



SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday, February 7 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford and First Unitarian families
The Wholly Family - An Intergenerational Service

Our annual celebration of our many traditions of family. Several of our church families will give brief accounts of who we are and how we are in a full-hearted celebration of the human condition.

Origins and Play Circle rooms are open.

Today's special offering is for Crossroads RI.

Sunday, February 14 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford
A Ministry of Love

James thinks a lot about love and ministry and how they're connected. He thinks that's what we're about here, creating a ministry of love. He's also aware that in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, the "Ministry of Love" was charged with controlling the country through repression, fear, and mind control. James will ruminate on this.

We will commission our Lay Ministers for another year of service.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, February 21 10:30a Rev. Gail Lindsay Marriner
Depth Perception: Triangulating on Unitarian Universalism

Norton Juster's children's classic *The Phantom Tollbooth*, the UU primer *A Chosen Faith*, and Zondervan's *The Challenge of Cults and New Religions* provide multiple perspectives in this service exploring what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

Our guest minister previously served three UU congregations in the Mass Bay District and is completing a two-year interim ministry with the UU congregation of Duluth, Minnesota.

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

Origins and Play Circle rooms are open.

Sunday, February 28 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford
Legends of the Drunken Masters

There is an ancient and venerable tradition associating drunkenness with spirituality. James will attempt a consideration of the metaphor and its deep meanings, without forgetting the very real tragedy of alcohol addiction.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 7 10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford
The Devil and Daniel Webster

On this day in 1850, Unitarian and United States Senator Daniel Webster gave his famous "Seventh of March" speech, which is generally credited with winning victory for the "Compromise of 1850," averting civil war but condemning slavery to continue for more than a decade longer. Among its more reprehensible features was the Fugitive Slave Act. James wonders about this and about the Unitarian style of seeking a middle way in most all things.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.



The Monthly Newsletter for

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

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 0

ALL PARISH EVENTS

All-Parish Supper
 Friday, February 12

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S T A F F

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
 Henry Colpa, Evening Security
 Pedro Vasquez, Sunday Building Manager

N E W S L E T T E R

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

Hats Off!

To the Breakfast Club - Bruce Boucek, Maia Bailey, Stephen and Heidi Koelz, Lach Franquemont, Holly Dobbs, Dorothy Fibiger and Rachel Morrison - for putting on a most successful service auction which raised just over \$5000 to support the annual fundraising line item in the budget. With additional hats off for assistance from Tom Getz and David House.

Many thanks to Coffee Hour Providers last month: Marilyn Eanet, Gail Brule, Betty Finn, Janet Noble, Katy Killilea, Roberta Groch, Kendall Jones, Susan Fisher, Leslie Bostrom and Pat Murier, Barbara Gloria, David House, Lucille Ricciteli, Anne Connor, Anne Hamilton, Erica Napolitano, Gerry Spremulli, Cathy Orloff, Marilyn Meardon, Marilyn Van Erp and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.

Special thanks to Shannon and Lincoln Oliver-O'Neil, Charlie Hunt, Grace Burberry-Martin, Sam Taber, Pietro Verrechia and Holly Dobbs for reading at the Christmas Eve Services ... and to all those who planned to have parts in the annual, Almost-Traditional Christmas Pageant that was cancelled due to snow.



Monkey Mind

I was sitting at my desk looking for that “hook,” that interesting theme for my column. Something like “Crossing the Rubicon.” Then Richard Boober walked by and I asked him for a good hook. Now, Posey overheard this and yelled out, “Don’t let James make you do his work for him.” But Richard couldn’t help himself, and he suggested “How about ‘It’s a good day to die.’” He added, “I think it’s a saying used by Klimgons when they go into battle.”

I looked it up. Actually, the first recorded use is attributed to Chief Crazy Horse to his warriors at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Among many other things, it is also a running phrase in the movie *Little Big Man*. I recall the father figure, a tribal chief played by Dan George, deciding it’s time to die; with his adopted son, he goes and sets up one of those wooden-framed, above-ground graves used in various cultures and lies on it. As I remember the scene, it starts with the Dustin Hoffman character sitting below weeping while his adoptive father waits to die. Hours pass, it begins to rain, and eventually Dan George’s character says something like “It’s a good day to live.” They go home.

I resist looking it up, I don’t want to be corrected.

For me, the two phrases “It’s a good day to die” and “It’s a good day to live” are intimately connected. It seems to me if we really, really want to live full and engaged lives, we need both attitudes. While we are walking around doing things, it is just and right and good that we do it full-heartedly, giving it everything we’ve got.

And when the time comes to die, to die. No shilly-shallying around. Full-hearted engagement with that moment, too. And, yes, easy to say when one isn’t dying. So, I won’t spend lots of time there.

But as to the living part, that I know without any doubt to be true. It’s always just this. We take up the way of being present to who we are, and things happen. Kind of like magic. We get a little smarter. We get a whole lot more compassionate.

I suspect we even look better. But that’s a guess.

Whatever, here we are, still at the beginning, more or less, of the year. Why don’t we make a New Year’s resolution to, as the commercial once had it, go for it!

One hundred percent.

And just see what happens.

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

Path to Membership

Saturday, February 27, 9:00a-12:30p

February offers more than groundhogs and shadows and valentines – it also has a Path to Membership class! The 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. Rev. James Ford will lead the session, with help from our Deacons (who provide hospitality and a scrumptious brunch for participants). There will be an opportunity to join the congregation at the close of the class.

This will be the final Saturday morning Path to Membership class of the church year. The next session will be on a Thursday evening: April 15 from 6:00p to 9:00p. If your schedule has prevented you from attending a Saturday morning class, please keep this one in mind.

For more information or to register for the class, please call the office (401.421.7970) or email our Membership Coordinator, Katy Killilea (mem@firstunitarianprov.org). Childcare is available for those who reserve in advance: deadline, Monday, February 22; please indicate age(s) of children you will bring.



Spiritual Pathways

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education, is on sabbatical until April 20, 2010. Patricia Wilhelm, Chair of the Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth, will contribute to this column while Cathy is away.

The RE Committee is holding down the fort while Cathy is away. We are geared up and organized to keep things running: Judy Bowden and Marcia Taylor are leading Chapel services, Amy Webb and Dana Guterman are helping with office tasks, and the RE Committee liaisons to the classrooms are continuing to support our priceless volunteer teachers. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or ideas.

Tricia Wilhelm (pwillhelm@ccri.edu)
Chair, RE Committee

February Is Sandwich Brigade Month! Crossroads RI Guest Speaker

Sunday, February 7 at 12:15p in the Auditorium

The Sandwich Brigade is a social justice commitment by our congregation to provide 200 sandwiches a week – 800 for the month of February – to Crossroads Rhode Island. It is an exciting activity that involves our RE program, Social Justice Ministry, and Community Food Share Pantry. Crossroads RI assists homeless and disconnected people on their journey toward a better quality of life through the provision of essential life services, advocacy, and referral.

A representative from Crossroads will be joining us on February 7 to inform and enlighten us about the services Crossroads provides to our community. Both youth and adults in our congregation are encouraged to attend.

Making sandwiches this year will be our sixth/seventh-grade class, eighth-grade Coming of Age group, Senior High Youth Group, and young adults. Parents help purchase the supplies, which are paid for by our Social Justice Ministry. Look for the bustle of activity in the parlors after Coffee Hour each February Sunday as our youth and young adults make sandwiches and assemble lunch bags!

A Special Request for JUICE: This year, Crossroads has made a special request for complete lunches, and we need your help to make this happen. We will need 800 drinks to include in our lunch bags: juice boxes, small cans, pouches, or small bottled water are all welcome. Donations can be dropped off throughout the month in our Atrium Barrel or through the RE classes.

Thank-yous for Our Holiday Toy and Gift Drive

Bill Shuey, Executive Director of the International Institute, has written to say, "These gifts (over 50!!) will allow us to assist our newly arrived refugee clients in their quest to create a new homeland and fulfill the America Dream. Many of our newcomers have come here with nothing but their hopes and dreams. Your generosity helps inspire our families as they build their new lives. Our eighty-seven years of successful service is in large part a function of a remarkable and passionately committed constituency – a constituency of supporters like you."

Camp Street Ministries, in their newsletter, listed the First Unitarian Church as a "Hero of Christmas" this year.

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

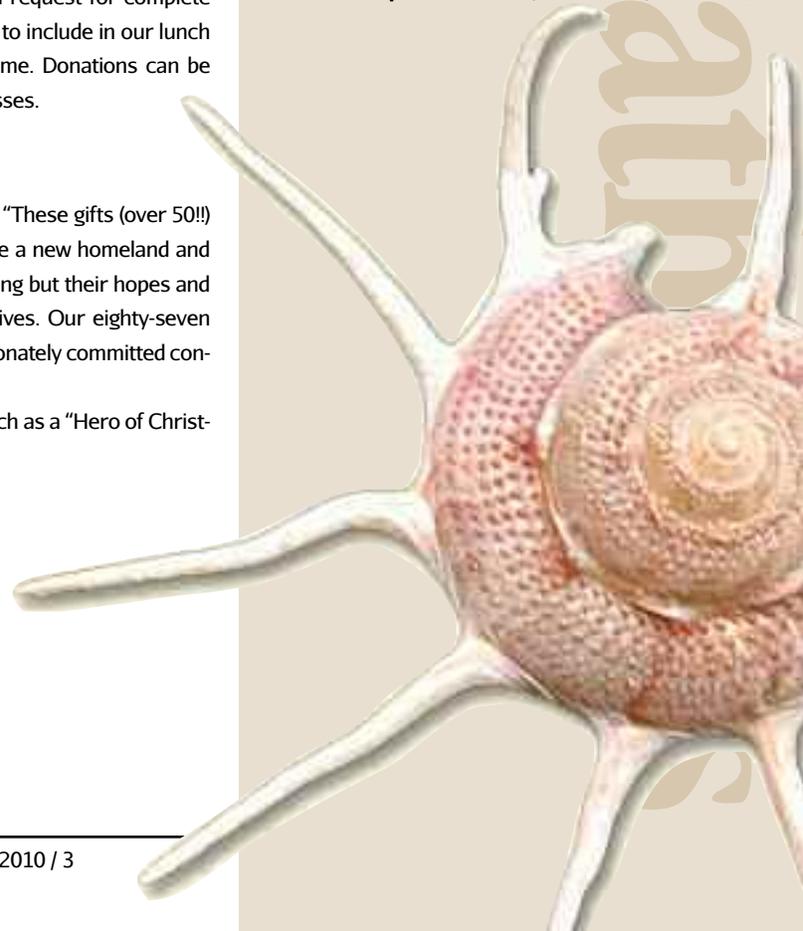
Sandwich Brigade: Roberta Groch

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)



\$600,000 50% \$25,000 2%-3%

Do you know what it takes to support the work of the church each year? Approximately \$600,000, and our past budget drives have only funded a little more than 50% of that amount. The rest has come largely from returns on our endowment. But relying on our endowment to fund our budget is neither sustainable nor currently possible given the decreased yield on those investments.

The shortfall on endowment earnings next year is projected to be \$25,000. Without greater financial support from all of us, the members and friends of First Unitarian, we will be unable to level-fund our current programs, thus jeopardizing much of what we love about First Unitarian.

"Respecting the Past. Revitalizing the Present. Investing in the Future" is the theme of our annual budget drive, which is now getting under way. During the month of February, the Stewardship Committee will be talking with many of you who are active in church programs about your continued financial support of the church.

We all know times are tough for many of us. We will each need to do the best we can. That may mean making a pledge of 2% or 3% of your income; it may mean adding \$10 a week to your current pledge; it may mean just maintaining your current pledge on a reduced budget. By whatever means we increase our pledges this year, we reduce our dependence on the endowment, while respecting the vision and generosity of our forebears; we pay our own way, while owning and revitalizing the promises that our church represents in the present; and we invest in the future of our beloved community.

- The Stewardship Committee



Sight Lines

Maybe it's the start of the New Year, or the start of the new decade, but my thoughts keep returning to long-range planning for First Unitarian. Who do we want to be? What do we long to become? Over the years, we have looked at these questions in a variety of ways, bringing in facilitators to help us wrestle with them. We have harvested our dreams several times in my 17 years at First Unitarian, but I don't remember us ever taking those fruits and using them to create a long-range plan. Over the next year, this is what the Prudential Committee hopes to accomplish.

To stay with my metaphor, we have several baskets of fruit from which we may draw to construct this plan. In 2006, we had two all-congregation sessions to "Harvest Our Dreams." One tangible result of that process was the creation of our Membership Coordinator position, now skillfully filled by Katy Killilea. But there is much more that may be culled from those two events.

Another source for our planning is James's "hidden agenda" five-year plan he wrote for First Unitarian. He calls it "hidden," but that's not remotely true, since he read it out to those attending the program of the first All-Parish Supper last fall and will repeat it to just about anybody who will take a minute. We have already met many of those goals, including becoming a Welcoming Congregation. Ones we have yet to pursue include becoming a teaching church: bringing in a student minister for a two-year internship, an opportunity to put into practice what they learned in seminary.

The most recent harvest is the cards over 150 of us wrote when discussing what a new covenant would contain for us. Once the covenant writing group completes its work, we will go back through the cards to find concrete examples of programs and ministry opportunities we as a congregation long to do.

The PruComm will use these three "baskets of fruit" to sketch a plan for the next five years in our church life. This skeletal plan will be refined in several ways, including in Congregational Conversations, throughout this year. My husband likes to say that, if you want to make God laugh, tell her/him your plans; but it is equally true that, without a plan, we can only drift. Let us know where you hope to help lead our wonderful community in the second decade of this century, and we'll garden together!



Martha Rice Sanders, President
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Icing on the Cake . . . A Delicious Auction and Dessert Evening!

If you were there, you know what a fabulous event the First Unitarian Goods and Services Auction turned out to be. Dozens of mouth-watering desserts, a variety of wines and other beverages, and tables loaded with offers of goods and services: gift certificates, dog sitting, breads and cakes, hair styling, a hand-knitted shawl, a hand-carved keepsake box, even a poem to be written for the high bidder (that went to our minister, James Ford, who has commissioned poet Ryk McIntyre to write a piece in honor of Music Director Fred Jodry). Live bidding got heated over several get-away vacation homes.

And the bottom line: \$5,025 raised to support the annual fundraising line item in the church budget.

Many thanks to the Breakfast Club - especially Bruce Boucek, Maia Bailey, Stephen and Heidi Koelz, Lach Franquemont, Holly Dobbs, Dorothy Fibiger, and Rachel Morrison - for the many hours they spent putting together such a successful and enjoyable evening. And additional thanks for their assistance and expertise to Tom Getz and David House.





Community Life and Heritage

The February All-Parish Supper

Friday, February 12

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:

"Love and Other Difficulties: A Winter Recital and Soiree"

The talented and accomplished Aurea Ensemble returns to entertain us with a delightful concoction of romantic songs, poetry, stories, and chamber music. Poets Rilke and Goethe and romantic composers including Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Schubert will be represented. The evening's program will feature the Aurea string quartet including Charles and Consuelo Sherba, Katherine Wintersteen, and Emmanuel Feldman, as well as vocalist Gigi Mitchell-Velasco. Actor Nigel Gore will recite. Don't miss this wonderful program!

Heavily discounted tickets for the performance will be available for sale for those who attend the supper. You're invited to bring juice boxes, cans, or small water bottles to support the Crossroad RI Sandwich Brigade.

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.

February Saturday Social Suppers

Saturday, February 27

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: June and David House
53 Pleasant Street
Rehoboth, MA

In the West Bay:

Hosts: Joyce and Richard Boober
20 Bennington Road
Cranston, RI

For reservations, menu planning, and directions for both dinners, contact Janet Noble in advance (401.732.0256 or bamajan2002@yahoo.com. Please bring your own beverage.

"Y'all Come Sing!"

Sunday, February 7 at 9:15a in the Auditorium

Too busy to join a choir? A bit rusty on reading music? Been singing in the shower lately? Anyone and everyone is invited to join Marcia Taylor and YMoDE (our young musicians group) to learn a cheerful piece to sing in the Wholly Family Service that day. If you like to sing, come join us and be part of the fun!

A Concert by Triple Spiral

Saturday, February 20, 8:00p in the Auditorium

The folk group Triple Spiral will be with us to preview their show at Club Passim in Cambridge. Proceeds will go toward re-voicing the tired Steinway piano that supports the Chapel services for the young people on Sunday mornings (suggested donation: \$5 to \$15).

Triple Spiral features a truly joyful fusion of Celtic and folk music with influences from Europe and beyond. The group performs in five-part harmony with instrumentals, with a repertoire of songs from the Scottish Highlands and other lands, sung in native tongues including English, Breton, French, and other European styles. Learn more at their website: <http://triplespiral.us>

March All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 19 (one week later than usual)

Program: "Ethical Eating: From Farm to Table"

Main Speaker: Dr. Polly Walker, Associate Director of the Center for a Livable Future at The Johns Hopkins University

Food is a major issue in today's world. How do we decide, on a day-to-day basis, what to eat? What nutritional, ethical, and ecological factors might we consider in making our food choices? Polly Walker is an expert on these matters, and she is also a member of our congregation and a very interesting speaker. We have also invited local farmers and representatives from local farmer's markets to comment. Please join us. This program is co-sponsored by the World Affairs Committee.

Upcoming Saturday Social Suppers

Saturday potlucks are scheduled for March 27, April 24 (Round-the-Table dinner), May 29, and June 26.

Hosts needed: We are seeking two more hosts to round out our spring schedule. Hosts provide space (to accommodate 14 or more, served buffet style), water to drink, and tea or decaf after the meal. Welcome a diverse group of absolutely wonderful UUs to your home!

Contact: Carol Adams (401.433.4365 or carol.adams6@cox.net)

Winter Storm Cancellations - An Update

If church activities are cancelled due to extreme weather, the message will be conveyed to the following media outlets (this is an updated list): TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI PBS, and radio stations 630 WPRO, 920 WHJJ, 1180 CCNX news radio, 1290 WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94 HJY, 92 ProFM, 98.1 Cat Country, 93.3 Coast FM, and 95.5 WBRU.

No one should make heroic efforts to get to church during a storm. If the City of Providence announces a parking ban, remember that space will be limited.



Coffee Hour Reminder

Be our Valentine and bring in goodies for the February 7, 21, or 28 Coffee Hours. The Lay Ministry will provide delicious Valentine treats on February 14 to spotlight this important ministry in our church and to recruit volunteers to the Caring Crew. Cookies, breads, brownies, fruit, or cheese and crackers will warm our hearts this month. Sign up at the Coffee Hour table in the front parlor and go home with a reminder so you won't forget.

Cold and Flu Season: Common Sense Etiquette

Sniffing, illness, and avoiding germs are on many people's minds at this time of year. Please take note of the following:

- ❖ You should feel free to refrain from hand-shake/hug greetings if that is part of your flu-season strategy.
- ❖ If your handshake or hug is rebuffed, please don't be offended.
- ❖ Hand-washing facilities and pump bottles of hand sanitizer are numerous. Restrooms are located in the Meeting House, Parish House, and on each floor of the Atrium. Each classroom is equipped with a sink and soap. Additionally, hand sanitizers are found at each Welcome table, classroom, and other convenient spots.
- ❖ Please stay home if you or your children are experiencing cold or flu symptoms (sniffles, coughing, fever).

Four Ways to Make Connections at Coffee Hour This Month

- ❖ Sign up to bring snacks for Coffee Hour. Find Janet Downing Taylor in the front parlor any Sunday.
- ❖ Drop into the Newcomers Café any Sunday in the Paneled Parlor to get to know members of the church (try it even if you're not a newcomer!).
- ❖ Shop the Village Bank sale or the Atrium Bookstore a chance to chat with fellow shoppers while you support a worthy cause.
- ❖ Volunteer to be a Sunday morning greeter or an usher. It's easy and fun!

Contact: Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator
(mem@firstunitarianprov.org).



Community Life and Heritage

The Women's Alliance

A Trip to the Roger Williams Park Greenhouse

 Monday, February 1 at 10:15a (note the earlier time)

This month's program features a visit to the Roger Williams Park Greenhouse (no entrance fee for Alliance members). Following a short business meeting, Joanne Bouley, Program Manager of the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center, will give a talk on the history of the Greenhouse and share future plans to develop the exterior grounds. There will be a self-guided walk through the Center, and Joanne will be available to answer any questions. Luncheon at a local restaurant will follow.

Meet in the church parking lot at 10:15a for carpooling to the park. Women's Alliance programs are open to everyone.

Village Bank Sale . . . Continued

Sunday, February 14 in the Atrium before and after church

-  We're holding the final day of this year's Village Bank Sale on February 14, which was postponed because of the snowstorm in December. Please support First Unitarian's micro-economy project. We have lots of lovely items left and will be discounting many of them. Proceeds go toward establishing our third Village Bank in Haiti, which is needed now more than ever.

Art in the Atrium: Photographs by First Unitarian Members

Our second show in the Atrium is a photography display. Eight photographers from the congregation are represented:

Phil Lieberman brings images from his trips to Nepal that are stark reminders of the unjust inequality existing on our planet.

Franklin Scheel, a doctor who volunteered in the Third World for 18 years, contrasts inequality in South America and India with pictures of "our" more familiar world.

Liz Palter depicts Rome in ways that reflect her purpose in taking photographs: to "mark the past in the present" and "situate the present in the past."

James Corbin seeks to capture "a feeling, expression, or mood" behind a plain scene by manipulating his pictures in a "painterly" way with digital tools.

Richard Boober, known for his photographs of our church, shows different subjects here, from a city view to imprints in the sand to old objects.

Bill Rice shares his pictures of beautiful, surreal flowers. "The color in these photos doesn't have much to do with reality . . . it is, though, what I'd like to see."

Rick Richards looks at a printed picture and sees "things that were not visible at first." His photos all have a focal point, a powerful way of "organizing a picture very clearly."

Upcoming exhibits

In the coming months, Art in the Atrium will feature drawings by Burr Harrison, paintings by painter and sculptress Ruth Emers and by Irene Allen, and a joint show of work by Sally Barker and Amy Webb. Our Church School children will exhibit in May, and children from the Meeting Street School will also display their work in the spring, since we decided to open the space to artists beyond our community.

I am very grateful to all the participating artists for the work and the insight they offer to us. A special thanks to Sally Barker, who helped me in the long process of taking down the previous show and hanging up the new.

— Chiara Romano Van Erp

For art submissions, please contact Chiara (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net). The two principal rules for the exhibitions are that the work has to be evaluated for content by the committee and that it cannot be for sale. We are open to comments or suggestions to improve this venue.





Spiritual Development

Growth Opportunities in the Ballou Channing District

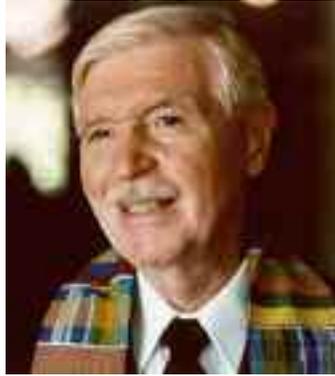
Walking the Talk: Engaging a Congregation in Social Justice Work

🕒 Saturday, February 27, 9:30a-4:30p

Channing Memorial Church, 135 Pelham Street, Newport, RI Unitarian Universalists are eloquent in talking about peace and social justice, but do we really “walk the talk”? This workshop will explore the spiritual roots of our concern for social justice and the unique UU mission to translate concern into action. Participants will gain organizational tools for working with their congregation and planning for change. Each team of participants is asked to come with a completed Congregational Self-Analysis Survey available on the registration website listed below.

Leader: The Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert has been a Unitarian Universalist minister for 45 years, retiring in 2005 from the First Unitarian Church in Rochester, NY. Currently a Social Justice Coordinator of the St. Lawrence District, he has taught at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Starr King School, and Meadville Lombard Theological School. His publications include the *Building Your Own Theology* series; *The Prophetic Imperative: Social Gospel in Theory and Practice*; *How Much Do We Deserve? An Inquiry into Distributive Justice*; and *In the Holy Quiet of This Hour: A Meditation Manual*.

Cost: \$20 (includes lunch). Registration deadline: February 24. Register online at: www.channingchurch.org/walkthetalk



Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert

Thinking Outside the Pulpit: Beyond the “Hymn-Sermon Sandwich” Service

🕒 Saturday, March 6, 9:30a -12:30p

All Souls Church, 196 Elm Street, Braintree, MA

Participants will explore opportunities to expand and enhance the liberal religious “worship” experience in traditional and non-traditional settings; explore ways of involving more members of the congregation in worship; consider possibilities for multigenerational worship experiences; create a worship experience that will attract those people for whom traditional “church” is a turn-off.

Leader: The Rev. Dr. Judith Campbell is a poet and UU parish and community minister with advanced-degree study in spirituality and the arts.

Cost: \$20 per person or \$50 for 3 people.

Registration information is in the church office.



Rev. Dr. Judith Campbell



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)

Gaia’s Hearth CUUPS

(Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

🕒 First Thursday, February 4, 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 (nimui@cox.net)

UUMeN

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

Topic: Relationships and Technology

Relationships are very important to us, including partners, relatives, friends, and co-workers. We find relationship to be both rewarding and frustrating. What makes for a good relationship? Are we as men really "relationship-challenged"?

Recent developments in technology may (or may not) help us with relationships like email, cell phones, social networking sites, texting, etc. What have been the effects of these new ways of fostering relationships? Come and share your thoughts and experiences. All interested men are welcome.

This month's facilitator: Paul Rossignol (401.640.3599).

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays

February 9 and 23 at 7:00p

After a lengthy study of the Gospel of Thomas, we have begun an examination of Ecclesiastes, seeking insights from a recent translation by Lloyd Geering, for many years a professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, and from the introduction to his forthcoming book on his favorite Wisdom sage. Come and discover why this famous scholar has frequently translated the Hebrew *Elohim* as 'Nature' rather than 'God.'

Contact: Tom Hall (texts for downloading may be requested from Tom at twh2nd@aol.com)

Spiritual Cinema

Third Sunday, February 21, 7:00-9:00p

Featured film: Milk

Hosted by the Welcoming Congregation Committee. This award-winning film, set in San Francisco in the 1970s, stars Sean Penn as Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man elected to a public office in California. His struggle to bring civil rights to the gay movement were iconic in a time of broad social and political change, and despite his short career in politics, he is still viewed as a one of the most famous and significant openly gay elected officials. A discussion of the film will follow.

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



Spiritual Development

First Aid for Stress

Tuesday, February 9, 7:00p

Got stress? Get rid of it! Chronic stress is really bad for your health. The immediate effects of stress are to raise blood pressure and blood sugar, and susceptibility to infection and inflammation. Long-term stress can lead to or worsen diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and autoimmune disease. Don't despair. Help is available. In this workshop you will learn two simple, effective yogic techniques that can be done at your desk or anywhere. The techniques, once learned, will take from 5 to 15 minutes and have an immediate tangible effect on reducing stress.

Contact: Karen Lee (401.421.9876) Karen is a registered yoga therapist and owner of Breathing Time Yoga. Registration is requested but not required.

Ballou Channing District Spring Conference and Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 24, First Unitarian Church of Providence

Our church will be hosting the annual BCD spring meeting this year. Please save the date and come to enjoy an outstanding program and a chance to meet and get to know other UUs from around the district. More information will be forthcoming.

If you have questions about the district, please contact Marilyn Eanet (meanet@cox.net or 401.433.1299); Marilyn has been on the BCD district board for several years and is currently serving as the District board secretary.

Sunday Flowers

We all enjoy the wonderful floral arrangements at the pulpit on Sundays in the Meeting House, now even more with the new under-pulpit lighting. You can honor a loved one or celebrate a special occasion.

You may order flowers for the Meeting House by contacting Jacqui Nye (funjac@hotmail.com) with "Flowers" in the subject line.



The First Unitarian Community Orchestra/Band Returns

Sunday, March 7 and 14, 90-minute rehearsals right after coffee hour

Sunday, March 21 during the service.

This is a fun opportunity for those in the congregation who play instruments to get together and make music. It's also a good way to encourage middle school- or high school-aged children who play in school bands to get involved in a church activity.

We will play through some hymns and a few other well-known pieces. We have been invited to play for a Sunday morning church service, perhaps as a prelude and possibly to accompany a hymn.

This group will be directed by Stew Armstrong, a former band director, school music teacher, and brass player. Please contact him before March with your name and instrument so we can prepare parts for everyone.

Contact: Stew Armstrong (401.253.7987, cell 401.523.8018, or bestar3@cox.net)



Social Justice

Send a Valentine for Marriage Equality

Sunday, February 14 during Coffee Hour 🌍🌈

As part of our work for full civil rights for all, the Welcoming Congregation Committee will be collecting signatures in support of marriage equality on Valentine's Day. Visit our table during Coffee Hour and sign a card that we'll return to Marriage Equality Rhode Island. MERI will send the cards to our state senators and representatives, urging them to vote for full human and civil rights for BGLT people.

We're very proud of the rainbow chalice now displayed on our church homepage, which tells visitors that we are an official UUA Welcoming Congregation. Visit the church website at www.firstunitarianprov.org.

The Committee is working on fund-raising ideas for our planned activities: workshops, outreach ads, a banner, and Pride Parade participation. We will be selling pins and greeting cards during Coffee Hour in the near future, so watch for announcements.

Food Pantry News

The Christmas Eve offering to support the First Unitarian Church Food Pantry brought in just over \$3,000. Thanks to everyone who gave so generously!

February Food Donations – Juice Boxes

As the demands on our state Food Bank continue to rise, we are asking the congregation to help out. February is juice box month to support the Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade. You can leave donated items in the barrel in the Parish House Atrium. NO GLASS PLEASE! Glass containers 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)

Distribution Day – Monday, February 15

Many volunteers are needed for all phases of the distribution: 1:00p-3:00p for set-up, 3:00p-5:00p for distribution with our clients, 5:00-6:00p for restocking and clean-up.

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

Neighborhood Social Justice Book Drive

Book drive on Sundays in the Atrium. Meetings on Sunday, February 7 and 28 at 12:15p

The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee (NSJC) kicked off a Book Drive on January 24 to benefit the clients of the RI Institute of Mental Health. RI IMH is in desperate need of reading materials their library consists of a handful of books that are old and tattered. Materials they can accept include: new or used magazines (without staples) and soft cover books that do not contain violence, criminal procedures, murder, or any sexual themes. Magazine gift subscriptions would be ideal. Also welcome are new or used DVD movies, music CDs (especially Spanish), arts and crafts supplies, board games, or any other supplies to help people pass the time. Please keep in mind that the majority of the clients at the RI IMH are Spanish-speaking. NSJC is committed to providing First Unitarian with opportunities to share our social justice passions, expertise, and beliefs.

For more information on the RI IMH Book Drive, contact Laura Courtemanche at 401.572.2677.



First Unitarian Knitting Connection

Every Tuesday, 7:00p

The Knitting Connection at First Unitarian has been making warm clothing for English for Action, a group that serves Latino immigrant families in Providence. The knitters gather 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.

Contact: Julie Meyers (kelmey@cox.net)

Habitat for Humanity Work Day

Saturday, February 16

The First Unitarian Habitat Work Group volunteers once a month with the Providence chapter of Habitat for Humanity RI (www.habitatprov.org). 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. Sign-up is required as space on each month's crew is limited.

Contact: Peter Van Erp (401.351.4881 or petervanerp@cox.net).

Turn Old Magazines into Food!

Ruth Arellana is reselling expensive, special-topic magazines during Coffee Hour for 50 cents or a dollar. The money collected is donated to our Community Food Share Pantry. Magazines not resold between monthly Food Share days will be made available to our clients for free. To donate magazines, bring them to Ruth in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Best are magazines like *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 are also helpful. Please think about re-salability; this is not a recycling project: no *Newsweek*, *Time*, etc.

Contact: Ruth Arellana (rkarellana@yahoo.com or 401.383.0385).

Energy Efficiency Plan

Phase I

- ❖ Insulation and air sealing of the old Parish House
- ❖ Installation of doors between the Atrium and the old Parish House building
- ❖ Replacement of incandescent lights in the Auditorium
- ❖ Replacement of incandescent lights in the Meeting House

Phase II

- ❖ Replacement of the steam boiler that heats the old Parish House with a hot-water system
- ❖ Recalibration of the heating controls for all three buildings

Phase III

- ❖ Repair of Meeting House windows
- ❖ Other projects as yet undecided

Women's Alliance Fair Trade Coffee

Why you should buy your coffee from the Women's Alliance table during Coffee Hour:

1. It's organic.
2. It's Fair Trade.
3. It's shade grown.
4. It's fresh and delicious.
5. We have drip grind and whole bean, regular and decaf.
6. It costs less than at some local stores. (We sell a pound to their 12 ounces.)
7. All profits go directly into the community to benefit women, children, and families including the food pantry at our church.
8. It comes from a local roaster and supports local business: New Harvest Coffee Roasters in Pawtucket.
9. We'll be very grateful.
10. It's the right thing to do.



The Greening of First Unitarian

The First Unitarian Church has embarked on a long-term plan to use less energy in the church buildings. The goals are twofold: to reduce church operating costs and to reduce our carbon footprint. Church utility costs average \$1800 a month, releasing about 156 metric tones of CO₂ annually. Through insulating and air sealing the buildings and investing in more efficient lighting, heating, and air-conditioning equipment, we can reduce utility costs by several thousand dollars a year, as well as cut carbon dioxide emissions from heating and electricity generation.

The plan currently has three phases, the first of which is almost complete (see sidebar).

Phase I started with a detailed energy audit of the Parish House. An air-infiltration test identified major air leaks. The auditor recommended insulating and air sealing the attic and crawl space under the old Parish House. When the work was completed, the test was run again and showed that the air leakage had been reduced from 3,000 cubic feet per minute to 1,250 cubic feet per minute. A rebate from National Grid will cover 20% of the cost of the insulation work.

Another recommendation was to install doors between the Atrium and the old Parish House. As the two buildings are almost never kept at the same temperature, doors will be very effective at keeping the buildings heated and cooled separately at times when there are not events that use both buildings. The new doors are on order.

The biggest part of Phase II is the replacement of the Parish House boiler. The current unit dates back to the 1940s and could fail at any time; in addition, many of the radiators have been turned off because of leaks. The boiler is probably running at under 50% efficiency. Replacing the steam system with a high-efficiency hot-water design will provide a system that is more dependable and will cost considerably less to operate. There are rebates from National Grid for boiler replacements, also, but the cost will still be quite high. We are currently investigating ways to fund this project.

Phase III will concentrate on upgrades to the Meeting House and will likely be part of a remodeling for the two-hundredth anniversary of the building in 2016. Many details of this work remain to be resolved. Farther down the road, it may be possible to install solar photovoltaic panels on the Meeting House roof. The solar resource of that roof is very closely matched to the electric usage of the church and could cover all of the church's annual electricity needs. There are issues regarding the appearance of a photovoltaic system on such a historic structure, but as the technology evolves, solar arrays become cheaper, more efficient, and less visually noticeable.

Though investments in energy efficiency can be expensive, the pay-off is over \$3 for every \$1 invested, significantly reducing operating expenses. National and international goals to reduce fossil fuel consumption need to be made personal if they are to be achieved. Reducing dependence on fossil fuels must be an ongoing process; it can rarely be done all at once. Could we reduce the energy consumption of the church from fossil fuels to zero before 2050? It will take commitment and long-term thinking, but it is possible. We have already taken the first steps.

In the summer of 2009, the Prudential Committee appointed a task force including David Brown, Art Lusignan, Tony Allen and Posey Kooris to work on this project. For more information, contact Posey Kooris (admin@firstunitarianprov.org).



February 2010

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." – Warren Buffett

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<u>1</u> Women's Alliance 10:15a Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>2</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>3</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p	<u>4</u> Personnel 12:00p Deacons 6:00p Gaia's Hearth 7:00p Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
	<u>7</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Mentor/Mentee 12:00p Membership Committee 12:00p Crossroads RI 12:15p NSJC 12:15p BUUUG 7:00p	<u>8</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>9</u> Yoga (K. Lee) 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>10</u> RE Committee 6:00p	<u>11</u> Worship Committee 7:00p	<u>12</u> Parish Supper 5:45p
<u>14</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Village Bank Sale 11:30a BUUUG 7:00p UU Men 7:00p	<u>15</u> Presidents' Day Church Office Closed Food Pantry 4:00p Fellowship Committee 6:30p Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p Nominating Committee 7:00p	<u>16</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> Triple Spiral Concert 8:00p
<u>21</u> Sunday Service 10:30a BUUUG 7:00p Spiritual Cinema 7:00p	<u>22</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>23</u> Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>24</u> Executive Committee 7:00p	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> Path to Membership 9:00a-12:30p Saturday Social Suppers
<u>28</u> Sunday Service 10:30a NSJC 12:15p BUUUG 7:00p						

First Unitarian Church of Providence
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The Mitten Tree

The Kindergarten class and the First Unitarian Knitting Connection have once again created a Mitten Tree at the front of our Meeting House on Benevolent Street. Handmade or store-purchased “warmings” (mittens, gloves, scarves, hats and socks), new or gently used, can be dropped off in the basket in the Atrium or hung directly on the tree outside the Meeting House. When planning projects, shopping, or clearing out those extra winter items, keep in mind that our tree is more frequently harvested on Food Pantry days, the third Monday of each month.

