



Services in the Meeting House

Sunday, January 3 This Is the Year: A Sermon-in-Song
10:30a

David Roth

David will offer a "sermon-in-song" on new beginnings. His work celebrates ordinary people who do extraordinary things, how one person can make a difference in the world, and how simple and singular acts can, indeed, change paradigms. Join us for a rollercoaster ride of song and story.

David Roth strikes many chords, hearts, and minds with his unique songs, offbeat observations, moving stories, sense of the hilarious, and powerful singing and subject matter. To find out more about him, visit his website (www.davidrothmusic.com).

*Young people pre-K–Senior High begin in the Meeting House, then go to their classrooms.
Newborn–three-year-old room is open.*

Sunday, January 10 The Structural Evil of Prison
10:30a

Tim DeChristopher

Tim will explore the spiritual and structural roots of mass incarceration.
Tim DeChristopher spent 21 months in prison after he disrupted an illegitimate Bureau of Land Management oil and gas auction in December of 2008 by outbidding oil companies for parcels around Arches and Canyonlands national parks in Utah. His actions and imprisonment earned him a national and international media presence, which he has used as a platform to spread the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for bold, confrontational action in order to create a just and healthy world. He also created the climate justice organization Peaceful Uprising in Salt Lake City and, most recently, the Climate Disobedience Center. He has spent the past two years as a student at Harvard Divinity School, and he continues to work for a livable future.

*Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.
A workshop on prison justice follows the Coffee Hour (see page 9).*

Sunday, January 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday: Why We Can't Wait
10:30a

Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman

*The Community Collection will be for the Senior Agenda Coalition. (See page 9)
Young people pre-K–Senior High begin in the Meeting House, then go to their classrooms.
Newborn–three-year-old room is open.*

Congregational Vote on Black Lives Matter immediately following the service.

Sunday, January 24 A Steward of the Church
10:30a

Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, January 31 Partners in Faith: Our Transylvania Roots
10:30a

Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.



We are a Welcoming Congregation

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Staff

- Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman, Interim Minister
- Rev. Gene Dyszlewski, Community Minister
- Rev. Gwendolyn Howard, Community Minister
- Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
- Frederick Jodry, Music Director
- Posey Kooris, Administrator
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From My Window . . .

As we come to the end of the calendar year and close to the halfway point of my time with you, it seems fitting to provide you with a midterm assessment of our time together. When I began my ministry with you, back in August, my first order of business was to find out as much as I could about who you are as a congregation. Several dozen interviews with individuals and groups gave me a pretty good picture of how you see yourselves. There is much about the First Unitarian Church to which you are committed, for which you are proud, and of which you are fond. I think much of this congregation's health stems from these feelings and dynamics. In those sessions, I also learned that you have some very definite ambitions toward which you want to aspire during this transition.

You let me know that you want to take a stand and act toward social justice goals beyond the walls of the church. You said that you want to have a better infrastructure within the congregation for taking care of each other. And finally, you made it clear that you want to be more responsible for the stewardship of this church, so that the cost of doing business will be more reflective of membership support and less reliant on income from your endowments. You talked of satisfaction, even pride, with your Religious Education program. And you spoke of the centrality of Sunday worship as the core of the congregation's spiritual vitality. Regarding worship, with perhaps a few starts and stops, as we all got used to some minor adjustments – me to your styles and you to mine – we seem to have created an acceptably comfortable stream in which to share a spiritual/religious Sunday worship experience. I don't suppose it's ever the case that everyone can or will be pleased all of the time. It seems, though, that now most of you are able to find and make ample meaning in and from worship much of the time.

You want to take a stand on issues that are meaningful. To that end there are two initiatives in progress. A deep exploration and conversation regarding the congregation's relationship with Black Lives Matter is well under way and is likely to continue beyond the foreseeable future. Another conversation, regarding sustainability, has also begun. Your lay leaders of this effort and I are hopeful that this, too, will involve a deep and transformational participation by the entire congregation.

You want to improve the ways in which you are connected with and care for one another. Progress in this area has been astonishing to me. Your Deacons, Chalice Circles, Membership, and Lay Ministry groups have cooperated in the creation of a dynamic Caring Network that has already provided a much greater capacity for meeting various needs of congregants. For example, members of the congregation and the community now have a place and a structure in which to work on issues of grief in our Grieving Mindfully group, or for exploring ultimate matters in an intimate setting in your strengthening Chalice Circle program.

Responsible stewardship is the issue that remains as an unknown factor within this year's progress. The annual pledge drive will get under way in the late winter, but that is hardly reason to wait until then to think about the congregation's relationship to its finances. I am looking forward to a very positive and productive campaign, as you prepare to settle your new minister. For now, I'd like to begin the pledge conversation this way – please don't think of your church as a place where you can get a great bargain. There is no such thing as a *spiritual bargain*! Please think of your church as a place where you come to find and make meaning of your life experiences, transforming what has been into what yet can be. Think of your financial investment in securing this spiritual home for yourself and your family. Then consider those in the future who will need to find what you have found here. And consider your leaving them a sound legacy, built firmly upon the one that was left here for you by those who came before.

It's been quite an amazing year so far. I'm guessing that it can only get better! I'm looking forward to discovering with you, just how that might come to pass. This is indeed a fine and healthy congregation, and it's my pleasure and great honor to be here, working with you.

Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman, Interim Minister
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday
min@firstunitarianprov.org

Deacons' Corner

Happy New Year. It is an exciting New Year at First Unitarian.



First Unitarian addresses Racism.

On Sunday, January 17, a question will be presented to the congregation asking us to consider our stance on the Black Lives Matter movement. The Board of Deacons recognizes the complexity of this issue. We also recognize the rife racism in our city, state, and country. We believe this question merits consideration by the congregation, and we support bringing the question for discussion in an all-church meeting. We are confident that the meeting will recognize the quintessentially spiritual nature of that question and agree that there should be a formal vote.

Jim Crow Book Discussion Groups. These groups are the initial effort of the Board of Deacons to become informed about racism in this country. This effort has been organized by Deacons Tom Getz and Sharon Kernan. Some groups have already met; others will meet this month.

Grieving Mindfully and the Caring Network. If you have an email address on record in the office, you received a survey asking about needs within the congregation. We are using this information to develop a more robust Caring Network. Thank you to those who filled it out. Some respondents expressed what seemed to be more immediate concerns but did not offer their names. If you have a pressing need, please contact – in confidence – a Deacon or the church office.

Two events in January will advance this effort. First: a sign-up day to welcome you into any of the Caring Network groups. Second: initiation of the Grieving Mindfully group, nine sessions to be co-led by persons with specific skills and experience with grieving (see page 8). We have learned that there are folks within our community who have grieved in isolation for years and others whose loss is fresh. How we relate to one another is part of spiritual living. Watch for announcements of these events in the *Meeting House Times* and sign up if you are interested or know someone who is.

Deacons Calling. Please contact us with needs or concerns about our church community.

The Deacons: Shirley DiMatteo, Steve McCloy, Senior Deacons; Rebecca Alberg, Stew Armstrong, Jim Barfoot, Kate Bowden, Tom Getz, Ariadne Greenberg, Sharon Kernan, Mary Speare



Spiritual Pathways

**“Want what you have. Do what you can.
Be who you are.”**

January – a time to look backward and forward. We tend to easily identify something we’d like to leave behind, didn’t accomplish, or should adjust in our lives. We know that it is also healthy to shine the scant bit of new year light on our happy news, what we *did* do, achieve, or discover. Next, we focus on our hopes and dreams for 2016. These can be energizing and effective practices. We should consider that our children are watching, listening, and learning from how we live and how we judge and care for ourselves and others.

In the Spiritual Pathways Program, we do appreciate successes, while embracing challenge and change. This winter, the Religious Education Committee will continue to reflect on innovative programming, review goals, evaluate curricula and safety practices, and stretch our creative energy toward fresh opportunities for a full-week UU faith. The committee has launched the use of an online project management system, Basecamp, helping those busy volunteers to coordinate. I will continue to partner with our excellent Interim Minister, Charlie Ortman, in supporting the ministerial transition that is happening this fast church year. This month, young people’s chapel worship will balance messages of hope and action.

A sampling of first semester good news in the congregational lives of our children, youth, and adults:

- Marcia Taylor’s Joyful Noise singing group performed beautiful music at the Thanksgiving Sunday service. We can look forward to another opportunity this winter.
- The Preschoolers visited our classrooms, jingling bells, singing holiday carols.
- The sixth-grade Neighboring Faiths group has already visited the Providence Vedanta Society and Temple Beth El. They coordinated a successful Recycled Toy Sale, raising funds for a cause to be chosen by them.
- The Senior High Youth led a gift card drive for Dorcas International Institute. They are co-sponsoring the Standing on the Side of Love social justice proposal and are connected to many areas of congregational life.
- The eighth-grade Coming of Agers and their mentors have been building relationships as they shepherd the UUSC Guest at Your Table effort and plan for their Taco Supper this month.
- The seventh-graders did a wonderful job selling UUSC cards this holiday season. They are excellent worship associates in chapel.
- There are over 55 volunteer teachers, advisors, and RE Committee members who share their time and loving energy with our children and youth.

We have so much. We can always do better. We will find ample opportunities for inspiration and transformation. Before his passing, Rev. Forrest Church wrote the words at the top of this column. I hope they can inform you as they have me, in both personal and professional life: “Want what you have. Do what you can. Be who you are.”

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and justice-filled 2016,

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

First U Fiesta! ~ Coming of Age Taco Night with Entertainment

Saturday, January 23, 6:00–8:00p

What’s better than tacos with teens?! Your hosts, the First Unitarian Coming of Age families, invite you to join us for A First U Fiesta featuring a festive evening with delicious tacos and more, plus entertainment. Chase the winter chill away with good company and food. Relax, visit, and mingle as your hosts and their families serve you.



To further spice up your time, purchase a raffle ticket or two for a chance to take home one of a variety of specialty items. This event helps support the eighth-graders’ trip to Boston later this spring. Bring your family and invite your friends!

Donations for the raffle table are welcome! Contact: Kristen Curry (curryk78@gmail.com).

Individual Tickets: \$8; Family Tickets (four): \$25
Tickets available in the Atrium during Coffee Hour.

Guest at Your Table Box Return

Sunday, January 3

UU Service Committee Guest at Your Table boxes will be collected on January 3 by the members of our eighth-grade class. With their mentors, they will roll the coins so the contributions can be deposited and a check sent to the UU Service Committee.



Please leave your filled boxes in the baskets outside the Haynes classroom in the Atrium.

Opportunity to Participate in the Wholly Family Service

Sunday, February 21

We are looking for families interested in participating in our Wholly Family Service on Sunday, February 21. This multigenerational service has become an annual tradition when we share diverse family stories, connecting us as a community. Singles, couples, step, adopted, multicultural, GBLTQ, all kinds of families with or without pets are encouraged to participate.

This year, our stories will focus on transitions and transformations.

Interested? Please contact Cathy Seggel in the church office (421.7970 or dre@firstunitarianprov.org)



Sight Lines

From the President

Your life begins to change when you put more energy into your dreams than into your fears. (Unknown)

At our second fall meeting, the check-in prompt that was posed to the Prudential Committee was "Please share at least one of your greatest hopes/dreams for First Unitarian Church of Providence." Some of the responses are what you might expect from the governing body of the church – including "A sound physical plant," "Being financially solvent," "No more raiding of our consolidated fund for operations," "Building still standing," and "Paying our fair share to the UUA." As you have heard this year, we recently began reviewing a needs assessment for the maintenance, improvement, and restoration of our historic building and grounds. These actions, which have continued to be put off over recent years, now demand our attention. We've triaged the recommendations into immediate needs and longer-term necessities, and we have begun to talk about ways of funding these projects through a combination of grants and a capital campaign. In the fall of 2016, we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of our Meeting House, and it is our hope that all will be inspired to participate in ensuring the future of our spiritual home.

Some of the other hopes and dreams that were shared fell under the heading of what and who we might want to be as a community. These dreams included things like "Returning to a focus on Green Sanctuary," "Growing inside and out," "Being a unified force," "Being more of a presence in our community around issues such as gun control and violence," "Remaining relevant," and "Taking a stand." These dreams seemed to rest on an understanding of the relative stability that we've been able to achieve as a congregation and the desire to act, to do, and to become. Behind these aspirations is a desire to be more visible in our community -- to become known as "the church that . . .," so that there will be others who might consider joining our ranks and becoming activated in our larger local, national, and world community. It has been gratifying to see the efforts to flow energy toward these dreams as well – the development and activity around our Caring Network, our intentional learning around Black Lives Matter, our interests in how we can engage with refugee communities, and standing up for common-sense gun legislation.

It can be tempting to see these categories of hopes/dreams as separate from one another, but I would argue that by striving to be more of who we want to be and thus attracting others to join us, we will also inspire ourselves and others to be generous in giving and motivated toward increasing the financial health of our ministries so that we can continue to do and be more. As I've continued to feel, this is an exciting and transformative time in our church life, and I am so grateful to be working alongside you all to realize everyone's hopes and dreams.

Here's to a celebratory, joyful, and peaceful 2016.



Cynthia Rosengard
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff decide whether church services 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 the following media outlets:

- TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI-PBS
- Radio stations 630WPRO, 920WHJJ, 1180 CCNX news radio, WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1 Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM, 95.5 WBRU

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

Treasurer's Report

Every year as January 1 approaches, many of us pay all or substantial amounts of our pledge to take advantage of the charitable donation deduction for income tax. In addition, some of us find that because of changing jobs, family, or health situations, we must reduce what we had anticipated being able to contribute to First Unitarian.



If you find you must reduce your pledge – or if you've had a windfall and are able to increase your contribution – please contact Walter Sotelo in the church office (401.421.7970) or Graham Nye (401.461.0971, courtstplace@hotmail.com). It is very helpful to know what you will actually be giving in order to budget expenses properly.

With 41.7% of the fiscal year completed, we have received 43.4% of the amount budgeted as pledge receipts. We are \$9,000 ahead of last year at this time. Meanwhile, Sunday cash collections are \$800 less than last year at this time. The successful fall fund raiser (the Variety Show) keeps us on track in this category.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer

Annual Budget Drive Is Coming!

In the months ahead, you will be hearing and reading about our Annual Budget Drive, which this year seeks to secure 95% participation from the congregation to fund our religious education program, all our ministries, our day-to-day operations, and staff salaries including benefits.

In the past, our annual pledge totals could not meet all of the congregation's pressing needs. For many years, we have used funds from the Property endowment (in addition to the Sunday School and Consolidated endowments) to completely fund our operating budget. It is our hope that, by the time our congregation turns 300 in 2020, we will be able to reserve the Property fund for long-term maintenance of our buildings, and we will be able to fully fund the activities of our congregation, and then some, with pledges and modest use of the other two endowments.

Our seventh principle is "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Your giving directly impacts First Unitarian's staff, members, and ministries, including our wonderful music program, our Standing on the Side of Love initiatives, the Loaves & Fishes Mission, and many more.



Our Ministerial Search

Moving Toward “Pre-Candidating”

As of December 1, ministers who are interested in finding a new pulpit will be able to peruse First Unitarian’s Congregational Record (CR) on the UUA’s Settlement System in order to determine if they would like to be considered to be our next minister. The CR contains our responses to a UUA-designed questionnaire about who we are and what we are looking for in a new minister. Those responses were developed from what we gleaned from the cottage meetings and the survey results in the fall. All churches in search fill out the same questionnaire.

After January 1, we will be provided with the list of ministers who are interested in First Unitarian. We will then have access to those ministers’ Ministerial Records (MR) and their websites. An MR contains a relatively brief synopsis of a minister’s education and experience; sifting through anywhere from 30 to 40 Ministerial Records will be a challenge! From these records, we will contact perhaps a dozen candidates we want to know more about, and we will “swap packets” with them. This, too, is done electronically. Candidates will be given access to our search website to read about our congregation, our activities, our history, our organization, our community, and our vision for the future. We will also look more closely at those ministers’ websites, which give details about their experience, their theology/philosophy, their personal background, their visions for the future of their ministries. We will also have a chance to communicate directly with these ministers to get to know them a little better.

From these dozen or so ministers, we will narrow the field to a few top candidates, probably three in number, and begin the process called “pre-candidating.” Pre-candidating involves meeting with each of our selected ministerial candidates over a weekend for a thorough, four-to-five hour interview, as well as showing them around Providence and spending time together more casually. On the Sunday, to get a feel for a candidate’s preaching, the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) will observe him or her in a “neutral pulpit,” a nearby church where the candidate will be a guest preacher.

This process has been carefully designed by the Unitarian Universalist Association to assist search committees as they undertake the challenging task of selecting their final candidate to present to the congregation. It provides an opportunity for MSC members to experience their chosen candidates, to have intense periods of interaction with them, and to discuss the candidates’ sermons and overall impressions gained.

It is important to understand that during this time, candidates do not meet any church members except those on the Search Committee for reasons of confidentiality. The UUA has very strict rules regarding the confidentiality of ministers in search. Candidates currently serving at a church most likely will not want members of their own churches to know that they are in search until they are further along in the process, so it is our responsibility to keep their candidacy confidential.

We have planned two practice events that will help prepare us for the pre-candidating process. First, we will have a practice interview with our current Interim Minister, Charlie Ortman. Various members of the committee will be responsible for asking questions in different categories, such as religious philosophy and worship, pastoral care and working with people, church programming, leadership roles, religious

education and youth, and financial and contract matters. This mock interview will help us develop an effective way of evoking truthful and meaningful interactions with each candidate.

Our other practice opportunity will involve attending a service in an area UU church and then gathering to discuss the minister and service afterwards. This will allow us to sharpen our observational skills and articulate our thoughts clearly for one another.

We are looking forward to learning about our ministerial candidates, on paper, on screen, and in person. Once the materials have been vetted, the references checked, the preliminary interviews completed (by phone or Skype), we will choose our top candidates. Then the pre-candidating process will give us an opportunity to interact with our top candidates for an extended period of time through interviewing, shared meals, and visits to neutral pulpits. We hope to complete this phase of the search process by early to mid-March.

Ministerial Search Committee: (top, l to r): Wendy Oliver, Rick Richards, Shelley Stephenson, Domenic Napolitano; (bottom) Bill Koteff, John Simmonds (chair), Lisa Sampson



MUCH APPRECIATED!

The MSC would like to thank the following for their assistance in developing our website for ministers in search:

- Tom Getz (article on Transylvania)
- Richard Boober (Photos)
- Caroline Mailloux (article)
- Posey Kooris, Walter Sotelo, and Amy Webb (general assistance)
- Graham Nye (article)
- Michael Cappelli (annual meeting)
- Keith Brown (video)
- Youth (Video)

Thanks to all the past Search Committee members from the three previous searches who attended our sharing meeting on November 22.

The experiences and suggestions you shared were very helpful!



Community Life

January All-Parish Supper

Friday, January 15

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: Black Lives Matter

Our after-dinner program will feature a provocative presentation and a lively discussion of the Black Lives Matter movement. Our presenters will talk about the origins and goals of the movement, how it is organized and how it has spread, and why it is needed and important. Consideration will be given to the major problems and injustices that BLM seeks to address, and some of its activities and achievements thus far. Special attention will be given to the circumstances of African-Americans in Rhode Island and ways that members of our church might choose to support the movement. Our speakers will include Susan Leslie from the UUA; Marco McWilliams, a community organizer for the Providence chapter of DARE; James Vincent, President of the Rhode Island NAACP; and others.

This program will provide us with information and insight about Black Lives Matter, and a forum to think about and discuss the proposal that our congregation become a public supporter of the BLM movement. Please plan to join us and let us hear your voice.

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 who request in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).

Saturday Social Supper

Saturday, January 2, starting at 5:30

The January 2 Supper will be at the home of Steve McCloy in Providence. People new to the church are encouraged to attend; it's a very nice way to meet others from our church family.

For reservations, contact Shirley DiMatteo (shelly-dimatteo@verizon.net, 401.477.9668) with the number of people in your party and what you would like to bring.

The February 6 Supper will be at the home of Elissa Emerson in Providence.

February All-Parish Supper

Friday, February 12

After-dinner program: Being a Muslim in Rhode Island. Being a Muslim has become increasingly difficult in recent years because of ISIL, other terrorist groups, civil wars, refugee issues, and the politicization of the Islamic religion in the American presidential election campaign.

What is it like to be a Muslim in America and in Rhode Island under these circumstances? A panel of local Muslim leaders and lay people will share their experiences and feelings about these circumstances. How are Muslims treated? What are their main concerns? The program will include both presentations and dialogues with the audience.

Save the Date!

Annual Cook-Off to Feature Soups

Followed by Community Band Sing-Along and Jam

Sunday, February 7 during Coffee Hour

The Membership Committee invites you to cook up a batch of your best soup. Folks will have the chance to taste all entries and vote on a favorite! All are welcome to join in and last-minute dishes will be accepted. Immediately following the Cook-Off, join the Community Band for a fireside sing-along and jam in the Ministers' Parlor. Come one and all and all ages.

The Women's Alliance

Women's Alliance Monthly Program

Monday, January 4

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Prisoner Rehabilitation and Volunteer

Opportunities at the ACI

Speaker: Ken Findlay

Ken will talk about how the Rhode Island prison system addresses both men's and women's rehabilitation and orientation to their future in the community. He will include information on volunteer programs at the Adult Correctional Institutions.

Ken Findlay is the Interdepartmental Project Manager for Institutional Programs and Services at the RI Department of Corrections.

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

Gourmet Coffee Sale in the Atrium

The Alliance purchases its gourmet coffees locally from New Harvest Coffee Roasters in Pawtucket. Because of its close proximity to the church, New Harvest delivers free their freshly roasted coffee a few days before church. The Alliance only sells organic coffees. The selections are regular and decaf, both ground coffee and coffee beans. Our coffee prices have increased a little due to the increase in the prices we pay. Proceeds from the sales go to community charities. The coffee sales are in the Atrium at the Women's Alliance table.



Coffee Hour

Happy New Year! Here's a great resolution for the New Year: Sign up regularly to bring food to the Coffee Hour! Remember that our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by the Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of baked or bought goodies such as brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake, and more. In order to feed the ravenous crowd each Sunday, we need 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.



Community Life

Becoming a Member

The next opportunity to take the Path to Membership class starts on January 19 (details below). Whether you have been coming to First Unitarian for a little while or a number of years, I would encourage you to consider signing the Membership Book at this time. We have scheduled these next classes so new members can sign the book in time to complete the three-month waiting period before the vote to call our next minister.

The Vote to Call a new minister is an important event in the life of our church. At the congregational meeting to consider the proposed candidate, 85% of the Voting Members present must vote in favor of the candidate for a call to be issued (although most ministers will look for a vote of 95% or better).

Our bylaws state that to be a **Voting Member**, you meet these three criteria:

1. You signed the church Membership Book 90 days before a vote.
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 have questions, please see me after service in the Newcomers' Café or email (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

– Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator

Path to Membership Classes

Tuesdays, January 19, 26, February 2 & 9, 7:00–9:00p

The Path to Membership class is for anyone who is interested in membership, in learning more about Unitarian Universalism or about First Unitarian. This four-session course is being offered three times during the church year. The classes are led by our Interim Minister, Charlie Ortman; our Director of Religious Education, Cathy Seggel; and our Membership Coordinator, Jenn Nardone. Childcare will be provided if requested by January 19.

The last Path classes of the church year will be held on Tuesday evenings in the month of May. For anyone unable to attend the Tuesday evening sessions, arrangements will be made to provide a "mini-course" as an alternative.

To register, contact: Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or call the church office (401.421.7970).

Transylvania Partner Church Sunday

Sunday, January 31 at 12:00noon

After the service on Sunday, January 31, we will celebrate our Transylvania partnership with readings, stories, and song. John Dale from the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council will be with us for this celebration along with our Interim Minister Rev. Charlie Ortman. A special feature this year will be an encore presentation of the 2015 pilgrimage to our partner church in Szentegyhaza, Transylvania, for all those who were unable to attend the presentation after the October Parish Supper. Look for some Hungarian snacks to enjoy while watching the show.

– Transylvania Partner Church Committee

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!

If you are interested in posting a church related event email to Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or contact the church office.



HATS OFF TO ...

Our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

Mary Frappier, Tony Allen, Liz Palter, Karen Rameaka, Lynne Fazzi, Anne Connor, Cynthia Rosengard, Roxane Stern, Phil Swayze, Paul Almeida, Kelly Barat, Annette Casparis, Steve McCloy, Karen Boulanger, Elissa Emerson, Lyn Bradford, Derek Smith, Roberta Groch, Bobbi Fisler, Colleen Smith, Joyce Boober, Graham Nye Shirley Brown, Janet Noble, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to:

Jack Irwin's wife, **Karyne Wilner**; his daughter, **Nicole**; and his friends on his death in late November. Jack became a member of this church in 2006.

Congratulations to:

Jacqui and Phip Wheelock on the marriage of Jacqui's daughter, **Grace Burberry Martin**, to Sean Patrick Kenney. Grace grew up in this church.

Speedy Recovery to:

Jen Huntley, recovering at home, after surgery.



The Mitten Tree Blooms All Winter

Surely one of these days the snow will start flying, the cold winds will blow, and many of our neighbors will be grateful for the warm items we hang on our Mitten Tree. Throughout the winter we deck our tree, located next to the Meeting House on the Benevolent Street side, with new or gently used hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, and socks. Passers-by are welcome to take what they need.

You can leave donations in the box by the glass wall in the Atrium. Our giving tree will be stocked with warm items until the first day of spring.

– Kathy Ahlquist, for Knitting for a Better World



Spiritual Development

Thinking of Joining a Chalice Circle?

Sign-ups: Sunday, January 10 & 17 during Coffee Hour

Sampler: Sunday, January 24 at 12:00p

Chalice Circles – our “small group ministry” program – fulfills the need for intimacy and spiritual growth of members in our large faith community.

Small groups of eight to ten people enhance personal connections and provide an avenue for religious growth and spiritual meaning. Most groups meet twice a month for two hours in the Parish House or in a member’s home. Group members are asked to commit to eight or ten sessions.

If you would like to find out more about Chalice Circles, there will be an information table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour on January 10 and 17 to answer questions and provide an opportunity to sign up for a Chalice Circle. On Sunday, January 24, there will be a Chalice Circle sampler, which will provide a brief experience of what participating in a Chalice Circle is like, as well as another opportunity for questions and sign-up.

Contacts: Marilyn Eanet (meanet@cox.net) or Janet Downing Taylor (jdtaylo39@verizon.net)

First Unitarian Caring Network

Meeting: Sunday, January 3 at 11:45a

The data from our Caring Network survey indicated interest in the following support groups: Unemployment, Newly Retired, Suddenly Single, Care-giver, Relative of an Addict, Living Single, Creating Community/Cohousing, Positive Aging, Working Mother/Father, and Help with Disability.



The Deacons are planning a short meeting after the service on January 3, for anyone interested in participating and hearing more about these groups.

If you are interested, but cannot attend the meeting, please contact: Shirley DiMatteo (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com) or Steve McCloy (Steven_McCloy@brown.edu)

Grieving Mindfully

First session: Tuesday, January 19, 7:00–8:00p

On January 19, the First Unitarian Caring Network will begin a group for people in the process of grieving. The group will meet on nine consecutive Tuesday evenings, from 7:00 to 8:00p, in the Moon Room. Each session will address a different facet of grieving and use a reading as the starting point for a facilitated group discussion. The group is open to anyone in the congregation as well as anyone not yet connected to the congregation. The group is facilitated by Pat Gifford, Rick Richards, Bruce Amand, and Elissa Emerson. All group proceedings will be strictly confidential.

In order to participate, interested persons will want to talk to Rev. Charlie Ortman to determine whether the group is an appropriate match to their needs.

Art in the Atrium

Paintings by Margaret Worthen (1984–2015) are in our January exhibit. With her art, Margaret leaves us a legacy of beauty and love, after a short, challenging life.

After a severe brain stem stroke at age 22, a week before graduating from Smith College, Margaret Worthen was unable to speak or move. She could only communicate using eye movement. For nine years she lived a challenging life, surrounded by love, and died peacefully in 2015.

Margaret Worthen began painting hand over hand in 2012, guided by her mother, Nancy Smith Worthen, an art therapist, who taught hand-over-hand painting techniques.

If you are interested to show your work in the Atrium, a couple of months are still open. Please contact Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

Continuing Programs

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: Cindy Bapties and George Beshers

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.

No previous meditation experience required. You can visit our website (foundationforactivecompassion.org/audios-videos-texts).

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

Tai Chi

Every Tuesday at 7:00p

Tai Chi class for beginners to advanced, children to seniors. All inclusive. Instruction and performance. For information or to sign up, contact Sean Connor (seanconnor@cox.net).

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays, 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, January 10, 7:00–9:00p

Topic: Your Comfort Zone

Questions for discussion will include: What is a comfort zone? Why is it so hard to leave it? How can you move out of it? What are the rewards when you break free and try new things?

Facilitator: Paul Bazin (pbazin11@gmail.com)



Social Justice

Congregational Meeting Regarding Racial Justice

Sunday, January 17 following the Sunday service

A congregational meeting will take place to decide if we, as a congregation, want to move forward with a vote to take a public stand on racial justice and affirm that Black Lives Matter by hanging our banner prominently. The Standing on the Side of Love Committee (SSL) has been working to bring forward the formal motion as well as plan for opportunities for intentional learning and reflection and other activities aimed at dismantling racism and pursuing racial justice. The motion is cosponsored by the Youth Group. We hope that all will attend.



We also encourage everyone to join SSL at our meetings, visit us on Facebook (Standing on the Side of Love at First Unitarian, Providence), and say "Hi" at the SSL table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour; we welcome your ideas on actions to take as a congregation around this important issue.

Contact: Tiffany Reed (tiffanyreed@gmail.com)

Prison Justice Workshop

Sunday, January 10 at 12:00p

Following a sermon that explores the spiritual and structural roots of mass incarceration, join a discussion about how to tangibly engage with the struggle for true prison justice here in Rhode Island. This interactive discussion will be led by Meghan Kallman, coordinator of the Prison Op/Ed Project, and activist Tim DeChristopher. Kallman is a Brown University Ph.D. candidate. She teaches CCRI students at the Adult Correctional Institutions to use ideas from their sociology class to make sense of their experiences by writing for online publication in "RIFuture." DeChristopher will be the guest speaker at our Sunday service on January 10.

The New Jim Crow Book Discussion Groups

The Board of Deacons is sponsoring book discussions on *The New Jim Crow*, a good source of information of some of the issues concerning the Black Lives Matters movement. The discussion leaders, times, and dates for the groups include:

Beth Armstrong – Thursday, January 7, 10:00–11:30a

Kathy and Steve Ahlquist – Sunday, January 10, 6:00–7:30p

Cathy Orloff – Wednesday, January 13, 7:00–8:30p

Margaret Balch-Gonzalez has volunteered to lead a three-part discussion group starting in mid-February – Sundays, February 21 & 28 and March 6.

The Atrium Bookstore has copies of the book. Stop by their table to purchase one and look at other books they have on this topic. Look for the sign-up/information table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. The coordination of discussion groups is a fluid matter. We appreciate your patience in working with the Deacons on this important issue.

First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, January 18

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–3:00

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)

Community Collection Recipient

Our Sunday Community Collection on January 17 will support the work of the Senior Agenda Coalition of Rhode Island. Their priorities are to work as a coalition of groups and activists that advocate for the following goals:

- "Balancing" RI's Medicaid-funded long-term care by shifting funding from nursing homes and into home- and community-based services. Currently only 21% of RI's Medicaid dollars is spent on home- and community-based services – the rest on nursing home care.
- Protecting and improving affordable public transportation for seniors.
- Developing a state information system where seniors and their relatives and other caregivers can find reliable information on services, disease and disability management.
- Improving supports for the family and friend care-givers who provide 75% of the care for elderly and disabled persons.

Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly Meeting

Sunday, January 3 at 12:15p

The NSJC takes on projects to lighten the load of low-income and homeless Rhode Islanders. Please join us to learn more about our work and to contribute some ideas of your own.

Loaves & Fishes Mission

Tuesday, January 5, noon to 7:00p

This month, as always, we could use your help – whether time, goods, or money – with carrying out our monthly Loaves & Fishes Mission for the men at Harrington Hall. On the first Tuesday of every month, volunteers deliver food, clothing, and respectful companionship to the men at Harrington Hall, a homeless shelter in Cranston.

Since Harrington Hall may shelter some sex offenders at times, children under 18 are not allowed there, but they are more than welcome to come to the church at 12:00p to prepare sandwiches or at 3:00p to collect clothes and help to load food and clothes in the cars.

There are three shifts: noon–1:00p: sandwich crew; 3:00–5:00p: clothing organizers and supply loaders; 5:00–7:00p: delivery crew.

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

For more information on these and future programs (meeting locations, contact information, etc.), see details in this newsletter.

January 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 NEW YEARS DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	2 Saturday Social Supper (Steve McCloy)
3 Worship 10:30a <u>at 11:45a</u> Caring Network <u>at 12:00p</u> Neighborhood SJ	4 Women's Alliance Meeting 10:00a Program 11:00a Zendo 7:00p	5 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12-7:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	6 Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p	7 Jim Crow 10:00a Budget Drive 5:30p Worship Comm 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	8	9
10 Worship 10:30a <u>at 12:00p</u> Prison Justice Workshop Mentor/Mentee Membership Jim Crow 6:00p UU Men 7:00p	11 Zendo 7:00p	12 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	13 Jim Crow 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	14 Budget Drive 5:30p Deacons 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	15 All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	16
17 Worship 10:30a <u>at 11:30a</u> Black Lives Matter Vote	18 MLK, Jr. DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Food Pantry Open 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p	19 Path to Membership 7:00p Grieving Mindfully 7:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	20 Meditation 7:00p	21 Budget Drive 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	22	23 First U Fiesta 6:00-8:00p
24 Worship 10:30a <u>at 11:30a</u> Deacons' Salon <u>at 12:00p</u> Chalice Circle Sampler 31 Worship 10:30a <u>at 12:00</u> Transylvania Partner Church	25 Zendo 7:00p	26 Path to Membership 7:00p Grieving Mindfully 7:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	27 Finance 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	28 Budget Drive 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	29	30