



Services in the Meeting House

Focus for February: Transitions and Changes

Sunday, February 7 A Steward of the Church
10:30a **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, February 14 Behind Door #1... or Door #2?
10:30a **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**

New Members will be welcomed during the service.

The Community Collection will be for Crossroads RI. An organization that helps the homeless and less fortunate.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, February 21 Wholly Family: A Multigenerational Service
10:30a **Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education & Families**

Young people pre-K–Senior High begin in the Meeting House, then go to their classrooms.

Newborn–three-year-old room is open.

Sunday, February 28 Forward through the Ages
10:30a **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**

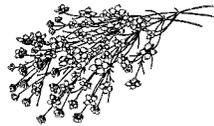
Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Springing Our Spirit

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, March 15, 16 & 17

If you enjoyed our Winter Week of Worship last year, or if you missed it, save the dates for another series of varied mid-week worship experiences. Like last year, each evening will feature a different style and flavor, and each will be something different from what we usually do on Sunday mornings (including another hymn sing).

For more information watch the March newsletter, *Meeting House Times* or contact Jacqui Nye (funjac@hotmail.com)



Congregational Conversation on the Search Survey

Sunday, February 14 at 12:00p

Come share your thoughts on the results of the Ministerial Search Committee's survey sent to the Congregation last October. Details on page 5.



We are a Welcoming Congregation

I n s i d e

From My Window	2
Spiritual Pathways	3
Sight Lines	4
Our Ministerial Search	5
Community Life	6
Spiritual Development	8
Social Justice	9
Monthly Calendar	10

S t a f f

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
 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

N e w s l e t t e r

Posey Kooris, Managing Editor
 Susan Fisher, Proof Editor
 Design Consultant, Amy Webb
 Next Deadline: February 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



From My Window . . .

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote... The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large."

This is the fifth of our seven Unitarian Universalist principles that we share in our covenant with all other UU congregations. In this newsletter, I would

like to reflect on the congregational meeting that took place on Sunday, January 17. What I witnessed then, and in the leadup to Sunday's meeting, was one of the finest exercises of the democratic process that I've ever seen unfold.

When the Executive Committee of your Prudential Committee and I first began talking about taking a position on the Black Lives Matter movement back in September, we naively held the thought that this was a simple matter, which spoke of a simple truth, and which merely needed to be rolled out and unfurled. What we discovered was that important matters require due diligence and time. Not only did the PruComm itself need more time to process a statement of public stand, but a great deal of the congregation did as well. We discovered a significant need for exploration into the meaning of the proposal and in what it might mean to the future life of the congregation.

A broader process began. No fewer than five groups within the congregation took active leadership in creating that process. The Standing on the Side of Love group reconstituted itself to lead this conversation along with the Women's Alliance and our Senior High Youth Group. Our Board of Deacons encouraged the reading of, *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander. They then offered programs to explore the ramifications of that book. Last, but hardly least among these efforts, were presentations at two Parish Suppers, in which representatives from the larger community joined us in conversations exploring the wider understandings and importance of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

That the congregational meeting to vote on this plebiscite took place this past Sunday, as the nation commemorated Rev. Martin Luther King's birthday, perhaps speaks of the poetry that sometimes seems to flow out of the cosmos when we are in alignment with the "moral arc of the universe."

As your interim minister, I want you to know how very moved and proud I am to have been along with you on the journey through this process. Whatever the results of the final vote to support BLM might be, this congregation has indeed lived fully into that fifth principle of our UU covenant. You have upheld the democratic process here with great integrity and you have also promoted the principles of democracy in society at large. The opportunities for that promotion will now become a part of this congregation's ongoing mission in pursuing the transformation of hearts, of homes, of communities, and of our world.

Chances are that soon your Ministerial Search Committee will be bringing a candidate for your consideration to call as the next settled minister to this congregation. You will again have the opportunity of practicing that fifth principle through the democratic process. I have every confidence that again you will uphold it well in this vitally important matter. What an exciting, vibrant moment this is in the rich heritage and legacy of this congregation.

For now, onto the next and most immediate challenge for the congregation – finance! Next up will be the pledge drive to secure the budget for the beginning year of your new ministry, as well as the onset of formational conversations for a capital campaign to secure your facilities for the next 200 years. This congregation is indeed a shining light upon the hillside. I suspect that it really doesn't get any better than this!

Please pray and act for peace and justice,

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

Deacons' Corner

First Unitarian Addresses Racism.

Last month a question was presented to the congregation asking us to consider our stance on the Black Lives Matter movement. The deadline for our newsletter is earlier than the final vote, so results are not known. Your Board of Deacons continues the *New Jim Crow* book groups as a means of learning about one manifestation of racism in our country. We also join with Standing on the Side of Love in its efforts to identify specific ways that individuals can give their time and energy as advocates for racial justice in our community. There is much to be done.



Deacons Calling. We are serving as your liaison to the church community and hope that you will allow us that privilege. You may have questions about Black Lives Matter, you may have issues of need or concerns about your church community. We will strive in confidence to help address those issues. Contact information is available in the form of small cards at the table in the back of the Meeting House and on the visitors' table in the Newcomers Cafe in the Paneled Parlor.

Caring Network. Kate Menard has been solid and steadfast in her service to the Lay Ministry over the past several years. She finds it necessary to step aside from those responsibilities. The Board of Deacons sends huzzahs to her for her service. She will remain active in the Caring Network. The Church Office continues to be first contact for any member who needs help. Senior Deacons Shirley DiMatteo and Steve McCloy are taking on the coordinating functions of the Caring Network. In January several new groups were launched, including groups for the newly unemployed, for new parents, and developing The Buddy Connection.

January 24 saw the initiation of the **Grieving Mindfully** group. This nine-session program is led by Rick Richards, Bruce Amand, and Drs. Pat Gifford and Elissa Emerson. Rev. Ortman has strong involvement by pastoral contact with each participant. How we interact with each other is part of the spiritual life of the church, isn't it? Tim DeChristopher in his sermon on January 10 said something like "God is that which connects the sacred spark within each of us."

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

Transitions & Transformations ~ What are we teaching?

This February is fraught with the usual cold and snow, but with a good dose of something else. I am feeling the hopeful warmth of change in the frigid air. I know that soon, we could notice those early rosy buds on trees, portending the leaves to come. I know, that once we reach mid-month, the returning light is more palpable. These signs in nature are healthy reminders that change is what the cycle of life is all about. This wisdom applies to our faith community. I am amazed at how this church year has been zooming by. My work in faith development, in partnership with Rev. Charlie Ortman, is going way too fast. There is still much to be learned, so I am taking stock of what has been accomplished and what might still be possible.

Adults often inquire about our brand of religious education. I share that we provide content and resources that focus from exploration of timeless themes in sacred texts and world religions to leadership development and taking part in local to global justice-making. These lessons are most often experiential, lived, relational. I am very proud of our congregational social action and the implicit curriculum that it has provided to our children youth and adults. One of our beloved volunteer teachers spoke up about this at last month's congregational meeting on anti-racism action. He said, "The fourth graders are here and they are listening!"

No hibernation for this church. February is full of worship and programming that explores the possibilities that change can hold. Our young people will participate in the Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade, connect with UU and multi-faith youth in our region, deliver your donations to Dorcas International, serve at the Community Food Share Pantry and more. I am cooking up a pajama Sunday, a blessing of the stuffed animals, and ways to embody our living tradition between Sundays.

We strive for our explicit and implicit curriculum to be alive and evolving, for our null curriculum to be mindful and intentional. In my role, I aim to help babies, children, youth, adults, and elders find faith development tools, paraphrased from my colleague Tim Atkins, that are relevant, accessible, and relational. We need each other if we are to live our values with courage and resilience.

In the larger UU community, I continue as President of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), which has me collaborating for change with leaders including those from the UUA, UU Minister's Association, UU Musicians Network, and Meadville Lombard School for the Ministry. With support from a UU Funding Program Grant, LREDA just launched our new communication system and website. I invite you to visit lreda.org to see for yourself. My heart is warmed by a vision of serving as an architect and curator of networks and resources that support individual, congregational, and denominational needs to transform ourselves and our world.

I look forward to embracing and supporting all of the transitions and transformations for individuals, our congregation, and well beyond that are surely coming this way, as we keep each other warm.

Take good care,

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

Save the Date ~ First Unitarian Family Game Night

Friday, March 4, 5:30 - 7:30p

The RE Committee is excited to announce that on Friday, March 4 from 5:30 to 7:30p they will host an early evening of games, food, and fun for all ages (yes, even the toddlers).

You are welcome to bring a favorite table game, but there will be games provided.

Hope to see you there.

February Means Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade at First Unitarian

Each February, our seventh, eighth and high school groups participate in the Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade, preparing 100 lunch bags on each Sunday of the month. The mission of Crossroads is to assist the homeless and disconnected on their journey toward a better quality of life through the provision of essential life services, advocacy, and referral.

Funding for the Sandwich Brigade is a collaborative effort between our Spiritual Development and Social Justice ministries. This year, the seventh-graders, eighth-graders, senior high youth, and young adults will prepare the lunches. Parents from the RE program help purchase supplies and deliver the lunches.

On Sunday, February 7, a leader from Crossroads RI be with us to talk with the Coming of Age community after church in the Auditorium. All are invited to attend.

UUSC Guest at Your Table Drive



Thank you to all who contributed to this annual social justice project.

The eighth-graders and their mentors are counting the donations in the boxes that were returned. The

final results will be reported soon. Stay tuned.

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.



Sight Lines

From the President

I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be.
- Douglas Adams

The time of year has got me thinking about the Roman God Janus, the two-faced god who symbolizes transition and who, more to the point for me, illustrates a simultaneous looking backward and looking forward. Not only is it a new year dawning – which gives many of us reason to reflect on the year that has just ended and what is on the horizon for the coming year, but it is also the middle of my presidential year at First Unitarian. I have presided over five Prudential Committee meetings and I have five meetings to go before I will turn things over to Keith Brown in July.

Such reflection led me to the Douglas Adams quote above. In some ways, this experience has been about what I expected it to be – setting agendas for meetings, collaborating with the Executive Team, facilitating discussions at meetings, calling for motions and seconds and requesting discussion before calling for a vote on questions. What had been visible to me, in observing my predecessors, were these formal parts of the role I agreed to play this year. What I hadn't anticipated were the opportunities I've had to get to know so many of you through what have been challenging, engaging, impassioned, and sometimes emotional conversations and interactions. There are so many ways in which each of us relates to, contributes to, and care about our beloved community...so many ways we find to "do church" that both enrich us as individuals and engage us as a congregation. I think that what I might not have been prepared for was the spiritual growth that I would experience in deepening my connections with all of you and with the larger UU world.

This interim year...the year of transition...of looking back while looking forward has included some twists and turns, some bumps in the road, some renegotiations of relationships and traditions. Perhaps many can relate to the idea of not having gone where intended. It has also been a period of tremendous excitement, energy, and direction of our love and care for one another and our larger community. It is my mid-year wish for you all that you find yourself also feeling as though you (and we) are where you (and we) need to be. I am so looking forward to how the second half will unfold – our ministerial search process, our budget drive, and the planning for our building and congregational anniversaries. I invite all to be full participants in all of it!



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, 98.1Cat 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

As February begins we are one month from the beginning of our Annual Budget Drive. This year's drive is particularly important, as it will signal our commitment to this church and will be evaluated by those interested in our settled minister's position.



With 50% of the fiscal year completed, we have received 65.6% of the amount budgeted as pledge receipts. We are \$43,000 ahead of last year at this time in this category. Sunday cash collections are \$708 less than last year at this time. The successful fundraising (Variety Show) keeps us on track in this category. Planned giving (receipts from bequests placed with the Rhode Island Foundation) is at 109% of the amount budgeted. Please note that with holiday sales, the bookstore is now well over expectations.

As of the midyear point, we have expended 46.6% of the budget. That is, of course, without the cost of potential snow removal and winter heating.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer

The 2016 Annual Budget Drive Is Coming in March!

A Testimonial from Paul and Gail Brule

After being brought up in different religious traditions, we found our spiritual home at First Unitarian Church over 35 years ago. Being married here and seeing our children go through the Church School program, we know



how important the church is not only in our lives, but also in the fabric of the community. We have contributed both time and money, in increasing amounts over the years, to continue the work of this church. Not only is it a spiritual home but it is a vehicle for so many good works. We can't possibly be involved in everything, but we know how important each and every pledge is to do what we do. We pledge every year and it's wonderful to know we are a part of something much larger than ourselves.



Our Ministerial Search

The Ministerial Search Committee has entered a new phase of the search process: reviewing ministerial records, performing reference checks, and conducting preliminary interviews.

On January 3, we received 22 applications, and a few more trickled in later, bringing the total number to 25. The applicants range in age from about 30 to 62; 13 of them are women and 12 are men. A few are gay or lesbian; two are African-American or mixed race. As part of the review process, we read their ministerial records, lengthy documents that explain every aspect of their professional background and ministerial experiences, along with their interests and relationships outside the ministry. Applicants also have websites where we can read or hear their sermons; some also have video versions of their sermons, which provide an excellent vehicle for assessing preaching skills.

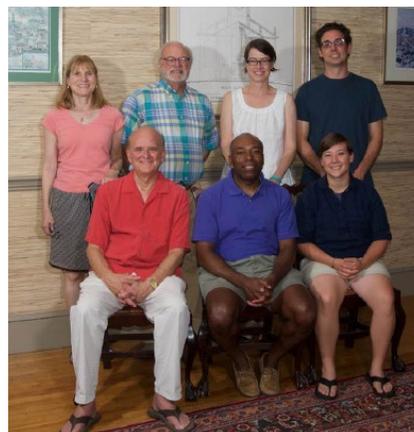
Since we know that excellent preaching is a high priority for the congregation, we are placing a higher priority on applicants that have this skill, both in terms of the content of the sermon and its delivery. We are familiar with the results of the congregational survey and are taking into account what the congregation has indicated is important in a new minister. Although we know that a minister is only human, and therefore cannot be perfect in every aspect of ministry, we will look for someone who has the most important qualities necessary to lead our congregation. We are attempting not to judge people by their age, since some younger ministers already have a lot of wisdom and some older ministers still have a lot of youthful energy.

Last week, we each read all 25 files, examined every website, and each of us individually rated every applicant, using a green (accept), yellow (discuss further), and red (reject) system. Based on extensive discussion of these individual ratings, we created a composite rating for each applicant. We discussed particularly carefully the ones around whom there was not total agreement.

Eventually our discussion and rating system brought us to select our top eight candidates, who hail from a variety of areas across the country. One of them recently dropped out of the running, which leaves seven strong candidates. We have scheduled video interviews with each of the seven semi-finalists on Skype so that we have a chance to see them and interact with them in order to narrow the field to our top three candidates. Meanwhile, we are calling references provided by each minister, Googling, Facebooking, and generally finding out everything we can about each of the seven semi-finalists.

By early February we will have selected our top three candidates and scheduled their visits to Providence.

Due to the confidential nature of the ministerial application process, we will not be able to share any specific information with the congregation regarding our pool of candidates, but we will do our best to keep you informed generally about the progress we are making. We are excited to begin the interview process and meet some of these very impressive ministers.



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

Congregational Conversation

*Sunday, February 14, noon until 1:00p,
in the Auditorium.*

Child Care will be provided.

Topic: Results of the 2015 Congregational Survey

Come and share your response to last October's congregational survey by the Ministerial Search Committee. A report on the survey results was sent out early in January. Another copy will be sent out via email the week before the Conversation.

Please join the Conversation, especially if you didn't participate in the survey. This is an additional opportunity to let the Search Committee know what your preferences and concerns are as we move into the last few months of the search for a new settled minister.

The conversation will be convened by the Transition Team.



Community Life

February All-Parish Supper

Friday, February 12

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. **NO PORK.** Vegetarian and fish preferred.

7:45p Program in the Auditorium: On Being a Muslim in Rhode Island

Being a Muslim in many places in the world has become increasingly challenging and difficult in recent years because of ISIL, terrorist groups, civil wars, refugee issues, and now attacks by political figures in the US. What is it like in 2016 to be a Muslim in America and in Rhode Island?

A panel of local Muslim leaders and lay people from several mosques in RI will be with us to share their thoughts and experiences and to answer questions. About 25 RI Muslims and their families will join us for the dinner and the program. Our goal is to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of their religion and of their situation, and to seek avenues of friendship and alliance. The program will include both presentations and an extensive Q & A session and discussion. Please plan to join us, and help welcome our Muslim-American neighbors. Also, bring warm hearts, and if you can, extra food.

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, February 6, starting at 5:30

The February 6 supper will be at the home of Elissa Emerson 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 March 5 supper will be at the home of Marida Hollos and Jim Anderson.

March All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 11

Our after-dinner program will feature an exciting musical event with Aubrey Atwater, Elwood Donnelly and guest artist Cathy Clasper-Torch. This talented trio of Rhode Island folk singers and instrumentalists will perform a concert of IRISH MUSIC in AMERICA in celebration of St. Patrick's Day. In this program they will convey the history of the Irish in America and the impact of the Irish on American culture. Lots of beautiful songs, tunes, and dance numbers... and some Irish humor. Please plan to join us.

Getting to Know Your UU Neighbor

(Formerly Round-the-Table Dinners)

Saturday, April 30 (Sign-ups start Sunday, February 21)

There will be multiple potluck dinners on the same night throughout the different towns our community members live in. Can you host? Please let us know. We want to have a dinner going on in every town our community covers, more than one in heavily populated areas. 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.

To host/attend one of these small dinners, please look for the sign-up table with Terri Smith, Mary Frappier, or Kim Ziegelmayr during Coffee Hour or email Membership Coordinator Jennifer Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

The Women's Alliance

Women's Alliance Monthly Program

Monday, February 1

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Muslim Women in the United States Today

Speakers: Eva Pirro Sasa and Aisha Manzoor

Eva and Aisha will speak about their lives and their interfaith work and answer questions about the challenges they face as Muslim Americans.

Eva Sasa is the mother of four, whom she home-schools. She held several positions with Sisters Wing of RI Council for Muslim Advancement and taught middle school at the Islamic School of RI. She and Aisha work with Rabbi Sarah Mack of Temple Beth-El in the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.

Aisha Manzoor earned a master's degree in Islamic theology and jurisprudence in Bradford, England. A teacher for nine years in NY and MA, she now works with her husband at the mosque in North Smithfield as an event and youth coordinator.

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

Gourmet Coffee Sale in the Atrium

Create Your Own Unique Coffee

Why settle for any old coffee. You can create your very own unique coffee using the gourmet coffees sold by the Women's Alliance.

We sell two bold coffees, one medium coffee, and two decaf coffees. All types come in both beans and drip ground 16 oz. bags. And they are all organic and freshly roasted in RI! Perhaps you'd like a reduced-caffeine coffee but with just the right amount of caffeine for mental alertness. Or you might like to blend together several coffees for Your Special Coffee. It's fun to experiment on these cold winter days. And you are helping the community. The Alliance donates the proceeds from the coffee sales to worthy causes. Check out the Alliance coffee table in the Atrium.



Coffee Hour

Be Our Valentine this month and bring treats for our Coffee Hour. Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by The Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of baked or bought goodies. 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. Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour and go home with a reminder so you won't forget. You just might get a kiss!



Community Life

Alternate Path to Membership Class

Saturday, February 6, 9:30a–12:00p

If you have been unable to attend the Tuesday evening sessions of the Path class, but are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian Church and seeing if membership is for you, please join us for our Alternate Path Class. This session will be led by the Rev. Charlie Ortman, Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator, and Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education. You are encouraged to bring your questions.

Please register by Sunday, January 31, 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).

Annual Cook-Off to Feature Soup: Followed by Community Band Sing-Along

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.

An Evening in Istanbul

Friday, February 5 at 7:00p

Please join Janice Okoomian, at the home of Ruth Arellana to hear her impressions of the Armenian Genocide Conference she attended in Istanbul in the fall of 2015. Janice will show her slides, share her insights, and treat us to homemade b/paklava and tea.

Space is limited. Please RSVP to Ruth Arellana (401.383.0385). Location: 100 Estrell Drive, Riverside, RI.

The Women's Alliance

Save the Date! A Night At The Theater

Thursday March 10, 7:30p

The Women's Alliance will host a night at the theater for a performance of *A Murder Is Announced* by The Players at the Barker Playhouse. The Alliance has purchased half the house (50 seats) and is inviting members of the congregation to join us. Discounted, limited seating tickets are \$20.

There will be a dessert reception before the performance at 7:00p. Reserving your ticket now will help the Alliance to know how many people are coming and to plan for the evening. You will be given a ticket as a reminder. Tickets may be purchased at the Alliance Coffee Sales table.

The net proceeds from this event will be donated to the 200th Anniversary Celebration of our Meeting House.

Contact: Janet Downing Taylor, Alliance President (jdtaylor39@verizon.net)



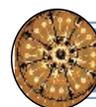
Missions for Humanity: A Sabbatical



Our Administrator, Posey Kooris, has been given a sabbatical which she will take in July of this year. She will be traveling to Tanzania with Missions for Humanity, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing medical, dental, and humanitarian aid to those in the world's neediest communities. The group will consist of doctors, nurses, dentists, and educators. Her trip will entail going to a different village each day.

Every person going on the trip will be collecting items in large quantities. Over 2,500 people will be served. In the Atrium you will find a large blue rolling suitcase to be filled with medical supplies such as: infant vitamins, infant Ibuprofen, infant Motrin, anti-fungal cream, eye drops, antibiotic/first aid creams, Hydrocortisone cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sunscreen (high SPF) and bars of soap. Smaller travel-size items are preferred but any donation is greatly appreciated.

For more information about Missions for Humanity visit www.missionsforhumanity.org



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to:

The family and friends of Abbott (Tom) Gleason who died on Christmas Day.

Congratulations to:

Bob Fredericksen on his 92nd birthday, January 18.

HATS OFF TO ...

Our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

Ryk McIntyre, Jim Barfoot, Spence Hobbs, Nancy Weiss-Fried, George Beshers, Maureen Johansen, Shirley Brown, Tony Allen, Rita Rossi, Zoe Corbin, Bobbi Fisler, Mary Frappier, Lucille Riccitelli, Yvonne Federowicz, Steve McCloy, Lyn Bradford, Elissa Emerson, Karen Boulanger, Paul Almeida, Sonya Gray, Laura Burkett, Sue Fracker, Sally Barker, Joseph Pinho, Philip Swayze, Nancy Dooley, Vikki Bristlin, the Transylvania Partner Church Committee, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



Spiritual Development

The Caring Network

Good news! The Caring Network is up and running. The Grieving Mindfully group began on January 24. The Parenting Group and The Buddy Connection will be forming in late February. The Buddy Connection is designed



for those who live alone and would like to team up with a buddy for a daily phone call. Our Caring Group is ready to receive requests for the following needs: errands, phone calls, notes, visits, meals, and rides. Please contact Posey Kooris in the church office during the week (401.421.7970, admin@firstunitarianprov.org). If you have a need evenings and week-ends, when the office is closed, please contact Shirley DiMatteo (401.477.9668, shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com) or Steve McCloy at (Steven_McCloy@brown.edu).

We are looking forward to hearing from you. If you are interested in The Parenting Group or The Buddy Connection, please contact us. Shirley and Steve

Purchase a New Teal Hymnal

In February you will have the opportunity to purchase, dedicate, and donate a teal hymnal to honor a friend, family member, or just someone in our community that you admire.

We'd like to ensure that there are enough teal hymnals in the Meeting House for everyone, so we will be selling copies at the Alliance Coffee Table on Sundays in February. Come buy one and fill out a dedication sheet. The dedication label will be prepared and placed in the book, and we will even deliver the book to your favorite place in the Meeting House.

Sponsored by the Music Committee and the Women's Alliance

UU Men

Sunday, February 7, 7:00-9:00p (note the date change)

February topic: The Meaning of Life

At birth we immediately begin a life-long process of experiencing life, of "growing up." Developmental milestones abound in infancy and early childhood and continue throughout life.

Though experience is never ending, at some point we garner enough of it to safely live independently and call this transition adulthood. At some point the accumulation of an undetermined amount of "experience" leads to "perspective" and a sufficient body of this eventuates in what is otherwise said to be "wisdom." The timing of all this varies by individual but the Skin Horse probably provided a reasonable estimate:

"It doesn't happen all at once, said the Skin Horse. You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand." Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*

Facilitator: Tim Dawes (dawg1280@gmail.com)

Summer Services 2016

Our worship services from mid-June to Labor Day weekend are led by members and friends of the congregation and occasional guest speakers. They are planned and hosted by the Worship Committee. Summer services are an opportunity for us to learn more about the spiritual insights, passions, and life-changing events that are important to the people who share this religious community with us. Please give us your suggestions about possible speakers, including yourself, who might like to share an aspect of their spiritual path with our community. We also want to hear from anyone who would like to share a musical talent.

Worship Committee members: Neil Bartholomew (chair), Jim Barfoot, Elissa Emerson, Betty Finn, Jacqui Nye, Kelley Smith

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)

Art in the Atrium

The cold month of February will be brighter with Bruce White's pictures of flowers and Irene Allen's bright color acrylic paintings.

If you are interested in showing your work, a couple of months during this church year are still open.

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



Social Justice

Standing on the Side of Love

Sunday, February 7 & Wednesday, February 24

The Standing on the Side of Love Committee (SSL) has been reactivated with a commitment to harnessing the power of love to take action to dismantle institutional racism and white supremacy in the pursuit of justice. To this end, SSL will plan and facilitate opportunities for education, advocacy, and action that our congregation can pursue. This may include publicizing and attending rallies and vigils, organizing events at the church to educate and raise awareness, book clubs, film screenings, letter writing, and legislative action campaigns.

In February the committee will meet on Sunday, February 7 at 12:15p and on Wednesday, February 24 at 7:00p. All are welcome.

Contact: Tiffany Reed (tiffanyreed@gmail.com)



Neighborhood Social Justice Monthly Meeting

Sunday, February 7 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, February 2, 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 to help.

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.

Henry George Land Rights

Four Sundays in February at 12:15p

This session will use a shorter version of *Progress & Poverty*. Stop by the Henry George table during Coffee Hour to take a look at the book and sign up if you're interested. Class is limited to 10 because we follow a discussion format.

Contact: Cathy Orloff (cathorloff@cox.net)

Y'All Come Community Lunch

Saturday, February 27

Neighborhood Social Justice with the Beneficent Church Peace and Justice Team is organizing another lunch for the homeless. It will take place in the Round Top Center of Beneficent Church and is a special "Pot Luck" lunch with entertainment for the homeless and people from both our congregations who would like to participate.

The intent is not only to feed the homeless, but also to build a mission partnership among Beneficent Church, First Unitarian, and their community members for addressing issues of homelessness, hunger, and other related problems in Providence.

We expect to feed 200 people and need each volunteer to cook a dish to serve 8 to 10. We are also collecting good used clothes (no socks and underwear) and small toiletries.

Please come to the NSJC table after the service for information or to sign up to help. This event can only succeed with your help. Thank you!

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

The New Jim Crow Book Group Continues

Sundays, February 21, 28 and March 6

The Board of Deacons continues to sponsor book discussions on *The New Jim Crow*, a good source of information of some of the issues concerning the Black Lives Matters movement.

Margaret Balch-Gonzalez will 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.

First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, February 15

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

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

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

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

The Pantry Is Open to All

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

Knitting for a Better World

Every Tuesday from 7:00-9:00p



Come join fellow knitters for a casual evening of knitting and conversation. Work on your own project or knit for one of First Unitarian's social justice projects. Drop in any Tuesday evening. Beginners are always welcome. We have yarn and needles to get you started.

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

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

February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Women's Alliance Meeting 10:00a Program 11:00a Zendo 7:00p	2 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12-7:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	3 Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p	4 Annual Budget Drive 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	5	6 Alternate Path to Membership Class 9:30a - 12:00p Saturday Social Supper (Elissa Emerson)
7 Worship 10:30a <u>at 11:45a</u> Cookoff & Jam Band <u>at 12:00p</u> CoA Mentor Mentee Neighborhood SJ <u>at 12:15p</u> Land Rights Standing Side of Love UU Men 7:00p	8 R.E. Committee 6:45p Zendo 7:00p	9 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	10 Meditation 7:00p	11 Annual Budget Drive 5:30p Deacons 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	12 All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	13
14 Worship 10:30a <u>at 12:00</u> Congregational Conversation <u>at 12:15p</u> Land Rights	15 PRESIDENTS' DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Food Pantry Open 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p	16 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	17 Meditation 7:00p	18 Annual Budget Drive 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	19	20
21 Worship 10:30a <u>at 12:15p</u> Land Rights <i>Jim Crow</i> Book Discussion	22 Zendo 7:00p	23 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	24 Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	25 Annual Budget Drive 5:30p Worship Comm 5:45p Search Committee 7:00p	26	27 Y'All Come Lunch (Beneficent Church)
28 Worship 10:30a <u>at 12:15p</u> Land Rights <i>Jim Crow</i> Book Discussion	29 Zendo 7:00p					