

WHERE LAND AND SEA MEET

Reflections on the life and lives of a religious community

by Rev. David M. Horst

When Charles Dickens published *A Christmas Carol* in December 1843, the book came packaged as a gift bound in holiday red cotton and printed on green paper with a wreath of holly and ivy stamped in gold on the front cover. All 6,000 copies of the book sold out by January. Many feel that the 19th-century Christmas in England that Dickens evokes greatly influenced that way we celebrate Christmas in America today.

In 1867, when Dickens made his second trip to the U.S. for a tour of dramatic readings, he drew a half-mile ticket line at Boston's Tremont Temple for a Christmas Eve reading of his by-now famous work. Those who attended reported Dickens' remarkable ability to bring Scrooge, the Cratchit family, and old Marley to life for the audience. Many found the message of generosity in the face of class divisions and wide-spread poverty just as compelling. Kate Field, who one might now describe as a Dickens' groupie, attended every program on this three-month tour and exclaimed in her book, *Pen Photographs of Charles Dickens' Readings* (1871), "Talk of sermons and churches! There never was a more beautiful sermon than this of *The Christmas Carol*. Sacred names do not necessarily mean sacred things."

We bring Dickens' "beautiful sermon" to the Sunday morning worship service on December 4 as our contribution to Nantucket's Christmas Stroll weekend. The staged reading is presented by the newly dubbed "Meeting House Players" and directed by Bradford Garrison. Come hear and enjoy this classic tale by the talented cast of church members and friends, enjoy music by Marcia Hempel, and sing some classic Christmas carols. Plan a little extra time; this special program will run 90 minutes. Children are welcome.

Christmas as we know it today is chiefly of European origin and pushed to new highs (and lows) by good old American commercialism, but the holiday is celebrated around the world by many cultures. I'll explore some

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JOIN US AT 10:45 A.M.
FOR SERVICES EACH
SUNDAY

Sunday, Dec. 4

"A Christmas Carol"

Staged Reading of Charles
Dickens' Classic Holiday Tale
by Meeting House Players

Sunday, Dec. 11

"Christmas Around the
World"

Rev. David M. Horst

Sunday, Dec. 18

"Christmas Carol Sing"

Hear and Sing Your Favorite
Songs of the Season

Sunday, Dec. 25

"Rehanging the Bell"

Lay Led Fourth Sunday with
Special Guest Speaker
Rev. Ted Anderson

Families Welcome!

Sunday School
for Children Each Week

REFLECTIONS

by Chris Lohmann

On Sunday, November 20, I attended the post-service discussion of the church budget, and I came away from it with the distinct understanding that we are in a major crisis. It's much like the crisis we see looming in Washington: if we don't have the will to increase revenues, important programs (and the people who make these programs possible) will be drastically cut.

We can expect to get from our church only what we're willing to pay for. And what is clearly in the offing is a church with a diminished music program, a reduced RE program, possibly a reduced ministry, and fewer office services. That's not the church I joined a few years ago. That's not a church that will attract new members and more children. It will be a church whose diminished offerings reflect the congregation's diminished commitment and willingness to make the necessary financial contributions.

It really upset me to learn that only about half of our regular members have so far made any pledge whatsoever for 2012. It just doesn't make any sense to me—even in these straitened economic times—that half of our congregation often attend services, make use of our RE program, and enjoy the musical offerings thinking that these things happen without everyone making a pledge to the best of their ability.

In fact, I believe that expecting **100 percent participation** in pledging is not unreasonable. Even if someone simply cannot afford a major pledge (let's say arbitrarily \$500 or more a year), I think that \$2-5 a week (\$100-250 a year) should be possible for everyone. At that rate, some cuts in programs and people would probably still be made, but at least everyone would have the feeling that we're all in this together, that we've all given as much as we can.

The pledge I'm making now is that when we reach 100 percent participation for 2012 (at whatever individual level) I'll increase my already submitted pledge by 50 percent. A fully realized communal commitment to this church is something that would inspire me to do more myself.



The Wagon Train Food Pantry was a big success this year! Several wagon loads of food were collected by our LRE children and donated to the Nantucket Emergency Food Pantry, operated by the Nantucket Interfaith Council. The Food Pantry recently relocated to the Greenhound Building at 10 Washington St. Donations are needed year-round!



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of the varied customs with you at the December 11 worship service. Then we'll bring Christmas home with an all-ages, all-music Christmas carol service on December 18 featuring the adult and children's choirs.

The end-of-the year holidays are a time filled with many emotions: Joy and celebration for most; but sadness and regret for others. In the midst of this time of singing, gift-giving, feasting, and merry-making let's be aware of each other in a deeper way. Let's look for "sacred things" in unexpected places, be generous in spirit, and take time to care for each other. Give thanks for smiles and tears, songs and silence in equal measure. Most of all, let's give thanks for each other, for loved ones near and far, and for the faith that carries us from year's beginning to year's end -- year after year for a lifetime.

Have a blessed holiday season!

My comments on the history of A Christmas Carol are drawn from Merry Christmas: Celebrating America's Greatest Holiday by Karal Ann Marling (2000). "Where land and sea meet" is my Nantucket analogy for congregational life. A church lives in a tidal zone where our private and public lives meet and converge like the meeting place of the land and sea.



LRE Update

by Sally Ure and Lizie Hagenstein

Thank you to all who helped make our annual Wagon Train Food Pantry Drive such a huge success! The kids had a lot of fun riding on the bus and knocking on doors on Friendship Lane and Equator Lane. They were greeted with big smiles and many donations.

Our Senior UUth group is hosting an island-wide interfaith youth group evening of Christmas caroling on December 11. We will meet at our church at 4 p.m. In the holiday spirit we would like to serve hot cider and cookies, but we are in need of donations! If you are able to make a plate of cookies or donate some cider, please contact Sally or Lizie!

If you are roaming about town, look for the Church Christmas tree our UUth group has decorated on Centre Street!

Our senior UUth group's "bring a friend" potluck holiday party will be on Thursday, December 22 at 6:30 p.m. come join us for great food, reindeer hats and jingle bells! Lastly, we join the LRE Committee members in wishing you a happy holiday season and a very Happy New Year!

The Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee urge members, friends, and staff to the final budget meeting on Sunday, December 11, at noon in Hendrix Hall to discuss income and allocations for next year. The Board is seeking ideas and input from everyone about the proposed budget that will be presented at this meeting. **Please come and make your feelings known!** *The congregation votes on the 2012 budget at the Annual Meeting on January 22 at noon in Hendrix Hall following the Sunday morning worship service.*

South Church Preservation Fund Report

by Leslie W. Ottinger

Work on the auditorium is proceeding according to schedule and the campaign to raise the funds for the Permanent Maintenance Fund is well underway now. These are the governing principles that have been developed by the Board of Directors for the fund. Some degree of modification will still be possible, but since contributions are being sought with these principles having been placed before the potential donors, major changes are not anticipated.

- *The fund will consist of the principal and all accrued interest.*
- *The principal will generally be maintained at \$500,000 with the capacity for expenditure of money from the principal to be made under special circumstances as determined by the SCPF Board of Directors.*
- *The fund will be permanent and will be supplemented by raising additional funds when appropriate.*
- *Expenditures from the fund will be for maintenance, restoration or preservation of the building. Expenditures may be used for no other purpose.*
- *Expenditures from the fund will be approved by a majority vote of the SCPF Board of Directors at a regular or special meeting.*
- *The fund will belong to the SCPF and be managed by a subcommittee, to consist of three members of the SCPF Board of Directors and elected by the Board. Terms will be of three years.*

Harvest Festival Update

by Debby Merritt

Many thanks to those who helped in large and small ways at the Harvest Festival last month. It all added up to make our tables a success.

Mary Beth and Jack, Christine, Sharon, Tomomi, Pam and Chris, Les and Joan, Donna and Rod, Elaine and Dave, David and Alyson and Dominica, David and Lizie, Kat, Grace, Gerry, Lora and Paul, Nancy, Yve, John and Harriet, Marcia, Libby, Theresa, Debby, Patrick and Margaret, Jack, and any others who donated, gathered, priced, moved, set up, sold, bought, and cleaned up.

If I missed anyone, know you are appreciated. I believe the total of funds raised for the operational budget was over \$1,100, and more has been added since then. Thank you again.



Music Notes

by Marcia Hempel
Music Director



I hope you will come and hear our special Christmas Music Sunday, on December 18. The music will center around soloists, including Pete Sawyer, Leah Hull, Phaedra Plank, Jessie Lambrecht and Amanda Torchia. The choir will join the soloists for several pieces, and the children's choir will sing three songs, including one that they have choreographed. I think you will enjoy the music very much!

Some of the titles we will be performing are: *Boar's Head Carol*, *Winter Wonderland*, *Suogan*, *I Wonder As I Wander*, *Child's Christmas in Wales (ending)*, *Silver Bells*, *Once Upon a December*, and *Walking In The Air*. All of the songs, except one, feature soloists from our congregation, young and old.

Also, please join us on Christmas Eve for caroling. We will meet at the church after the Red Ticket drawing downtown, and from there we will carpool to Our Island Home, the Cottage Hospital, the Homestead, and a few other places. It's fun, and appreciated by the people who hear us.

Adult Choir meets on Thursdays from 5:15 to 6:30. Children's Choir meets on Saturdays from 2 until 2:45.

Fourth Sunday Update

by Sissy Girard

The 4th Sunday Lay Led Service Committee is pleased to welcome Yve Shevalier as a new member. The next Lay Led Service will be on December 25, when we will have Rev. Ted Anderson as our guest speaker on December 25th. We look forward to another year of presenting interesting, informative, and inspirational services each Fourth Sunday. Thank you for contributing to the success of these services by your attendance and support. It is most appreciated!

“Embedded Sanctuary”

by Jack Reindel

The oil painting of the Meeting House which has recently been hung in its permanent location in the Activities Room, now bears the following legend, “This painting by artist Anne Sutherland was presented as a gift to The Second Congregational Meeting House Society by members and friends of the congregation to honor the ministry of Reverend Jennifer Brooks (2003 - 2011).” The title of the painting, “Embedded Sanctuary,” is taken from a poem by Frank J. Cunningham entitled *The Unitarian*. The poetry is incorporated into the painting and may be read in its entirety on the church website. Copies of the poem can be taken from a rack located on the chest to the right of the painting.

Finance Committee Report

As we approach year end, the Finance Committee goes into its number crunching mode to seek the least painful ways to present a balanced budget to the Board of Trustees. Following the July 2010 mandate from the congregation, we are examining scenarios leading to a reduction of capital withdrawal from \$50,000 in 2011 to \$37,500 in 2012. Even more challenging are the mandated reductions of capital withdrawal to \$25,000 in 2013 and to zero thereafter.

For the current year, after taking all available interest and dividends plus the \$50,000 from capital, we anticipate a shortfall of over \$30,000. This money can only come from donations or by congregational vote at the Annual Meeting on January 22, 2012 authorizing a further withdrawal from capital reserves.

With the loss of some of our largest pledges for 2012, and if spending were continued at the 2011 level, a deficit of about \$68,000 would be anticipated.

Alternate plans for a balanced 2012 budget will be discussed at an informational meeting on Sunday, December 11, 2011 after the service at noon in Hendrix Hall. Childcare available upon request.

Many thanks to the more than 43 friends and members who participated in the October and November informal budget discussions. Your involvement has been vital to the work of preparing the 2012 budget.

Finance Committee: Brian Girard, Marty Eerhart, Bob Hall, Larry Miller, Jack Weinhold (Craig Spery, Rev David Horst, ex officio)

Four possible things to do with the envelope you find in this copy of the *Weathervane*: (1) Send in the balance of your 2011 pledge. (2) Make a year-end donation in gratitude for the congregation's outreach in the community. (3) Send the church staff a holiday card. (4) All of the above. Happy Holidays!



December Calendar of Services

Sunday, December 4

10:45 a.m.

“Staged Reading of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens” - Meeting House Players. Directed by Bradford Garrison (Hendrix Hall)

Members and friends of our congregation present Charles Dickens' classic holiday tale *A Christmas Carol* as part of Nantucket's Christmas Stroll weekend. The staged reading features Bradford Garrison, Alyson Gaylord-Loy, James Grieder, Jessie Lambrecht, David Lazarus, Bob Lehman, Chris Lohmann, Sally Ure, and others. Music and caroling led by Marcia Hempel and the choir. Families are welcome. Childcare for infants and toddlers. A donation at the door is requested for this special program. Running time: 90 minutes. *Coffee and refreshments follow the program.*

Sunday, December 11

10:45 a.m.

“Christmas Around the World” - Rev. David M. Horst (Hendrix Hall and Activities Room)

North and south, east and west, people and cultures around the world honor and celebrate Christmas. We'll learn about the universal appeal of this singular Christian holiday and how the joy and hope of this season touches people's lives in some unexpected places. *Children and youth learn about different Christmas traditions during religious education. Coffee and refreshments follow the programs in the Activities Room. Budget meeting follows the service.*

Sunday, December 18

10:45 a.m.

“Christmas Carol Sing” - Marcia Hempel, Director of Music, and the adult and children's choirs (Hendrix Hall)

Come hear and sing your favorite carols at this all-ages, all-music Christmas service featuring the adult and children's choirs conducted by Marcia Hempel. Featured soloists include Pete Sawyer, Leah Hull, Phaedra Plank, Jessie Lambrecht, and Amanda Torchia. The choir joins the soloists for several pieces, and the children's choir will sing three songs including one that they have choreographed. The choir selections include *Boar's Head Carol*, *Winter Wonderland*, *Suogan*, *I Wonder As I Wander*, *Child's Christmas in Wales*, *Silver Bells*, *Once Upon a December*, and *Walking in the Air*. *Coffee and refreshments follow the program in the Activities Room.*

Thursday, December 22

6 p.m.

“Winter Solstice Celebration” - Rev. David M. Horst with students and staff of the Nantucket Community Music Center (Sherburne Hall, 11 Centre Street)

Join us for a service to honor and celebrate the longest night of the year with singing, drumming, chanting, meditation and dancing! “So the shortest day came, and the year died; and everywhere ... came people singing and dancing to drive the dark away” (Susan Cooper). Come celebrate! *This special program is presented in collaboration with the Nantucket Community Music Center. Enjoy hot wassail and holiday treats following the service.*

Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day)

10:45 a.m.

“Rehanging the Bell” - Fourth Sunday Lay Led Service with Special Guest Speaker Rev. Ted Anderson (Hendrix Hall and Activities Room)

Minister Emeritus Ted Anderson delivers this morning's sermon with members of the Fourth Sunday Lay Led Service Committee participating with readings.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

by Craig Spery, Board President

Recent activities from the board:

- Reverend Horst has asked the staff for a monthly brief written report of their accomplishments and activities. The plan is to present a review of these reports at the second Board meeting each month.
- Marty Eerhart was formally welcomed as a new Board Member replacing Bertrand Briere who replaced Meg Hunter when she moved to Maine. Marty's term is up January 2013. Marty also serves on the Finance Committee.
- Verizon has submitted a new version of their plan to upgrade their facilities within the church tower. The plans are under review by the board and our attorney, Jill Kastle, who helped the congregation with the Unison buyout five years ago.
- Several groups are being considered for potential rentals and/or fundraisers. One in particular is the Boston Children's Chorus, brought forward by Reverend Horst with additional details to follow.
- Georgen Charnes has redesigned the church website and is about ready to launch the new look. We appreciate Georgen's outstanding work.
- A three member subcommittee has been formed to review the church's by-laws. Bob Hall, Sissy Girard and Joan Ottinger were appointed by the Board to carry out the review and will present their report at the next board meeting. The changes could be ready for inclusion for a vote at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22, 2012.
- The Finance Committee will submit a draft operating budget for 2012 to the Board for review on Tuesday, December 6. The Board and Finance Committee will then present the draft budget at an open meeting on Sunday, December 11 at noon in Hendrix Hall. Childcare will be available upon request. Every effort will be made to include the draft budget with the official notice that will go out to members to announce the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22, 2012.

The Board thanks all the members and friends who attended the budget discussions on November 4 and 20. Overall, a total of 44 members and friends attended the meetings

- A garbage disposer has been installed in the church kitchen sink, thanks to a gift from Brian and Sissy Girard. It was installed by our plumber, Bruce Hermansdorfer, and wired by Ryder Electric. Thanks to Brian and Sissy for this generous gift.

This church community relies on everyone to step forward and volunteer to help lead the congregation. There are Board of Trustees and various committee positions that become available at the Annual Meeting. Now is the time to get involved and help us continue to bring liberal religious excellence to Nantucket. For more information on how to get involved, ask me or any Board member, or contact Mary Beth Splaine, chairperson of the Nominating Committee.



The Horst-Loy family invites you to a holiday open house.

David Horst and Alyson Gaylord-Loy invite church members and friends to a holiday open house at the parsonage at 10 Fair Street, Friday evening, Dec. 16.

Because of parking and space limitations, David and Alyson ask that guests arrive at intervals throughout the evening: If your last name starts with A through H, please come at 6 p.m.; last names I through P at 6:30; last names Q through Z at 7. Stop by and enjoy some punch, cookies, and warm holiday greetings with the Horst-Loy family. Children are welcome!



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Church Staff

David M. Horst, *Interim Minister* ~ **Edward B. Anderson**, *Minister Emeritus* ~ **Kim N. LaRue**, *Office Administrator and Receptionist* ~ **Marcia Hempel**, *Director of Music and Organist* ~ **Lizie Hagenstein and Sally Ure**, *Co-Directors of Religious Education* ~ **Mimi Jones and Dennis Santangelo**, *Sextons* ~ **Meghan Blair-Valero**, *Fogged-In Bookkeeping, Business Services*

Board of Trustees

Craig Spery (President), Sissy Girard (Vice-President), Bob Hall (Clerk), Jack Weinhold (Treasurer)
Marty Eerhart, Larry Miller, David Hall, Joan Ottinger, Christine Sanford

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday ~ 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Minister's Office Hours

Tuesday (10 a.m. - noon) and Friday (noon - 2 p.m.)