

United Parish of Auburndale

TOGETHER

Dec. 26, 2010

First Sunday in Christmas



Sacrament of Baptism: Natalie Lynch

Preaching: Jean Alexander

Sermon: "By Another Road"

Scriptures: Isaiah 63:7-9

Matthew 2:1-12

Head Ushers: Natalie Austrian

Assistant Usher: Jan and Doug Spicer

Acolytes: P.J. Membrino and Willis Herlihy

Fellowship Time: Pot Luck

Matthew's version of the Christmas story continues on this Sunday with the visit of the wise men and their encounter with Herod. I was intrigued this year with the very last words of the text which tells how they were warned by a dream not to go back and tell Herod where the baby was, but returned home "by another road." Christmas invites us to take another road into the future, a road that leads to new life for all.

Christmas blessings to you all,

Fellowship of the Concerned:

Our prayers are with **Barbara Edmunds** who has moved to a retirement facility in New Hampshire near some of her children. Her new address is:

Windham Terrace
3 Church Road
Windham NH 03087
Phone: **603-537-2570**

Please also keep in your prayers **Arlene Heiss** who will be having surgery this Wednesday
Congratulations to **Marilyn** and **Granville Harris** on the birth of their first grandchild on Nov. 9th, **Mateo Landon Meier**.

Upcoming Services

December 24-Christmas Eve Services

5 pm-Family Worship
Let by the youth group
7:30 Candlelight Communion
A Service of Lessons and Carols.

January 2- Communion Sunday

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31: 7-14
Matthew 2:13-22
Sermon: Homecomings and New Beginnings
Preaching: Michael Nilon

Senior Ministries Calendar 2011

January 19 Noon - Bring a sandwich and Sail Away with Walter Piescik who will do a show and tell about his adventures "kiting."

February 23 Noon - Bring a Sandwich - Bruce Hanson will talk about his time in the 1960's working at the National Council of Churches, Division of Religion and Race and how it was involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

March 16 - Bowling at Fairway in Natick-11 a.m. – leaving the UPA @ 10:30 we will bowl for an hour and then have lunch at a nearby restaurant.

April 13 - A visit to the American Heritage Museum in Concord and lunch in the Colonial Inn.

Monday Musing

Yesterday was a wonderful, wild and wooly day! We ran out of bulletins which is always a good sign.

The baptism for Casey James FuWei Wong was so special. Most of you probably don't know this but Barry Wong was baptized at the then Auburndale Congregational Church by Eugene Meyer, Betty Meyer's late husband, as were all his other brothers except Bruce. How special is it to have another generation of Wongs be baptized here! I'm sure Barry's parents, Helen and Jim, were present with the communion of saints to see this little guy become a part of the Christian community. We had done a "rehearsal" on Saturday because you never quite know how a two year old is going to react, but he was a perfect little fellow. He even let me walk him down the aisle. When I suggested that he wave, he did and everyone waved back.

During the Joys and Concerns we dedicated a beautiful star in memory of Sandra Ross who had directed the pageant for so many years. Toni Miller has written a description of how it came to be elsewhere in the Together so I won't say more except that it was just the perfect thing to do in her memory.

And then there was the pageant. This was a pageant to end all pageants. If Sandra was watching with Helen and Jim Wong, she must have gotten a big laugh. First it was huge. There were about 50 kids participating. (Katie Jackson thinks we are going to have to get more animal costumes for next year and I've put in a vote for chickens.) The baby Jesus slept peacefully in Laura Andersen's arms. The star angel proudly shone Sandra's star over the whole event. There was the usual array of angels and shepherds and wise men, but it was the animals who stole the show. We had two very obstreperous little animals, a cow and a sheep that were a particular delight, but there were also a few errant angels. The animal keepers had their hands full and I noticed some adults strategically poised to make sure that the little animals didn't leave the building.

I was exhausted just from watching all that energy contained in one place! But the day wasn't over. At 4 pm about 35-40 adults and children showed up to go carol singing. I divided them up into two groups and sent them out where they brought delight to a number of our neighbors. I fed them hot chocolate and cookies when they returned, and then went home to sit comatose in front of the TV for the evening and read the rest of the newspaper. Whew.

It is a good thing I went on retreat last Thursday. I had seen that Rolling Ridge had some Advent retreat days. Since I had never been to Rolling Ridge, the UMC retreat center, and since I am taking the confirmands there next spring, I decided to go. It is such a lovely spot and I needed some quiet reflection time. I also met a former UPA member Jeannie Martin who was on the same retreat. She is leading a retreat there in the spring and I will include information about it later for those who might be interested.

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Soon it will be Christmas. Bruce and I are looking forward to a quiet day on the 25th because after church on the 26th we are heading for a week away with grandson Miguel and Bruce's step-daughter Maya and her family. They will ski and I will cook and read, play games and maybe snowshoe. Michael will be preaching on January 2nd.

I hope that your holidays are filled with people you love. If I don't see you on Christmas Eve, have safe travels and I look forward to seeing you in 2011.

Jean

First Friday for Families

January 7th 6:30-8:30 pm

Join us for a quiet evening of dinner and discussion with other parents. Becky Connor and Mike Nilon will lead us in a discussion on the spirituality of parenting from the NPR series "Speaking of Faith"

Child care provided

Bring a salad or dessert to share

Donation requested \$10-20

Rsvp on Facebook or to Jean Alexander by

Wednesday January 5th. jalexander@upanewtonma.org



Special Offering For Christmas

The special offering for Christmas will benefit two non-profit organizations that serve the homeless. **HomeStart**, where UPA member Linda Wood Boyle is president, assists homeless people in obtaining permanent housing. **Community Day Center of Waltham** is a daytime shelter for homeless and other low-income adults. Please drop your contributions in the regular Sunday collection baskets before year-end.



Have You Noticed the Two New Pieces Hanging in the Parish Hall?

In the Centenary Room is the piece given by Homer Jernigan and his family in memory of Margaret Jernigan that explains the symbolism in the Centenary stained glass windows.

In the parish hall is a wood carving of the Last Supper. It was gifted by Mary Lou and David Walsh.

This carving was done by David's father who was a wood carver and enjoyed reproducing historical moments in history. He had his own working shop, The Artistic Carving Co. in Boston for over 37 years.

David is so happy to have found a wonderful home for this piece of art.

From the Open & Affirming And Reconciling Committee



Please join us for a forum on **Jan 9th at 11:30** when our guest will be a representative from Waltham House. For the past three years Waltham House has been one of the organizations that the UPA has supported with our Outreach dollars. The Open & Affirming and Reconciling Committee has also provided dinner and pumpkins for the residents on two separate occasions.

Waltham House is a group home program designed to provide a safe and supportive living environment for up to 12 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth ages 14-18. We will hear what programs are working and what programs have been improved to provide the services needed for this age group. This home was the first residential group home designed specifically for GLBTQ in New England.

Thank you. David Walsh



The 2011 Coffee Hour Schedule is just about complete. You should be receiving it by week's end.

It would be helpful if you would write down "your" Sunday on your calendar (date book . . . I-phone . . . Blackberry . . . whatever). That way it won't come as a complete surprise when you get a reminder letter.

Most people are in the same slot they were in this year. Please remember that it is up to you to make switches if the need arises. You have all done a fantastic job hosting and finding people who are able to swap Sundays. The congregation along with the Community Board thanks you.

When you receive the schedule please let Toni Miller know if there are any misspellings or incorrect phone numbers. Thanks, Toni Miller (tjkjkm14@yahoo.com)

Maine Seacoast Mission trip will be August 13-20.2011

*Since this is the season for giving, sharing and receiving, the Outreach Board would like to let you know that Maine Seacoast Mission trip will be August 13-20.2011. Since there maybe families that will make decisions soon about summer camp, we wanted to let you know this house repair mission week dates are set. We're hoping that this summer, families will join the team for a worthwhile, rewarding and fun week. More details in January or if you have questions please call **Carol Walsh**, of the Outreach Board.*

Find Yourself on the UPA Photo Wall

The Photo Wall has been updated, but it's not complete.

- * **Are you new to the parish? (Members and participants are both welcome.)**
- * **Do you have a new member in your family?**
- * **Were you unable to have your picture taken for the 2009 Photo Directory?**

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, please take a picture for the UPA this holiday season! You can submit a Christmas card photo to Johanna in the UPA office, or email a digital photo to melissawylie@gmail.com. Please send all photos by Monday, January 10. The Membership Cultivation Board will get them printed, labeled, and posted, so you can find yourself, or your family, on the photo wall.

Stewardship Campaign Results - December 20, 2010

The 2011 Stewardship Campaign was conducted over the month of November with our focus on community and outreach to our fellow congregants, the charities and organizations we support and worldwide efforts for the greater good. We certainly got to more closely know our fellow pew members as well as what the UPA means to all of us and what we need to do to support our church home and the world beyond our immediate community. The Stewardship Board is thankful to everyone for a great response and your financial commitment to all that the UPA is and does.

Through the basket and mail brigades we looked for support from our members, participants and friends of the church. We sent approximately 140 pledge requests of which we anticipated positive response from approximately 111 families and individuals. In 2009 we had 105 pledges and in 2010 a total of 107 pledges. As of this December 15th, we have received commitments from 100 donors which constitute an 87% response rate. While we expect 10 to 11 additional commitments, the current commitments to date total \$271,850 for the pledges received. This figure represents a decrease from 2010 commitments by approximately 9.8 %. If we realize the outstanding pledges the total commitments would grow to \$291,717 for 2011 which is approximately 2.4 % less than 2010 commitment levels.

Other notable results:

- * Seven new pledge units for 2011 (\$6,440)
- * Forty-four pledges increased levels over 2010 commitments (\$11,858 in additional commitments)
- * Twenty-three pledges decreased levels from 2010 commitments (a decrease of \$27,388)
- * Thirty-four pledges remained at the same level as 2010 commitments

The results of our campaign are commendable given the continued poor economy, high unemployment and economic uncertainty. However, there is a negative trend in our financial commitments to the UPA that should be identified. Our annual commitments have been steadily decreasing over the recent years:

2006: \$310,344 pledged, \$295,024 actual
2007: \$301,978 pledged, \$291,545 actual
2008: \$307,266 pledged, \$288,636 actual
2009: \$297,012 pledged, \$284,056 actual
2010: \$298,607 pledged, \$282,889 actual
2011: \$291,717 pledged*, actual ???

* if remaining outstanding pledges are actually realized.

Tithing represents approximately 62 % of our annual operating budget, and as such, the majority of our ability to continue to maintain our facilities, property, salaries and outreach funding comes from our small community of parishioners and friends of the UPA. This is a huge burden as costs inevitably continue to rise even during periods when the economy creates unknown economic impacts on us all. *(Continued next page)*

Funds from our endowment provide the second major source of income in support of our annual operating budget, contributing approximately 20-21% per year. Similarly with pledge income, the formula for withdrawing funds from the endowment has, over the last 4 years, provided less income available to support the operating budget. Annual withdrawals from the endowment are as follows:

2006: \$114,342

2007: \$117,851

2008: \$113,364

2009: \$109,748

2010: \$101,517

2011: \$ 88,020

As is evident, our financial resources to conduct our mission have been impacted quite extensively. We expect withdraws to remain flat over the ensuing years as the balance of the endowment has stayed flat if not decreased during the economic downturn.

We have been able to “balance the budget” by using carryover reserves from prior years, but this is no longer sustainable. Stewardship must look to other sources of income to make up the decrease in funding from pledges and the endowment which may include a capital campaign, additional fundraising events such as an auction or yard sale. These events do not balance the budget although they do help ease the financial burden on the income side of the budget. We must also seriously consider cutting the operating side of the budget in areas that are very dear to parishioners, namely outreach funding and/or replacement capital reserves. Historically, the capital reserve account has taken the brunt of budget balancing, but now is the time to start thinking of reducing our outreach funding commitments as we endeavor to balance the budget.

Mark Paris

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a
New Year filled with all good things!
The UPA Staff
Jean, Allen, Mike, Jane, Johanna and Ron*

Think Altar Flowers:

We have an opening for altar flowers on the ninth of January.
Thanks, Patricia Bottomley (617)527-7470



The UPA Pageant Star - 2010 In Loving Memory of Sandra Ross

Sandra Ross directed the Christmas pageant every year for over twenty years. She had the whole process down to a science, and as soon as one pageant was over she began planning the next year's pageant, right down to who might be the "Baby Jesus."



At the time of her death, Sandra was also co-chair of the Community Board, a position she had held for four years. When thinking about how to honor Sandra's memory, the Community Board felt a special star for the pageant would be a fitting for this quiet, unassuming woman who was a UPA "star."

After consulting with Katie Jackson, Chair of the Board of Christian Education, and some other Board of Ed members, the Community Board commissioned Karen Mondell and Diana Kooy of DK Threads here in Newton to design and make the star for our pageant.

Carole Smith and Toni Miller met with Diana and Karen, who happens to be a friend of Cathy Paris, to discuss design, color, fabrics, etc. Together, Karen and Diana came up with the design that resulted in our new star.

"In loving memory of Sandra Ross" is embroidered along the bottom seams.

This Coming Week at UPA:

Sunday, Dec. 26, 2010

10:00 a.m. - Worship Service
Baptism of Natalie Lynch
11:00 a.m. - Fellowship Time-Potluck

Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2010

No Together

Friday Dec. 31, 2010

Office Closed

Sunday, Jan. 2, 2011

10:00 a.m. - Worship/Communion Sunday
11:00 a.m. - Fellowship

Monday, Jan. 3, 2011

7:30 p.m. - Common Meeting

Tues. Jan. 4, 2011

7:30 p.m. - Board of Ed Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 6, 2011

3:30 p.m. - Children's Choir

7:30 p.m. - Adult Choir

Friday, Jan. 7, 2011

6:30 p.m. First Friday Family Dinner

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(617) 964-8516

No Sunday School Dec. 26: We will not have any church classes on Dec 26. Nursery care and play room supervision is available for children under 8. Older children are invited to stay in the service. Classes will resume on Jan 2.



www.upanewtonma.org

The **ELIOT CHURCH Food Cupboard** in Roxbury - Non-perishable items are collected each week in a shopping cart located in the narthex. Please contribute.

The United Parish of Auburndale is an Open and Affirming/Reconciling Ministries Congregation:
"Recognizing that the church historically has not always welcomed all persons, we affirm the God-given worth and dignity of every individual as our sister or brother, and we welcome all persons, including those who are gay, lesbian bisexual or transgendered to the full life and ministry of the United Parish of Auburndale. We celebrate all relationships founded on the principles of God's love, compassion and faithfulness and embrace the responsibility to work against all forms of discrimination.