



SUNDAY SERVICES

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 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.

Sunday, January 10 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford
Crossing the Rubicon: A Meditation on Burning Bridges

By someone's calculation, this is the anniversary of Caesar's famous crossing of the Rubicon. In addition to being one of those signal events in world history, it has become an abiding metaphor for going for it, for burning bridges, for going whole hog. James will reflect on this idea, the good and the bad of it.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, January 17 10:30a Claudia Ford and Rev. James Ishmael Ford
Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear: A Dialogue on Race

Claudia and James will explore themes of race in America, where we have been, where we are, and where we might go.

Young people in grades pre-K-7 begin in Meeting House, then go to their classes.

Origins and Play Circle rooms are open.

Our Community Offering will be for heating assistance.

Communion Service 11:45a

James and the Deacons will lead our genuinely UU celebration of this ancient rite based in the Gospels' account of Jesus' last meal with his friends - a timeless ritual of love and remembrance.

Sunday, January 24 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford
What Does Sex Have to Do with It? A Consideration of Human Sexuality

James has noticed we're sexual beings. Being raised Baptist, it all embarrasses him. Still, he thinks if, indeed, our shared spirituality is naturalistic and about our ordinary lives, then we need to consider some of what it means. Today we will.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, January 31 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford
Creations: A Reflection on the Axial Age

One of James's favorite novels is Gore Vidal's Creation, which addresses that time often called the Axial Age when most of the world's great religious traditions first emerged. Religious scholar Karen Armstrong addresses it and some of what it means in her recent study, A New Axial Age. James will ruminate on it and what it might tell us about ourselves.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

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

JANUARY 2010

ALL PARISH EVENTS

Live and Service Auction

Saturday, January 9

All-Parish Supper

Friday, January 15

Coming of Age Pasta Supper

Saturday, January 23

INSIDE

Table with 2 columns: Item Name and Page Number. Includes Monkey Mind, Spiritual Pathways, Sight Lines, Community Life and Heritage, Spiritual Development, Social Justice, Church Calendar, Back Page: Icing on the Cake..., Auction and Dessert.

STAFF

- List of staff members and their roles: Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister; Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education; Frederick Jodry, Music Director; Rev. Christina Wille McKnight, Community Minister; Posey Kooris, Administrator; Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant; Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator; Jaime Durango, Building Manager; Paul Webber, Evening Security; Henry Colpa, Evening Security; Pedro Vasquez, Sunday Building Manager.

NEWSLETTER

- List of newsletter staff: Posey Kooris, Managing Editor; Susan Fisher, Editor; Carol Pentleton, Designer.

Deacons' Corner

The Deacons' activities this winter will support our Community Life and Heritage ministry as we continue to conduct our annual telephone check-in with members and friends.

The Deacons will also assist James with Communion on Sunday, January 17, following the worship service. The Communion service is in the liberal tradition, non-creedal, emphasizing themes of remembrance, reconciliation, thanksgiving, and interdependence. All are invited to join in this meaningful celebration. There will be additional Communion services through the church year.

Do you have extra or unused cloth napkins at home? We are collecting cloth napkins to use at Parish Suppers to eliminate paper napkin waste. Leave your donations of unwanted napkins (or newly purchased, if so moved) with Deacon Janet Downing Taylor at the Coffee Bake table on Sunday, or drop them in the "Cloth Napkins" box 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*

Lay Ministry: We're Here to Serve!

The Lay Ministry and the Care Crew are ready to help those in the congregation who are in need. Please call on us if you, or someone you know in the congregation, needs a hand. Just a friendly word at the time of a death in the family, an illness or injury, or even the happy event of a new addition to the family.

While we cannot provide ongoing services, we are able to provide calls and cards, visits, rides to the doctor's office, emergency babysitting, emergency elderly companionship, meals delivered

If you are interested in volunteering to be part of the Care Crew, please email Posey Kooris at admin@firstunitarianprov.org or call the office 401.421.7970 and one of the Lay Ministers will contact you.

*-The Lay Ministers: Stewart Armstrong,
Mary Frappier, Mary Frey, Martha Manno,
Kate Menard, Janet Noble*

Wheel of Life



Condolences to Anita and Ty Ann Garey and Nicholas Townsend on the death of William Kelly Garey.



Monkey Mind

People often ask me how I liked my last sermon. I make various replies, but in my heart I'm almost always thinking I hope my next sermon will be better. There's an old Zen saying about the spiritual life being "one continuous mistake." Now, the Zen lesson is deeper than the one I'm looking for here, but not a lot

deeper. Here, I'm writing about optimism. For some of us it comes naturally, for others it can be hard slogging. But I think it's helpful to try. In the great mess that is our lives, it can help if we can get up in the morning and hope, this time, it'll be better. This time, I'll do better. I know how with my sermons I do the best I can, and then how I always look forward to the next chance, the next opportunity, and how this time I will try to make it better.

And sometimes I succeed. Now, nothing wrong with savoring the moment. But time flies, and soon I want to be about doing better.

I guess that's why I love the beginnings of a new year. I like that first Sunday after Labor Day, when the church year begins. I love Rosh Hashanah, which happens not long after, and when we're called to observe the days of awe - such a lovely term - and how it all culminates in a rite of repentance and renewal. And I love the New Year that begins on January first, dating to the mists of Roman culture and enshrined in the Julian and then the Gregorian calendars. It's all about a new blank canvas, and endless possibility.

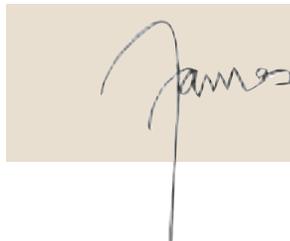
Okay, it's never actually a blank canvas. There are some hard facts we have to live with. Over the long haul, we humans don't have a particularly good track record. Technology has improved; sadly, along with that we've gotten a lot better at killing each other. Human nature, however, doesn't seem to have changed much, if at all. But with each New Year, I think: This time we'll do better. Yes, I'm aware that one definition of crazy is doing something over and over while expecting a different outcome. But we *can* do better.

And so I prefer that warning at the bottom of stock offerings: "Past performance is not a guarantee of future results." And the attitude of my friend who says that should she walk out into some one's backyard and step into a pile of horse manure, her first thought would be "Where's the pony?" Probably the wisest of all sayings is one attributed to the Prophet Mohammed: "Trust in God, but remember to tether your camel." There is a place for hope.

I think it important that, despite our sorry record since we started keeping them, we humans have some hope that this time we can get it right. For a couple of reasons. For one, if we long to get it right, and we keep trying, then maybe we won't just repeat our actions. Instead, maybe we'll think about it all, we'll feel deep into our hearts, and we'll act from that place which knows the connections.

And, as they say, "Let there be peace, and let it begin with me." May we each find that small hope, that desire for the good in this coming year, and may it begin with us.

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





Spiritual Pathways

Review, Reflect, Renew

By the time you read this article, I will be away from my church office and on sabbatical leave until late April. I am confident that James and the Religious Education Committee will lead well in my absence. Staffing the program will be Dana Guterman and Amy Webb, who are sharing the DRE Assistant hours. Judy Bowden will lead chapels with Youth Music Director, Marcia Taylor. Point people for various areas are listed in the sidebar. Their contact information is in the church directory. General questions and/or concerns should be directed via email (dreassist@firstunitarianprov.org) or through phone messages left for the assistants in the church office (401.421.7970).

I am very grateful for the support of the RE Committee, James, Posey, the staff, and others in the congregation. I will be thinking about you all during this time for me to review, reflect, and renew. I look forward to returning with new ideas and energy for our work together.

Take good care,

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
401.421.7970
dre@firstunitarianprov.org

Behavior Covenant of the Children and Youth of First Unitarian

The children and youth in the Spiritual Pathways program helped to create this covenant. The process included interactive worship on the meaning of the seven UU Principles and classroom discussions about behavior guidelines. The promises will be posted in all classrooms and serve as a resource for teachers and young people.

In the Spiritual Pathways Program of the First Unitarian Church of Providence, we make promises about how we will treat each other and what we will do to create and maintain a safe and sacred space. Our covenant is based on the Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association that our congregation affirms and promotes and on the rendering of the Principles in the language of children and youth. Examples of behaviors that model our promises follow each UU Principle.

The inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Each and every person is important.

We take turns so that all have a chance to speak and participate in activities. We listen to one another. We don't call people names or interrupt when someone else is talking.

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

All people should be treated fairly.

We speak up and get help when we notice someone being treated unfairly. We take turns and share snacks and supplies, leaving something for the next person. We show that we care when someone is hurt.

Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations.

Encourage each other and learn together.

We listen to each other. We are patient and take the time to help others learn. We participate in group activities to the best of our abilities. We help new people. We apologize when we have not treated someone the way we would like to be treated.

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

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

We encourage everyone to share their thoughts and feelings. We listen to others and ask questions to help discover what is true and right. We support asking questions and exploring the things that have meaning for each person, without judging or making fun.

(continued on page 8)

Sabbatical Contact List

Budget: Jon Henson

BUUUG: Jesse Cohen; James will stop in.

Chapel Leader: Judy Bowden with Marcia Taylor

Childcare for Mentor Lunches and Church

Events: Dana Guterman

Coming of Age: Amy Webb (REC Liaison), Rita Rossi (Lead Teacher), Anne Connor (Mentor Coordinator), Susan and Peter Verrechia (Parent Coordinators)

Curriculum, Teacher Support, Teacher

Appreciation, Teacher Recruitment: Tricia Wilhelm (chair) and the RE Committee for Children and Youth

Parent Communications: Tricia Wilhelm (Newsletter and email)

Pastoral Care: James Ford and the Lay Ministry Team

RE Committee Presidential Support:

Kathy Ahlquist and Lisa Voutes

Social Justice: Roberta Groch

Guest At Your Table: Anne Connor

Sandwich Brigade: Roberta Groch

Food Pantry: Amy Webb

Sunday Office Coverage: Amy Webb with Jenn Karl, Susan Harrison, Kate Guilbault, and Dana Guterman

Worship: Sally Caruso

Youth Group: Jon Henson (REC Liaison)

January Church School Events

Sunday, January 3

Sunday School resumes and Guest at Your Table Boxes are due.

Pasta Supper Returns

Coming of Age Class 2010 Pasta Supper

Saturday, January 23, 5:30-8:00p

The eighth/ninth-graders and their parents invite you to join them for a fun-filled evening with fine cuisine inspired by Chef Michael O'Malley (vegetarian menu included) and music by Kate Katzberg, Bob Asprinio, and Phil Edmonds with youth, parents, and mentors. Enjoy the camaraderie, the finest table service found on the East Side by our youth wait staff, as well as a raffle with wonderful prizes.

Festivities begin at 5:30, dinner at 6:00

Proceeds benefit the eighth grade overnight trip to UU headquarters in Boston.

Tickets will be on sale in the atrium during coffee hour. Cost: \$7 per person, up to \$20 per family.

Raffle tickets: \$1 each, 6 for \$5

Snow Date: Saturday, January 30th

Small Steps Add Up to Big Leaps

Our congregation has become more comfortable speaking about church finances and what it takes to meet our roughly \$600,000 annual budget. Over the last few years, we have often asked you to make a "fair share" pledge of 2%-3% of your annual income. In the upcoming FY11 budget drive, we will again be asking you to step up to that challenge.

You may feel that you can't step up to that challenge this year. But there is an alternative small step you can take that can make a big difference - increasing your pledge by just \$5 to \$10 per week. If half of us made this small step, it would yield a minimum increase of about \$35,000. That would move us a long way toward lessening our dependence on the endowment to meet our program expenses and would free up endowment funds to replace our aging boiler systems and tackle other major projects.

Our spring budget drive is still a few months away, but now is a good time to begin thinking about your pledge. Whether you can step up to a fair-share pledge of 2%-3% or take a small step of an additional \$5 to \$10 per week, you will be playing a powerful role in keeping our congregation vibrant and active.

- *The Stewardship Committee*

Looking for Leaders

The Nominating Committee is looking for a few good men and women who are interested in leadership roles at First Unitarian. We are 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 message for us in the church office. Thanks for your interest in the future of our church.

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



Sight Lines

At First Unitarian, we've been channeling our passions into reality in many ways. Over the past several years, we have grouped our programs and committees into four ministries - Community Life and Heritage, Finance and Investment, Social Justice, and Spiritual Development. I wrote in an earlier column about how each ministry held their own fair this year. These were wildly successful, and many of us discovered activities already going on in our community that align with our passions and signed up to participate.

A liaison to each of these ministries sits on the Prudential Committee (PruComm), the governing body of the church. This year they are Rebecca Alberg (Community Life), Graham Nye (Finance), Julie Meyers (Social Justice), and Rita Rossi (Spiritual Development). These four individuals work incredibly hard to keep the committees/programs with which they work informed of what's going on in the PruComm and also advocate in PruComm meetings for the needs of those committees/programs.

In addition to monthly PruComm meetings, three times a year (September, December, and May), the church's leadership (professional staff, PruComm members, senior Deacons, and committee chairs) gathers to assess where we are and to look forward to where we want to go. We discuss opportunities for and barriers to fulfilling our hopes and dreams for the church.

Stew Armstrong, as president-elect, chairs a group we're calling the Ministry Council, which works with him to identify current and future activities that would impact the budget. The Ministry Council has a member from each ministry on it (Cheryl Bartholomew from Community Life, Graham Nye again from Finance, Box Cox from Social Justice, and Cindy Bapties from Spiritual Development), in addition to senior staff and the PruComm Planning Coordinator (this year that position is filled by Anne Connor). This group gathered twice: first, to plan the December all-ministries gathering and, second, to assess its outcome. That assessment included identifying core values and initiatives that must be addressed in the budget for the next church year. Stew will present that assessment to the PruComm this month.

Tony Allen, the church's treasurer, will take the helm of the Ministry Council in April, which will morph into the Budget Committee to develop a balanced budget to recommend to the PruComm for the 2010/11 church year.

As you see, many, many people are working hard over the year so that the church continues developing in a way that provides deep meaning to our lives and to the lives of those in our greater community.



Martha Rice Sanders, President
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Membership News: We Welcome New Members!

The second Path to Membership class of this church year was held on Saturday, December 5, where we welcomed 10 new members: Michael and Elizabeth Rennick, Susan Farady, Janette Greenwood, Christine and Jules Olley, Lauri Stevenson, Kathryn Eller, Roger Carl Johanson, Angela Semonelli.

Since September, we have welcomed 26 new members to our congregation. If you haven't met them in person, you'll find their photos and names posted on the bulletin board in the Parish House. Then look for them and greet them at Coffee Hour!

Our next Path class will be on Saturday morning, February 27. If you would like more information, ask me. I'd love to talk about it. And if you would like to register for the class, let me know.

If your schedule has prevented you from attending a Saturday morning class, please consider attending the final Path class of the year, on Thursday evening, April 15, from 6:00p-9:00p.

- *Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator*





Community Life and Heritage

The Holiday All-Parish Supper

Friday, January 15 (Note the date: one week later than usual)

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 auditorium: "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. Don't miss what promises to be a most interesting and informative discussion.

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 Saturday Social Suppers

Saturday, January 30

These Saturday evening potluck suppers are for adults, except where noted. Newcomers, old-timers, and in-betweeners who would like to meet new friends in the congregation are all welcome to participate. However, space is limited and reservations are required.

In the East Bay:

Hosts: Nancy and Mike Shand
59 High Hill Road
Tiverton, RI

In northeastern Rhode Island:

Hosts: Gail and Paul Brule
4 Hedge Road
Lincoln, RI

For reservations, menu planning, and directions for both dinners, call Carol Adams (401.433.4365) in advance or email carol.adams6@cox.net. Please bring your own beverage.

The Women's Alliance

Monday, January 4

Business meeting at 10:30a, program at 11:00a

Our guest speaker for January is our minister, the Rev. James Ford, who will explore aspects of the history of First Unitarian and its place in the life of Providence and Rhode Island over the past nearly 300 years. A catered luncheon (\$9.00) follows the program at 12:00p. The program and luncheon are open to everyone.

Coming of Age Pasta Supper

Saturday, January 23 (snow date, January 30)

Don't forget the Coming of Age group's annual Pasta Supper. Tickets (\$7/person, \$20/family) on sale in the Atrium. See page 3 for details.



Save These Dates!

February All-Parish Supper

Friday, February 12

**Program: You and Me Together:
A Valentine's Day Celebration**

The Aurea Ensemble returns to entertain us with a delightful concoction of romantic songs, poetry, stories, and chamber music. Poets including Heine and Goethe and romantic composers including Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Schubert will be represented. This evening's program will feature the Aurea string quartet led by Charles and Consuelo Sherba, as well as vocalist Gigi Mitchell-Velasco. Actor Nigel Gore will recite.

You won't want to miss this exciting program of great music, prose, and poetry. Heavily discounted tickets will be available for people who attend the supper before the performance.

Saturday Socials and Round-the-Table Dinners

February 27, March 27, April 24 (RTT), May 29,
June 26

Sunday Mornings at First Unitarian

Newcomers Café

Make your way to the Paneled Parlor during Coffee Hour for coffee/tea, snacks, and an opportunity to meet and talk with members of the congregation and other newcomers in a quiet, congenial, and welcoming atmosphere.

Atrium Bookstore

The Atrium Bookstore offers books on a wide variety of subjects: inspiration, daily meditation, Buddhism, Bible studies, environmental concerns, children's stories, poetry, family life and rituals, and more. Profits benefit the church.

Information: Irene Allen (iallen112@aol.com)

Coffee Hour Bakers

Happy New Year! A good New Year's resolution would be to sign up as one of the six to eight people providing baked goods and other treats to keep up with the crowd each Sunday at our Coffee Hour. You can sign up with Janet Downing Taylor at the Coffee Hour table in the first parlor during Coffee Hour. She'll send you



Hats Off!



Many thanks to our December Coffee Hour Providers: Marilyn Eanet, Gail Brule, Betty Finn, Janet Noble, Elsie Buffum, Kathy Eller, Tovha Muro, Shelly Stephenson, Suzanne Craig, Michael Cappelli, Lynne Hoppin-Fazzi, Jacqui Nye, Linda Gulley, Kate Menard, Anne Connor, Susan Fisher, Gaia's Hearth, Mary Frappier, Tiffany Reed, Laura Cuzner, Mary Speare, David House, Liz Rennick, and all of you who brought something in to the church kitchen to surprise us.

Parking with Others in Mind

Our parking lot has two spots reserved for handicapped parking and two for visitor parking. If you use a handicapped spot, be sure to display your handicapped parking placard. Please leave the visitor spots open for those new to our church to make parking easier for them. On Sunday mornings, be mindful of the handicapped parking spots on Benevolent Street across from the entrance to the Parish House - these spots are reserved for the cars of handicapped people.

The Hope Club graciously permits us to use their parking lot on Sunday mornings. If you use that lot, be mindful that the Hope Club has overnight guests who park in the lot and may need to leave before our service is over.

Thanks for your cooperation!

Congregational Life: First U and the Flu

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 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.



Community Life and Heritage

Art in the Atrium: Inspiration and Insights through the Visual Arts

Two years ago, Sarah McQueen and Rick Richards joined efforts to start art shows in the Atrium. They chose and bought a non-intrusive and easy system to hang art, set it up, and started to ask the artists in the congregation to submit their work. Like magic, the Atrium was transformed in an art gallery.

This year, a committee of seven people has joined forces to organize and oversee the art shows, trying to promote them throughout our church community and beyond. The intent, as Rick Richards explains, is "to connect the congregation of First Unitarian to the inspiration and insights offered by the visual arts."

To give more emphasis to each show, we decided to have evening openings - our first group show opened on Thursday evening, November 19. Attendance was good considering that we didn't have much time for advertising. We'd like to thank again all the artists for their contributions that made the show possible and also for bringing food and beverage for opening.

The current show will be on display until January 3. The next exhibit will be a photography show by about seven photographers from the congregation. In the following months, there will be solo shows featuring two or three artists at a time. Besides paintings and photographs, there will be openings for poetry, probably associated with the art. While the members of our congregation have first priority for the use of the gallery, we are also thinking to make it available to artists or organizations in our larger local community.

The show schedule for this church year is pretty full until May, but we are thinking about extending into June and July, till the office closes for vacation. We will start again in September. The two principal rules are that the work has to be evaluated for content by the committee and that it cannot be for sale, since the church is a nonprofit organization.

As Sarah Mc Queen puts it: "Our hope is to support and nurture a healthy spiritual community by giving the gift of beauty and sharing pieces of our own paths which have given us meaning and guided our search for truth."

The Atrium is a beautiful space, and people have noticed its potential as a showcase for the church and the community. We are open to comments or suggestions to improve this venue.

For art submissions and suggestions, contact Chiara R. Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

Winter Storm Cancellations

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.





Spiritual Development

First Unitarian Women's Chorus

Sundays, January 3-31, 12:00-1:30p in the Choir Room

Calling all women! If you have ever wanted to join your voice in song with other women in a non-threatening, supportive environment, here's the best suggestion you may ever get for 2010! Come sing in the Women's Chorus here at church. It is open to all women in the church, teenager through golden-ager, and no previous experience or demonstrated ability is required. If you can talk, you can sing!

We will gather in the Choir Room (below the Meeting House in the front of the church) at 12:00p on Sunday, January 3 and meet every week there from 12:00p-1:30p until we sing in the service on February 7. It would be so much more fun if you were in it. Please consider trying us out!

Contact: Beth Armstrong (bestar3@cox.net)

Sunday Flowers

We all enjoy the wonderful floral arrangements at the pulpit each Sunday in the Meeting House. The flowers are given by members and friends of the congregation to honor a loved one or celebrate a special occasion. You can arrange for flowers to commemorate a special person or event in your life on an upcoming Sunday.

Contact: Jacqui Nye (funjac@hotmail.com); please put "Flowers" in the Subject line

Let There Be Light

Have you noticed the wonderful warm feeling of the Meeting House with its new lighting? If not, look for it on Sundays or at evening events.

In years past, the sanctuary was rarely used at night (with the exception of the candlelight Christmas Eve service). That is no longer the case, as the church is now often used for evening concerts, weddings, lectures, and performances. It is a very sought-after space. But on cloudy days and dark nights, it could be a shadowy and sometimes gloomy space.

Through the generous gift of an anonymous donor, the Meeting House has now come to life. Over the past year, we and our Church Administrator, Posey Kooris, have worked diligently, guided by professional lighting designer Barbara Kristiansen, to create a new ambience in our lovely worship space.

The back-and-forth choices we wrestled with included choosing the types and locations of fixtures and taking into account the building's historic integrity. We all agreed that lighting the upper pulpit, the lower lectern, and the choir areas were most important. Upgraded energy-efficient bulbs are now in the chandelier and side sconces.

Additional lighting of the balcony and back corners were eliminated due to budget constraints. Also on the wish list would be to ring the dome with light. This may be just the first phase of lighting in the Meeting House, as there are endless possibilities.

Thank you so much to the generous donor who had the vision to see what a difference additional lighting could make!

—The Facilities Task Force: Larry Bush, Mary Frappier, Helen Haynes, and Robert O. Jones



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 for more information.

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

UUMeN

Second Sunday, January 10, 7:00-9:00p

Topic: What Makes You Feel Alive?

How many men do we know who seem spiritually dead, just going through the motions? On the other hand, we also know men who seem to bubble with energy and life. What's the secret? What makes you feel alive? Come join us and share your thoughts. All interested men are welcome to join us.

This month's facilitator: Burr Harrison (401.943.1541)

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays, January 12 and 26, 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 (401.647.2925 or twh2nd@aol.com)

More Spiritual Development programs on the next page.

Spiritual Cinema

Sunday, January 17, 7:00-9:00p

Featured film: *Ocean of Pearls*

Written and directed by Sarab Neelam, M.D., this film is the story of a Sikh surgeon in North America. He is of two worlds, but belonging to neither. When he is offered a prestigious position at a Detroit hospital, the young surgeon sees an opportunity to start fresh, only to discover that his appearance may threaten his success. What happens when our dreams seem to clash with our heritage? Perhaps it is through the collusion of the old ways and the new that we find out who we are.

Contact: Marilyn Eanet (401.433.1299 or meanet@cox.net) or Maureen Johanson (508.557.1173); more information at www.spiritualcinema.com

Gaia's Hearth CUUPS

(Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

Thursday, January 7, 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)



Spiritual Development

Behavior Covenant of the Children and Youth of First Unitarian (continued from page 3)

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

Everyone should have a vote about things that concern them.

Church members vote for leaders and on important decisions, including what social justice community projects to work on and how the church's budget money is spent.

The goal of world community with peace liberty and justice for all.

Working together for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

We settle our disagreements in honest, caring, peaceful ways. We do not bring dangerous items to church, or play in violent ways, like fighting or pushing. Using hurtful words or talking meanly about others is not allowed. We respect what belongs to the church or other people and don't destroy or damage anything.

Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

We believe in caring for our planet Earth.

We recycle all possible products, reuse supplies, and reduce energy consumption. We do not waste food or supplies. We help keep our classrooms and church clean and safe.

First Unitarian and the Ballou Channing District

First Unitarian is the largest congregation in the Ballou Channing District, one of 20 geographic administrative regions of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The BCD encompasses southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island and serves 45 member congregations 8 in Rhode Island and 37 in Massachusetts with a total district membership of about 6,000 Unitarian Universalists.

The mission and purposes of BCD are to assist member congregations with carrying out their programs, cultivate cooperative relationships among the member congregations, and advance the Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The work of the district is led by a volunteer Board of Directors and a full-time District Executive, the Rev. William Zelazny, who lives in the Providence area. The district also employs part-time consultants for Religious Education, Youth, and Young Adult Ministry. A recent addition to the district staff is a part-time Growth Consultant, whom you may know - Peter Bowden. Peter grew up at First Unitarian and is married to the Rev. Amy Friedman, the minister at Channing Memorial in Newport. The funds for this new position come from some of the donations we and other BCD congregations made for Association Sunday in 2007.

In the next few months the BCD is offering a roundtable discussion for ministers and church boards and workshops on stewardship, handling difficult behavior, worship, and congregational social justice.

And on April 24, the BCD Spring Conference and Annual Meeting will be held in Providence at First Unitarian. This will be a great opportunity to enjoy an outstanding program and to meet and get to know fellow UUs from around the district. Watch for more information in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

To learn more about the BCD and the activities it offers, visit the website at www.bcduua.org, where you can sign up to receive the district's monthly newsletter, *BCD in Brief*. If you have questions about the district, you can also contact First Unitarian member Marilyn Eanet (meanet@cox.net or 401.433.1299), who is currently serving as the district board secretary.





Social Justice

Another Successful Write-a-thon for Human Rights

At this year's Write-a-thon for Human Rights, on the afternoon of December 6, over 450 letters were written and have been sent on behalf of prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders at risk. Tables in both parlors, with a spill-over into the Atrium, were filled with people from our congregation and the general public writing these appeals. The event was sponsored by our World Affairs Committee, with the support of the Providence chapter of Amnesty International.



Guest speaker Albert Rajabu

Our guest speaker, Congolese refugee Albert Rajabu, spoke during the morning service and again at the afternoon letter-writing event. After lighting the ceremonial Amnesty International Candle of Hope, Mr. Rajabu gave deeply moving and often painful testimony based on his own personal witness. Among the letters we wrote was an appeal for his countrywoman, Justine Bihamba, whose life is at risk because of her work for women who have endured special victimization in their country's brutal conflict.

Through our event at First Unitarian, we in Providence joined over 400 communities in the U.S. and others in 38 countries around the world in what has become the annual Global Write-a-thon for Human Rights, a worldwide celebration of International Human Rights Day. We are grateful for the enormous support we received from so many in our congregation, our church leadership, and our community who, by working together, made this possible.

—Marcia R. Lieberman

Our Food Pantry Community

January is hot and cold breakfast cereal month!

Hot Cereal: Oatmeal (18-20 oz, no jumbo sizes), quick or instant oatmeal, etc.

Cold Cereal: Corn, bran or rice flakes, granola, etc. (regular box sizes preferred)

Please add some extra cereal boxes to your grocery shopping cart and drop them in the barrels in the Atrium for distribution to our monthly food pantry clients.

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 are asking the congregation to help out. 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 donations, contact Amy Webb (amy.webb7@verizon.net)

Volunteer on Distribution Day: Monday, January 18

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)

The Mitten Tree Returns

Starting on Sunday, January 3, the Kindergarten class and the First Unitarian Knitting Group will once again be creating a Mitten Tree at the front of our Meeting House on Benevolent Street. Last year through our efforts, more than fifty items were plucked from its branches to warm the hands and hearts of those passers-by in need.

We are always gratefully accepting hand-made or store-purchased "warmings" (mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, and socks) that are new or gently used. They can be dropped off in the basket in the Atrium or, if you prefer, hung directly on the tree outside the Meeting House. On the third Monday of each month (Food Pantry days), our tree is more frequently harvested, so keep this in mind when planning projects, shopping, or clearing out those extra winter items.

Our tree will bloom until the beginning of spring, longer if the weather necessitates an extended warming season.

Village Bank Fights Global Poverty



The Village Bank, First Unitarian's micro-finance project, will be working on its *fifth* bank this year.

For information or to get involved, email Polly Walker (pwalker41@cox.net) or Marilyn Eanet (meanet@cox.net)



Standing on the Side of Love

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

First Unitarian's first SSL activity was our participation in the October 17th 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 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 8000 signatures, and First Unitarian contributed 50 of them.

Be sure to read about the activities of First U's Neighborhood Social Justice Committee. They're bringing important legal information to renters affected by their landlords' mortgage foreclosures. This dovetails with SSL's focus because many of these folks are affected by the predatory lending practices that targeted low-income people and immigrants.

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.

Standing on the Side of Love has a website: www.standingonthesideoflove.org where you can learn more. If you're on Facebook, join the fan page for updates and information.



Social Justice



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 or 401.383.0385)

UUA Legislative Objectives – What Can You Support?

The UUA has approved several legislative priorities for the 2010 session of the 111th Congress. First Unitarian's Social Justice Ministry urges you to go online at uuu.org/socialjustice for detailed information about these priority issues, including:

- Economic and Racial Justice: Implement fair and just immigration reforms. Raise the federal minimum wage to \$10 in 2010.
- Environmental Justice: Mandate a reduction of U.S. carbon gas emissions. Create millions of green jobs.
- Gender and Sexual Justice: Grant full and equal access to civil marriage for same-sex couples.
- Extend fair-employment practices to the LGBT community.
- International Justice: End the military occupation of Iraq. Fully support the peace process in Darfur.

The UUA Washington Office for Advocacy is working for us. Contacting your Congressional delegation will help.

First Unitarian Knitters Help Keep Families Warm This Winter

Every Tuesday, 7:00p



The Knitting Group at First Unitarian has been making warm clothing of all sorts for English for Action, a group whose mission is to serve Latino immigrant families in Providence through participatory English language and childcare programs that link language learning, leadership development, and community building.

In October, we made our first delivery of several bags of warm clothing. Additional deliveries will be made throughout the winter months.

The Knitting Group gathers at the church each Tuesday evening for knitting/crocheting, sharing ideas, and companionship. All are welcome. If you like to knit but aren't free to join us, feel free to knit scarves, mittens, hats, baby blankets, or sweaters and drop them off at church. They will be delivered to appreciative families who are trying to keep warm. We also accept donations of yarn or knitting needles if you'd like to contribute to our projects (which also include the Mitten Tree, described elsewhere on page 9).

Contact: Julie Meyers (kelmey@cox.net)

January 2010

"Patterning your life around other's opinions is nothing more than slavery." -Lawana Blackwell

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<u>1</u> New YearsDay Church Office Closed	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Mentor/Mentee 12:00p Women's Chorus 12:00p BUUUG 7:00p	<u>4</u> Women's Alliance Business Meeting 10:30a Program 11:00a Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>5</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>6</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p Welcoming Congregation 7:00p	<u>7</u> Deacons 6:00p Gaia's Hearth 7:00p Stewardship 7:00p	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> Live and Service Auction
<u>10</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Worship Committee 12:00p Nominating Committee 12:00p Membership Committee 12:00p Women's Chorus 12:00p BUUUG 7:00p UU Men 7:00p	<u>11</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>12</u> Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> Parish Supper 5:45p	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Communion 11:45a Women's Chorus 12:00p BUUUG 7:00p Spiritual Cinema 7:00p	<u>18</u> Martin Luther King Day Church Office Closed Food Pantry 4:00p Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p Nominating Committee 7:00p	<u>19</u> Fellowship Committee 6:30p Knitters 7:00p	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> Social Justice Ministry 7:00p Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> Coming of Age Pasta Supper
<u>24</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Women's Chorus 12:00p <u>31</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Women's Chorus 12:00p	<u>25</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>26</u> Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>27</u> Executive Committee 7:00p	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> Saturday Social Suppers

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



We are a
Welcoming Congregation.

Telephone: 401.421.7970

Fax: 401.276.4291

Website: www.firstunitarianprov.org

Email: min@firstunitarianprov.org
dre@firstunitarianprov.org
admin@firstunitarianprov.org
assist@firstunitarianprov.org
mem@firstunitarianprov.org

Icing on the Cake . . . Auction and Dessert! First Unitarian Goods and Services Auction

Saturday, January 9, 7:00-9:00p

The Breakfast Club of First Unitarian is sponsoring an all-parish goods and services auction the second Saturday in January. Come enjoy delicious cake, brownies, and more, while finding that item you

really wanted for Christmas.

Some tempting donations have already come in. How would you like some time at a vacation home in New Hampshire? Maybe you prefer a weekly supply of homemade bread? There'll be lots more fun and fabulous offerings to bid on.

Tickets are \$10 per person with a maximum of \$25 per family and are on sale during Coffee Hour through January 3.

For more information, contact Maia Bailey (maia.bailey@gmail.com)

If you are interested in childcare for the evening, please let us know when you purchase tickets.

