

Services in the Meeting House

Sunday, December 1 **To Light One Candle**
10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James finds himself surprised at how important Hanukkah is for him. Raised Baptist and for many years a Unitarian Universalist Buddhist, he finds this service, rooted in a fundamentalist revolt against syncretism, strangely moving. Come and find out why and how.

Child dedications will be celebrated during the service.

Grades Pre-K and older begin in the Meeting House for the first portion of the service.

Sunday, December 8 **The Warm and Flickering Light of Hope**
10:30a

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

Where might we find sparks of inspiration and direction on these darkest days of the year? If you blink, you might miss them. In these chaotic times, how might we find meaning and hope? Cathy, with colleague and friend Halcyon Westall, reflects on this season of anticipation through a Unitarian Universalist lens.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, December 15 **Dreaming Justice**
10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

In the past, James has spoken about how he sees writing letters for Amnesty International as a spiritual practice. He will explore our radical interdependence as the source calling our hearts to love and action.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, December 22 **Our Very Nearly Traditional**
10:30a **Multigenerational Christmas Pageant**

Come and join us as our cast of a hundred or so create a Unitarian Universalist celebration of the traditional Christmas story as one of hope for all peoples.

Childcare for infants-three-year olds on the 2nd floor of the Parish House.

Christmas Eve, December 24 **A Celebration of Carols and Lessons**
5:00p **Cathy Seggel, DRE & Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

9:00p (Prelude music at 8:45p) **Rev. James Ishmael Ford & Cathy Seggel, DRE**

These two services bring dignity and the values of liberal religion to a central celebration of the Western tradition. The 5:00p service is family oriented, while the 9:00p service (James likes to call it the "midnight service at nine o'clock") is more meditative. Cathy will preach a brief homily at the first service; James will preach at the second.

The offering for both services will be dedicated to our First Unitarian Food Share Pantry.

Sunday, December 29 **The Question Box: or, Stump the Chump**
10:30a **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

This is a low-key and informal service. Bring that question you've always wanted to ask James and he will try to respond. Please, nothing about underwear. Beyond that he will rely upon your discretion.

No Sunday School classes. Children are welcome at the worship service.

Sunday, January 5
10:30a **Jim Scott**

We welcome UU musician Jim Scott, an exciting acoustic guitarist, singer, and composer of powerful music that furthers the ideals of ecology, justice, and peace.

Grades Pre-K and older begin in the Meeting House for the first portion of the service.



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

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Monkey Mind

Ten years ago, November 18 was a watershed event for civil rights in our country. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ruled that it was unconstitutional to deny same-sex couples the right to marry. Jan and I lived in Massachusetts then, and I was serving our UU congregation in Newton. My first wedding for same-sex couples where I was able to say “By the authority granted me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts” was a very private affair involving a colleague who wanted a larger church wedding later but – just in case there was legislative action to reverse the court – wanted something legal and now. The couple, two witnesses, and I stood in the couple’s living room.

A few weeks later, I officiated at a major church wedding with a local power couple. There were some 500 people present, including the mayor. When I got to that line about the Commonwealth, people starting cheering and clapping – it took five minutes and more before the commotion slowed down enough for me to finish the pronouncement. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house. Including mine.

Less than a week ago I was deeply honored to officiate at Gerry Boone and Bruce Whyte’s legal wedding. They were, as some among us might recall, married in the church by the then minister, Tom Ahlburn, some 16 or 17 years ago. But now being able to add in the words “by the authority of the State of Rhode Island” was again, something, amazing, and right, and just. And generated some more tears. Appropriately.

Here in this state, it was legislative action that did the deed. And, as we all know, the principal opposition was religious, and the principal religious support came from Unitarian Universalists and Congregationalists and Jews, with more than a smattering of others from Episcopalians and Lutherans to lay Catholics. Of the religious communities, none was more prominent in the struggle than the First Unitarian Church of Providence.

I think back to that service in our Meeting House with our denominational president, the Rev. Peter Morales, and the general minister of the United Church of Christ, the Rev. Geoffrey Black, bringing the full force of denominational authority in support of basic human rights for our country.

And, again, my eyes begin to water.

I firmly believe the foundation for our engagement in the world is our ever deepening insight into the preciousness of the individual and that that individual is woven out of the world – we are created out of each other. That amazing interdependence can even be called God. It is something holy.

It is knowing our connections, as much as our preciousness, well that leads us, of course, to act in this world. Of course we struggle together to see more deeply; and in that seeing, when we find injustice, to work to correct it.

Sitting here in the knowledge we’ve done just that at this moment in history sits in my heart. And it makes me grateful. I’m grateful to this whole community for how it has engaged this issue, in the right order, seeing the foundation within our hearts and then building from that, brick by brick.

Our Meeting House has become something wonderful, a resting place for the birds of heaven.

Thank you.

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
 Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday,
 9:00a-12:00p. Appointments are recommended.
 min@firstunitarianprov.org
 James’s blog: www.patheos.com/blogs/monkeymind

Deacons’ Corner

Now that the last of the turkey leftovers have been eaten, and before all the Christmas, Yule, and other activities begin, we are starting our annual Deacons Calling program. One of the questions we will ask is if you are aware of the Home Hospitality program for the UUA General Assembly (GA) that meets here in Providence in June 25–29, 2014.

Home Hospitality is the Deacons’ only major project this year. The program is very important to GA and to our church.

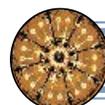
Here’s how it works:

You board attendees to the conference in your home for a fee, and 90% of that fee comes back to the church. This is a great opportunity to meet fellow UUs from different parts of the country and to support our congregation.

When we call, we’ll be able to give you further details; or look for our table in the Atrium after service, one of us will be there most Sundays.

In closing, have a great Christmas, Yule, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or however you celebrate the Winter Solstice.

The Deacons: David Spremulli, Senior Deacon; Gerry Spremulli, Ruth Arellana, Jacqui Nye, Steve McCloy, Shirley DiMatteo, Keith Brown, Claire Rosenbaum, Tom Getz, Mary Speare



WHEEL OF LIFE

Congratulations to:

Bruce Whyte and Gerry Boone, long time members, on their state recognized marriage 17 years after their original commitment service here at First Unitarian.

Beth and Stew Armstrong, whose daughter Robin was ordained into the Unitarian Universalist ministry.

Condolences to:

The family and friends of **Michael Dawkins** on his sudden death.

Healing thoughts to:

Elissa Emerson, who is recovering from surgery.
Steve McCloy, who had a bad fall and broke his ankle.



Spiritual Pathways

I Wish for You . . .

Here it is again, the colder, darker season. For many of us, the tasks pile up at home and at work, regardless of primal messages to slow down and hibernate. Once we add the winter holidays to the mix, the challenge to live our values is often tested. What is a responsible, mature, chalice-toting UU family to do? I don't have the answer but continue to troll for wisdom from the past, in addition to current ideas, that might help us keep warm and inspired.

The ancient Yule festival involved the burning of a massive log, carefully chosen to go the distance. The light and heat of its fire were magic in the winter cold and dark. The sparks from its burning were said to create warmth in human souls.

Evergreen trees, unconquered by the winter, became symbols of life, as fire and candlelight became symbols of the sun. When the evergreen was first brought indoors for the celebration, it was hung upside down from the rafters and decorated with fruits, nuts, and colored ribbons of paper. This custom was brought to us from Germany by the Rev. Charles Follen, minister to a Unitarian church in Lexington, Massachusetts. In 1832, planning a Christmas party for his family, he went into the woods, cut a fine spruce tree, and lovingly decorated the first documented tannenbaum in North America.

The latest issue of the *UU World* advertises a Christmas game that promises to help families focus on what matters, like shared memories and kindness. In our own congregation, many of our families give of themselves to efforts like our Community Food Share Pantry and other important efforts. Our children are watching, learning, forming their own ideas of what is important.

The most precious present we can give to our children and ourselves is a relaxed and fun time. In some early Native American culture there was a belief that a gift, once received, had to be given away. In other words, "the gift must always move." That sure could soothe our guilt about re-gifting. But the message had more to do with sharing what we love. Teaching a friend to play a game. Handing a grandchild a treasured family music box. Children holding a parent's hand and taking them on a walk to a favorite outdoor spot. Teens sitting down with an auntie and asking her to listen to music you adore. The gift must always move.

Unitarian Universalists of all ages celebrate, each in their own ways, from the traditions of their families of origin, as well as from their chosen faith.

Whatever your brand of celebration might be, I wish that you will enjoy some hours of warmth, wonder, renewal, and peace.

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

The Blessing of the Mitten Tree

Sunday, December 29, following the service

As the colder weather settles in, it is time to start thinking about those folks for whom suffering is magnified by the winter's chill. On the last Sunday in December, our Mitten Tree will burst into bloom once again at a blessing ceremony after the service.

Each year our Mitten Tree has been in bloom, more items have been donated and plucked from its branches. Last year, nearly 125 items were placed on our tree by our congregation, with other, uncounted items appearing from unknown sources. There is no way of knowing where all of these items go, but our First Unitarian Food Share clients benefit, as well as area homeless persons and students.

Adults and children are invited to join Knitting for a Better World for this beloved event, as we deck our tree with hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, and socks. Throughout the winter season, there will be a collection basket in the Atrium where you can drop off any of these items to help warm up those less fortunate in our surrounding community.



Holiday Season Schedule

Sunday, December 1

10:30a Children and youth in grades Pre-K through Senior High begin in the Meeting House for child dedications, then go to classes.

Sunday, December 8

10:30a Children and youth worship in Chapel and attend Sunday School classes.

12:00-1:30p Mentor/Mentee and Parents Lunch and Program

Sunday, December 15

10:30a Children and youth worship in Chapel and attend Sunday School classes.

1:00p Amnesty International Write-a-thon

Sunday, December 22

10:30a Our annual no-rehearsal, not-quite-traditional, multigenerational Christmas Pageant.

Tuesday, December 24

5:00p Our family-oriented Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols.

Sunday, December 28

10:30a All ages are welcome at this annual Question Box service. Kids are invited to bring their questions for James Ford.

No Sunday School. Childcare rooms open for nursery-three-year-olds).

Sunday, January 5

10:30a A multigenerational service with UU troubador Jim Scott

Guest at Your Table boxes will be collected.

12:00-1:30p Mentor/Mentee and Parents Lunch and Program

Youth Helping Others during the Holiday Season

Our children and youth are taking part in many congregational Social Justice programs around the holidays. See page 8 for details.





Sight Lines

President's Report

The Prudential Committee of First Unitarian Church is composed of bright, committed persons who represent well the diverse needs, interests, and programs in the church. When an issue is raised for which no easy solutions exist, the PruComm is usually willing to discuss it until consensus is reached. This is a healthy, but time-consuming, process.

Recently, the PruComm ruminated on how best to support the Mobile Loaves & Fishes effort, while at the same time limiting the church's exposure to potentially crushing liability claims. A prudent way forward has not been found, but a workable solution is being sought.

Other thorny issues are being reviewed. Almost every church member recognizes that our music program is exceptional. Part of that success is our fine, but aging organ. It needs work that is very costly. It has not had an overhaul in more than 40 years. The work can be phased over five years, but should we allocate a substantial amount of our limited resources (in the \$275,000–\$450,000 range) to organ improvements? Ultimately, the congregation will decide, unless substantial restricted donations are found.

Over the past several years the church has adopted policies that address many situations and concerns. How are complaints handled? By whom? What happens in a medical emergency or a physical emergency, such as a fire or a broken window? What should we do with persons who disrupt one of our functions? What financial controls do we need? How are they implemented? How can we protect the privacy of our members and friends? Mercifully, thanks largely to the ongoing efforts of Past President Dan Kubas-Meyer, we have many policies to help guide us. Additional policies are under review.

Planning for the June 2014 UUA General Assembly in Providence continues. First Unitarian will host a cluster meeting of Ballou-Channing church presidents and others in mid-November; GA will be the central topic. We invite you to participate in helping to plan for the influx of 6,000–9,000 UUs from all parts of the USA.

Respectfully yours,

Merritt K. Meyer
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

UUA General Assembly in Providence - June 25–29, 2014

We are very excited about helping to host General Assembly (GA) in Providence. There is much work to do to get ready, but sometimes it's a good idea to stop and just think about how much fun it will be to host 6,000–9,000 UUs. We want them to see Providence in its best light and feel welcomed. The official host is the Ballou Channing District, but as the largest church in the district and located as we are near downtown Providence, there are many ways in which we are considered the unofficial hosts. You should take advantage of this opportunity to attend GA, especially if you never have before. The cost for the full conference is \$335, \$130 for a one-day pass. But this year, you won't need air fare, hotel rooms, and three restaurant meals a day.

If you can offer a room in your home for a visitor, please speak to Jacqui Nye and find out how you can benefit our church while serving as a host.

If you are dining in Providence in the next several months, pick up an extra menu and bring it to church – give it Graham Nye – and attach a short review if you like.

If you entertain your children or grandchildren in Providence, jot down where you went, how much it cost, how to get there, and suggest appropriate ages.

Consider being a GA volunteer. You can earn free conference time – there are many different volunteer possibilities. We especially need folks familiar with Providence to answer visitor questions. Graham Nye is coordinating volunteer services.

There will also be a WaterFire on June 28. It's going to be a great week! See you there!

GA Planning Committee: Beth and Stew Armstrong, Graham and Jacqui Nye, Bob Cox

Treasurer's Report

As the end of the calendar year approaches, each pledge unit will receive a statement that gives an updated report as to what has been paid to date on their pledge. This is also a chance for individuals to affect their income tax deductions; many in the congregation use this opportunity to fully pay their pledge, thus reducing their tax liability.



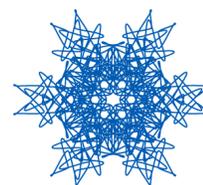
The current balance sheet shows several positive trends. With 33.3% of the church year behind us, we have received 37% of what was budgeted for pledge income.

As of October 31, a number of pledges (47) have been paid in full, while (38) have made no payment on their pledges. Of those having no payments, many have a history of making full payment at midyear.

Additional good news is that the successful fundraiser held in October should provide slightly over \$3,000 after payment is received for all silent auction items. This coupled, with the Home Hospitality housing effort for UU General Assembly should fully fund the budgeted amount of \$5,000 for fundraising.

Currently, expenses are on pace to be within the budgeted amount. This is, of course, prior to our greatest costs for energy and plowing. The winter will be watched carefully to see the impact of the weather.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer



Winter Storms and First Unitarian Church of Providence

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff decide whether church services will be cancelled. If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, church will be cancelled.

A cancellation decision will be made by 7:00a on Sunday and conveyed to media outlets, TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI-PBS, and radio stations 630WPRO, 920WHJJ, 1180 CCNX news radio, WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM, 95.5 WBRU.

If church is open during a storm, no one should make heroic efforts to get to church. Use your own best judgment about whether it is safe to drive or come to church on foot during any stormy weather.



Community Life

December All-Parish Supper

Friday, December 20, 2013 (Note: the third Friday of the month)

Everyone, young and old and in between, is welcome at these monthly gatherings of members and friends of the congregation.

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 8 people. You can bring a main dish, or alternatively a vegetable, a salad, or a dessert.

8:00p Program in the Meeting House – A Child's Christmas in Wales

Our after-dinner program will be a special holiday celebration featuring the Aurea Ensemble's presentation of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Dylan Thomas. This beloved story will be narrated by popular Rhode Island actor Nigel Gore and will include musical interludes of delightful old English carols and holiday chamber music from earlier times. Our own Fred Jodry (voice and harpsichord), Chris Turner (harmonica), and a string quartet led by Charles and Consuelo Sherba with Katherine Winterstein and Emmanuel Feldman will perform.

Heavily discounted tickets will be available for those who attend the supper. Please plan to be with us for this celebration.

Reservations for the dinner are strongly requested. Please fill out the tear-off form in the Sunday *Meeting House Times* and put it in the collection plate, see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour, or call the church office in advance (401.421.7970). Childcare for infants and children to age 10 will be available for parents that request in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).



Saturday Social Supper

December 14 starting at 5:30p (Note: this supper is a week later than usual)

The December Social Supper will be hosted by Shirley DiMatteo and Mel Shelly in Providence. For reservations and menu planning contact Shirley DiMatteo at (shelly-dimatteo@verizon.net or 861.1537) to indicate number of people and what you would like to bring.

Plan ahead: The Social Supper on January 4 will be hosted by Dave and Gerry Spremulli.

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: hats, socks, mittens, scarves, and more for local groups in need of warm clothing and for our own Mitten Tree come winter.

Beginners are always welcome. We have plenty of yarn and needles to get you started.

Contact: Kathy Ahlquist (katherine.ahlquist@gmail.com)



The Mitten Tree Returns

Please begin collecting – or making! – mittens, hats, scarves, and other warm items to hang on our Mitten Tree for the plucking by our neighbors who need them. And plan to be there for the Blessing of the Mitten Tree on December 29. For details, look for the mittens on page 3.

Contra Dancing at First Unitarian

Friday, December 6, 7:30p–10:00p

Everyone is invited to a First Unitarian Holiday contra dance to be held on Friday, December 6 from 7:30p-10:00p in the Auditorium of the Parish House. Both beginners and experienced dancers are welcome. We will be joined by the College Hill Contra Dancers. The caller will be Lynda Leslie. There will be live music with Andy Grover, Amy Larkin and friends. Please plan to join us if you wish and bring your dancing shoes.

Admission is \$5 for students and for people in our church family; \$10 for others.

For information, call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).

January All-Parish Supper

Friday, January 10, 2014

Bring in the New Year by celebrating with Aubrey Atwater and Elwood Donnelly, a talented duo of Rhode Island folk musicians who will perform a concert of traditional American folk music and dance following our Parish Supper. Their selections will provide glimpses of people and places in U.S. history and will include funny songs, beautiful songs, patriotic songs, sing-alongs, and thought-provoking commentary. Their performances are always exciting, moving, and of high musical quality. Please plan to join us.



HATS OFF TO...

Melissa Guillet, Tom Getz, and everyone who helped with the event or contributed raffle items to the EnSEEKlopedia Fundraiser Show on Saturday, October 26. It was a great success!

Our Coffee Hour providers last month:

Penelope Yanni, Spence Hobbs, Bruce Evje, Mary Frappier, Kelly Baraf, Nancy Libby Fisher, Beth Anterni, Steve McCloy, Rich Rudert, Tony Allen, Karen Boulanger, Anne Connor, Susan Fisher, Eve Tobin Caron, Paul Almeida, Kim Ziegelmayer, Dee Reynolds, Ryk McIntyre, Martha Cussler, David Schrag, Janet Noble, Nori Duncan, Gaby Petruck, Ruth Worthen, Carol Adams, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



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!



Community Life

Path to Membership Class

Saturday, December 14, 9:00a–12:30p

The Path to Membership class is for anyone who is interested in membership in the church or who just wants to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian.

The session will be led by our minister, Rev. James Ford, and the Membership Coordinator, Jenn Nardone. A light lunch will be served. If you have questions about these sessions, please come by the Newcomers' Café or email Jenn Nardone.

Registration is required.

Registration forms are in the Newcomers' Café and on the Membership Board in the Parish House hallway. Or call the church office (401.421.7970). Please register by Monday, December 9. Childcare will be provided if requested by Monday, December 9.

Contact: Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org)

The Women's Alliance

Monday, December 2

Business Meeting: 10:30a

Program: 11:00a followed by lunch (\$10)

The Harmonica according to Chris Turner

Speakers: Chris Turner and Rachel Maloney

Chris Turner, accompanied by his wife, Rachel, will demonstrate different kinds of harmonicas and tell how he got into harmonica music.

Harmonica virtuoso and founding member of Aurea, Chris Turner was born into a musical family in London, England, and learned harmonica and recorder as a child. Chris and Rachel have composed and performed scores for many productions at Trinity Repertory Company. He has appeared as concert soloist with the Rhode Island Philharmonic and the Ocean State Chamber Orchestra. Rachel Maloney, a native Virginian, is best known as a fiddler but also plays washboard, melodeon, jaw harp, bones, viola, psaltery, mandolin, and cornet.

Non-members are always welcome to join us for our monthly programs and luncheon.

Transylvania Partner Church News

Building Construction Plans Are Moving Forward

Due to the cramped size of their church, the Szentegyhaza congregation of our Partner Church in Romania has initiated a significant fund-raising effort to draw up plans and begin the construction of a new church. In November, the Partner Church Committee received notice that they received approval to transfer ownership of town property to their church and that state approvals for the land transfer are forthcoming.

In November, First Unitarian sent our Partner Church \$3,400 from the funds collected through the sale of "Paper Bricks," symbolic of the building blocks for the new church, and through collection-plate donations. These funds will be used to help in the construction of the church foundation. Work is expected to begin in the spring of 2014.

Senior Sunday in Szentegyhaza

On November 10, our Partner Church honored seniors in their congregation who have reached the age of 70. They were recognized for their contributions to the church and to the community. This is a yearly event at the Szentegyhaza church.



Members of the Szentegyhaza congregation pose in front of the church bell tower.

Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

If you're new to First Unitarian, please come by our Newcomers' Café, where I look forward to welcoming you. It's a great place to meet people in a less daunting setting than the regular Coffee Hour. Held in the elegant and intimate Paneled Parlor (just beyond the fireplace in the Parish House), the Café offers coffee, goodies, and fellowship and is hosted by a rotating cast of church members who will also be happy to answer your questions and introduce you to others in our community.

If you've been around the church for a while, this is a great place to help new folks get acclimated. Contact me to sign on as a café host.

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

Women's Alliance Programs

Camp Street Ministries Benefit from Eastside Marketplace Grocery Receipts

If you shop at Eastside Marketplace, please save your receipts and place them in the collection box on the table in the Atrium outside the Haynes Room. The Women's Alliance collects them for the Camp Street Ministries.

Gourmet Coffee Sale in the Atrium

The Women's Alliance sells delicious organic gourmet coffee each Sunday during Coffee Hour. We offer several varieties of both beans and ground coffees from New Harvest Roasters, including a bolder decaf: French Roast.

Your purchases help the Women's Alliance support community charities and church projects.

Our Coffee Hour Co-op Needs YOU!

Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort with donations from our congregation of baked goods, brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake, and more. These donations can be homemade or store-bought. Each Sunday we need eight people bringing donations that serve 24 each.

Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour for upcoming Sundays.

Look for the bear! On multigenerational Sundays like December 22, you'll find a special Kid-Friendly Foods table with donations from the RE Committee and parents.





Community Life

Welcome Our Newest Members!

On Sunday, November 3, the congregation recognized 15 new members with a ceremony of covenant and welcome. Look for them at church and add your personal greetings.



Christine Boucher has Unitarian roots through her Canadian/American mother. She has a BFA from Mass Art in Boston and promptly upon graduating left Boston for New York with creative endeavors in both design/manufacturing and real estate. She is currently sourcing sculpture art and furnishings to collectors and the trade from her studio in New Bedford. She lives part time in New Bedford and part time in New York.



Nancy Ferrazza is a lawyer by education and a business consultant by trade. She lives in Warwick with her rescued shar-pei named China. She is a native Rhode Islander, who has lived many places, both physically & spiritually and has just returned home.



Kimberli & Dan Gray and their 14-year old-daughter, Madison, recently moved to Rhode Island from Tulsa, OK, where they were members at All Souls Unitarian Church for about 13 years. Dan's background is Air Force, construction, music and I.T. He currently works for Atrion as a SharePoint administrator. Kimberli switched her career direction from health care to project management upon moving to the area and, luckily, secured a position with Atrion as well. The Gray's are a musical family who enjoy doing things together as well as on their own and have played as a family at First U during the 2013 Summer services. They live in Barrington.



Bev and Bill Koteff moved from Wellesley, MA, to Warren to be near their grandkids and family in Barrington. They have three adult daughters and four adorable grandchildren. Bill grew up in southern California and has spent most of his career in information technology. He is now a career coach. Bev grew up on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and is a freelance writer/editor, most recently for public health publications at Brown and a social-emotional program at Wellesley College.

Bev and Bill have been UUs for 28 years and active in the Wellesley Hills church, where each served as president of the congregation. Bill chaired a ministerial search committee and co-led a capital campaign. Bev launched and coordinated the small group ministry program and chaired the advisory board of the UU Chaplaincy at Wellesley College. They are happy to be settled once again in a vibrant UU congregation.



Victoria Dalstra



**Don James
& Bob DaRocha**



My Mami, **Gaby Petruck**, supports soldiers without families and no company by sending them care packages to where they are stationed. She is called a "Soldiers Angel." She helps at the library by showing kids how to read by reading with them. She also is doing homework with them, which helps them too. Sometimes she even assists their parents who are not so good at reading English. She lends a helping hand at the Food Pantry here in our church and she is in the Care Crew visiting injured people in hospitals and writing cards. Even in her job she is helping people who owe a lot of taxes. She is a great mommy!

Written by Gary Rose-Petruck



Rebecca Rhoads is new to New England. She enjoys dancing and teaching Zumba and Salsa as well as baking and eating wonderful foods. Rebecca grew up in Louisville, KY and got her MA and BA at Florida State University. She taught Spanish at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, GA. There she married Joseph Rhoads, a Connecticut native, who now works for the Brown University Library. Rebecca currently teaches Spanish part time at Wheeler School and second grade UU Religious Education and tutors adults in Spanish. She is happy to be a part of the UU community!



Born in Torino, Italy, **Chiara Romano van Erp** grew up in the artistic environment of her family. Her architect father, her painter mother, and her sculptor aunt contributed to her interest in art and design at an early age. After graduating in architecture from the Politecnico di Torino she came to the U.S. for a stage with the architect Paolo Soleri in Arizona, where she met her husband, Peter van Erp. Chiara worked in architecture and interior design firms in Torino, Rome, Boston, and Providence, mostly on commercial projects, before starting her own studio in Providence focusing on residential interior architecture, furniture, and rug and textile design. She and Peter have two children: Paolo, who works for the Cosanti Foundation in Arizona, and Marilyn, a junior at St. Mary Academy BayView.



Kelly Steel lives in Uxbridge, MA and works as a nutrition educator in Providence. She is wife to her wonderful husband, Mike, and has a beautiful little baby girl, Daphne, who is just over five months old.



Chen Zhang and Sally Peixoto met while serving with City Year Rhode Island. Chen was born in China and moved to the U.S. as a child, while Sally is a Rhode Island native. They both currently serve as AmeriCorps members at the Rhode Island Free Clinic and Inspiring Minds, respectively, helping make the world a better place.



Holiday Happenings

Our Annual Winter Gift Card Drive

*Pick-up recipients' names: Sundays, December 1 & 8 in the Atrium
Bring gift cards to church by Sunday, December 15*

As the holidays approach, the annual gift drive is one way that we reach out to help families in the Rhode Island community. Warm winter clothes are the priority for families served by the Dorcas International Institute, based in Providence.

Gift cards are the preferred gift, enabling the agency to assist our neighbors in choosing their own appropriate necessities. Gift cards might not be as exciting as tangible gifts, but they make a big difference in people's lives. Please purchase gift cards to stores accessible by public transportation, such as Walmart or Ocean State Job Lot. Wrapping isn't needed but holiday cards are welcome.

In keeping with First Unitarian tradition, our Senior High Youth Group and their advisors will facilitate the project.



Christmas Plants to Decorate the Meeting House

Submit orders to the church office by Sunday, December 15



Each holiday season, the church is filled with poinsettias given in memory or celebration of a loved one(s). The cost is \$20 per plant per person.

To order your poinsettia, contact the church office (401.421.7970) or fill out the form in the order of service on Sunday. Please specify the first and last name of each person you are honoring as well as your name and phone number (in case we need to contact you).

THE GIRL EFFECT GROUP SALE

December 1st, 8th & 15th, 10 am – 12 pm in the atrium

All proceeds go to the education of girls around the globe

Fair trade items from the global marketplace

Cash or check only (Sorry, no credit cards)

Seventh-Grade UUSC Holiday Card and Gift Sale

Sundays, November 24, December 1, 8 & 15

Our seventh-grade class is selling beautiful greeting cards from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Look for them at the RE table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Proceeds benefit social justice efforts of the UUSC. By buying these cards and fair trade gifts, we choose compassionate consumption and support human rights efforts.

Children's Recycle-a-Toy Sale

Collection of Toys: Sunday, December 8

Toy Sale: Sunday, December 15, 12:00–12:30p in the Auditorium

This Children's Toy Sale offers a way for kids to buy gifts for family and friends on a very small budget. Toy prices range from 25 cents to \$2. We hope that our children will seize the spirit of the season and shop for others they love. The sale is open to the full church community.

We encourage families to donate gently used – or even new – toys, games, and books for preschool through high school-age children. Donations will be collected on the Sunday prior to the sale. Our goal is to encourage children to recycle their toys and do good for their community. Our children and youth will help choose the recipient for the money raised. All toys not sold will be donated to Camp Street Ministries in Providence.

John Dooley is organizing this event with help from RE Committee members and parents. For questions, contact John Dooley (dool@cox.net)

Holiday and Special Occasion Cards

The History Committee is offering individual and sets of cards with images of the Meeting House taken by Richard Boober. The cards are blank inside and suitable for holiday greetings or notes to family and friends. Also make a great gift! Look for the History Table in the Atrium.

Cards are \$1.50 each or \$7.50 for a set of five, envelopes included.

Cocoa, Coffee & Tea Drive – Marshmallows Welcome!

A Special Winter Food Drive for our Community Food Share Pantry

The cold weather brings more folks to our Community Food Share Pantry each month, and we would like to offer some special warm drinks for our neighbors in need. Please donate any of the suggested items below during the months of December and January; we will need over 250 items to distribute.

Bring donations to Chapel or classrooms as well as the donation barrel in the Atrium.

Our fourth-grade teachers and students are coordinating this community food drive.

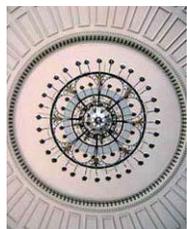
Suggested Donations:

- Instant or regular cocoa mix
- Marshmallows
- Ground regular and decaf coffee in small cans or bags (please, no whole bean)
- Black teas and herbal teas

The Atrium Bookstore

Looking for gift ideas in a literary vein? The Atrium Bookstore is open each Sunday at Coffee Hour. You'll find a broad selection of books of interest to liberal religionists. Subjects include religious liberalism, daily meditations, and social activism. There also are books for children.

Among the wide range of authors are poet Mary Oliver, Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, and writers from the First Unitarian Church including the latest book by our minister, James Ford, *If You're Lucky, Your Heart Will Break*. (Profits go to supplement the church's annual operating budget).



Spiritual Development

Child Dedications

Sunday, December 3

Dedications of children of members of the church will be celebrated during the worship service on December 3. If you are interested in having your child(ren) dedicated, please speak with Cathy Seggel.

Contact: Cathy Seggel (dre@firstunitarianprov.org)

Talk-Back Sundays to Continue in the New Year

Have you ever wanted the opportunity to discuss the Sunday sermon with other members of the congregation? You are not alone.

On designated talk-back Sundays, discussions will begin directly after service in the Meeting House and will last approximately 25 minutes. Stay tuned for the new schedule in 2014!

Art in the Atrium

In December Art in the Atrium will feature a Collective Holiday exhibit with artists from our congregation.

There is still room in this church-year calendar for artists who would like to show their work. Please contact Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerpdesign@cox.net)

Flowers for the Sunday Services

Flowers at the pulpit each Sunday are donated by members and friends of the congregation in honor or memory of a loved one. Donors are acknowledged in the order of service. Whether the flowers are a florist's arrangement or picked from a garden, people always comment on how they brighten the pulpit.

Jacqui Nye will be glad to explain how you can provide an arrangement and to schedule your donation. Your flower offering will be greatly appreciated.

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

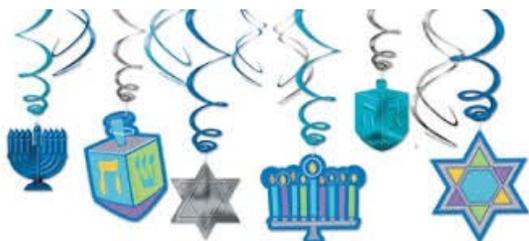
UUMen

Sunday, December 8 at 7:00p

Tradition! When belted out by Zero Mostel, it sounds like a fine thing, even a necessity. What traditions in your life are meaningful, perhaps providing an important connection with other people, alive or not.

Are there also traditions in your life that serve no real purpose and are only a sort compulsory act? Are there traditions around you that, even worse, are the basis for prejudicial treatment of certain individuals? Are some traditions getting in the way of living a more thoughtful and creative life?

Facilitator: Chris Campanile (401.941.1126)



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 available at 6:45p.

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



Innate Wisdom and Compassion Meditation

Every Wednesday at 7:00p

This drop-in group offers guided meditations of wisdom, love, and compassion. These practices are adapted from Tibetan Buddhism 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, and in our service and social action.

No previous meditation experience required. You can visit our website for a preview of the practices with Benefactors (foundationforactivecompassion.org/audios-videos-texts)

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

Reimagining Religion

Tuesday, December 10, 7:00p

Reimagining Religion is an ongoing attempt to employ the best recent scholarship in coming to grips with issues raised by radically new developments in the study of religion and thereby achieving a fuller appreciation of what religious literacy entails in the twenty-first century.

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)



Social Justice

Annual Write-a-thon for Human Rights

Sunday, December 15, 1:00-5:00p

The Annual Global Write-a-thon for Human Rights is the world's largest letter-writing event. In celebration of International Human Rights Day, Write-a-thons are held all across the U.S. and in over 50 countries. The twenty-sixth Providence celebration is held at First Unitarian and sponsored by the World Affairs Committee, assisted by the Providence chapter of Amnesty International.

The event is free and open to the public, and is suitable for young people and families. There will be refreshments, prizes, and an inspirational guest speaker.

Our guest speaker this year will be Yvonne Towah, an Ivory Coast refugee. She and her family were driven from their home by the unfolding conflict that swept across West Africa. She was given refugee asylum in the U.S. and now feels isolated in Providence, living alone without any family. She prays for eventual reunion with her family who were left behind.

No registration necessary.

Contact: Marcia Lieberman (marcia.lieberman@gmail.com)

Standing on the Side of Love

The Standing on the Side of Love Committee is creating a partnership with the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. RICH is composed of individuals and organizations that provide direct help and services to people in need. These organizations address this important work "through advocacy, education, collaboration, technical assistance, and selected direct services."



Our role in this partnership calls for work at all levels of participation. It can be as simple as showing up after services to write advocacy letters. For those with time and dedication, it could even include lobbying legislators. In between these poles, there may be rallies and organizing other work. There's room for all degrees of time commitment in this important work.

We hope you'll join us to help create coalitions and working groups with other local organizations and faith communities. We can speak with one voice to end homelessness!

Please be on the lookout for messages from the Standing on the Side of Love Committee.

SSL Sponsors Newtown Commemoration

On December 14, the anniversary of the Newtown massacre, Moms for Gun Sense will hold a brief morning rally at First Unitarian starting at 9:15a. All in the community are welcome to join in this commemoration. Details will be shared in the *Sunday Meeting House Times*.

Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly meeting, Sunday, December 1, 12:15p in the Haynes Room

The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee takes on projects to lighten the load of low-income and homeless Rhode Islanders. Please join us – on the first Sunday of each month – to learn more about our work and perhaps to contribute some ideas of your own.

Mobile Loaves & Fishes

Wednesday, December 11 at Open Table of Christ, 1520 Broad Street, Providence.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who filled the collection plate on November 24 with dollars for MLF. Your gifts will help ensure the continuation of this vital interfaith effort to feed and clothe homeless Rhode Islanders.

The next truck runs will take place on December 11 and on Tuesday, January 7 at Open Table of Christ. The MLF crew at First Unitarian will again be helping Open Table. The onset of cold weather intensifies the need for generous donations of food and clothing, so in this season of giving please be generous.

To learn more, drop-off donations, or sign up to help, visit the NSJC/MLF table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour, or contact Joe Salvatore (joesuu@gmail.com).

First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry Volunteer at Our Food Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, December 16

The biggest social justice program at First Unitarian is the Food Share Pantry. It takes many volunteers to keep the program going! Volunteer with your van or truck to transport food from the RI Food Bank to the church, or volunteer for a shift on Distribution Day:

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p,

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p,

Restock, recycle, and clean up: 5:00p–6:00p.

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

The Pantry Is Open to All

You probably know that volunteers at First Unitarian run a very well attended food pantry. But did you know that members of the congregation who are in need are also welcome to take part and receive food? You do not have to be receiving government help or otherwise demonstrate need. Just come to the church after 2:30p on the third Monday and fill out a brief registration form.

Your Recycled Magazines = Food for the Food Pantry

Donate your high-interest magazines for others to purchase for just 50 cents to \$1. Popular categories: science, gardening, kids' magazines, handyman, *Geographics*, cars, yoga, fishing, cooking, craft, foreign affairs, current events, and personal improvement, just to name a few. No catalogs, please. Last year this program earned close to \$370. for our Food Pantry.

Donate Calendars and Notecards

Please gather those random calendars and cards sent out by charities at the end of the year and donate them to the Food Pantry for our clients. They are in great demand. Drop them in the office.

Habitat for Humanity Work Day

Saturday, December 21

First Unitarian's Habitat Work Group volunteers once a month with the Providence chapter. 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.

Sign-up is required as space is limited.

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



