



The Monthly Newsletter for
The First Unitarian Church of Providence
Corner of Benefit and Benevolent Streets
Providence, Rhode Island

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 8

All-Parish Events

Church School Registration begins
September 7 from 9:45a

All-Parish Supper
September 12

Church School begins
September 14

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S T A F F

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
Posey Kooris, Administrator
Frederick Jodry, Music Director
Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
Jaime Durango, Building Manager
Paul Webber, Evening Security
Tadesse Tsega, Sunday Building Manager

N E W S L E T T E R

Posey Kooris, Managing Editor
Susan Fisher, Editor
Carol Pentleton, Designer

Services in September

September 7

10:30a

Welcome to the beginning of our new church year! Today we celebrate the gathering of waters and our community. Please bring a few drops of water from your summer travels or your backyard and be prepared to say a brief phrase about its origin (we will have "metaphorical" water if you forget!).

Homecoming/Water Communion – An Intergenerational Service

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Cathy Seggel, DRE, and Friends

Registration for the new Church School year in the Parish House begins at 9:45a and continues during Coffee Hour.

Childcare for our youngest children (birth to age 3) in the Parish House during the service

September 14

10:30a

James reflects on the nature of spiritual community: Why do we gather together? And to what purpose? There are small and large reasons that this enterprise is important.

"Come, Come, Whoever You Are"

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Young people in grades K and older begin in the Meeting House, then go to the first session of Sunday School classes. Origins, Play Circle, and Preschool classrooms are open.

September 21

10:30a

Now, James thinks we are also what we think. And our aspirations count, as well. But very much at the heart of the matter we is what we do. For James, this is a call to the creation of an ethical life and it is also a call to a creative engagement with the world.

We Are What We Do

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

September 28

10:30a

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, James will explore the theme of second chances, of starting over, of beginning again.

Beginning Again

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Services in October

October 5

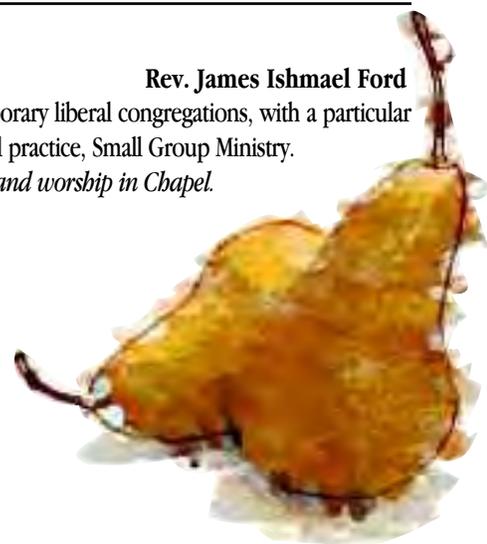
10:30a

James will look at spiritual practices within our contemporary liberal congregations, with a particular focus on what he considers our homegrown UU spiritual practice, Small Group Ministry.

The Art of Conversation

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.



NEWS AND NOTES

Have a "Cuppa" with James

Our new minister, James Ford, has asked the Fellowship Committee to help him meet with First Unitarians in small groups (10-15 people) to hear about what is important to us about our church, as well as to simply have time together. The first of these early evening coffee/tea/dessert events, held in August in members' homes, filled up quickly, and those who attended have made lots of positive comments.

"Cuppas" are currently scheduled on September 8, 11, 16, 18, and October 2 from 7:00p to 9:00p. A special gathering for those under 29 is tentatively scheduled for September 9. Several others are being planned. For information and to sign up, visit the Fellowship table at Coffee Hour or call Gerry or Dave Spremulli at 401.434.3346. Please tell them your preferred and an alternate date, and let them know if you would be willing to host an event.

This process will involve a lot of evenings out for James! And he is very happy to do it in order that we each get a sense of knowing him, and he us, sooner rather than later. This seems to us a loving and generous decision and we feel blessed to be asked to participate.

*Fellowship Committee: Carol Adams, Chair;
Jim Estey, Mary Frappier, Kate Menard,
Janet Noble, Dave Spremulli, Gerry Spremulli*

Path to Membership

Thursdays, October 9 and 16, 7:00-9:00p

The Path to Membership class is for those interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism – its values, history, and principles – and about First Unitarian and its programs and people. Members of the congregation are also welcome to attend to meet newcomers and learn more about your church.

In October, a two-session Path class will be led by Rev. James Ford and DRE Cathy Seggel and hosted by the Deacons, who will provide dessert. There will be an opportunity to join the congregation at the close of the class. Childcare is available for those who reserve in advance.

Registration required by Sunday, October 5.

Contact: Walter Sotelo at 401.421.7970 or assist@firstunitarianprov.org. Indicate the age(s) of children you will bring.



MONKEY MIND

It is hard to believe the church year is upon us. At the same time, so much has been going on it's hard to believe there was anything like a "break" in our congregational rhythms.

I've been able to attend several of our summer worship services and am very impressed at the quality and dignity of what our speakers and Worship Committee have all been able to put together. I look forward to our continued collaboration this year. I've also been able to learn a bit about Social Justice here at First Unitarian and am quite excited at what we are up to. I'm equally impressed with the Small Group Ministry project. I also know there's a lot of interest in supporting the range of "lay ministry," and particularly our supporting each other through the Caring Crew and what the Deacons have been doing. I'm very interested in seeing how we can help and expand that part of our shared ministry.

I've been enjoying the "Cuppa with James" meetings, learning much more than I anticipated. I hope if you haven't already signed up for one, that you will seriously consider doing so (see sidebar). They're fun!

What an office! I'm in awe of both our administrator, Posey Kooris, and our Director of Religious Education, Cathy Seggel. And I'm just getting a feel for the rest of the supporting staff for this amazing community. What a team! It really is exciting.

I am particularly grateful that the congregation has gathered such an amazing crowd of people as our Prudential Committee. What wisdom, humor, and insight – a very good combination. This is going to be quite a year . . .

As you probably know, among the many things we've been looking at over the summer is, in the wake of the tragedy at Knoxville, a review of our safety measures at the church. The PruComm has called together a small task force and we will be reporting back to both the Prudential Committee and the congregation in the next couple of weeks. Largely, it looks good. But there are a few things we think would be prudent to add into our normal welcoming procedures.

Looking at our size, I cannot say how grateful I am for the visionary leadership that has created our new membership coordinator position. If you think you might be the right person for the job, or you think you know who is, please look at the job description elsewhere in this newsletter or on the church website.

On a more personal note, Jan and I found a lovely little house in the Oak Hill section of Pawtucket, which we have purchased. We're currently perched in an apartment on the East Side while fixing up the house a bit. We hope to move in soon.

I so look forward to this year.

See you in church,

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00a-12:00p
Appointments are recommended.

Postscript: If you're wondering about the title of my column, "Monkey Mind," I've used it ever since my parish internship nearly twenty years ago. It comes from an old Buddhist description for our human minds, so like a monkey, dancing from this to that. Seemed an appropriate name for a minister's column. Whether it is or not, it has stuck.



SPIRITUAL
PATHWAYS

Here We Go

September arrives regardless of how much we swam, read, remodeled, cleaned, painted, hiked, or bicycled. Our focus shifts from attempts to refill our wells to walking the next chapter in our individual, family, work, and/or spiritual travels. The change of seasons has the potential to move us from moments of outdoor relaxation to crisper hours of working to accomplish tasks and reach measurable goals.

People of all ages feel change in the air after Labor Day. Some consider it their “new year.” It is helpful to go with the flow of these transitions. As we come together this fall, words from Robert Fulghum’s latest book, *What on Earth Have I Done?*, lend a little humor, and plenty to ponder about the cycles of life.

Questions asked of children by parents:

- “What on earth have you done?”
- “What in the name of God are you doing?”
- “What will you think of next?”
- “Who do you think you are?”

Questions I still ask myself:

- “What on earth have you done?”
- “What in the name of God are you doing?”
- “What will you think of next?”
- “Who do you think you are?”

Churches have their own patterns of ebb and flow. This bright September, our congregational narrative continues as we fling our doors wide open to welcome newcomers and old friends alike. It is time to celebrate the new settled ministry of Rev. James Ishmael Ford. I look forward to his leadership of a strong collaborative staff and volunteer team, in service to First Unitarian.

I encourage you to find new opportunities for satisfying involvement in congregational life. There are places waiting for you in our shared ministries of community life, social justice, stewardship, and faith development for children, youth and adults.

I invite you to visit, call, or email with your questions and to share your ideas and energy.

As we all to continue to ask our ageless questions, I hope we remember to feel the warm air through open windows. And that the precious light of fading summer guides us in greeting the colorful promise of fall.

It will be good to see you on Homecoming Sunday.

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

401.421.7970
 dre@firstunitarianprov.org
 September Office Hours: Monday–Friday
 and Sunday

More Information

For complete Sunday School program information, plus a map and calendar, see the 2008-2009 *First Unitarian Resource Book* mailed in late August to all households on our mailing list.

For details and questions, contact Cathy Seggel at 401.421.7970 or dre@firstunitarianprov.org

NEWS AND NOTES

Coming of Age Program Postponement

Our plan to postpone the Coming of Age class for this year’s group until the 2009-2010 school year was a difficult decision. It was based on the small size of the incoming eighth-grade class, the cohesive seventh/eighth-grade group that has been combined for over four years, and the nature of the curriculum. The minister, Religious Education Committee, teachers, and parents were consulted in a process led by the DRE.

This decision means that the mentoring component and the spring worship service when our eighth-graders share their credos are on hold. We look forward to the following school year for the traditional Coming of Age program with mentoring and recognition service components.

We are pleased to offer a Junior High Youth Group for this year’s seventh- and eighth-graders that will combine classroom learning with social gatherings, worship, and social-action projects. Mentor Coordinator, Anne Connor, has agreed to serve a one-year term on the Religious Education Committee with a focus on this age group.

Sunday School Schedule of Opening Events

Sunday, September 7

- 9:45a Registration on the front lawn before church and during Coffee Hour in the Atrium
- 10:30a Intergenerational Worship Service Homecoming/Water Communion Origins (birth–2 years) and Play Circle (2–3 yrs) classrooms open.

Tuesday, September 9

- 7:00p Teacher Orientation in the Atrium

Sunday, September 14

- 10:30a First Day of Church School Grades K–7 begin in the Meeting House, then go to classes. Origins, Play Circle and Preschool begin in classrooms.

Sunday, September 21

- 9:30a Youth Music Ensemble Kick-off Parish House Auditorium

Bring voices and instruments (that you can already play) to begin a new year of making music and raising spirits. Open to young singers and musicians in grades 3 and older or by permission of Marcia Taylor, music ensemble director. Parents, please accompany young people to sign up.

NEWS AND NOTES

New Picture Directory

Putting names with faces is an important step in building a warm and welcoming community. The church has not had a picture directory since 1996. Because there are many newcomers and new ministries to highlight, the time has come.

The Deacons will be staffing a table during Coffee Hour starting in late September for sign-ups. Photos will be taken at the church by Olin-Mills, a well-known company that specializes in producing church directories.

Your photo can be what you want it to be – your family (including your animals), you alone, you and a friend – it’s up to you. Finished photos will be ready for the holidays.

Watch for more information in the *Meeting House Times*, or contact Posey Kooris in the office (admin@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970).

The Deacons’ Corner

The Deacons are looking forward to working with Rev. Ford this year. We hope to see each of you when we sign you up at Coffee Hour for our new picture directory. This fall, in addition to working with the picture directory project, we’ll be hosting the two-part Path to Membership class in October and discussing ways we can support the spiritual and community health of the congregation.

*Paul Brule, Mary Kollar, Senior Deacons;
Richard Boober, Nancy Weiss-Fried,
Robert O. Jones, Janet Downing Taylor,
Judy Bowden, Mary Finger,
David Bridgehouse, Russell Gifford*



SIGHT LINES

This Fall Is About Welcoming

I suppose the place to start is to say – to most of you – “Welcome back.” But then, for others who are new to our congregation or are visiting us for the first time, the place to start is to simply say, “Welcome! We’re glad you are with us.” In many ways, I think the start of this year is all about welcoming.

Certainly this is true when we think about James Ford joining us as our new settled minister. Over the summer, I had the opportunity to begin working with James. He definitely has a passion for nurturing a congregation of generosity and caring, one that reaches out to the larger world. One way you can welcome him is to be sure and sign up for a “Cuppa with James.” The idea here is to create opportunities for more personal gatherings, where James can meet as many of us as possible and learn about our congregation. Look for more on these get-togethers on page 2.

Another reason that this fall is particularly about welcoming is we are currently in search for a new Membership Coordinator. By creating this new position, we hope to find someone who will help newcomers – and not-so-newcomers – find pathways into the life of our congregation. (See below for more information about this.) Certainly the best way to get to know people and to become a part of the rich fabric of life in our congregation is to get involved in any of the many programs here at First Unitarian. From Sunday worship to the Parish Suppers, from religious education to social justice initiatives, there are a lot of pathways into this congregation. The purpose of the new Membership Coordinator will be to help us create better ways of welcoming newcomers and to create better ways for newcomers to get connected with all that is going on here.

September is usually the time of year for gathering back together as a congregation. But this year, in particular, this September is a time to focus on welcoming newcomers and new initiatives. It is a moment rich in potential and new possibilities . . .

Good things,



Cy O’Neil, President
pres@firstunitarianprov.org
 401.272.9454

Are You a People Person?

The Membership Coordinator Search Committee is now seeking applicants to fill this newly created, part-time position. The Membership Coordinator will lead the church’s program of welcome and integration for newcomers and new members. This position requires a visibly enthusiastic commitment to the mission of the First Unitarian Church of Providence and of Unitarian Universalism, and appropriate skills to plan and implement a new and continuing program to welcome newcomers into the congregation, assist newcomers toward becoming members, and integrate new members into the active life of the church. Over time, this position is expected to expand to include development and implementation of programs to attract new members.

The complete job description is posted on the bulletin board in the Parish House and on the church website: www.firstunitarianprov.org, in the “First U News” section. Interested candidates are asked to submit a letter of application, current resumé, and contact information for three references to: uuprovmc@gmail.com or to:

First Unitarian Church of Providence, attn: Membership Coordinator Search Committee
 One Benevolent Street
 Providence, RI 02906



TOGETHER IN FELLOWSHIP

Welcome Back All-Parish Supper – Friday, September 12, 2008

Everyone, young and old and in-between, is invited to join us for these potluck All-Parish Suppers.

5:45p Social Hour – Bring hors d'oeuvres to share and/or wine for your own party if you wish.

6:30p Potluck Dinner – Please bring a dish to share that serves at least eight people. You can bring a main dish, or alternatively a vegetable, a salad, or a dessert.

7:45p Program in the Auditorium: An Evening with Rev. James Ishmael Ford



Our after-dinner program will give us a special opportunity to welcome and to learn more about. James Ford, our new settled minister. James will begin the conversation by briefly telling his story, explaining his background and interests, and reflecting on his ideas about ministry and our UU movement.

He will also share some of his observations about our congregation: what attracted him to First Unitarian, what he has learned so far about our hopes and concerns, and how we might move together to become the church we really want to be. He will then respond to questions and comments.

Following this dialogue, we will have an opportunity to introduce ourselves briefly and share a highlight of our summer experiences.

Don't miss this special evening!

Reservations are requested. Please fill out the sign-up slip in the Sunday Meeting House Times and drop it in the collection, or call the office at 401.421.7970.

Childcare for infants and children up to age 10 will be available for parents who request it. Call Jim Estey at 401.351.1748 to sign up.

October All-Parish Supper – Friday, October 10

The Election of 2008: Issues and Trends

The after-dinner program will feature presentations and discussion by Professors John Dietrich and Richard Holtzman of the Political Science department at Bryant University. Questions from the audience and discussion will follow.

Please plan to join us. You won't want to miss this great opportunity to become fully informed about the upcoming election.

SATURDAY SOCIALS

These potluck suppers are for adults; newcomers and long-timers alike are welcome. Space is limited, and reservations are required. Please call in advance to reserve a space and for further information.

For reservations, menu planning, and directions for any of the Social Suppers, please call Kate Menard, registrar and menu coordinator, at 401.437.6322.

September Saturday Potluck Social

Date: Saturday, September 6
 Host: Carol Adams
 Place: 145 Narragansett Avenue, Riverside, RI
 Time: 6:00p Social hour / 7:00p Dinner
 Remember to bring your own beverage.

October Saturday Potluck Socials

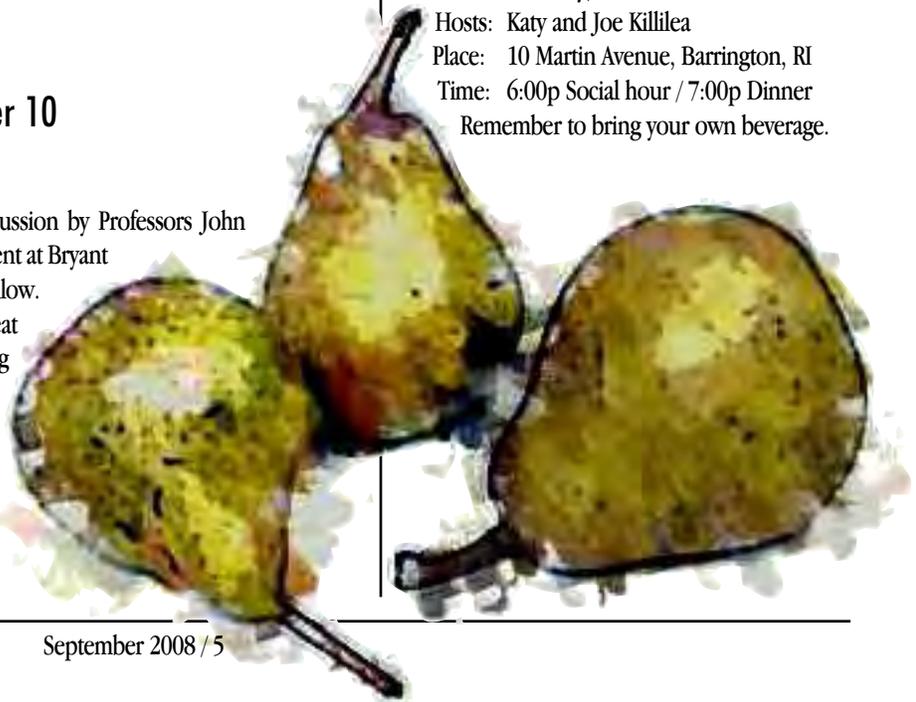
There will be two, simultaneous potluck socials in October, both for adults only.

Newcomers especially are encouraged to join in the social at the Meyers/Keller home.

Date: Saturday, October 4
 Hosts: Julie Meyers and David Keller
 Place: 170 Ridge Street, Pawtucket, RI
 Time: 6:00p Social hour / 7:00p Dinner
 Remember to bring your own beverage.

The social at the Killilea's home is for those who think of themselves as "younger," perhaps single but not necessarily; newcomers are, again, especially welcome.

Date: Saturday, October 4
 Hosts: Katy and Joe Killilea
 Place: 10 Martin Avenue, Barrington, RI
 Time: 6:00p Social hour / 7:00p Dinner
 Remember to bring your own beverage.



WHEEL OF LIFE

On the Move

Best wishes to Bob and Nan Sumner-Mack who have moved to Hilo, Hawaii, and are settling in with a “somewhat Unitarian-based discussion group.” The church office has their new address.

Condolences

To Ruth Kiven Arellana and her family, including Kate and Peter Bowden, on the death of Ruth’s mother, Arline Kiven, a member of First Unitarian since 1956, on June 18, 2008.

To the congregation of our partner church in Transylvania on the death of Sándor Rác, President of the Szentegyhaza church, after a brief illness, on June 28, 2008, just two months after his visit with us here in April.

OUR LARGER FAITH

New England Fall Multi-District Conference

Save the Date! October 17-18, 2008 at the DCU Center Arena & Convention Complex, Worcester, MA

The fall conference for UU churches in New England will feature the candidates for UUA President, Laurel Hallman and Peter Morales. The election will be held at General Assembly in June 2009.

For more information and registration details, visit the Ballou Channing District website at www.bcduua.org

Womensphere Annual Fall Retreat

Saturday/Sunday, October 4-5

Senexet House, Woodstock, CT

Theme: Global Sisterhood – Weaving the Interconnected We

Womensphere organizes sacred circle gatherings for women of the Ballou Channing District of the UUA. Join us as we explore how our lives are woven together with others around the world. The workshop leader for the weekend will be the Rev. Dr. Dorothy May Emerson, who will facilitate a variety of activities.

The cost is \$122, including four meals. A limited number of scholarships are available.

To register or for more information, contact Kate Gillis, 401.823.7929 or ksgillis@netzero.net



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

A Note on James Ford’s Installation

The installation ceremony for our new settled minister was originally planned for Sunday, October 19, and is so listed in the new Resource Book, which went to press before a change in schedule necessitated a postponement. James explains:

Just a quick note to all of you to say that, due to scheduling conflicts, we will be delaying my installation until later in the church year. We’ll let you all know when with plenty of lead time. Promise!

However, as a treat for us all, I’ve been able to get the Rev. Suzanne Spencer to be with us that Sunday, October 19. Sue is a UU minister who spent a year in an Episcopal convent and will preach on that experience as “What I Learned from the Sisters.” I’m a big fan of Sue and consider her one of our UU treasures. I look forward to her gracing our pulpit with her presence and hearing her message.

More anon, James

Peace Flag Project to Celebrate the UN International Day of Peace

Sunday, September 21, 3:00p to 6:00p Burnside Park at Kennedy Plaza, downtown Providence



The Peace Flag Project is sponsoring Providence’s fifth annual celebration of the UN International Day of Peace, along with the American Friends Service Committee of SE New England and the International Institute. The event is free and open to the public. There will be activities for adults and children, including making Peace Flags and Pinwheels for Peace. Throughout the event, there will be performances by storytellers, dancers, and singers from India, China, Africa, and Latin America.

First Unitarian will be there! Through Anne Connor’s efforts, we will offer Voter Registration at the event; and our Tuesday night Knitters Group will host the Peace Shawl Project, sharing their wisdom and peace shawl instructions. Our minister James Ford will join in.

At 5:00, there will be a brief program followed by a Silent Walking Meditation, the traditional highlight of the program. The Walk will be led by interfaith clergy and community leaders, from Burnside Park to the Basin of Water Place Park, and will conclude with interfaith prayers for peace.

If you’d like to help, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities. Please consider being involved in building peace by contributing your time and ideas.

The Peace Flag Project part of First Unitarian’s Social Justice Ministry.

Contact: Ginny Fox at 401.453.8281 or ginfox32@yahoo.com; or Jill Cicero at 401.263.0820 or storyheadjillmc@gmail.com



CONGREGATIONAL
NEWS AND EVENTS

First Unitarian Establishes a Third Village Bank

The Fanm k'ap Brase ("Women Entrepreneurs") Village Bank has been established in Les Cayes, a port town in southwestern Haiti, thanks to the generosity of members and friends at First Unitarian Church. The church sent \$5,000 to establish the bank through the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), the agency that provides financial services through a global network of locally managed, self-supporting institutions.

Fifteen women have received loans from Fanm k'ap Brase Village Bank. Fabiola Etienne, a village bank client writes, "This is my first loan with FINCA. My loan is for 8,000 gourds (\$231) and I have 1,000 gourds in my savings account. My business is dry food. I had to give up school after seven years of studies because of lack of money, but I know how to read and write. I am now 20 years old. I have five years in business without any credit. The loan of FINCA allows me to grow my economic activities. I received land from my grandmother and I am building a house on it now. I love FINCA. I hope to do well and receive larger loans in the future."

Jacqueline Lalanne has borrowed \$144 to expand her clothing business; Josette Paul's \$115-dollar loan is helping her enlarge her charcoal establishment. Other clients have used their loans to enhance or start up businesses selling fish, milk, and cooked food.

First Unitarian established two previous village banks in Guatemala in 2007. Loans through FINCA help women create their own jobs or enhance an existing business, enabling them to raise their household incomes and their standard of living. The loans are repaid, with interest, within four months. Recipients are required to save at least 20 percent of the loan amount. Once a loan is paid off, the recipient may borrow more money.

The First Unitarian Village Task Force will be meeting to plan funding for more village banks. Look for more details in the October newsletter. Thank you all for supporting micro-credit, where small loans mean big changes.

For more information, contact Sara Slate at 435-2039 or sslate@cox.net

SAVE THE DATE!

Special Fundraising Event

Saturday, November 8, 2008

Plans are going forward for this year's special fall fundraiser, "Sharing Our Gifts - Receiving the Bounty." Please mark your calendar now and prepare for a day full of fun and frolic: an afternoon talent show by our congregation's youth and an evening with Our UU Idols and a silent auction.

Auction items are being solicited until October 26. You can help by donating services, soliciting gift certificates from businesses, joining the planning team, or volunteering for the food crew.

To volunteer, call Jacqui or Graham Nye at 401.461.0971. For information about auction items, call Tom Getz at 401.726.1867.



Photos courtesy FINCA International



CONTINUING PROGRAMS

Spiritual Cinema

Spiritual Cinema will not meet in September. It will resume on the third Sunday in October. For information about the Spiritual Cinema program, visit www.spiritualcinema.com.

Contact: Marilyn Eanet at 401.433.1299 or meanet@cox.net; or Maureen Johanson at 508.557.1173

Knitting Connection

Every Tuesday, 7:00p

Join other knitters in the congregation for an evening of knitting/crocheting and conversation. Bring your own project; share your techniques, skills, and ideas. Beginners are always welcome! We'll be selecting a group project for the year in September.

No registration necessary.
Contact: Julie Meyers at kelmey@cox.net

UU Women

Second Tuesday, September 9, 7:00p

Women are welcome to participate in a group of support and sisterhood. Meetings begin with a roundtable "check-in," usually followed by the introduction of a topic or focus for the evening. This format is flexible and can be adapted to deal with more pressing issues brought to the group. All participants are encouraged to contribute ideas as to how our group can meaningfully flourish.

Registration not required.
Contact: Terri Smith at 401.941.6865 or essceetee123@yahoo.com

UUMeN

Second Sunday, September 14, 7:00-9:00p

This is the fifteenth year that First Unitarian's UU MeN's group has been gathering together for fellowship, discussion, and the building of a liberal spiritual community of men. Facilitation is shared by the members; the facilitator for September is Jim Estey. After an extended check-in, we will attempt to identify and to consider the three or four main issues that we, as men, are facing. All interested men are welcome; please join us.

Registration not required.
Contact: Jim Estey at 401.351.1748



GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

New Programs

Small Group Ministry Sampler

Sunday, September 28 during Coffee Hour

Over the years, members and friends of First Unitarian have remarked that the things that originally drew them to Unitarian Universalism – such as the opportunities to grow spiritually and grow in relationship to others – were often lost in the jumble of church and committee business. Small Group Ministry is a way to fulfill the needs for intimacy and spiritual growth of members of our community.

Small groups of six to ten people enhance connections and provide an avenue for religious growth and spiritual meaning. Groups share a common format: centering, a brief personal sharing, discussion of a topic or activity, and closing. The groups are not designed to be therapy groups. As a group, the members develop a covenant for how they will relate to each other and to the larger community. They also participate as a group in a service activity at least once a semester, for the benefit of either the church or the larger community. Most groups meet twice a month for two hours in the Parish House or in a member's home. To enhance the experience for all, group members are asked to commit to eight sessions. Trained facilitators are members of First Unitarian Church.

You're invited to sample the Small Group Ministry experience on Sunday, September 28, during Coffee Hour, to see if SMG is what you've been looking for.

No registration required for the SMG Sampler.
Contact: Ruth Arellana at rkarellana@yahoo.com

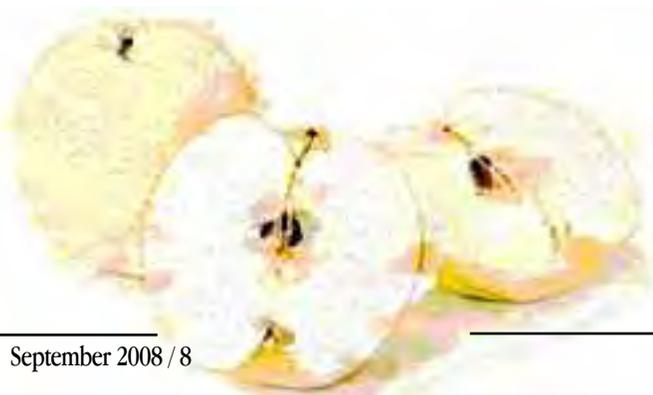
Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays, September 9 and 23, at 7:00p

Reimagining Religion is an ongoing attempt to employ the best recent scholarship in coming to grips with issues raised by radically new developments in the study of religion and thereby achieving a fuller appreciation of what religious literacy entails in the twenty-first century.

The group is beginning a new series of discussions, drawing on Lloyd Geering's autobiography, *Wrestling with God*. In his book, Geering observes that the longevity of the Judaeo-Christian theological tradition has resulted from its brilliant mythological description of the human condition. "But because we have now moved into a radically new age and express ourselves in a non-mythical medium," he argues, "it has now become necessary to enunciate a completely fresh world theology, ... drawing appreciatively from all religious traditions ... in the light of our new knowledge of the universe."

Registration not required.
Contact: Tom Hall at 401.647.2925 or tw2nd@aol.com





GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

Coming in October

Introduction to the Zen Path

Mondays, October 6, 13, and 27 at 7:00p

Zen is a school of Buddhism that has specialized in certain meditation disciplines. This three-session class will explore Buddhist foundations, the emergence of the school in China and its various expressions in Japan, Korea, Vietnam and now the West. The class will include lecture and discussion, but will be grounded in an exploration of the meditation discipline called shikantaza, or “just sitting.”

Our minister, James Ford, has received permission to teach in two Zen lineages. His most recent book is *Zen Master Who? A Guide to the People and Stories of Zen*. A weekly Zen Meditation Group led by Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford will begin on Monday, November 3.

Leader: Rev. James Ford. Registration not required.

First Unitarian Women's Chorus

Sundays, October 12, 19, 26, November 2, 9, 16, 12:00–1:30p

This is an opportunity for women of all ages (including teens) to get together to sing. Beth Armstrong will direct. She has years of experience singing and directing choruses of all types and special experience with women's voices. She also has a vast collection of songs that are accessible, not only to the experienced vocalist, but also to the beginner. Music reading is not required, so this is a good chance to grab your mom, your best friend, or your daughter and come to church to sing just for the joy of it. If the group chooses, it's possible that the chorus will sing in a Sunday service. Join us on all or any of the Sundays.

Contact: Beth Armstrong at bestar3@aol.com. Registration requested.

Yoga for Anxiety and Depression

Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00p

Anxiety and depression go hand in hand. Anxiety revs you up and burns up your energy, leaving you depleted and depressed. Simple and effective yogic techniques can help ease anxiety and elevate your mood. In this two-hour class, you will have an opportunity to learn about a basic yogic model of human energy that has a strong correlation with Western understanding of physiology. Experience the effects of calming and nourishing practices. Teacher Karen Lee is a registered yoga therapist and owner of Breathing Time Yoga.

Contact: Karen Lee at 401.421.9876. Registration requested but not required.

Consider the Cosmos

October 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30, 7:00–9:00p (weather dependent)

These two-hour explorations of the night sky offer an interesting path to deeper awareness of our place in the Universe. We will view objects within our solar system, within our galaxy, and far beyond our galaxy while we discuss related, mind-bending facts and theories that, in the words of Einstein, cause one to “pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe.” Wishing Star Observatory in Barrington houses a 14" telescope and was designed for programs such as this. Class size is limited to nine people per session with a minimum of at least three participants committed to each night. Repeat participants welcome as space permits.

Registration required. In the Atrium during October Coffee Hours, or call Pete Peterson at 401.245.4068

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

Green Sanctuary at First Unitarian

Second Sunday, September 14, 9:30a

A Green Sanctuary is a congregation that lives its commitment to the Earth by creating a sustainable lifestyle for its members as individuals and as a faith community. Program goals include building awareness of societal environmental issues and injustices, motivating community action and fostering a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.

Registration not required.

Contact: Bekah Greenwald at

bekah@apeiron.org or 401.521.3446

Gaia's Hearth

CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

Gaia's Hearth was formed to create a harmonious spiritual environment for nature-based traditions to worship together. There are a wide variety of paths and traditions within Paganism. We welcome people of all paths to join us.

Cornerstones of Wicca

Third Thursday, September 18, 7:00–8:30p

In this ongoing class, teachers will instruct students in the basics tenets of Wicca as well as the practical techniques of magical work for an intensive, homework-oriented class experience. Our members come from varied magical backgrounds and experiences, and we welcome people of all faiths and paths to join us. Our September topic is “Proper Wicca Etiquette.”

Registration requested.

Leader: Diane Donnelly, dianednrlly@yahoo.com

Sylvan Circle

Second Sunday, September 14, 12:30–1:30p

At this family-friendly gathering, we all share, learn, and teach each other as we pass around a talking stick and explore all types of traditions. Each meeting starts with the Celtic Tree of the month (September's trees are Hazel, past; Vine, present; Poplar/Aspen, coming) and then “branch out” to explore and honor each other's paths. Children are welcome to participate, as sometimes they are the best teachers.

Registration not required.

Leader/contact: Arte Ezikovich nimuix@cox.net

Empties4Cash Printer Cartridge Recycling Program

You can participate in an easy, effortless, and environmentally beneficial program to recycle your printer cartridges – and help out First Unitarian! Just bring your empty printer cartridges to church and put them in the collection box in the Atrium. The church will receive cash for the empty cartridges that are returned.

The Empties4Cash program has kept more than a million printer cartridges out of landfills. The cartridges are recycled into remanufactured ones that can be purchased at up to 80 percent savings at www.inksmile.com.

For additional information, contact Posey Kooris in the church office at 401.421.7970 or admin@firstunitarianprov.org.

Coffee Hour Co-op!

Our Sunday after-service Coffee Hour is really a cooperative effort. We need providers for September and October. Whether you like to bake or not, you can help. You can bring in home-baked or store-bought goods – cheese, crackers, and fresh fruit are welcome alternatives. Six to eight people are needed each Sunday to bring in goodies to keep up with the ravenous crowd. Sign up with Janet Downing Taylor at the Coffee Hour Bakers Table in the Front Parlor any Sunday during Coffee Hour. She'll send you home with a reminder so you won't forget!



To Helen Haynes (once again) for her emergency phone coverage while the office was closed in late July and early August.

To our Summer Sunday Service speakers: Kevin Carson, Jim Estey, Joan Richards, Bruce Boucek, Carol Adams, Bekah Greenwald, Polly Walter, Keith Brown, Neil Bartholomew, Ann Boyd, Rita Rossi, and Rev. Christana Wille McKnight.

To Cheryl Bartholomew, John Dooley, James Ford, Dan Kubas-Meyer, Rick Richards, and Martha Rice Sanders for their fine work this summer in sustaining the momentum on the important initiative of hiring a Membership Coordinator.



Join the Volunteers at the Community Food Share Food Pantry

Third Mondays monthly

The Community Food Share Food Pantry serves needy people in the Providence area. The number of people who depend on our pantry is increasing due to the weakening economy. Our "Grocery Store" is set up in the Atrium on the third Monday afternoon of each month; our next distribution is Monday, September 15.

Volunteering for the Food Pantry is a rewarding experience. You can help with setup, be a personal shopper to help clients select food items, or, of course, work clean up (we particularly need volunteers for the late afternoon).

If you would like to help or would like more information, contact either Elesá Amand at 401.253.9602 or Sara Slate at 401.435.2039.

First Unitarian's Habitat Group Helps Build Homes in Providence

Third Saturdays monthly

"Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world, and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need. Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses around the world, providing more than 1,000,000 people in more than 3,000 communities with safe, decent, affordable shelter. HFHI was founded in 1976 by Millard Fuller along with his wife, Linda." (from the Habitat website: www.habitat.org)

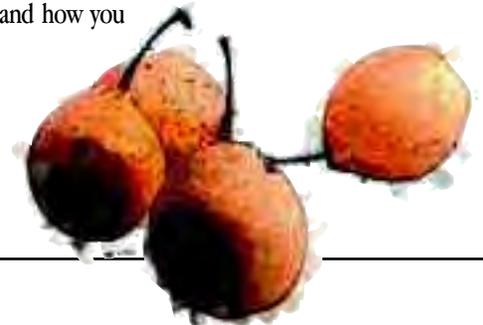
The First Unitarian Church Habitat Work Group has been active for the past two years with the Providence chapter (Habitat for Humanity of RI – Greater Providence, Inc., www.habitatprov.org). The Providence chapter usually has several houses under construction at any one time. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome – the only requirements are a willingness and ability to do physical work, and minimum age of 16.

Our next work day is Saturday, September 20. Sign-up is required as space on each work crew is limited. Contact: Peter Van Erp at 401.351.4881 or petervanerp@cox.net

All-Church Program Fair

Sunday, October 5 during Coffee Hour

Are you wondering how you can become more involved in the life of the church? Or just curious about what all those groups and committees do? Plan to be at this year's Program Fair, where representatives of church groups, committees, and ministries will be eager to talk with you about their activities and opportunities to join in. Learn more about Small Group Ministry or the Women's Alliance. Meet others who share your special interest in social action or music or spiritual pathways. Find out how things work and how you can get connected!



THIS MONTH @ FIRST UNITARIAN

September 2008

"Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good." — Calvin Coolidge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<u>1</u> LABOR DAY	<u>2</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>3</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> Saturday Social Supper
<u>7</u> HOMECOMING Church school registration begins 9:45a Sunday Service 10:30a	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> Teacher Orientation 7:00p Re-imagining Religion 7:00p UU Women 7:00pm Knitters 7:00p	<u>10</u> Worship Committee 7:00p Green Sanctuary 7:30p	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> Parish Supper 5:45p	<u>13</u>
<u>14</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Sunday School Begins UU Men 7:00p	<u>15</u> Food Pantry 4:00p Deadline for October newsletter	<u>16</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>17</u> Caring Committee 7:00p	<u>18</u> Peace Flags 6:30p Wicca 7:00p	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>21</u> Sunday Service 10:30a SGM Facilitators 12:00p	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>24</u> Executive Committee 7:00p	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> Retreat
<u>28</u> Sunday Service 10:30a SGM Samplers 11:30a	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> Knitters 7:00p				

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Remembering Sándor Rác

It was with surprise and sadness that we learned of the unexpected death of Sándor Rác, the president of our partner church in Transylvania, on June 28, after a short illness. He was 67. Sándor had visited First Unitarian, with his minister, Szabolcs Kelemen, just last April. That trip to America was a life-long dream, ever since as a small boy he watched American planes fly overhead during World War II. His visit here held another first: his trip with the Partner Church group to Beavertail in Jamestown was the first time he had been to the ocean.

Sándor was born into a poor family in Szekelyudvarhely in Transylvanian Romania; his mother was influential in his decision to earn a degree in accounting. He settled in Szentegyhaza to work as an accountant in a steel mill that was moved there under Ceausescu. He and his wife, Maria, had two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom are successful mathematicians living in Budapest and who blessed him with two grandchildren. After retirement, Sándor continued working as an accounting consultant on various projects. He loved computers; while he was here, he bought a laptop with money he had saved for a number of years. He was very happy with it, and he and Tom Getz spent most of a day at Best Buy getting the computer set up.

Sándor's wife, Maria, was a Catholic, but Sándor was a life-long Unitarian. He had been the president of the Szentegyhaza church for a number of years: he was called "president for life," since the congregation couldn't imagine that anybody could replace him. After he died, Rev. Kelemen told Marida Hollos that, sadly, it was true: he was president for life. It was a position he had held with pride.

