

Services in the Meeting House

Sunday, February 2 Wholly Family, a Multigenerational Service
10:30a Cathy, James and Representative of Our Families

This annual event is a celebration of the many ways we are family. Over the years, we've heard from members of our community of many ages and races and economic conditions, gay and straight, "traditional" couples, families with one parent, a single-person family. And, most important, how all are worthy. Come, celebrate with us!

Infants-three-years-olds room open on the Parish House second floor.

**Sunday, February 9 The Failure and Injustices of Mass Incarceration:
How We Got Here and the Way Out**
10:30a Acharya Fleet Maull

Acharya Maull will talk about how we came to embrace a national policy of mass incarceration and the profound injustices and social costs of this failed approach to criminal justice. He will also talk about a clear pathway to a more humane and just approach to dealing with crime, an approach that will actually enhance public safety, while effectively supporting people and uplifting communities.

*Read more about Acharya Fleet Maull on page 2.
Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.*

**Sunday, February 16 Love Your Mother: A Sermon for the National Preach-In on
Climate Change**
10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford

One of the most pressing issues of the day is climate change. Our country is torn in a way perhaps unique in the world, where a significant part of the population simply denies the reality. James will explore themes, directions, and – perhaps – provide a word of hope.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

11:45a A Communion Service in the UU Tradition
Our congregation has celebrated Communion several times a year since we first gathered nearly 300 years ago. Immediately following today's service, James and the Deacons will offer a service of Holy Communion in the liberal tradition. All are welcome.

Sunday, February 23 A Sunday Surprise!
10:30a Special Guest Speaker

James has invited a special guest to lead our worship this Sunday. Come prepared to have fun! Watch for more information in the weekly *Meeting House Times*.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.



We are a Welcoming Congregation

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- Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, Community Minister
- Rev. Gene Dyszlewski, Community Minister
- Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
- Frederick Jodry, Music Director
- Posey Kooris, Administrator
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Monkey Mind

This morning I received an interesting email from an old friend. He's an Episcopal priest serving a congregation up in Maine. (Or is that down Maine? I get confused about these things . . .) He told me he was getting a contingent of Unitarian Universalists visiting his church over Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday. And he wondered if I had a joke or something in my hip pocket he might use to break the ice with this visiting crowd.

Other than that old line that skewers us both a bit, defining Episcopalians as Unitarians with a sense of style, I found myself a bit stymied. I don't actually hold with most of the jokes about us, which suggest we're confused about what we're doing, a resting spot between church and the *New York Times*. Possibly the most accurate of the crop is the one that goes: if we came to a divide in the road and there were two signs, one pointing to "heaven" and the other to "a really good conversation about heaven," we know which path most of us would choose.

But, while I no doubt laughed the first time, and second and maybe third time I heard it, and while it still can raise a small smile, I don't really think that's so, either. The truth of the matter is our style of religion. As I consider the range of religion around the world, it seems we as humans approach the deep questions of meaning and hope from two directions. The images we use for those two directions are "heart" and "head." Often these are posited as opposites. Often they are seen as in conflict, where one is "feeling" and the other is "thinking."

Here I find myself taken with the Chinese character *Xin* in Pinyin transliteration and *Hsin* in Wade-Giles. The *Xin* means both head and heart. And I believe this speaks to a deep truth. What we like to divide as "feeling" and "thinking" are, in fact, two facets of a single thing, what I believe we can usefully characterize as "knowing." To feel without thinking is a problem. And to think without feeling is a problem. But bring them together and I believe we are on the path to wisdom. Or what I like to call the wise heart.

And people lead with one or the other. Most religious traditions seem to lead with the heart, with the feeling quality. And while we have tons of that among us as Unitarian Universalists, our tradition for the most part has always led with the thinking part. Our tradition is analytical. We tend to be a challenging sort, spiritually. But it *is* spiritual.

That's when I thought of the Rev. John Buehrens and the "joke" that might work for my Episcopal friend. In *Our Chosen Faith*, which he wrote with Forrest Church, John describes how he and his wife, Gwen, an Episcopal priest, required that their children go to church, but that the kids could choose which one. The two girls quickly revealed what their affinities would be. For instance, when one of the girls had set up the piano bench as a sort of altar with a Barbie sitting on it, had hung a towel over her shoulders, and was dancing around the bench, singing *The Hokey Pokey*, clearly they saw the Episcopalian. And when they discovered that their other daughter had organized a protest against Moses at Sunday School, they knew who was going to be the Unitarian.

We need some dancing. And we need some critical thinking.

And while it is our style to lead with some hard thinking, I find what we get is something quite lovely.

Among the many ways of religion – most with a good dollop of truth about them, like our sister and brother Episcopalians – I'm so grateful that I belong to a tradition that not only has no problem with me keeping my brain as I walk through the church doors into the dance, but that I am expected to use it throughout.

The wise heart.

See you in church,

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

Please Welcome Acharya Fleet Maull

Fleet Maull is a senior teacher (*acharya*) and leader in the international Shambhala Buddhist Meditation Community. He is also a *sensei* (senior teacher) and senior priest in the Zen Peacemaker and Soto Zen traditions. While serving a mandatory 14-year minimum sentence for drug trafficking (1985–1999), Acharya Maull founded two national organizations: Prison Mindfulness Institute (www.prisonmindfulness.org) and National Prison Hospice Association (www.npha.org), catalyzing two national movements that have brought healing and transformation to tens of thousands of prisoners. He is an author, teacher, social entrepreneur, and peace activist who leads trainings and retreats throughout the world, including annual bearing-witness retreats in Poland at Auschwitz-Birkenau and in Rwanda. Acharya Maull lives here in Providence, teaching meditation both at the Shambhala Meditation Center of Providence and the ACI. His son Robert is a student at Johnson and Wales University, and both he and his son are avid sailors on the Narragansett Bay.

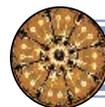


The Lay Ministry and Care Crew

The Lay Ministry and Care Crew help those in the congregation in need of calls, cards, visits, rides to the doctor's office, emergency babysitting, emergency elderly companionship, or meal delivery.

The on-call Lay Minister for February is Margaret Balch Gonzalez. Referrals or calls to the church will be passed on to Margaret, who will call upon Care Crew volunteers.

The Lay Ministry Team: Margaret Balch Gonzalez, Andy Barrett, Pat Gifford, Kate Menard, Rick Richards, Tori Smith and Susan Weston.



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to:

Neil & Cheryl Bartholomew on the death of Neil's mother.

Kevin DeJesus on the death of his mother.

Roxanne Stern and the family of Stan Graham on the death of Stan.

Healing thoughts to:

Elsie Buffon who is making a speedy recovery after having hip replacement surgery.

And to **Elissa Emerson**.



Spiritual Pathways

This Winter ~ Love is Reaching Out

February is a mid-winter month, a month that includes cold, darker days, usually some snow, some slush, even some rain. As a warm-up practice, why not consider it a fine time to focus on reaching out in love. That concept is certainly being shared far and wide. Valentine's Day happens soon. I

prefer to imagine it as Friendship Day, a holiday to appreciate and celebrate our friends, family, and beloveds.

Believing that our UU faith provides a path for each of us to unlock our transformational capacity to serve the world with love, the theme for our UU Association's General Assembly, coming to Providence in June, is "Love Reaches Out." I have been deeply involved in the preparations, choosing programming, planning professional development opportunities, and working on a team to showcase the Waterfire Witness event. I encourage you to investigate how you and your family will choose to participate in this GA at www.uua.org/ga. The Rhode Island location is likely to be a once in a lifetime opportunity. I am happy to chat with you and help you navigate the options.

Another worthwhile direction is the Standing on the Side of Love's *Thirty Days of Love* effort, a spiritual journey for social justice. Their website (www.standingonthesideoflove.org/30daysoflove) showcases ideas for a month of living, sharing, building, reflecting, and celebrating courageous love. It includes calendars for family use that have been shared with our volunteer teacher teams.

Here at home, I am inspired by our involvement in the Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade, the outdoor Mitten Tree stocked by Knitters for a Better World with help from children of all ages, and multigenerational Knit-Ins. There's the weekly spreading of joy during our Chapel worship services, with preschoolers dancing and junior highers leading. And the Coming of Age community's hard-working, creative accomplishment of their annual Pasta Supper fundraiser.

In my professional work, I continue to take advantage of the latest in the evolving field of twenty-first-century UU faith formation. Viewed through a comprehensive lens, religious education for children, youth, and adults is a network of programs, experiences, content, and resources, both physical and virtual. I just attended a program entitled "Doing Better Religion," focusing on helping to spark a revitalization of our UU faith in New England. My own heart is warmed by a vision of my role as an architect and curator of networks and resources that support individual, congregational, and denominational needs to transform ourselves and our world.

February may be a cold month outdoors, but it is full of warm possibilities in this and the broader community.

Stay warm, choose love, and take good care,

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



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 by our Spiritual Development and Social Justice ministries. This year, our seventh-graders, eighth-graders, senior high youth, and young adults will prepare the sandwiches. Parents from the RE program help purchase supplies and deliver the lunches.

On Sunday, February 2, 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.

Special Request for 100 Juice Boxes on a Month of Sundays!

Drop off each Sunday during February

Our third-grade class is helping to coordinate a Juice Drive as part of fulfilling our Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade project to provide 100 complete lunch bags for a month of Sundays. We will need 100 drinks each week. 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 the church office.

The Holiday Gift Card Drive

A special thank you to our Youth Group for their leadership! A Message from Dorcas International Institute of RI.

Happy New Year! With sincere thanks for organizing a holiday gift card drive for recently arrived refugee families. Your contributions brought great joy during the holiday season. Your kindness and generosity is greatly appreciated by the clients, staff and board of Dorcas International Institute of RI.

Sincerely, DIIRI Staff

UU Service Committee Guest at Your Table Drive

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





Sight Lines

From the President

In mid-January, we held a Congregational Conversation to discuss the upcoming Annual Budget Drive for the next church year. In the past, similar discussions have engaged as many as 12 to 18 persons. For some reason, however, more than 50 interested persons participated in the recent exchange of ideas, and nobody was bored or apprehensive. I welcome and applaud this level of interest. Thanks are given to all participants and to the parties who organized this event. This is your church, and the active support of members and friends is vital to sustaining the mission.

Many members offered ideas that will help make the upcoming Budget Drive more successful. We need to work hard to fund our operations, which benefit all of us as well as the larger community. For years we have utilized endowment funds to aid in supporting operations. This means that many repairs and some maintenance projects have been deferred. This practice may be expedient in the short term, but deferred repairs and maintenance items become costly capital expenses when the work can no longer be put off into the indefinite future.

An example of costly maintenance work is looming. We have an excellent organ, and it needs work. If we did only maintenance of the existing instrument – cleaning, and replacement of the 40-year-old leathers – without upgrades, the cost would be about \$200,000. If we sought to modernize the organ and improve the voicing, as much as an additional \$250,000 would be needed. Improvements could also be made to the present choir loft, which barely contains our excellent choir. These loft improvements could easily cost \$30,000 to \$50,000. Mercifully, much of this work can be done in phases over a five-year period. And before any major capital improvements are undertaken, approval and support from the congregation must be sought.

Long-term needs assessment and planning and fund raising are never easy, but they are essential to avoid truly draconian decisions. Input and support of the congregation is vital to this work and most welcome.

Respectfully yours,

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



Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff decide if church 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 these 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 best judgment about whether it is safe to drive or come to church on foot during any stormy weather.

Treasurer's Report

At the December PruComm meeting, I provided a primer on First Unitarian's various endowments and separate investments. Included in the report were our regular endowments, which are managed by Washington Trust Investors, and individual funds, managed by the Ocean State Incubator.



Several individual funds have been established for specific programs and purposes. These are not utilized for the regular operating expenses for the church. These include three funds invested with Ocean State Incubator Program (managed by Citizens Bank):

- the Edith Ehrlenmeyer Pastor's Fund, which provides discretionary funds for our minister to individuals in need;
- the Brown University Lease Fund, established with money from the 100-year lease from Brown for use of the Meeting House for Brown's Medical School Commencement; and
- the Community Food Share Food Pantry Fund, established by the late Dino Germani.

The Pastor's Fund is restricted to use of 3% of the principal each year (value as of 10/31/13: \$157,665). The Brown Fund (value as of 10/31/13: \$48,160) is unrestricted and may be used at the discretion of the PruComm; \$18,663 was used this past year for the Meeting House window repair and for the upgrade of our office computer system. The Food Pantry Fund (value as of 10/31/13: \$140,094) provides a quarterly drawdown of \$1,040 and can be used for food purchases only.

Graham Nye, Treasurer



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!



*Lighting the Chalice at the
2013 General Assembly*

Love Reaches Out to Providence June 25–29

The theme of this year's General Assembly (GA), June 25–29 in Providence is "Love Reaches Out." Here are three ways you can reach out in love as we prepare to gather for GA 2014.

Help Feed the Hungry by Creating a Bowl

Each year, the General Assembly reaches out to the host community with a Service Project. This year's project benefits two outstanding local organizations that serve the homeless: **Housing First Rhode Island** and **McAuley House**. To help raise money, we will be selling symbolic "empty bowls."

This is a call to artisans in pottery, ceramics, wood, metal, or glass, to donate one or more samples of your work, which we'll display and sell for a worthy price. Perhaps we'll sell chances on one or two of them as well.

We are also looking for more modest bowls, given with intention and love. Painting ceramic bowls together to raise money to feed the hungry would be a great service project for a youth group, a Religious Education class, or an adult church or community group.

Not artistically inclined yourself? You still can help by recruiting bowl donors in your area, helping to gather bowls and bring them to GA, or volunteering to spend some time in the Exhibit Hall booth selling them. There's room in this project for everyone! Interested? Curious? Explore the possibilities by contacting GA Service Project Coordinator Nori Duncan of Providence (nori.duncan@gmail.com).

Reach Out in Your Congregation

Who would benefit from GA? Who would make a good delegate? Unfamiliarity and cost might give some folks pause, and they may be hesitant to ask, especially if they're new. Why not reach out and encourage them? Could you start a fund to help pay for GA attendance? Or run a special fundraising event (you can find ideas on the GA website: www.uua.org/ga)? Or offer help with child care or transportation?

Share Your Talents at GA

There are lots of volunteer opportunities at GA – see which ones might suit you at www.uua.org/ga/registration/financialaid/14930.shtml.

Do you love to sing? When you get to GA, plan to sign up for the GA Choir! Learn about it at www.uua.org/ga/program/contribute/174728.shtml.

Or maybe you can help sponsor the unique **Waterfire** event on June 28, where we'll be Standing on the Side of Love and taking a major role in this nature-centered artistic event, which has brought Providence international attention. Get a glimpse of the spiritual and communal experience of Waterfire at www.waterfire.org.

Looking forward to gathering together in one strong body in Providence!

Beth McGregor, District Coordinator for GA 2014 (BethGA14@gmail.com)



Participants gather for a GA 2013 Workshop

General Assembly Is Coming to Providence – and You Can Be Part of It!

The annual meeting of the UUA member congregations is coming to Providence this June! It's going to be fun and interesting and stimulating and entertaining and exciting – and you can be part of making it a great success! Here are some things you can do.

Host Some Fellow UUs

If you'd like to host UUs coming from out of town in your home, it will mean you will make new friends, your guests will have a lovely and inexpensive housing option, and our church will get the money for its annual funding needs. Win-win-win. Contact Jacqui Nye (funjac@hotmail.com) right away if you want to do it – it's still not too late.

Recommend Some Local Restaurants

You can help steer folks to some of our fabulous dining options! If you eat at a Providence restaurant, bring in a copy of the menu and put it in the basket at the back of the church. Attach your comments or a little review if you like.

Register to Attend the 2014 GA

Go to the (uua.org/GA) website for information. March 1 is the opening date for registration, and we certainly hope a lot of you will want to attend. If you haven't been to a GA, it's really fun and there is so much to do! There's even some good shopping!

See you in church,
Beth Armstrong for the First Unitarian GA Planning Committee (Stew Armstrong, Graham Nye, and Bob Cox)



Community Life

February All-Parish Supper

Friday, February 7 (note the date: a week earlier than usual)

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

7:45p Program in the Auditorium: “Promoting Labor Rights and Standards in a Global Economy”

Many of the world’s workers suffer from company policies that result in substandard and sometimes horrific working and living conditions. The textile workers in Pakistan are an example. What we choose to buy – or not to buy – affects their lives. How can we as a nation and as individual consumers spend our money more ethically?

Our distinguished speaker is Richard Locke, Director of the Watson Institute for International Studies and Progress and professor of political science at Brown. Rick is an engaging speaker and has received a number of teaching awards. His research on this subject has recently been published in a highly praised book, *Promoting Labor Standards in a Global Economy*. His outstanding PowerPoint presentation is sponsored by the World Affairs Committee.

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 Suppers

February 1, 2014 starting at 5:30p

The February Social Suppers will be held at two venues in homes that accommodate a smaller number of people. The hosts will be Beth and Stew Armstrong in Bristol and Janet Downing Taylor in Providence.

People new to the church are always encourage to attend; it is a very nice way to meet others from our church family.

For reservations, contact Shirley DiMatteo (shelly-dimatteo@verizon.net or 401.861.1537) with the number of people in your party and what you would like to bring.

The March 8 (note the second Saturday) Social Supper will be held at the home of Susan and John Weston in Providence.

Round-the-Table Dinners: Can You Host?

Saturday, March 22

Round-the-Table Dinners offer six to eight potluck dinners on the same night at multiple locations around the state. These small gatherings (8 to 12 guests) are a great opportunity to get to know fellow UUs in a more intimate setting than the Saturday Suppers or Parish Suppers.

We are looking for hosts for our upcoming Round-the-Table Dinners. To host one of these small dinners, please look for the sign-up table with Vikki Bristlin-Lax or Mary Frappier during Coffee Hour or email Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

March All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 14

The topic of our after-dinner program will be “Homelessness.” There are many people in our society who have no home. Why is this? What is it like to be homeless? What is being done about homelessness in Rhode Island, and how can we end it? We will hear from a panel of experts including Eric Hirsch, professor of sociology at Providence College and our own Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, who is President of the Board of the RI Coalition for the Homeless. Several formerly homeless people will also share their experiences. Please join us.

Deacons’ Corner

We would like to thank everyone who has offered to participate in the Bed and Breakfast program for General Assembly. This could mean significant monetary gains for our church. We can still accept applications for last-minute fill-ins in case someone is not able to host due to unforeseen circumstances.

We have planned two communions for this year. The first will be celebrated on February 16, after the regular worship service. Our annual Maundy Thursday Communion will be on April 17 at 7:00p.

We are in the process of our yearly Deacons Calling program. Please remember that this is not part of stewardship; it is our way of keeping in contact with the congregation, to see if you have any needs or questions we can help with.

Happy Valentines Day! Just in case you were wondering, the origins of Valentine’s Day trace back to the ancient Roman celebration of Lupercalia. Held on February 15, Lupercalia honored the gods Lupercus and Faunus, as well as the legendary founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. In addition to a bountiful feast, Lupercalia festivities are purported to have included the pairing of young women and men. Men would draw women’s names from a box, and each couple would be paired until next year’s celebration.

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

First Unitarian Contra Dance

Friday, March 7 from 7:30p - 10:00p

Everyone is invited to our First Unitarian contra dance to be held in the Auditorium of the Parish House. Both beginners and experienced dancers are welcome.

HATS OFF TO...

Our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

Dee Reynolds, Gerry Spremulli, Tom Getz, Rick Rudert, Anne Connor, Tony Allen, Gaby Petruck, Paul Almeida, Mary Frappier, John Moran, Lynda Gulley, Kelly Barat, Susan Weston, Nori Duncan, Lucille Riccitelli, Sara Cappelli, Jean Plunkett, Lynette Kapsinow, Lisa Rose, Lynne Fazzi, Shirley DiMatteo, The Transylvania Partner Church Committee, Karen Boulanger, Spence Hobbs and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



Community Life

An Evening Path to Membership Class

Thursday, February 27, 6:00–9:00p

Have you been wanting to attend a Path to Membership class but not able to make it on a Saturday morning? This is your opportunity!

If you are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian Church and seeing if membership is for you, please join us for our next Path Class. This session will be led by the Rev. James Ford, Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator and Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education. You are encouraged to bring your questions – and your appetite, as a light supper will be provided during the class.

Please register by Sunday, February 23, by filling out a registration form, which you can find on the membership bulletin board in the Parish House, in the Newcomers' Café, by calling the church office (401.421.7970), or by emailing me (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator

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 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)

The Women's Alliance

Monday, February 3, 2014

Business Meeting: 10:30a, Program: 11:00a followed by lunch (\$10)

Topic: Urban Agriculture: Farming in the City

Speakers: Rich Pederson, Southside Community Land Trust and Laura Brown-Lavoie, Sidewalk Ends Farm
Rich and Laura will share their experiences farming land in the city of Providence.

Rich Pederson is City Farm Steward for SCLT. Created in 1986, in the heart of South Providence, City Farm is a three-quarter-acre urban commercial farm, a unique "outdoor classroom" for food-growing education, and an inspiring example of how to foster a vibrant ecosystem in a city.

Laura Brown-Lavoie is one of three young women who founded an urban farm in the West End of Providence in 2011. They sell food at the Armory Park Farmers Market, to Providence restaurants, and directly to consumers through a small CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

Join Us for Our Monthly Knit-In

Sunday, February 9, 12:15 to 1:30p

Would you like to learn to knit? Are your knitting skills a little rusty? Want to make something for our Mitten Tree? Come join Knitting for a Better World, our First Unitarian knitting group, for our monthly knit-in (light refreshments served). All ages and abilities welcome! No registration.

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

Be Part of Our First Annual May Breakfast

May Breakfast is a welcoming, long-standing Rhode Island tradition. This year, First Unitarian will host a breakfast on May 17. Rebecca Alberg, Jim Barfoot and Mary Frappier are looking for at least 20 others to join them to make it a reality. All proceeds will go to support the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless.

If you would like to cook, decorate, organize, or be a part of the crew for a couple of hours on May 17, talk to Rebecca, Jim, or Mary at Coffee Hour or call Rebecca (401.231.4104).

Women's Alliance Programs

Alliance Spring Indoor Yard Sale – Donations Wanted!

Start putting things aside for the Women's Alliance Indoor Yard Sale on Saturday, April 26. We are looking for household goods, small working appliances, toys, furniture, dinnerware, pots and pans, utensils, etc. No clothing, please! Better items will be sold in a separate room as a Parlor Specialties Sale.

You can arrange for pick-up and storage now until the sale by contacting Janet Downing Taylor (401.751.7969, jdtaylor39@verizon.net) or Dee Reynolds (401.272.0880, deereynoldsprov@gmail.com). More details in next month's newsletter.

Support for Camp Street Ministries

Your Eastside Marketplace grocery receipts can benefit the programs at Camp Street Ministries. Bring them to the collection box at the back table of the Atrium near the Haynes Room. The Women's Alliance passes them on to 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.

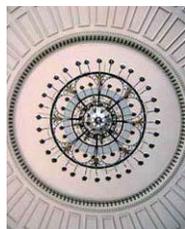
Your purchases help the Women's Alliance support community charities and church projects.

Our Coffee Hour

Be our valentine this month with treats for our Coffee Hour. The Women's Alliance organizes this cooperative effort featuring donations from our congregation of baked or bought goodies: brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake, and more. In order to feed the ravenous crowd each Sunday, we need eight people bringing donations that serve 24 each.

Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour. Sign-ups help us plan for each upcoming Sunday; we'll give you a reminder so you won't forget.





Spiritual Development

Summer Services 2014

Our worship services from mid-June to Labor Day weekend are led by members and friends of the congregation and occasional guest speakers. They are planned and hosted by the Worship Committee.

Summer services are an opportunity for us to learn more about the spiritual insights, passions, and life-changing events that are important to the people who share this religious community with us.

We have not yet decided on a theme that will tie together the 2014 summer services, but we are nonetheless ready to gather ideas for speakers and/or topics. So please give us your suggestions about possible speakers, including yourself, who might like to share an aspect of their spiritual path with our community. We also want to hear from anyone who would like to share a musical talent.

Jim Barfoot, Neil Bartholomew (chair), Casey Duckett, Betty Finn, Lynda Gulley, Joan Richards, Sam Kennedy-Smith, Rev. James Ford

Talk-Back Sundays

Do you want to have rich, meaningful conversations about the week's sermon with other members of the congregation? After a successful fall pilot, we are excited to launch our second semester series of Talk-Back Sundays on February 9. We will be discussing *The Failure and Injustices of Mass Incarceration: How We Got Here and the Way Out* with Acharya Fleet Maull (see pages 1 & 2 for more details). All talk-backs will begin directly after service in the choir room and will last approximately 25 minutes.

Also, mark your calendar for future Talk-Backs Sunday's throughout the spring:

March 16 - Mary Margaret Earl

April 13 - James Ford

May 18 - 8th Grade Coming of Age Service

Chalice Circle Update 2014

Seeking New Facilitators!

While about six established chalice circle groups are doing well, about a dozen people are still on waiting lists from the fall of 2013. We're looking for several new or returning facilitators. We could use your help! There will be a brief training session available at a future date. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee, below, if you are interested.

Thank you, Janet Downing Taylor, Registrar (jdtaylor39@verizon.net); Jean Lawlor, chair (jean-lawlor@cox.net); Marilyn Eanet (meanet@cox.net); Dianne Mailloux (dkmailloux@cox.net)

Art in the Atrium

The January exhibit with Elizabeth O'Connell and Jim Barfoot has been postponed to February. They will be joined by a guest artist, friend of Elizabeth's, Jane Ann Dever. She will show some of her paintings of Madonnas, out of her project of painting one a day for the 2014 year. Elizabeth O'Connell will display some of her water colors and Jim Barfoot his mixed media work.

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 (funjac@hotmail.com) will be glad to explain how you can provide an arrangement and to schedule your donation. Your flower offering will be greatly appreciated. Please put "Sunday Flowers" in the subject line when contacting her.



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

Tuesdays, February 11 & 25, 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)

UUMen

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

TOPIC: The Spirituality of Men

What are your core spiritual beliefs? Do you believe in God? Are you atheist, humanist, Christian, Buddhist or none of the above? Is there anything unique about the male experience of the divine? Can we let go of a patriarchal religion and images of male godliness that are damaging and destructive and find ones that are healthy and positive and what about the sacred feminine?

Facilitator: Tim Dawes (timd02806@yahoo.com)



Social Justice

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). The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless is composed of individuals and organizations that provide direct help and service to people in need “through advocacy, education, collaboration, technical assistance, and selected direct services...”

RICH’s Jim Ryczek joined us at a special meeting in January to outline how we can bring our dedication and energy to this important issue. Our part in this partnership would call 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. Inbetween these poles, there may be rallies and organizing and 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 organizations and faith communities in RI. 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.



Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly meeting, Sunday, February 2, 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 this and every first Sunday of each month – to learn more about our work and perhaps to contribute some ideas of your own.

Mobile Loaves & Fishes

Tuesday, February 4

Heads up: First Unitarian volunteers are needed to organize and staff an upcoming catering truck run to Harrington Hall, a homeless shelter for men in Cranston. Stay tuned for announcements in *The Meeting House Times* and at Sunday services, and check in with the NSJC/MLF table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour.

Y’All Come Community Lunch

Saturday, February 22, 12:00-3:00p, Beneficent Church, 300 Weybosset St., Providence

In what is becoming an annual tradition, the Neighborhood Social Justice Committee and Beneficent Congregational Church are hosting a lunch for homeless Rhode Islanders, and we could use your help in making this all-volunteer effort as successful as its forerunners.

Before the event, we need folks to cook up some good eats, preferably hearty & flavorful casseroles (nothing fancy) that will feed from 8-10 and, of course, desserts. Dishes can be dropped off at either First Unitarian or Beneficent by 10:00a the day of the lunch. Alternatively, you can help prepare the hall where guests will sit by setting tables, distributing drinks and the like.

During the lunch, we need volunteers to serve the food (cafeteria style) and drinks to our guests and to act as gofers.

After the event, we need people to help clean up the kitchen and the hall at Beneficent.

The rousing *All Star Recovery Band*, as in past years, will provide the entertainment. If previous community lunches are a fair guide, guests and volunteers alike are sure to have a great time. Our homeless neighbors will enjoy the rare pleasure of sitting down to a plate heaped with delicious home-cooked food served to them by people who treat them with respect. Volunteers will be rewarded by knowing they helped make the meal — and the experience — possible.

To learn more about the community lunch and/or to sign up to help, visit the NSJC table in the Atrium on Sundays or contact Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

The Christmas Eve Community Collections for the First Unitarian Food Share Pantry brought in \$3,468. Thanks to all who generously donated.

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

Distribution Day: Monday, February 17

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.

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.

The Mitten Tree

We will continue to keep the Mitten Tree stocked with hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks until the cold weather subsides.



This year, our own Knitting for a Better World knitters have a goal of collecting 300 hats, either knit, purchased, or gently used. Can you help us reach our goal? Look for our collection basket in the Atrium through the winter months and help us warm the heads, hands, and hearts of our neighbors in need.

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

February 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Saturday Social Suppers (Taylor & Armstrong)
2 Sunday Service 10:30a at 12:00p History Comm. Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ	3 Women's Alliance 11:00a Zendo 7:00p	4 Lay Ministry 7:00p Amnesty Int'l 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	5 Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p	6	7 All Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	8
9 Sunday Service 10:30a at 12:00 Teacher Lunch at 12:15p Knit-In UU Men 7:00p	10 Zendo 7:00p	11 Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	12 Meditation 7:00p	13 Deacons 5:30p Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Worship Comm. 7:00p	14 	15 Habitat Work Day
16 Sunday Service 10:30a	17 Presidents' Day Holiday Church Office Closed Food Pantry 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p	18 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	19 Meditation 7:00p	20	21	22 Y'All Come Community Lunch at Beneficent Church 12:00-3:00p
23 Sunday Service 10:30a	24 Zendo 7:00p	25 Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	26 Meditation 7:00p	27 Path to Membership Class 6:00-9:00p	28	