





## From My Window . . .

I can remember back, many years ago, when I was a member of the Unitarian Church of Davenport, Iowa. That's where I experienced my first candidating week. I was not a minister then, but a lay member of the congregation. I can remember the excitement and the anxiety as we met our candidate. Who was she? What would she be like? What kinds of things did she like? What did she not like? What were her theological perspectives? How would she care for us? How would she envision leading our congregation?

I remember my own two candidating experiences – 24 and 21 years ago. They were filled with the same kinds of excitement and anxiety. They were loaded with all those same questions. Only on those occasions, it was from a slightly different perspective. I say "slightly," because the truth of it is that in all three cases, everyone's hope was for the same outcome – a good match and the beginning of a strong new ministry, a meaningful new era.

I know this analogy doesn't hold up for very long, but it is sort of like an arranged marriage. A minister is selected as your candidate, after a long and exacting process, and it is left to you, the congregation, to affirm that Yes, indeed, this looks, sounds, and feels like the religious leader that we want to walk with us through the threshold into this congregation's fourth century.

Here's the thing, though; this match was not brought forward by anybody's parents, nor by any outside authority figure. The members of your Search Committee are members of this congregation. They represent you best because they are you. The invitation that they will extend to one of their three pre-candidates will be to the one that they have found with all of you in mind. I don't know who they've chosen, but after talking with them, I do know that they feel strongly that she will be the right choice for you.

It's important to remember that there does exist the possibility that, even though they have selected her, she may feel that she has found a better match somewhere else. This sort of thing happens. It is not a reflection on the quality of a congregation. It is merely a reflection on what might be the best perceived match. If this does happen, there is no need for consternation. If your path should lead in that direction, I trust this congregation would have another fine year in transition. We all have to leave that open as a possibility. But we needn't anticipate it as a probability!

As you go into this month that promises to be filled with excitement and a bit of anxiety, this month that is sure to be loaded with all kinds of questions, there is something that I want you to know. In the short time I have been with you, I have come to believe in you. Your congregational leaders, your social justice workers, your Caring Network caretakers, all of you – I've come to believe in you. And I know that whatever it might be, your future will be bright, meaningful, and fulfilling.

April? Is it April already? How about that!  
See you at church.

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

## Deacons' Bench

**Welcome, Joe Fisler.** Joe Fisler has accepted a position as first-year deacon to fill in for a deacon who had to resign. Joe and his wife, Bobbi, came to First Unitarian from the Williamsburg, VA UU church. They have plunged into life at First Unitarian, and their daughter, Kathi, is a member of the Prudential Committee. Joe is currently active in planning the capital campaign likely to emerge as we approach the 200th anniversary of the Meeting House (October 2016) and our 300th anniversary as a congregation (2020). We are really happy to have him with us.



### Who Are the Deacons and What Do They DO?

The Deacons are an elected body of our church. *New Feature:* Photographs of the Board of Deacons are now posted on the wall as you enter the Parish House. The photos will change as this year's Senior Deacons step down and a new group of first-year deacons are elected by you. Yeah, but what do they do? A valid and perennial question. To address that question, we sat down last month with Rev. Ortman to write out a Mission Statement with a Covenant. Next month we will polish that statement. Meanwhile, as always, our meetings are open to anyone and are held on the second Thursday monthly, starting at 5:30p in the Parish House. You are more than welcome.

**Communion . . .** is one of the spiritual activities that engage the Board of Deacons. We assisted Rev. Howard and Rev. Ortman with the service on Maundy Thursday, March 24.

**Safety on our Church Campus.** We are working with others to secure Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) for our campus. Once we have these, we will offer training in their use. They are of no use hanging on the wall. We are hoping that there are people within our community who have the capacity to train members of the community in the use of AEDs (takes maybe 10 minutes). Please contact any Deacon if you are able to help. We are also seeking affordable ways to offer CPR training and would welcome volunteers for that.

. . . with gratitude for our deep connection to each other and to the larger web of existence . . .

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



## Spiritual Pathways

### Circling Back

Perhaps I am not the only one. I imagine that others look forward to spring and notice small and large changes in the air. In congregational life, on the church calendar, we are chock full of events, celebrations, and programs, as well as reflections on how we are doing and how to plan forward for the next school year. Coming up, we will remember the traditional messages of Easter, Passover, Earth Day, and more. We will also learn about new efforts in environmental justice and our own needed work in antiracism.

Parents are particularly invited to join young people's worship on Sunday, April 17, in the auditorium Chapel, although they are welcome at any service.

A combination of internal and external goals drive our curriculum of UU faith formation in this season of renewal. Sunday morning gatherings for children and youth will include music and lively discussion, leadership development, and social responsibility. We will thank volunteer teachers with yummy breakfast treats and ask for feedback on ways to evolve and grow our programming.

Plans are focused on next fall's full week faith development opportunities. The Coming of Age culminating trip, recognition, and celebrations take place soon. We will bridge our senior highs to the young adult UU community during the annual Youth Group Service on April 10. Some folks are already signing up to attend UU General Assembly '16 in Columbus, OH or UU camp and conference centers, like Star Island.

Spring means new congregational members will be welcomed and babies dedicated. Budgets will be proposed and teacher-team volunteers recruited. This year, we will know if our excellent, dedicated Ministerial Search Committee has discovered a match to be our next settled minister. It is an exciting and pivotal time of anticipation at First Unitarian.

April is when I circle back. I reflect on what has been accomplished through my work and that of many others. I measure this in terms of deep connections, of programmatic evolution, of meaningful relationships. After all, I believe that we are together to support one another through transitions and to gather courage to change our world.

Take good care,

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

## Coming of Age Taco Fiesta — ¡Gracias!

Thanks to the congregation for partnering with eighth-grade Coming of Age families for a new twist on the traditional pasta supper. We appreciate your willingness to join us! Taco Night proved to be a success, with a full house enjoying a fabulous meal and even salsa dancing at the end of the night! Many thanks to the students, parents, teachers, mentors, and friends of COA who made this such a warm and delightful evening. The eighth-grade students worked very hard on set up, clean up, and serving: Anya, Anika, Lucian, Kaila, Willem, Juliya, Callan, Alexia, and Ava, with great support from siblings Khemrin and Adrian. Special kudos to Jorge Armesto and Paul Almeida for their delicious cooking, Steve Murphy for his master planning, Martha Torrance and Tim Tolman for program and coordination, Bela Teixeira for decor and student training, the Arena/Fairbrother's for the fantastic sangria, Karina Holyoak Wood for tickets and MCing, the Brekers for cookies and all-night assistance, and the Curry/Maytums for the raffle coordination. Thank you to Cathy Seggel, Jaime Durango, and Pedro Vasquez for helping to make our night so successful! Thanks to the First Unitarians who donated to our raffle table and for wonderful donations from great community neighbors: Blend Café, Coffee Exchange, Eastside Marketplace, Harvest Kitchen, JJ Latin Dancers, Moe's Southwest Grille, Narragansett Creamery, Providence Children's Museum, R.I. Philharmonic, Seven Stars, Tortilla Flats, and Whole Foods. Please thank them with your patronage. Proceeds benefit the Coming of Age program. – Kristen Curry, Parent

## Joyful Noise: A Singing Opportunity

Joyful Noise, an "everyone's invited" singing ensemble, returns for another exuberant musical sharing in the Meeting House on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8. Everyone of every age and singing ability is welcome. This is a fun thing for families to do together. We'll learn two songs. Rehearsals will be no more than 30 minutes long. Reading music not required. Great singing ability not required. Simply enjoying singing with others is the ticket.

Come to any two 30-minute rehearsals plus the performance day warm-up on May 8. Locations posted each Sunday:

- Sunday, April 10: 12:00 noon sharp
- Sunday, April 17: 9:45a sharp & 12noon
- Sunday, May 1: 9:45a sharp & 12noon
- Sunday, May 8: 9:45a Required rehearsal.  
Performance Day!

Questions? Contact Marcia Taylor (mdtrenn@gmail.org)

## Interest in Volunteer Team Teaching

Some team-teaching opportunities are available next fall for interested adults in the congregation. Our Sunday school is a cooperative venture, with parents and non-parents sharing their time and gifts with our children and youth. Current volunteers have first choice to remain on class teams.

Spring is when we explicitly seek interest from those who might like to teach. To learn more, contact Cathy Seggel (dre@firstunitarianprov.org, 401.421.7970)

## It's Time: UUA GA and Star Island

There are wonderful opportunities for individual adults or youth and families to attend UU gatherings this summer. Settings like Star Island in July and UUA General Assembly in Columbus Ohio, in late June are wonderful ways to nurture your spirituality while having fun and making connections. For helpful information about UUA GA, please consult ([www.uua.org/ga/](http://www.uua.org/ga/))

The theme at Star Island Lifespan Religious Education Week in July ([www.starreweek.com](http://www.starreweek.com)) is Sustainability and Faith with Tim DeChristopher. A perfect way to enjoy a beautiful, relaxing, inspirational, and fun island experience! Funding is available for first-time attenders and others.

Please contact Cathy Seggel soon for details and help in navigating registration and funding. Or, talk with folks like Emily Bruce, Michael Currier, Cynthia Rosengard, Sadie and Owen Swayze, Kimberli Gray, Ellen Anderson, or Adele Andrews who love Star LRE Week.



## Sight Lines

### From the President

"Sometimes you don't realize you're actually drowning when you're trying to be everyone else's anchor." (Unknown)

Seeing this quote reminded me of the strong tendency in many of us to take on more and more without realizing that we are neglecting our own needs. A piece of advice that I often offer my clients is to think about the instructions you receive when you are about to go on an airplane trip: "In case of a change in cabin pressure, you should put your own oxygen mask on before helping someone else with theirs." We are so focused on caring for others that we might forget that in order to be there for others, we need to practice self-care as well.

Here's how this is relevant to our church community: A number of leadership positions are opening up in the coming months or year (for example, UU Legislative Ministry or Lead Steward) that have been held by folks who have been serving in leadership for many years because it has been their passion but also because they haven't been able to find anyone to take their place. We have a tendency to attract dedicated workers for leadership positions and then keep tapping them for more and more tasks – because they are so good at what they do and because they have a tendency to say "yes."

I would very much like us to expand our idea of "Caring Network" to include the process of growing leadership – identifying those who might not yet be engaged, but who bring tremendous gifts to our community – who might be interested in becoming leadership "apprentices" to those who are interested in taking on something else – or even taking a break entirely. That way, there could be a seamless transition and no interruption of mission in those areas where leadership might benefit from some fresh ideas and new energy.

I encourage each of us to examine if we are taking on too much or might like to think about a new challenge that would grow our commitment and love for our community. And I challenge those who might be newer to our community to look around at what might be of interest to you and find out more about how you can play a role. Above all, take care of yourself as you care for others!

In the past month on the Prudential Committee, we have been coordinating with our Budget Drive Committee, providing updates on our building maintenance and capital campaign plans, flowing energy toward the planning for the Meeting House's 200th anniversary celebration this fall, and awaiting word from the Ministerial Search Committee on the response of their selected minister candidate to our offer. It is an exciting time to be a part of the governing body of our church community. I do hope that folks will consider checking out a PruComm meeting some first Wednesday in the next few months. All are welcome!



Cynthia Rosengard  
President, Prudential Committee  
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

### Last Path to Membership Class of the Year

Tuesdays, May 10, 17, 24 & 31, 7:00–9:00p

The Path to Membership class is for anyone who is interested in membership or in learning more about Unitarian Universalism or about First Unitarian. 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 Sunday, May 8.

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

### Treasurer's Report

April is the month when we develop our budget for next fiscal year. The proposed budget will be presented at the Annual Meeting in early June.

Currently our budget is constructed in this form.

1. Sources of income:
  - a. 93% of funds pledged (accounts for 7% of pledges not completed)
  - b. 5% of the total endowment
  - c. Rentals from parking lot and church facilities (weddings, group meetings, etc.)
  - d. Sunday plate cash collection (three Sundays per month, averaging \$250–\$300)
  - e. Fund raising activities
  - f. Planned Giving
2. Expenses:
  - a. Salaries and benefits comprise 75% of our budget. We currently pay the average for a church our size as determined by the UUA. Includes minister, religious education director, music director, church administrator, youth music director, building manager, bookkeeper, evening and weekend security, and membership coordinator. (Note: all full-time employees [except minister] have been with First Unitarian for over 15 years.) Health insurance costs over \$77,000, with employees paying 20% in addition.
  - b. Facility expenses include heat, lights, snow and trash removal, insurance, service contracts for heating/ac, elevator and fire systems, and minor repairs.
  - c. Programs include religious ed., music, summer worship, spiritual development, social justice, community life, and stewardship.
  - d. Governance covers the costs associated with selecting a settled minister.
  - e. Denominational support includes fair-share payments to the UUA and Ballou Channing District. We receive services from the UUA in the ministerial search, stewardship, and programs with the wider church community.
  - f. Office expenses include phone, accounting, payroll, postage, office supplies, printing, and coffee hour.
  - g. While not part of our budget, we share the plate with seven community organizations during the church year, and last year distributed over \$12,000.
  - h. We also have several funds which are used to assist those in need, including the Pastor's Fund and the Community Food Share Pantry. These funds generated \$9,266 this year.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer



## Our Ministerial Search

The Ministerial Search Committee has completed the pre-candidating phase of the search process. Three candidates visited us in Providence during the months of February and March for one weekend each. These visits followed a necessarily busy schedule, beginning with an at-home dinner on Friday. Saturday began with a three-hour interview session, followed by lunch. Then candidates received a real estate tour of the area with a local realtor, followed by an interview with our three senior church staff members. A tour of the church (including the bell tower!) and dinner at a lovely downtown restaurant rounded out the day. Sunday was devoted to visiting neutral pulpits in order to see and hear each candidate preach.

The next step of the process was to make a decision regarding the three candidates. We evaluated each one individually to decide whether the candidate was a good fit for First Unitarian. Preaching was evaluated not only by viewing live sermon presentations, but also by watching sermons online. Many other elements of ministry were queried during our formal and informal interviews, including religious philosophy and worship, leadership roles, financial and contract matters, church programming and initiatives, Religious Education and youth, pastoral care, and working with staff and volunteers. A great deal of individual study and group conversations went into analyzing each of the candidates and how well each met the qualities you told us were the most highly valued. The three candidates were then ranked. .

During our pre-candidating process, all three of our candidates were also busy visiting other congregations. Once they finished their visits, they had to go through the same process of determining which churches were a good fit for them. If candidates liked more than one church, they rated their choices.

According to UUA procedure, all ministerial candidates and search committees send their ranked preferences to the UUA Transitions Office. In early April, all parties are informed of their fate! Is there a match? We will be making an announcement on Sunday, April 10, to let you know. If we make a match with a candidate, a ten-day visit will be scheduled; this is known as "candidating week." This visit affords plenty of time for the minister to meet with church members and will also include sermons on two consecutive Sundays. During the week, the minister will attend regularly scheduled meetings as well as specially scheduled gatherings in order to meet as many people as possible. After church on the final Sunday of the visit, the congregation has the opportunity to vote whether or not to call the minister.

If the candidate we favor chooses another church over ours, we have two options. First, we can participate in an abbreviated "second round" of searches, which can include new candidates not included in the first round as well as others not previously "matched." This second round occurs in the late spring of this year. Second, we can extend the interim ministry for 6 to 12 months, and repeat the search process during subsequent rounds as scheduled by the UUA.

We are hopeful that neither of these two options will be necessary and that we will bring an outstanding minister to First Unitarian for candidating week! Candidating week will occur in late April or early May, depending on the minister's availability and how quickly we can put plans in place.

We look forward to introducing all of you to our future minister.



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

## Spiritual Development

### 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.

Contact: Ken Bent ([kenbent@cox.net](mailto:kenbent@cox.net))

### UU Men

*Sunday, April 10 7:00–9:00p*

Who gave us our model of the kind of man we want to be? Or don't want to be? Was our father a model of manhood for us -- a positive or negative model, or both? And how did the model get conveyed: was it something he said or did, or both? Did the most important modeling come when we were very young, or as adults, or both? What models of manhood have we received from our mothers, grandparents, uncles and aunts, siblings, or friends? Join us for this conversation.

Co-facilitators: Tony Allen ([tonyallenri@gmail.com](mailto:tonyallenri@gmail.com)) and David Riley ([davidpriley@aol.com](mailto:davidpriley@aol.com))

### 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](mailto:twh2nd@aol.com))



## Community Life

### April All-Parish Suppers

*Fridays, April 8 & April 29*

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.

Reservations for the dinners 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 eight will be available for parents who request in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).

#### *Friday, April 8*

##### **7:45p Program in the Auditorium: Meeting with the Mayor**

Since we are members and friends of the First Unitarian Church of Providence, we are all constituents of our after-dinner speaker, Providence mayor Jorge Elorza. Mayor Elorza is a native Rhode Islander, born of immigrant parents, and a graduate of the University of Rhode Island and of Harvard Law School. He was elected mayor of Providence in November 2014 and is known to be man of integrity and good intentions for our city.

Who are the “people of Providence”? What is it like for him to be mayor? He has stories to tell. What have been his initiatives and achievements so far? What are his chief problems and frustrations? What is his vision for Providence? An extended question and discussion period will follow his talk. Please plan on attending to show our mayor that we UUs care deeply about our city and our state.

#### *Friday, April 29 (Note: the fifth Friday)*

##### **7:45p Program in the Auditorium: Worlds in Motion – The Refugee Crises in Europe and the Middle East**

The flow of refugees and economic migrants into Europe has posed enormous strains on the infrastructure of border control and placed major demands on the citizens of the broad swath of countries affected. This swath now extends to Turkey and across the Balkan countries into the heart of Europe, especially Hungary and Germany. Drawing on first-hand experience in refugee camps in Syria and Jordan, and on what has become known as “the refugee trail,” our panelists, all Brown University faculty members, will share stories and provide insights on the ongoing crisis. Dr. Sarah A. Tobin is an anthropologist with expertise in Islam, currently involved in researching Syrian refugees in camps in Jordan. Dr. J. Nicholas Ziegler is a professor of international affairs and an expert on the political life of Germany and central Europe. Dr. Keith Brown is a specialist on the politics of the Balkan countries.

Program presented by the World Affairs Committee. Please plan to join us for a discussion and analysis of this very important topic.

## Getting to Know Your UU Neighbors

(Formerly Round-the-Table Dinners)

#### *Saturday, April 30*

Multiple potluck dinners will be held on the same night in the different towns where our community members live. These small gatherings (8 to 12 guests) are a great opportunity to get to know fellow UUs in a more intimate setting than the Saturday Suppers or Parish Suppers.

Can you host one? 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.

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).

## Saturday Social Supper

*Saturday, April 2, starting at 5:30*

The April 2 supper will be at the home of Doris and David Bridgehouse in Smithfield. 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.

## May Parish Supper

*Friday, May 8*

### **Program: A Concert by the GNOMES**

We will welcome the return of the GNOMES, an exciting, popular, and talented group of folk singers and instrumentalists, who will present a concert of traditional musical tunes from all over the world. The band members include some of Rhode Island’s finest musicians, among them: Phil Edmonds, Cathy Clasper-Torch, Mike Fischman, Peter Breen, and Matt Niebels. You won’t want to miss this great show!

## Can You Help Put On Our Annual May Breakfast?

*Saturday, May 14*

May Breakfast is a long-standing, welcoming tradition in Rhode Island. Our breakfast is coming up sooner than you think (yay spring!), and we need to have volunteers ready to make it happen.

We need several people who can cook complicated dishes like scrambled eggs, pancakes, etc. We need a few people to serve, some who can help with set-up and dishwashing, and others who can contribute muffins, donuts, and breads.

If you would like to be part of this fun event, please talk to any one of the organizers at Coffee Hour or call Rebecca Alberg (401.231.4104).

## Art in the Atrium

The April exhibit will feature Thomas Terceira. He will be showing collages from his recent “Birds, Blossoms & Butterflies” series, in which he combines antique sheet music, paper ephemera, and vintage illustrations into unique and evocative creations.

If you are interested in showing your work in the Atrium next church year, (September to June), please contact Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net)



## Community Life

### Our Second Annual Spring Musicales and Fundraiser!

*Saturday, April 23, 7:30p in the Meeting House (doors open at 7:00p)*

The Meeting House is the place to celebrate spring's return with our unparalleled music community! This year's performance is loaded with instrumental and vocal works spanning centuries and genres, including a premier or two of newly composed pieces. Expect to be moved and entertained during this fast-paced performance of soloists, small ensembles, and the entire First Unitarian Choir.

After the performance, please join the cast for a dessert reception in the Parish House. We look forward to celebrating spring's return with all members and friends. See you there!

Suggested donation: \$20 general admission; \$5 students/starving artists.

### Antiques & Uniques – Third Annual Alliance Indoor Yard Sale

*Saturday, April 16, 10:00a–2:00p*

Time for spring-cleaning! Gather up your donations for the Women's Alliance Indoor Yard Sale. We are looking for household goods, small working appliances, toys, furniture, dinnerware, kitchenware, domestics, hard-cover books, art, etc. Vintage clothing and accessories only, please. Better items will be sold in a separate room as Parlor Specialties.

You can arrange for pick-up and storage now until the sale by contacting Janet Downing Taylor (401.751.7969 or jdtaylor39@verizon.net). Items can be brought to the church the week of the sale only.

Then come and buy on April 16. The sale is sponsored by the Women's Alliance. Proceeds after expenses will benefit local charities supporting women and families.



## Caring Network

The First Unitarian groups involved in the Caring Network include the following: Chalice Circles, Mindful Grieving, The Women's Alliance, Membership, the Care Crew, and in progress, the Phone Buddies. There are still some openings in the Chalice Circles at this time if you are interested. The Mindful Grieving Group meets weekly. A list for a new group has started and that group will begin later this spring. The Women's Alliance continues to provide an interesting program and lunch on the first Monday of the month. Look for Membership's sign-up for Getting to Know Your UU Neighbor dinners, which will be held in various neighborhoods. The Care Crew is using "Meal Train" to organize taking meals to people who are ill and/or are recovering from surgery. Phone Buddies plans to be up and running by September.

If you are interested in participating in any of these groups or would like more information regarding the groups, please contact Posey Kooris in the church office (401.421.7970), Shirley DiMatteo (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com), or Steve McCloy (steven\_mccloy@brown.edu).



### Parents of Young Children! Parents New to First Unitarian! Working Parents! Overworked Parents! Parents Doing Their Best!

Please join us for an Interest Gathering Session on Sunday, April 17, during Coffee Hour in the Web Room (second floor Parish House to the left of the stage, off the Auditorium)

Many who answered the fall questionnaire asked for some kind of support group for parents. We invite your help in planning what kind of support, when, how, and where. Come to connect with each other and representatives of the Caring Network and RE Committee to begin this discussion. All parents are invited to drop in during Coffee Hour to meet other parents and discuss possibilities. Please come, with your coffee, without your child, and with your ideas.

Can't come, but have ideas? Contact Janet Bralove (bralove.estey@gmail.com) or Meghan Smith (meghan.mac.smith@gmail.com).

## The Women's Alliance

### Monthly Program

*Monday, April 4*

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

### Program: Keeping the Creative Spirit Alive

Speaker: Diane Postoian

As an arts educator, storyteller, motivator, and comedian, Diane has made the creative spirit her business for 30 years. Her lasting energy is fueled by her need to keep child-like curiosity alive in education. She has enlightened and entertained thousands of children and adults by driving home her two life-long passions: "Pretend and Literacy in Early Childhood Development" and "Fighting the Hype in an Overly-Popped Teen Culture." She has now added a third program: "ElderArts: Companions for Comic Relief."

*Diane Postoian has worked as an arts educator, performer, theatre director, and creative dramatist. She has earned many awards and grants, including an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Rhode Island College.*

Non-members are always welcome to join us for our monthly program 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 blend 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-grind 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. The Alliance donates the proceeds from the coffee sales to worthy causes. Check out the Alliance coffee table in the Atrium.

## Coffee Hour Contributions

April showers won't spoil our Coffee Hours this month, thanks to the generosity of those who bring delicious contributions for our enjoyment.

Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by the Women's Alliance with donations 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. Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour and go home with a reminder.



## Community Life

### The Bell in the Steeple

*This is the second in a series of articles from the History Committee about the Meeting House as part of its 200th anniversary on October 31, 2016.*

When our third (and present) Meeting House was envisioned in 1814, a massive bell was commissioned for the steeple from the Boston firm of Paul Revere and Son. A close friend of church member John Howland, the 81-year-old Revere was still alive when the bell was cast, although he had retired from the firm.

The bell was installed in the steeple on August 16, 1816, two months before the dedication of the new building. At 2,488 pounds and 49 inches in diameter, it is the largest bell ever cast by the Revere foundry. The cost of the bell was \$1,119.60 (45 cents a pound). In today's dollars, that's the equivalent of \$18,667.19. In reality, of course, it is priceless.

The bell has been rung by hand for 200 years, by pulling on a long rope that hangs down into a small room below the bell chamber. It takes a bit of practice (and a lot of strength) to achieve a regular rhythm, but it's not difficult and volunteers are always welcome.

In August 1966, the steeple was struck by lightning, and fire spread down into the sanctuary. Although the bell was firmly suspended from massive beams, a young Bob Schacht warned the fire department that the bell could fall if the fire had weakened its supports. Instead of entering the steeple, streams of water were poured onto the structure (resulting in serious damage to the sanctuary). Once the fire was out, a firefighter climbed into the steeple to assess the damage; when he reached the top, he signaled that the bell was unharmed by striking it with the handle of his ax. The crowd gathered in the street below let out a cheer.

One member of that crowd (former Treasurer Ted Howell) salvaged a piece of one of the burnt beams, which is now in the display case behind the organ, along with other memorabilia from our history. It's worth a trip up to the balcony level to take a look.

## Mother's Day Sale to Benefit Girls' Education

*Sunday, April 24, 2016 in the Atrium, before and after church*

Stop by the Atrium on April 24 to choose something unique for your mother or a special woman in your life. It's a triple impact gift! She will enjoy beautiful jewelry, kitchen items, or a scarf made by artisans in the less-developed world. The women who make these items gain income, and we donate the proceeds to improve girls' education and to help girls stay in school. Educating girls is one of the most important tools to alleviate poverty. The funds we have raised so far this year have been donated to five different groups.

1. Heshima Kenya: Education and Empowerment for Refugee Girls – \$1500  
Provides shelter and education to adolescent refugee girls in Nairobi, Kenya. ([www.heshimakenya.org/index.php](http://www.heshimakenya.org/index.php))
2. The San Lucas Toliman Scholars in Guatemala - \$1580 for 2016 school year; \$1580 for 2017 school year (starts in January) – Enables six girls whose parents cannot afford school fees to continue in either junior high or high school. ([www.sltscholars.org](http://www.sltscholars.org))
3. Global Giving – Project #16755 – \$1000  
Our donation supports education and leadership skills training for girls living in slums in Mumbai, India. ([www.globalgiving.org/projects/life-skills-training-for-poor-girls-in-slums-in-india/](http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/life-skills-training-for-poor-girls-in-slums-in-india/))
4. Providence Student Union – \$500  
This student-run project of the nonprofit Federal Hill House helps build leadership and activism skills among Providence Public School students. Our donation will support female students. ([www.providencestudentunion.org](http://www.providencestudentunion.org)).
5. Stages of Freedom – Swim Empowerment Project – \$400  
This project seeks to increase swimming proficiency among African American children, who drown at five times the rate of white children. Our funds will give two girls the chance to have swimming lessons. ([www.stagesoffreedom.org](http://www.stagesoffreedom.org))

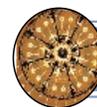
**The Girl Effect Task Force:** Polly Walker, Marilyn Eanet, Martha Manno and Pam Steager  
Questions? Contact Polly ([polly41walker@gmail.com](mailto:polly41walker@gmail.com))

## Grieving Mindfully

*First session: Sunday, April 10, 5:00–6:30p*

On April 10, the First Unitarian Caring Network will begin a group for people anywhere who are in the process of grieving. The group will meet in the Paneled Parlor for nine Sunday evenings. Using facilitated group discussion, each session will address a different facet of grieving. The group, facilitated by Pat Gifford, Rick Richards, Bruce Amand, and Elissa Emerson, is open to anyone in or outside the congregation. All group proceedings are strictly confidential.

Anyone interested in participating should talk to Rev. Charlie Ortman to determine whether the group is an appropriate match to his/her needs.



## WHEEL OF LIFE

### Healing Thoughts to:

Katherine Hegedus, Denise Lagueux, and Judie Knilans

### Congratulations to:

Rev. Gene Dyszlewski on his installation as minister at the Lime Rock Baptist Church

## HATS OFF TO ...

**Greg Waksmulski** for his ongoing help with office technology.

Our **Coffee Hour Providers** last month:

Anne Connor, Shirley DiMatteo, Jill Malin, Deborah Baldizar, Sine Pounder, Judy Ortman, Lisa Rose, Mary Frappier, Joyce Boober, Paul Rossignol, Roberta Groch, Joan Markell, Gaby Petruck, Spence Hobbs, Roxanne Stern, Elissa Emerson, Tony Allen, Bobbi Fidler, Lynne Fazzi, Mary Kollar, Beth Anterni, Mike Brady, Jess Dolan, Lyn Bradford, Janet Noble, Cathy Orloff, Liz Palter, Yvonne Federowicz, Karen Boulanger, and all of the March leprechauns who brought something in to surprise us.

## Find Us on Facebook!

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



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

If you are interested in posting a church-related event, send an email to Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone ([mem@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:mem@firstunitarianprov.org)) or contact the church office.



## Social Justice

### Want to Volunteer to Help Refugees?

*Sunday, April 10 at 12:15p*

Come to a meeting after Coffee Hour to learn how you can help refugees in our community by volunteering through Dorcas International Institute. Opportunities are varied and range from an intense commitment such as mentoring a family for at least four months to collecting and donating household goods or clothing.

For more information about volunteer possibilities, visit the Dorcas web site ([www.diiri.org](http://www.diiri.org)) and click on "How You Can Help." Our contact at Dorcas is Elaine Heebner (401.784.8697). If you can't wait to get started, see Nori Duncan or Ruth Arellana for an application form.

### Standing on the Side of Love (SSL)

*Monthly Meeting - Wednesday, April 27 at 7:15p*

*Voter Registration Training - Sunday, April 10 at 12:00p*

The SSL Committee is looking for more members to help execute all of our anti-racism efforts! Please come to our next meeting to help us plan for next year. We are exploring possible workshops to host, as well as planning book discussions and other opportunities for advocacy and action. SSL is also collaborating with the NAACP and other groups on voter registration efforts. If you are interested in helping people register to vote, please come to our training on Sunday, April 10. The training will last one hour.

Contact: Tiffany Reed ([tiffany.e.reed@gmail.com](mailto:tiffany.e.reed@gmail.com))



### Neighborhood Social Justice

#### Monthly Meeting

*Sunday, April 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, April 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 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](mailto:joesuu@gmail.com)) for details.

### Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry—Rhode Island

*Annual Meeting: April 10, 2:00p at Westminster Church, East Greenwich, RI*

*Keynote: Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman, Interim Minister, First Unitarian Church*

*Issues: Ethics, Housing, Gun violence, Immigration, Refugees, Climate, and BLM.*

Join with other UUs to discuss and vote on the social and economic issues being considered in the upcoming session of the General Assembly and/or of concern to UUs.

Contact: Bob Cox ([rcox45@cox.net](mailto:rcox45@cox.net))

### First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

*Distribution Day: Monday, April 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–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

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

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

### 2016 UUA General Assembly

*June 22–26, Columbus, OH*

Registration for the Unitarian Universalist Association's annual General Assembly began on March 1. This national gathering is open to congregation members, clergy, and friends of all 1,000-plus UU congregations.

For online information, go to [uua.org/ga](http://uua.org/ga), or contact Cathy Seggel in the church office (401.421.7970, [dre@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:dre@firstunitarianprov.org)).



### Knitting for a Better World

*Every Tuesday, 7:00–9:00p*

Come join fellow knitters for a casual evening of knitting and conversation.

Work on your own project or 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](mailto:Katherine.ahlquist@gmail.com))



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

April 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2  Saturday Social Supper (Bridgehouse)
3 Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Neighborhood SJ	4 Women's Alliance Meeting 10:00a Program 11:00a  Zendo 7:00p	5 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12-7:00p  Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	6  Prudential Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p	7  Search Committee 7:00p	8  All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	9
10 Worship 10:30a at 12:00a Mentor/ Mentee at 12:00p Refugee Meeting Voter Reg. Training  UU Men 7:00p	11  Zendo 7:00p	12 R.E. Committee 6:45p Budget Comm. 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	13  Meditation 7:00p	14  Deacons 5:30p Search Committee 7:00p	15	16 Women's Alliance Yard Sale 10:00a - 2:00p
17 Worship 10:30a at 11:30a Food Pantry Food Shuttle Chapel Drop In for Parents at 12:00p Parent Gathering	18 Food Pantry Open 2:00p-6:00p  Zendo 7:00p	19 Budget Comm. 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	20  Meditation 7:00p	21  Search Committee 7:00p	22	23  Musicale Fund Raiser 7:30p followed by a reception
24 Worship 10:30a Girl Effect Sale at 12:00p New Member Brunch	25  Zendo 7:00p	26 Budget Comm. 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	27  Meditation 7:00p Standing on the Side of Love 7:15p	28  Worship Comm 5:45p Search Committee 7:00p	29  All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	30  Getting to Know Your UU Neighbors