



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016

Services in the Meeting House

Sunday, May 1 "Picking Up the Pieces and Moving On"
10:30a **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, May 8 **Mother's Day/Teacher Recognition: A Multigenerational Service**
10:30a **Homily: "When the Sunrise or Sunset Just Isn't Enough"**
Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman

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

PLEASE NOTE: If the Search Committee proposes a new ministerial candidate this spring, the candidate will lead services on **either May 15 and 22 or June 5 and 12**, choosing his or her own themes. Watch for announcements early in May.

Sunday, May 15 **Coming of Age: A Multigenerational Service**
10:30a **8th-Graders, Mentors, Cathy Seggel, DRE & Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**

Our annual recognition of eighth-grade Coming of Age honorees will be the centerpiece of the service. With mentors by their sides, the class will share reflections about their individual beliefs, and the congregation will celebrate and affirm the beginning of the next stage of their lifelong faith development. Please join us for this meaningful rite of passage.

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

Sunday, May 22 "A View from the Cornerstone"
10:30a **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman and Friends**

Grades Pre-K and older begin in the Meeting House for the first portion of the service.

Infants-three-year-olds meet in classrooms on the second floor in the Parish House.

Sunday, May 29 "Remember and Recommit": A Joint Service at Bell Street Chapel
10:00a (Note the earlier time) **Rev. Margaret Weis & TSgt Katie MacVeigh, USAF Ret.**

Join us in a combined Memorial Day worship service with our UU neighbors at Bell Street Chapel. Together, we will explore the challenges of military service, honor lives lost, and reflect on how we can recommit ourselves to caring for those who have served. Retired Air Force TSgt Katie MacVeigh will offer a reflection on her service and work as a Peer Support for Heroes at Home.

Following worship, we will gather in Eddy Hall for coffee hour and our annual cookie contest! Bring two dozen of your favorite cookies to enter into the contest. And bring your loose change or bills to use for voting! Last year we had a lot of fun, shared some recipes, and raised money for Youth Pride, Inc. Let's have some fun and raise some money for another great cause on the 29th.

No Sunday School classes.

Brown University Medical School will be holding commencement in our Meeting House.

Bell Street Chapel is located at 5 Bell Street, off Broadway, on the West Side of Providence.

Sunday, June 5 "Reaching for the Stars . . . on a Summer's Night or Any Other Time"
10:30a **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman and Friends**

New Members will be recognized during the service.

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



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

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S t a f f

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

As your Ministerial Search Committee moves from the first round of search into a second effort to find the right match for this congregation's new settled minister, once again we all discover that certain expectations we might have had, regarding what we might know at this moment in time, have evaporated. I'm reminded of lyrics from "Delicate Balance," a song by Chicagoan Tom Dundee, lyrics that claim, "Expectations we have can lead down that path where the devil discouragement lives." Our expectations can indeed lead us down that path, but I don't think we have to let them.

As I think about what to share with you in this month's newsletter, I'm once again reminded of how much we all do not know about the future. I looked unsuccessfully for a good poem or reading about uncertainty that we might find to be reassuring. I didn't have much luck finding what might convey the uplifting sentiments I thought might be helpful. Often, when I can't find a poem that I'm looking for, I realize that I need to try my own hand. So here is my poem for you in this moment of shared uncertainty.

Just as we cannot
and never will be able to
unknow the things that we
have come to know,
we cannot now know
those things that have
yet come to pass.

Knowing is indeed related to time.
So is not knowing.
We can choose to either
bide our time
or we can live and act and sing
and dance our way through it.
Let it be a dance . . .

British philosopher Julian Baggini noted that "Accepting that the world is full of uncertainty, and ambiguity does not and should not stop people from being pretty sure about a lot of things." The truth of it is, I think, that when we find ourselves in transition or uncertainty, what we find is that we are alive. The truth is that we are always in a constant flow of change; the world is, too. We might have some pretty good guesses about what tomorrow may bring, but once we've been around the block a time or two, we learn that we cannot ever know for sure what tomorrow holds in store. And so, we live in faith; not so much a faith that what we think will happen is what will occur. Our experience encourages us to live in faith that whatever might transpire, we will continue to live and love, to dream and hope.

You have a very fine Search Committee working on your behalf to locate a minister who will help you to hold high the vision of this congregation as it moves into the future. The committee is clear on the job that they have been elected to do. Whether they accomplish their goal this year or next, we can all move along with certainty . . . toward the very next unknown phases of the transitions that are our lives.

Whether it's about the next minister here at First Unitarian, about the next president of the United States, or about the next unknown steps on our own journeys, there's a lot we can't know until we get there. And so we might as well live and act, sing and dance . . . now, and then again, and then again.

Doing the best we can in any given moment has to make the next moment that much better. From the first round to the second round to the next round, our uncertainty is the fertile ground from which we grow our souls. Yes, let it be a dance!

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

Deacons' Bench

Who are the Deacons and What Do They Do?

The Deacons are the other elected body of our church. *Nominations are open for new Deacons* for two five-year terms. Kate Bowden is stepping down due to other pressing church-related responsibilities, so a third slot will need to be filled. If you have recommendations, please speak to the Nominating Committee.



Yeah, but, what do they do? At our April meeting, we forged our Mission Statement with a Covenant about that Mission Statement. It is posted near the Deacon Wall to your left as you enter the Parish House. Meanwhile, as always, our meetings are open to anyone and are held on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 5:30p in the Parish House. You are more than welcome.

Safety on our Church Campus. We are still working with others to secure Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) for our campus. A generous donor will provide two AED devices to install in the church. As they are of no use hanging on the wall, this month we will offer training in their use.

Another aspect of safety is medical contact information. Your Deacons have noted that on those occasions when the Fire Department is summoned, there is no medical information or contact information to share with the rescue personnel and no centralized means of contacting a family member to advise them of the event.

Is that safe?

Is that enough connection among us?

What would you think of having a secure central file of next-of-kin and medical information in the church office? Stay tuned.

Sandwich Generation. Caught between the needs to care for an older generation and a younger generation. Exhausted. Feeling guilty. Wrung out. Enduring in silence. What do people do? How do they get help? *Is there help for them?* The Deacons wonder if a self-help group is possible within our community. Shared experience and shared answers seem a good idea. It appears to us that this might be a good program for Adult Education within our Lifelong RE experience. Who will step up?

. . . with gratitude for our deep connection to each other and 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

Dancebreak

This month holds opportunities for warmth, inside and out. There will be celebrations, recognitions, and closing ceremonies. In our faith community, we will engage in spirited worship, lifelong learning, and social justice action as the weather heats up. By the time this column is posted, the ministerial search process will have shifted. Whether it is decided that the congregation will be blessed with another year of interim ministry or that a settled minister candidate match is found, all will be well. I trust and admire the process and the people who are leading the way. It is a comforting feeling. Please keep in touch with me to discuss this further.

Meanwhile, with the Religious Education Committee I have been reviewing curriculum, policies, practices, and support systems. We have devoted some resources for next year's program that support multigenerational innovational experiences in faith development.

We are in the midst of harvesting next year's teams of volunteer teachers. It is not too late for you to enjoy this opportunity, beginning in September. If you have interest in participating on a teacher team, please let us know by contacting me or a committee member by email, phone, or in the church office. You will be supported in learning how to do that dance.

Plenty of warming tools are apparent in our midst. I can't resist sharing another, introduced to me at a week-long, 12-hour-a-day meeting of LREDA (the Liberal Religious Educators Association). It's called *Dancebreak*. A weekly blind email is sent to in-boxes of willing bodies of potential energy in hope, inspiration, motivation, unity, freedom, and movement. When it arrives, you can stop what you are doing for a brief *Dancebreak!!!* Take a moment. Close the door. Close your eyes. Don't worry – no one is watching. (Even if they are, maybe you will inspire them.) Commit to being with us. Three to five minutes a week seems reasonable to dedicate to dancing with other human beings and moving your body's insides and outs to sounds coming from our Earth and its people. Hokey? Perhaps. I must say, it sure feels good.

I look forward to being with you in this season of appreciation, recognition, and visioning for the future. I am available to chat by phone or email or visit with you in my church office.

Take good care and don't forget to enjoy the dance,

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

Two First Unitarian Youth Chosen to Serve Our National Association

Congratulations on the achievements of two of our young people, who have been chosen from their respective applicant pools to take up major roles in our greater UU Association.

Elesa Turner will serve as one of the Youth Caucus chaplains for this year's General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio. Her expenses to attend GA will be paid by the UUA.

Bailey Saddle mire was chosen through a national election to be the Youth Observer on the UUA Board for the next two-years. She will attend the four to five board meetings each year representing the youth throughout the Association.

Both young women are Luminary Leaders in our UU movement, a program that recognizes and fosters individual youth who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their UU communities. Emma Lyons, who served as a Youth Caucus chaplain at last year's GA, has also been designated a Luminary Leader.



Elesa Turner



Bailey Saddle mire

Youth Lead Spring Worship Services

The Senior High Youth Group's annual worship service was a creative and inspirational gift from our teen community. The message, in word and music, was well crafted and presented. The two graduating seniors, Hanna Van Belle and Angela Sun, were honored, each receiving symbolic life tools: thorny roses; *Becoming*, a guide to navigating adulthood; and a chalice pendant. Rev. Charlie Ortman gave them a light for their way and sunglasses because their future is so bright. Thanks to all who participated and to their supportive parents and dedicated advisors, Bruce Boucek, Emily Bruce, Emma Gross, and Erica Napolitano.



This month, the eighth-grade Coming of Age recognition service will showcase youth belief statements as a celebration of their transition to the next stage of lifelong faith development.

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 for 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/.



The theme at Star Island Lifespan Religious Education Week in July (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 attendees and others.

Please contact Cathy Seggel soon for details.



Sight Lines

From the President

LOST

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
 Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
 And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
 Must ask permission to know it and be known.
 The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
 I have made this place around you.
 If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
 No two trees are the same to Raven.
 No two branches are the same to Wren.
 If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
 You are surely lost. Stand still.
 The forest knows
 Where you are. You must let it find you.

– David Wagoner

What a strange time I find myself in . . . with only one more newsletter article to write after this one and just a few more Prudential Committee meetings to organize and lead. My life this year has, to a certain degree, been organized around the church calendar, the church needs, and the routine and nonroutine parts of providing lay leadership for a congregation in transition. There have been so many surprising parts of this experience for me – getting to work with many people whom I've known but not really experienced fully before this year, participating in conversations and negotiations around policy-setting and differences of opinion and experience, and allowing myself to be more visible and vocal both within PruComm meetings and within the larger church. I used to have a friend who was terrified of being lost, of not having his bearings and losing his way. Making friends with being and feeling lost has been a powerful lesson for me and has helped in large and small ways as this year has unfolded.

I reflect on what a potentially challenging time the congregation finds itself in . . . poised and ready to accept a new settled minister and then having to sit with the discomfort of uncertainty and stress associated with not having a candidate emerge from our year-long search process. Our lives this year have, to a certain degree, been organized around the church calendar, the preparation for welcoming a new settled minister and the twists and turns of navigating an interim process that was planned to last only one year. We find ourselves in the midst of the surprise elements of this experience – engaging the Ministerial Search Committee to continue on to the second round of the search process, while simultaneously mobilizing the Prudential Committee to work with our current interim minister on the possibility of staying on, while also entertaining the potential need of welcoming a second interim minister, all while completing our budget drive, exploring a capital campaign, streamlining our *Policy Manual*, examining our governance structure, and maintaining the high-quality programs and activities that we all look forward to at this time of year.

It is tempting to feel lost and to feel the fears associated with that disorienting feeling. It is important to make friends with that feeling and to remind ourselves that we are a strong, vibrant, growing, and beloved community. The forest (and our new settled minister) knows where we are . . . we need to have faith and let that individual find us, however long that takes. I have great confidence that it will be worth the wait.

Happy Spring!

Cynthia Rosengard
 President, Prudential Committee
 pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Treasurer's Report

As the fiscal year draws to a close, it appears that First Unitarian will end the year within budget.

A budget rarely provides an exact number for either income or expenditures. Many factors affect what money is received and how it is spent. Areas such as utilities, possible rentals, changes in insurance costs, emergency building repairs, staff changes, and snow removal are always in question. And yes, the ability of the congregation to meet the yearly pledge goal also affects the surplus or deficit.

This year our utilities and snow removal, lower insurance costs, unused medical insurance deductibles, and careful management of other expenditures provide a balance. In addition, the congregation is on pace to meet the budgeted amount from pledges.

As many have noticed, there is damage to the ceiling in the Parish House Auditorium. A portion of the anticipated budget surplus will be used to repair the leaking chimneys so as to stop the damage to the ceiling. Even with this expense, First Unitarian should complete Fiscal Year 2015-16 with a balanced budget.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer

Our UUA "Fair Share"

First Unitarian is one of the more than 1,000 UU congregations that have covenanted to support one another of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Our goal as we plan our 2016-17 budget is to uphold our covenant with our fellow congregations in the UUA and contribute our *fair share. Together we can do what no one congregation can do alone. UUA national programs include:

Ministry and Professional Leadership: Counsel, leadership, and resources for religious professionals.

Publishing: Spreading our faith and values through publications such as *UU World*.

Lifespan Faith Development: Resources to nurture UU identity, spiritual growth, and communities of justice and love.

Advocacy and Witness: Promoting social justice values through media advocacy, public education, partnerships, and local social justice efforts.

To support these programs, each congregation is asked to contribute its *fair share, which is currently \$60/member (we have 468 members as of January 2016). Thus, First Unitarian's full UUA fair share for 2016-17 is \$28,080. The 2016-17 fair share for the Ballou Channing District is \$8,892 to support local programs and services.



Community Life

Our Ministerial Search

During February, the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) met with its three finalist candidates for our ministerial position, as described in our earlier newsletter articles. We spent an entire weekend with each of the three candidates and got to know them through interviews, informal discussion, and hearing them preach. During March, we deliberated and made a decision on each candidate. One was a definite Yes, one a definite No, and the third was a Maybe.



After further deliberation, our Maybe candidate became a No. We take seriously the charge you gave us, and we did not want to compromise by calling a minister whom we felt could not meet all the needs and standards of our congregation.

Committee chair John Simmonds shared these results with the UUA. Meanwhile, all the ministers-in-search were rating the churches they visited and turning in the results to the UUA also. Unfortunately, our first-choice candidate selected another church. While we are disappointed in this outcome, we have accepted it and moved forward. We hope that the congregation will join us in looking forward to the “Second Round.”

The Second Round is a relatively new option. It is a shorter search process (about 6 to 8 weeks), an opportunity for new candidates to jump into the search and express interest. It has all the tasks – reviewing ministerial candidate packets, conducting interviews and reference checks, hosting a pre-candidate weekend and candidating week – of a longer search.

We will know by late April whether or not we have one or more candidates to interview. The interviews would happen in early to mid-May, and a candidate could potentially be brought before the congregation before the end of the church year. If this Second Round search does not result in a suitable ministerial candidate, we will do a full-year search again in the fall. The full-year search will be much easier the second time around, since there is no need to redo the congregational survey, hold cottage meetings, write a congregational record, or create a website. All of these are completed and we can simply do minor updates as needed.

Please feel free to contact members of the MSC with any questions you might have.

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

There Were Once Stained Glass Windows . . .

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

In the early 1890s, Mary Williams Brown Tustin, widow of Rev. Josiah P. Tustin, donated funds to the church for a stained glass window as a memorial to her parents, Isaac and Lydia Williams Brown. She chose a design, and a committee was appointed to oversee the gift, but Mrs. Tustin died suddenly in 1892 before the work could be carried out.

In her will, Mrs. Tustin left money for two memorial windows. Another committee was formed in 1893 and selected well-known stained-glass artist Frederic Crowninshield of New York to execute the windows. In 1894, the windows, with angels and doves above and parables below, were installed on the north side of the church, in the east and middle windows.

The top left window was of angels with robes and sandals. The bottom left was the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11). The top right window was of angels with scepter and crown. The bottom right was the parable of the Little Child (Matthew 18:2 and Mark 10:13).

As part of the major restoration preceding the 1916 centennial of the Meeting House, the windows were moved to the west wall of the church, flanking the main entrances. For the 150th anniversary renovation in 1966, the windows were removed and stored in the church basement, where they were accidentally damaged beyond repair. The one surviving panel – a triangular section depicting a descending dove – is part of the display of church artifacts in the balcony behind the organ.

Why I Pledge to This Church

A Testimonial from Michael Currier

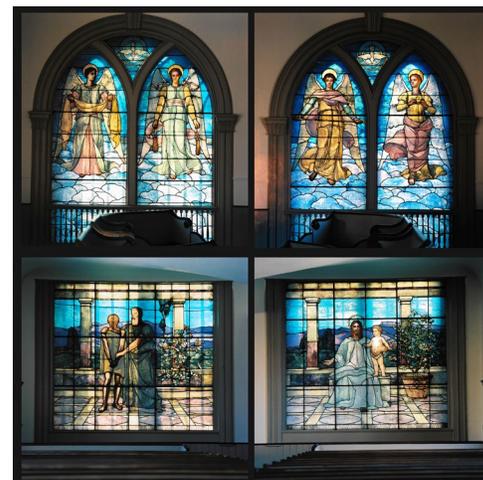
I'm going to be honest. I hate pledging. How does one decide how much something is worth? I guess from NPR, there's a part of my brain that now converts pledges into the number of lattes per year. A pledge of \$1,000 is equivalent to 333 point 33 repeating decimal expensive coffees per year. But First Unitarian isn't NPR or any other nonprofit competing for my somewhat limited resources – this is the place I call a spiritual home.



In the years since I joined this church, I've watched our lovely magnolia tree bud and blossom and lose its leaves maybe 10 times. During that time, both of my parents have died, my relationship broke up, I lost a few dogs. I went back to school and started a new career. Throughout all my own joys and sorrows, this church has sustained me. I've been called to action. I've been comforted. I've belonged. This is the place I come weekly that calls me to be a better person.

Last week, I was sitting up in the balcony, which is one of my favorite spots in the church. I love to look out at the crowd. I have lovely memories of interactions with so many people in this sanctuary. You are my friends and cheerleaders and heroes. My life is a far richer place for my participation in this community. I feel grateful for you and this place.

This church has been a harbor to liberal religious thought for 300 years. I am a part of that tradition. I am a steward of that tradition. So when the pledge drive came around this year, I thought about what this church has meant to me and how much I could afford, and I pledged that day.





Community Life

May All-Parish Supper

Friday, May 13

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

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

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

7:45p Program in the Auditorium: A Concert by The Gnomes

Celebrate the coming of springtime with a wonderful concert by The Gnomes. They are an exciting, popular, talented group of folksingers and instrumentalists who offer a lively program of traditional musical tunes from all over the world – Celtic, Russian, Eastern European, Caribbean, Native American, and more. The Gnomes play an eclectic blend of world fusion music, and they play it fast and with energy and with soul. The band members include some of Rhode Island's finest musicians, including Phil Edmonds (Irish whistle, accordion), Cathy Clasper-Torch (fiddle, keyboard, vocals), Mike Fischman (guitar, mandolin, banjo, vocals), Peter Breen (bass guitar, vocals), and Matt Niebels (percussion). You won't want to miss this great show.

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).

Our Annual May Breakfast

Saturday, May 14, 8:00–11:00a

May Breakfast is a delightful, long-time Rhode Island tradition. Last year we revived our participation in this springtime celebration. We invite you, your family, and friends to join in.

To help make this year's breakfast even better, we need a few volunteers to help cook, serve, set up, and clean up and we especially need contributions of breakfast baked goods.

To participate in any of these ways, stop by our table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour on Sunday, and see Rebecca Alberg or Jim Barfoot to sign up for a job and a shift, and/or buy your meal tickets. All proceeds will go to our own Loaves & Fishes Mission that feeds homeless men.

June Parish Supper

Friday, June 10

The last Parish Supper of the church year will be a special occasion. Watch the June newsletter and the *Meeting House Times* for the program announcement. Please plan to join us.

Art in the Atrium

The May exhibit is about an artist couple, Dana and Justin Munroe. Dana is a textile artist and Justin is a sculptor and image maker. They will present Fine Art and Fibers.

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)

Start Your Summer with a Picnic in the Park!

Sunday, June 12, 12:00p–3:00ish at India Point Park

We'll kick off summer 2016 with a picnic in the park after the Sunday service. Join old friends and make new ones during an afternoon of food and fun!

We'll celebrate summer and play some games: we'll have kickball, and croquet. Pack a lunch and bring a blanket. The Membership Committee will provide drinks and watermelon.

Check out the event on our church Facebook page (search "First Unitarian Church of Providence" and click on Events) and add your input.



Szekler Pride

At some point in our trip to Transylvania last summer, we began to hear about the Szekler people.



Historically, the Szeklers were probably one of the tribes that migrated into the Carpathian basin to become Hungary. Their location on the edge of the basin situated them naturally to be Hungary's frontier guards. So they were, from about 800 AD on, and known for their ferocity.

Long ago, the Szeklers, like other nomadic tribes, rode horses, lived in wagons, and tended herds of sheep. As nomads, they occupied land communally. Even today, there are traces of this ancient culture in the Szeklar way of life – there is communal property in their villages, they still use and ride horses, and they pool their sheep into large herds that graze across the countryside.

After our arrival in Szentegyhaza, the Szekler people became a palpable reality when we went to the Festival of a Thousand Szekler Maidens in what is called "Szeklerburg", or Szekler City.

The festival began in the city square where thousands of people, many in Szekler costume, were gathered. The men wore boots, flannel pants, white shirts, and black vests; the women wore long colorful skirts, red vests, and white blouses (see the picture for more detail).

Shortly after our arrival, music began and the costumed Szeklers began dancing in circles, changing steps from time to time, reversing direction, weaving in and out. Children and adults of all ages were dancing together: this was not a show – this was an extremely large community dance.

After several dances, everyone moved on to a mountain location out of town where the festivities continued. Many travelled by horse-drawn cart in a pretty spectacular procession. On the mountain, a huge square was set up. Three sides of the square featured booths with Szekler crafts – wood carving, shingle making, lace making, iron mongering, etc. – mixed in with places to buy food. On the fourth side was an outdoor stage where dance groups from different villages performed continuously. At the end of the day, Szabolcs, the minister of our sister church, told us proudly that well over a thousand women had registered as wearing national costume to the festival and nearly a thousand men. Szekler pride, something we did not know existed, lives passionately in Transylvania!



Community Life

The Women's Alliance

Monthly Program

Monday, May 2

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Program: Secrets and Scandals: After Separation of Powers

Speaker: H. Philip West, Jr.

How is Rhode Island government performing ten years after the Separation of Powers amendment? Where are we now? What important issues that we should be aware of might be slipping under the radar?

H. Philip West, Jr. served 18 years as Executive Director of Common Cause Rhode Island. His first-person history – Secrets and Scandals: Reforming Rhode Island, 1986–2006 – recounts events that shook Rhode Island's culture of corruption and led to separation of powers in 2004.

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

Antiques & Uniques – Our Indoor Yard Sale a Success!

Thank you to all who donated items and time to this event that will provide the financial donations the Alliance gives to local charitable organizations helping women and families. And thanks to all who came and bought! The sale netted over \$3,000. This year the Alliance will be donating to Sojourner House, Planned Parenthood of SE New England, Dorcas Place Family Literacy Center, and Crossroads RI Women's Center.

Easter Desserts Sales

Thank you to all who ordered the wonderful desserts prepared by the Great Women's Alliance Baking Show bakers. This, also, was a fundraiser, and proceeds after expenses will be part of our donations to those local charities, listed above, which help women and families.

Camp Street Ministries Donations

Camp Street Ministries benefits from Eastside Marketplace grocery receipts. Save your receipts from Eastside Marketplace and place them in the collection box at the back table of the Atrium near the Haynes Room. The Women's Alliance delivers them to Camp Street Ministries.

Gourmet Coffee Sales 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.



Our Coffee Hour Needs You!

Remember that our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort (organized by the Women's Alliance) with donations from our congregation of baked or bought goodies such as brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake and more. In order to feed the ravenous crowd each Sunday, we need eight people bringing donations that serve 24 each.

Sign-ups are preferred in order to plan for each upcoming Sunday. Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour and go home with a reminder so you won't forget.

Last Path to Membership Class of the Year

Saturday, May 21, 9:00a–12:00p

(Note: this replaces the previously scheduled Tuesday sessions)

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 15.

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

HATS OFF TO ...

Our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

Anne Connor, Mary Frappier, Gaby Petruck, Joyce Boober, Sine Pounder, Surrell Wells, Bela Teixeira, Lynne Fazzi, Lucille Riccitelli, Elissa Emerson, Karen Keohan, Karen Boulanger, Lyn Bradford, Marilyn Eanet, Shirley Brown, Jess Dolan, Roberta Groch, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to:

Martin Lazzareschi on the death of his father.

Congratulations to:

Ann Daum on her 90th birthday.

Healing Wishes to:

Kelley Smith and **Norm Seggel** after surgery.

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) or contact the church office.



Spiritual Development

The Caring Network

Many of you may wonder what the Caring Network is. That's because it's new this year and hasn't yet become "part of the furniture" at First Unitarian. We hope a little information about the Network will nudge it in that direction.

The Caring Network is built on the foundations of the Deacons, the Lay Ministry, and the Care Crew. It was formed this year because these groups all had similar purposes and it seemed their purposes would be better achieved if they were amalgamated. The Deacons, whose purpose is to promote the spiritual welfare of the church, provide the leadership for the Network. The Lay Ministry and the Care Crew, which were formed to provide rides, meals, and consolation, became a core element of the Network.

With these changes came an expanded purpose and a new determination to serve the congregation's needs better. Do you remember the congregational survey of needs? Out of that effort, and a subsequent series of meetings, the Caring Network identified a wide range of needs that congregants live with every day – stressed new parents, grieving people, unemployed people, separated people, and more.

The Network is trying to find ways to meet all these needs. One obvious approach is to use the model of small-group ministry – bring people together with some leadership and help them help themselves. However, not all needs fit this model, and the Caring Network is working to develop appropriate ways to help the congregation minister to itself.

It's exciting work that only gets better as more people become engaged. It starts with describing needs, and the Network will continue to ask the congregation what kinds of help it needs. But it also depends on finding people who are interested in helping others. If you are one of those, please contact Steve McCloy (steven_mccloy@brown.edu) or Shirley DiMatteo (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com), current leaders of the Caring Network.



The Care Crew has been busy serving people who have had illness, surgery, and family complications. They have supplied meals, rides, or childcare for three individuals and one family. Kudos to all those who volunteered – sometimes four times! Those people include:

Nori Duncan, Marilyn Eanet, Cheryl and Neil Bartholomew, Liz Palter, Lynda Gulley, Janet Taylor, Anne Calderella, Lucille and Ted Martin, Bobbi Fisler, Joyce Boober, Janet Bralove, Marcia Bubolz, Mary Frappier, Elissa Emerson, Katherine Hegedus, Anne Connor, Anne Boyd, Mary Kollar, Irene Allen, Tom Getz, Vikki Bristlin, Steve McCloy, Marida Hollos, Sonya Gray, Nancy Libby Fisher, Shirley DiMatteo, Judy and Charlie Ortman, Cynthia Rosengard, and Lyn Bradford. Other thanks go to driver, Rich Rudert and card senders, Jill Malin, and Cynthia Davis.

The Mindful Grieving Group has completed its first session and has started a new session. It has proven to be a very successful group and, hopefully, will become an integral part of our congregation's Caring Network. Many thanks to the facilitators: Bruce Amand, Elissa Emerson, Pat Gifford, and Rick Richards.



2016 UUA General Assembly

June 22–26, Columbus, OH

Our annual gathering of UUs from across the country is open to congregation members, clergy, and friends of all 1,000-plus UU congregations.

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

Ongoing 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.

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

UU Men

Sunday, May 15, 7:00–9:00p

(Note: a week later than usual)

What can we learn about our shared humanity from the awesome goddesses of the Greek myths? Storyteller Burr Harrison will lead this month's group with the telling of selected Greek myths that focus on the goddesses, which we will then discuss.

Facilitator: Burr Harrison (burr_harrison@yahoo.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)

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).



Social Justice

Call for Next Year's Community Collections

Submissions due by May 31

One Sunday each month, First Unitarian donates its Sunday offering to a charitable cause, a practice we have been following for several years. Any member of the church can submit a proposal to support either a program sponsored by our church or an organization in which a church member is actively involved.

The Community Collection Committee will entertain proposals from church members for Community Collections during the 2016-17 church year. A very simple proposal form needs to be completed. Submissions must be received by the end of May; selections will be made by the end of the church year.

Forms are available from the church office (admin@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970). For more information, contact: Nori Duncan, PruComm Social Justice Liaison (nori.duncan@gmail.com).

Standing on the Side of Love (SSL)

Monthly Meeting to be announced

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, movies, and other opportunities for advocacy and action.

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



Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly Meeting

Sunday, May 1 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, May 3, 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 prepare the deliveries.

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.

Volunteer to Help Refugees

Sunday, May 15 at 12:00p

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) and click on "How You Can Help." Or contact Nori Duncan or Ruth Arellana for an application form.

Community Collections 2015-16

Nonpledge contributions from one Sunday offering each month have been donated to the following causes:

September 13: Strong Roots School – \$2,346

October 18: City Year Providence – \$1,223

November 22: Loaves & Fishes Mission – \$1,424

December 24: Christmas Eve collections for First Unitarian Community Food Share Pantry – \$3,123

January 17: Senior Agenda Coalition – \$1,286

February 14: Crossroads RI – \$1,243

The last collection of the church year will be on Sunday, May 8 for Children's Friend, a nonprofit agency in Rhode Island providing services for vulnerable children and their families.

First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day

Monday, May 16

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

Set-up: 2:00p-3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p-5:00p

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

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

The Food Pantry Is Open to All

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

Knitting for a Better World

Every Tuesday, 7:00-9:00p

Come join fellow knitters for a casual evening of knitting and conversation. Work on your own

project or 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 detailed information on these and future programs (meeting locations, contact information, etc.), see details in this newsletter.

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Mentor/ Mentee Neighborhood SJ</p>	<p>2 Women's Alliance Meeting 10:00a Program 11:00a Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>3 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12-7:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p>4 Prudential Committee 6:15p Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 Worship 10:30a</p>	<p>9 Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>10 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p</p>	<p>11 Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>12 Deacons 5:30p</p>	<p>13 All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p</p>	<p>14 May Breakfast 8:00-11:00a</p>
<p>15 Worship 10:30a at 11:30a Food Pantry Food Shuttle at 12:00p Helping Refugees UU Men 7:00p</p>	<p>16 Food Pantry Open 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>17 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>	<p>18 Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 Path to Membership 9:00a-12:30p</p>
<p>22 Worship 10:30a</p>	<p>23 Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>24 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p</p>	<p>25 Meditation 7:00p</p>	<p>26 Worship Comm 5:45</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 <i>[Brown University Commencement]</i> Worship Service at Bell St. Chapel 10:00a</p>	<p>30 MEMORIAL DAY Church Office Closed Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p>31 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p</p>				