

EVENT

Summer
2009

The Newsletter of First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ
11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 Telephone 617-547-2724

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*Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
the Lord
answered me and set me in a broad place.*

— Psalm 118:5

A broad place. Doesn't that sound nice? As part of the opening devotions at our June Executive Council meeting, we were invited to ponder what such a broad place looks like for each of us. After a few minutes of prayerful silence, folks began to share. Some minds and hearts went quickly to worship at First Church. A broad and beautiful place indeed. Another talked about taking her daughter to college in Indiana and that summer's drive through Midwestern cornfields. Lovely. I myself "went" a few miles off the coast of Maine to a 3-acre island, where I hope to be kayak-camping this summer atop a bed of pine needles and under a canopy of tall trees, as ocean waves crash on the rocky shore. A broad and quiet place, with water!

For many, summer has the feeling of a broad place or at least of a broad time. People scatter some, and our hearts go with them. Meetings are sparser. Days are longer.

Whether we call on God out of distress or exhaustion or even from a newfound love or joy, what are those broad places that come to mind for you? Where might God be trying to set you and meet you in these coming months? Even for those

taking "staycations," those who can't afford time off, those who are busy working or looking for work, I trust that a broad place awaits us all.

Just imagine the much different life of the Psalmist thousands of years ago and what ideas came to mind then. These words are so much more than a whistle blowing at the end of the day, week, or year, telling us it's time to get away. This kind of broad place cannot be found on Travelocity! Instead these words remind us of the broad place of conversation and relationship and encounter with the divine that's available anytime and anywhere, so long as our hearts call out God's holy name. Perhaps these words are even an invitation to do only that and then to leave it to God to choose the meeting spot. "Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place."

In his classic book *I and Thou* the Jewish writer Martin Buber suggests that there are at least three ways that our relationship with the divine is mediated, that is, there are at least three ways that we can come to know God *through* our human experiences. Let's call them three places. The first is the realm of our relationships with nature. The second is the realm of our relationships with art. And the third is the realm of our relationships with other human beings. In each realm, in each place of encounter,

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there is a sad potential for objectifying the other and living in “I – it” relationship with that which is around us. I’ll leave it to you to conjure examples. But in each of these three potentially broad places there is also an opportunity to know God’s presence and to apprehend a “Thou” in and through our day to day experiences. This is but a blurry snapshot of a very deep, provocative, and highly recommended book, but it serves to give a clearer picture of those broad places in which we may find ourselves set by God. In the course of a day, at work or at play, whether through an encounter with a ladybug, through a visit to a museum, through a moment with a street artist, or over a tall glass of lemonade with a friend or a stranger, these are some of the places wherein we can participate in an “I-Thou” relationship with God, to carry on that deeper conversation, to call out and to be answered.

Over the course of this summer may we each allow ourselves some broad places and times, where the “we” becomes “I” and where “it” becomes “Thou.” Read a book, whether deep or frivolous, or try to drink in some live music. Take an extra ten minutes for quiet prayer or meditation, whether in the early morning sun or in the extended twilight. Ask a neighbor to join you for a Sunday stroll. Call out God’s name, and cultivate a broad place your life. Anytime and anywhere.

Until we meet again...

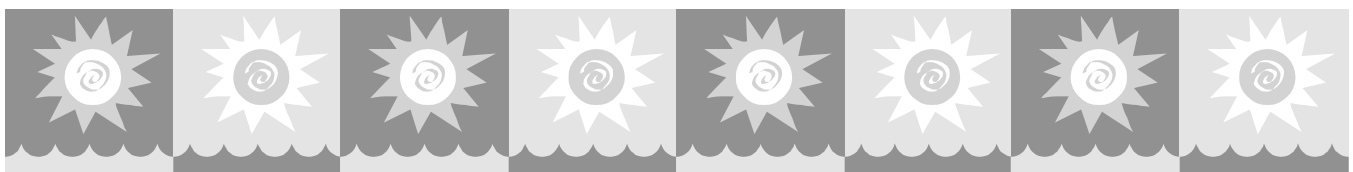
God’s peace,

Dan

EVENT is a regular publication of First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

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The due date for contributions for the Fall issue of **EVENT** is August 17. This issue will cover activities and plans through the months of September, October, and early November.



SUMMER SUNDAYS AT FIRST CHURCH

Note: From July 5 through August 30 Sunday Morning Worship will begin at 10:00 a.m. There will be no formation programs for adults or children during the summer, but there will be weekly "pick up choir" rehearsals starting at 9:00 a.m. Morning Worship will be a simplified service that will be welcoming of all children, and we encourage their participation.

The nursery will be staffed on summer Sundays from 9:00 to 11:30. In addition, the Hastings Room (for quieter activity) and the outdoor play area (for more energetic activity) will be available to accommodate older children for whom the service becomes too long, provided that at least two adults are supervising in each location. Adults who volunteer to supervise children playing board games or reading in the Hastings Room will be able to follow the service in the sanctuary by means of the audio system in that room.

July 5. Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Worship begins at 10:00 a.m.!)

| | |
|------------|---|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, In-care student Jocelyn Gardner, preaching, Multigenerational Communion-in-the-Round |
| 1:00 p.m. | Outdoor Church, Cambridge Common |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, Margaret Jewett Hall |

July 12. Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, Karin Case, preaching |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH |

July 19. Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, Karin Case, preaching |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH |

July 26. Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, Dan Smith, preaching |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH |

August 2. Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, Karin Case, preaching, Multigenerational Communion-in-the-Round |
| 1:00 p.m. | Outdoor Church, Cambridge Common |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH |

August 9. Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, Dan Smith, preaching |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH |

August 16. Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Pick up Choir |
| 10:00 a.m. | Morning Worship, In-care student Krysia Burnham, preaching |
| 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health and Spirituality Group, Tower Room |
| 5:30 p.m. | Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH |

August 23. Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:00 a.m. Pick up Choir
 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Dan Smith, preaching
 2:00 p.m. Mental Health and Spirituality Group,
 Tower Room
 5:30 p.m. Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH

August 30. Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:00 a.m. Pick up Choir
 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship, In-care student Anna
 Kreisle Humble, preaching
 2:00 p.m. Mental Health and Spirituality Group,
 Tower Room
 5:30 p.m. Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH

September 6. Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (*Worship returns to 11:00 a.m.!*)

- 10:00 a.m. Pick up Choir
 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Multigenerational
 Communion, Karin Case, preaching
 2:00 p.m. Mental Health and Spirituality Group,
 Tower Room
 5:30 p.m. Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting, MJH

September 13. Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Regathering Sunday

- 10:00 a.m. Regathering Breakfast, MJH
 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship, Multigenerational
 Service, Dan Smith, preaching
 12:30 p.m. Second Sunday Lunch, MJH
 2:00 p.m. Mental Health and Spirituality Group,
 Tower Room
 5:00 p.m. Jazz Vespers Regathering Celebration,
 MJH

SEASONS AND TRANSITIONS

“For everything there is a season.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)
 It’s tempting for me to see this as a statement about opportune timing. It’s more, I believe, about the wisdom of understanding that everything comes to an end at some point.

As Christians, however, we believe that endings are not deaths as we usually understand them, but times of change and transition in which nothing is lost and everything is transformed. We’re also lucky enough to have a community to remind us of this hope and belief, when fear or grief and loss overcome us.

I’ve been unusually attuned to transitions lately and to the sense of loss that can accompany them, whether the transition is one of celebration or mourning. At First Church we’ve been observing all kinds of transitions, such as the many milestones that come at the end of the academic calendar. We’re also in a time of transition, as we search for a new pastor. Even our schedule is in transition, as we change to summer worship hours.

Transitions may go through many possible stages: preparation, a new reality, its concrete effects, or a sense of loss or newness (often simultaneously), to name but a few. Our Christian hope holds all aspects of transition within the context of our conviction that they are all part of the process of transformation.

As you may suspect, I’m keenly aware of my own transition at the moment, bringing a beloved and blessed time as ministerial intern at First Church to a close. There’s joy and excitement in returning to First Church in September as the Affiliate Minister for Mental Health Outreach. Yet at the same time I’m coming to terms with the reality of this big change; it comes with no small sense of loss, as it impacts relationships and introduces shifts in identity.

A human reality is that transition, whatever the occasion, is always easier when supported by others and by a community. I feel speechlessly grateful for the way First Church has marked this particular transition with such a gracious blessing; I do feel blessed by it,

and I pray that you feel blessed by me as I hold you in deep gratitude.

May First Church, in its faithful life as the beloved community, continue to practice extravagant blessings on one another during this time of many transitions, and to bring that blessing out into this beloved world that so desperately longs to hear it.

Christ's peace,

Terry

CHRISTIAN FORMATION MILESTONES

Confirmation

At morning worship on June 7 three First Church youth were confirmed: Peter Wilson-Braun, Isobel Heck, and Brent Lo. Other confirmation class participants who chose not to be confirmed at this time but were recognized and celebrated were Sarah Robinson, Margaret Efthim, and Ian Ball.

Recognition of Christian Formation Teachers and Leaders

Also during morning worship on June 7 First Church gave thanks to those many teachers and small group leaders who have shared their gifts with people of every age in this congregation:

Nursery: Devin Hansen, Sarah Higginbotham

Godly Play 1: Ellen Rohan Ball, Nora Willcutts, Martha and George Dyer, Stefanie Haug, Stephen Weller

Godly Play 2: Susie Longfield, Mary Louise Culpepper, Sarania Lazar, Beth Loomis, Sarah Marshall

Middle School Group: Stephanie Paulsell, Victoria Mills, Dick Harter, Andrea Seek

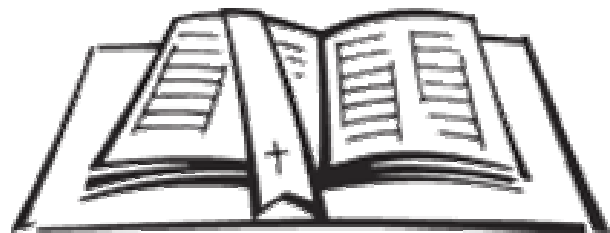
Confirmation Class: Asher Kaboth, Barbara Kroft, Dan Smith

Bible Study and Small Groups:
Jaime Bonney

Kurt and Anita Winikka
Carter West
Terry McKinney
Cynthia Shoemaker
Jan Lo
Lindsay Miller
Dick and Gay Harter
Evan Ingersoll

These leaders have helped First Church members and friends to strengthen our understanding of what it means to be disciples of Jesus and to be Christians in our community and world. They have taught us about the Bible, engaged in soul searching conversations, and helped us to reflect on our practices as Christians. They have helped us to take one more step or several on our ongoing journeys of religious learning and spiritual formation

We are still seeking a small handful of new Godly Play teachers to join the teaching teams for THREE Godly Play classes in the coming year. All new teachers will be placed on teams with veteran teachers. If you might be interested in considering this, you are asked to contact Sarah Higginbotham, shigginb@firstchurchcambridge.org or 617-547-2724 ext. 42.





GBIO UPDATE – FROM CONVERSATION ...TO RESEARCH ...TO ACTION!

Here's a recap of this Spring's Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) happenings:

Remember back in February? We met in small group discussions — our Conversations on the Economy. Over three sessions we gathered in 24 small groups that involved roughly 100 First Church members! We shared stories about the ways in which the economic crisis is affecting our lives and the lives of people we care about. We did some preliminary thinking and imagining about how we might act together to address some of these issues at their root causes.

In March a large group of us gathered for an interpretive session, so we could begin to discern what we were really hearing — what issues are truly affecting our community.

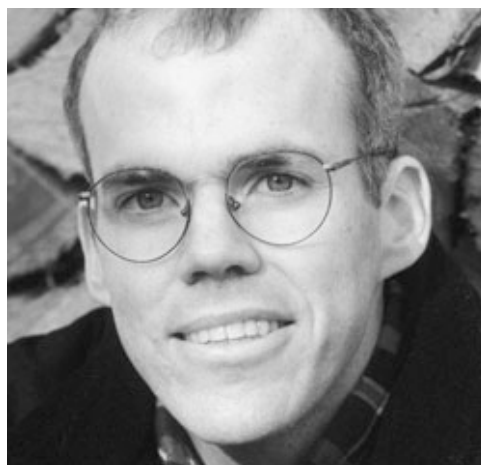
In April we took those issues to our Jewish, Christian, and Muslim partners in GBIO, where we were strengthened to realize that many of our issues are shared issues.

Across GBIO four main categories of issues have emerged:

- ◆ Jobs and Joblessness (including green jobs and where all that stimulus money is going!)
- ◆ Student Loans

- ◆ Credit Card Interest Rates and Usurious Practices
- ◆ Mortgage Lending/Foreclosures

And now we have begun the next phase of organizing the campaign, what GBIO calls Research Actions. These are meetings we set up with individuals who can help us better understand the issues, who are powerful decision makers, and who can help us move forward with strategic public action. We are meeting with state and federal legislators, heads of local banks and government agencies, and a wide range of economists. We are also meeting in issue-specific research teams to share what we learn. If you are interested in participating in this research or if you know a person with whom we should be meeting, please contact Alice Kidder, flintkiddr@aol.com, Jaime Bonney, jbonney@gmail.com, or Dan Smith, dsmith@firstchurchcambridge.org. And stay tuned! The next step is ACTION!



GETTING TO 350*: A CALL TO CLIMATE ACTION

Sunday, October 18. Save the Date! 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship at First Church, Bill McKibben, preaching 2:00 p.m. Community Forum,

Memorial Church, Harvard

In anticipation of the October 24 International Day of Climate Action (1,000 actions are already registered at www.350.org!), writer and environmentalist Bill McKibben will be in Cambridge on October 18 to offer his penetrating insights on global and local efforts for climate justice and the individual, institutional, and political change the crisis demands.

Bill will start the day by preaching at First Church in Cambridge. After church and across the Common, people of faith and people of conscience, educators and community leaders, scientists and students will gather for a broader, community-wide forum at Memorial Church, Harvard University, to hear and to usher forth a common call to action.

Together we can make it clear that the world needs an international plan that meets the latest scientific evidence and safeguards our irreplaceable earth for future generations. Mark your calendar today — Sunday, October 18, 11:00 a.m. at First Church in Cambridge and 2:00 p.m. at Memorial Church, Harvard University

**Scientists say that 350 parts per million CO² in the atmosphere is the safe upper limit for a populous, livable planet. Learn more about 350 — what it means, where it came from, and how to get there — at www.350.org.*

GUEST LECTURE AND LUNCHEON

sponsored by First Church Shelter

Sunday, October 11, 12:30 p.m.,
Margaret Jewett Hall. Save the Date!

On October 11 First Church rededicates itself to the work of its First Church Shelter. Following worship that day **Richard Weissbourd**, author of *The Parents We Mean to Be: How Well-Intentioned Adults Undermine Children's Moral and Emotional Development*, will deliver the **First Doris Beauvais Lecture**. A luncheon will precede Dr. Weissbourd's presentation. The lecture is named in honor of the

late former member of First Church Doris Beauvais, who was instrumental in helping the church make the decision to open a shelter in the basement over twenty years ago.

Richard Weissbourd is currently a lecturer in education at Harvard Graduate School of Education and at the Kennedy School of Government. His work focuses on vulnerability and resilience in childhood, the achievement gap, moral development, and effective schools and services for children. For several years he worked as a psychologist in community mental health centers as well as on the Annie Casey Foundation's New Futures Project, an effort to prevent children from dropping out of school.

Dr. Weissbourd is a founder of several interventions for at-risk children, including ReadBoston and WriteBoston, city-wide literacy initiatives led by Mayor Menino. With Robert Selman, he founded Project ASPIRE, a social and ethical development intervention in three Boston schools. He is also a founder of a new pilot school, the Lee Academy, which begins with children at 3 years old. He has advised on the city, state, and federal levels on family policy and school reform and has written for numerous scholarly and popular publications. He is also author of *The Vulnerable Child: What Really Hurts America's Children and What We Can Do About It* (Addison-Wesley, 1996).

The Shelter Committee will also provide information and offer an invitation to join in efforts to stabilize the work of the shelter and help ensure its financial viability. There is no charge for either the luncheon or the presentation.



CHOIR RECORDING AVAILABLE

The recording of our choir's performance of the Durufle Requiem, sung jointly with the choir of United Parish in Brookline last fall, is now available. The CD includes both performances of the work, the one at First Church on October 26 and the one at United Parish in Brookline on November 2. Donations will be gratefully received and will be used for the First Church music budget to support the needed overhaul of the chapel organ console. Donations in any amount will be welcomed, but the suggested amount is \$10.00 for each CD. CDs will be available on several Sundays beginning May 31, from the church office during normal office hours, or at other times by arrangement with Paul Sawyer. Cash is cheerfully accepted, and checks should be made payable to First Church in Cambridge, Congregational.

CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

"Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Hope for Things Unseen"

First Church's Middle East Task Force has increasingly found Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) to be a valuable source of information and policy guidance concerning issues of peace and reconciliation in Israel/Palestine. CMEP is a coalition of 22 North American Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant national church bodies and organizations, working in support of U. S. policies that are conducive to Israeli-Arab peacemaking and a positive future for all the peoples of the region.

As a means of developing this relationship further, Gay Harter and I participated in CMEP's 2009 Advocacy Conference, held in Washington, DC, June 7-9, on the theme "Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Hope for Things Unseen." We left feeling more empowered, more aware of the issues, and less alone in our desire for peace in this area of the world that we have come to love.

At the opening worship service the preacher was the Episcopal Bishop of Maryland, the Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton. His text was from Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." He reminded us of all the walls through history that have been destroyed, taken down, or overcome. Some hope flickered in all of us. We came from all over the United States, ordained and lay, 150 in all. We shared information about our work, our travels to Israel and Palestine, and when it was that we decided we needed to work for peace.

What we heard and learned would fill more than this whole issue of EVENT. These are a few of the highlights:

- ◆ The approval rating of the United States throughout the Middle East has continued to go up since January. 79% of the Saudi people admire President Obama.
- ◆ Egypt and Jordan are the most neutral toward the US, probably because they were most affected by the Gaza crisis and feel that the United States has not done enough to help.
- ◆ The speaker from the National Iranian American Council expressed hope that the Iranian election would result in the defeat of President Ahmedinejad.
- ◆ Everyone was excited by the speech made by President Obama in Cairo on June 4 and felt that there is now a window of hope and opportunity that needs to be respected and not ignored.
- ◆ The two speakers from the New American Foundation, one an Israeli Jew and the other a Muslim, echoed the sense of urgency to work toward peace, saying that it was not going to get any easier. It was very encouraging to see these two men from different backgrounds, obviously close colleagues, demonstrate the possibility of peace among all groups of people.

Monday, June 9, was devoted to lobbying our representatives in Congress. It began with a workshop addressed by two Congressional staff members, one from the office of a Representative from Louisiana and one from the office of a Representative from Virginia. Discussing the most effective means of lobbying, they told us to:

- ◆ Know our representative, learn how he or she has voted and the committees on which she or he

serves.

- ◆ Avoid focusing on issues, such as human rights, and emotional statements, but rather cite personal experiences that motivate your views.
- ◆ **MOST IMPORTANT: COMMUNICATE TO THOSE WHO REPRESENT YOU. THANK THEM FOR VOTING AND FOR THE WORK THEY DO.** This was heard from those we visited also.

Then we gathered in a meeting room in the House of Representatives Rayburn Building for a Congressional breakfast. There were prayers by the Chaplain of the House and three other clergy. Four Representatives spoke to us, including Representative Delahunt, from the congressional district south of Boston. All thanked us for the work we were doing and gave assurances that the peace of the Holy Land is important to them.

After the breakfast we fanned out, each to meet with staff from his or her Representative's office. In Representative Markey's office Gay and I met with a young man, who had responsibility for foreign affairs. He was welcoming and articulate about the issues and told us that Representative Markey is supportive of President Obama's statements opposing any expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. He assured us that Representative Markey would support any peace initiatives that come before the Congress.

After lunch the five of us from Massachusetts went first to Senator Kennedy's office, where the meeting with the staff person was agreeable but subdued, perhaps because of the concern over the Senator's health. Finally, at the office of Senator Kerry we met with Daniel Beniam, one of his staffers, who also serves as staff of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee of which Senator Kerry is chair. He is an articulate, knowledgeable young man, who engaged the five of us in a lively conversation, providing us with background information and some political realities.

The sense of urgency regarding the need to support President Obama and our elected representatives, as they work to bring peace to Israel/Palestine, was conveyed by many. In addition, we heard emphatically that our concern for peace as Christians needs to have a more forceful and continuing voice.

What can you and I do?

- ◆ Continue our education to understand the complex issues.
- ◆ Participate in CMEP's program of action alerts at www.cmep.org. After registering for CMEP's mailing list, you will receive notification of current issues in Congress and will be provided with easy options to send advocacy messages to your Congressperson. The CMEP website also provides valuable current information about the situation in Israel/Palestine.
- ◆ Lastly, pray. Pray for the people of Israel and Palestine and for the leaders of these countries and ours for wisdom, strength, and courage. Pray for ourselves that our faith has the assurance of hope and the conviction that peace will come.

— Linda Ziebell



NEW MEMBERS

On Sunday, June 21, seven new members were welcomed into First Church. To help us all become better acquainted with one another, following are brief introductions of the new members:

Suzanna and Geoffrey Challen began coming to First Church last September and were married in January. Both Suzanna and Geoffrey are graduate students at Harvard. Suzanna is pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science, studying immigration policy, and Geoffrey is pursuing a Ph.D. in Computer Science, studying sensor networks. They both reside with Harvard undergraduates as resident tutors. While they have enjoyed being part of the Harvard academic community, they are excited to join First Church, where they felt immediately welcome.

Stephanie Krokidas and Earl Shaw have been married four years and live in Waltham. Stephanie is from New Haven, CT, and works as an elementary school art teacher in Canton. Earl is from rural Manitoba and works as an electrical engineer at Teradyne. Earl and Stephanie were drawn to First Church by its inclusive atmosphere and strong sense of community.

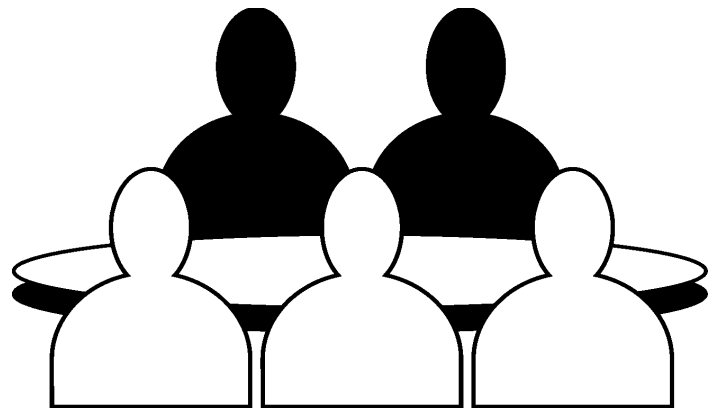
Zoe Newman Castro moved to Sudbury last June by way of Austin, TX, and Ann Arbor, MI. She teaches elementary school at Apple Valley Montessori and is delighted to have found First Church after visiting quite a number of congregations in the Boston area. Zoe enjoys quilting, music, reading, and walking with her golden retriever mix Annie.

Rachel Carlson, a native of Virginia Beach, VA, has lived in the Boston area for over ten years. She lives with Elizabeth Lovance in Somerville and enjoys working in their garden and running an occasional road race. Rachel is a management consultant to public housing authorities, which she advises on regulatory compliance and improving business operations. Elizabeth introduced Rachel to First Church over a year ago.

Elizabeth Lovance grew up in suburban Milwaukee, WI, attended college in western Massachusetts, and moved to the Boston area eight years ago after a few years in Minneapolis. She currently lives with Rachel

Carlson in Somerville, where she enjoys gardening in a rare sunny city backyard and cooking the results. She works as a consultant with a software company in Lexington. She enjoys the change of pace of the walk to church on Sunday mornings, watching the changing seasons and shops along Massachusetts Avenue.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOTES



April 27 Meeting

Members of the Ministerial Search Team reported to Executive Council at its April meeting on the team's summary of the questionnaire responses received from church members, noting that these results would be made available on the church website.

Council approved a motion from the Deacons that "Terry McKinney's role at First Church Cambridge be transitioned to that of Affiliate Minister for Mental Health Outreach with the job description outlined in his proposal, with a compensation of \$5,000 to be generated from the Ministerial Intern line and the Deacons' budget for one year." The position would be a transitional one, amounting to five hours per week; it would enable continuation, for at least the next academic year, of a ministry recognized as valuable and growing. The only intern to be employed next year would be a student to help out during Sarah Higginbotham's sabbatical (salary savings used for that purpose). The conclusion of Terry McKinney's service as Ministerial Intern would be recognized in a reception after church on June 14.

Michael Swartz updated Council on the Shelter Committee's continued attention to Shelter finance,

including the recognized need for ways of reducing the Shelter's deficit. A list of anticipated Shelter expenses for next year would be presented to Council in May. Representatives from the Missions Committee expressed an interest in hosting a forum in the fall, perhaps at one or more 10 o'clock hours, on steps the church and its individual members could take to reduce their carbon footprints. Staff reports from Sarah, Karin, and Dan touched on recognition and recruitment of Church School teachers, plans to hold a series of Sacred Conversations on Race, the Musicales scheduled for June 7, appreciation for the fine services of the choir, deacons, and staff during Lent and Holy Week observances, an engaged GBIO Core Group of eight or so members, the importance of First Church's work with in-care seminarians (especially the three now concluding their in-care time with us and the three beginning it), and the planned dedication and installation of Mary Luti's portrait on June 21.

May Meeting

After reflecting on a scriptural reading from Mark concerning Jesus' feeding of the 5000, the Executive Council:

- ◆ Heard from Treasurer Brian James about first quarter budget expenditures and about a seminar on church financial management that he, Marc O'Brien, and Jan Lo had attended,
- ◆ Heard about the plans of the Ministerial Search Team to report on its progress after church on May 30 and to make the church profile available to the congregation, once it is completed,
- ◆ Heard about the Buildings and Grounds Committee's work in having some windows painted in early summer and having some church floors refurbished over the next few months. Heard also that an energy audit had identified church lighting as the major energy expenditure, with savings of \$2,600-\$4,000 annually likely through a replacement of lighting fixtures. Learned that an energy audit of the parsonage would also take place,
- ◆ In response to a B&G need to meet an unanticipated expense, Council authorized allocation of an amount not to exceed \$10,000 (expected repairs to cost \$7,500) to repair gutter and fascia molding on the parsonage that is causing water infiltration and damage to the ceiling in the south parlor. The Copper & Slate Roof Company, having very good references, would be the contractor for the project with

work to proceed immediately,

- ◆ Reviewed a "Projected Capital Plan" for the Shelter for the next ten years, with a list of anticipated capital expenses, and encouraged the Shelter Committee to continue with such planning, in conjunction with the B&G and Stewardship Committees,
- ◆ Heard that the Missions and Social Justice Committee is soliciting applications for Awake to the Spirit grants (due in September with decisions to be announced in October). Learned also about the Kids for Peace summer camp project that Peggy Stevens is initiating and about the meeting on June 14 following morning worship to discuss ways of working on greener church and eco-stewardship issues. Was reminded of the need to keep working to support the homeless,
- ◆ Approved inviting members of the Harvard Square LDS church destroyed by fire to use our sanctuary after 1:00 p.m. on Sundays for the near future, along with the office space we currently have available (and so extending Dan Smith's offer of May 24 Sunday use),
- ◆ Heard from Dan and Karin about various activities and developments, the newest being that Pamela Cochran, a seminary student well-qualified for work in Christian education and Creative Worship and Arts, had accepted the position of Ministerial Intern for the coming year and that Bill McKibben, considered a prophet of the environmental movement, would be visiting and possibly preaching on October 18, an event deserving of wide publicity.

Staff reports also included mention of the praiseworthy work of the pastoral care teams, the farewell reception for Terry McKinney after church on June 14, Sarah Higgenbotham's intention to work a couple of hours per week during October through December, the dedication and installation of Mary Luti's portrait scheduled for June 21, the June 3 open meeting to explore ideas about endowment concerns, the updating of the sanctuary ministerial plaque, the composition of the transitional team meeting to serve as a steering or coordinating committee for the Executive Council, exploration of possibilities for a high school youth group, current GBIO endeavors, and sought feedback concerning the Sacred Conversations on Race that the planning group would continue to host.



EVENT

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