



Services in the Meeting House

Sunday, March 1 On Belonging to a Spiritual Co-op

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James will consider the joys and complications of our "barely organized" religion, where we have wild freedom, but also responsibilities. He will outline some of what that means.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 8 Crossing the Bridge

10:30a

Lisa Sampson and Emily Bruce

Daylight Savings – Turn your clocks ahead one hour.



Nearly 50 years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. sent a telegram to faith leaders around the country, including Unitarian Universalists, calling on them to join him in Selma – and UUs heeded the call. Join us on March 8 as we commemorate March 7, 1965 ("Bloody Sunday") and contemplate our own efforts to "cross the bridge" for justice. Choral music provided by the Brown Chorus, in preparation for their upcoming tour to Cuba.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.



Sunday, March 15 Eight Beautiful Things

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

In the midst of our Music Sunday, which will feature choral music by the modern mystical Estonian composer Arvo Paert, including his setting of the Beatitudes, James will reflect on the Beatitudes of the good rabbi, Jesus, those "Eight Beautiful Things" that one scholar has called "cryptic, precise, and full of meaning."

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 22 In Praise of the Quest

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James talks a lot about the first and seventh principles of our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes. But he also thinks the fourth – that call to a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning" – is very important. He will talk about spiritual quest and what it can mean for us as religious liberals.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 29 Annual Senior High Youth Service – Multigenerational

10:30a

Members of the Senior High Youth Group

Youth are shapers of our UU living tradition. Please come support and participate in their creative worship experience. The service will include recognition of our graduating seniors.

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

Sunday, April 5 An Easter Sunday Celebration – Multigenerational Service

Child Dedications will be celebrated during the service.



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

Inside

Monkey Mind	2
Spiritual Pathways	3
Sight Lines	4
Ministerial Search	5
Annual Budget Drive	6
Community Life	7
Spiritual Development	9
Social Justice	10
Monthly Calendar	11

Staff

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
 Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, Community Minister
 Rev. Gene Dyszlewski, Community Minister
 Rev. Gwendolyn Howard, 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: March 15

First Unitarian Church of Providence
 One Benevolent Street
 Providence, Rhode Island 02906
 Tel: 401.421.7970
 Fax: 401.276.4291

Web: www.firstunitarianprov.org
 Email: min@firstunitarianprov.org
dre@firstunitarianprov.org
admin@firstunitarianprov.org
mem@firstunitarianprov.org



Monkey Mind

Well, if I have allowed myself to think it really isn't happening, that I'm not really retiring from parish ministry, it is getting increasingly hard to deny. I'm so grateful to the Rev. Parisa Parsa for coming from the UUA to preach and then to meet with those who were able to stay to talk about ministerial transition within our Association. And I'm very impressed by our process to select a Ministerial Search Committee.

The task is provided for in our bylaws. The Nominating Committee is charged with presenting, in a timely way, a slate of candidates for the congregation to vote on. The Nominating Committee is a group of people selected for being generally plugged into the life of the church, and I've been impressed with the various incarnations of that committee since I've been here. Of course, when they accepted election, no one on this committee knew they'd have this specific task thrown on their table. I think they've done a first-rate job.

I was quite taken that the Nominating Committee went with the idea that came from General Assembly, where we were asked to nominate people we think would make good members for a search committee. Not that people couldn't go with the old tried and true: volunteer ourselves. I understand there were over 140 names for the Nominating Committee to sort through. A good list.

I know the committee had to juggle an impossible number of factors, providing a range of ages, genders, and life experiences. Candidates had to be people who know a lot about at least some aspect of our congregation, but also have some sympathy for the variety of our interests and involvements. And possibly most important, they needed to be people who could work well together over at least a year, and possibly more, under considerable stress, and with that most serious responsibility: to deliver the best possible ministerial candidate to the congregation.

What I know as well is that there could be any number of "best possible" groups. What I know here is that they succeeded in finding one of those "best possibles." A good crew, no doubt. (For the final slate of seven candidates, see the President's column on page 5.)

I'm not good at watching from the sidelines. I like to be involved. I have opinions. Some of them are even informed. But, of course, this process was one thing in the life of this congregation that I absolutely had to sit out. And, of course, after offering up names, we all needed to sit and let the process play out. I think we've done a pretty good job of doing that. So we now have a team of people who can fairly gather and **access** who we are and what our hopes are – really, what *your* hopes are – for after me, and out of that look for a match.

And, as I said, I think we have a good team, one of those "best possible" teams.

I hope you agree.

As to that other thing in my life right now. Thank you all for the kind words and thoughts of concern as my auntie moves into home hospice. Auntie Julia has lived with my wife, Jan, and me for almost a quarter of a century. And we love her very much. This is a hard time for us. But things are going as well as they can, and for the moment we and the hospice team are on top of all that is needful.

The generosity of spirit so many have shown speaks to me about how this congregation is going to flourish in years to come.

I will cherish these years, even as I continue to cherish the weeks and months we still have together.

See you soon,

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

Child Dedications

The next child dedication ceremony will take place at the Easter Sunday service on April 5.

Church members with a baby or smaller child – okay, even a big one – who needs dedicating can contact the church office (401.421.7970).

Deacons' Corner

The Deacons Calling campaign to our members and friends continues. You are teaching us wonderful things and providing stimulating ideas for the spiritual and social betterment of the community of First Unitarian Church. Thank you deeply for the love and guidance you show.

One of the things we are learning from our calls is that it is not always clear to whom to direct concerns, ideas, and questions. The entire community strives for better communication. Print, online, Facebook, web pages, and blogs. Conversations face-to-face and on the telephone. Our Resource Book, published each fall, is a source of information and an outline of the avenues of communication.

The Deacons offer themselves as avenues and conduits for communication and for guiding conversation and questions to the right place. Talk to us at church. Call us. Email us. This is both our job and our joy, to improve the spiritual life of the church. We are:

Ruth Arellana (383.0385; rkarellana@yahoo.com)
Kate Bowden (521.2686; kbowdenesq@gmail.com)
Shirley DiMatteo (861.1537; shelly-dimatteo@verizon.net)
Tom Getz (726.1667; thomas1getz@prodigy.net)
Ariadne Greenberg (247.7557; ariadne15@cox.net)
Sharon Kernan (723.1745; smkernan7@gmail.com)
Steven McCloy (244.5321; Steve_McCloy@brown.edu)
Mary Speare (521.3262) mcs2598@cox.net



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 to the Lay Ministers, who will call upon Care Crew volunteers.

The Lay Ministry Team: Holly Dobbs, John Dooley, Kate Menard, Rick Richards, Tori Smith, John Wilhelm



Spiritual Pathways

Budding Energy

Navigating this snowy winter has certainly required energy and patience. Our younger congregation plowed through, including hosting a regional youth conference of 85 youth and advisors, preparing a hundred lunches a week in February for Crossroads, RI, and visiting the Providence Zen Center. We sang and reflected in chapel worship services, hosted a game night, and staffed the Community Food Share Pantry, regardless of the frigid temperatures.

This season we offered a teacher appreciation event entitled "A Full Week Faith," led by Karen Bellevance-Grace, from the UUA New England Regional Faith Formation staff. Karen's work has informed my own goals for expanded communications and a broad vision for my faith development ministry to all ages. In Karen's words:

Full Week Faith is a result of an invitation to engage the adaptive challenges our young century is bringing to our ministries. It is not intended to be the one "right" answer or the only way forward. I hope it invites our religious professionals, our lay leaders, and our families to imagine a ministry of faith formation that is not Sunday School-centric, but rather engages all generations in living Unitarian Universalism in everyday lives and times. Rather than answering the question "How do we get families to come back to church?" it's an invitation to ask instead, "How do we get our church to meet people in the places out in the world where their lives are happening?"

I invited the Deacons and other church leadership to join teachers for this program, since our service to this congregation and beyond depends on collaborative leadership.

Winter is still happening, and March often shares harsh weather challenges. However, I do see signs of spring. In our Spiritual Pathways program, more daylight heralds planning for next year, with curriculum review and ongoing volunteer support.

As we approach the spring equinox, a natural balance in nature, I am counting on the generosity of our congregation to fund and support the next blooming of our faith community. Our Unitarian Universalism is evident each day of the week, not only on Sundays. It is evident in what we care about, what we do or don't do, in what we fund, support, and stand for. May our full-week faith find fresh energy this spring.

Stay warm. Notice the increasing light. Take good care,

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

Coming of Age "Beach Luau Pasta Supper" – A Warm, Fun Evening

Bravo to the 2015 Coming of Age community for hosting a very successful "Beach Luau Pasta Supper" fundraiser. Sarah Cussler and the chef team produced a fabulous meal for vegetarians, omnivores and a yummy gluten-free option. Servers were our charming eighth-graders. Entertainment included a popular raffle, and lively entertainment from coming of agers. Decorations by Emily Connor were amazing. All eighth graders and their parents were onboard setting and cleaning up and working the event. Many thanks to the students, parents, teachers, mentors, musicians and friends of COA who made this a delightful evening. Huge gratitude to Parent Coordinators, Elizabeth Roche, Cassandra Thayer and Phil Swayze for fine organization and continuous hard work. The students and teachers look forward to their UU heritage trip to Boston, funded by the effort.



Constantine's Corner



To you consigned to the white and wintry constraints constructed by the conspiracy of contrite conniving constellations above, the youth wish, in concordance with contemporary practice, to send our condolences, in the hopes that they may prove convivial to the conceptions and constitutions of yourself and those to whom you feel a sense of consanguinity as you conglobate together in your conclaves, contemptuous towards all conceptions of the outside's frozen condensation pierced with the occasional conifer. But now the grammar police senses constabulary duty to be done, and this confluence of contortions ceases...

The meaning of this obnoxious wordplay is simple enough: the CON (ference) hosted by our congregation's youth in collaboration with Sharon, MA UU Youth from 1/30 to 2/2, dubbed 'Monty PyCON's Flying Earth Circus', was a complete success. For one day and two nights, youth from all over RI and Southern Mass. thronged our parish house for spirituality, harmony, and comradeship. Workshops ranged from engaging in innocent puerility with a giant parachute, to hearing a lecture by guest speaker Steven Hamburg of the Environmental Defense Fund, from brushing up on meditation techniques to filling our auditorium with music. "Touch groups" – very temporary versions of small-group ministries – got to know one another over a series of meetings. Leadership and labor was shared equitably as meals were prepared and chores were done. Chaplains were available for anyone needing an ear. Youth-led worships probed the value of absurdity in the face of overwhelming challenges. The "coffeehouse" provided a venue for touch groups to share their energies with the broader group in the form of an irreverent skit, and for anyone who wished to share something further on their own. And, of course, there was plenty of free time – the mother's milk of group cohesion. At the end of such conferences, youth write each other notes referred to as 'warm and fuzzies' (would that each church member could read at least one of these notes before determining her pledge amount!)

On the home front, we have taken a break from organizational matters to discuss 'mongocosmic' questions of life, the universe, and everything, as well as to scheme about GA fundraising and social justice possibilities. Exploration of the upcoming youth-led service has also begun – be sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, March 29! Sandy Greenberg



Sight Lines

From the President

On this snowy morning, I want to highlight two very important aspects of our church life going on right now.

First, we have a ministerial transition ahead of us because of James's retirement. On February 8, we had a very productive Congregational Conversation with the Rev. Parisa Parsa, our Ministerial Settlement Representative from the UUA. Our Nominating Committee has put forth the following slate of candidates for the Ministerial Search Committee:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Bill Koteff | Rick Richards |
| Dominic Napolitano | Lisa Sampson |
| Wendy Oliver | John Simmonds |

Shelley Stephenson

We will have a chance to vote for them after church on Sunday, March 22. They will then begin the long and exciting process of offering one candidate to be our next settled minister. (For more information on the process and what happens next, please see page 5.)

In April, our three presidents (Merritt Meyer, Cynthia Rosengard, and I) will choose an interim minister from a short list to be provided by the UUA. James's retirement is official in August, and our interim minister will take over at that time. With luck, we will be able to choose our settled minister in April of 2016, and he/she will begin the new ministry in August of 2016. The Search Committee will be turning to the congregation for feedback on many levels as they do their work, and I urge you to keep the lines of communication with them open.

Second, we are soon to begin our Annual Budget Drive. We have a strong ABD Committee who have specific and well-thought-out goals for this year. Our overarching goal is to become free of our dependence on our endowment for operating expenses. We all need to think hard about how we can personally contribute toward that important objective. Our budget is stretched so tightly at this time that there is no way to balance it without increasing our revenue. The ABD committee will explain all this to you in detail, but I want to ask you to be ready to listen.

I am proud of this church and its activities. I love the building, the Sunday worship services, and the music. I love to see the activities of the children and youth and feel we give them a strong grounding in liberal religion, which will form a good foundation for their life decisions. I love to show us off to friends from out of town. I want our children and grandchildren to be able to do that, too. We are the stewards of the future of First Unitarian.

Spring will be here in 38 days. Just sayin'.

Beth Armstrong
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Winter Storms and First Unitarian

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

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

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



Treasurer's Report

With 58.3% of the fiscal year complete, we have received 66.3% of the amount budgeted as pledge receipts. This is a result of the numerous individuals who paid in full before the end of 2014 to take advantage of IRS deductions. Sunday cash collections are now only 2% below what is anticipated. Rentals will exceed what was anticipated. This appears to predict a balanced budget for FY15; however, recent snow removal costs will present a challenge to maintaining a balanced budget.



In October, the Prudential Committee asked the Personnel Committee to review staff costs. A very detailed report was prepared and presented in January. A number of scenarios were reviewed which identified actions that could be taken to reduce costs. The majority of the possible actions would seriously hurt the Church's ability to provide wanted programs and services. The quality of our staff was identified as a strength which would be greatly affected by reducing benefits or cutting staff. The PruComm made several adjustments which would affect new hires and is holding off on any changes which would affect current staff until the Annual Budget Drive is completed. If the goals established for the Budget Drive are met, we will protect the benefits of our staff.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer

HATS OFF TO...

Our Wholly Families: Kaila Armesto-Royston & Khemrin Armesto-Royston, Jorge Armesto, Steve Murphy; Elizabeth Schibuk & Jesse Cohen; Emma Corbin & Jennifer Huntley

Our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

The Cook-Off Casserole Cooks, Tony Allen, Shirley Brown, Mary Frappier, Paul Almeida, Steve McCloy, Nancy Weiss-Fried, Penelope Yanni, Cynthia Rosengard, George Beshers, Roberta Groch, Betty Finn, Lyn Bradford, Dee Reynolds, Brett Summers, Elizabeth Roche, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us



Find Us on Facebook!

First Unitarian's Facebook page is loaded with updates, useful links, photos, and more!

Type "First Unitarian Providence" in the search box and check it out!

The Search for Our Next Settled Minister: The Process Begins

Choosing a Ministerial Search Committee

In order to choose a Search Committee for our next settled minister, we have followed a process that is mandated by our bylaws and recommended strongly by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

Last fall, the Prudential Committee charged the Nominating Committee (Cindy Bapties, Richard Boober, Bob Cox, Roberta Groch, Jon Henson, Jen Huntley-Corbin) to nominate a seven-person slate to be placed before the congregation on Sunday, March 22, 2015. They began their work in September of 2014.

In October, the NomCom asked all members of the church to identify five (more or less) church members they would trust to make such an important decision. Over 140 names were submitted. They then narrowed that large list down to 28. They contacted those people and asked if they would be willing to serve on the Search Committee, given its time demands. That narrowed the list down quite a bit, and they eventually ended up with 14 potential candidates.

Those 14 people were sent a questionnaire and asked to fill it out and return it. Questions were asked that tried to determine the background of the responder, his/her history with our church and with UU churches elsewhere, their current activities at our church, what special skills he/she would bring to the work of the committee, and others.

The next task was to select seven people who represented various demographics and activities in the congregation and who had the time, the commitment, and the ability to work well with others. They agreed upon the following group of seven, whose bios will be available soon:

Bill Koteff	Rick Richards
Dominic Napolitano	Lisa Sampson
Wendy Oliver	John Simmonds
Shelley Stephenson	

After the service on March 22, the congregation will vote on this slate. According to our bylaws, it is possible to nominate from the floor at that meeting, in which case, the voting would be done by ballot with church members choosing seven names from the final list of nominees.

Defining Who We Are and What We Want

Once the Search Committee has been elected, their work will begin. They will meet together in a retreat to begin to get to know each other and identify some of their dreams and fears about the future. They will create a detailed survey for the whole congregation that will enable all of us to share our dreams as well. They will pay a great deal of attention to what we tell them we are looking for in our next settled minister. By the end of November, they will have completed a UUA-generated website questionnaire (called the Congregational Record), that will introduce First Unitarian to prospective ministerial candidates.

In December, ministers in search will post their own profiles and can indicate their interest in our congregation. Meanwhile, the Search Committee will create a detailed website describing who we are and what we are looking for.

Narrowing the Field of Candidates

In January begins a process that the Rev. Parisa Parsa, our Settlement Representative, likened to computer dating – with our Search Committee and interested ministerial candidates exchanging website profiles and narrowing their options. Phone/skype interviews will narrow the

list some more. The Search Committee will finally choose between three and five “pre-candidates” and will invite each of them to Providence for a weekend, which is basically a long job interview, culminating in the candidates conducting a worship service in a neutral pulpit somewhere in New England.

Calling a New Minister

In early April, the Search Committee will narrow its choice to one unanimous candidate and invite him/her to “candidate” at First Unitarian. If the candidate agrees, he/she will be with us for a full week in late April or early May. Between two Sunday services, there will be opportunities for everyone to meet and greet him/her in various social and professional activities. After the second Sunday service, the candidate will leave the building, and the voting members of the congregation will be asked to vote yes or no for the candidate. If the percentage of yes votes is sufficiently high (usually ministers are reluctant to accept a vote of less than 95%), we will have succeeded in calling a new minister.

In the unlikely event that the Search Committee does not find a candidate who meets their expectations, the search can be extended to a second year. Our interim minister would be asked to stay on for another year, or a new interim minister will be chosen.

A Confidential and Collaborative Process

Although the Search Committee deliberations are kept strictly confidential, the committee will be constantly asking for our feedback and comments – and listening to what we have to say. It is most important that we all think of ourselves as represented by this carefully chosen committee, and that we continue to talk to them and listen to their progress reports. The whole process will be on our church webpage, with regular updates by the Search Committee so we know where they are in their deliberations.

This is a complex and time-consuming method for choosing a minister, but the UUA has developed the process based on many years of experience in churches all over the denomination. It certainly worked exceptionally well for us the last time!

– Beth Armstrong, President

Who Is a Voting Member?

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

1. You signed the church Membership Book 90 days prior to a congregational vote. (You would need to have signed the book on or before December 22, 2014, to be able to vote on March 22, 2015).
2. You are over 16 years of age.
3. You have made a financial contribution to the church that has been recorded in the office database during the 12 months preceding the vote.

If you are interested in learning more about membership in the First Unitarian Church, you can attend a Path to Membership class (offered several times during the church year – watch the monthly newsletters and weekly *Meeting House Times*) or call the church office.

March Is Annual Budget Drive Month!

On Sunday, March 1, we kick off the Annual Budget Drive with our all-congregational event. Highlights will include a special sermon by our minister, Rev. James Ford, and testimonials by several members of our congregation.

In the following week, all members, contributing friends, and newcomers will receive their budget drive mailing. During the first three weeks of March, cottage meetings, visiting stewards*, and budget-drive-team visits to church groups and committees will take place. Then, in the final two weeks of March, we will wrap up the drive with phone-banking efforts by our budget drive team and members of the Prudential Committee. By the first week of April, we will have concluded the drive so that we can begin preparing a responsible budget for the fiscal year 2015-16.

It has been an exciting year at the First Unitarian Church of Providence. Many of us worked tirelessly to host a successful UUA General Assembly in our city, and many more have worked to enrich the lives of others in this state and around the world. To share just a few highlights, in the last year:

- Our Community Food Share Pantry served 4,665 individuals in 1,320 households.
- We wrote nearly 500 letters as part of the Amnesty International annual Write-A-Thon for Human Rights.
- We fought to end homelessness in Rhode Island through our Standing on the Side of Love Committee.
- We served 188 youth in our Religious Education program.

With this work in our hearts, budget drive season is upon us. This is the moment in our church calendar when we reflect on our own legacy as the keepers of this place and then, together, chart our course for the coming year.

This year we enter our second year of Race to 300, an initiative that aims to gradually eliminate our dependency on the property endowment for annual operating costs by our congregation's 300th anniversary in 2020. We made strong progress last year increasing both the number of pledges and the size of those pledges. This year, our goal is to continue this momentum. Please consider growing with us as you pledge** this year.

We are at a critical moment in our congregation's life. As we begin the search for a new minister, we are reminded that we are the heart and soul of this community. All of us. **We are First Unitarian.** We know that a healthy budget drive is a powerful and welcoming signal that tells candidates we value our church and invest in its future.

If you have questions about this year's budget drive, please feel free to reach out to the Annual Budget Drive Team co-chairs, Lisa Sampson (lisasampson2@gmail.com) or Anne Connor (anneconnor@gmail.com).

*What Are Visiting Stewards?

Visiting Stewards are volunteers who serve the congregation and make personal connections by inviting other congregants and engaging in conversations about what is most meaningful and important to them as a part of this congregation. This year, the Stewards will be contacting recent new members.

Visiting Stewards are communicators, providing and gathering information to share. They are mail carriers, personally accepting and delivering financial commitments with discretion, protecting the privacy of the people they visit. And they are personal and sincere thank-ers. Please accept their invitation when they call!

**Pledging Is Easy!

There are three easy ways to make your pledge:

1. Fill out the Pledge Form – Annual Budget Drive 2015-2016 – that you will receive in the mail
2. Pick up a form when you come to church
3. Click this online link (<http://www.firstunitarianprov.org/cgi-bin/canvass/pledgeform>).

The Budget Drive team will have a table during Coffee Hour during March for your convenience.

Proud to Be Members of First Unitarian: A Testimonial

Being members at First Unitarian and contributing annually to the budget drive is an important part of our identity as a couple. Side-by-side, we attended our first service together and eventually signed the Membership Book. Conversations about faith and committing to a new faith together have been a cornerstone of our relationship. Sunday services continue to offer a welcome opportunity for us to reflect individually and collectively about where we're heading together.



We are proud to be raising our two children in a supportive community that values the worth of every person and grateful for the opportunity to invest in and nurture a community and movement that we know is larger than ourselves and the walls of the Meeting House. We enjoy actively contributing to this community of faith through Sunday services, Men's Group, Friday Night Parish Suppers, Chalice Circle, and Religious Education. We are First Unitarian.

Caroline Mailloux and Robert McKay
Riverside RI

Join the Conversation at Our Cottage Meetings!

As part of this year's Annual Budget Drive, you are invited to attend a Cottage Meeting on Sunday, March 1 or 8 after Sunday service so that everyone can partake in a conversation about how to nurture and enhance our community.

Here are some topics to think about:

- What makes our congregation special?
- What brought you here?
- Was there a moment when you just knew that this was your spiritual home?
- What has kept you coming back?



Community Life

Special Program: Education in Rhode Island

Friday Evening March 6, 2015

6:45p Social Time: Dessert and beverages will be served.

7:00–9:00p Program: A Congregational Conversation about Education in Rhode Island

This event, sponsored by the Standing on the Side of Love Committee, is designed to appeal to parents, educators, and other people concerned about education. Our congregation has been asked by the RI Department of Education to host one of a number of “community conversations” as part of their development of a Five-Year Strategic Plan for K–12. The purpose of the event is to promote community dialogue about the issues, and it is designed to be highly interactive. Our facilitator will be Andrea Castaneda, one of the “chiefs” on the Commissioner of Education’s staff.

Please let us know that you are planning to attend this event by filling out the tear-off form found in the Sunday *Meeting House Times* and put it in the collection plate or by calling Jim Estey (401.351.1748). Child care up to age 10 is available for those who request. Call Jim Estey.

March All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 20 (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 eight people. You can bring a main dish, a vegetable, a salad, or a dessert.

7:45p Program in the Auditorium – “The Threat of ISIS”

Our after-dinner program will feature a description and analysis of the dramatic rise of the self-declared “Islamic state” (IS) and its violent and brutal takeover of major areas of Iraq and Syria. The IS stands as one of the world’s most dangerous jihadist groups and is a continuing threat to the region and to the world. The international community’s response has proved to be both inadequate and haphazard.

Our presenter, Dr. Emily Cury, an articulate and thoughtful speaker, will examine some of the factors that have led to the rise of the Islamic state, the devastation and terror that it has brought, and the broader regional and global implications posed by this new global actor. Professor Cury is a visiting Carnegie scholar of Arab Regional Studies at Northeastern University, specializing in Muslim-American relations. Please join us for this timely program, sponsored by the World Affairs Committee.

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

Saturday Social Supper

March 7 starting at 5:30p

The March Social Supper will be hosted by Cheryl and Neil Bartholomew in Providence.

People new to the church are always encouraged 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.

Last Path to Membership Class This Church Year

Saturday, April 18, 9:00a–12:30p

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

Please register by Sunday, April 12, by filling out a registration form, which you can find on the membership bulletin board in the Parish House, in the Newcomers’ Café, by calling the church office (401.421.7970), or by emailing Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

Round-the-Table Dinners

Saturday, March 21

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

Can You Host?

We are looking for hosts for our upcoming Round-the-Table Dinners. To find out more about hosting one of these small dinners, stop by the sign-up table during Coffee Hour or contact John Dooley (dool@cox.net) or Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

Can You Help Put On Our Annual May Breakfast?

Saturday, May 16

May breakfast is a welcoming, long-standing tradition in Rhode Island. This year First Unitarian will be hosting its second May breakfast. Rebecca Alberg, Jim Barfoot, and Mary Frappier are starting the process. For it to be successful, they need at least 20 others to join them.

Would you like to cook, decorate, or organize for a couple of hours? If you would like to be part of this fun event, please talk to any one of the organizers at Coffee Hour or call Rebecca Alberg (401.231.4104).



Community Life

The Great Alliance Baking Show presents: Easter Desserts

Orders accepted until Sunday, March 29

It's time to choose a delicious dessert to top off your Easter dinner. Each will be freshly made by the Alliance and can be picked up after church on Easter Sunday, April 5. Order and pay for your dessert at the Alliance table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour.

Almond Cake with Strawberry Sauce—This delicious, single-layer almond cake gets a triple almond whammy from almond paste, sliced almonds, and amaretto. It comes with a strawberry compote. To make it even better, you can add whipped cream. Serves 8–10 \$25

Dark Chocolate and Orange Tart—This year, the chocolate selection is reminiscent of fragrant Mexican chocolate. This tart has a chocolate crust with cinnamon overtones. The filling is like a chocolate truffle laced with candied orange zest and sliced almonds, finished with a little orange liqueur. Serves 12–16 \$25

Decorated Easter Egg Cake—This is a yellow cake shaped like an egg and covered with a white chocolate mousse frosting and decorated like an Easter egg. Serves 16 \$25



Grape Pie—This is the only dessert from last year: a rustic pie crust filled with a mélange of grapes covered by a nut streusel topping—colorful, delicious, and unusual. Serves 8 \$20

Orange Chiffon Cake—The chiffon cake originated in the 1920's which makes it a true American cake. It uses oil instead of butter which makes it light and moist. This cake comes with an orange glaze. Serves 12 \$22

Lemon Mousse (gluten-free) with Blueberry Sauce and Shortbread Cookie—Light, tart-sweet, this is a perfect dessert after a heavy meal. It comes in individual portions with a blueberry sauce on the bottom and a cookie on the side. (We can offer gluten-free cookies.) 8 for \$26 6 for \$22 4 or \$18

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

Our Sunday Coffee Hour

You don't have to be Irish to have good luck this month! Just sign up to bring goodies to our Coffee Hour to feel lucky. Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by The Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of baked or store-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 eight 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.

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 get acclimated. Contact me (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) to sign on as a café host.

– Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator

Women's Alliance Programs

Women's Alliance Monthly Meeting

Monday, March 2

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Program: **Sojourner House and its Community Services**

Speakers: Vanessa Volz and Odile Mattiauda

Sojourner House is an advocacy and resource center for domestic violence victims in Rhode Island. It is a leader in assisting victims of domestic violence and their children, offering a comprehensive network of support services.

Vanessa Volz is executive director of Sojourner House. Odile Mattiauda is on the Board of Directors of Sojourner House. She is also a member of the First Unitarian Church and taught for ten years in our Religious Education program.

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

Antiques & Uniques – Indoor Yard Sale

Saturday, April 25, 10:00a–2:00p

Put aside items now for donating to the Alliance Indoor Yard Sale. We are looking for household goods, small working appliances, toys, furniture, dinnerware, kitchenware, domestics, hard cover books, art, etc. Vintage clothing and accessories only please. Better items will be sold in a separate room as *Parlor Specialties*. You can arrange for pick-up and storage between now and the sale by contacting Janet Downing Taylor (401.751.7969, jdtaylo39@verizon.net) or Dee Reynolds (401.272.0880, deereynoldsprov@gmail.com).

Sponsored by the Women's Alliance. All proceeds after expenses will be donated to local charities benefiting women and families.

Support for Camp Street Ministries

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

Gourmet Coffee Sale

The Women's Alliance sells delicious organic gourmet coffee each Sunday during Coffee Hour. There are several varieties of both beans and ground coffees from New Harvest Roasters. Your purchases help the Women's Alliance support community charities and church projects.



Spiritual Development

Donate Plants for the Easter Sunday Service

If you would like to give plants in memory or celebration of a loved one for our Easter Sunday service on April 5, please look for the form in the *Sunday Meeting House Times*. There is a requested donation of \$20 per name. Donors can take the plants at the end of the Easter Sunday service.

To order plants, put the form in the offering plate or contact Posey Kooris in the church office (admin@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970).



Vinyasa Yoga

First and Third Thursdays monthly at 7:00p

A Yoga class is being offered, partly with the help of the youth group, and will be taught by Ariadne Greenberg. Ariadne is a senior yoga teacher with thousands of hours of teaching experience. The class will be an all-levels vinyasa-style class open to youth and adults, whether experienced or beginner. Please bring a mat. Donations to benefit sending youth to the 2015 General Assembly.

Contact: Ariadne Greenberg(ariadne15@cox.net)

Summer Services 2015

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

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

We are gathering ideas for speakers and/or topics. So, please give us your suggestions, including yourself, of people who might like to share an aspect of their spiritual path with our community. We also want to hear from anyone who would like to share a musical talent.

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

Art in the Atrium

The March exhibit will feature abstract paintings by Lachlan Franquemont. He aims to use nontraditional tools and materials, paired with composition and color theory, to create works where he hopes others can find their own meaning. Lach often finds inspiration in math and statistics but will go out of his way to obscure this fact, fearing it would overly impose his own interpretations on the observer. He is the proud father of a baby girl.

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

Donate Flowers for Sunday Services

Flowers at the pulpit each Sunday are donated by members and friends 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



*Glass Flowers by
Chris Belleau
from Gallery Belleau
on Wickenden Street*

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 (foundationforactive-compassion.org/audios-videos-texts)

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

Reimagining Religion

Tuesdays, March 10 & 24, 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, March 8 from 7:00-9:00p

TOPIC: **Loss**

Loss could be the topic of a hundred meetings: loss of a loved one, loss of innocence, loss of faith, loss of love, loss of a relationship, loss of money, loss of respect, loss of our youth, and many more. Loss in a man's life occurs often, and each time it places a mark on our souls. How do we heal? How has the experience changed us? These can be emotional meetings because often we have not confronted our losses; we have simply dismissed them as inevitable.

Facilitator: David Philip Reed (davidreedpfd1@gmail.com)



Social Justice

Neighborhood Social Justice

Sunday, March 1 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.

Delivering Food & Clothing to Harrington Hall Shelter for Men

Monthly meeting, Sunday, March 1, 12:15p

March delivery, Tuesday, March 3, noon to 7:00p

As you may know, First Unitarian is part of Mobile Loaves & Fishes – an 11-church coalition – whose mission is to feed the hungry and homeless in Rhode Island. Every month, on the first Tuesday, we serve the men at Harrington Hall, who would otherwise not have a meal. We transport the meal and serve the men there. We rely on *you*, our fellow congregants, to assist us in this mission. And you have been both gracious and generous with your time and donations, and we thank you. The men are sincerely thankful.

For the February run, we prepared a hot entrée of franks and beans extraordinaire with a recipe straight from Yosemite National Park, accompanied with cornbread and a salad. Additionally, the men were given a protein snack, hot apple compote, and hot chocolate, with cupcakes and brownies for dessert. As usual, we distributed a pair of new boxers and socks to each man, as well as their choice of various toiletries. We were also able to provide various pieces of winter clothing, all donated by the congregation.

We are always looking for more volunteers, as well as donations. Specifically, we need seasonally appropriate clothing, large cans of tuna or chicken, protein snacks (hard boiled eggs, cheese snacks, trail mix, nuts), and *fruit*.

If you'd like to volunteer – and we hope you do; it's a wonderful experience – you can sign up for one of three shifts: sandwich crew from noon to 1:00p; clothing organizers and supply loaders from 3:00p to 5:00p; and delivery crew from 5:00p to 7:00p. Please stop by the Neighborhood Social Justice table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour, to learn more about us and this meaningful mission and to see how you can help. Or come to our monthly meeting, held at 12:15p on the first Sunday each month. Our next meeting is March 1, in the Resource Room. We hope to see you there.

Winter Hibernation Land Rights Seminar Continues

Sundays, March 29, April 12, 19 & 26 at 12:15p

Title: **In Honor of Newly Elected Officials Seeking RI's Economic Renewal: "Jobs! – The Land Offers Full Employment at High Wages!"**

Text: Free 10-page summary of Henry George's 599-page *Progress and Poverty*. See Cathy during Coffee Hour for a copy.

Contact: Cathy Orloff (cathorloff@cox.net)

The Mitten Tree

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

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

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



January Community Collection

The collection for the Transylvania Partner Church brought in \$1,589. Thanks to all who so generously donated.



Guest At Your Table Results

Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual effort in support of the UU Service Committee. Total contributions were \$632.

First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Volunteer at Our Food Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, March 16

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

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

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

Contacts: Martha Manno (Mmanno7@comcast.net), or Nori Duncan (nori.duncan@gmail.com)

The Pantry Is Open to All

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

Knitting for a Better World

Every Tuesday, 7:00–9:00p

Come join fellow knitters for a casual evening of knitting and conversation. Work on your own project or join in one of our many group efforts: hats, socks, mittens, scarves, and more for local groups in need of warm clothing and for our own Mitten Tree

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



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Budget Drive Cottage Meeting Neighborhood SJ</p>	<p>2 Women's Alliance 11:00a Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>3 First Unitarian Mobile Loaves & Fishes 12:00-7:00p Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p>4 Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 Education Congregational Conversation 6:45p</p>	<p>7 Saturday Social Supper (Cheryl & Neil Bartholomew)</p>
<p>8 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS Worship 10:30a at 12:15p Budget Drive Cottage Meeting UU Men 7:00p</p>	<p>9 Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>10 Finance 6:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p>11 Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>12 Worship Comm. 5:00p Deacons 5:30p</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 Worship 10:30a</p>	<p>16 Food Pantry 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>17  RE Committee 6:45p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p>18 Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 All Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p</p>	<p>21 Habitat Work Day Round the Table Dinners</p>
<p>22 Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Ministerial Search Committee Vote</p>	<p>23 Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>24 Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p>25 Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 Worship 10:30a at 12:15p Land Rights Seminar</p>	<p>30 Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>31 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>				