



**SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY SERVICES**

**Sunday, December 6** 10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**  
**The Day before Pearl Harbor: A Meditation on the Work of Peace**

Every moment of every day of our lives, we are given the opportunity to make choices. Usually the consequences of those choices are pretty small potatoes. But sometimes these decisions we make and actions we take play out in amazing ways. James will reflect on some of the things we might do before we are forced to make hard decisions.

**There will be a child dedication during this Sunday's service.**

*Young people in grades pre-K and older start in the Meeting House, then go to Sunday School. Origins and Play Circle rooms are open.*

**Today is our annual Amnesty International Write-a-thon.**

**Sunday, December 13** 10:30a **Cathy S. Seggel, Director of Religious Education**  
**Waiting for the Ninth Wave**

How do we listen for the rhythm of our lives in a season filled with anticipation and hope? We might embrace the changing tides and still find time to breathe. Or, as Cathy is learning from the Rev. Meg Barnhouse, we can paddle and let the waves hold us up.

*Young people in grades pre-K and older start in the Meeting House, then go to Sunday School. Origins and Play Circle rooms are open.*

**Sunday, December 20** 10:30a **Rev. James Ford, Cathy Seggel, Fred Jodry**  
**Our Almost-Traditional Christmas Pageant: A Multi-generational Service**

Cathy, James, Fred, and a cast of many will recall the ancient story of the birth of a child as a story of universal hope in this second annual production of our living nativity. Kids needed! And no one who wants to be involved and claims they're a kid will be carded.

*Origins, Play Circle, and Preschool classrooms are open.*

**Thursday, December 24** **Christmas Eve Services of Candles and Carols**  
**5:00p** Our Family Service featuring our Youth Music and Occasional Drama Ensemble

**9:00p** Our Contemplative Service with choir and guest musicians

**Sunday, December 27** 10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**  
**Mr. Darwin's Journey: A Spiritual Meditation**

On this day in 1831, the Beagle began its voyage made famous by the naturalist they brought with them. James has given a lot of thought to the place of evolutionary theory and more to the place of science, not only in society at large, but for religious liberals. He'll share some of his thoughts.

*No church school. Nursery and toddler care available.*

**Sunday, January 3** 10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**  
**"Who Is the True Chien?" and Other Ghost Stories about Our Lives**

James will begin his reflection about our new year with an old Chinese ghost story. He thinks it has something to do with ghosts that haunt all of us in our ordinary lives, and today he will reflect on the divided heart and what we might be able to do about it.

*Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.*

**Guest at Your Table boxes are due today.**

**Please see the flu-prevention and the program cancellation notices on page 6.**

The Monthly Newsletter for

The First Unitarian Church of Providence  
 Corner of Benefit and Benevolent Streets

DECEMBER 2009

ALL PARISH EVENTS

**Path to Membership**

December 5

**Annual World Affairs Write-a-thon**

December 6

**All-Parish Supper**

Friday, December 11

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- Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
- Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
- Frederick Jodry, Music Director
- Rev. Christana Wille McKnight, Community Minister
- Posey Kooris, Administrator
- Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
- Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator
- Jaime Durango, Building Manager
- Paul Webber, Evening Security
- Pedro Vasquez, Sunday Building Manager

NEWSLETTER

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



**Deacons' Corner**

The Deacons have begun our annual telephone check-in with members and contributing friends, and plan to finish by February. We will be following a new system in which each Deacon, instead of calling a randomly selected list, is assigned households and will call the same people every year during her/his five-year term. We hope this will increase the sense of congregational interconnections.

We are very excited about the Covenant Conversations, and all feedback indicates the meetings have been popular and successful. We hope everyone has a chance to participate in this momentous undertaking for our congregation.

To continue the greening of our campus, the Deacons collectively have purchased an inscribed paving brick for our Memorial Garden to help raise funds for plants for the new Atrium garden. How about some other committees joining us? The \$100 donation isn't that much when members split the cost. All proceeds will go first toward Atrium garden plants and, after that, other landscape improvements. See Deacon Nancy Weiss-Fried to make your donation and discuss the inscription you would like on your brick.

We are still collecting cloth napkins to use at Parish Suppers to eliminate paper napkin waste. Leave your donations of superfluous napkins (or newly purchased, if so moved) with Deacon Janet Taylor at the Coffee Bake table on Sunday, or drop them in the "Cloth Napkins" container in the Parish House.

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

**Wheel of Life**



Congratulations to our Community Minister Christana Wille McKnight on the birth of her second child, a daughter named Deliah.



**Monkey Mind**

Last week there was an email going around where people were suggesting we should be inviting Congressman Patrick Kennedy to investigate the Unitarian Universalist church. I thought it a charming idea. Why not? And then it set me to thinking a little.

As most of us here know, I was raised a fundamentalist Baptist. Beyond worship, our biggest enterprise was reaching out to other people with our good news. Now, I grew up to think maybe it wasn't as useful a message as my parents had thought. And I set off on a spiritual pilgrimage. Now, as an adult and a UU of a Buddhist flavor, I've found something in this lovely faith tradition that has helped me through rough times and good and has helped me to find my way toward something that might deserve to be called spiritual maturity. And I think it worth sharing, as much as any, and way more than some.

I am very much aware there's a discomfort in our crowd with reaching out to others and telling them about our good news. It's a New England thing. It's also a UU thing. Unless, apparently, it's a congressman raised Catholic but now enduring the importuning of his bishop.

But I sincerely believe we have a message of hope, authentic good news. At the heart of what it means for me to be a Unitarian Universalist is our message of human liberation. Ours is a call to notice two truths: the preciousness of the individual and how we are all intertwined together, a web that includes all of us and the whole world.

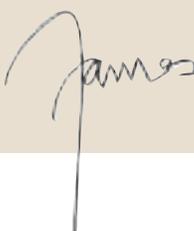
We band together in our congregations in support of this way of freedom and grace, becoming a place of healing for ourselves and for the world. There is no doubt in my mind and heart that, informed by this vision, we've done some good for ourselves, our families, our community, and, in many ways, spread some good across the globe.

And I'm committed to sharing our faith in the precious individual and the mystery of interconnect- edness - found through a sustained, disciplined, responsible, and free pursuit of our hearts and minds - which, all along the way, from beginning to end, is expressed in a thousand acts of mercy and jus- tice.

This is a saving message that many are yearning to hear. We need to share it.

And not just with Democratic congressmen. I believe we have friends and neighbors we know could profit from associating with our community. I hope you agree. I hope you can think of one or two or three. And, I hope, you'll consider maybe, possibly, inviting one or two of those people to come to church with you sometime this year. No hard sell. Not necessary at all. Just a friendly invite to some- one you think might well be a "UU without knowing it."

Wouldn't that be something? And who knows, perhaps they'll meet the congressman here . . .  
See you in the Meeting House.



Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister  
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday,  
9:00a -12:00p Appointments are recommended.  
[min@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:min@firstunitarianprov.org)





## Of Seasons and Sabbaticals

### Seed Bundles and Simple Gifts

Each year at this time in the cycle of the seasons, I need to remember that the trees faithfully mentor me. Yes, they may be bare, but they have already prepared their seed bundles for new growth in the spring. Sound hokey? Perhaps.

But many of us have reason to seek comforting signs in nature to guide our winter lives.

Children also provide positive role models for embracing the chilly change in the weather. Just when parents might brace themselves for bundling on piles of extra outerwear, kids are elated at thoughts of snow and winter holidays. UU families celebrate in diverse ways during this season. I recommend that we help our children and youth experience peaceful winter holiday traditions in our families and with our community. What most children need is time to relax and be with their family and/or friends and opportunities to give and receive meaningful, simple gifts. And remember, it also a time to rest and prepare our own seed bundles.

I wish you a season of warm traditions and peace.

### Review Reflect Renew

I have served this congregation for twenty years. My work and our path together have certainly changed and grown over that time. When I began, there were barely 80 children and youth in our program, and we are now proud to serve more than 250. I spent six of those years (2001-2007) working full time while commuting to Cambridge to complete a Master's program in theological studies. Over that period, we welcomed multiple, talented parish ministers; built a spacious, welcoming campus; and reached our arms into our UU Association, the local community, and beyond. We have consistently evolved our curriculum and have coordinated a vibrant cooperative system, including more than 50 volunteer teachers annually. Our congregation has grown strong and is continuing on its way to becoming a healthy, large, generous faith community, where people come to be transformed and to help change our world.

I am ready to review my portfolio and credential, reflect on what I have learned, and refresh my spirit. It is time for me to be sure that you all know that I am preparing to experience a rare and precious time in my career as a Unitarian Universalist religious educator - that is, a winter sabbatical. A careful, multi-year congregational process has brought us to this place. A proposal was crafted by the Religious Education Committee and presented to the Personnel and Prudential leadership. Then, a congregational vote approved the budgetary and timing plan. I have been making lists of lists for more than a year, detailing and prioritizing a calendar of my work and the needs of our programs. This fall, I have worked with the RE Committee to define roles and responsibilities for staff assistants and volunteers who will cover the important tasks of serving children and youth while I am away.

I was granted a six-month sabbatical, of which I will now take three and a half months, from January to mid-April. During that time, I will catch my breath in order to discern the possibilities that my faith-development ministry can bring. I will listen for my own song and open my mind and heart to all that I can offer to this congregation and to the greater community. I am abundantly grateful for this chance to breathe new life into my work.

This is also an opportunity for the congregation to reflect and grow, through the sharing of creative abilities in meeting the needs of our successful and vital programs during my respite. I trust that we will come back together in the spring renewed and invigorated by the learning and identification of possibilities we each have gained.

I will share more details in the next newsletter. In the meantime, I am counting on you to join me in looking forward to this amazing opportunity.

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education  
401.421.7970  
dre@firstunitarianprov.org  
Office Hours: Monday, Friday, and Sunday

### Upcoming Church School Schedule

#### Sunday, December 6

Young people in grades pre-K-7 begin in Meeting House - child dedications

#### Sunday, December 13

Young people in grades pre-K-7 begin in Meeting House - Cathy Seggel preaching

#### Sunday December 20

Multi-generational Service -  
No-rehearse, almost traditional  
Christmas Pageant  
*Origins and Play Circle are open*

#### Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve Services at 5:00p and 9:00p  
See page 1 for details.

#### Sunday, December 27

No church school.  
Nursery and toddler care available.

#### Sunday, January 3

Sunday School resumes



This is the Sunday to return the Guest At Your Table boxes !

### Save the Date!

#### Annual Pasta Supper!



Saturday, January 23  
at 6:00p  
Hosted by our  
Coming of Age  
families



## Nuts and Bolts

As the winter months approach, and we all start to see the effect of the cold weather on our heating bills, it's a good time to reflect on how important a role each of us plays in such mundane things as keeping the lights on and the rooms warm and welcoming in our church buildings.

With activities at the church nearly every night of the week, our Parish House heating system has a full-time job. We've decreased our energy costs in recent years, but utilities and property insurance combined still account for nearly ten percent of our operating budget.

When you come for your evening Chalice Circle or to knit, discuss, meditate, or participate in a committee meeting, be aware that more than nine cents of every dollar that you contribute to the church goes to keeping the building open for that activity. It may not be romantic to think about paying to keep the lights on and the rooms warm, but all of the wonderful stuff that happens in our church buildings depends on it. Thank you for your part in making that happen.

-The Stewardship Committee

## Looking for Leaders

The Nominating Committee is looking for a few good people who are interested in leadership roles at First Unitarian. Our committee is charged with filling vacancies on the Prudential Committee, the Board of Deacons, and the Nominating Committee. If you would like to serve on one of those committees, please contact any member of the Nominating Committee and let us know about your dreams for First Unitarian and how you can help. You can also leave a note for us in the church office.

-Beth Armstrong, Michael Currier,  
Paul Gazin, Carrollyn Grace,  
Dianne Mailloux, Bill Twaddell

## Hats Off!



Many thanks to Coffee Hour Providers last month: Tamara Sexton, Lynda Gulley, Melissa Guillet, Mary Frappier, Pat Tonnessen, Barbara Gloria, Lynne Hoppin-Fazzi, Anne Connor, Jacqui Nye, Gerry Spremulli, Kate Menard, Suzanne Craig, The Transylvania Partner Church Committee, Katy Killilea, Marilyn van Erp, The Cuzner Family and all of you who brought something in to the church kitchen before the Sunday service to surprise us.



## Sight Lines

Guess who's coming to church?

The Unitarian Universalist Association has a program, called the Mystery Worshipper Program, of which First Unitarian took advantage last May. At a church's request, one or two people attend a worship service unannounced and evaluate that church's openness and welcoming attitude toward visitors. They assess how easily the church makes information available before coming (from the website), after arriving, and during and after the service; they check out the accessibility of the facilities and of information about the religious education program.

In the opinion of our Mystery Guest, First Unitarian does quite a good job of welcoming newcomers and providing information about ourselves. We have an "intuitive, attractive, thorough, welcoming, and extremely professional looking" website; we greeted our guest warmly (though we didn't "fuss over" her) and welcomed children in our midst. "Welcoming as part of the service was thorough and open," and our service gave her "the sense that this was a joyous community, where people knew and enjoyed each other, and were happy to be there." After the service, several urged her to sign up for the upcoming potluck supper. She concluded that "it seems like a great community of people - vibrant, intelligent, and caring. The Joys and Concerns (read beautifully by the minister) also gave this sense. I was very favorably impressed with the reception I received, and if I weren't there just for 'mystery worship' business, and if I lived in that area, I would definitely go back."

Are we perfect? Well, no. Our visitor noted several omissions, including no indication on our website or in our literature that we are a Welcoming Congregation (a church that explicitly welcomes members of the bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender community); but then, we had just voted that previous week to become one! Also, we didn't have an American Sign Language interpreter or an offering envelope available, and there were no materials about the religious education program on the literature table inside the church.

I wonder what your experience was the first time you attended First Unitarian and what made you come back again and, eventually, to join the church? I hope that you seek out me, or any other member of our Prudential, Membership, or Fellowship Committees, or our Membership Coordinator, Katy Killilea, and tell us your stories - what we can do better and what made you want to return? First Unitarian offers such an important place for people to explore and grow spiritually: we want to make a newcomer's experience as welcoming as we can so that they, too, come back again and again.



Martha Rice Sanders, President  
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

## Membership News: Our Wonderful Greeters

Thanks to everyone who has been a greeter on Sunday mornings! Together with the ushers and James smiling heartily at the big front doors, the greeters are able to create a very warm, relaxed welcome for everyone coming in. I love that I can count on so many members to take a turn.

The more greeters we have, the less frenzied those frenzy-prone minutes between 10:00 and 10:30 are. Having plenty of people to answer questions, point out bathrooms, and generally take care of newcomers allows for a serene entry into the Meeting House for all. Greeters also spend time with new people in the Newcomers Café during Coffee Hour, where there's easy access to coffee, and the sweets are hand-selected by experts. Remember: you can always become a part of this - please let me know if you're able to volunteer.

-Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator

To get in touch with me about greeting, or some other thing, you can call the office (401.421.7970) or email me (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).



## Community Life and Heritage

### The Holiday All-Parish Supper

Friday, December 11

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

**6:15p 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 Meeting House: "A Child's Christmas in Wales"**

Join us for this special holiday celebration featuring the Aurea Ensemble's presentation. Dylan Thomas's beloved story will be narrated by veteran Rhode Island actor Bob Colonna and will include musical interludes of old English carols and holiday chamber music from the baroque era. Fred Jodry (voice and harpsichord) and a string quartet led by Charles and Consuelo Sherba will perform. This will be an enjoyable evening for children (elementary through high school) as well as adults. Heavily discounted tickets for the performance will be available for sale in the Parish House on the evening of December 11 for people who attend the supper.

**Note:** Please bring a container of coffee or cocoa for the church's Food Pantry if you can.

Everyone - young and old and in-between - is invited to the All-Parish suppers. Reservations for this event are requested. To reserve your place and sign up for a potluck dish, please fill out the form in the *Meeting House Times* and leave it at the church office, call the church office at 401.421.7970, or see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour. Childcare is available for toddlers and young children if requested; call Jim Estey at 401.351.1748 to sign up.

### January All-Parish Supper

Friday, January 15 (a week later than usual)

**Program: "The Obama Presidency: An Assessment"**

Many of us had high hopes and expectations when Barack Obama became our President in January 2009. How and to what extent has he been successful? Has he lived up to his promise? What would be a fair assessment of his performance and his record thus far?

Our presenters are popular professors of political science at Bryant University. Richard Holtzman teaches American government and courses on the U.S. elections and the presidency. John Dietrick teaches American foreign policy and courses in international relations. Both scholars have been monitoring the Obama presidency closely. Join us for what promises to be a most interesting and informative discussion.

### Path to Membership Class

Saturday, December 5, 9:00a-12:00p

The Path to Membership class is for anyone interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism - its values, history, and principles - and about the First Unitarian Church and its programs and people. There is an opportunity to become a member of the congregation at the close of the class.

The class is led by Rev. James Ford, Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education, and Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator. Brunch is prepared and served by the Deacons. Current members of the congregation are welcome to attend to meet newcomers and learn more about our church.

If you can't attend this class, two more Path classes are planned for this church year, on February 27 and (especially for those with other Saturday morning obligations) a class on two week nights in April.

Registration for the December class is requested by Monday, November 30. Childcare is available for those who reserve in advance; please indicate the age of children you will bring.

To register for the December class, contact: Katy Killilea ([mem@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:mem@firstunitarianprov.org)) or call the church office (401.421.7970) if past the requested deadline of Monday, November 30.

### Women's Alliance

Monday, December 7

Program at 11:00a, followed by luncheon

Join us on December 7 to hear Scott Wolf, Executive Director of Grow Smart Rhode Island, who will talk about sensible alternatives to suburban sprawl and urban decay.

A catered luncheon (\$9.00) follows the program at 12:00p. The program and luncheon are open to everyone.

### Saturday Social Suppers Schedule

No Saturday Socials in December

Make plans now to participate in one of the Social Suppers coming up in the New Year: January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24 (Round-the-Table), May 29, and June 26.

### Coffee Hour Needs More Bakers!

Because we have had a larger attendance in the Meeting House recently, we need more donations. Won't you share the spirit this festive season and be part our cooperative Coffee Hour Bakers crew? Sign up at the table in the first parlor on any Sunday during Coffee Hour. You'll go home with a reminder so you won't forget!

Coffee Hour on Sunday, December 13, will be sponsored by the members of the Village Bank Micro-credit Project committee in appreciation of the offering that Sunday for their project.



### The Breakfast Club

Saturday, December 5, 7:00p at the home of Stephen and Heidi Koelz

Are you too old for BUUUG, but still young at heart? Do you remember Neil Patrick Harris as Doogie Howser, MD, rather than Barney Stinson? Do you still think of Alyssa Milano as Samantha from *Who's the Boss*? Then join the Breakfast Club of First Unitarian. We meet on the first Saturday of each month to view a classic '80s movie.

For more information, directions, or a ride, contact Stephen (stephen.koelz@gmail.com)

### The Knitting Connection

Every Tuesday, 7:00p

Join other knitters in the congregation for an evening of knitting and conversation.

Share your techniques, skills, and ideas. Beginners are always welcome!



Contact: Julie Meyer (kelmey@cox.net)

### Congregational Life: First U and the Flu

First Unitarian is adopting a proactive philosophy and policy on maintaining the health and safety of our congregation of all ages during the upcoming flu season. James and Cathy will continue their greeting and welcoming practices, including hand shaking. As always, all adults, youth, and children are encouraged to pass on hand shakes or hugs, as they are comfortable. We will continue to closely follow recommendations from government officials and UUA leaders. Changes in these policies and practices will be communicated in a timely and widespread fashion.

The following message, with specific recommendations for classrooms, was included at teacher orientation for our Church School staff and volunteers. These recommendations apply to infectious disease prevention at all times:

- ◆ Adults, youth, and children should remain at home if they have active cold/cough symptoms, fever, or any sign of infectious disease.
- ◆ Frequent and comprehensive hand washing is the best prevention technique.
- ◆ Hand-sanitizers will be placed at convenient locations on the church campus.
- ◆ Choose to pass on handshakes and other contacts, as you are comfortable.

Here's to a healthy year!

– Cathy Seggel and James Ford



## Community Life and Heritage

### A New Year for Art in the Atrium!

You may have noticed that the Atrium is also an art gallery. For several years, we have used this gallery to show the works of members of this congregation, as well as people who are its friends. We believe art is an important spiritual expression and seeing it communicates spiritually and inspires spiritual growth. That's why we continue to show the work that is created in our spiritual community.

We also hope you have found time to take in our first show this year—it features a broad collection of the work of members of this church. We hope it will serve as an introduction of ourselves to one another and that you now know more about how some of us see the world.

We know that you can't really get to know an artist well by seeing only a few pieces of their work; so, over time, we will deepen your knowledge of our artists by creating shows that feature the work of only one or two artists at a time. That will allow them to produce a more richly textured accounting of their world to share with all of us. As we go ahead, we also want to introduce you to artists whom we recognize as members of our larger community but who do not belong to our congregation.

If you haven't yet taken in the current show, we urge you to look around the Atrium and nurture your eyes, mind, and heart. Stay tuned for more information about future showings!

– Sally Barker, Claudia Ford, Rick Richards, Chiara Romano van Erp, Amy Webb

For information, contact Chiara Romano van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net)

### Winter Storms and First Unitarian Church Services

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff decide if church services will be cancelled. A cancellation decision will be made by 7:00a on Sunday and conveyed to TV channels 10 and 12 and radio stations WJAR, WHJJ, WPRI, WWBB, WHJY, and WSNE.

If the church is open during a storm, no one should make heroic efforts to get to church. Use your own best judgment about whether it is safe to drive or come to church on foot during any stormy weather. If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, remember that parking will be limited to our lot and the Hope Club lot.

### Smart Parking around the Church Campus

Our parking lot currently has two spots marked for handicapped parking and two marked for visitor parking. These spaces are reserved for people who need them. When using the handicapped spots, please display your handicapped parking placard. And please leave the visitor spots open for those new to our church to make parking easier for them. On Sunday mornings, there are additional handicapped parking spots on Benevolent Street across from the entrance to the Parish House, which must, of course, be reserved for the cars of handicapped people. Thanks for your cooperation!

**And please note:** The Hope Club has graciously permitted us to use their parking lot for decades. Recently, one of our parishioners parked in a spot that blocked other cars from leaving. The Hope Club has overnight guests who also park in the lot and need to exit at different times. Please, if you use the Hope Club lot, be aware of where you are parking and know that others may need to get out.





## Holiday Happenings

### Helping Our Neighbors – Annual Gift Drive

The annual gift drive is one way this congregation reaches out to help families in the Rhode Island community. The recipients are from the International Institute Rhode Island (IIRI) and Camp Street Ministries, both based in Providence. In keeping with First Unitarian tradition, our Senior High Youth Group and advisors will facilitate the project.

IIRI's Refugee Skills Coordinator Keith Cooper offers us this advice: "Since refugees' needs are so basic, a gift card allows them to buy their own winter clothes (gloves, hats, socks, long underwear) or some other essentials, and avoids leaving them with gifts that are inappropriate for either their culture, education level, or circumstances. I know gift cards may not be as exciting to give as other things, but they make a big difference in people's lives. We wish your church members could see that firsthand!"

Since most of this population depends upon public transportation, please purchase gift cards to stores such as K-Mart, Walmart, Payless, Price Rite, or Ocean State Job Lot. Fancy envelopes and gift bags are not necessary; however, feel free to insert cards in personalized holiday gift cards.

Recipients' names can be picked up starting Sunday mornings beginning November 29 and continuing through December 13 in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. All gifts must be brought in by December 20 in order to be delivered to the agencies in time for their Holiday parties and breaks.



### Junior High Selling UUSC Holiday Cards

Our sixth/seventh-grade class will be selling beautiful greeting cards from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, beginning on Sunday November 22 and each Sunday until December 20 or until the cards are all sold. Look for them at the RE table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Proceeds benefit the social justice efforts of the UUSC.

### GLBT Greeting Cards

Christmas cards, commitment cards, and anniversary cards for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender folks and their families and friends will be sold after church on Sundays in December. These beautiful, welcoming greetings are being offered by the Welcoming Congregation Committee, proceeds to support our Social Justice programs.

Look for them in the Atrium after Thanksgiving! To buy cards at other times, contact Janet Bralove at 401.351.1748.

### Handmade Guatemalan Crafts from the Village Bank

Support the Village Bank by purchasing items made in Guatemala at our craft sale on December 6 and 13 during Coffee Hour.



### Coffee, Cocoa, Cheese, and Nuts from the Women's Alliance

In addition to fair-trade coffees, the Women's Alliance will be selling the famous Adamsville cheddar cheese, peppermint marshmallows, hot chocolate mix with peppermint marshmallows, and spiced nuts to enliven your holiday table.

## Spiritual Development

### Continuing Programs

Unless otherwise indicated, programs are held in the Parish House and advance registration is not required.

### Benevolent Street Zendo:

#### An Ongoing Zen Meditation Group

Every Monday at 7:00p

Brief instruction is available at 6:45p.

Boundless Way is an interfaith Zen community, maintaining close connections with the Soto Zen Buddhist Association and the American Zen Teachers Association. (All three of its senior teachers, including our minister, James Ford, are also Unitarian Universalists.)

All are welcome. We are a member community of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha; visit [www.boundlesswayzen.org](http://www.boundlesswayzen.org) for more information.

Contacts: Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford ([benevolentstreetzendo@gmail.com](mailto:benevolentstreetzendo@gmail.com))

### Reimagining Religion

Tuesdays, December 8 and 22 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.

Contact: Tom Hall at 401.647.2925 or [tw2nd@aol.com](mailto:tw2nd@aol.com)

### UUMeN

Sunday, December 13, 7:00-9:00p

#### Topic: Legacies

It's been said, "Never think of yourself as a self-made person; thousands of hearts, souls, hopes, and hands molded the form that became you." A legacy is something of enduring value that has been left behind for us. What legacies have benefited you? What legacies have been difficult for you to deal with? And, turning the issue around and looking forward, what do we hope will be the legacies that we as men will leave behind?

All interested men are welcome to join us.

This month's facilitator: Tony Allen (401.521.3908)

*More Spiritual Development programs on the next page.*

**Spiritual Cinema**

Sunday, December 20, 7:00-9:00p

**Featured film:** *2012: Science or Superstition?*

The ending of the Mayan calendar on December 21, 2012, has sparked a worldwide discussion, bestselling books, *New York Times* and *USA Today* articles, Hollywood films, and more. Discover the multiple perspectives on this enigmatic topic, combined with related global-change theories, and get up to date on the 2012 phenomenon, allowing you to decide for yourself. This film was written and produced by Gary Baddeley, founder and president of The Disinformation Company, whose website ([www.disinfo.com](http://www.disinfo.com)) is a popular alternative news service.

Contact: Marilyn Eanet (401.433.1299 or [meanet@cox.net](mailto:meanet@cox.net)) or

Maureen Johanson (508.557.1173); more information at [www.spiritualcinema.com](http://www.spiritualcinema.com)

**Gaia's Hearth CUUPS**

**(Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)**

Thursday, December 3, 7:00-8:30p

Meetings are open and no registration is required. Gaia's Hearth was formed to promote:

- ▶ Networking among Pagan-identified UUs and outreach of Unitarian Universalism to the local Pagan community;
- ▶ Educational materials on Paganism for our home congregation, First Unitarian Church of Providence, and the general public;
- ▶ Interfaith dialogue, based on Earth- and nature-centered religious and spiritual perspectives;
- ▶ Greater use of music, dance, visual arts, poetry, story, and creative ritual in Unitarian Universalist worship and celebration;
- ▶ Support for Pagan-identified UU religious professionals and ministerial students;
- ▶ Healing relationships with our mother Earth and all her children.

Contact: Artemis Ezikovich ([nimuix@cox.net](mailto:nimuix@cox.net))

**Honor a Loved One with Sunday Flowers**

We all enjoy the wonderful floral arrangements in the Meeting House. You, too, can honor a loved one or celebrate a special occasion with flowers on Sunday in the Meeting House.

To order flowers for a particular Sunday, contact Jacqui Nye ([funjac@hotmail.com](mailto:funjac@hotmail.com)) with "Flowers" in the Subject line. To donate flowers for the holiday decoration of the Meeting House, please use the form at right .



**Holiday Happenings**

**Chalice Jewelry and Note Cards from CLF**

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) has an online store that offers a wide variety of UU-themed gifts—note cards, pendants, lapel pins, and posters. Chalice pendants are perfect for the holidays to give to family members or to thank staff and volunteers. Purchases from the CLF Shop allow the CLF to support small congregations with worship and RE resources.

Until January 2010, the CLF will give a 20 percent discount to people who mention their district by name (ours is Ballou Channing)! Go to the CLF website (<http://clf.uua.org>) and select "CLF Shop."

You can also support the CLF when you buy merchandise online through Amazon.com: just go to the CLF homepage (<http://clf.uua.org>) and click on the Amazon.com button (on the right-hand side). Whether you buy a book or snow blower or banjo or *Bon Appétit* subscription or marshmallow shooter or gluten-free brownie mix or *Alvin and the Chipmunks* video or hoop earrings or a microscope or Kindle - or whatever else - the CLF will get a percentage of the price by virtue of your purchase.

Questions? Contact: Beth Murray ([bmurray@clfu.org](mailto:bmurray@clfu.org) or 617.948.6150)

**Membership in the Church of the Younger Fellowship**

A Church of the Younger Fellowship membership can keep young adults (ages 18 to 35) connected with their UU faith while they are away from home at college, in the military, or in volunteer service programs. The cost of membership, like your contribution to the church, is an amount you determine. CYF also offers a three-month free trial membership.

Information about CYF and membership at the CYF website ([www.uucyf.org](http://www.uucyf.org))

**Subscription to *UU World***

Purchase a subscription to *UU World*, the UUA's quarterly magazine, as a Christmas, Hanukah, or Solstice gift for family, friends, or your college student. A one-year subscription is \$14.00.

Information at the *UU World* website ([www.uuworld.org/subscriptions/index.shtml](http://www.uuworld.org/subscriptions/index.shtml))

**Holiday Memorial Flowers**

Every year as winter closes in, our sanctuary blooms with bright-colored flowers and evergreens. Members of the congregation donate the flowers in memory of loved ones, who will be recognized in the order of service on December 20.

To order memorial flowers, fill in the form below and return it to the church office (One Benevolent Street, Providence, RI 02906) or drop it off in the church office by Sunday, December 13, 2009.

Please make check payable to First Unitarian Church and indicate that the donation is for holiday memorial flowers. Suggested donation: \$20.00 minimum per name.

**Holiday Memorial Flowers**

Enclosed is my donation for Holiday Flowers in memory of (please print first and last name of each person)

\_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (suggested donation: \$20 minimum per name)

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please do NOT put completed form in the Sunday offering. Return it by mail or in person to the church office by December 13.



## Social Justice

### Human Rights Sunday: Annual Global Write-a-thon for Human Rights

*Sunday, December 6, 1:00-5:00p in the Parish House*

Picture a chain of flaming torches stretching across the United States and around the world. These torches of human freedom began from a matchbox tossed into a prison cell during the darkest days of World War II. On the matchbox was written one word: *coraggio* ("courage"), and the match it contained lit the candle of hope, the symbol of Amnesty International: a single candle, surrounded by barbed wire, burning with a tiny flame.

We will light our ceremonial Candle of Hope on Sunday, December 6, joining Providence with communities around the world in the annual Amnesty International Global Write-a-thon for Human Rights. This year we celebrate the sixty-first anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world's first human rights treaty, adopted by the UN on December 10, 1948.

Our guest speaker this year is Albert Rajabu, an exiled human rights worker from the Democratic Republic of Congo, where violence against women has become a standard weapon of war. Mr. Rajabu will speak of his own experience and deliver personal testimony from a woman in Congo.

We will provide all materials for writing letters on behalf of Justine Masika Bihamba—who is under threat of death in Congo because of her leading role in protesting violence against women—as well as for letters of appeal for prisoners of conscience in other countries. Our actions work: prisoners have been freed, and human rights abuses stopped, because of our letters. Refreshments and prizes make this event festive and fun, as well as deeply meaningful. Suitable for young people and families.

Can't stay for the Write-a-thon? Sponsor someone who will, by donating toward the postage. Look for the Amnesty International Wire Basket in the Atrium during Coffee Hour.

Co-sponsored by the World Affairs Committee and the Providence Chapter of Amnesty International

### Helping Neighbors Facing Foreclosure

*Saturdays, December 5 and 19, 1:00p-4:00p at DARE, 340 Lockwood St., Providence*

The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee (NSJC) is currently involved in a grassroots effort to bring valuable information to those that are currently facing foreclosure and/or eviction. Together with our partners, we're knocking on the doors of those houses listed for foreclosure and providing pamphlets describing the legal rights and housing resources that people can use to save their homes. Many people are losing their homes due to lack of accurate information, and some tenants are not even aware of the fact that their apartment buildings are facing foreclosure. The NSJC has joined with Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) to bring this valuable information to those who are being directly affected. We are also working with the RI Bank Foreclosure and Tenant Association, which was formed by homeowners and renters who have joined together for mutual support. They have been assisted by the Legal Aid Society to change the laws in Rhode Island to help provide protections to those facing evictions and foreclosure.

Anyone with a few spare hours and looking for volunteer opportunities that will make a material difference in someone's life is encouraged to join us on either Saturday. No experience is necessary. Hope to see you there!

The NSJC will be meeting at 12:15p on December 13 and December 27 in the Christensen parlor. Our purpose is to provide members of First Unitarian with spiritual growth opportunities by serving those in our neighborhoods who face issues of social injustice.

Contact: David St. Germain (401.536.0715 or [ridavidstgermain@gmail.com](mailto:ridavidstgermain@gmail.com))



### We Are a Welcoming Congregation



We're very proud of earning our Welcoming Congregation status in June, and we will soon add the rainbow chalice image to our web page. We plan to display a banner to welcome the community, and some great fundraising ideas are in the works. Stay tuned!

### First Unitarian Is "Standing on the Side of Love"

Standing on the Side of Love (SSL) is a UUA-sponsored social justice advocacy and public witness campaign that targets identity-based oppression and violence, creating a community-wide network of support and communication to take united action. SSL is focusing on three areas of social justice witness: equal rights for GLBT people, scapegoating of the immigrant community, and racism.

First Unitarian's first SSL activity was our participation in the October 17 marriage equality march, sponsored by Marriage Equality Rhode Island. We brought our banner and demonstrated our Welcoming Congregation status with our feet! You'll be hearing more about what we can do to win marriage equality in Rhode Island in the coming weeks.

Thank you to all who signed the petition asking the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The Senate committee held hearings on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) in November. The Standing on the Side of Love program sent more than 8,000 signatures, and First Unitarian contributed 50 of them.

The work of First Unitarian's Neighborhood Social Justice Committee with folks who are affected by the predatory lending practices also dovetails with SSL's focus.

Standing on the Side of Love is generating a lot of interest among other UUs in our district, and we'll be looking for ways to join together for action. We will also welcome support and participation from people of other faith communities.

Learn more about SSL at [www.standingonthesideoflove.org](http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org). If you're on Facebook, join the fan page for updates and information.

**Habitat for Humanity Work Day** 

December 18

The First Unitarian Habitat Work Group volunteers once a month with the Providence chapter of Habitat for Humanity RI, which usually has several houses under construction. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome; the only requirements are a willingness and ability to do physical work and a minimum age of 16. Our work day is the third Saturday each month (December 18). Sign-up is required as space on each month's crew is limited..

To sign up, contact Peter van Erp (401.351.4881 or [petervanerp@cox.net](mailto:petervanerp@cox.net))  
Information on Providence Habitat at [www.habitatprov.org](http://www.habitatprov.org)

**Support Camp Street Ministries** 

Bring your grocery receipts from the Eastside Marketplace and deposit them in the brightly colored box, marked for that purpose, located in the Atrium. The Women's Alliance donates these receipts to the Camp Street Ministries, which redeems them at the Eastside Marketplace for 1 percent of the total amount.

**Global Poverty – Our Village Banks Make a Difference** 



The Village Bank, First Unitarian's micro-finance project, is working on its fifth bank this year. Our congregation has already established two banks in Guatemala and two banks in Haiti. This is possible through your generous contributions and through the sale of fair-trade crafts (our next sale is on December 6 and 13).

For information about our coordinating organization, FINCA, visit [www.villagebanking.org](http://www.villagebanking.org)

For information about our project or to get involved, contact Polly Walker ([pwalker41@cox.net](mailto:pwalker41@cox.net)) or Marilyn Eanet ([meanet@cox.net](mailto:meanet@cox.net))



**Social Justice**

**Our Food Pantry Community Is Growing** 

Community Food Share, our First Unitarian food pantry, had a record distribution in November, serving over 165 families! The special holiday items were turkeys and Stop & Shop gift cards.

**Food Donations - It's Coffee and Cocoa Month!**

Currently less than 1 percent of the food we distribute comes from direct donations from our congregation. As the demands on our state Food Bank continue to rise, we will be asking the congregation to help out. December is coffee and cocoa month.

You can leave donated items in the barrel in the Parish House Atrium. NO GLASS PLEASE! We transport food several times throughout the month through shuttles and distribution. Glass products increase the risk of injury and clean-up issues that we need to avoid.

For larger food donations, contact Amy Webb ([amy.webb7@verizon.net](mailto:amy.webb7@verizon.net))

**Distribution Day** 

Monday, December 21.

Many volunteers are needed to make sure that all phases of our operation run smoothly.

- 1:00p-3:00p Set-up
- 3:00p-5:00p Distribution with our clients
- 5:00-6:00p Restock and clean-up

To help on Distribution Day, contact Elesa Amand ([elesa2@verizon.net](mailto:elesa2@verizon.net))

**Turn Your Old Magazines into Food!** 

Ruth Arellana has a plan to resell expensive, special-topic magazines during Coffee Hour for 50 cents or a dollar. Why? To turn magazines into money for food! The money collected will be donated to the Community Food Share Pantry to buy food for our clients. In addition, magazines not resold between monthly Food Share days will be made available to our clients for free.

Magazines needed include those like the following: *Art and Antiques*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Current History*, *Architectural Digest*, *Art in America*, *Scientific American*, and especially children's magazines. Magazines in Russian, Portuguese, and Spanish would also be helpful. As you check your magazines, please think about their re-salability. This is not your usual recycling project: no *Newsweek*, *Time*, etc.

To donate magazines, bring them to Ruth in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. To help organize the process (as an idea person, Ruth says she desperately needs those detail people to bring some of her ideas to fruition), contact Ruth ([rkarellana@yahoo.com](mailto:rkarellana@yahoo.com) or 401.383.0385)



December 2009

"Action speaks louder than words but not nearly as often." –Mark Twain

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<u>1</u> Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>2</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p	<u>3</u> Deacons 6:00p Gaia's Hearth 7:00p Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> Path to Membership 9:00a Round the Table Dinners
	<u>6</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Mentor/Mentee 12:00p Ministries Council 12:15p Write-a-thon 1:00p BUUUG 7:00p	<u>7</u> Women's Alliance Business Meeting 10:30a Program 11:00a Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>8</u> Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>9</u> R.E. Committee 5:30p Fellowship Committee 6:30p	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> Parish Supper 5:45p Proigram 7:45p
<u>13</u> Sunday Service 10:30a NSJC 12:00p BUUUG 7:00p UUMen 7:00p	<u>14</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>15</u> Ministries Council 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>20</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Membership Committee 12:00p Gaia's Hearth 12:00p BUUUG 7:00p Spiritual Cinema 7:00p	<u>21</u> Food Pantry 4:00p Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p Nominating Committee 7:00p	<u>22</u> Executive Committee 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> Christmas Eve Services at 5:00p and 9:00p	<u>25</u> Christmas Day	<u>26</u>
<u>27</u> Sunday Service 10:30a NSJC 12:00p	<u>28</u> Church Office closed all week Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>29</u> Church Office closed all week Knitters 7:00p	<u>30</u> Church Office closed all week	<u>31</u> Church Office closed all week		

First Unitarian Church of Providence  
One Benevolent Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02906



We are a  
Welcoming Congregation.

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[mem@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:mem@firstunitarianprov.org)

## Get Yourself What You Wanted for Christmas!

### Goods and Services Auction, Saturday, January 9

The Breakfast Club of First Unitarian will be coordinating a goods and services auction on January 9, 2010. Come celebrate the end of the holiday season and get yourself what you *really* wanted for the holidays.

During Coffee Hours in December, we will have a table in the Atrium where you can sign up to donate items for the auction. Do you have a house on the Cape you would be willing to donate for a weekend? Or are you a spectacular cook, willing to donate your time to prepare someone else's dinner party? We know that First Unitarian is full of talented people, and this is a perfect opportunity to show off your talents while benefiting the church.

Then, on Saturday, January 9, come to the church and bid on the spectacular items we have available. Some tempting donations have already come in . . . How would you like a weekly homemade loaf of bread? Maybe some tickets to the Avon Theatre? Come and see what we have to offer, and treat yourself to what you wanted for the holidays.

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If you would like to donate an item, but cannot stop by during Coffee Hour, please contact Maia Bailey ([maia.bailey@gmail.com](mailto:maia.bailey@gmail.com)).

If you are willing to help with various tasks at the auction—in particular, we need help coordinating and preparing food for the night of the auction—stop by our table and sign up, or contact Lach Franquemont ([lachfranque@gmail.com](mailto:lachfranque@gmail.com)).

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