

# *Independent Christian Church Calendar*

## *September 2007*

Sundays	5:00 p.m.	Youth Group
	7-8:30 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting
Wednesdays	7:30-9 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting
Thursdays	7-8:30 p.m.	Women's Narcotics Anonymous
Fridays	7-8:30 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous Meeting
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Sunday, September 2	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting
	11:30 a.m.	Care Committee
Sunday, September 9	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting
	11:00 a.m.	Building & Grounds Committee
	11:30 a.m.	Religious Education Committee
Tuesday, September 11	4:00 p.m.	Social Justice Committee
	6:15 p.m.	Restoration Committee
	7:00 p.m.	Staff Relations Committee
Saturday, September 15		October newsletter deadline
Sunday, September 16	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting
	11:30 a.m.	Finance Committee
Sunday, September 23	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting
Thursday, September 27	7:00 p.m.	Board of Managers
Sunday, September 30	10:00 a.m.	Worship service, Rev. Fitting

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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  
10 Church Street  
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930-3511**

*address service requested*



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# The Gloucester Universalist

*The First Universalist Church in America  
Organized 1779*

**The Reverend Wendy Fitting, Minister**

**September 2007**

**The Newsletter of the Independent Christian Church Unitarian Universalist**

## ***Words from Wendy***

*“Music hath charms...” (Thank you to Nina Bergeron)*

Blessed are those whose lives have soundtracks. As I drove to the laundromat one recent afternoon, Ravel’s “Bolero” happened to be on the radio. I cranked up the window, the volume, and the AC, and the familiar music brought me back 40 years to 1967, when assorted NYU hippies would lie about in our friend Arthur’s 76th Street apartment and watch an ancient silent newsreel of the coronation of Queen Mary with an LP of “Bolero” on the hi-fi as soundtrack. After the wash cycle, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was on the radio, bringing with it memories of days on Martha’s Vineyard when I worked at Seward’s Market in Menemsha. In the slow days of autumn we’d pipe in Beethoven, loud, especially the Seventh, but the Ninth, as well. These will always bring back the sweet fall air, the quiet after the tourist season, and the graceful light off the water of Menemsha Bight. I sat in the parking lot and listened to the Ode to Joy until it was time to fold the laundry. When I returned to the car, Brahms’ Second Piano Concerto was on. Would wonders ever cease? One of my very favorites! Now, listening, I’m back two generations remembering my Nana, who loved Brahms almost as much as she loved Jean Sibelius and Edvard Grieg, the composers of her native Scandinavia. I’ve enjoyed all kinds of music in my life. I love Breton harp, and I love the wild early punk rock of Nina Hagen, who spiced her growling German songs with exclamations in English: “stockings!,” “Rice Krispies!” And if performance artist Laurie Anderson is in town, I’ll be sure to get a ticket.

If pressed (and only if pressed), I would say my favorite modern composers are Ralph Vaughan

Williams, whose music recalls my mother’s Celtic side of the family (especially “The Lark Ascending”), and Aaron Copland, in whose music resonates all my ancestors’ New York City immigrant experience.

Listening to Copland’s “Appalachian Spring” brings me right back to eight years old and the farm in Pennsylvania. And whenever I listen to Copland’s “Quiet City,” I am once again in the early spring of 1968, watching the light leave the New York streets, sunset and street lights merging, from the fire escape of Arthur’s loft high up over Church and Canal Streets in lower Manhattan.

By blessing and grace I’ve recently reconnected with my beloved friends from the old detective days. Thirty-five years ago I found myself under acres of fluorescent lights in a discount department store outside of Providence, Rhode Island. The boss of our detective agency had admonished me that I’d better wear a disguise. It was Christmastime and I wore a wig, a dress, and a raccoon coat. As I was “switching a ticket,” removing a cheap price tag from one item and affixing it to a more expensive one in order to test the check-out clerk, I heard “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” playing over the store’s sound system. And then I heard my own adolescent voice, in the choir of the Hartridge School for Girls, singing, “Adeste fideles, laeti triumphantes, venite, venite in Bethlehem,” I knew it was done. And I knew it was God in the music and I knew I had to change.

When the world is too much with you and all the news is bad, it’s really OK to close your eyes and let the music—whatever music—carry you, remember you, hold you, rock you, cradle you, love you to safety. It’s only a sojourn, not an escape. For me music is the passport, the gateway, into the refuge of the heart of God.

## August Flowers

*August 5* Given by Patricia Murphy in loving memory of her mother, Mrs. Ruby Ricker Murphy.

*August 12* Given by Deborah Hiltz in loving memory of the Foster sisters: Harriet Taylor, Lena Foster, and Betty Schereschewsky.

*August 19* Given by Cynthia Lang in loving memory of Sasha Vivienne Lang-Heaven's great-grandmothers, Sylvia Grebe and Vivienne Walker, on the occasion of Sasha's dedication.

*August 26* Given by Rosalie Katz, in gratitude for being a member of this church.

## July Church Attendance

*July 1* 47 adults, 5 children  
*July 8* 46 adults, 2 children  
*July 15* 71 adults, 11 children  
*July 22* Not Available  
*July 29* 49 adults, 7 children

## September Birthdays

*September 3* Will Thomsen  
*September 4* Dianne Stephan  
*September 7* Jennifer Banacos  
 Sherry Borge  
*September 14* Erik Ronnberg  
*September 12* Lani Heath  
*September 17* Robert Tuffley  
 George Smith  
*September 18* Alanna Peres  
*September 19* Newt Fink  
*September 20* Tracy Wood  
*September 22* Linda Farnham  
 Sally Willard  
*September 24* Nicole Psalidas  
 Bill Holton  
*September 25* Manny Peres  
*September 28* Charlotte Gordon

## Treasurer's Report as of July 31, 2007

(58.3% of the year elapsed)

July Income	\$18,733
July Expenses	<u>\$ 8,741</u>
Net (deficit)	\$ 9,992

2007 Income	\$93,660 (60.8% of budgeted \$153,980)
2007 Expenses	<u>\$88,307</u> (55.1% of budgeted \$159,370)
Net (deficit)	\$ 5,353

2007 Pledges and Donations: \$71,839  
 (58.1% of budgeted \$123,750)

*September 30* Carol Ann Maciel  
 Sander Schultz

## A Word from Lucille

Sincere thanks to recent mowers of the church lawn, Charles Curti, Kerry Mullen, and Keith Gray; to Don Ruzecki for repairing the hinges on the vestry yard door; and to Bill Holton for replacing light bulbs in the sanctuary chandelier.

The church also benefited recently from the gift of several hours of work by Scott Woods, of "Pane in the Glass" Window Repairs.

Mr. Woods replaced a broken window in the lantern area of our steeple, right under the cupola. He asks only that we communicate his firm belief in the superiority of old wooden windows and the value of repairing rather than replacing them.

—Lucille LePage

## Member Notes

All the best to **Elizabeth Bergeron**, who leaves this month for her junior year abroad in Florence, Italy. And all the best, as well, to **Aaron Bergeron**, who begins his freshman year at the University of Massachusetts.

Congratulations to **Bev Beauregard** and **Bill Melvin**, who were married in August.

Our condolences go to the Churchill-Maciel-Connolly family on the death of **Herbert Churchill**, Carol Ann Maciel's brother. Herb was a soloist in our choir, as was his father, Robert. Herb died at his home in Pennsylvania on August 18th.

Belated condolences to **Tracy Bowen** and her family on the death of her stepmother, Grace, in July.

## History Minute

*Erik Ronnberg, our church historian, has kindly allowed the newsletter to reprint selections from the History Minutes that he put together as part of the celebration of our bicentennial year, 2005–2006. More selections will appear from time to time as space allows.*

### *The Thomas Cains Chandelier, by Erik Ronnberg*

From 1806 to 1823, our sanctuary was illuminated on dark days and at night with candles. Nothing is known about the candle holders, which were probably wall-mounted sconces and two or more chandeliers of modest size suspended from the ceiling. In the attic directly above the sanctuary, there are remains of a very old hoist for raising and lowering a chandelier with a rope, and there is an old fish keg filled with rocks which may have been used as a counterweight. We aren't even sure if these two items were part of the same hoisting arrangement. What is certain is that every time they were used, the chandeliers had to be lowered and their candles lit, then hoisted back to the ceiling. After the service, they had to be lowered to snuff out the candles, then raised again to the ceiling until the next time they were needed.

In the 1820s, after nearly 15 years of suffering through winter services without stoves to provide heat, Gloucester's Universalists decided they wanted a warmer, brighter sanctuary for those cold dark Sundays. Stoves and new lighting could be afforded by a growing and prosperous congregation who expected, and no doubt rejoiced in, the lengthy services conducted by Father Jones. The stoves were purchased in 1820, and three years later the issue of lighting was dealt with.

On April 26, 1824, at the Annual Meeting of the congregation, it was voted "to pay Mr. Thomas Cains for the new chandelier and dispose of the old ones." Cains had already begun this project in the beginning of the year, and by March 22, the central column and the glass arms were finished and assembled. A new winch was needed to raise and lower this much larger and heavier chandelier, and one was installed prior to March 1824. It appears that by the time of their annual meeting, the Universalists had their new chandelier at a total cost of \$175.00. A surviving bill dated September 26 indicates that \$33.55 was still outstanding.

The new chandelier still had to be lowered to light its lamps, but at least it didn't use candles. The 24 lamps at the ends of its glass arms burned whale oil. Spermaceti oil, the rich oil from the head of the sperm whale, burned much brighter, allowing Cains's chandelier to take the place of its predecessors while providing more light. When the chandelier was restored in 1930, electric lights were fitted to the old glass fonts which contained the whale oil; the burners which held the wicks were unfortunately discarded. Under the fonts are glass dishes, called star pans, which were intended to catch any dripping oil.

Thomas Cains was an Englishman who came to Boston in 1812, first working at the South Boston Flint Glass Works. In 1820, he founded the Phoenix Glass Works, also in South Boston, and worked there until his death in 1865. Few examples of his work have survived, but those which have are of exceptional quality and beauty, and are now highly prized by museums and collectors. Our chandelier is the largest surviving example of Cains's glass work, and is believed to be the largest surviving American-made chandelier from this period.

One of the hallmarks of Cains's work is a chain pattern which encircles the vase-like column sections and the star pans. These raised patterns are actually twisted strands of glass, applied in a still-molten state. Some of the glass components are apparently mold-blown, but the shaping of the twisted glass arms was done by deft handwork.

The glass has a high lead content, like cut crystal glassware, but there are no cut and polished glass surfaces anywhere in this piece. It is the reflections from the raised chain decorations and the spiral forms which cause the glass to sparkle so brightly.

In 1861, the chandelier was taken down and stored in the bell tower. Throughout the sanctuary, whale oil lamps were replaced by gas fixtures. Many of the chandelier's glass arms were given to church members as mementos, and what remained gathered dust until 1930, when it was decided to restore the chandelier and rehang it in the sanctuary, this time to be lit with electricity. A call went out to church members and families of past members to return the missing parts, and all but one glass arm were returned.

Next time you stand beneath the chandelier, look up to enjoy the beautiful radial pattern made by the glass arms and the star pans.