



Services in the Meeting House

January's theme is **Intention and Justice**.

Sunday, January 7 Football and Justice: Fire In the Belly

10:30a

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

"Prairie Home Companion" gave Unitarian Universalism some of its broadest, and most dubious, reknown. Based on one of their skits, we'll look at what the nature of our faith really is, what it needs to be as we look to a new year, to the needs of the present and our commitments to the future. What are our real capacities for justice and intention in today's world?

Child Dedications will be celebrated during the service.

Young people in Pre-K and older begin in the Meeting House for worship and then go to their classes.

Sunday, January 14 MLK Sunday: Looking Beyond Justice

10:30a

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

On this Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, our service will look at the challenge and imperative of relationships and commitment between us all, across all our differences, despite all our differences, and maybe most of all, because of all our differences. What do we all gain, as well as give, when we live into what we believe?

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, January 21 Significant Other Church

10:30a

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

Do you know we have a partner church? Way over in Romania, a place utterly unlike Providence, with people who lead very different lives and whose Unitarianism is in some ways unfamiliar to us. And yet . . . and yet they are our siblings, related through our faith. They are our benefactors, as they have hand-made gifts for our church spaces. They are our friends, as our journeys back and forth, and the experiences that we've shared, have created lasting and loving bonds. We'll spend this morning cultivating our awareness of the ways First Unitarian has a significant other – more significant, perhaps than we knew, with yet more significance possible for us all.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

See the article about our Partner Church friends on page 9.

Sunday, January 28 You and I

10:30a

Rev. Colin Bossen

We come to know the self through the other. In this service, we will examine how salvation, whatever it might be, is a social, rather than an individual, proposition.

The Rev. Colin Bossen serves the First Parish Church of Ashby, Massachusetts. He is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Harvard University, where he is writing a dissertation on the religious dimensions of populism. He will give the spring 2019 Minns Lectures. He keeps a blog at www.colinbossen.com

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Special day with the Rev. Dr. Thandeka (Love Beyond Belief) and Cathy Seggel for worship, time with Coming of Age and Senior High, and a teacher/leader lunch program.



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

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Next Deadline: January 15

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Lately . . .

Ganesha is my favorite of the Hindu gods. That’s not unusual – he’s a lot of people’s favorite; he even has followings among the Jain and Buddhists. Here’s why I love him.

He has a lot of appealing qualities: he’s a patron of arts and intellectual endeavor and wisdom. But most of all, he is the “remover of obstacles,” which makes perfect sense because he has an elephant head. Hard to think of a better obstacle-remover than an elephant. I always just imagine them putting their heads to some big obstacle and then – they just walk forward. Whatever it was gives way. So it is with Ganesha – whether the obstacle is literal or metaphorical, he’s the one to invoke when you need help.

I have two matched mugs that my best friend Vanessa brought back for me from her two years living in India – they have the head of Ganesha worked subtly into the design, and his trunk is the handle of the mug. I often start the day with one of these mugs because you never know when you will need some help with whatever you end up encountering that day.

With this kind of a resumé, you can see why Ganesha is also often invoked at the beginning of important enterprises, including the beginning of a new year. With him overseeing almost any enterprise, there’s a lot of good energy behind it.

Maybe it’s just superstition, maybe it’s a form of faith, but regardless, I think of Ganesha a lot at the beginning of the year. For me it’s part of meeting my days with intention. Sometimes we know we’re facing an important day. Sometimes the day becomes pivotal to our utter surprise. But it’s clear that life can turn on a dime, and that any day, any moment, can require our deepest intention and our greatest capacities.

So, I commend Ganesha to you if you want somewhere to aim your thoughts or prayers at this time of year. But regardless of Ganesha’s place in your world view, our ministry themes for January are justice and intention. Certainly the work of justice requires intention and our intention can hardly be focused on anything more precious and transformative than justice. And sometimes, intention is not enough when we’re removing the obstacles to justice. So – let’s make some room, in all we do, for some form of help, whatever helps us, with cultivating our intention and making justice.

May all our endeavors be wise, may we get the help we need, may obstacles be removed, may our beginnings prosper.

Happy New Year and see you in church!



Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
min@firstunitarianprov.org

A Holiday Message from Our Partner Church

Christmas is the most beautiful holiday because people are connected to each other. This celebration awakes in many people the feeling of love. I wonder, though, do we give ourselves enough time to prepare for this special day? Our life is often filled with doing things. When we live day by day we often do not have enough time for each other, for our children, for God, for the forgiveness of past injustice, or love, and for happiness.

May this Christmas give us the present of time that is needed to celebrate this joyous holiday with others. Let us find the time to be with each other, our children, our friends. Let us think about our faith and how we can prepare for this holy season. The biggest gift of Christmas this year is to find ourselves and the importance of our life in God’s vision.

Let us be happy. Let us to live a full life in the New Year. Let us see each other, hug each other, and love each other. Let us not be fearful about war, terrorism, or immigrants. Let us all find joy and happiness.

May God’s blessings be bestowed to everyone during this Christmas season and the coming New Year!

With Love,

Rev. Szabolcs Kelemen, Minister, Szentegyhaza Unitarian Church

Deacons’ Corner

This month in the Deacons’ Corner we have two activities to report.

First, the Deacons took the lead in organizing the Wassail Party after the later Christmas Eve service. Thanks to all who helped.

Second, Deacons Calling is about to begin. We will be asking you about your experience of, and hopes for, First Unitarian. To help us coordinate your responses, we’ll be asking you for your thoughts about each of four aspects of church life: Spiritual Development, Community Life, Social Justice, and Stewardship.

It may help to think of our church like a flower:

* **Spiritual Development** – the roots and stem – the individual search for meaning out of which grow all the rest of our activities.

* **Community Life** – the blossoms, the most visible part of church life, where we do things all together.

* **Social Justice** – like the leaves – reaching out to the world in many different directions.

* **Stewardship** – the flower pot and dirt – the less-glamorous, practical infrastructure that makes all the rest possible, though it does need regular watering.



Each part contributes in its own way, and all are necessary to have a healthy flower. When a Deacon calls, let us know how each part is working for you, personally.

The Deacons: Jim Barfoot, Judie Knilans, Senior Deacons; Beth Anterni, Peter Gray, Katy Killilea, Joe Fisler, Dave Lewis, Max Pounder, Martha Rice Sanders, Meghan Smith

Winter Storms

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff will determine if church will be held or cancelled. A cancellation decision will be made by 8:00a on Sunday and conveyed to these media outlets: TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI PBS and radio stations 630WPRO, 920WHJJ, 1180 CCNX news radio, 1290WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM.

If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, church will be canceled.

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister
Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
Fred Jodry, Director of Music
Posey Kooris, Congregational Administrator
Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator



Spiritual Pathways

What Does It Mean to Be a Community of Intention and Justice?

The new year, 2018, is a time for fresh beginnings and for looking back. An intention is different from a resolution. An intention pulls us into who

we truly are. An intention comes from an inner voice and is connected to your true self in a spiritual way (as suggested by Doug Taylor, Tahoma UU in Tacoma, WA).

As a community of all ages, we know that our children are watching, listening, and learning from how we live, what we intend to do, and, more important, the impact we make. Our ministry to children and youth is important and must include relevant life issues, relationship building, and ways to transform our own lives and a waiting world.

This winter, the Spiritual Pathways (aka Religious Education) Committee will continue to reflect on innovative programming, review goals, and evaluate curricula and safety practices, as well as stretch our creative energy toward fresh opportunities for a full-week UU faith. I am looking forward to a day with Rev. Dr. Thandeka, scholar, theologian, ordained minister, journalist, author, and television producer. The day will focus on her initiative "Love Beyond Belief" and will include young people's worship, a special conversation with Coming of Age and senior high youth, and a teacher lunch program.

January young people's worship will balance messages of intention and justice.

In reviewing the past, it is important to appreciate and affirm current accomplishments, while embracing challenge and change. A sampling of first semester good news in the congregational lives of our children, youth and adults:

- Monthly family messages have been shared with parents.
- We hosted a lively, warm Family Joyful Noise Sing-along. There will be another in the spring.
- Marcia Taylor's Joyful Noise Singing Group graced us with music at the Thanksgiving service and on Christmas Eve.
- Senior high youth are leading a gift card drive and fostering an ongoing relationship with and for Dorcas International Institute. They are connected to Standing on the Side of Love (SSL) projects and many areas of congregational life. Sadie Swayze is the Youth Representative to SSL. Jack Killilea is the Youth Representative on the Deacons. Kiera Roche is the Youth Representative on the PruComm.
- Eighth-grade Coming of Agers and their mentors have been building connections as they shepherd the UUSC "Guest at Your Table" effort and plan for their "Taco Fiesta" later this month.
- Sixth/seventh-graders did a wonderful job selling UUSC cards and are excellent chapel worship associates.
- Over 50 teacher, advisor and RE Committee volunteers share their time and loving energy with our children and youth.

May 2018 be full of opportunities for intention with impact that insists on justice,

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

Is It Your Turn to Participate in the Wholly Family Service?

Wholly Family Service, Sunday, February 11

This multigenerational service has become an annual tradition, a way to share diverse family stories, connecting us as a community. We are looking for families interested in participating in our Wholly Family Service on Sunday, February 11 – singles, couples, step, adopted, multicultural, GBLTQ – all kinds of families, with or without pets, are encouraged to participate.

Interested? Please contact Cathy Seggel 401 421-7970 dre@firstunitarianprov.org

First U Fiesta! ~ Taco Night

Saturday, January 27, 6:00–8:00p

What's better than tacos with teens?! Your hosts, the First Unitarian Coming of Age class, their families and mentors, invite you to them for "A First U Fiesta," featuring a fun evening with delicious tacos,



fabulous pastries, and musical accompaniment. Chase the winter chill away with good company and food. Relax, visit, and mingle as this year's awesome eighth-graders and their families serve you. We'll also have raffle tickets available for purchase for a chance to take home one of a variety of specialty items.

Raffle donations are welcome! To donate a raffle item, email curryk78@gmail.com.

This event helps support the Coming of Age trip to Boston and UUA headquarters in the spring. Tickets are available during Coffee Hour. Single tickets: \$8; family tickets (four+): \$25

Upcoming Child Dedications

Sunday, January 7 during the service

The next Child Dedication ceremony will take place during the Sunday service on January 7, 2018. Members with a baby or young child they would like to have dedicated, please contact the church office (401.421.7970).

Return Guest at Your Table Boxes on January 7

UU Service Committee Guest at Your Table boxes will be collected on January 7 by the members of our eighth-grade class. With their mentors they will roll the coins and count the cash so the contributions can be deposited and a check sent to the UUSC.

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



First Unitarian Church of Providence

Our newly revised and redesigned website features Recent News, Upcoming Events, Past and Future Services, as well as information for first-time visitors, ways to get involved, and much, much more.

Visit our new website at the same old address: firstunitarianprov.org



Sight Lines

The end of the old year, the beginning of the new year. Reminds me of the Buddhist coroner who was fired for writing “birth” as the cause of death on his autopsy reports.

Let’s take a look at what has been accomplished by members of the church since September, and what still remains to be done in the months ahead.

Looking back over the year so far:

- Liz Lerner Maclay was installed as our new minister – quite the celebration. Church attendance is up!
- A successful Faithify campaign helped raise funds for some of the divinity school expenses of Emily Bruce and Lisa Sampson.
- Ralph Mero and Tony Allen have established the Benevolent Society to ensure our long-term financial future.
- The Canvass under Joe Fisler and Cynthia Rosengard has initiated a Congregational Census – please fill it out if you have not already done so.
- Bev and Bill Koteff and the Communications Team have the new Website operational.
- The Capital Campaign Building Team created a bid package and is preparing to award a contract for the Meeting House restoration.
- Kate Bowden and the Personnel Committee are meeting regularly to hire a new Congregational Administrator as Posey Kooris departs.
- The Standing on the Side of Love Sanctuary Team received a Heroes of Faith award from the RI State Council of Churches and is moving forward with training classes for volunteers and retrofitting a classroom as living space for a sanctuary guest.
- The church is moving forward with formally joining Loaves & Fishes RI and the RI State Council of Churches.
- A Church Safety Committee has been organized to review safety issues affecting the church and congregation.
- A new Parish Supper Committee is being organized following the retirement of Jim Estey, who has coordinated the All Parish Suppers for over 20 years.
- A successful leadership retreat was completed in the fall.
- Charlie Sweigart and David House provided a wonderful Veterans Day fundraiser

Looking forward to the next six months:

- A new Safe Congregation Policy, developed and adopted by the Prudential Committee, will be introduced to the congregation.
- The Annual Canvass will get into full swing.
- A follow-up Leadership Retreat will take place in February.
- A Congregational Conversation and subsequent vote will be held regarding our becoming members of Loaves & Fishes RI and RI State Council of Churches, and regarding new term limits for the Deacons.
- A new charitable corporation may be created to seek grants and raise funds for the maintenance of our three buildings.
- Contracts for the Meeting House restoration will be signed, and plans will be made for how best to repave and enhance lighting the parking lot.

Carpe Diem. Join with us in embracing change in the New Year.

Jay Glasson
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

From the Nominating Committee

Are you interested in being considered for an elected position at First Unitarian Church, such as the Nominating Committee, the Prudential Committee, or as a Deacon? As we develop the slate for 2018, the Nominating Committee would like to hear from or about people, especially those newer to the church, who have been involved in church activities but have never had a governance role.

If you are interested in learning more about these elected positions or to express your interest in being considered, email Marilyn Eanet, Nominating Committee chair (meanet@cox.net) or Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

Treasurer’s Report

A variety of organizations have recently seen their funds embezzled. We have been asked on several occasions how First Unitarian handles funds to protect against any irregularities.

Sunday Collections:

Checks and cash from the collection plate are consolidated in a single bag by head usher and taken to the church office to be counted by two church members. The counters cannot be members of the same family. Checks are stamped with the church deposit stamp; cash is double counted, as are checks. Two sheets are filled out with the count by denomination. The checks and cash are bundled with summary sheets and placed in the safe. Walter Sotelo opens the safe on Monday, recounts the cash, and credits each check to the appropriate pledge account. Deposits are made to our bank on Monday. Three times each year pledgers are notified of the status of their account (amount of pledge and current balance).

Payment of Bills:

All bills are paid by check. Individuals purchasing items for programs like Sunday School or Loaves & Fishes submit a reimbursement request with a receipt. Expenditures are reviewed by Posey Kooris, the Church Administrator, and then given to Walter to prepare the checks. Twice a month the Treasurer reviews the journal of cash disbursements, reviews each expenditure with the appropriate receipts, and signs the checks.

Auditing of Accounts:

Our outside accountant conducts a quarterly review of all transactions. A full yearly audit is, therefore, not required, saving the expense.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer



Meeting House Restoration

Progress Report – January 2018

On December 5, 2017, First Unitarian's Meeting House Restoration Task Force selected E. F. O'Donnell as our Meeting House's exterior restoration contractor.

The task force – made up of Henry Allsworth, Betty Finn, David House, Merritt Meyer, Joseph Wagner, and Architect Corrie de Boer – selected O'Donnell as the contractor best meeting the selection criteria of experience, completeness of bid response, financial health, project delivery history, and project cost. O'Donnell not only had a higher score in the first four categories, but presented a completed project bid 30% lower than its competitor.

Projected Cost for Exterior Restoration

Although O'Donnell's cost was the lowest of the contractors considered, the \$1,052,074 price tag is about \$150,000 higher than the estimate upon which the Capital Campaign was based. Increased costs for labor and material over the two years that elapsed between estimate and bid selection explain this difference. Additional costs over the contractor fees must also be factored into the total project cost as follows:

O'Donnell bid	\$1,052,074
Contingency funding at 5%	52,600
Architect's fee	<u>35,000</u>
Total cost of exterior restoration	\$1,139,674

The total pledged Capital Campaign amount is \$1,180,000, so the pledged amounts can meet the entire restoration costs.

Restoration work is scheduled to begin this coming April, with completion scheduled for August 15, 2018. We are starting the project before all capital campaign funds are collected to avoid an exponential increase in project cost caused by another year of weather damage to the exterior.

Covering the Income Gap During Restoration

Contributions to the Capital Campaign are scheduled to be complete in 2019. As a result, there will be a gap between the September 2018 due date for the project final payment and the 2019 Capital Campaign pledge collection complete date. We project up to a \$300,000 difference between the September 2018 Capital Campaign fund balance and the final project cost. However, given the current rate of campaign pledge collections, the \$300,000 difference will be collected by April 2019.

Fortunately, First Unitarian has a line-of-credit arrangement with Washington Trust, our endowment manager. The expected final capital campaign pledge will easily cover the financing costs for this eight-month loan. Other sources for financing may be considered if the Washington Trust financing program cost seems unreasonable at the time the loan is required.

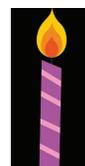
Prudential Committee Approval

On December 6, 2017, the Prudential Committee, approved the Restoration Task Force's recommendation to award the restoration contract to E. F. O'Donnell. PruComm also approved the concept of bridge financing between final project invoice and Capital Campaign pledge collection completion.

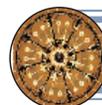
Copies of the Restoration Task Force's presentation package are available in the church office. Should you have any specific questions regarding the selection process or project implementation dates, please contact David House, Meeting House Restoration Coordinator (dlhouse51@comcast.net).

Happy Birthday to ...

If you see these folks during January, be sure to wish them a warm and happy birthday!



- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Cheryl Bartholomew | Pat Maier |
| Kate Bowden | Kristi Martel |
| Elwood Donnelly | Lauri Ontso |
| Jess Duckett | Kevin Porter |
| Channing Gray | Rick Richards |
| Lillian Jeznach | Lonnie Thomas |
| Peter Van Erp | |



Wheel of Life

Congratulations to:

Kevin Proft and Nova Quinn on the birth of their first child, a son, named Linden.

Condolences to: Dwight McNeill and family on the death of his wife, Joan, member since 1984.

Hats Off to ...

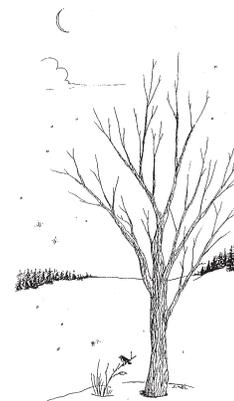
Ann Boyd, Nori Duncan, and Mary Frappier for feeding 60ish diners at the Thanksgiving Day dinner. And to all who brought something to share.

Youth Groupers who helped to guide our Winter Solstice Worship Experience.

Len Cabral for his beautiful storytelling during the Winter Solstice service.

Our Coffee Hour Providers:

Suzanne Francis, Sine Pounder, Gerry Spemulli, Karen Boulanger, Marilyn Eanet, Anne Connor, Jeris Stueland, Maria Marble, Roberta Groch, Steve Garthwaite, Diana Cole, Nancy Nicholson, Elissa Emerson, Joan Rollins, Aida Wilby, Kelly Baraf, George Beshers, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



See information on winter storm cancellations on page 2.

Welcome to Our Newest Members

On November 28, at the end of the Path to Membership class, eleven people signed the Membership Book and made a donation of record or a pledge for the current year. Please make sure to greet these newest members when you see them at Coffee Hour.



Phyllis Cole and her husband, Bob, recently moved to the Providence area as they retired from a long commuting schedule – he working as a mental health administrator in Connecticut and Rhode Island, Phyllis teaching American Studies and Women’s Studies at a branch campus of Penn State near Philadelphia. While Bob is a practicing Catholic, Phyllis has experimented with several church-going options over the decades, from teen years as an Ohio Congregationalist to fellow-traveling with Bob to many visits to UU churches. Somehow this whole range has worked, maybe because their wedding in the liberal seventies was celebrated by a Catholic and a Unitarian working together.

But now is the time for a new community, and Phyllis is delighted to be finding it at First Unitarian. (Who could resist a church at the corner of Benefit and Benevolent, with Hope just short blocks away as well?) The opportunities are great for worship, music, and shared food and talk. She looks forward to joining a Chalice Circle and contributing to the Food Pantry, with various social justice programs possibly on the horizon. What’s directly ahead, though, is the History Committee; long a scholar of women connected with American Transcendentalism, many of them Unitarians, she would like to find out more about First Unitarian and Providence as part of the picture.



James R. Estey, Jr. was born and raised on the East Side of Providence, attending the church school at First Unitarian as a student. After graduating from Classical High in Providence in 1984, he attended Bryant University and, upon graduation in 1988, took a job as a Revenue Agent with the Internal Revenue Service. While working at the IRS, James attended law school at Suffolk University in Boston, MA, finishing in 2003.

After 25 years with the IRS, James retired in 2013 and now works part-time in the toy and novelty concessions business. Presently he lives in a condominium on Providence’s East Side and looks forward to becoming more involved with First Unitarian and to maintaining and making new friendships within the Church Community.



Sarah Gleason first encountered the newly formed Unitarian church in White Plains, NY, when her mother became a member. She had a somewhat unsuccessful bout in Sunday school. Her fondest memory is a picture she made of a scapegoat with cotton wool fur. She had been church-less since then.

She and her husband, Tom, a Russian History Professor at Brown University, moved to Fox Point in 1970. When her husband became sick with Parkinson’s some years ago, she occasionally started attending Sunday services at First Unitarian, and sometimes brought him with her. She felt welcome, and appreciated knowing the Rev. James Ford for the short time that they overlapped. Then her church-going lapsed for a couple of years.

Now that the church is fortunate to have Liz Lerner Maclay as the “settled” minister, she believes this is the right time to become a member. She enjoys participating in the work of the Food Pantry, attending the All-Parish Suppers, and now the Women’s Alliance. She loves the remarkable music, of course. The congregation and church staff have been most welcoming, and she looks forward to being an official part of this church and to share in its long history.

As for her own interests, Historic Preservation has been a constant, and she continues to enjoy researching old houses.



Rachel Meade is a third generation Unitarian who suffered through the OWL program at Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois. She relocated from northern Indiana to Providence to attend a graduate program at Brown University in 2013, and was pleased to discover a Unitarian church practically on campus. Her partner, Gregory Waksmulski, joined her shortly thereafter and quickly converted from a church skeptic to a Unitarian booster, now serving on the Prudential Committee.

Rachel’s research on populist politics in the U.S. and Argentina has kept her busy traveling for the past few years, and she is excited to spend more time in Providence and at First Unitarian while she writes her dissertation in her final years of graduate school. Rachel also enjoys hiking, backpacking, music, and animals. She plays the violin and has recently embraced fiddle music. You may see her perform at summer services or at the Pawtucket Wintertime Farmers’ Market.



Tom Gordon is part of the current group of new members at First Unitarian.



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 (401.421.7970).

Welcome New Members (cont'd.)



Marie Mouradi

Marie was born in the Philippines and grew up in southern California. Raised Catholic, she converted to Islam in her 20s, and was drawn to Unitarian Universalism for its inclusivity of people of all faiths and creeds and its emphasis on love, peace, the search for truth, and social justice.

Marie has volunteered as a human rights activist and supporter, worked as a math and early reading tutor, and is currently a homemaker. She is supported by her caring husband, who is a local Rhode Island physician, and her vivacious, loving daughter keeps her busy.



Louise Sloan and Skip Farinha

Louise, who grew up in Virginia and went to Brown, moved back to Rhode Island from Brooklyn in 2015, with her 11-year-old son, Scott. She works as the deputy editor of the Brown Alumni Magazine. Louise sought out First Unitarian as a way for Scott to grow up in a community dedicated to the progressive values that were the norm in their Brooklyn community. She was delighted to find that First Unitarian offers everything she loves about church – she grew up in a churchgoing Episcopalian family and went to Episcopal church school – and none of what she doesn't.

Skip grew up in Fall River and is a practicing, extremely progressive Catholic who has attended many Unitarian services over the years. He is the VP of product development at Commense Inc., a Boston biomedical startup focusing on the human microbiome. He appreciates the values and thoughtful sermons at First Unitarian and is happy for the opportunity to be part of the community.

Skip and Louise are thrilled to be joining a church that their new family can grow in together. They plan to marry next summer.



Jude Sonder

Jude was born and raised in Allentown, PA and attended a Baptist and then a Lutheran church until the time of college. Upon graduation, she moved to Boston and fell in love with New England, settling on the South Shore in Hingham, MA, where she became a member of the Old Ship UU Church.

Old Ship UU Church.

Jude left a career in Telecom to become a full-time mom to her daughter, Lily, now grown and living in South Boston. That time at home provided her the opportunity to express her life-long interest in horticulture by creating extensive gardens around her home and to learn more about growing food by being a ten-year volunteer at Holly Hill organic farm in Cohasset, MA. There she worked the fields, wash-stand, plant sales, and finally several years as one of their floral designers for their field-grown flowers. She also spent ten years as a Park Ranger with the Trustees of Reservations at their cherished Hingham property, World's End.

Jude currently works part-time as an account manager for Sand-Box Medical, a very small Massachusetts company selling niche

developmental products for preemies and sick infants, both nationally and internationally. She can't think of a better client to work with than a nurse, who are unsung heroes all.

When not working, Jude is busy exploring Providence and Rhode Island, having moved to Ashton Mill Lofts in Cumberland in June 2017. An avowed foodie, she is enthusiastically eating her way through Providence and attending as many art and culture events as time allows. You might also see her swimming or doing yoga at the Y, biking the Blackstone Valley bike path, or walking at Chase Farm. Sunshine, moonshine, fresh air, nature, birds, raptors, great food, great friends new and old, poetry, music (especially jazz), art, flowers and plants, spectacular sunsets and sunrises, a deep faith, and an enduring gratitude toward all that is given and not yet known, these are what sustain her each and every day on this beautiful planet Earth, where she believes mortals come to deeply explore their humanity.



Andy and Aida Wilby

Andy and Aida are new to First Unitarian and are enjoying being a part of the community. They moved to Rhode Island three years ago and live in East Greenwich. They enjoy being outdoors, hiking, sailing, kayaking, or just sightseeing. They love to travel and they enjoy music, the arts, and theater. They have five children and two grandchildren, from California to the UK, so they seem to always be quite busy! They feel blessed to have found the First Unitarian Church and look forward to making new friends and growing deeper roots as time goes by.

Save the Date

Path to Membership Class

Two-part session, Saturday, February 24, 2:00–5:00p and Sunday, February 25, 12:00–2:00p (light lunch before history and tour of the church)

The Path to Membership class is for anyone who is interested in membership or in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian. The classes are led by our minister, Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay; our Director of Religious Education, Cathy Seggel; and our Membership Coordinator, Jenn Nardone. Childcare will be provided if requested in advance.

Registration forms are available in the Newcomers' Café and on the Membership Board in the Parish House hallway. Anyone interested in this class but unable to attend should let Jenn Nardone know; there will be at least one more session of classes scheduled this church year.

For questions, contact: Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or call the church office (401.421.7970). On Sundays, Jenn can be found in the Newcomers' Cafe in the Parish House (behind the fireplace).



Community Life

Saturday Social Suppers

January 6, 5:30p

On January 6, there will be two suppers: one at the home of Beth and Stew Armstrong in Bristol and the other at Carol Delaney's in Providence. People new to the church are encouraged to attend; it's a very nice way to meet

others from our church family.

Contact Shirley DiMatteo for meal planning and reservations (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com).

Joe and Katy Killilea hosted the first ever multigenerational Saturday Social Supper. We hope to start a new trend with this concept. If anyone is interested in hosting such an event, please contact Shirley DiMatteo (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com). There is another planned for February.

A New Year's Present to the Church!

History Committee monthly meeting, Sunday, January 7, 12:00p in the History Room

The granddaughter of a family who belonged to our congregation in the 1950s to 1980s has donated a lovely oil painting of the Meeting House viewed from Benefit Street. The painting was done by her grandmother, Ragnhild Cheel, who emigrated from Norway in the 1920s. The History Committee would welcome stories from any long-time church members who remember the family. Watch for the formal presentation soon!



The mission of the History Committee is to preserve and share the history of First Unitarian. Interested church members and friends are welcome to join our meetings on the first Sunday of the month to find out more about our ongoing projects.

Contact: Janet Downing Taylor (jdtdtaylor39@verizon.net)



Caring Network

The Caring Network met November 26 and reports were given by all groups. They spent extra time discussing how to get the word out regarding how the Care Crew can help our congregation with meals, rides, visiting, etc.

Save The Dates!

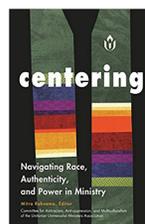
UUA "Common Read" Book Discussion

Single session, Thursday, February 1 at 7:00p

Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry is one of this year's UUA Common Read selections. First Unitarian is sponsoring a discussion session on *Centering* on Thursday, February 1. You can purchase a copy of the book at our own Atrium Bookstore on Sundays during Coffee Hour or go to uua.org/bookstore.

Co-facilitators: Cathy Seggel and Beth Anterni

Please contact Cathy Seggel in the church office (dre@firstunitarianprov.org) if you plan to participate.



Annual Cook-Off to Feature Your Best Stew/Hearty Soup!

Sunday, February 11 during Coffee Hour

The Membership Committee invites you to cook up a batch of your best stew. Folks will have the chance to taste all entries and vote on a favorite! All are welcome to join in and last-minute dishes will be accepted.

Sign-ups will take place in Coffee Hours preceding the event.

Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

Held in the elegant and intimate Paneled Parlor, the Café is hosted by a rotating cast of church members and offers coffee, goodies, and fellowship. If you're new to the church, this is a great place to meet people in a less daunting setting than the regular Coffee Hour. If you've been around for a while, this is a great place to help new folks get acclimated.

To sign on as a Café host, contact: Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator (mem@firstunitarianprov.org)

Gourmet Coffee Sales

Why settle for any old coffee. You can create your very own unique coffee using the gourmet coffees sold by the Women's Alliance. They sell two bold coffees, one medium, and two decafs. All types come in both beans and drip-grind 12 oz. bags. And all are organic and freshly roasted in Rhode Island! Your purchase helps the community – the Alliance donates proceeds from its sales to worthy causes. Visit their coffee table in the Atrium.

Our Coffee Hour

Happy New Year! Here's a great resolution for the New Year: Sign up regularly to bring food to the Coffee Hour! Remember that our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by The Women's Alliance with Peanut and Peanut butter free 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 8 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.



Atrium Bookstore

The Atrium Bookstore is open every Sunday during the regular church year in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Besides the books that we get from the UUA's own Beacon Press and Skinner House, we also offer books from Skylight Paths Publishing, an interfaith publisher of various faith traditions. Please stop by and browse our selections.



Community Life

Our Partnership Is Personal: The People of Szentegyhaza

People are at the heart of any relationship, and the honest and open hearts of those people is what makes the difference in any relationship. Those of us lucky enough to travel to our Partner Church in Transylvania found just that, people with honest and open hearts. We know Szentegyhaza is a place where members of First Unitarian will always be welcomed. This month we recognize our relationship with our Partner Church.

Here are the stories of some of the lovely and interesting people in the village.



Zoltan Laszlo is the president of our Partner Church congregation in Szentegyhaza. He and his wife, Annushka, have hosted a number of visitors, and each time, their guests come away with fond memories of a short but sweet visit. Zoltan worked at the steel mill in town and knows the danger of working with large equipment: he lost a finger in that mill. He is now retired. Zoltan makes a great effort to speak English, which he learned from watching TV. His attention to the church as he leads the community with the Rev. Szabolcs Keleman, is a labor of love. He keeps the finances in order and the dreams of Reverend Keleman down to earth. They are a great team.



Aranka Horváth and her daughter, Orsolya, or Orsi, live in the home that Aranka's late husband built in the 1990s. This lovely country home, clearly hand-crafted with love and care, is where they spend their summers. It provides a small respite from life in the village. A river runs by the house and there are fields surrounding the country home. Her three cats and two dogs enjoy the area. Aranka is a nurse and works in a nearby clinic. When visitors come with a cough or cold, she is there to heal, as she does each day at work. Her daughter, Orsi, is now a university graduate and translates for visitors; she speaks impeccable English. However, due to lack of employment in the village, she travels to Budapest to work for the Viking Cruise Ship line. She is learning German to improve her career options. She travels widely and enjoys her life, even though she has not had the economic opportunities one would expect for a university graduate. Aranka's daughter-in-law, Emilia, also fills in as translator. She is a cheese maker and tends her goats carefully, as they give her the resources to produce some of the best cheese in the area.



Ibolya Fartu is the president of the Women's Group at the church. She and her husband live in a brick apartment building, a Communist-era structure that is rather nondescript and, frankly, dim. A few years back, the couple bought a piece of property at the edge of the village and created a respite in stark contrast to their home. Their Garden of Eden is absolutely beautiful, resplendent with colorful flowers and plants, as well as a wide range of fruits and vegetables. There, one is free to relax in a lush, natural setting. They built a small cabin, so at times they spend the night there. Many visitors have enjoyed this enclave in the middle of the village and toasted to those who have gone before with the traditional drink of Palinka.



Emre Keleman is, indeed, his father's son, a teen full of curiosity and energy. He lives with his mother in Koloszvar, but spends as much time as possible in Szentegyhaza with his Dad, the Rev. Szabolcs Keleman, and his step-mom, Aniko. He is an affectionate and thoughtful person, as happy to engage in a game of basketball as he is to join in a traditional Hungarian folk dance. Aniko, Szabolcs' wife, is clearly very attached to Emre. To see them in the kitchen happily preparing the supper meal is charming. They do their best with English and promise, as we visitors do, to learn a few more words for next time.

Cheers, or as they say in the village, Egészségére!

– The Transylvania Partner Church Committee

The Women's Alliance

Monthly Meeting

Monday, January 8, 2018

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Aging Out of Foster Care

Speaker: Lisa Guillette

Foster Forward offers programs and services to prepare foster children and teens to live independently and become successful adults. Since 2007, when Rhode Island lowered the cutoff age for foster-care services from 21 to 18, Foster Forward has worked to support youth who "age out" of these services and are at risk of poverty, homelessness, and prison.

Lisa Guillette has served as Executive Director of Foster Forward for 14 years. Her priorities include successful advocacy for the legal extension of foster care for 18-to-21-year-olds and expanding a workforce development initiative for youth in foster care.

Camp Street Ministries

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

Volunteer at First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, January 15

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

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

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

Contacts: Martha Manno (Mmanno7@comcast.net) or Judy Ortman (jbortman@gmail.com)

The Pantry Is Open to All

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.



Spiritual Development

Thinking of Joining a Chalice Circle?

Sign-ups: Sundays, January 14 & 21 in the Atrium during Coffee Hour

Samplers: Sundays, January 14 & 21 at 12:15p in the Haynes Room

Chalice Circles – our “small group ministry” program – fulfill a need for intimacy and spiritual growth in our large and growing congregation and provide an opportunity to know others in our congregation.

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

If you would like to find out more about Chalice Circles, look for the Chalice Circles table in the Atrium on Sundays, January 14 and 21. On those Sundays there will also be Chalice Circle Samplers, which provide a brief experience of what participating in a Chalice Circle is like, as well as an opportunity for questions and to sign up.

For more information, contact Registrar Janet Downing Taylor (jdtaylor39@verizon.net).

Mindful Grieving: A Program for Those Facing Loss

These facilitated, six-week groups are for people who are experiencing grief in their life, for whatever reason, and would like to share that grief in a safe, welcoming environment. Groups are small, usually six to eight people, with two trained facilitators. Mindful Grieving is part of the Caring Network of First Unitarian, and its leaders consult regularly with our minister.

New Mindful Grieving groups are being organized to begin in January.

For more information, please contact Carol Adams (carol.adams6@cox.net)

UUMen

Sunday, January 14, 7:00–9:00p

In the future someone will ask, “Back in 2017, when courageous women were standing up and speaking out against sexual assault and harassment during the #MeToo movement, what were you men doing to improve male culture?” Do we want to answer, “Nothing”?

How do you successfully build a more positive male culture? It is a daunting challenge, fraught with the potential for hypocrisy and failure, but let’s do it anyway. Men need to own this work. Join us to try to figure out how to do it, one human interaction at a time.

Facilitator: Burr Harrison (burr_harrison@yahoo.com)

Harry Potter and the Sacred Text – First Unitarian Edition!

Inaugural meeting, Monday, January 22, 7:00p

It started with two Harvard Divinity School graduates deciding to take the practices they learned – ways in which you can analyze sacred texts to reveal more – and apply them to one of their favorite series: Harry Potter. It started with two people, then there was a reading group, then there was a podcast (it’s phenomenal), and now there are groups like ours popping up all over the world. Now, we are bringing this practice to you!

Please join us with your copy of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s/Philosopher’s Stone* and brush up on chapter 1: The Boy Who Lived. We will be examining the text through the lens of Hope. Bring a Harry Potter lover with you.

All are welcome! I look forward to meeting all our Potter Heads and shining a new light on texts many of us know and love so well.

Facilitator: Erin Newell (eenewell@me.com)

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. We meet most Mondays from 7:00p to 8:30p in the Parish House. All are welcome.

If you have never attended, please arrive at 6:45p for a brief orientation. You may call or text Cindy Bapties (401.573.0881) for more information.

Cindy and George Beshers are practice leaders. This is offered as an activity of First Unitarian, but is part of Boundless Way Zen (www.boundlesswayzen.org, select “Benevolent Street Zen”).

Innate Wisdom and Compassion Meditation

Every Wednesday at 7:00p

This drop-in group offers guided meditations of wisdom, love, and compassion. These practices are adapted from Tibetan Buddhism into new forms that can touch the hearts and minds of people from all backgrounds and faiths, to help each of us bring out the best in ourselves and in our service and social action.

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays at 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)

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: Katherine Ahlquist (katherine.ahlquist@gmail.com)





Social Justice

Standing on the Side of Love

What social justice issues are important to you? Standing on the Side of Love wants to know. While there are many causes our church members work toward independently, in the coming months we will start to examine what issue we, as members of the First Unitarian

Church, feel we can come together as a congregation around, and focus our energy on for the most impact. With the strength of numbers, we can work together to create real change in some area. So, think about what change would you like to be in the world? And stay tuned . . .



Sanctuary at First Unitarian

Additional Sanctuary Host Training Session, Sunday, January 21, 12:15–2:30p

With the dawning of the new year, our sanctuary space is looking cozy, cheerful, and ready should we be called to help someone in need. Nearly 50 people from our congregation have stepped forward to volunteer as Sanctuary Hosts, those who will stay at the church for short shifts, day and night, should we have someone staying as our guest. There are still more members who would like to attend a training, so we are holding another session on Sunday, January 21. You are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch, beverages will be provided. RSVP at firstusanctuary@gmail.com.

Later in January, we will be holding a nonviolence training and a more detailed skills training, which will include role playing on what to do if ICE comes to the door, and how to film using a cell phone. We will send out emails to those who have come to the previous trainings and will place notices in the *Meeting House Times*.

The Mitten Tree Is Blooming!

The Mitten Tree was blessed and dressed after the service on the last day of 2017. It will remain stocked with hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, and socks until the weather gets warm. If you have any new or gently used items you can donate to our tree, please leave them in the basket in the Atrium. Our knitting group will tag them, so people know they are for taking, and hang them when new items are needed.



Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly Meeting, Sunday, January 7 at 12:15p

The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee takes on projects to lighten the load of low-income and homeless Rhode Islanders. Please join us to learn more about our work and perhaps to contribute some ideas of your own. Leadership Volunteers are Needed.

Loaves & Fishes Mission

A Glow of Love and Service on a Cold, Rainy Night

On December 5, just like the first Tuesday of every month, something special was happening at the Emmanuel House Homeless Shelter on Public Street in Providence. The First Unitarian Church Neighborhood Social Justice Committee (NSJC) Loaves & Fishes Mission volunteers were hard at work providing delicious food, hospitality, and holiday cheer to members of the Providence homeless population. The three-course meal of salad, turkey pie on a biscuit, and cake was prepared and served by our dedicated volunteers. On hand were our very own Santa and Mrs. Claus (the Spremullis) to distribute gift bags filled with cold weather essentials and toiletries. The recipients were gracious and grateful and there were smiles all around. Earlier in the day volunteers participated in a sandwich brigade and distributed them to the homeless on the streets of Providence.

The NSJC is a First Unitarian all-volunteer group that does extensive outreach in the community. Find out more or sign up to join us at the NSJC table in the Atrium after services. Our next event is Tuesday, January 2.

Community Collections 2017-18

One Sunday each month, First Unitarian donates its non-pledge Sunday offering to a charitable cause, a practice we have been following for more than a decade. The Community Collections Committee has selected the following organizations to receive this year's contributions.

September 10 (Homecoming)

The collection for First Unitarian and the UUA Sanctuary Movement brought in \$1,272. Thank you all for your generous contributions.

October 15 – Pawtucket Backpackers

The collection for the Pawtucket Backpackers brought in \$1,077. Thank you all for your generous contributions.

November 19 – Loaves & Fishes Mission

The collection for the First Unitarian's Loaves & Fishes Mission brought in \$1,905. Thank you all for your generous contributions.

January 21 – Transylvania Partner Church

Assistance to our Partner Church in Transylvania for expansion of their worship space, so all congregants can gather together

February 11

Sojourner House – A comprehensive domestic and sexual violence agency

Day One – Working to reduce the prevalence of sexual abuse and violence in Rhode Island

April 15 – Pets in Need

Low-cost, affordable pet care veterinary clinic in East Providence

May 20 – Dorcas International Institute

Empowering individuals and families to become self-sufficient and fully participating members of our diverse community

Join the Green Team!

Fourth Thursdays, 7:30p

The Green Team Environmental Task Force promotes environmental issues and sustainable living in and outside First Unitarian. Caring for our environment is an important responsibility because those who are most impacted by environmental destruction are often those with the least power. Creating a sustainable way of life is central to our view of a just and compassionate world. We invite all who share these values to get involved in our broad and growing movement for climate justice and join us on this journey of connection, sustainability, and hope.

Contact: Kristen Ivy Moses (kristenivymoses@gmail.com)

For more information on these and future programs (meeting locations, contact information, etc.), see details in the church newsletter at www.firstunitarianprov.org

January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 NEW YEARS DAY Church Office Closed	2 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12:00–7:00p Prudential Committee 6:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	3 Sanctuary Host 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	4	5	6 Saturday Social Suppers (Armstrong & Delaney – see page 8)
7 Worship 10:30a Child Dedications at 12:00p Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ History Comm.	8 Women’s Alliance 11:00a Zendo 7:00p	9 Deacons 6:30p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimag. Rel. 7:00p	10 Meditation 7:00p	11	12	13
14 Worship 10:30a at 12:15p Chalice Sign-up & Samplers UU Men 7:00p	15 MLK, Jr. Day Church Office Closed Food Pantry 2:00p–6:00p Zendo 7:00p	16 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	17 Nominating Committee 12:30p Finance Comm. 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	18	19	20
21 Worship 10:30a Transylvania Sunday at 12:00p Sanctuary Training at 12:15p Chalice Sign-up & Samplers	22 Harry Potter 7:00p Zendo 7:00p	23 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimag. Rel. 7:00p	24 Harvest the Power 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	25 Green Team 7:30p	26	27 Coming of Age Taco Supper 6:00-8:00p
28 Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Teacher Program & Lunch	29 Zendo 7:00p	30 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	31 Meditation 7:00p			