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SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 6 **The Wholly Family - An Intergenerational Service**
10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Cathy Seggel, DRE, and First Unitarian Families**
 Come celebrate the diversity of our First Unitarian families - from single people to single parents to a man and a woman with or without children to same sex couples to interracial families - all joined together in the fabric of our shared lives. Hear our stories, laugh and cry with our community. An annual event not to be missed.

Origins (birth-2 years) and Play Circle (2-3 years) rooms are open.

This Sunday's Community Collection will be donated to Crossroads RI (see page 3).

Sunday, February 13 **Is Love All You Need?**
10:30a **Rev. Ken Read-Brown**
 The Beatles famously sang that love is all you need. But are there companion virtues that make it more likely we can transform the sentiment of love into the reality of loving lives, both personally and politically?

Rev. Ken Read-Brown has been minister of the First Parish (UU) Church (known as the Old Ship Church) in Hingham, Massachusetts, since 1987. A graduate of Haverford College and the Starr King School for the Ministry, he lives in Hingham with his wife, Susan; they have three grown children.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, February 20 **Knit One, Purl Two: A Meditation on Lay Ministry**
10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**
 James stands in awe of those who knit. People take some yarn and a couple of sticks and make useful and beautiful things. (He may even show us socks that his wife, Jan, has made for him.) James will reflect on knitting as a metaphor for ministry and, particularly, for our congregation's Lay Ministers. We will acknowledge those of our Lay Ministers who have stepped down as well as the newest members of this critical ministry within our community.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

After Coffee Hour, the First Unitarian knitters group will attempt to teach James to move from talking to acting. Come and see if they can actually teach him the rudiments of this ancient art!

Sunday, February 27 **The Royal Road to Romance:
A Meditation on the Way of Pilgrimage**
10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**
 When James was young, one of his favorite books was *The Royal Road to Romance*, a travel adventure book written by Richard Halliburton in 1925. It was filled with photographs of strange and mysterious and wonderful places, often with spiritual significance. And James has never forgotten it, nor the taste of joy in life that it called for. January 9 was Halliburton's one hundred and eleventh birthday, and James wants to celebrate and, perhaps, offer a criticism of spiritual tourism. (This service, originally scheduled for January 9, was delayed due to the terrible events in Tucson last month.)

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 6 **The Widow's Mite**
10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**
 James will explore the parable of the widow's mite and what the idea of a generous heart means in our time and place.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

This Sunday's Community Collection will be donated to Community MusicWorks.

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

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

ALL - PARISH EVENTS

All-Parish Supper
 Friday, February 11

**Congregational Conversation
 on the Five-Year Plan**
 Sunday, February 27

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S T A F F

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
 Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
 Frederick Jodry, Music Director
 Posey Kooris, Administrator
 Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
 Jenn Nardone, Acting 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

DEACONS' CORNER

Happy Valentines Day! Speaking of Valentine's Day is a natural lead-in to marriage equality. This may be the year marriage equality comes to Rhode Island. If the congregation has voted to poll the membership on whether we should publicly endorse the bill now before the state legislature, we ask you to participate by casting your vote.

The Deacons will be assisting in the Path to Membership class on Saturday morning, February 12. As always, we will be providing food, hospitality, and conversation for those who will gather to learn more about the church and Unitarian Universalism and to decide if they are ready to become members of First Unitarian.

We have been working to finish our congregational calls in January, so if you haven't heard from one us yet, you will.

A quick reminder for those who receive this newsletter by January 30, the Deacons and Rev. James Ford will be leading a late afternoon (4:00p) Communion Service with special music provided by Philip and Jacqueline Wheelock. We hope to see you then.

- Robert O. Jones, Janet Downing Taylor, Senior Deacons;
- Judy Bowden, Mary Finger,
- David Bridgehouse, Russell Gifford,
- Mary Frappier, David Spremulli,
- Ruth Arellana, Jacqui Nye



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to

- Ellen Anderson and her family on the death of Ellen's mother;
- Sarah Sasse and her family on the death of Sarah's mother;
- Pam Steager and her family on the death of Pam's father;
- The family and friends of former member Carolyn Bray, who died on January 18.

Healing thoughts to Rev. Neil Bakker, who is rehabilitating at Bethany Home in Providence.



Monkey Mind

Since T. S. Eliot has already claimed April as the cruelest month, I was rummaging around the Web seeking an appropriate way to address February's deep cold, its wintry storms, and the fact there has been a gentle turning toward a yet-distant summer. These days, tWeb wandering seems pretty much always to take me to Wikipedia.

There I learned the Anglo-Saxons called this mud month and cabbage month . . . which seemed appropriate enough, at least the mud thing. But I also learned the Finns called it the month of pearls for the way snow melts on branches creating those lovely ice pearls, some of which I saw today as I drove into the office. So, mud and pearls.

I guess it is often just a question of how one takes it.

Well, not always. Adjusting our attitudes does not change some facts. We can't wish away what has happened. Nor will thinking pleasant thoughts fill an empty belly.

But there is something magic, an expanding of the range of possibilities, that happens when we do open our hearts to wonder. And maybe this is a good time to notice that. In the depths of the mud month, we can once in a while look out and - my goodness! - there are ice pearls!

For me, it is important that there be a next step. Open our hearts to possibility . . . and then *take* one of those possibilities. And so let me ask a question: What would that step be for you, here at the dawn of the month of mud and pearls?

Having trouble? Look to your inner eleven-year-old. That ancient child will know what to do.

And, then, the question again. Where does that opening to wonder take you?

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

The Lay Ministry and Care Crew Are Ready To Lend a Hand

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

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

The on-call Lay Minister for February is Martha Manno. Referrals or calls to the church will be passed on to Martha, who will call upon Care Crew Volunteers.

If you are interested in helping with the work of the Lay Ministry, consider volunteering for the Care Crew. Speak with any of the Lay Ministers for more information.

-The Lay Ministry Team: Andy Barrett, George Beshers, Mary Frappier, Martha Manno, Kate Menard, Rick Richards, Bill Twaddell





Spiritual Pathways

Be My Valentine?

I have often thought of Valentine's Day as "Friendship Day." Perhaps that started when I began comforting friends who had no sweetheart. Or maybe it stemmed from the notion that the original, loving intention of that celebration had become a "Hallmark Holiday." Regardless, mid-February is a fine time to tend to relationships of all sorts and to nurture loving kindness.

This year, the national Standing on the Side of Love folks have reimagined February 14 as a holiday for love and acceptance for everyone. There will be celebrations of unsung heroes who support the most marginalized and vulnerable in our society. What a good moment to lift up stories of people we know - teachers, nurses, friends, and family - who are tuned in to helping and nurturing others.

I hope that the RE Committee, staff, and our volunteer teachers feel loved as they tend to the faith development of our children and youth. This month, I am grateful for the energy and enthusiasm that warms us as we greet the returning light. Here is some what they have been doing:

- The RE Committee and Cathy Seggel are focused on the annual cycle of goal setting and curriculum and program review. They are also beginning a review of attendance and enrollment.
- Preschoolers made their "field trip" to our Chapel space in early January and are now weekly worshippers.
- The kindergartners have been helping the Knitting for a Better World group make hats for our Mitten Tree and they participated in the dedication early in January (see below).
- The sixth/seventh-grade Neighboring Faiths group will be visiting the Providence Zen Center.
- The Coming of Age community will glow having completed the annual Pasta Supper at the end of January.
- The fourth grade is sponsoring a juice-box drive in support of Crossroads Sandwich Brigade.
- The Senior High group will have a party and a sleepover, connecting with other UU youth.

Take good care,

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



Our kindergarten class helps decorate the First Unitarian Mitten Tree during the blessing of the tree on January 2.



UU Service Committee Guest at Your Table Drive



Thank you to all who contributed to this annual social justice effort this year. The eighth-graders and their mentors are counting the donations in the many boxes that were returned. The final results will be reported in early February. Stay tuned.

February Means Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade at First Unitarian

Each February, our Sunday School participates in the Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade, preparing 100 sandwiches on each Sunday this month. The mission of Crossroads is to assist the homeless and disconnected on their journey toward a better quality of life through the provision of essential life services, advocacy, and referral.

The Sandwich Brigade is a collaborative effort between our Spiritual Development and Social Justice ministries. This year, our sixth/seventh-graders, eighth-graders, senior high youth, and young adults will prepare the sandwiches. Parents from the RE program help purchase supplies.

On Sunday, February 6, a leader from Crossroads RI be with us to talk with the Coming of Age community after church in the Auditorium. All are invited to attend. The Community Collection during the adult worship service on February 6 will be donated to Crossroads RI.



A Special Request for 400 Juice Boxes! 🌱

Drop-off on Sundays during February

Our fourth-grade class is helping to coordinate a Juice Drive as part of fulfilling our commitment to provide 100 drinks per week for the complete lunch bags requested by Crossroads. Juice boxes, small cans, pouches, or small bottled waters are all welcome. Donations can be dropped off in our Atrium Food Pantry Barrel or brought to RE Chapel or classrooms.

May We Dare To Dream Dreams

Each year as winter turns to spring, we conduct our annual pledge drive in order to raise the funds for the following fiscal year. Over the next couple of months, we will be talking with you about support for the financial health of the church in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Our annual operating budget is about \$600,000 per year, and in these challenging times, the Budget Committee and the Prudential Committee have had to make difficult choices to keep our programs going. Nondiscretionary things like salaries, benefits, utilities, etc., are a very large part of our budget, and in recent years we have kept them in line with fiscal reality. We have held our ground.

The theme for our fundraising this year is "May we dare to dream dreams." In order to dream dreams – rather than just hold our ground – we all need to do what we can to increase the operating income of the church for next year.

Most of you have heard us talk about the importance of stepping up into the 2% to 3% range of adjusted gross income in order to keep things going here at First Unitarian. Many of us have done so, and we have greatly increased the number of pledges of \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000, and more in the past few years. If you can't reach the 3% goal, please think about an additional \$10 per week above last year's pledge.

Everything that you can do to help will be greatly appreciated.

*-The Canvass Committee: Jim Barfoot,
Neil Bartholomew (chair), Herb Fried,
Graham Nye*

Treasurer's Report as of December 31, 2010

Non-Endowment Income: Halfway through the fiscal year, income is at 60% of the annual budgeted amount (\$349,777). Proceeds from the November auction offset lower pledge payments. Rental income is about \$200 more than last year at this date.

Endowments: The value of our endowments is \$4,067,477, exceeding \$4 million for the first time since 2008, reflecting a flourishing finish to 2010 in the equity markets.

Expenses: Total expenses through December 31 were \$284,663, 47.4% of our operating budget (\$600,847). This is in line with expectations. With the heating season under way, it'll be interesting to see how much our new heating system helps.

-Tony Allen, Treasurer



Sight Lines

As usual, January was a very busy time of year for the Prudential Committee and the church. The January meeting featured a packed agenda with lots of important discussions and actions.

We are hard at work developing, revising, and codifying our Policy Manual. This month, the PruComm approved four policies: Special Requests for Donations (at Worship Services), Addressing Disruptive Behavior, Spiritual Pathways Faith Development Program, and a Description of Prudential Committee Positions Change. Copies are available from the church office.

James Ford reviewed with us the recent progress on our exciting new Outreach campaign (see back page). He went through the recent inception of the Web site and showed us how often it has been visited so far. The rest of the pieces of the program are being rolled out at this time.

The PruComm discussed at considerable length the condition of the Youth Group Room in the basement of the Parish House. We are committed to making it a safer, more pleasant environment. The committee authorized the purchase of an air-filtration unit and moisture sealing of the walls. There will also be some upkeep expenses associated with this solution.

As part of the five-year plan for the church, we have begun the task of reviewing all the ministries of the church. The RE Committee, in particular, has begun looking at various factors of and possible future directions for their program. A Congregational Conversation on the five-year plan will take place on Sunday, February 27 at noon (see below).

In the Social Justice arena, the PruComm approved a Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating. There will be a discussion on this issue, as well as on a Statement on Immigration as a Moral Issue [*more information on page 8. Ed.*]. We also discussed the Congregational Meeting on marriage equality, slated for January 23.

As we move on through our busy church year, I, as President, continue to be excited, awed, and pleased by all the good things that are going on in our church. The beauty of our Christmas Eve services has carried over into the new year. Recently, the tragedy in Arizona has drawn our community together to work for good in the world, under the inspiring leadership of our minister. We will continue to grow our church and make it the beacon on the hill!

In faith,



Stewart Armstrong, Jr., President
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Long-Range Planning:

A Congregational Conversation on the Five-Year Plan

Sunday, February 27 at 12:00p

Do you ever think about what First Unitarian will look like when we celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of our Meeting House in October of 2016? It seems a long way away, but we are actively planning for that great event now, and for the five years preceding it.

On November 13, 2010, the leaders of our committees and programs gathered in retreat to solidify a planning process begun the year before and to codify a true long-range (five-year) strategic plan. During that process, we looked at things we have accomplished, things we have started to work on, and things we want to start. Since November, the Prudential Committee has tweaked the recommendations from the retreat and has prepared a document for presentation to the congregation.

All members and friends of the church community are encouraged to participate in a Congregational Conversation on February 27 to review and offer feedback on the plan. Hard copies of the plan will be distributed and a discussion of its contents will follow. You can do your homework by getting a copy ahead of time from the church office.

Mark your calendar now to participate in this important step toward the future of our church.



Around the Church

Path to Membership Class

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

Our next Path to Membership class will be led by the Rev. James Ford, along with Cathy Seggel, our Director of Religious Education, and Jennifer Nardone, our Acting Membership Coordinator. If you are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism, the First Unitarian Church of Providence, and seeing if membership is for you, register for this program. You are encouraged to bring your questions and your appetite, as the Deacons will provide a delicious brunch at the end of the class.

If a Saturday does not work for you, a nighttime Path class is being offered this year on Thursday, March 24, 6:00-9:00p. Registration forms will be available on the Membership Bulletin Board in the Parish House, at the Welcome tables, and in the Newcomers' Café.

Please register for the February class by Friday, February 4.

To register: fill out a registration form at church, call the church office at 401.421.7970, or email Jenn Nardone at mem@firstunitarianprov.org. Childcare will be provided for those who request it by February 4.

Making Connections

A key to making connections and getting to know others in this community is to participate in some way, small or large, in the activities or tasks going on here.

This month I would like to highlight the All-Parish Suppers. Jim Estey does a great job lining up a program, but the night of the potluck, it takes many hands to pull it off smoothly so everyone can enjoy the event. This is an easy, active way to help out, usually with kitchen duty, and it lasts the one night!

If you have any questions or want to be introduced to someone involved in any of the programs going on here at First Unitarian, please email me anytime or come talk to me in the Newcomers' Café on Sundays. I look forward to seeing you!

-Jennifer Nardone, Acting Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org)

Visit the Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour in the Paneled Parlor

If you're new to the church, this is a great place to meet people in a less-daunting setting than the regular Coffee Hour and to find out more about First Unitarian. If you've been around for a while, this is a great place to meet people interested in our church and help them get acclimated. Just follow the signs to the Café; coffee, tea, and goodies will be there, too.

Sermons on the Web

Did you get a new video camera for the holidays? Or do you have one that you are not using? The Outreach Committee would like to put video clips of James Ford's sermons on the First Unitarian Web site, but we need to borrow a digital video camera. It doesn't have to be top of the line, but it does need to have external audio capability and a decent zoom ratio. Can you help us out with this?

Contact: John Dooley (dool@cox.net or 401.474.5899)

Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff will decide by 7:00a on Sunday if the church service will be canceled and will notify TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI PBS and radio stations 630WPRO, 920 WHJJ, 1180CCNX news radio, 1290WRNI, LiteRock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM, 95.5WBRU.

No one should make heroic efforts to get to church during a storm. If Providence bans street parking, remember that parking space will be extremely limited.



HATS OFF!

To Charlie Hunt and Chelsea Waite, BUUUG leaders, for being readers at the worship service on December 12.

to everyone who participated in our "Almost Traditional Pageant" on December 20; special thanks to Judy Bowden and Amy Webb (for stage managing), Lincoln Oliver-O'Neil, the Dotzenrod family, Stacey Allen, Nova Drewes, Taylor Boone, Flannery Brown, Rep. Rhoda Perry, Stew Armstrong, Martha Rice Sanders, and Neil Bartholomew.

to Grace Burberry-Martin, Charlie Hunt, Allie Verrecchia, Emma Caruso, Alec Kubas-Meyer, Kate Guilbault, Ben Keller, and Shannon Oliver-O'Neil for being readers at our Christmas Eve services.

and to our January Coffee Hour Providers: Frances Carpenter, Ronelle Halfacre, Susan Fisher, Anne Connor, Steve McCloy, Mary Iacobbo, Kate Menard, Marilyn Van Erp, Deborah Baldiear, Mary Frappier, Marilyn Eanet, Jenny Boone, Lisa Xie, Kate Guilbault, Kristen Coutoulakis, Tom Getz, Edie Warren, Karyne Wilner, Cathy Orloff, Elsie Buffum, Jacqui Nye, Vikki Bristlin, Sally Barker, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.

Coffee Hour Co-op!

Our Sunday after-service Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort. We need providers for February. You can bring in home-baked or store-bought goods - cheese, crackers, and fresh fruit are welcome alternatives. Sign up with Janet Downing Taylor at the Coffee Hour Bakers Table in the First Parlor any Sunday during Coffee Hour.



Find Us on Facebook!

First Unitarian's Facebook page is loaded with updates, useful links, photos, and more! Type "First Unitarian Providence" in the search box and check it out!

March All-Parish Supper ☼

Friday, March 11

Program: "Severe Weather Conditions"

In the past year, we seem to have been experiencing an unending series of severe weather occurrences – high summer temperatures and humidity, flooding, tornadoes, record snowstorms, melting ice caps, and more. What does all this mean? Our featured speaker will be Mark Searles, the popular weatherman at Channel 10. Mark received his graduate degree in atmospheric science and geography from the University of Colorado and has some interesting theories about severe weather conditions. This program is sponsored by the World Affairs Committee. Please plan to join us.

Our Atrium Art Gallery

Artists from our congregation have been exhibiting their finest pieces in the Atrium since 2007. The founding organizer, Sarah McQueen, started the gallery as a way to identify and honor the artists in our congregation and encourage people to get to know each other. Chiara Romano Van Erp took over the project in 2009.

The Gallery offers a variety of exhibits: solo shows, group shows, and children's shows featuring sculptures, photos, paintings, line drawings, and fabric works. Shows are changed monthly.

Each show opens with a reception to meet the artists and explore their works in a quieter setting than the Sunday Coffee Hour.

The February show will feature the photography of Frank Scheel.

Works by the Cerulean Group – of which painter Irene Allen is a member – have been scheduled for May.

Artists interested in showing their work are invited to discuss opportunities for a Gallery display with Chiara.

Contact: Chiara Romano Van Erp
(romano-vanerp-design@cox.net)



Community Life

February All-Parish Supper ☼

Friday, February 11

Everyone – young and old and in between, and especially newcomers – is welcome at the All-Parish Supper and the program following. Reservations are strongly requested.

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

6:30p Potluck Dinner: Bring a dish to share that serves at least eight people.

8:00p Program in the Meeting House: "The Life and Music of Clara and Robert Schuman"

Join us for a special midwinter soirée and recital presented by the talented and accomplished Aurea Ensemble and guest artists, featuring the life and music of Romantic composers Clara and Robert Schuman and their friend Johannes Brahms. The music, which will include songs and a piano quartet, will be interspersed with the reading of letters, poems, and stories about these wonderful musicians. Performers will include pianist Virginia Eskin, soprano Diana McVey, and a string ensemble with Charles and Consuelo Sherba and Emmanuel Feldman. Nigel Gore will narrate.

You won't want to miss this outstanding program. Heavily discounted tickets for the performance will be available at Coffee Hour on Sundays and on the evening of the Parish Supper.

To support the Food Pantry, please bring hearty canned soups. Pull-off tops are best.

To make reservations for the dinner, fill out the sign-up sheet in the Sunday *Meeting House Times* and drop it in the collection plate, see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour, or call the church office in advance (401.421.7970). Childcare is available for parents who request it; please call Jim Estey (401.351.1748) to sign up.

A Saturday Social Supper ☼

Saturday, February 26

This evening potluck supper is for adults. Newcomers, old-timers, and in-betweeners who would like to meet new friends in the congregation are all welcome to sign up. Space is limited and reservations are required.

Hosts: Gail and Paul Brule

Where: 4 Hedge Road, Lincoln, RI

When: 6:00p Social Hour/7:00p Dinner

Please bring your own beverage.

For reservations, menu planning, and directions, call Gail Brule (401.332.620).

The Women's Alliance ☼

Monday, February 7, 2011

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



Ray Rickman

This month's program will feature Ray Rickman, former State Representative from the College Hill area and former Rhode Island Deputy Secretary of State. Mr. Rickman is a noted historian and recognized authority in African American history. His focus will be on "Mr. William J. Brown."

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





Spiritual Development

The Ethical Thing

Tuesday, February 1, 7:00p

Topic: Your Job or Your Ethics?

Have you ever been directed by your employer to do something you consider unethical? Would refusing endanger your job? In the current tight job market, what are the ethical considerations that guide our behavior in the workplace? The discussion will begin with a real-life example. All are welcome. Suggested reading: *The Ethical Thing: Your Job or Your Ethics?* (http://carolpentleton.com/?page_id=286)

Contact: Carol Pentleton (carol@thedigitalartist.com)

Women's Spirituality: A New "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven"

Thursdays, February 3, 17, 24, and March 3 (fifth session to be arranged)

One important result of the 1977 UUA General Assembly Resolution on Women and Religion was the development of the adult curriculum "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven." Many women in our congregation participated in this program, which examines pre Judeo-Christian cultures that worshipped the female as divine and explores concepts of equality and reverence for the female in a religious setting.

The five-session start of the newly revised "Cakes II" curriculum - "In Ancient Times" - presents the archeological evidence of Goddess worship in prehistoric cultures. The interactive sessions examine important elements of women's lives today: personal, interpersonal, and societal. The primary question raised is: How would your life have been different if, when growing up, the divine had been imaged as female? Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences and beliefs, creating trust and bonds of friendship. The sessions will be facilitated by Melissa Guillet and Marilyn Eanet.

Registration is required. To register, contact: Melissa (melissaguillet@yahoo.com or 401.595.5218)

Introduction to Natural Wisdom and Compassion Meditation: A Workshop

Every Wednesday at 7:00p

These guided meditations of love and wisdom from Tibetan Buddhism have been adapted into new forms that can touch the hearts and minds of people from all backgrounds and faiths to help each of us bring out the best in ourselves within our relationships, service, and social action.

Coming in March: a four-week introduction to Guided Meditations of Natural Love, Wisdom and Compassion. Participants will be introduced to the practice step by step, in a supportive, fully guided setting. All sessions include description of the practice, about a half hour of actual practice, and time for questions and comments. Please pre-register for this workshop with Ken.

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

Rhode Island Men's Gathering

Friday-Sunday, February 18-20

This annual winter get-away is a welcoming and inclusive opportunity for men, 18 years and older, from different walks of life to gather in a safe and trusting environment to relax and explore men's issues. The weekend offers participant-led workshops, recreation, relaxation, support, and community. Held on the beautiful W. Alton Jones Campus in West Greenwich, the entire weekend is drug- and alcohol-free.

UUMeN extends a special innovation to men at First Unitarian to attend. This year's Master of Ceremonies at the Gathering is Steve McCloy; and Thomas Terceira, one of the founders of the UUMeN's group in Providence, is a member of the organizing committee.

For registration or more information: www.rhodeislandmensgathering.org

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

Benevolent Street Zendo:

An Ongoing Zen Meditation Group

Every Monday at 7:00p

Benevolent Street Zendo is a member community of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha, an interfaith Zen community that maintains close ties with the Soto Zen Buddhist Association and the American Zen Teachers Association.

Everyone is welcome. Brief instruction will be available to those who come at 6:45p.

Leaders: Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford (benevolentstreetzen@gmail.com)

Reimagining Religion

Tuesdays, February 8 and 22 at 7:00p

We continue our examination of Ecclesiastes, seeking insights from a recent translation by Lloyd Geering, a professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, and from the introduction to his forthcoming book on his favorite Wisdom sage. Discover why this famous scholar has frequently translated the Hebrew Elohim as "Nature" rather than "God."

Texts may be requested from Tom Hall.

Leader: Tom Hall (tw2nd@aol.com)

UUMeN

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

Topic: Personal Responsibility

How do we usually explain the misfortunes and the bad things that happen in our lives? Is it usually someone else's fault, or do we tend to take the blame on ourselves? What are our personal responsibilities as men, as citizens, and as humans to ourselves, to other people and to society? How and to what extent should we expect society to compensate us for our misfortunes?

All interested men are welcome for discussion and for fellowship.

February Facilitator: Paul Rossignol
(401.640.3599)

Flowers for the Sunday Morning Service

The wonderful floral arrangements at our Sunday worship services are provided by members and friends of the congregation to honor a loved one or celebrate a special occasion. You, too, can donate flowers, and after the service, you can take them with you or give them away.

Contact: Jacqui Nye (funjac@hotmail.com); type "Flowers" in the subject line

Our December Community Collections

The offering for the Village Bank on Sunday, December 19 raised \$1,618 toward a new Village Bank.

The two Christmas Eve offerings generated \$2,969 to support our First Unitarian Food Share Pantry.

Many thanks to everyone who donated so generously.

Neighborhood Social Justice

Sunday, February 6 at 12:15p

The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee has just completed a drive to help out Children's Friend, Rhode Island's oldest child-welfare agency. We collected disposable diapers, wipes, and baby formula. A big thank you to all who helped us help them.

The NSJ Committee is now working on plans for a joint project with the Beneficent Church: a "Y'all Come!" dinner for the homeless community of Providence. Watch for further details. The NSJC is also exploring various options for the disbursement of the David St. Germain Memorial Fund.

All are welcome at our monthly meetings. Hope to see you there.

Contact: Joe Salvatore (joesuu@gmail.com)



Social Justice

Social Witness: Ethical Eating and Immigration

A Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating

As part of the UUA's Social Witness process, the Prudential Committee, at its January 5 meeting, endorsed a draft Statement of Conscience (SOC) on "Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice." The endorsement was based on strong congregational interest in the Parish Supper program on "Ethical Eating: Food Choices from Farm to Table," held last March. The SOC was proposed to GA 2005 and, after a four-year comment and revision process, will be voted on at the 2011 General Assembly. "Ethical Eating" addresses issues from prices and health to pollution and worker welfare and suggests 13 actions individuals and congregations can take to incorporate ethical eating into their lives.

Practicing Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice

Sunday, February 27 at 7:00p

A small group at First Unitarian has started talking about steps we can take as individuals and as a congregation to practice ethical eating in accordance with the Seventh Principle and in conjunction with the Statement of Conscience endorsed by the Prudential Committee. We are planning ways to learn how to make food choices that are healthier for ourselves, our families, our community, and the planet. The Ethical Eating Action Group - Marilyn Eanet, Bill Rice, Martha Rice Sanders, Polly Walker, and Nancy Weiss-Fried - hopes you will join them for their next meeting on February 27 at the church.

Contact: Polly Walker (pwalker41@cox.net) with questions and to let us know you are coming.

A Discussion on Immigration as a Moral Issue

Sunday, February 13 at 12:00p

Our congregation will have an opportunity to discuss and comment on a second Statement of Conscience, addressing "Immigration as a Moral Issue." This SOC will also be coming before GA 2011 for a vote on adoption as an official position of the UUA. This SOC asks UUs to consider immigration as not only a legal issue, but also a moral issue. Comments from congregations on this SOC must be submitted by March 1. First Unitarian will hold a discussion on this important and complex issue. We look forward to your participation in a lively and informative session on February 13.

Contact: Bob Cox (rcox45@cox.net)

More information about the UUA Social Witness process and the texts of these two SOC's are at www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/index.shtml

A "Common Read" about Immigration as a Moral Issue

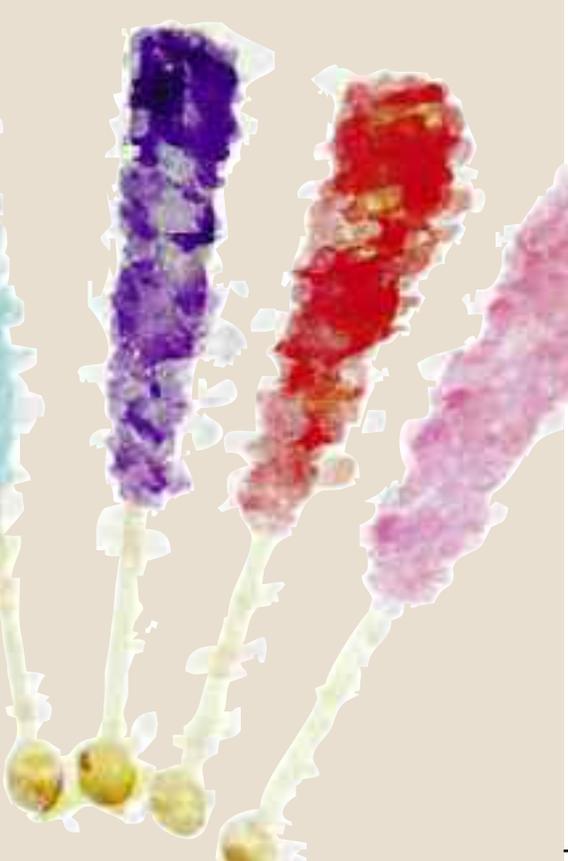
I want to let you know about an opportunity to learn more about immigration through a compelling book of inspirational stories. The UUA General Assembly 2012 is being held in Phoenix, AZ, as a Social Justice gathering, and this book has been suggested as a resource. Immigration reform is important in our state, our country, and our world. Stay tuned for congregational events related to this topic.

The UUA is promoting a Common Read project, which invites participants to read and discuss the same book in a given period of time, giving them a shared experience, a shared language, and a basis for deep and meaningful conversations. For a 2010-11 Common Read, the UUA offers Margaret Regan's *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona-Mexico Borderlands* (Beacon Press, 2010).

- Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

The book is available from the UUA Bookstore (www.uuabookstore.org) and is also available in public libraries.

Find out more about "Common Read" at www.uua.org/publications/commonread/





Social Justice

Knitting for a Better World Presents: ✪

A Fireside Chat and Knitting with James Ishmael Ford

Sunday, February 20, 12:00p in the Ministers' Parlor

Join us after church as the knitting group at First Unitarian teaches James to knit and talk at the same time. Can this be done?

Have faith and meet us in front of the fireplace for good conversation and in good company. This is an intergenerational, all-gender event! Coffee, tea, and light snacks will be provided.

The Mitten Tree ✪

Drop-off every Sunday in the Atrium

The Mitten Tree at the front of the church is now in bloom! Following the Blessing of the Tree ceremony led by James Ford and Cathy Seggel in early January, hats, scarves, and mittens have been placed on its branches to warm our mittenless, hatless, or scarfless neighbors through these cold winter months. If you would like to donate items, please place them in the basket in the Atrium located beneath the Hundreds of Hats poster, or feel free to place them directly on the tree.



Cathy and James lead the Blessing of the Mitten Tree.

The Food Share Pantry

Wants YOU! ✪ ✪

Distribution Day: Monday, February 20, 1:30-6:00p



February is hearty soup month again. Place your donations in the barrel in the corner of the Atrium.

The biggest social justice program at First Unitarian is the Food Pantry, open on the third Monday of every month. It takes a lot of volunteers to keep it going! We are always looking for new helpers. You can try it once or sign on to be a regular every month. We especially need folks with a van or truck who can help with carrying food from the Rhode Island Food Bank to the church.

Here are opportunities to help:

- Volunteer to shop at the RI Food Bank once a month. Needs a strong back and large vehicle.
- Pick up produce on Distribution Day – needs the same as above.
- Come for a shift on Distribution Day

Set-up: 1:30-3:30p

Shopping with clients: 3:30-5:00p

Clean-up, recycling, restocking food: 5:00-6:00p

Contact: Martha Manno (Mmanno7@comcast.net), Amy Webb (amy.webb7@verizon.net), or Nori Duncan (nori.duncan@gmail.com)

Knitting for a Better World ✪

Every Tuesday, 7:00-9:00p



Come join fellow knitters for a casual evening of knitting and conversation. Work on your own project or join in one of our many group efforts - knitting warm clothes for immigrants learning English through English for Action in Olneyville, prayer shawls for women in the Middle East, dolls for children in Haiti, or hats and mittens for First Unitarian's own Mitten Tree. Beginners are always welcome. We have plenty of yarn and needles to get you started.

Contact: Julie Meyers (kelmey@cox.net)

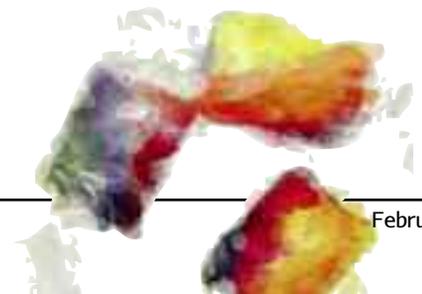
Hundreds of Hats Has Crossed the 100 Mark!

Thanks to the many helping hands that have contributed to our Hundreds of Hats project, we have passed the half way point! To date, we have received 110 hats, which have been distributed to English for Action, International House, and our own Mitten Tree. Please continue to knit, buy, or bring in hats from your own collection to help us reach our goal of 200!

Support the Food Pantry – Buy Recycled Magazines ✪

Sundays in the Atrium during Coffee Hour

Fabulous magazines have been rolling in to our magazine recycling project. You can take all you want for a donation of 50 cents or \$1 each. The money goes to our Food Share Pantry to help buy items not available from the Food Bank. Our goal is to generate \$100 to \$150 a month to offset the cost of those items. Imagine how much one magazine can generate for the food pantry if we keep recycling it!



Atrium Bookstore

Sundays during Coffee Hour

Besides the books that we get from the UUA's own Beacon Press and Skinner House, we have begun to offer books from Skylight Paths Publishing, an interfaith publisher of various faith traditions. And don't forget: we also carry books written by several church members and by our own minister.



Habitat Work Day

Saturday, February 19

The First Unitarian Habitat Work Group volunteers once a month with the Providence chapter of Habitat for Humanity Rhode Island (www.habitatprov.org), 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.

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

February 14 Is National

Standing on the Side of Love Day

UUA's Standing on the Side of Love Web site features information about National SSL Day, which aims to re-imagine Valentine's Day as a holiday of love and acceptance for everyone. Plus the site offers updates the work of SSL groups, videos, blogs, "love notes," resources, and much, much more.

See: www.standingonthesideoflove.org



Social Justice

General Assembly 2011: Who Wants To Go?

Charlotte, North Carolina, June 22-26

General Assembly is the annual meeting of the member congregations in the UUA and it's really exciting! We are looking for delegates from our congregation to attend. It's closer than many recent GAs, so this is the year to increase our presence.



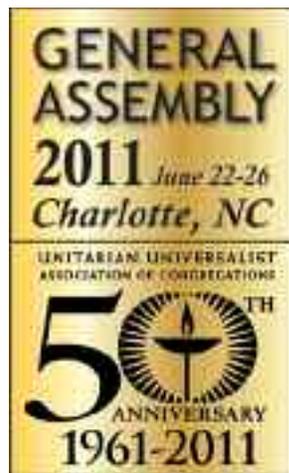
Highlights of GA include:

- GA Choir – it's fantastic!
- Opening Celebration and Parade of Congregations – One of us will carry First Unitarian's banner. Imagine 5,000 UUs singing "Gather the Spirit." Awesome.
- Plenary sessions – where we'll study and vote on issues of importance.
- Workshops and evening programming – countless opportunities, soup to nuts.
- Service of the Living Tradition – honors our religious leaders, past, present, and future.
- Daily morning worship – huge variety of styles.
- Ware Lecture – this year's speaker is Karen Armstrong, religious scholar and author of *A History of God and Islam: A Short History*, among many others.

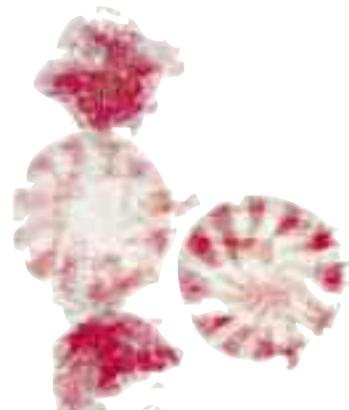
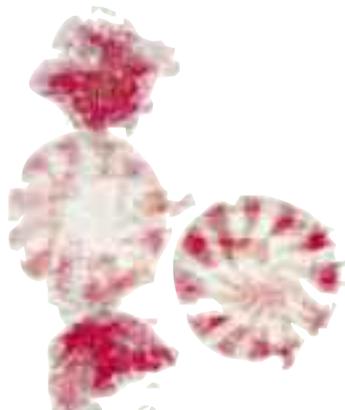
This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the merger of Unitarians and Universalists. More pomp and ceremony than usual!

Who wants to go? It's time for us to decide and commit. Please let me know if you're interested or want to know more.

Contact: Beth Armstrong, Denominational and Interfaith Connections (401.253.7987 or bestar3@cox.net)



UUA President Rev. Peter Morales and Moderator Gini Courter at General Assembly 2010



February 2011

"We are confronted with insurmountable opportunities." -Walt Kelly

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
		<u>1</u> The Ethical Thing 7:00p Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	<u>2</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	<u>3</u> Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 7:00p	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
	<u>6</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Mentor/Mentee 12:00p Neighborhood Social Justice 12:15p	<u>7</u> Women's Alliance 11:00a Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p	<u>8</u> Canvass Committee 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	<u>9</u> Meditation 7:00p	<u>10</u> Deacons 6:00p Worship Committee 7:00p	<u>11</u> Parish Supper 5:45p	<u>12</u> Path to Membership 9:00a - 12:30p
	<u>13</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Immigration Reform Conversation 12:00p UU Men 7:00p	<u>14</u> Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p	<u>15</u> Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	<u>16</u> Meditation 7:00p	<u>17</u> Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 7:00p	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> Habitat for Humanity 8:30a - 2:00p
	<u>20</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Knitting with James 12:00p Membership Committee 12:15p	<u>21</u> Presidents' Holiday Church Office Closed Food Pantry 4:00p Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p	<u>22</u> Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	<u>23</u> Executive Committee 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	<u>24</u> Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 7:00p	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>
	<u>27</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Congregational Conversation (5-year plan) 12:00p Ethical Eating 7:00p	<u>28</u> Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p					

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



We are a
Welcoming Congregation.

Telephone: 401.421.7970
Fax: 401.276.4291

Website: www.firstunitarianprov.org

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

Are They UU? Apparently They Are!

We are only a few weeks into our outreach campaign and, as of mid-January, many different people have visited our www.AreYouUU.org website. Although some of the visitors are probably our own church members and friends, the consistent rate of new visitors to the site is a sure sign that we are reaching new people who are responding to our efforts. And we have only just begun!

The campaign is pointing folks to our website through TV commercials on MSNBC and The Daily Show/Colbert Report, ads on Facebook and in *Options* magazine, bumper stickers, and info cards. And there are posters at RIPTA bus shelters at the Hope Street/Blackstone Boulevard intersection in Providence and on Narragansett Boulevard in Edgewood.

This is not a one-day sale on Unitarian Universalism. It is a systemic change in our church culture. We have recognized the importance of sharing our light and are out in the community letting everyone know that we are here!

So do your part by slapping on a bumper sticker and passing out the companion info cards to folks you talk to who are interested. We don't need to convert anyone. We just need to let people know what we are all about so that they might realize that they are UU, too.

You can pick up your AreYouUU.org bumper sticker and some info cards on Sundays during Coffee Hour; you'll also find them on the large bulletin board just outside the Atrium.

Contact: John Dooley (dool@cox.net)

