



Monkey Mind

This past April 15th was the feast of Fordicidia. And, no, this is not a holiday I invented for me. It is a real holiday. Or, rather, was. Among the ancient Romans, as I understand, the whole month of April was dedicated to the celebration of female deities in a season generally focused on fecundity.

Not unlike most of the world, for the Romans it was a time when the winter was passing and spring was beginning to burst forth. Of course, I note it snowed here on the 16th of April. But, that makes the urge toward spring, and what spring can mean, can call to our hearts, even more urgently.

Anyway, Fordicidia was among the oldest of these many rites of spring observed in Rome. And it included an unfortunate rite of sacrificing a pregnant cow to our Mother, the Earth. As we look at the more ancient rites of spring, they often have a harsh part, some shedding of blood.

However, in the Wikipedia article on Fordicidia, it mentions a Chinese spring ritual where a porcelain cow is ritually brought out and smashed and within the shards many small cows are revealed, along with the speculation that this rite may well have begun as a sacrifice, as well.

No doubt we can pass on the cow sacrifice. But in fact I think there may be a place for a restored rite that maybe does feature a porcelain cow. Maybe an annual event in the parking lot at the church. Maybe...

Whatever, like many spiritual traditions with somewhat bloody antecedents, this moment of noticing spring can be a call to possibility. This sense of new life, I find, is something most of us find coursing through our veins at this time of year.

It is something worth noticing. A recalling our fragility. A recalling the earth's fragility. And at the same time, a noticing of how hope bursts forth.

Like a new blossom...

Fondly,

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

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 May is Rick Richards. Referrals or calls to the church will be passed on to Rick, 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.



Deacons' Corner

Are You Aware? Make Your Final Plans

The Deacons are sponsoring 4 informational meetings to help people deal with end of life issues for themselves and loved ones. The meetings are open to all, and they are:

Tuesday, May 6: Five Wishes program presented by Ruth Arellana and Paul Brule. Start to think about how you want to be treated, how far you want treatments to go, and how to designate a health care agent. We all can have accidents or get sick at whatever age.

Thursday, May 15: Home and Hospice Care. Jane Creamer, CEO of the Visiting Nurses Association of RI will discuss hospice: what, why, when, where. She will also discuss new VNA plans for home care.

Thursday, May 22: Cremation Society of RI. Information on cremation options and costs.

Thursday, May 29: Funeral Assoc. of RI. Information on funeral packages, services and costs. Includes cremation services and donation of body to Brown Medical.

All meetings are from 6:30-8:00p so people can get home before dark. Contact Ruth to register (rkarellana@yahoo.com) in order to plan.

We are also working on a seminar, which we hope to open to the Ballou Channing District, regarding *How to Use Social Media* to grow congregations. Peter Bowden will chair the conference, tentatively scheduled for November 8.

The Deacons calling was put on hold during the pledge drive, so those of us who have not made our calls will be calling in the near future. The call is a means of keeping in contact with our members, to give an opportunity to voice their compliments or concerns.

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



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to:

Margaret Balch Gonzalez and family on the death of her brother Robert Balch who was a member of the church.

Congratulations to:

Richard & Joyce Boober on the birth of their grandson Zaylen Boober on March 13.

Beth & Stew Armstrong on their daughter Robin's ministerial call to First Church of Sterling, MA.



Spiritual Pathways

What Are We Teaching?

Unitarian Universalist spiritual development, religious education, faith formation. That is the goal of the work that I do. In the merry month of May, it is wise to look back at what we are doing through our congregation in Providence in order to move forward, next season and beyond. In fact, the Religious Education Committee and I have been reviewing curriculum, policies, practices and support systems for several months.

When I boil it down, there are important questions that guide our learning for all ages. How might we keep transforming ourselves into beings who share our gifts, make peace and care about our planet? How can we change our local and global world to become better places? How can we make connections, forge alliances, trust and be trusted, in our relationships with children, youth and adults? How can we make a healthy difference for ourselves and others? How do we live transitions, both happy and sad? Handle crisis and express joy? It's a high bar we set, preparing folks to make meaning, to answer those questions. Particularly when there are other influences, like fiercely competitive sporting events and schedules, the not always fair media, academic pressures, worrisome world events and broken family dynamics. It certainly is more than a realistic expectation for an hour a week. I aim to focus more on "full week faith" programming that further support our families and will learn more about putting that into practice this summer.

But there is already good news. This month, we celebrate and share gratitude. Our volunteer teacher teams have enthusiastically, creatively and carefully served large groups of children and youth, all year. There has been a back and forth inspirational flow between children, youth and adults. I am blessed to notice this generous sharing during chapel worship. I want to tell you how much I have appreciated our 7th grade Worship Associates, always ready, willing and able to lead the chapel services with me and to participate in elements of Meeting House multigenerational worship. I am proud of our 8th grade (23 strong) and 4 teachers who had a successful and fun Boston adventure, one of the last groups to tour UUA Headquarters at 25 Beacon St. and more. Their recognition service this month allows youth to share their belief statements and the congregation to celebrate their transition to another stage of lifelong faith development. Our senior high youth led service was gifted to the congregation, complete with recognition of graduating seniors. Their presents are symbolic life tools: thorny roses, a UU Pocket Guide and a chalice pendant. And, there are five in our Campus UU ministry group who will graduate from college this month. A party with a special gift is planned.

So, when I pause to tune in to what we are really teaching, I am glad. There is always more to offer in new and effective ways. We will continue to seek innovative opportunities. And, I give us all, including me, an invitation to appreciate and celebrate what is.

Take good care,

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



Senior High Youth Service

On April 6th, the senior high youth group presented their annual congregational service in the Meeting House. The youth explored the way that words speak to us, inspire, guide and nurture our minds during our formative years and beyond. Thought-provoking sermonettes presented by Rosemary Dean, Victoria Ezikovich, Sandy Greenberg and Nova Drewes explained how tales written by others act as markers in our spiritual and worldly development, challenging our assumptions. The senior recognition was conducted by Rev. James Ford and RE Director, Cathy Seggel as the service wound to a close, marking a milestone in the lives of graduating seniors.

Each of these graduating youth, move from the religious education program of their youth to entering a new chapter of their faith formation. In recognition of this, they received tokens of their journey with First Unitarian, and were given the time honored congressional response, pledging support, continued friendship, and affirmation of their spiritual adulthood.

Many contributions made the service well-crafted and meaningful. Music was an especially notable feature, including a prelude medley, beautifully performed by Angela Sun, the *Old Hundredth* was accompanied by kazoos and a wonderful Rolling Stones piece played by Emma Corbin. There was an amazing, original responsive reading by Jessica Litke-Shiple & Emma Lyons. As the congregation filed out accompanied by the strains of the postlude – a dubstep *Shalom Havayreem* – it was clear that this year's youth service had been a success.

The service was a creative and inspirational gift from our teens. The message, in word and music, was well crafted and presented. I am filled with love and gratitude for all who participated and for their supportive parents and dedicated advisors, Erica Napolitano, Joe Killilea (techie king) Bruce Boucek, Michael Currier & Emma Gross.

Cathy (with help from Sandy Greenberg)



8th Grade Coming of Age class at Arlington Street Church during their trip to Boston on April 5.



Sight Lines

From the President

Each Spring First Unitarian undertakes an elaborate, difficult two-stage dance. Although the tunes and participants may vary somewhat from year to year, the basic steps are now fairly routine. In the first stage the Church asks members, guests, and other friends for pledges of financial support to sustain operations for the coming year. In the second stage staff and members of the Budget Committee work together to develop a budget that is submitted to the congregation for review and approval. Clearly, the two stages are interdependent.

When the annual funding campaign is strong, the budget process flows smoothly without the need to make draconian decisions. When the pledges fall short of expectations, the budget process is very careful; each line item receives close scrutiny and justification.

The budget drive this year was successful on so many levels—very well planned and executed; the most pledges in the Church’s history; significant increase in average pledge amount, etc. Those who participated in the annual funding campaign and those who made pledges deserve our thanks. The campaign co-chairs, Ms. Anne Connor and Ms. Lisa Sampson, deserve special recognition and thanks.

The total picture, however, is not rosy in the near term. Income from sources other than pledges will drop significantly, e.g. the recent loss of \$27,000 in parking lot income, while projected expenses, especially health insurance, will grow. The projected shortfall between projected income and a lean expense budget now stands at \$77,000. Budget cuts will be made, and the budget will be balanced. But it’s a hard process that affects how we discharge our mission, and it has an impact on people we care about. Somehow the gap will be closed—a budget will be born after great travail.

In the long term, I remain very optimistic about the future of our Church. Our paid staff and volunteers are excellent and high performing, our programs are strong, we are growing and welcoming new and valued members. We are planning for UU General Assembly in June, and looking forward to important milestone dates in 2016 and 2020. Yes, we have challenges, but the prospects are exciting and our work is constructive. Thank you for participating.

Respectfully yours,

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

Treasurer’s Report

By the time you read this report, the FY15 budget for First Unitarian will be completed. It will be voted on at the Annual Meeting, Sunday, June 1. This year the budget process has been difficult due to the loss of several large pledges and the subsequent increases in health insurance. In addition the Race to 300 initiative has placed an emphasis on increasing congregational support.

As it appears currently, the voting members who attend the Annual Meeting may have to make some far reaching decisions as to how our budget is distributed. We have to ask what is our responsibility for maintaining our facilities? What is our responsibility to our church community vs what is our responsibility to the greater community? Be prepared to attend this important meeting.

On a positive note, we can be proud that most pledges are fully paid or up to date. And most pledgers have increased their commitment from the previous year. Also, the work of the Deacon’s to provide bed & breakfast stays for GA participants will help to provide a cushion which will guarantee a balance budget for this year.

Graham Nye, Treasurer

Preliminary Report of the Annual Budget Drive Team

On Sunday, April 13th at the conclusion of the 2015 Annual Budget Drive, Lisa Sampson made the following comments.

Every spring, just like nature outside this Meeting House, our community starts anew. Literally, we start with nothing, zero – and through the thoughtful contributions of this congregation we dollar by dollar create our budget for the next year.

To lend an analogy – or maybe a truth about this place. Every year in the spring, our big beautiful Meeting House falls down. Seriously – every brick, every beam, the whole thing collapses and we find ourselves standing here in the rubble.

But here’s the more important part of the story. Every year, while standing in the rubble, we decide to build it again. And that’s what the budget drive is really. It’s rolling up our sleeves and brick by brick recommitting to this place.

Of course, some of us can carry more bricks than others. We know that’s true. But we build it together and by this time in April, whatever we’ve built is our home for the next year. Admittedly, this year we did not built the deluxe model. We’ve fallen short of our goals and in the coming weeks the Budget Committee will likely roll out the blue print for a smaller church with fewer features – and we will feel that difference.

But know that we have so much to be proud of.

As of this morning 300 households have made a pledge and here are some exciting numbers.

- 134 increased (almost one-half of the pledges received),
- 25 pledged who hadn’t pledged in the last year or two,
- 31 pledged for the first time.

Thank you for your financial commitment to our beloved congregation.





Annual Meeting 2014

Nominees for Officers, Prudential and Nominating Committees, and Deacons

The Nominating Committee submits to the congregation the names of the following members for election to the positions and

for the terms indicated at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 1, 2014. All terms begin on July 1, 2014.

A note on the Presidency: In accordance with the church by-laws, the current President-Elect, Beth Armstrong, becomes President (*1-year term*) and the current President, Merritt Meyer, becomes Past President (*1-year term*) on July 1.

The Nominating Committee: Tricia Wilhelm, chair; Bob Cox, Jon Henson, Jennifer Huntley-Corbin, Katy Killilea, Sheena Tompkins

Prudential Committee Officers

Cynthia Rosengard, President-Elect (*3-year term*)

Cynthia came to First Unitarian Church in 2004 by way of a childhood in Massachusetts, schooling in Vermont and Connecticut, and additional professional training in Maryland and California. She has served as a church school teacher for the past nine years (1st and 3rd grades) and as a member and co-chair of the Religious Education Committee for the past three years. She currently lives in Barrington with her son, Owen (12), and daughter, Sadie (11). When she isn't carting her kids around to various extra-curricular activities and social events, she has a private psychotherapy practice in Providence and serves as Associate Professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences and of Medicine at the School of Public Health and the Warren Alpert Medical School, both of Brown University. When she has free time, she enjoys arts and crafts, baking/cooking, knitting and spending time with friends.

Michael Cappelli, Clerk (*1-year term*)

Michael began attending First Unitarian in the 1980s, becoming a member with his wife, Sarah, in 2001. For the past five years, Michael and Sarah have been teaching in our Sunday school. Their children, Andrew (8) and Matthew (10), have participated in religious education since birth. Michael is a member of the First Unitarian Community Band. He holds degrees in Fine Arts and Computer Science and works as a web/software developer and systems analyst. Michael was raised in a family that instilled the importance of community service.

Graham Nye, Treasurer (*1-year term*)

Graham signed the Membership Book in 2004. Before retiring and returning to Rhode Island, he was a superintendent of schools in Maine for 25 years, where he prepared and administered a \$20-million budget. At First Unitarian, he has been a member of the Prudential Committee and has been serving on the Stewardship/Canvass Committee for six years and the Finance Committee for seven years. He has co-chaired (with his wife, Jacqui) five First Unitarian fundraisers (Antique Shows, UU Idol, Auction/Dinner, Stroll), and he volunteers with the Food Share Pantry. Graham and Jacqui have had two children involved in the RE program.

David Lee House, Assistant Treasurer (*1-year term*)

David has attended First Unitarian for over 20 years and joined in 2005. He has been a member of the choir for all that period and has served as chair of the Worship Committee, sometime speaker at summer services, and back-up organizer for Parish Suppers. Professionally, David directed the design and implementation of claims computer systems for Amica Insurance, including the accounting systems for its Claims Division. Since retiring, he has supported renewable energy conversion from fossil fuels, first chairing Rehoboth's Energy Committee and overseeing town renewable energy projects, and then by promoting a national 40-year conversion plan to achieve 90% renewable energy power production; findings from his cost/benefit analysis for such a conversion have been published. David is happy to offer his skills in accounting, communication, and reporting to meet the requirements of Assistant Treasurer.

Announcing the Annual Meeting of the First Unitarian Church of Providence

*Sunday, June 1, at 12:00p
Parish House Auditorium*

In accordance with the by-laws of the First Unitarian Church of Providence, the Annual Meeting of the Church for the election of officers and members of the Prudential Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Board of Deacons will be held on the church premises on June 1, 2014.

Five percent of the membership number most recently reported to the Unitarian Universalist Association, or 25 Voting Members, whichever is greater, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time.

All questions at Church meetings, except as otherwise expressly provided for in the Articles of Incorporation or in the by-laws, shall be determined by a majority of those voting on such questions. Questions may not be voted on by proxy or absentee ballot. However, Voting Members who are disabled or incapacitated may apply for an absentee ballot seven days before a meeting. Absentee ballots must be received by the Clerk or his or her designee prior to the meeting.

Only those who have been Members for more than three months, who are over 16 years of age, and who in some recorded manner within the previous year shall have contributed to the financial support of the Church shall be entitled to vote.*

If you are not a Voting Member, you may still attend and speak at the Annual Meeting, but you may not vote.

Robert's Rules of Order governs all duly called meetings of the Church.

*You are a **Voting Member** if you meet these three criteria:

1. You signed the church Membership Book on or before March 3, 2014.
2. You are over 16 years of age on June 1, 2014.
3. You have made a financial contribution to the church that has been recorded in the office database during the 12 months preceding the Annual Meeting (June 1).

If you have any questions about your eligibility to vote at the Annual Meeting, please call the church office (401.421.7970).

Annual Meeting 2014 . . .

Prudential Committee Members**Kathi Fisler, Stewardship Liaison (3-year term 2014-17)**

Kathi had her first church leadership role at age 14, when she and a friend created a nursery school play circle as a way to avoid attending services. After high school, she religiously avoided church for 15 years. She discovered UUism when she skeptically accompanied her parents to their (UU) church in Virginia. Humbled into a more open mind and yearning for the cross-generational connections she remembered from church, she lurked in the back of First Unitarian nearly a decade ago. A powerful youth-group service made her a member; Chalice Circles made First Unitarian a home. Kathi remains active in her Chalice Circle and sits with the Monday night meditation group. She is a professor of Computer Science at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and lives in Providence with her husband and their preschool-age daughter. Kathi is currently finishing a one-year replacement term on the PruComm.

Sarah Leonard, Community Life Liaison (3-year term 2014-17)

Sarah grew up on the East Side in a non-church going family. After 17 more church-less years in MA, she moved back to RI with her husband (and First Unitarian 4th grade RE teacher) Glenn Wurz. Glenn, a former Episcopal altar boy, insisted that going to church would be good for them. They ended up joining in 2004 when their daughter, Emily, was a baby. Much like Baby Bear's bed for Goldilocks, it was "Just right!" -- traditional enough for Glenn and untraditional enough for Sarah (though she still prefers the fellowship of the Parish House over sitting in the pews). After a couple of years teaching Kindergarten and 5th grade classes, Sarah joined the Membership Committee. She also volunteers in the church office every second Sunday of the month. Outside of church, Sarah works in clinical research, managing and coordinating the adjudication of study endpoints.

Nominating Committee**Cynthia Bapties (2-year term 2014-16)**

Cynthia has been a member of First Unitarian since 1986 and raised two children who went through the Religious Education program. She married George Beshers in 2003 and has four grandchildren, two of whom attend the RE program. She is currently the Sunday Stewardship coordinator. She is interested in social justice issues and has attended UULM-RI (legislative ministries RI) meetings for the past 2 years. She has been a First Unitarian RE teacher (four-year-olds to Senior Youth group) with some training sessions during Star Island RE weeks. She has served on the PruComm, Budget, Finance and Investment, and RE committees. She is active in Zen practice with Boundless Way Zen, including Monday evenings held at First Unitarian. She is employed full time in sales at Ferguson Perforating. She has an industrial engineering background and likes photography, quilting and playing with grandchildren.

Richard Boober (2-year term 2014-16)

Richard is a retired postal carrier and Vietnam veteran and has been a member at First Unitarian for about 17 years. He is currently on the History Committee and has been a Deacon and Head Usher. Most Sundays you will find him assisting the ushers and greeting people as they enter the church. He is part of a team that will invite visitors to explore the steeple and ring the bell. Photography along with reading old or obscure books are hobbies of his.

Roberta Groch (2-year term 2014-16)

Roberta started attending First Unitarian in 1994, when she and her husband, Christopher Sanzo, were married in the church. She signed the membership book in 2010. She was a teacher on the second-grade teaching team for five years and was a member of the Religious Education Committee for three years. Roberta works as a city planner and is an avid gardener, board member, and volunteer for the Southside Community Land Trust. Roberta and Chris live in Providence with their two children.

Deacons**Kate Bowden (5-year term 2014-19)**

Kate is a third-generation member of First Unitarian. Both sets of her grandparents were members. On Sundays, Kate likes to think that she looks out the same window her grandmothers, Arline Kiven and Hope Bowden, did. Her mother, Ruth Arellana, and father, Paul Bowden, met at First Unitarian in the youth group. In the late 1970s Kate's father and bonus mother, Judy Bowden, met here while acting with the Parish House Players. Her siblings, Peter, Carly, and Rose, were raised along with her at this church.

Kate is a civil rights lawyer and voting rights advocate for people with disabilities. A singer and yogini, she sees connections between the messages of the yogis and UUs. Kate served on the Personnel Committee, taught in the RE program and is currently co-organizer of the Community Band. Her curly-top daughters, Lydia and Adelaide, can be seen at noon rushing to the Coffee Hour table. She marvels at how awkward she sometimes feels during Coffee Hour and invites you to strike up a chat.

Sally Caruso (5-year term 2014-19)

Sally and husband, Ralph, have been members of First Unitarian since 1996, when, after a seemingly never-ending search for the right place to worship, they felt like they were home. They have both been involved in the church in various roles: as worship service participants, committee members, and Coming of Age mentors. Both lifelong teachers and learners, they have been married for 31 years. They've raised Ralph's two sons (now 40 and 45 and parents themselves) and their own daughter, Emma, now 23, who completed First Unitarian's RE Program.

Sally currently coordinates the Coming of Age Mentor-Mentee Program. In the past, she has served on the RE Committee twice, once as chair and once as secretary. In addition, she has been a PruComm member and served a term as Clerk. Sally has taught eighth-grade English Language Arts at Kickemuit Middle School in Bristol-Warren since 1993 and, prior to that, high school English since 1987. She and Ralph live in Barrington.

Sharon Kernan (4-year term 2014-18, to fill an unexpired term)

Sharon has been a member of First Unitarian Church since 1984. She has served on the Prudential Committee, Finance Committee, and as chair of the World Affairs Committee.



Community Life

May All-Parish Supper

Friday, May 9

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 - "A Concert by THE GNOMES"

We will celebrate the coming of springtime with a wonderful concert given by The Gnomes. They are an exciting, popular, talented group of folksingers and instrumentalists who will offer a lively program of traditional musical tunes from all over the world – Celtic, Russian, Eastern European, Caribbean, Native American, and more. The Gnomes play an eclectic blend of world fusion music, and they play it fast, and with energy and with soul. The band members include some of Rhode Island's finest musicians including Phil Edmonds (Irish whistle, accordion), Cathy Clasper-Torch (fiddle, keyboard, vocals), Mike Fischman (guitar, mandolin, banjo, vocals), Peter Breen (bass guitar, vocals) and Matt Niebels (percussion). You won't want to miss this great show.



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

May 3 starting at 5:30p

The May Social Supper will be held at the home of Mary Frappier 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 June 7 Supper will be held at the home of Dave and Gerry Spremulli in East Providence.

Our First May Breakfast Will Support the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless

Saturday, May 17, 8:00a to 11:00a

Tickets will be on sale in the Atrium during Coffee Hour starting April 27. Adults \$8.00 / Children \$4.00 / Children under 5 free.

If you would like to help make this a successful event by volunteering that day or making muffins and pastries, please talk to Rebecca Alberg at coffee hour or call her 401.231.4104.

June All-Parish Supper

Friday, June 13

For our after-dinner activity, we will celebrate the coming of summer with a lively evening of contra dancing. We will have a live experienced caller and musicians will include Andy Grover and friends. This is an event for young and old, and you can come to participate or to observe and enjoy. Both beginners and experienced dancers are welcome. Please plan to join us.

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 be happy to answer 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 to acclimate. Contact Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) to sign on as a café host.

Our Coffee Hour

Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by The Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of baked or bought goodies such as brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake and more. In order to feed the ravenous crowd each Sunday, we need 8 people bringing donations that serve 24 each. Sign-ups are preferred in order to plan for each upcoming Sunday. Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour and go home with a reminder so you won't forget.

Look for the bear! On multigenerational Sundays like May 11 and 18, you will find a special "Kid Friendly Foods" table in the front parlor with donations from the RE committee and parents featuring treats just for kids.



HATS OFF TO...

Our Coffee Hour Providers last Month:

Arlene McGonagle, Elissa Emerson, Lisa Rose, Paul Almeida, Erica Hanson, Kelly Baraf, Eve Tobin Caron, Edie Warren, Roberta Groch, Lynette Kapsinow, Mary Frappier, John Dooley, Tony Allen, Sue Meyer, Anne Connor, Paul Almeida, Steve McCloy, Marilyn Eanet, Spence Hobbs, Nori Duncan, Lynne Fazzi, Gerry Spremulli, Jacqui Nye, Liz Palter, Nancy Ferrazza, Lyn Bradford, Betty Finn, Janet Noble, Dee Reynolds, Carol Drewes, Jean Plunkett, Mary Kollar, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



Community Life

Transylvania Update

Spring has sprung and a branch taken from First Unitarian is blooming in Szentegyhaza! There's lots of news to report from the Transylvania Partner Church Committee. First, on January 26, the First Unitarian Church and our partner church celebrated Partner Church Sunday. Each church took time to think about our special relationship. Rev. Ford talked about the origins of the Unitarian Reformation in Europe and how it is connected to our movement in America.

Then on March 30, the Committee hosted a one hour video entitled the "The Birth of Unitarianism." Twenty-seven people attended and were fed a light meal of Transylvanian delights. The video detailed the early development of the Unitarian religion from the mid 1560's to the end of the 1780's. The film put into context the importance of Transylvania in the development of the religion, especially the Edict of Torda (1568). This edict was the first formalized statement of a nation that guaranteed religious freedom of its inhabitants.

Next, our partner church in Szentegyhaza, located in the Transylvanian region of Romania, has indicated that it has received permission to purchase property from the town. Construction of a new church on that spot is now possible and will be done in phases; the church may take ten years to complete the project. In order to meet the immediate space needs of their congregation, a temporary structure is being built on their existing property. Members of the congregation will volunteer to build the structure.

Finally, Rev. Keleman indicated he would like to set up their website to allow simple video streaming capability for church activities. This site will allow the sick or people who are unable to attend services and youth who are in school to listen to Sunday services. In addition the site will allow youth a means to develop their own religious shows where they can share their problems with their peers. The use of this community outreach approach is in the early stages of development. He indicated he is currently fundraising for the approximately \$1,000 needed to set up the system.



Women's Alliance Antiques & Uniques Indoor Yard Sale

Thank you to all who donated items and time to this event that will provide the financial donations the Alliance gives to local charitable organizations helping women and families. This year the Alliance will be donating to McAuley Village, Planned Parenthood of SE New England, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State, and Crossroads Women's Shelter.

Easter Desserts and Cheese Sales

Thank you to all who bought Cheese and ordered the wonderful desserts prepared by the Women's Alliance. This also was a fundraiser contributing to financial donations to those local charities, stated above, that help women and families.

Save the Date:

Start Your Summer with a Picnic in the Park!

Sunday, June 8, 12:00p-3:00ish at India Point Park

Save the date for our kick-off of summer with a picnic in the park after the Sunday service. Join old friends and make new ones during an afternoon of food and fun! Let's celebrate summer and play some games: we'll have kickball, face painting, and relay races. Pack a lunch and bring a blanket. The Membership Committee will provide drinks and watermelon.

Check out the event on our church Facebook page (search "First Unitarian Church of Providence" and click on Events) and add your input.

Women's Alliance Programs

The Women's Alliance

Monday, May 5

Business Meeting: 10:30a

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

Maternova: Saving Mothers and Babies Through the Web

Speaker: Meg Wirth, Maternova Founder and CEO

Meg will discuss the inspiration for her social enterprise called Maternova, a Providence-based organization with the goal of speeding the delivery of innovative life-saving technologies to end users in dozens of countries around the world.

She and her team are inspired by the role that innovation can play in saving the lives of mothers and infants. Today, it seems hard to believe that childbirth is still a leading killer of women and newborns. Maternova seeks to change that.

Meg Wirth is the Founder and CEO of Maternova Inc. and Maternova Research. She has worked on women's health throughout her career. She was a co-author of the UN Millennium Project's final report on child and maternal health. She has a BA from Harvard University and an MPA in international development from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School.

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

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.

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 St. Ministries.



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!



Spiritual Development

Talk-Back Sunday

Sunday, May 18

Do you want to have rich, meaningful conversations about the week's sermon with other members of the congregation? On May 18 we will have our last Talk Back of the regular church year when we will be discussing the 8th Grade Coming of Age service. Talk-backs begin directly after service in the church basement choir room and last approximately 25 minutes.

Art in the Atrium

In May we will have a guest textile artist, Bonnie Platzer, showing her tapestries in Gobelin weaving and other techniques.

For more information please contact Chiara van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net)

Interested in Buying an Atrium Art Piece?

The Art Gallery in the Atrium started about eight years ago. From time to time people have asked if they could purchase a piece. In response to that, the Art in the Atrium Committee and the Prudential Committee have instituted a policy for exhibitors in the Church's Atrium Gallery. Exhibitors will now be allowed to sell their pieces.

If you are interested in a piece, you can look for the binder on the coffee table for prices and contact information, then contact the artist directly. The artist will give 25% of the price of their sale as a donation to the church.



General Assembly (GA) news

There are quite a few applications in the church office from folks who want to serve as delegates at General Assembly, but there is room for more! You can also apply for financial aid. Forms are available in the church office. For complete information about the many opportunities at General Assembly including what it means to be a delegate go to (www.uua.org/ga).

Don't forget to bring in menus from local restaurants, too.

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

Sign Up to Donate a Bowl

The "Empty Bowls" service project at General Assembly (GA) will raise funds for McAuley House and Housing First RI, while showcasing the issues of hunger and homelessness at a booth in the Exhibit Hall. Attendees will engage in conversations about homelessness with volunteers from the two organizations, and they will be encouraged to make a donation and take home a hand-made bowl representing the empty bowls of hungry people in Rhode Island and around the world. The booth will also have a presence at GA Waterfire, with the general public as audience and potential donors.

So what can you do to help? Make or decorate a bowl, or more than one! Buy a handmade bowl to donate, or donate one you already own. Persuade an artist to donate a bowl. Organize a group to make bowls together. Children are welcome to make bowls to donate. Luke Chen, owner of Three Wheel Studio at 436 Wickenden Street, is available to help. You can decorate a food-safe bowl for \$25, or make a bowl on the potter's wheel and glaze it for \$25/hour. Call Luke (or Ian, his assistant) (401.451.2350) for an appointment.

Nori Duncan will have a table in the Atrium during May coffee hours where you can see examples, get instructions, ask questions, and sign up to participate in this project—even if you are not planning to attend GA.

Or contact Nori (nori.duncan@gmail.com or 401.475.1678)

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, May 13 & 27, 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, May 18 (note the 3rd Sunday) from 7:00-9:00p

TOPIC: American Men and Friendship.

Research shows that adult men have fewer and less supportive and trusting friends than women. When asked, men say they want the same level of support that women want. Reports assert that men with strong friendships have happier, healthier lives. They even have fewer colds! Is it time to man up and make friendship a priority?

Facilitator: Tony Allen (tonyallen15@aol.com)



Social Justice

Call for Next Year's Community Collections

Submissions due by May 30

One Sunday each month, First Unitarian donates its Sunday offering to a charitable cause, a practice we have been following for several years. Any member of the church can submit a proposal to support either a program sponsored by our church or an organization in which a church member is actively involved.

The Community Collection Committee will entertain proposals from church members for Community Collections during the 2014-15 church year. A very simple proposal form needs to be completed. Submissions must be received by the end of May; selections will be made by the end of the church year.

Forms are available from the church office (admin@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970). For more information, contact: Nori Duncan, PruComm Social Justice Liaison (nori.duncan@gmail.com)

Standing on the Side of Love

The legislative year is underway, and the SSL committee is excited about its partnership with the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. RICH 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..."



There are some bills coming up in the legislature that affect the homeless community. We will be organizing letter-writing campaigns, lobbying, and other actions to speak out for justice. There's room for all degrees of time commitment in this important work.

We at First Unitarian worked hard on the successful campaign for marriage equality in Rhode Island, and we can bring that same energy and dedication to the problem of homelessness. We hope you'll join us to help create coalitions and working groups with other organizations and faith communities in Rhode Island. 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

Sunday, May 4 at 12:15p

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.

Food & Clothing to Harrington Hall Shelter for Men

Tuesday, May 6, noon to 7:00p

Would you like to help out with our monthly Mobile Loaves & Fishes mission? This mission brings food and clothing to Harrington Hall, which is a men's homeless shelter located in Cranston. This mission runs every FIRST TUESDAY of the month. For more information and to sign-up, please stop by the NSJC table located in the atrium after any service on Sunday -OR- you can NOW go to (signupgenius.com) and locate the "find a sign up" tab and search for (khalmeida@gmail.com). Hope you will join us!

There are three shifts:

- noon-1:00p - sandwich crew;
- 3:00-5:00p - clothing organizers and supply loaders;
- 5:00-7:00p - delivery crew.

Donations of food, clothing (clean and lightly worn) and cash donations are always welcome.

Contact Joe Salvatore (joesuu@gmail.com) for details.

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

Distribution Day: Monday, May 19

The biggest social justice program at First Unitarian is the Food Share Pantry. It takes many volunteers to keep the program going! Volunteer for a shift on Distribution Day:

- Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p,
- Shopping: 3:00p–5:00p,
- Restock, recycle, and clean up: 5:00p–6:00p.

Contacts: Martha Manno (Mmanno7@comcast.net), Brian Paradis (briananddeacon@comcast.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.

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.

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



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Saturday Social Suppers (Mary Frappier)
4 Sunday Service 10:30a at 12:00p History Comm. Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ	5 Women's Alliance 11:00a Zendo 7:00p	6 Harrington Hall Food Delivery 12:00-7:00p Five Wishes 6:30p Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	7 Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p	8 Deacons 5:30p Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Worship Comm. 7:00p	9 All Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	10
11 Sunday Service 10:30a	12 Zendo 7:00p	13 Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	14 RE Committee 6:45p Meditation 7:00p	15 Home and Health Care - Visiting Nurses Association 6:30p	16	17 May Breakfast 8:00a-11:00a
18 Sunday Service 10:30a at 11:30a Talk Back at 12:00 New Member Brunch UU Men 7:00p	19 Food Pantry 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p	20 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	21 Meditation 7:00p	22 Cremation Society of Rhode Island 6:30p	23	24
25 Brown University Commencement Sunday Service at Bell St. Chapel 10:00a	26 MEMORIAL DAY (Church Office Closed) Zendo 7:00p	27 Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	28 Meditation 7:00p	29 Funeral Association of Rhode Island 6:30p	30	31