

Independent Christian Church Calendar

February 2007

Sundays	5:00 p.m.	Youth Group
	7-8:30 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting
Wednesdays	7-8:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Thursdays	7-8:30 p.m.	Women's Narcotics Anonymous
Fridays	7-8:30 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting

Thursday, February 1	6:30 p.m.	Judith Murray Guild Potluck Supper
Saturday, February 3	7:30 p.m.	"Unforgettable: A Tribute to Nat King Cole" with Gordon Michaels
Sunday, February 4	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting
Tuesday, February 6	7:00 p.m.	Social Justice Committee
Sunday, February 11	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting
Tuesday, February 13	6:15 p.m.	Restoration Committee
	7:00 p.m.	Staff Relations Committee
Thursday, February 15		March newsletter deadline
Sunday, February 18	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service, Rev. Fitting
	11:30 a.m.	Finance Committee
Tuesday, February 20	7:15 p.m.	UU Discussion Group
Thursday, February 22	7:00 p.m.	Board of Managers
Sunday, February 25	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service, Rev. Fitting

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE CHURCH UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.
 This is your church newsletter. We welcome your observations, news items, constructive criticism, and general comments for the good of the church community.
 We are glad to publish thoughtful submissions on a space-available basis.

Church Office Hours: Monday—Thursday, 9:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m.; closed Friday.
 Wendy's Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

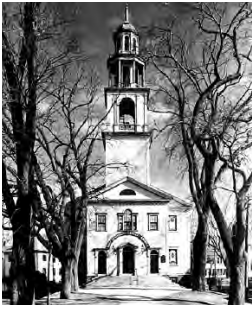
The Independent Christian Church
Unitarian Universalist
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ESSEX NATIONAL
 HERITAGE AREA





The Gloucester Universalist

*The First Universalist Church in America
Organized 1779*

The Reverend Wendy Fitting, Minister

February 2007

The Newsletter of the Independent Christian Church Unitarian Universalist

Words from Wendy

I often take my mobility for granted. And I forgive myself when I do. It has been such a pleasure to enjoy the unseasonable weather, taking walks with two good knees. I am grateful to be mobile, even in the winter wind that has finally come. Even so, the temptation to despair sometimes visits my home and when that happens I am grateful for the memories of me and my dogs hobbling to Rocky Neck: Swayze wearing his tee-shirt to protect a wound on his chest and Peach lying down to rest every ten feet or so. We were all pitiful, but we enjoyed our walks. The dogs didn't feel self-pity—it was against their religion. But when I'm feeling sorry for myself for one thing or another, when I'm full of gravity and avoiding the garden, chores, the phone, I try to remember my old neighbor and his dog—an Australian shepherd—walking day after day on Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

Every day I looked forward to seeing them, and every week they looked weaker and weaker. Finally, the man and the dog were no longer there, but after a couple of weeks while I grieved

their absence, there was the old man again. This time he was walking with his wife. I didn't see them every day, but frequently. They walked slowly, holding hands. In the produce section of Shaw's some years ago I introduced myself to them. Their dog was named Skipper. All their dogs through the years were called Skipper—all sheep dogs.

If I remember to do this—to remember Skipper—I am lightened. I look up.

Peach always rested in front of the Last Stop Variety store on the way home, and so did Swayze and I. There was a little song of delight there for us. This small thing meant a good day. It meant energy, and in spite of my slowness, accomplishment—and satisfaction into the evening. It meant, and with these memories it means still, that I have skated around the edge of the Le Brea tar pit of despair once again.

And a bit of ketchup with my supper adds its natural mellowing agents.

It's Not Too Late

If you haven't yet made a pledge for 2007, please consider doing so. Pledges are running behind last year. Contact Kate Ruznecki, Dick Prouty, or administrator John Barbour.

Mardi Gras Sunday

The Civil Disturbance Jazz Band will again join us for Sunday worship on February 18, the last Sunday before Lent. Civil Disturbance has played for us for the past several years to high praise and enthusiasm. This service with jazz band and gospel music to mark the open-

ing of Lent has become a unique Gloucester Universalist tradition.

Pledge Envelopes

The 2007 pledge envelopes are available for those who prefer to use them. Numbered boxes and a sign-up list are in the sanctuary on the front pew, Church St. side.

Church Directories

Church directories for 2007 are now available. You'll find them in the vestry, on the table at the foot of the stairs. We request a \$1 donation to defray printing costs.

January Flowers...

The poinsettias on the altar on January 7 and January 14 were given by members and friends of this congregation.

January 21 Given by Elizabeth and Philip Jensen in loving memory of Philip's father, Arthur Jensen, and of the "East Gloucester Girls," Jenny and Lillian Jensen and Mildred Smith.

January 28 Given by Hamer and Charlotte Lacey in celebration of the fourth anniversary of their marriage.

...and February Birthdays

- 2 Jeneth Fahey
- 13 Val Babson
- 19 George Thompson
- 23 Henry Gates
- 26 Elena Sinagra

December Church Attendance

- December 3* 81 adults, 15 children (Advent I)
- December 10* 60 adults, 13 children (Advent II)
- December 17* Not Available (Advent III)
- December 24* 86 adults, 22 children (Advent IV)
- Christmas Eve* 150 adults, children NA
- December 31* 66 adults, 2 children

February Ushers and Coffee Hour Hosts

Ushers

- 2/4 Suzette Lomba and Tracy Bowen
- 2/11 Mern Sibley and Roger and Lucy Garberg
- 2/18 Bob Williams and Ames Fuller
- 2/25 Paddock family

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 2/4 Pot Luck
- 2/11 Rufus Collinson
- 2/18 Ruth Maassen
- 2/25 Sylvia Anthony

Treasurer's Report as of December 31, 2006

(100% of the year elapsed)

December Income	\$14,530
December Expenses	<u>\$16,212</u>
Net (deficit)	(\$ 1,682)
2006 Income	\$148,620 (94.1% of budgeted \$157,966)
2006 Expenses	<u>\$147,428</u> (94.1% of budgeted \$156,604)
Net	\$ 1,192

2006 Pledges and Donations: \$118,876
(91.1% of budgeted \$130,516)

Religious Education News

If you are interested in leading a lesson, or if you would like to contribute by sharing a talent or passion, please call Cathy Lake at 978-525-3851.

Upcoming church school lessons:

January 28 Asking Questions (UU Principle 4)

Each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.

February 4 A Vote for Everyone (UU Principle 5)

All persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.

February 11 In Harmony (UU Principle 6)

Working for a peaceful, fair and free world.

Member Notes

Prayers and good thoughts go out to **Ruthie Cook**, who is at home recuperating after a hospital stay.

And to **Andrea Jacobs**, as well, all the best following a brief hospitalization.

This news was beamed from **Priscilla Runkle's** daughter in California, Ginny Scott: "Mom—Priscilla—got home from the hospital Tuesday evening. She was very!!! glad to be home and away from the 'all hours' television in her room. The cat had missed her ever-present lap and was very glad to see her again, though not too sure about the walker."

Our hearts go out to **George and Judy Thompson** and their family on learning of the death of George's mother, Ruth F. Thompson, on January 2nd. She was a member of the First Congregational Church in Winchester. George was with his mom when she died.

Our condolences to **Juliet Chamberlain** on the death of her mother.

We mourn the death of **Ernestine Monroe** in January. Ernestine and her husband John were frequent visitors to the church. Our hearts go out to John and Ernestine's family.

Big thanks to **Jay McLaughlan**, who has repaired long-standing damage to the granite steps in the front of the church!

Don't miss the photograph album of the **Tongue In Cheek Garden Club**. The book was put together by **Linda Kidder** and it's delightful. These folks have a lot of fun! Think about attending. The book is in the vestry.

Let's hear it for **Ginny Costigan**! Ginny's been in church and attended the Guild Supper last month. Ginny, it's good to see you out and about!



Unforgettable: A Tribute to Nat King Cole, Starring Gordon Michaels

If you were lucky enough to hear the gospel trio Az One perform at our church, you won't have forgotten Gordon Michaels's singing. He is returning to the church for "Unforgettable: A Tribute to Nat King Cole," on Saturday, February 3rd at 7:30 p.m. (Storm date is Sunday, February 4th at 4:00 p.m.) Tickets at the door are \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and \$5 for students with ID, or you can buy tickets online at www.essexheritage.org.

Gordon Michaels performed this program twice at the Park Plaza Hotel for Boston's First Night Celebration to standing-room-only crowds. This is the only opportunity to hear "Unforgettable" on the North Shore.

The *Boston Globe* has described Michaels as a "powerful baritone with an amazing range and a vibrant stage presence." Accompanied by a jazz trio, he will perform songs recorded by Nat King Cole, such as "Unforgettable," "Route 66," "Autumn Leaves," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "When I Fall In Love."

He has shared the stage with Patti Labelle, James Taylor, Rod Stewart, Cissy Houston, Keith Lockhart, Jennifer Holiday, and Tramaine Hawkins. You can find out more at www.gordonmichaels.exploretalent.com.

This House

Every Sunday, as I stand at the beginning of the path that leads here,
looking Up,
I am in awe of this big house,
its steadfast presence
on the earth,

its tall and steady beacon
to those returning home from sea.

And so I have returned from a far off place
to the warmth of ushers
the phenomenon of organ music
the lift of voices
the ring and sway of Lucille and the bell.

And I return again and again
to this enormous, kindly room
its portraits, its golden light
its history and ancient colors.

Here I find my place and sit,
surrounded by sanctuary,
in the presence of God and my parents
and all of you.

Every Sunday in this place
David and Nina and the choir
lead us to the river,
to peace and longing and harmony—
the resonance of the music held deep within our souls.

Every Sunday in this place,
Wendy gives us a reason to carry on.
She gives to us straight from her life, from her heart,
from her mighty mind...
words and images that will come back to us
during the week,
to comfort or urge or delight or inspire again and again.

Every Sunday, here with you...
You...all and each of you,
I break open again to Love

And then travel with you
toward the smell of the coffee
toward talk and laughter and loving arms.

*I give because I am so grateful to be here with you.
Because being here with you
feels like an intimation of heaven
And because as long as sailors are returning
to the ancient harbor,
as long as the human spirit
is looking for a place to Be,
I want this house to stand.*

—Rufus Collinson