



SERVICES IN MARCH AND EARLY APRIL

Sunday, March 7

"This Second Day of July, Anno Domini 1722, in the Eighth Year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord King George . . ."

10:30a

Cy O'Neil and Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Cy and James will trace some of the signal features of our congregation since its gathering in the early decades of the eighteenth century. We have a rich heritage of rogues and saints, who together built something precious.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 14

Life's Work

10:30a

Rev. Christana Wille McKnight



Christana, our affiliated Community Minister, will reflect on jobs, employment, and vocation and what it means "to go to work" today.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 21

A Hymn to the Gods

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

March 21 is by tradition the Equinox and is a major marker in the celestial calendar. James finds himself thinking of the old gods and goddesses. He thinks they are still speaking and have words of wisdom for us to consider.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 28

A Feast of Unleavened Bread

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

This year Passover begins on Tuesday. It is a powerful holiday in the Jewish tradition, a pivotal point in the great Exodus story where, by the grace of God, people are saved from terrible things and guided toward freedom. James will explore some of how this story might, and where it might not, have meaning for contemporary Unitarian Universalists.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Thursday, April 1

Maundy Thursday Communion Service

7:00p

Rev. James Ishmael Ford and the Deacons

We will celebrate a Unitarian Universalist service of communion. James will be the celebrant, assisted by the Deacons of the First Unitarian Church. The Rev. Sean Manchester, who is Episcopal chaplain at the Eleanor Slater Hospital, will preach. All are welcome to this modern adaptation of an ancient rite celebrating radical interdependence.

Sunday, April 4

The Rising of the Sun

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Easter is the most problematic of traditional Christian stories for most Unitarian Universalists. We are inclined to the religion "of Jesus rather than the religion about Jesus," which is why Christmas, with its solid pagan roots and humanistic message, continues to appeal to UUs. James suggests we can find similar themes and pointers in the Easter story for us on our contemporary spiritual journey.

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

Origins and Play Circle rooms are open.

The Monthly Newsletter for

The First Unitarian Church of Providence

Corner of Benefit and Benevolent Streets

M A R C H 2 0 1 0

A L L P A R I S H E V E N T S

All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 19

Annual Fund Drive

(see Back Page)

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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





Wheel of Life

Condolences to Susan Fisher on the death of her mother, Anne Grant Fisher, on February 10 at the age of 90.

Congratulations to Steve McCloy on the marriage of his son Joshua to Nicole V. Ramey in December of 2009.

Annual Lay Ministry Installation

With a unison recitation, the congregation installed seven Lay Ministers during the worship service on Sunday, February 14. They will serve until this time next year.

Joining the Lay Ministry group were Rick Richards and Bill Twaddell.

Continuing in the Lay Ministry are Mary Frey, Martha Manno, Kate Menard, and Janet Noble.

Acknowledged as they leave service in the Lay Ministry were Stewart Armstrong and Mary Frappier.

The Lay Ministry, and volunteers in the affiliated Care Crew, are ready to help those in the congregation who are in need, as 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 they cannot provide ongoing services, they are available to provide support such as calls or visits, rides to the doctor's office, emergency babysitting, emergency elderly companionship, or meal delivery.

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



Monkey Mind

Once upon a time many years ago in a universe far, far away . . . Well, okay, actually about fifteen years ago in Chandler, Arizona, I attended the Spring Senior High Schoolers worship service. They began with a series of readings, each highlighting the freedom of thought within Unitarian Universalism. Most of these statements, from ministers and high-profile lay leaders, were paraphrases of that old saw "As a Unitarian Universalist, I can believe anything I want."

Then, after concluding the readings - oh, I don't recall, maybe five or six of them - all seven or eight of the Senior High Schoolers stood in a line while their first speaker said, "Of course, this is wrong." With that, they caught my attention. No doubt. I listened very closely to what they went on to explore.

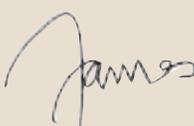
In my opinion, there is indeed a radical freedom involved within Unitarian Universalism. And the kids said so, as well. They'd been watching and listening. We have no creed, no test one must sign on to in order to belong to one of our congregations. And looking out at the kids, I knew they held a variety of opinions: several pagan, a Christian, one Buddhist, a couple of atheists. So, of course, there is a temptation to say I can believe anything I want. But they saw through such an easy conclusion. Instead, the High Schoolers went on to elaborate what this freedom was actually about. They noticed how freedom for us is a good - but not an absolute good. Rather, our freedom is instrumental, it takes us someplace.

They informed their elders that the whole purpose of the enterprise is to grow wise. They implied a couple of us had succeeded - or I'd like to think they were implying that. Whatever, they went on to outline the process: how, while one needs to be free to explore and reflect and consider, one also by entering a Unitarian Universalist congregation has agreed to meet full on others with many thoughts and feelings that are not precisely what we, I, the other person, might think or feel. Becoming a UU is not unlike being a potato thrown into a pot with a bunch of other potatoes. By rubbing up against each other, by bumping and colliding and sliding, rough spots are polished away, and something rather beautiful is revealed.

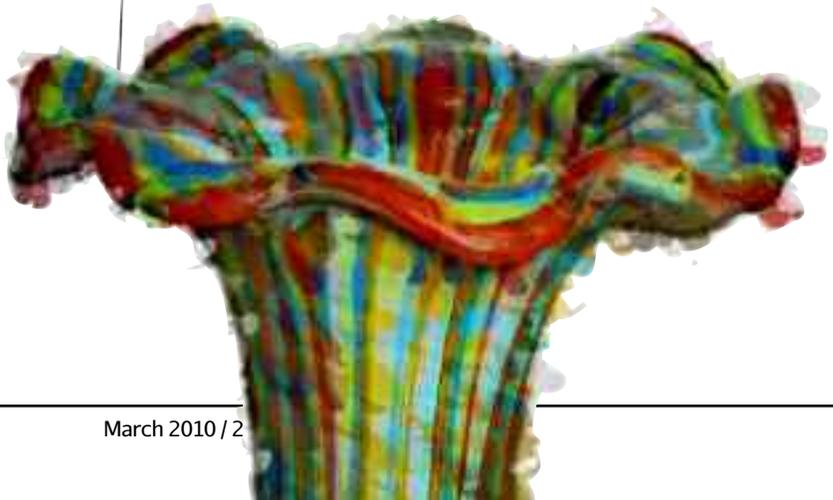
Of course, we come here believing what we will. And then through our spiritual practice of presence to ourselves and to each other, and by not turning away, we come to find we believe, not what we wish, but what we must.

Now, some fifteen years later, I find myself thinking about the wisdom of our youth. And, once again, I find myself grateful for the mysterious circumstances that first led me to wander into a Unitarian Universalist congregation many years ago, and to keep on coming back, rubbing up, bumping and colliding, sliding and gradually revealing something about my life that I behold in wonder.

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

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.

As we look forward to the returning light and the renewed energy that comes with spring, we'd like to share the accomplishments of the winter months and upcoming plans for the RE program.

Sandwich Brigade

Each Sunday in the month of February, students in our RE program made 200 sandwiches and packed them with a snack and a juice for full lunches that were delivered to Crossroads Rhode Island - 800 lunches in total! February 7 was a great kick-off. Our Coming of Age class, and their mentors, made the sandwiches and lunches in the parlor; we also had the pleasure of attending a presentation by Betty Johnson Simons, a member of our congregation and part of the staff at Crossroads. She shared the challenges and success stories of Crossroads RI, helping us all to better understand the enormous contributions they make to our community.

Thanks are extended to all who helped with this effort: Roberta Groch, coordinator; Dana Guterman and Kate Guilbault, RE assistants; Amy Webb, Food Share Pantry; Betty Johnson Simons, Crossroads RI; RE parents who purchased supplies and delivered lunches; and the Social Justice Ministry. Many thanks also for all the juice box donations from our congregation, and a special thanks to Kathy Ahlquist and the kindergarten class for making cookies to put in the lunches - a very special treat for Valentines Day!

Curriculum Review

Upcoming in March, the RE Committee will meet with teachers to review curricula, gather feedback, and plan ahead for the coming church year. This process will begin with a Teacher Bagel Breakfast before service on Sunday, March 7, and will continue through the month. The core of our program is the wonderful work of our volunteer teachers. Their input into the review process is essential and highly valued.

Guest at Your Table Collection Results

The congregation contributed over \$870 to this year's Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Guest at Your Table project. Thank you to all who generously gave and to the eighth-grade Coming of Age class and their mentors for facilitating this effort.

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

Pasta Supper a Great Success!

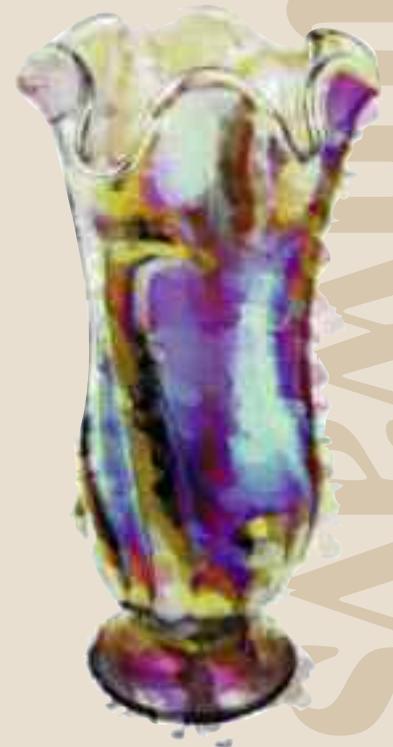
Bravo to the 2010 Coming of Age class for hosting a most successful Pasta Supper fundraiser! The event raised \$1,280, to go toward the COA Heritage Trip to UUA headquarters in Boston. The dinner was the creation of chefs Michael and April O'Malley, served by our charming COA wait staff. The ever-popular raffle was highlighted by a remarkable bottle of wine from an anonymous donor. There was entertainment throughout the evening by musicians Phil Edmonds, Kate Katzberg, Bob Asprinio, and Joe Grady, with special performances by our COA class, a first for this event!

Many thanks to the musicians, parents, teachers, mentors, and friends of COA who made this event such a warm and delightful evening. Special thanks to our parent coordinators, Susan and Peter Verrecchia. The students and teachers are looking forward to their trip and will be off to Boston March 12 and 13.



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 Verrecchia (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)



Treasurer's Note

Despite stressful times, we can all take heart with the pace at which our congregation is providing financial support. As of January 31, support was coming in faster than it did last year. We have identical total budgets for this fiscal year and last, but pledge income so far this year stands at 69 percent of total pledges due, while last year at this time, pledge income was 62 percent of the budget. All in all, total income from everything excluding the endowment pledges, new members, donations, Sunday cash collections, the auction, planned giving, and the bookstore - is 69 percent of the budget versus 65 percent last year at this time.

On the endowment side, things are not so rosy. We will continue to face the challenge of declining support from the endowment funds, the result of the drop in the financial markets. That this decline will continue for some time to come, despite marked improvement in those markets, is the result of the "smoothing" process that we, and many other nonprofits, use. That is, to avoid wild jumps up and down in our endowment income, we take the average endowment value over a three-year period. The base for our endowment support is the 12 quarters ending March 31, 2010. We don't have the final figure, but it's clear that support will be about \$9,000 less in fiscal 2010-2011 than it was in fiscal 2009-2010.

It may well be possible that the generosity of members and friends will fill that gap. We all have a remarkable example of generosity in the anonymous donation of \$20,000 for new lighting for the Meeting House. I continue to be in awe.

- Tony Allen, Treasurer



Sight Lines

First Unitarian has many, many people volunteering countless hours to keep us the bustling, exciting place that we are. We teach, sing, feed the hungry, care for our members in need, serve our local and global community, and on and on and on. I am so thankful for the huge gift of time devoted to our community, and thank all of you!

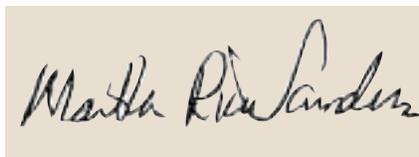
I am writing this column to highlight a few individuals who are making a huge difference this year in an area that I, for one, took for granted until I joined the Prudential Committee two years ago. They are the task force charged by the PruComm to create and oversee a plan to make our buildings more energy efficient - David Brown, Art Lusignan, Tony Allen (our treasurer), and Posey Kooris (our church administrator).

As you read in last month's newsletter, the task force outlined three phases to move us toward having "greener" (more energy-efficient) buildings. David Brown has spent countless hours over the past year organizing and overseeing Phase I. Due to his organizational efforts and passion for using energy efficiently, we now have a far less leaky Parish House. If you didn't see last month's article, please go back and read it for the details (it's on our website at www.firstunitarianprov.org/news/newsletters.shtml).

Now we are in Phase II: replacing the furnace that heats the old Parish House (which includes the downstairs Parlors and the Auditorium) as well as the system that distributes the heat throughout those spaces. Art Lusignan has taken the helm for this project and is spending many, many hours working to get the most efficient system designed for us. The current furnace dates from the 1940s, so this is a huge undertaking whose results will last well into this century. This phase may also include asbestos abatement, which would make it more costly.

Tony Allen has helped with investigating possible ways to finance this project. And nothing of any importance about the buildings ever happens without hours of expert work and oversight by Posey Kooris. They are looking into ways to take advantage of energy rebates to reduce the overall cost to the church.

The PruComm's goal is to have all the pieces in place, including finances, to complete the Phase II work over the coming summer. To that end, we hope to have a motion for your approval ready for our April annual meeting. Stay tuned!



Martha Rice Sanders, President
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

We Welcome Our New Members!

With great joy, chalice pins, and jumbo cookies, the congregation officially welcomed these new members during the service on January 24: Vikki Bristlin-Lax, Kathy Eller, Susan Farady, Janette Greenwood, Roger Carl Johanson, Jon Lax, Christine Olley, Jules Olley, Liz Rennick, and Michael Rennick.

Get to know them - you'll learn who's the oceanographer, the artist, the professor, the bass singer, the web designer, the blushing bride-to-be, and more!

To get in touch with me about membership, greeting, or any other thing, call (401.421.7970) or email (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

- Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator





Community Life and Heritage

The March All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 19 (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 Meeting House: "Ethical Eating: Food Choices from Farm to Table"

Main Speaker: Public Health Advocate Polly Walker, MD, MPH, Research Associate, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

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 a public health advocate and an expert on these matters; she is also a member of our congregation and a very engaging speaker. We have also invited Nancy Starziano, General Manager of Eastside Marketplace, and Robert and Marie Pray, proprietors of Oakdale Farm in Seekonk, to provide local perspectives. This program is co-sponsored by the World Affairs Committee.

To reserve your space, please fill out the sign-up form in the Meeting House Times, see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour, or call the church office (401.421.7970). Childcare for infants and young children under 10 will be available if requested in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748) to sign up.

Food Pantry donation for the month of March is tomato products such as meat and vegetarian sauces or diced tomatoes (whole tomatoes are not popular). Remember - no glass, please!

March Saturday Social Suppers

Saturday, March 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:

Host: Elsie Buffum
145 New Meadow Road
Barrington, Rhode Island

In the West Bay:

Hosts: Bob and Joanne Schacht
250 Kirby Avenue
Warwick, Rhode Island

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.

Start Making Plans for a UU Summer!

Sunday, March 28 at 12:15p

Janet Noble will host this informational meeting to offer firsthand, up-to-date information on three UUA-affiliated vacation sites in New England: Ferry Beach in Maine, Star Island off the coast of New Hampshire, and Rowe Camp in western Massachusetts. These camps each have their distinct differences, but all offer individuals, families, children, teens, singles, men, woman, and gay people a variety of experiences. Many First Unitarians have spent time at these sites, and several will offer personal experiences and an overview of each of the sites.



Registration for the UUA camps usually begins in early spring, and spaces fill up fast - so now is the time to begin planning.

This session will also explore the possibility of establishing a Ferry Beach Weekend for First Unitarian in the spring or fall. Many churches have been having annual Ferry Beach weekends for years.

For more information, contact: Janet Noble (401.732.0256 or bamajan2002@yahoo.com)

Saturday Night Socials Schedule

Saturday potlucks are scheduled for April 24 (RTT), May 29, June 26, 2010

Would you like to host a social? We are seeking two more hosts to round out our spring schedule. Hosts provide space to accommodate 14 or more (buffet-style), water to drink, and tea or decaf after the meal - and enjoy the company of a diverse group of absolutely wonderful people.

To find out more, contact: Carol Adams (401.433.4365 or carol.adams6@cox.net)

April All-Parish Supper

Friday, April 9

Program: The Annual First Unitarian Storytellers' Festival

This promises to be a wonderful evening of storytelling featuring Jeanne Bent, Len Cabral, and Marilyn Murphy Meardon -all celebrated Rhode Island storytellers who are members of our parish community and who have captivated us in the past with their fascinating tales. This program is designed to appeal to all ages: young school-age children, older adults who are young in spirit, and anyone in between. We are making a special effort to make this evening's program child-friendly, so bring the whole family!

Winter Storm Cancellations

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.

Welcome, Access, and Parking

Parking spaces for visitors and the handicapped are part of what makes First Unitarian a warm, welcoming church. Please leave the spaces marked off for Visitor Parking and Handicapped Parking for those who need them. There are two of each in the church parking lot, and more handicapped spaces are on Benevolent Street. When using any of the handicapped parking spaces, be sure to display your handicapped placard to indicate your eligibility for the parking spot. Thanks for your continued cooperation,

-The Membership Committee

Membership Connections

We're on Facebook!

A few Sundays ago, I took a field trip to meet the Membership Coordinator at First Parish in Brookline. Seeing the differences and similarities (i.e., good ideas to swipe) between our churches gave me a lot to think about and act on. Coming out of this visit will be small tweaks, new materials, and more opportunities for new members to connect. There may also be an occasional baked potato bar. Speak up if you'd like to be part of something like that!

One easy way to connect, endorsed not just by me but also by James, is Facebook. So, now you can become a fan of our church. Search on Facebook for the "First Unitarian Providence" page and join us! So far we have seen commentary on coffee, dogs, art, Membership Coordinator snafus, sermons, and suppers. The more we use it, and the more of us who use it, the better it will be. If you are unsure of how to sign up for Facebook and are interested, please let me know. I can help you. It's quick and painless.

A recently brainstormed list of quick and painless ways for new members to connect, created by the Membership Committee, made me realize how many of these simple but enriching things all of us should try. The list included everything from ushering to attending a Parish or Social supper to ringing the bell on a Sunday morning. Earlier this year, Rebecca Alberg took me up, up, up into the bell tower so I could experience the tour she so often gives to newcomers. Holding that scratchy rope, feeling the icy air, and marveling at the view over Benefit Street gave me a fresh perspective and a new connection to the church.

What will you do to connect this month? Come by Newcomer's Café during Coffee Hour to talk about it, or post your ideas on the church's Facebook page.

Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator
(401.421.7970) ormem@firstunitarianprov.org.

Hats Off

To John Dooley for custom-crafting our fine new name tag holder . . . and to Rebecca Alberg for her eagle eye - she found cases of clip-on name tags for a rock-bottom price and saved the church oodles of money.



Community Life and Heritage

Art in the Atrium

Current show: February 23-March 14

A solo exhibit by Irene Allen. Irene's paintings are part of her rock collection featuring views of rocks mostly in and around water. She also includes some images inspired by the Sunday morning services plus some abstract pieces. All of her paintings are from memories and pictures in her head rather than taken directly from nature. Irene says these paintings "are influenced by my love of bright colors, simple solid shapes, and energetic motion."

Upcoming show: March 15-April 4

Works by a small group of students from the Carter School of Meeting Street. Karen Rameaka, Head of the Carter School, was one of the first people to have shown interest about the space in the Atrium for an exhibit by her high school students. Adrian Watts-Driscoll, their art teacher, will choose works on painted canvases made by students with disabilities, ages 10 to 21.

For art submissions, contact Chiara R. Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net). The two principal rules 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.

The Women's Alliance March Meeting

Monday, March 1

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

This month's program features Tony Estrella, Artistic Director at the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre in Pawtucket. Tony's topic will be "Art and Dissent in Tom Stoppard's *Rock and Roll*," the current offering at the Gamm.

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

Easter Dessert Offerings from the Alliance

It is again time to order a delicious dessert for your Easter dinner. There are three new desserts never before offered here, along with two old favorites; and two (marked *) are gluten-free. Each will be freshly made by the Alliance and can be picked up after church on Easter Sunday, April 4. You can order your dessert at the Alliance table in the Atrium any Sunday through March 28.

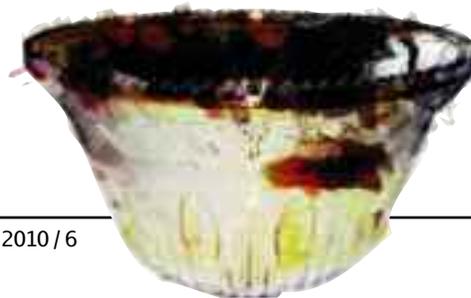
Rustic Apple Pie - Filled with over three pounds of apples, this rustic, freeform pie is everything an apple pie should be, not too sweet and full of apple flavor. It will be baked Sunday morning so it will be very fresh. Serves 8-10 (\$18)

Pear and Almond Tart - Poached pears are nestled into a frangipane layer, making this tart a little something different to offer to your guests. Serves 8-10 (\$18)

***Triple-Chocolate Mousse Cake** - Imagine three layers of delicious chocolate: a dense layer of flourless chocolate cake covered by a lighter chocolate layer of mousse topped by a layer of white chocolate mousse. Mmmmm! Serves 10-12 (\$25)

Orange Mimosa Cake - This dome-shaped sponge cake, moistened by an orange syrup and frosted with an orange butter-cream frosting, is both a visual and taste delight. Serves 12-16 (\$25)

***Lemon Panna Cotta with Raspberry Sauce** - These delicious little "cooked creams" are lightly lemonged and served with a raspberry sauce. 8 pieces (\$20), 6 (\$16), 4 (\$12)





Spiritual Development

The First Unitarian Community Orchestra/Band Returns! 🎵

Rehearsals: Sundays, March 7 and 14 after Coffee Hour

Performance: Sunday, March 21 during the service

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

We will gather for rehearsals for about an hour and a half, where we will play through some hymns and a few other well-known pieces. Then, we will play during the March 21 Sunday morning church service, perhaps as a prelude and maybe along with a hymn.

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

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

Reiki Level I Training to Support First Unitarian Food Pantry

🕒 *Saturday March 27, 10:00a-4:30p*

Reiki Master Teacher and First Unitarian member Maureen Gordon-Johanson will offer a Reiki level I training, focusing on self-healing, all proceeds to benefit the First Unitarian Food Pantry. Reiki is a time-honored healing method that produces beneficial physiological changes, verified by NIH-funded scientific research. Reiki is offered by many hospitals for pain management and stress reduction.

Class limit: 6 students. Both men and women are invited - no experience necessary. A Reiki level II training will be offered in May.

Registration is required. Cost: \$90

Contact: Maureen Gordon-Johanson (401.751.2001 or eastsidewellness@comcast.net) or see Maureen in the Atrium during Coffee Hour on March 14 for any questions or to register.



The Mark of Zorro: A Movie Classic with Live Improvised Renaissance Music by Hesperus!

🕒 *Sunday, March 28, 3:30p in the Auditorium*

Get out your hankies and prepare to be enchanted! You won't find a more entertaining event than the screening of this silent film classic, accompanied by the award-winning early music ensemble Hesperus, featuring Tina Chancey, early violin, viola da gamba; and Grant Herreid, early guitar, lute, tenor recorder.

This concert is a showing of Douglas Fairbanks' first swashbuckler, the 1920 film *Mark of Zorro*, with a live score of improvised Spanish renaissance dances: the folia, canarios, jacara, romanasca, and others popular in colonial California where the film was set.

Sponsored by the Music Committee. Discounted tickets will be on sale in the Atrium Sundays, March 21 and 28.

🌿 Worship Associates Training Program

The Worship Committee is seeking a few interested members of the congregation to serve occasionally at Sunday morning services as Worship Associates. Ideally, participants should have public speaking ability and experience and a strong interest in worship. They should also be available for a half-day training program on a Saturday.

Contact: Marilyn Eanet (401.433.1299) or Jim Estey (401.351.1748)

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, March 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 (nimuix@cox.net)



UUMeN

ⓧ *Second Sunday, March 14, 7:00-9:00p*

Topic: Men and Intimacy

Is it true that men are less willing to engage in or create intimacy in a relationship than women? What does intimacy entail? How do you make it happen? What makes it scary? By extension, are men less intimate (honest and self-examining) with themselves than women are? What are the rewards of working to create intimacy in a relationship?

This month's facilitator: Chris Campanile (401.941.1126)

Reimagining Religion

*Second and fourth Tuesdays
March 11 and 25 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, March 21, 7:00-9:00p

ⓧ **Featured film: *Food, Inc.***

The Spiritual Cinema film for March will follow along with the theme of the Parish Supper topic, "Ethical Eating." We do it three times a day - or more. What are the health and social justice implications of eating? Watch the trailer of *Food, Inc.* at www.foodincmovie.com.

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



Spiritual Development

Natural Wisdom and Compassion Meditation ⓧ

A Four-Session Workshop

Wednesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 7:00p-8:15p

The Foundation for Active Compassion (FAC) offers guided meditations of love, wisdom, and compassion from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, adapted for people from all backgrounds. Its mission is to empower people with profound, accessible spiritual practices which support their individual and collective work to become better people and to make a better world.

FAC provides workshops, teachings, and guided meditations on the liberating wisdom of simplicity, openness, and presence beyond self-clinging, supporting:

- ▶ Social Service Workers and All Caregivers to cultivate a state of compassionate communion and simple, natural presence for more effectiveness and equanimity in their work with and care for others.
- ▶ Social Justice Activists to return to their deepest sources of motivation, energy and joy, so they can embody the spirit of service that inspires others.
- ▶ Dharma Students to cut through barriers and obscurations to uncover the spirit of enlightenment that greets the world with reverence and joy.

This meditation series will be led by Ken Bent, an FAC Meditation Teacher who has a long affiliation with First Unitarian..

To register for this workshop, contact Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

For more information on FAC, visit: www.foundationforactivecompassion.org

Womensphere Spring Gathering

ⓧ *Saturday, March 27, 2010, from 9:30am through 3:00pm*

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Falmouth, 840 Sandwich Road, Falmouth, MA

Join Unitarian Universalist women from southeastern New England at a Day for Women with Dharma Teacher Joanne Friday, Buddhist teacher in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. The day's theme will be "Listening as a Spiritual Practice, Hearing with the Heart." Womensphere organizes sacred circle gatherings for women of the Ballou Channing District of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Registration is required; deadline to register: Friday, March 19.

Fee: \$20 includes registration and lunch; scholarships are available.

Contact: dschmader@cox.net

District Spring Conference To Be Held at First Unitarian

ⓧ *Saturday, April 24*

This year's spring gathering of the churches of the Ballou Channing District will offer a far-reaching and though-provoking exploration of a number of demographic and religious-practice trends that will affect how churches, including Unitarian Universalist congregations, approach worship, religious education, and outreach in the coming decade. Participants will be able to examine these trends and consider possible responses by our congregations during an extended and creative morning worship service and five workshops.

Our own Rev. James Ford will provide an overview of the trends; the UUA's Director of Worship and Music Resources, Rev. Eric Wikstrom, will discuss worship and spiritual expression; and Thomas Jefferson District Director of Faith Development, Rev. Sue Sinnamon, will be the theme presenter. Watch for more details about the program and registration in the next few weeks.

The Local Arrangements Task Force (Morgan Ivens, Gail Brule, Marilyn Eanet, and Bill Twaddell) is looking for volunteers to help with various logistics on the day of the conference. Just a couple of hours of your time on that Saturday will help us to be a warm, friendly, and efficient host church.

Contact: Morgan Ivens (morgan_iven-duran@brown.edu); Gail Brule (401.333.6620), Marilyn Eanet (401.433.1299 or meanet@cox.net), or Bill Twaddell (401.274.0456)

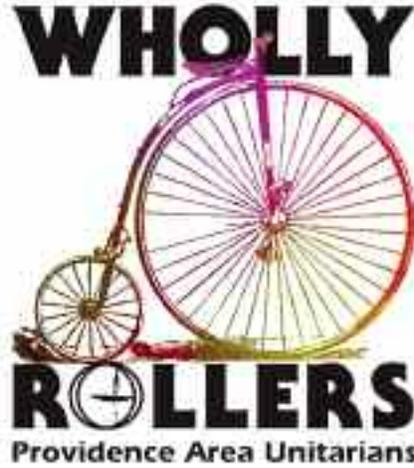


Social Justice

The Return of the Wholly Rollers

Sunday, March 14
at 12:15p

Thinking about dragging that bicycle out of the garage and dusting it off? Or have you been riding recently and would like to ride more if you could find some nice people to ride with? Are you already an avid rider, or a cycle psycho? However much you bike or want to bike, consider the Wholly Rollers. We are a loosely knit bike club centered at First Unitarian. Beginning in late March, we meet each weekend for rides. Our main purpose is to have fun. Along the way, we provide information and support about the health benefits of biking, about bicycle commuting, safety and maintenance, and about bicycle related laws. In addition, some of our members participate in the MS 25 and MS 150, yearly charity bicycle events hosted by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. For information about the MS bicycle events, visit: <http://bikerir.nationalmssociety.org/>



Come to our kick-off meeting on March 14 to find out more!

Contact: Paul Hossfield (410-338-3087 or aus.robustus@gmail.com)

March Is Tomato Products Month at Our Community Food Pantry

Tomato products, such as meat and vegetarian sauces or diced tomatoes or paste, are the featured donation food this month (please note that whole tomatoes are not a popular item with our clients). Currently less than 1 percent of the food we distribute each month 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. Please pick up a few extra tomato products when you visit your supermarket and deposit them in the marked barrels in the Atrium. And remember - for safety's sake, no glass containers!

Distribution Day

Our next distribution day is Monday, March 15. Many volunteers are needed to make sure that all phases of our operation run smoothly. You can sign up for any (or all!) of the following tasks:

- 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)

To make larger food donations, contact Amy Webb (amy.webb7@verizon.net)

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. Our tree will bloom until the beginning of spring (March 21), longer if the weather necessitates an extended warming season.

Habitat for Humanity Work Day

Saturday, March 20

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

For information on Providence Habitat, visit: www.habitatprov.org

To sign up, contact Peter Van Erp

(401.351.4881 or petervanerp@cox.net)



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)

Support Camp Street Ministries

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



Welcoming Congregation News

The Welcoming Congregation Committee sponsored a Spiritual Cinema movie night last month. We had a great time, and we'll be enjoying another in April. We're also proud of a monthly ad for First Unitarian in Options, the news magazine of the Rhode Island BGLT community. Thank you to all members and friends who have worked to tell the community about First Unitarian!

Standing on the Side of Love

As part of our work for social justice for all, the Welcoming Congregation Committee collected signatures in support of marriage equality. More than 50 members and friends signed cards that we'll return to Marriage Equality Rhode Island. MERI will send them to our state senators and representatives, urging them to vote for full human and civil rights for BGLT people. Thank you to all who stepped up and signed. It's not too late to sign find Jan Seymour-Ford at Coffee Hour.

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).



Social Justice

Our Monthly Community Collections

One Sunday a month, First Unitarian donates its Sunday offering to a charitable cause. Over the several years we have been doing this, we have attempted to better define the process. There is now a policy in place for Community Collections. The new policy has opened up the process considerably, so that any member of the church may "apply" to have a Community Collection for a program sponsored by our church or an organization in which the church member is actively involved.

Beginning in April, the Community Collection Committee (consisting of Marida Hollis, Sharon Kernan, and Julie Meyers - all members of the Social Justice Ministry, which is responsible for organizing the Community Collections) will entertain proposals from church members for Community Collections for the 2010-2011 church year. The deadline for submitting the proposals will be the end of May. A very simple proposal form will need to be completed. Selections will be made by the end of the church year; the committee will try to balance local and global projects.

Since September 2009, our special offerings have gone to:

September 13: First Unitarian Church Food Pantry \$1,638

October 25: UUA Association Sunday \$692

November 22: Transylvania Partner Church \$1,326

December 20: slated for the Village Bank; service canceled due to snow

January 17: UUSC/Haiti Earthquake Relief \$4,221

February 7: Crossroads RI \$1,789

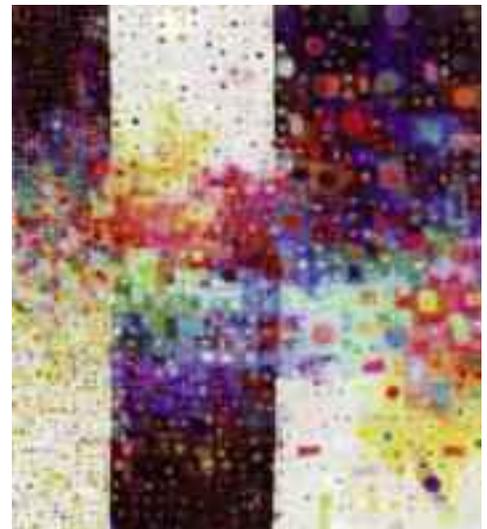
The March 21 offering will be for Community MusicWorks.

Questions? Suggestions? Contact: Marida Hollos (marida_hollos@brown.edu), Sharon Kernan (smkernan@cox.net) or Julie Meyers (kelmey@cox.net)

Calling All Artists and Quilters for Peace

This year the Peace Flag Project (PFP) and the Peace Art Partnership are sponsoring a major art exhibit to promote peace and to expand awareness of the UN International Day of Peace, celebrated every September 21. PFP's Ginny Fox will be creating an event in downtown Providence as she has done for the last six years. Many of you have attended and/or volunteered at this event.

First Unitarian will be part of a month-long community-wide venture, anchored by a major exhibit at the downtown URI Gallery from September 1 to 30. We will be having an exhibit of quilts about peace in our Atrium all that month. I'm sure there are wonderful quilters in our congregation who would like to be part of this peace exhibit. This is an inspiring way for our congregation to participate in an important peace event in Providence. Quilters and artists, we really want to hear from you!



For information about the First Unitarian quilt exhibit, contact: Ginny Fox (info@thepeaceflagproject.org or (401.453.8281 or the curator for our Atrium Gallery, Chiara Romano Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

If you are interested in the peace art exhibit at the URI Gallery, contact the gallery director, Steven Pennell, (401.277.5206 or spennell@etal.uri.edu).

March 2010

"Everything being a constant carnival, there is no carnival left." Victor Hugo

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 Meditation Workshop 7:00p	<u>4</u> Deacons 6:00p Gaia's Hearth 7:00p Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>7</u> RE Teacher Breakfast 9:30a Sunday Service 10:30a Mentor/Mentee 12:00p UU Band 12:00p BUUUG 7:00p	<u>8</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>9</u> Lay Ministry 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>10</u> Meditation Workshop 7:00p	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>14</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Worship Committee 11:45a Membership 12:00p UU Band 12:00p Wholly Rollers 12:15p BUUUG 7:00p UUMen 7:00p	<u>15</u> Food Pantry 4:00p Fellowship 6:30p Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p Nominating Committee 7:00p	<u>16</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>17</u> RE Committee 6:00p Meditation Workshop 7:00p	<u>18</u> Stewardship Committee 7:00p	<u>19</u> Parish Supper 5:45p	<u>20</u>
<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> Meditation Workshop 7:00p	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> Saturday Social Suppers
<u>28</u> Sunday Service 10:30a UU Summer Planning 12:15p Museum Concerts 3:30-5:00p BUUUG 7:00p	<u>29</u> Benevolent St. Zendo 7:00p	<u>30</u> Knitters 7:00p	<u>31</u> Executive Committee 7:00p			

It's Month

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



We are a
Welcoming Congregation.

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Respecting the Past Revitalizing the Present Investing in the Future

March is the month in which we renew our commitments to our spiritual community, the First Unitarian Church. This year, there are three reasons why it is important that many more people join those who have in recent years begun pledging 2 percent or 3 percent (or more) of our annual income.

1. The men and women who worshiped here in the past left a legacy that lives on in the buildings, the history, and the endowment of which we are stewards today. For many years, we have used those endowment funds to meet routine operating costs. To respect the endowment donors' intentions, we need to reserve the majority of the endowment for larger goals, particularly the long-term preservation of our historic buildings.
2. Our reliance on gifts from the past has been undermined by the realities of today's economy. For the next several years at least, the return on our endowment will be significantly decreased. It is up to us to ensure the fiscal stability that will allow us to revitalize and expand our programs for adults and children and our service to the larger community.
3. What we do today becomes the legacy for those who will come after us. Our commitments, our work, our caring, our generosity widens our reach into the world, enriches the spirit within the congregation, and preserves the legacy of our predecessors to ensure that First Unitarian will sustain itself far into the future.

When we raise our pledges this year, we are respecting the vision and generosity of our past, we are owning and revitalizing the promises of our church in the present, and we are investing in the future of this beloved community.

When you are asked to make your financial commitment for the next church year, please give some thought to these reasons for being as generous as you can.

-The Stewardship Committee

John Simmonds, chair; Neil Bartholomew, Susan Fisher, Rev. James Ford, Herb Fried, Graham Nye, Cy O'Neil