deborah Greel, Russell Lane, Seth Mascolo, Mike Mascolo, Jeannine Matthews, Tricia Pini, Bob Walker, and Rose Wolf.*

The Wizard of Paws

Come to the Hawthorne Hotel on Thursday, May 12 for an event to benefit the Northeast Animal Shelter. Drink, mingle, and kick up your ruby slippers. Enjoy a bit of drag, along with comedians David Rattigan and Bob Gautreau. Receive complimentary prizes and giveaways.



Tickets are \$50 per person; tax-deductible. Call the Northeast Animal Shelter at 978-745-9888 ext. 315.

Fellowship

Thanks to all those who hosted Fellowship in April:

April 3: *Mary Krigbaum, Leanne Schild, and John Ninneman*

April 10: *Lynn and Ryan Donovan, Claire Donaldson*

April 17: *Deborah Greel, John Wathne, and Tricia Pini*

April 24: *Easter Fellowship; thanks to all who contributed.*



Hosts are still needed for February and beyond. Be sure to sign in the Barnard Room. Feel free to team up with another individual, couple, or family.

Readers and Chalice Lighters

Thanks to those who served as Reader and Chalice Lighter during our Services in April:

April 3: *Chris Finn*

April 17: *Max Burbank*

April 10: *Youth Sunday*

April 24: *Claire Donaldson*

Alliance

The Alliance continues to work with Operation Troop Support by collecting items to send to our deployed and wounded troopers. And thank-you letters pour in. One recently received letter is from the American Red Cross in Kuwait, where the organization helps to keep the troops in touch with their family members, notify them of births, deaths, and other family emergencies, and assists them in getting home during times of family crises.

Recently, OTS contacted the Alliance to let us know that May is the month we collect suntan lotion, skin and body lotion, deodorant, and foot powder to send to our troops. If you would like to help out, bring these items to Charlene Long or take them directly to 16 Trinity Street in Danvers.

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The First Church in Salem, Unitarian
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Salem, Massachusetts 01970

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

Minister's Musings (cont'd from page 1)

Over the last few years, when I had the occasion to introduce Rene to someone at the church, I would say "This is Mr. St. Pierre, Church Sexton and Resident Philosopher." People would always chuckle when I said that. Rene would just stand there with a grin on his face. He knew what was important in this life and not everyone does.

A funeral was held on Thursday, April 14 at the Levesque's Funeral Home here in Salem. Rene was then laid to rest in St. Mary's Cemetery with multiple friends and family in attendance. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Nancy, his children and his many family members. He will be missed.

By the time many of you read this, there will be a variety of updates regarding several proposed items on the agenda of this year's Annual Meeting. I encourage all members and supporters of the church to check our website for updates and look for upcoming email items. This could be a rather busy summer. See you in Church,

Flowers

Sign up to provide flowers for our services. Special wording can 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, or bring your own creation. Arrangements can be simple or elaborate — the choice is yours! See the sign up sheet in The Barnard Room on Sundays during Fellowship, or contact the church office. **Remember to bring one flower with you on May 22 for Flower Communion.**

