



## Services in the Meeting House

**Sunday, December 7**      **Blessings in the Dark - Reflections on Hope**  
**10:30a**      **Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education**

This time of year can be challenging as well as joyful, for all ages. Cathy will share some thoughts on how we can re-joyce or as Anne Lamott quotes her pastor as saying, "find your joyce."

Joining her in the pulpit to lend some wisdom from their faith journeys will be the voices of two young member leaders; Emily Bruce & Lisa Sampson. Please join us.

*Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.*

**Sunday, December 14**      **Lighting One Candle: A Celebration of Amnesty International**  
**10:30a**      **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

Today we remember the story of Hanukkah in all its complexity, and we join it with the work of Amnesty International. Later this day we will be sponsoring our annual Amnesty International write-a-thon. Plan on coming to both activities.

*Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.*

**Sunday, December 21**      **Our Very Nearly Traditional**  
**10:30a**      **Multigenerational Christmas Pageant**

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

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

**Christmas Eve, December 24**      **A Celebration of Carols and Lessons**  
**5:00p**      **Cathy Seggel, DRE & Rev. James Ishmael Ford**  
**9:00p (Prelude music at 8:45p)**      **Rev. Mary Margaret Earl & Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

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

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

**Sunday, December 28**      **The Question Box: Also known as Stump the Chump**  
**10:30a**      **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

For the third year James will accept questions collected during the offering (cards will be provided in the order of service and pencils will be passed out), shuffle them, and then respond from the top down until we run out of time. This informal Sunday is sometimes serious, sometimes silly, and always a good time for all. Well, except on occasion, for James...

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

**Sunday, January 4**      **On Telling the Truth**  
**10:30a**      **Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

One of James' mentors once quoted Mark Twain to him, "When in doubt, tell the truth." That bit of advice has set him off on a lifetime of thinking about truth, what it is, what it might not be. Today he will share some of those ruminations.

*Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.*



We are a  
Welcoming Congregation

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## Staff

- Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
- Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, Community Minister
- Rev. Gene Dyszlewski, Community Minister
- Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
- Frederick Jodry, Music Director
- Posey Kooris, Administrator
- Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
- Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator
- Jaime Durango, Building Manager
- Paul Webber/John Forde, Evening Security
- Pedro Vasquez/Anderson Correa
- Sunday Building Managers

## Newsletter

- Posey Kooris, Managing Editor
- Susan Fisher, Proof Editor
- Design Consultant, Amy Webb
- Next Deadline: December 15

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## Monkey Mind

Ah, December! It is just filled with spiritual celebrations.

To name a few. In Islam the holiday Ashura, which adjusting for the lunar calendar falls this year on the 5th of December in our solar calendar. It commemorates for Sunnis Mohammed fasting in solidarity with the Jewish observation of Yom Kippur and for Shiites the death of Mohammed's grandson, Husayn ibin Ali. December 8th is Bodhi Day, celebrated on solar calendars commemorating the Buddha's great awakening. December 12th is the feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, in Roman Catholicism, the patron of the Americas. And floating around the end of the year following its complicated compromise lunar and solar calendar, the feast of Hanukkah is observed in Jewish communities.

And, of course, in the Western Christian calendar, we get the mega holiday, Christmas, observed on the 25th of December. This holiday pretty much everyone knows, is observed Jesus' birthday. Non scriptural, of course. A close reading of the nativity references in the scriptures implies Jesus' birth took place in the spring. But, early Christians tried to calculate from earlier traditions of Jesus' conception, and the 25th of December was nine months later. Also, in the fourth century when it became a common celebration, it conveniently replaced the sometimes disreputable observances of the Victorious Sun.

And perhaps most to the point of this month we get the Solstice somewhere near the end of the month, this year the 21st, marking the world's turn from increasing darkness toward the light, is one of those most ancient of holidays and likely informs to some degree most all of the others.

For me it is this last celebration that pervades my sense of the season. The dark, which has been creeping on us for months, and which I can just envision my northern hemisphere ancestors getting increasingly anxious, wondering if it will ever turn, finally, finally, does.

From this moment of shortest day and longest night, of course we get holidays of hope. Birth. Possibility.

New beginnings.

While we are also running into a season of unmitigated commerce, and will be running the gauntlets of those who resent there are other holidays going on at the same time than theirs, nonetheless, this is a special time.

A moment to notice our anxieties, our deep fears, and how in the deepest place there is a moment of hope.

A good thing.

No doubt.

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](http://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.

Referrals or calls to the church will be passed on to the Lay Ministers who will call upon Care Crew Volunteers.

The Lay Ministry Team: Margaret Balch-Gonzalez, Pat Gifford, Kate Menard, Rick Richards and Tori Smith



## Deacons' Corner

Thanksgiving is behind us and winter beckons.

**Who are the New Deacons?** This year we welcome Sally Caruso and Kate Bowden as our newest deacons. Sharon Kernan has also joined us to fill in for someone who resigned. We are sad also to say good-bye to Keith Brown whose career leads him to another part of the country. We are seeking a replacement for Keith, whose input and ideas were valued. Thank you.



**Deacons Calling.** We plan to contact members of our congregation once a year just to touch bases and see how our church is serving them. Calling will start this month and we will try to complete our calls by the end of the calendar year. We do not ask for money. We want to assess the opinions and needs of the congregation. Your input provides ideas for the sustenance of our community's growth. Thank you for your response.

**Thanksgiving Dinner.** Thanks to all the people who worked with Nori Duncan and Ann Boyd to provide good food, good fellowship and a spiritual experience. And to those who came to enjoy.

**Social Media and the Church.** More than 50 people attended this workshop from five different states in our region. There were many ideas generated. Those attendees from our community are challenged to use social media to improve our own communications and accessibility. We are supporting the development of a Communications Committee with ample representation from our youth (because they seem to have this hard-wired) and all ages within the church. An interactive web page would greatly improve access to our community and its programs.

We support an adult enrichment program to help everyone understand how to use social media. Right now, First U is not able to provide a real-time education program because we lack an adequate WiFi system on the campus. This WiFi inadequacy also prevents live-streaming of sermons and other programs to people who cannot attend. We hope that planning and budget will address this. Thanks to Peter Bowden, Carly Paradise, and Jaime Durango for making the Social Media program happen.

The Deacons: Ruth Arellana, Senior Deacon; Kate Bowden, Keith Brown, Sally Caruso, Shirley DiMatteo, Tom Getz, Sharon Kernan, Steve McCloy, Mary Speare



## Spiritual Pathways

*Our hearts are touched by both darkness and light during the holiday season. Instead of keeping busy to chase away the darkness, allow your heart to open in the broken places. That is where Love will enter in.* Rev. Amy Freedman

Unitarian Universalists may celebrate the winter season with traditions from their past or with those they are building themselves. Many include festivals of light. I am personally challenged in the transition to colder, darker days, learning how to stay warm, both inside and out. I seek comforting signs in nature to guide my winter life, like knowing that the bare trees are already preparing their seed bundles for the spring. I also pay attention to messages that come from children of all ages. This winter I am also searching for ways to understand the blessings that can be found in the dark.

In our Sunday faith development program, the Pre-K class has been welcomed to the chapel worship community, ushered to their decorated pew by 7th grade worship associates. In preparation, the four year olds went on a field trip to the auditorium to sing and listen, each of them sounding the gong. The senior high youth group is highly spirited and open to doing more with our congregation and beyond. They are planning to host an overnight Con-ference for youth and advisors in our UU region and will be leading a gift card drive to benefit Dorcas International Institute this month. And, coming soon - a youth group bulletin board in the Atrium where their adventures will be posted. The Coming of Age community is in full swing, with twenty-one mentees, their parents and mentors forging relationships and organizing to accomplish common goals. There are various social justice projects hopping, from the 4th grade battery collection for the Community Food Share Pantry, 5th grade Buy Nothing Day Coat Drive, 7th/8th grade UUSC projects and more.

At church and at home, children provide positive role models for embracing the chilly change in the weather. Just when parents might brace themselves for bundling on piles of extra outerwear, kids are elated at thoughts of snow and winter holidays. UU families celebrate in diverse ways during this season. I recommend that we help our children and youth experience peaceful winter holiday traditions in our families and with our community. What most children need is time to relax and be with their family and/or friends and opportunities to give and receive meaningful, simple gifts. And remember, the dark also means a time to rest.

On these shorter days, you will find me holding up possibilities for building a healthy, multi-generational faith community of wholeness through my work. There is power when adults, youth, and children are all welcomed to contribute to the life and ministry of the congregation and our world.

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

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

### Youth Group Coffee House

Saturday, December 6 from 7:00-8:30p

Please join our senior high youth group for coffee, dessert and performance. Stay tuned for ticket information. All proceeds will be used to send youth leaders to General Assembly, June 2015 in Portland, Oregon.

### Youth Helping Others during the Holiday Season

Our children and youth are taking part in many congregational Social Justice programs around the holidays. See page 7 for details.



### Constantine's Corner



If you could see through the eyes of a certain stuffed goldfish, you would see many things. As leaves fall from the trees and youth awake from their summer stupor, Constantine benevolently watches. He watches as the youth seek their way back to General Assembly, planning fundraising, as doggedly as a bloodhound, pulled inexorably by the scent of prey. He watches and learns of a planned fundraising event - a coffeehouse, to be advertised in the Meeting House Times, complete with confectionaries, youth entertainment, and a possible silent auction, for the enjoyment of the entire congregation. He watches several eager youth proclaim that the gauntlet has been thrown, applying for leadership positions at the Assembly. Constantine knows that some of the Youth will be in Portland come June, proudly bearing the flag of Providence, and Constantine sees that this is good.

He watches as the Conference season begins, youth seeking out their regional Unitarian Universalist peers, to renew the bonds of fellowship, cuddling, and spiritual exploration, beginning with a successful gathering in Cohasset, MA. And Constantine sees that this is good. He watches as a large graduating class of 8th-graders, some having credoized their way to our basement space, others having joined us from different paths, add their vital passions and spirits to a community of continuity and change.

And Constantine sees that this is good.

He watches as the Youth, cognizant of the necessity to make change in our own lives before engaging in broader action, plan ecological initiatives: the creation of a church-wide compost pile, the church-wide placement of recycling bins, and the church-wide dissemination of information about the feasibility and transferability of such ecological schemes. He knows that they will also be in the atrium, staffing the annual gift-card board for the Dorcas Institute and the refugees it assists.

And Constantine sees that this is good.

Sandy Greenberg, Class of 2015



## Sight Lines

### President's Report

This month I have been involved in a couple of conversations about being welcoming. Our church claims to be very welcoming to newcomers and to people of all sorts: old and young; single, partnered, and married; gay and straight; rich and poor; under- and over-educated; homeowners, renters, and homeless; etc. I think we do a good job of it, too. We stand outside on a Sunday morning and greet those who come in; we stand inside and greet them again; we stand near the Parish House and greet them if they sneak in the back; we have a Newcomers' Café in the Parish House for after the service; we have a membership coordinator who keeps track of folks when they visit and tries to help them find what they are looking for in a church. It made me think of the few times that I was a newcomer in a church. I had mixed feelings: on the one hand, I wanted to be welcomed and noticed and sort of "courted," and on the other hand, I wanted time and space to decide if this was the right place for me and my family, without pressure. I wanted to listen to the music, I wanted to think about the sermon, I wanted to explore the building and campus, I wanted to read the bulletin boards and the most recent newsletter, and then I wanted time to think.

It is really hard to know how to approach a newcomer, given that they may fall anywhere on the spectrum of wanting to be noticed.

I suggest that the next time you come to church, try to look at it from the standpoint of a newcomer. Walk in the building with new eyes. Look at the pamphlets on the table in the back of the Meetinghouse. What do they say about us? What do they say about Unitarian Universalists? A newcomer might well be new to the denomination, not just to the Providence church. Look at the hymnals and read through a few of their lyrics. They are, after all, our only readily accessible holy texts. Look around at the people sitting near you. Do they make eye contact with you, do they smile? Would you want them to if you were brand new? Did you find it difficult to know where to park, to enter, to put your coat, to take your child to church school, to find a cup of coffee? If an announcement of an upcoming event piqued your interest, was it clear where and to whom you should go to join?

If you think we are a church worth visiting, and eventually joining, what are you doing to help other people find us, try us, and join us? And if you come up with a way in which you think we fall short, please let me or James or a member of the Prudential Committee know. Some problems have simple solutions, some do not. But insofar as we can make things a little easier for a newcomer by being friendly, warm, hospitable, and not over-do it, we should, I think.

See you in church,

Beth Armstrong  
 President, Prudential Committee  
 pres@firstunitarianprov.org

## Report from the Annual Budget Drive Team



### Testimonial from Sandra and Brian Ackerman

When it came time to make a pledge, we took a moment to reflect on the impact of the UU community on our lives. From day one, simply walking in the door of the meeting house and later coffee hour, we were made to feel so welcome and special. But more importantly, we needed a place where our children were safe, embraced as unique individuals, and encouraged in their growth. This community has done that and more for us. Through the reflective services, music, Sunday school, and the various community outreach programs and events, we have felt supported and proud of this congregation. We want be able to fully participate in the continuation of this efforts, which means so much to so many, and hope our contributions help.

## Treasurer's Report

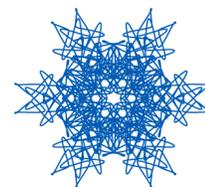
### Making a Financial Contribution of Record

There is something new under the sun at First Unitarian!!! In order to provide those who give cash as part of the offering, to easily identify their donation, envelopes will be available beginning this month. The envelopes can be found on the tables in the front foyer of the church or on the windowsill as you enter from the Parish House. A contribution made by check can simply be placed in the collection basket.



It is also our hope to encourage giving by those who visit the church for other events. If you are interested in making your pledge or a contribution with shares of stock please contact Posey in the church office.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer



## Winter Storms and First Unitarian Church of Providence

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

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

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



## Community Life

### December All-Parish Supper

*Friday, December 19, 2014 (Note: the third Friday of the month)*

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

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

**6:15p Potluck Dinner** - Please bring a dish to share that serves at least 8 people. You can bring a main dish, or alternatively a vegetable, a salad, or a dessert.

### 8:00p Program in the Meeting House – “A Child’s Christmas in Wales”

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

Heavily discounted tickets available for those who attend the supper. Plan to be with us for this family celebration.

Reservations for the dinner are strongly requested. Please fill out the tear-off form in the Sunday *Meeting House Times* and put it in the collection plate, see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour, or call the church office in advance (401.421.7970). Childcare for infants and children to age 8 will be available for parents that request in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).



### Saturday Social Supper

*December 13 starting at 5:30p (Note: this supper is a week later than usual)*

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

Plan ahead: On January 3, 2015 there will be two suppers. One at the home of Beth and Stew Armstrong in Bristol. The other at the home of Janet Downing Taylor in Providence.

### 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 (see page 6 for information on The Blessing of the Mitten Tree).

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

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

### UUA Common Read Discussion ~ Save the Dates, Read the Book

*Wednesday evenings, January 21 & 28, 2015 from 7-8:30p*

The 2014-15 UUA Common Read is “Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square” by Paul Rasor. Leading UU theologian, Paul Rasor, dispels the myth that conservative Christianity is the only valid religious voice in national debates on social policy. A Common Read invites participants to read and discuss the same book in a given period of time.

*The book is available at our Atrium Bookstore or through www.uuabookstore.org*

Convener: Rev. Ralph Mero, retired Unitarian minister who has recently moved to Providence. Sign-up is appreciated. Contact Cathy in the church office (dre@firstunitarianprov.org)

### January All-Parish Supper

*Friday, January 9, 2015*

Bring in the New Year by celebrating with Aubrey Atwater and Elwood Donnelly, a talented duo of Rhode Island folk musicians who will perform a concert of traditional American folk music and dance following our Parish Supper. The theme of this concert will be “Celebrate Being American.” We will celebrate what’s right, and quirky, and lovely about our American heritage...in song, musical instruments and dancing. Their performances are always exciting, moving, and of high musical quality. Please plan to join us.




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### HATS OFF TO...

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**All Soul’s Service readers:** Anika Breker, Jesse Cohen & Emma Corbin

### Our Coffee Hour providers last month:

Cynthia Rosengard, Marilyn Eanet, Maureen Johanson, Steve McCloy, Gaby Petruck, Kelly Barat, Suzanne Craig, Shirley Brown, Anne Connor, Erica Hanson, Kate Menard, Lynne Fazzi, Spence Hobbs, Elissa Emerson, Lyn Bradford, Vikki Bristlin, Karen Boulanger, Claire Rosenbaum, Paul Almeida, Liz Palter, Betty Finn, Nancy Ferrazza, GE Wakszulski, Ariadne Greenberg, Christine Boucher, Penelope Yanni, Edie Warren, Carolyn Sammon, Janet Noble, Shirley DiMatteo, Kitty Kelly, Dee Reynolds, Cindy Viveiros, Cathy Orloff, Nancy Weiss-Fried, Mary Frappier, Gerry Spremulli, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.





## Community Life

### Path to Membership Class

Saturday, December 13, 9:00a–12:30p

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

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

Registration is required. Forms are in the Newcomers' Café and on the Membership Board in the Parish House hallway. Or call the church office (401.421.7970). Please register by Monday, December 8. Childcare will be provided if requested by Monday, December 8.

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

### The Women's Alliance

Monday, December 8 (note the 2nd Monday of the month)

Business Meeting: 10:00a; Program: 11:00a followed by lunch (\$10 or bring your own)

#### A Musical Journey from East to West and Here Between

Speaker: Cathy Clasper-Torch

This "participatory" program of spirit and song will weave through cultures, stories, and songs, with the erhu (Chinese two-string violin), cello, fiddle, piano and voice.

*Cathy Clasper-Torch is a multi-instrumentalist, teacher and performer living in Providence. She performs with bands such as "The Gnomes" and Atwater-Donnelly and teaches group-adult fiddle classes at the Blackstone River Theatre in Cumberland. Cathy is the Director of Religious Education at Central Congregational Church in Providence.*

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

### Women's Alliance Programs

#### Camp Street Ministries Benefit from Eastside Marketplace Grocery Receipts

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

#### Gourmet Coffee Sale in the Atrium

The Women's Alliance sells delicious organic gourmet coffee each Sunday during Coffee Hour. They 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.

### The Blessing of the Mitten Tree

Sunday, December 28, following the service

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

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

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



### Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

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

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

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

### Volunteer Opportunity: Staff the Magazine Recycle Table

1 Hour/Week on Sundays

Earn money for the Food Pantry. Put out magazines before church. Put away at the end of coffee hour. People donate used magazines; others pay \$.50-\$1 for a magazine. Money goes directly to the food pantry to buy more food for those in need. Yearly donations collected: \$450-\$500.

Call or see Ruth Arellana (401.383.0385)

### Our Coffee Hour Co-op Needs YOU!

The holidays are here! When shopping or baking for these special times, remember to make or buy extra for our Coffee Hour! This cooperative effort is organized by The Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of baked goods, brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake and more. We welcome donations made at home or bought at a store. 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.



#### 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!



## Holiday Happenings

### Our Annual Winter Gift Card Drive

*Pick-up recipients' names: Sundays, November 30, December 7 & 14 in the Atrium. Bring gift cards to church by Sunday, December 21*

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

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

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



### Christmas Plants to Decorate the Meeting House

*Submit orders to the church office by Sunday, December 14*

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



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

## THE GIRL EFFECT HOLIDAY SALE

**Sundays: November 30th, December 7th & 14th  
10 am – 12 pm, in the atrium**

All proceeds go to the education of girls around the globe



Fair trade items from the global marketplace

Cash, checks or credit cards accepted.

### Seventh-Grade UUSC Holiday Card and Gift Sale

*Beginning on Sunday, November 23, and Sundays as long as supply lasts*

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

### Children's Recycle-a-Toy Sale

*Collection of Toys: Sunday, December 7*

*Toy Sale: Sunday, December 14, 12:00–12:30p in the Auditorium*

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

We encourage families to donate gently used – or even new – toys, games, and books for preschool through high school-age children. Donations will be collected on the Sunday prior to the sale. Our goal is to encourage children to recycle their toys and do good for their community. Through a democratic process during a chapel service, young people chose UUSC Ebola Epidemic Relief Fund as the recipient for the money raised. All toys not sold will be donated to Camp Street Ministries in Providence.

The 6th grade class is organizing this event with help from RE Committee members and parents. For questions, contact John Dooley (dool@cox.net).

### Love the Meeting House? – You'll love these cards!

The bell – The chandelier – The pulpit and chalice – The organ pipes – The balcony bench – and more! The History Committee is offering sets of cards with images of the Meeting House taken by Richard Boober. The cards are blank inside and suitable for holiday greetings or notes to family and friends. They also make a great gift!

Cards are \$7.50 for a set of five, envelopes included. There are also framed 8"x 8" images available for sale at \$10 each.

The History Committee table also features booklets for sale on church history. Look for the History Table in the first parlor during the month of December.

### The Atrium Bookstore

Looking for gift ideas in a literary vein? The bookstore is open every Sunday during the regular church year at coffee hour. Besides the books that we get from the UUA's own Beacon Press and Skinner House, we have begun to offer books from Skylight Paths Publishing, an interfaith publisher of various faith traditions. And don't forget: We also carry books written by several church members and by our own minister.





## Spiritual Development

### Calling All Young Adult Members

*Mondays, December 1 & 8 at 7:00p*

Do you have a question? About faith, happiness and truth? So do we! Join us for a Young Adult mini-course, exploring our faith development Hosts are Lisa Sampson, Caroline Mailloux and Emily Bruce. For more information email (firstsocial@gmail.com). Hope you will join us.

### Child Dedications

*Sunday, January 11, 2015*

Dedications of children of members of the church will be celebrated during the worship service on January 11. If you are interested in having your child(ren) dedicated, please speak with Cathy Seggel.

Contact: Cathy Seggel (dre@firstunitarianprov.org)

### Save the Date for the Winter Week of Worship

*Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday January 13-15, 2015 from 7:00-8:00p*

Don't let the Mid-Winter Blues get you down.

Come experience Mid-week Worship and feel revived!

- Rev. Mary Margaret Earl will reflect on Social Class and its effect on our lives.
- A good ol' Fashioned Hymn Sing from the Silver and Teal Hymnals.
- A Contemplative Experience with Fred and James.

All leading into Martin Luther King weekend!

Families are welcome at all times. Think about singing together!

Childcare will be available. More details to follow!

Energy, Warmth, Caring Community



### Art in the Atrium

December is our Annual Collective Holiday Exhibit month, dedicated to exhibiting work of the artists of our congregation. The theme is the winter Christmas holidays, but it is not strictly enforced, so other subjects are welcome.

The month of January is still open for artists interested in showing their work.

Please contact Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net)

### Interested in Buying One of the Pieces of Art in the Atrium?

The Art Gallery in the Atrium started about eight years. From time to time people have asked if they could purchase a piece. In response, 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. The artists will give 25% of the price of their sale as a donation to the church.

If you are interested in a piece, look for the binder on the coffee table in the Atrium for prices and contact information; you can then contact the artist directly.

### Flowers for the Sunday Services

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

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

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

### UUMen

*Sunday, December 14 at 7:00p*

Topic: Almost 2000 years ago Seneca wrote a friend a letter "On the Shortness of Life," challenging the notion, attributed to Hippocrates, that life is short. Seneca argued that life is certainly long enough; we don't need to grumble about its brevity, but we do need to know how to use it. We'll examine the points he makes to see why his views are still considered helpful.

Facilitator Tony Allen (tonyallenri@gmail.com)

### 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, December 9 & 23, 7:00p*

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

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)



## Social Justice

### Annual Write-a-thon for Human Rights

*Sunday, December 14, 1:00-5:00p*

The Global Write-a-thon is the world's largest letter-writing event in celebration of International Human Rights Day. The Providence celebration, an Open House suitable for young people and Families, is held at First Unitarian and sponsored by the World Affairs Committee assisted by the Providence chapter of Amnesty International. Refreshments will be served.

The guest speakers this year will be Clement and Aline Shabani who formed an association in their town for women's and children's rights, in the Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC). Soldiers came to their home, threatened them, and then returned to assault them. Fearing worse, they gathered their children and during the night started the long walk across country to get away. Hours later, their home was burned down. They have been resettled as refugees in Providence. No registration necessary.

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

### Standing on the Side of Love

The committee has several projects on the table. Changes in the Rhode Island State House make the situation for homeless people more dire than ever. Our partner, Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, conducted a survey of the homeless population in November, and will ask us to join them in legislative work and direct action.

You'll be hearing from the Elder Village planning group, which is a highly successful community-based approach that allows older folks to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. Watch for them at the SSL table in the atrium after services.

We're also supporting the Coalition Against Gun Violence and will be co-sponsoring, with numerous other coalition partners, a memorial vigil on the second anniversary of the Newtown shootings, remembering all victims of gun violence. Please join us on **Thursday, December 11 at 7:00p** at our Church.

We're moving our committee meetings to Sunday after coffee hour. Next meeting is Sunday, January 11 at 12:00p. In the meantime, come talk to us at our table after Sunday services.



### News & Notes from Neighborhood Social Justice

*Monthly meeting, Sunday, December 7, 12:15p in the Haynes Room*

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

### First Unitarian Mobile Loaves & Fishes

*Tuesday, December 2, 12:15p*

Thanks to all who helped with our mission to Harrington Hall last month. Your work and donations helped us feed over 75 homeless men. First Unitarian is part of an 11 church coalition - Mobile Loaves & Fishes - whose mission it is to feed the hungry & homeless in RI. Every month, on the first Tuesday, we serve the men at Harrington Hall, who would otherwise not have a meal. We prepare a hot entree, sandwiches, snacks & desserts, and a drink. We transport the meal and serve the men there. We rely on YOU to assist us in this mission. And you have been both gracious and generous with your time and donations, and we thank you.

Last month we prepared a Thanksgiving-themed meal: a home-cooked entree of turkey a-la-king served over a bed of rice, with cranberry sauce, a dinner salad, roll and beverage. Additionally, the men were given a sandwich, a protein snack, fruit and choice of various toiletries, as well as a new pair of socks & boxers. Lastly, hot coffee and holiday pies & homemade cookies completed their meal. They were both delighted and grateful.

For our upcoming missions, we are always looking for more volunteers, as well as donations. Stop by our table on Sundays to learn more about us and this meaningful mission.

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

*Distribution Day: Monday, December 15*

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), 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.

### A Special Item Needed for our Community Food Share Pantry

It's important for the clients of the Community Food Share Pantry to have working smoke detectors. Please donate batteries – **AA**  or **9-volt** to help us provide this safety item. Bring donations to Chapel, classrooms or RE Office.

Our 4th grade teachers and students are coordinating this community collection.

### Magazine Recycle

Donate used magazines, especially special interest ones. Select magazines for yourself. Donate \$.50-\$1 for each magazine you take.

All money goes directly to the Food Pantry to provide more food for those suffering from food insecurity. Magazines available free to the clients on Food Pantry day. Leave under the table by the water fountain in the Atrium.

### Calendars! Calendars!

Donate all those free calendars and holiday cards you receive from charities to the clients at the Food Pantry. Leave in the church office.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Zendo 7:00p Young Adult mini-course 7:00p</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>First Unitarian Mobile Loaves &amp; Fishes 12:00-7:00p</p> <p>Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>ASHURA</p> 	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Youth Group Coffeehouse 7:00-8:30p</p>
<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Worship Service 10:30a at 11:30a Holiday Sales at 12:00p Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>Women's Alliance 11:00a BODHI DAY</p>  <p>Zendo 7:00p Young Adult mini-course 7:00p</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Deacons 6:00p Gun Violence Vigil 7:00p</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>LADY OF GUADALUPE</p> 	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Path to Membership Class 9:00a-12:30p</p> <p>Saturday Social Supper (Shelly/DiMatteo)</p>
<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Worship Service 10:30a at 11:30a Holiday Sales at 12:00p Recycle-a-Toy Sale 1:00-5:00p Annual Write-a-thon UU Men 7:00p</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Food Pantry 2:00p-6:00p</p> <p>Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>HANNUKAH</p>  <p>Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>Worship Comm. 7:00p</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>All Parish Supper 5:45p Program 8:00p</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Habitat Work Day</p>
<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Our Nearly Traditional Christmas Pageant 10:30a</p>  <p>SUMMER SOLSTICE</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>CHRISTMAS EVE</p> <p>A Celebration of Carols &amp; Lessons 5:00p &amp; 9:00p</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>CHRISTMAS DAY</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> 	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>Church Office Closed</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>
<p><b>28</b></p> <p>Worship Service 10:30a</p> <p>No Sunday School at 11:30a Blessing of the Mitten Tree</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>NEW YEARS EVE</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p>			