

The Messenger

The Newsletter of

THE NORTH PARISH OF NORTH ANDOVER
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

A Welcoming Congregation

190 Academy Road

North Andover, MA 01845-4022

www.northparish.org

Founded 1645

The Reverend Lee A. Bluemel, Minister

The Reverend Jim Sherblom, Leave Minister

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Next Copy Deadline: December 30, 2004

February Calendar Deadline: Monday, January 18, 2005

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WORSHIP AT THE NORTH PARISH

Worship and Religious Ed at 8:30 and 10:30am

Dec 24th ~ Christmas Eve services at 3:30,
5:00 and 7:00pm

Dec. 26th ~ Rev. Jan Bowering and Lani
Arnzen **10:30 ONLY! No 8:30am Service**

Jan. 2 ~ Gail Forsyth-Vail

Jan. 9 ~ Rev. Jim Sherblom

MEMORIAL FLOWERS & STEEPLIGHTING

If you are interested in memorial flowers and/or steeple lighting at \$25 each, call Claire McCarron, 978-689-2858.

Note: Every month in the first Messenger mailing will be the list of all the Flower and Steeple Lighting Memorials.

Spiritual Companionship

As of January, there will be two openings in the Spiritual Companionship group which meets the second and fourth Monday mornings of each month, from 10am to noon, at Susan Van Drie's home in Andover. Please call or email Susan for more information: 978-470-0107; susanvandrie@verizon.net

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

To avoid scheduling conflicts, you must check with the church office before booking meetings/events!

Standard Meetings:

AA: Every Monday, 7:30-9:30 pm, parish hall

Pantry Set-up: Alternate Mondays, 7:30-8:30 pm, OCH 1/3, 1/17, 1/31; 2/14, 2/28; 3/14, 3/28; 4/11, 4/25

People's Pantry: Alternate Tuesdays, 9:30-11am, OCH 1/4, 1/18; 2/1, 2/15; 3/1, 3/15, 3/29; 4/12, 4/29

AI-Anon: Every Thursday, 10 am-noon, parlor & hall

Yoga: New schedule! See Calendar this month. Old Center Hall, Upper floor.

Calendar Month to Date

Group Spiritual Companionship: Mon., Dec. 27, 10-12 pm. Contact Susan Van Drie (See note in this issue.)

Merrimack Valley People for Peace: Tues., Dec. 28, 7pm

SGM Facilitators: Tues., Dec. 28, 7pm

Messenger Deadline Thurs., Dec. 30 at 10am

Steeple Talk Deadline January 1

OWL: Sunday, Jan. 2, 6:30-8:30pm OCH 1st floor

Senior Youth Group: Sunday, Jan. 2, 6:30-8:30pm

SGM, Jeri: Tuesday, January 4, 7pm

All Committee Meeting: Tuesday, January 4, 7pm

Staff Meeting: Friday, January 7, 9:15am Parlor (no phone cover)

OWL Sleep-Over: Friday, January 7, 6pm to January 8 Noon. OCH

Crossroads Coffeehouse: Saturday, Jan. 8, 8 pm, parish hall. www.crossroads-coffeehouse.org. With "Monster" Mike Welch.

Junior Youth Group: Sunday January 9, 6:30pm.

Interweave/Welcoming: Monday, January 10, 7 pm, RE wing.

Social Action Committee: Tuesday Jan. 11, 7pm RE

Parish Council: Tues. Jan. 11, 7:30 pm, parish hall

Messenger Deadline Thurs., Jan. 13 at 10am for

Envelope Mailing

Movie/Book Discussion: Thurs., Jan. 13, 7:30 pm, parlor

GLBT Parent Support Meeting: with Child care, Friday, Jan. 14, 6-8pm Parish Hall and Re room.

Small Group Ministries: Mary Lou. Fri., Jan. 14, 7 pm, parlor

20/30 Something Brunch: Sunday, Jan. 16, 12 noon, Old Center Hall

Andover Art Guild: Sunday, Jan. 16, 2pm

Senior Youth Group: Sunday, Jan. 16, 6:30-8:30pm

Lunch Bunch: Tuesday, Jan. 18, 12 noon, parlor

Trustees Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 18, 7pm parish hall

SGM – Jeri Bayer: Tuesday, Jan. 18, 7pm, parlor

New UU Class: Wed., Jan. 19, 7pm Parish Hall

Soup Night: Thursday, January 20, Call Pam Pappalardo, 978-247-8942

CCNS Open House: Friday, January 21, 1-3pm (Snow date January 28)

Program Committee Catered Dinner, Friday, January 21, Set-up at 4pm, Parish Hall

Junior Youth Group Sleep-Over: Friday, January 21; 6pm to Jan 22 Noon. OCH

Bread and Roses Meal Prep: Saturday, January 22, 2-4pm Trustees turn

OWL: Sunday, Jan. 23, 4-6:15pm OCH 1st floor

SGM Facilitators: Tuesday, January 25, 7pm

MVPP: Tuesday, January 25, 7:30pm

New UU Class: Wed., Jan. 26, 7pm Parish Hall

MESSENGER DEADLINE FRIDAY JANUARY 28 AT 10AM

SGM: Mary Lou. Friday, January 28, 7 pm, parlor

Friday Night Supper (Alison Sparks): Friday, Jan. 28 4pm set-up, supper 6-8.

Sangha Buddhist Meditation and Potluck: Sat. Jan. 29, 4-7pm OCH

Seasonal Suppers in Homes: January 29

OWL: Sunday, Jan. 30, 4:30-6:45pm OCH 1st floor

MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

I'd like to thank, in advance, all those who bring Christmas to North Parish: the musicians we enjoyed on Sunday and will enjoy again on Christmas Eve, the Coming of Age nativity readers, the light-bearers, those who've decorated our sanctuary so beautifully, as well as the children and youth who went caroling on Sunday, bringing our North Parish spirit to some of our home-bound members. It is wonderful to have so many ambassadors of good will, beauty and celebration in this season, which can be so joyous and so bittersweet at the same time.

So many thanks to all of you for the "Blessings Box" full of good wishes for Terry, myself and the baby, which Laura Howell presented to me at the 10:30 service. I am really looking forward to opening it! It was indeed Very Sneaky of all of you, and it is such a meaningful

gift—in fact, I didn't know what to say to express my appreciation. I extend my deepest thanks to everyone. Even while I'm away, you will be very much with me in the weeks to come.

Unless we are surprised by an early arrival, I plan to be in the office through the end of December. (My maternity leave begins January 1st and the due date is January 5th. We will send news when and if we have some!) I hope to see many of you on Christmas Eve, and I wish all of you the best for the holidays and the new year. In faith—

~ Lee

And From Leave Minister ~ Rev. Jim

Thank you for welcoming me so graciously into your community life. I already know that I will enjoy the few months that I have here as your Interim Minister while Lee is on maternity leave.

Please be patient with me as I get to know your names, and please wear your name tags - it makes this process much easier for all of us. I plan to be here two Sundays a month when I'll lead worship, and generally around on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons/evenings for classes and committee meetings, and otherwise when useful.

I would be delighted to meet with anyone who would appreciate it during those times as well. Please call me at 781-466-9552 or send me an email at jim@seaflower.com to make an appointment. I really am looking forward to our time together.

~ Rev Jim Sherblom

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THANK YOU to all those who drove cars and helped chaperone as children went caroling at the homes of some of our elders. Big thanks also to Barry Low for singing with the children on Sunday mornings this month and accompanying them with his accordion.

Thanks also to the advisors and to Kayla Parker, who organized the Senior Youth caroling trip, and to the Junior Youth advisors, who organized that group's Christmas party.

There will be a no-rehearsal "paper bag" pageant on Christmas Eve at the 3:30 service. All those who would like to participate are welcome to come and join the re-enactment of the nativity story.

The January 2 service will be for all ages, the first of the "Great Debates about God" theme for children's/junior youth programming. I seek a few actors-adults, youth, and children-to help dramatize the debate at Nicea in 325 C.E.

To each and every one of you, I wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Gail Forsyth-Vail ~ ~ dre@northparish.org

Office Volunteers Needed:

The office is in need of additional volunteers to help with the Messenger mailing, roughly every other Monday in the mid-morning time frame. We are also looking for volunteers to help with the Steeple Talk mailing, once every other month. If you are able and interested, please call Cynthia or Pam at 978-687-7948.

MANY THANKS

Decorating!

Thanks to those who spent many hours decorating the sanctuary for the holidays: Kim Adami, Jack Bransfield, Luke Bransfield, Fred Glore, Ronda Johns and last but not least - Dave Savini.

Bake Sale a Success!

Fifth graders had overwhelming response (\$243) to a bake sale for Merkeb in November. Approximately \$125 will provide Merkeb with one goat, several hens and \$50 in spending money. This will improve his quality-of-life significantly. Wide Horizons suggests not to overwhelm one family with such luxury that remaining funds go toward helping with needs at a Wide Horizons orphanage. So, our children have chosen to do so. Thank you all so very much.

~ Roberta Whitney

New UU Class

January 19, 26, Feb. 2 7:00 to 9:00 pm

This is a class open to all curious visitors, friends and new members of the congregation who would enjoy a chance to meet others who are new to the church and learn more about Unitarian Universalism and this congregation. The facilitators are John Van Drie and the Rev. Jim Sherblom. Call or email Pam Guerrieo in the church office, 978-687-7948 or adminassist@northparish.org to sign up!

Crossroads Coffeehouse

On January 8th, Crossroads Coffeehouse will feature blues phenom, Monster Mike Welch. While playing at the House of Blues in Cambridge years ago, actor/comedian Dan Aykroyd gave this young Bostonian singer/songwriter/guitarist the nickname "Monster" Mike Welch. "Monster" Mike recorded three widely-acclaimed albums which won the praise of critics from *Musician* to

People magazines and garnered a loyal fan base. His newly released CD, *Adding Insight to Injury*, has been described as "thoughtful, edgy songwriting, passionate vocals" and "a truly original blues CD which will once again poise Welch to take over the blues world by storm."

Crossroads Coffeehouse at North Parish Church, 190 Academy Road, North Andover. Doors open 7:15, concert starts 8:00; tickets are \$14. For information, call 978-687-3960 (978-687-7948 evening of the concert) or visit www.crossroads-coffeehouse.org.

Things to Do in Other Places

Ilse Schenk, parishioner at North Parish, is the "Artist of the Month" during the month of December at the Andover Memorial Hall Library. Her exhibit of MANDALAS and Sacred Geometry shows Ms Schenk's unique and personal interpretation of this ancient art form. Visit before the year ends!

Special Opportunity ~

Transylvanian Christmas Communion Service **Sunday December 26**, 2004 2 p.m. First Parish in Bedford, Unitarian Universalist, 75 The Great Road, Bedford MA.

Please join the Bedford community in celebrating this special occasion with Rev. Csaba Todor. Rev. Todor is the minister in Homorodszentpal in Transylvania. He is a visiting scholar this year at Starr King School for the Ministry. He and his wife Eva and daughter Eszter are spending the semester break in the Boston area.

Transylvanian Unitarians celebrate communion 4 times a year - Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving and Christmas. First Parish celebrated communion at Christmas once before with Rev. Kinga Zsigmond Szekely. Here are some excerpts from her sermon: "*Communion is not only a festive hour when we stand in a circle, it is not only the simple act of sharing bread*

and wine. It is a testimony of our community. We witness each others' lives; we care for each other, that is why we have communion. Taking communion, we remember him and everyone else who taught us to love each other and feel responsible for a community of people." Full text available at www.uua.org/uupcc/resources.html All are welcome for this special occasion.

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John Buehrens, past president of the UUA, author and activist, will be holding a communion service at First Universalist in Salem, MA on **January 2**.

Christmas Offering Approved

Fifty percent of the Christmas offering that will go to charity this year will be split between People's Pantry, which provides food for families in need locally, and Wide Horizons for Children, supporting their programs to help provide health care and education to orphaned children in Ethiopia like Merkeb, the 10 year old boy we are sponsoring.

The Social Action Committee, which coordinates North Parish's efforts to work toward social justice in our local area, will be meeting on **January 11 at 7 pm**, rather than on the first Tuesday. Visitors and anyone interested are more than welcome!

~ Cara Marshall

Fair Trade Coffee

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has partnered with Equal Exchange to sponsor a project to emphasize the use of Fair Trade coffee in our congregations. We will sell the regular / decaf coffee every other Sunday during coffee hour, with profits going to the UUSC and North Parish. See Dan Brosnan or any YAC member.

New GLBT Parents Support Group

A support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender parents is forming. The first meeting will be Friday, January 14, 6:30pm in the Parish Hall. Child care will be available on site. Sponsored by the Interweave/Welcoming Congregation Committee. If interested, please contact Brenda Myers at brendajmyers@comcast.net.

STAFF PHONE EXTENSION CONTACTS AND OFFICE HOURS:

Administrator, Cynthia Sulesky
office@northparish.org M - F, 8:30 – 5:00
978-687-7948

Administrative Assistant, Pam Guerriero
adminassist@northparish.org
M, W, F 9:30—2:30; Sunday 8-1

Director of Religious Ed, Gail Forsyth-Vail
DRE@northparish.org T-F, Sunday, evenings
978-685-7855 or 978-687-7948 Ext. 2

Early Childhood Coordinator, Carolyn Zimmer
earlychildhoodcoord@northparish.org
Tues or Thurs a.m., Sunday

Leave Minister, the Rev. Jim Sherblom
minister@northparish.org Tuesday and
Wednesday afternoon and evenings, various
Sundays and as needed.
confidentialminister@northparish.org

Music Director, Jim Dalton
Music@northparish.org Tues/Thurs.5:30-9pm,
Sunday. 978-687-7948 Ext. 3

Sexton, Richard Beaudoin 978-685-0923
Various evenings, and on-call emergencies.

Guest at Your Table

Please remember to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee putting some money in at each meal through the holiday season. Our goal is that all of our RE students plan and work to become members of our UU Service Committee at the student level of just \$10. Adults

can become UUSC members by completing the membership forms and making the membership contribution. (Note: donations of \$60 or more are matched by the Shelter Rock congregation.) We encourage parents and youth to discuss the work of our Service Committee, an example of which you will find in the following story:

Burma: Harvesting hope

The Karen people are an ethnic minority in Burma – an indigenous people suppressed by a brutal military regime. Naw Paw Paw Htoo is a young Karen woman whose village was twice attacked by the army. The rice paddies, fields and barns were all destroyed.

Faced with the choice of starvation or relocation, Paw Paw’s family fled to Thailand to a refugee camp. There, she attended school and learned about the Karen Women’s Organization (KWO). With support from UUSC, KWO provides resource centers, and safe and accessible training facilities. “People do not want to be refugees,” Paw Paw says. “They want to live with dignity in their own land. When there is true peace in Burma, refugee camps will begin to disappear.”

Paw Paw became a member of KWO and received training on human rights, women’s rights and leadership. She now works with KWO’s orphan program, providing basic needs so children can attend school in the camps – and developing their leadership for the day when they will be able to return home in peace.

Other stories of hope can be found at <http://www.uusc.org/ia/gayt/2004/pdf/stories.pdf>

**GREAT POND SANGHA BUDDHIST GROUP
New 2005 Schedule**

Buddhist Meditation (guided) and Discussion first and third Wednesdays 730-9pm OCH (Old Center Hall) upstairs beginners/teens welcome drop in or call Laura Howell for more info 978-685-8323.

Buddhist Meditation (peer-led) and Study Group second and fourth Wednesdays 730-9pm OCH upstairs. Call Susan Malloy to sign up 978-474-0823.

Intergenerational Buddhist Meditation and Potluck (includes children's session) usually the last Saturday of the month 4-7pm OCH upstairs. Please RSVP to Regina Jesser 978-975-8153.

Guided Dzogchen Intergenerational Meditation & Discussion Meditation & Potluck	Peer-led Meditation & Study Group	
1/5	1/12	
1/19	1/26	1/29
2/2	2/9	
2/16	2/23	2/26
3/2	3/9	
3/16	3/23	3/19
4/6	4/13	
4/20	4/27	4/30
5/4	5/11	
5/18	5/25	5/28
6/1	6/8	
6/15	6/22	6/25
7/6	7/13	
7/20	7/27	7/30
8/3	8/10	
8/17	8/24	8/27
9/7	9/14	
9/21	9/28	9/24
10/5	10/12	
10/19	10/26	10/29
11/2	11/9	
11/16	11/23	11/19
12/7	12/14	12/17
12/21	12/28	