UNITARIAN
CHURCH
ELLSWORTH, MAINE
Sundays 10:30 am
Phone: 667-4393

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NEWSLETTER
May 1978

SUNDAY SERVICES

May 7 Dr. Meserve
May 14 Dr. Meserve
May 21 Dr. John Ruskin Clark
May 28 Dr. Meserve

On May 7, Dr. Meserve will preach in recognition of the first Sun Day, Wed, May 3, a day to consider and celebrate the part the sun plays and will play in the life of the earth and its creatures.

A service for the dedication of children will be held on Sunday May 14, at the regular morning service. Parents who wish to bring children for this occasion should get in touch with Dr. Meserve.

Dr. John Rustin Clark, interim minister of the First Parish Church of Cambridge, Mass., will exchange pulpits with Dr. Meserve on May 21.

SEXTONS DUTIES

May 7 & 14 Betsey Roy, Theresa Garnett
May 21 & 28 Jack & Augusta Bromley

In our listing of the duties of the church sextons last month, it should also have been mentioned that they have a privilege. They may arrange the furniture and chairs in the auditorium as they wish, providing it is compatible with the plans of the minister, and of the flower committee for the display that Sunday.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

May 3 - Parish Supper, chairmen Dorothy Berry and Augusta Bromley
May 10 - Alliance Annual Meeting, at the church, hostess Phyllis Canfield
May 17 - Dessert Social - see news item below.

On Wednesday, May 17, there will be a dessert social at 7:30 pm, followed by colored slides of the old church, inside and out; the old church being torn down; ground breaking for our new church, construction of the new church and its completion. Also, colored slides of Maybaskets, picnics and discussion group, taken in 1969 and 1972. A donation will be taken, the money to help pay for the adjacent land, thus decreasing our interest. A booklet of the history of both churches will be on sale, with a picture of the old church and one of our new church. Price $1.00.

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The discussion group will meet at 6:30 pm on Thursday, May 25, for a potluck supper and also a potluck discussion (topic to be announced)

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We welcome into membership the following people, who have joined the church this past year: Howard and Marjorie Tweedy, Deer Isle; Maurice and Ruby Crews, Southwest Harbor; Ethel M. Schwalbe, of Steuben; and Carole and George Ray Jr, of Ellsworth. We are delighted to have all of you with us!!

The annual meeting and parish supper were held on May 3. The following officers were elected for 1978-79: President, Eric Benedum; Vice-President, Helen Silver; Secretary, Chris Benedum; Treasurer, Stan Richmond; Historian, Marian Richmond; Co-Directors of Religious Education, Deborah Cravey and Phyllis Harris. Trustees for three years, Gus Crews and Betsey Roy.

Continuing as trustees for two more years are Joy Mayo and Lester Wass, while Jack Bromley and Eddie Kamps have one more year to serve.

Various reports were given, and president Eric Benedum expressed his thanks to all who helped him this past year.

After some discussion, the new constitution and by-laws were adopted. The fate of the old communion set was also discussed. It had been given to our church by the Bangor Unitarian church over 100 years ago. Its appraised value is $285. It was decided to have the trustees arrange a storage place for it, and to try to use it occasionally in whatever ways possible.

THANK YOUS

A very special THANKS to Lewis Smith, in recognition of his thirty consecutive years of holding office in the church, including one eleven year stretch as president. This surely must be a record of devoted service!

There were several far-reaching, important decisions made during his tenure. It was Lewis who presided when the members voted to hire a full time minister (Rev. Richard Gibbs), and when they voted to sell the old church and build our new one.

We are certainly indebted to him for these many years of leadership and hard work.

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Thanks, too, to Dorothy Berry for her four years as secretary, and to Theresa Garnett, vice-president last year (who unfortunately will soon be moving away).

The General Assembly of the UUA will be held in Boston June 19 to 24, on the campus of Boston University. The full program of the Assembly will appear in the UU World during May. Details as to accomodations and costs are available in the April issue.

Our church is entitled to two lay delegates. If there is a possibility of your attending all or part of these meetings, please notify Dr. Meserve or a board member so you can be named a delegate from our church.

MINISTERIAL STUDENT

Richard Beal, a member of our church, has written Dr. Meserve that he has been accepted as a student at the Harvard Divinity School. Richard and his wife Joan ran Homestead for several years before they moved to Boston. Their address now is The Gateway House, 40 North Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. 02134.

Is it your turn to sign up for providing "coffee" after the church service?? The list is in the kitchen.

INTEREST CORNER

This month (because she neglected to interview anyone else), HELEN SILVER lists her interests.

The American Field Service (AFS) with its international student exchange programs, has provided her and her family with many opportunities to meet young people from all over the world. Helen is currently chairman of the AFS Domestic exchange program for Ellsworth High School.

For recreation, she enjoys folk dancing with groups in Ellsworth, Orono, and occasionally Boston.

Her hobby is home decorating, and once a month she types up the church newsletter.

Meditation on Happiness

On the whole it is best not to think too much about whether you are happy or not. As soon as you decide for certain that you are happy, somebody or something drops a great load of frustration and sorrow on you. When you try to leap for joy, you are in danger of spraining an ankle or falling flat on your face. On the other hand, when your heart is heaviest and the outlook seems most bleak, that is the time to be awake to the swift, short waves of happiness that can sometimes wash over you like fresh, warm breezes on a day in spring. They are gone almost before you know it. You will miss them entirely unless you are ready. Frost says:

> You know how it is with an April day
> When the sun is out and the wind is still,
> You're one month on in the middle of May.
> But if you so much as dare to speak,
> A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
> A wind comes off a frozen peak,
> And you're two months back in the middle of March.

I do not know much about the secret of happiness, but I do know this much. You have to approach it gently, quietly, without grasping or demanding that it stay. Just be glad it came, however fleetingly and surprisingly, and be confident that it will come again.

Perhaps I am superstitious, but I think we are happiest when we are "surprised by joy." Joy, which is an integral part of happiness, resists all efforts to be moulded by our rational planning. One of the troubles with a lot of contemporary religion is that it insists on structuring our joy and our sorrow as if these profound and sublime emotions could be turned on and off by trivial rituals and group games. The other day on my morning walk I heard my robin, Jake, singing as loud as an opera singer, and twice as sweetly, in a bush near the road. I am sure he was just being happy, although for what special reason I cannot say. Love, food, warmth, the spring, or just the anticipation or memory of any or all of these? I do not know. But I do not doubt that he was happy. And hearing him made me happy, too.

A few minutes before my walk that day I had been reading Thomas Merton's poetic rendering of the teachings of the Chinese sage Chuang Tzu (c. 300 B.C.). In particular, I had read the discussion of Chuang with his constant friend and opponent in argument, Hui Tzu. Chuang had been walking by the river and was pointing out to Hui how happy the fishes were as they leaped and darted about in the bright water. Hui, the eternal logician and argufier, wanted to know how Chuang knew the fishes were happy. (I think Hui was a Unitarian Universalist without knowing it and before his time.) There was a brief, sharp discussion that ended when Chuang said, "I know the joy of fishes in the river through my own joy, as I go walking along the same river." That, I realized, is how I knew that Jake was happy, and also how he made me happy. Nice we could help each other.

Last winter I read a long, careful, and brilliant study on the process of experiencing, thinking, and knowing - epistemology, we call it in philosophical jargon. The study was by a distinguished modern philosopher. I tried very hard to understand. But I had a lot of trouble doing so. However, when I read about Chuang and the fishes and heard Jake sing, it all came clear. If we try to pull happiness apart, we will never understand it and we may destroy it in the process. We don't have to analyze everything. It is enough to watch and listen and be glad. As John Masefield said, "The days that make us happy make us wise."

H.C.M.