



Services in the Meeting House

Sunday, March 5 "Let It Be a Dance We Do" **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**
10:30a

*New members will be recognized during the service.
Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.*



Daylight Saving – Turn your clocks AHEAD one hour.

Sunday, March 12 "Discovering the Tools of Advocacy" **Rev. Eugene Dyszlewski**
10:30a

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, March 19 "Why I Am a UU Pagan" **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**
10:30a

*Young people begin in Meeting House then go to their classrooms.
Joyful Noise will be sharing.*

Sunday, March 26 "Blessed Are Those That Come . . ." **Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman**
10:30a

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, April 2 **Senior High Youth:**
10:30a **A Multigenerational Service**

Youth are shapers of our UU living tradition. Please come support and participate in their creative worship experience, including a recognition of graduating seniors.

Newborn–four-year-old room is open in the Parish House.

Looking for Summer Service Suggestions

Our worship services from mid-June to Labor Day weekend are led by members and friends of the congregation and occasional guest speakers. They are planned and hosted by the Worship Committee.

Summer services are an opportunity for us to learn more about the spiritual insights, passions, and life-changing events that are important to the people who share this religious community with us.

The Worship Committee is seeking your suggestions about possible speakers, including yourself, who might like to share an aspect of their spiritual path. We also want to hear from anyone who would like to share a musical talent. Please look for us at Coffee Hour.

Worship Committee: Neil Bartholomew (chair), Michael Currier, Elissa Emerson, Betty Finn, Watson Lerner, Jacqui Nye, Kelley Smith



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

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Staff

Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman, Interim Minister
 Rev. Gene Dyszlewski, Community Minister
 Rev. Gwendolyn Howard, Community Minister
 Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
 Frederick Jodry, Music Director
 Posey Kooris, Administrator
 Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
 Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator
 Jaime Durango, Building Manager
 Pedro Vasquez, Evening Security
 & Sunday Building Manager

Newsletter

Posey Kooris, Managing Editor
 Susan Fisher, Proof Editor
 Design Consultant, Amy Webb
 Next Deadline: March 15

First Unitarian Church of Providence
 One Benevolent Street
 Providence, Rhode Island 02906
 Tel: 401.421.7970
 Fax: 401.276.4291
 Web: www.firstunitarianprov.org
 Email: min@firstunitarianprov.org
dre@firstunitarianprov.org
admin@firstunitarianprov.org
mem@firstunitarianprov.org



From My Window . . .

Transitions provide bridges leading from one moment of time to the next. As we take the step from one side to the other, the world keeps spinning all the while. Our job is to take the step, and the world's job is to turn. If our recent election has taught us anything, *and I trust it has taught us plenty*, it is that our democracy cannot run on autopilot. For democracy to work, it takes a great deal of attention and a great deal of participation. Since the election and the inauguration, we've seen something of a great awakening across our country. We've seen something of a great awakening right here at First Unitarian Church, too.

Across the country, people and groups of people, on any side of any issue, are struggling to redefine what it means to be an American. Many are reassessing their values and attempting to bring those values to life in the public square. Whatever else happens, America and the world will not be the same following this experience as they were going into it.

What I'm experiencing here at First Unitarian is a revitalization of the fervor that I imagine brought many of us into this faith community in the first place. What I see at the core of that fervor are the values that we share as Unitarian Universalists. Our UU covenant to "affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person" is calling many of us to invest in programs and activities to assure that the most vulnerable among us do not stand alone, that we are here to bear witness with them and to lend support to their plight. Our UU covenant to "affirm and promote the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part" is calling us to a vision confirming that we are at our best as human beings when we include, not exclude; when we join together, not provoke division; when we act out of faith, not out of fear.

The values articulated in the mission statement of First Unitarian are similar. They are to:

- Replenish and expand the spirit and the mind throughout life's journey,
- Honor each other's gifts and minister to each other, and
- Transform shared values into action in the world.

As I read the mission, the purpose of this congregation is to affirm and promote the spiritual care of one another, so that each one here might have the best chance of growing their soul to its fullest capacity. And more, it is to affirm that you will take action to assure, as best you can, that the same opportunity will exist for all in the community and in the world.

I am heartened, and I hope that you are too, that so many members of this congregation have been doing so much to act on these values. During this interim period of transition, you have wholeheartedly participated in worship that has been both challenging and enriching; you have done much to establish an institutional infrastructure to care for one another; you've moved in the direction of being fiscally responsible stewards of your valuable resources; you've begun working on refining your communication systems so that you can be in closer and more effective contact with one another.

Last year you passed the Black Lives Matter initiative and, in it, committed to taking an ongoing stand. You proclaimed, "We, the congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Providence, by a vote of our membership, affirm that Black Lives Matter and *pledge to pursue racial justice in our communities, in our state, and in our nation.*" Who could have known at that time that the pursuit of racial justice might mean something like providing protection for our immigrant brothers and sisters. And yet, it looks more like that every day.

As we start to draw near the time when you will call your new minister and I will take my leave, I want you to know how privileged I feel to have had this opportunity to work with you during this interim period. You have paid attention; you have participated in making this congregation and this community stronger and better. I am so pleased for your future. I know that you will be calling a new minister who will ably and inspiringly lead you in your continued efforts to provide transformative opportunities for each other, for the wider community, and for the world. There is so much to be grateful for!

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

Deacons' Corner



One of the Deacons' activities is to take the pulse of membership. The Deacon Call for 2016 asked nine questions. We contacted about 85% of the households and received responses from over 100 people. Here is a brief summary of the Call:

- People were extremely satisfied with the ministerial search process and were supportive of the work of the History Committee in our 200-year celebration.
- People were positive about the strengths of the church and thought highly of our church community, the music program, and our Religious Education program.
- We could be doing things better, but interestingly, there were only half the number of comments in this area versus the question about our strengths. People would like to see First Unitarian as an agent of change in the Rhode Island community but thought we could do a better job with our communications strategies.
- There were a lot of suggestions for new programs, but there were only a few that had multiple requests, like more adult education.
- About 80% of responders were aware of the Care Crew, but 74% of responders did not want to participate in the group at the present time.
- There were extensive comments concerning our need to improve handicap accessibility on our campus: railings on the outside of the church, pews modified for accessibility, and better signage both inside and outside of the campus. It was also suggested that we get advice from experts on improving accessibility.

The 2016 Deacon Call Report has been sent to the Prudential Committee, requesting that the Ministry Liaisons follow through with suggestions for improvements and let the existing programs know how much their hard work is appreciated. The report will be distributed by e-mail to the congregation.

Please let one of the Deacons know or contact the Nominating Committee if you are interested in becoming a Deacon. And contact us at any time with your suggestions and concerns.

The Deacons: Tom Getz (401.726.1667) & Mary Speare (401.521.3262), Senior Deacons Jim Barfoot (401.521.9097) Joe Fisler (401.274.1410) Ariadne Greenberg (401.247.7557) Sharon Kernan (401.723.1745) Katy Killilea (401.861.0582) Judie Knilans (401.246.0192) Dave Lewis (603.204.7505)



Spiritual Pathways

*When we are overwhelmed with the world
And cannot see our way clear,
When life seems a struggle between tedium and apathy
Or frenzy and exhaustion;
When today seems a punishment and tomorrow a torment,
May we find the courage of patience.*

– Rev. Richard Gilbert

This year, more than ever, March seems to require patience, along with resistance and hope. It is a time when our children, youth, and adults need faith community more than ever. Of course, we know that spring is coming, even as we scrape ice off of windshields and wonder if there will be closings due to winter storms. This season, the cycle also holds a need to gather energy and strength to continue to insist on justice for all people and our whole planet. In our Spiritual Pathways program, we have been providing ways to stay balanced, to find comfort, and to be known while we face life’s realities.

This March, we will envision what our congregation can be, for those we serve on-site and for those we must serve way beyond our walls. The Annual Budget Drive will begin, to fund programs – including religious education for all ages, social justice/action projects and staffing – to fulfill congregational goals. In chapel worship, we will explore the concept of generosity and what we bring with us when we come to church. It might be our singing voices, our smiles or a word of advice or comfort, as well as contributing money.

We know that March weather may include weather challenges. However, with patience, we can spot early signs of spring. In UU faith development, more daylight heralds planning for next year with a mindful review of vision and goals, leaning toward innovative curriculum and ongoing volunteer appreciation and support.

As we approach the spring equinox, a natural balance in nature, the generosity of our congregation will shine, to fund and support the expanding vision of of this congregational faith community and all it can reach. We preach that our Unitarian Universalism is evident each day of the week, not only on Sundays. It is evident in what we care about, what we do or don’t do, in what we fund, support and how we answer the call of love. This spring, along with courageous patience, may our full-week UU faith find fresh energy to provide brave, safe space in our world.

Stay warm. Notice the increasing light.
Take good care . . .

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

Coming of Age Taco Fiesta – A Wonderful Event!

Bravo to the 2016-17 Coming of Age community for hosting a fun Taco Fiesta fundraiser! The shoppers, chefs, and parent organizers worked overtime to produce a fabulous meal. Of course, our servers were our charming eighth-graders. Entertainment included a fabulous Variety Show directed by Joe Grady, with performances by the talented class, and a popular raffle, shepherded by Cynthia Rosengard. All eighth-graders were on board and working the event.



Many thanks to the students, parents, teachers, mentors, and friends of COA who made this a warm and delightful evening. Huge gratitude to parents for their patience and just plain hard work. The students and teachers look forward to their UU heritage trip to Boston in April, funded, in large part, by this effort.

Renew Your Spirit This Summer at a UU Camp or Conference Center

Now is the perfect time for families to consider attending one of the many wonderful summer programs at UU camps and conference centers in the New England/New York region and around the country. The UUA website has links to UU centers offering a wide variety of programs for children, youth, and adults that gather Unitarian Universalists from many regions.

For links to individual sites, visit (www.uua.org/directory/where/camps-retreats-and-conferences).

Cathy Seggel and others from our congregation will be attending the Star Island Lifespan Religious Education Week, July 15–22. The 2017 theme is Growing Unitarian Universalism in a Changing World.

Contact Cathy (dre@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970) for funding options and with your questions.

General Assembly in New Orleans!

The 2017 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, from June 21 to 25. This year’s theme is Resist and Rejoice.

A new UUA President will be chosen during GA by delegates from member congregations (delegates may vote either on-site or remotely).



First Unitarian has nine delegate slots, based on our membership. Our delegates will be chosen by the Prudential

Committee from among those who express interest in serving as a delegate.

Online registration for GA attendance and housing begins at 9:00a on March 1.

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

Results of UU Service Committee Guest At Your Table Effort

Thank you so much to everyone who participated in the Guest at Your Table program. Our total donation of \$598.40 has been forwarded to the UUSC.





Sight Lines

Last month I reported on two of the four goals the Prudential Committee identified as priorities for this year. The other two I list in reverse order.

Goal #4: Invest in infrastructure for the long-term. Grade: B+

- On the latter of these goals, we have already celebrated the success of the capital campaign and the generous pledges that will be put to work to restore the exterior of the Meeting House. The need was apparent to anyone who saw the peeling paint when we hung our Black Lives Matter banner.
- Our governance, leadership, and information infrastructures are all overdue for the same scrutiny. They will demand less treasure, but similar investments of talent and time. Through the work of the Prudential Committee (especially Diane Baxter, Kate Bowden, and our ministry liaisons), the Harvest the Power program, and the new communications team, we have made a good start on this work.

Goal #3: Follow through on our congregational pledge to pursue racial justice in our community, state and nation, through a campaign of intentional learning, public witness, and partnership building. Grade: Incomplete.

- In our pledge to pursue racial justice, voted on in spring 2016, we face some key decisions that go beyond our initial commitment to affirm Black Lives Matter. Now, alongside the challenge posed by structural racism (including the denial of its existence), our community, state, and nation confront explicit threats of discrimination against different communities of color, whether motivated by their religion or their lack of legal documentation. How, in this climate, can we best align our actions to our values? Our Standing on the Side of Love Committee are learning from other UUA congregations and building partnerships with local allies, with the goal of informing the Prudential Committee and the congregation about the Sanctuary movement and the role we might play.

It seems fitting, at this time of discernment of who we are and where we stand as a congregation, to take guidance from what we tell ourselves each week. This church year began with our celebration of our 200-year-young Meeting House, and continued with affirmation of commitment to securing the building's future. Along the way I have found renewed meaning in the words of our mission statement, that declare our church as a safe harbor; and also, in the lyrics of so many of the hymns we sing. With the New England winter finally showing up, and with UUA principles directly challenged by the Executive Orders coming out of the White House, it is heartening to open our grey hymnal to the very first page and be reminded;

"By faith made strong the rafters will / withstand the battering of the storm.

This hearth, though all the world grow chill, / shall keep you warm."

I am so glad for all we can do together.

Keith Brown
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Meeting House Restoration Update

We have already collected \$250,000 of the \$1 million pledged for Meeting House capital repairs. This amazing outpouring of financial commitment to the restoration of the Meeting House will allow us to begin the needed work to our leaky roof and bell tower areas early this spring. In the meantime, we are working with our architect, Corrie de Boer, and the Restoration Committee to prepare bid documents for the larger job of full roof and bell tower restoration beginning in the spring of 2018.



Thanks to all the contributors to this Capital Campaign! Your generosity and commitment to the congregation are inspiring.

Treasurer's Report

At the end of January, First Unitarian's current budget appeared to be on a path to end the year as balanced. Pledge receipts are 5% ahead of last year, as are Sunday plate receipts. Last year we had a falloff in plate receipts, and we reduced the anticipated budgeted amount. In addition, rental receipts are currently stronger than last year.

Budget deliberations will begin in April and a budget will be formulated based on the results of our pledge drive, which is in progress in the month of March. Unknown challenges in developing our budget will include the cost of bringing our new settled minister, increases in health insurance, and loss of rental income for weddings due to our church renovations.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer



WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to:

The family and friends of **Elly Camp**, member since 1984, who died in December 2016.

The family and friends of **Derek Bradford**, member since 1968, who died on January 23.

The family and friends of **Fran Gifford Bidwell**, member since 1955, who died on January 24.

Carol Drewes and her family, whose aunt, Marilyn Drewes, died peacefully at home on February 4.

Our Community Minister **Rev. Gene Dyszlewski** on the death of his mother, Mary Ann, at the age of 95 on February 4.

Erin Newell on the death of her grandfather.

Sheena Tompkins and her family on the death of her father, Richard, who died on February 5 at 90 years old.

HATS OFF TO ...

The cooks who prepared delicious food for our volunteer-teacher appreciation lunch

Our "wholly families" who shared their stories at the annual Wholly Family worship service: **Alison Green, the Castellanos-Ferguson family, and the Arellana-Bowden-Hopson family.**

Our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

The Cook-Off Cooks, Anne Connor, Gaby Petruck, Jess Dolan, Rachel Spaulding, Lisa McGreavy, Steve McCloy, Shabram Hasemi, Suzanne Francis, Lisa Rose, Elissa Emerson, Gail Brule, Elizabeth Roche, Marilyn Eanet, Nancy Shand, Liz Palter, Kelly Baraf, Amy Swayze, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.

Our Ministerial Search



At the beginning of January, 31 ministerial candidates had expressed interest in becoming our next settled minister. During that month, we carefully evaluated each candidate; read their ministerial packets; read, watched, and listened to their sermons; and deliberated among ourselves to select the three candidates whom we would invite to Providence for one of our pre-candidate weekends.

By the end of January, two candidates had withdrawn. We completed six video interviews, conducted research and reference checks on each of the six, and determined which candidates we wanted to invite. But when two of the candidates withdrew, and two other candidates declined our pre-candidate invitation, we started looking at new candidates. The UUA had sent us four additional packets (which had arrived later than the rest), bringing the total to 35 candidates. We did two additional video interviews, then made our decisions.

Today, we are happy to report that we have three strong pre-candidates. The three include husband and wife co-ministers and two female ministers. They range in age from 40 to 55 and have a variety of ministerial, denominational, and life experiences. By the time you read this, we will have met two of the three potential ministers or minister teams.

During February and early March, the MSC will be participating in pre-candidating weekends. These weekends give us opportunities to interact with the candidates, hear them preach at a neutral pulpit, and assess their suitability to be our next minister. Each candidate will also have opportunities to explore our church, Providence, and the surrounding communities. Once we conclude all pre-candidating activities, we will begin our deliberations and discernments.

As part of our search, we created a website about First Unitarian. This website was viewed by all ministers who expressed interest in our congregation. We are very proud of this website, which received many compliments from ministers and the UUA Settlement Office. So we invite you to have a look.

The website link and password are:

Website: <http://firstuprovsearch.org/>

Password: OneBenevolent02906

– John Simmonds and Wendy Oliver
for the Search Committee



The 2016-17 Ministerial Search Committee:
(front) Wendy Oliver, John Simmonds (chair),
Shelley Stephenson; (back) Rick Richards,
Domenic Napolitano, Bill Koteff

“Our Covenant of Generosity” — The 2017 Pledge Drive

Greetings from the Canvass!

This March, we hold our annual Pledge Drive, where this community comes together and raises the funds for the operating budget for our next church year!

We envision the operating budget as a “Canvass Tent” for our beloved community, held high over the heads of congregants and friends as they seek spiritual sustenance at First Unitarian.

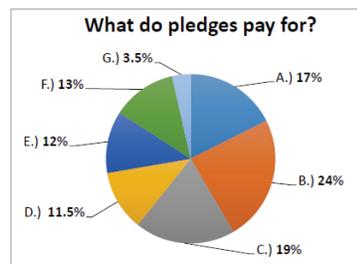
While our tent is strong in the face of the storm and open on all sides to welcome all, we fear that it might not be large enough to cover us all. Too many members of our community are left vulnerable to outside forces. We need a tent that can provide for an incoming minister, our indispensable staff, our utility bills, an important RE program, and our world-class music. The tent simply isn’t big enough right now.

How much will guarantee this vision? This year, that’s \$500,000. If every household pledges what they can, we will meet this goal.

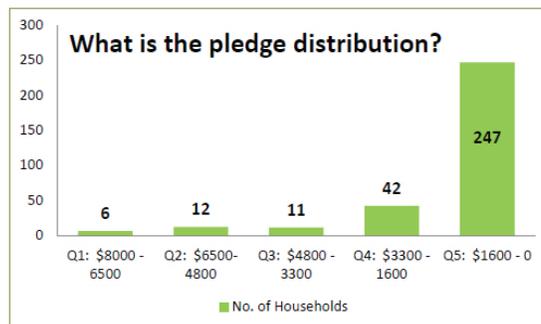
The Canvass is asking *you* to help reach out to everyone in this congregation and talk to them about stewardship. Stewardship includes raising money, yes; but it also includes raising awareness of the importance of our church in the larger community, and raising expectations of the impact we could make with adequate financial and human resources.

We ask you to consider the information below and schedule a Stewardship talk with us if you need one; even better, make yourself a Steward of Our Church and talk to someone you know.

– Beth Armstrong and Gregory Waksmulski, Canvass Co-chairs



A.) Ministerial Costs B.) Management C.) Payroll Taxes D.) Facilities
E.) Program Ministries F.) Religious Ed. G.) Denominational Support





Community Life

Musicale to Celebrate Life Experience!

Fantastic Line-Up for an Unforgettable Evening of Music

St. Patrick's Day, Friday, March 17, 7:30p in the Meeting House

Our third annual Musicale is shaping up to be the best yet! Our eclectic and accomplished pro, semi-pro, and gifted amateur musicians have stepped up once again to present a program ranging from early to current music. The all-acoustic show features instrument and voice offerings weaving a tapestry of life experiences from joy to sorrow and back to joy again in a compact, fast-paced program.

Musicales are real crowd-pleasers and are designed not only for members and friends of the congregation, but for the entire Rhode Island community. Rave reviews follow each Musicale, and we hope repeat audience members will not only come again, but bring in their friends from outside the congregation as well.

Tickets for the performance go on sale starting March 4 during Coffee Hour, at the church office, or at the door. Prices are \$20 general admission, \$8 for students and starving artists. All proceeds will be given to First Unitarian to support the mission of our congregation.

Please email David House (dlhouse51@comcast.net) for additional information.

March All-Parish Supper

Friday, March 10

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

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

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

7:45p Program in the Auditorium: Supporting Racial Justice

Although some progress has been made, the dream of a society based on equal rights and opportunities for all, on racial harmony, and on the respect for and inclusion of all minorities in our national life is far from becoming a reality. One difficulty is the persistence of white privilege and white racism.

Our main speaker will be Dr. Michael Kennedy, Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at the Watson Institute of Brown University. His topic will be "What Does It Mean To Be a White Ally, and Why Does It Matter?" He will consider some varieties of white ally practice, how they are working, what are the pitfalls. His comments may be supported by his friend Renata. The program will also include a panel of representatives from local racial justice groups, including Brown students, White Noise Collective RI, and the American Friends Service Committee.

This program is sponsored by the Standing on the Side of Love Committee and represents a continuation of our congregation's commitment to support the Black Lives Matter movement. We voted "to engage in a campaign of intellectual learning, public witness, and partnership building" concerning the issues of racial justice. Please make every effort to attend and participate in this gathering and show your support for this important work.

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 10 will be available for parents who request in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).

Saturday Social Suppers

March 4 starting at 5:30p

In March there will be two Suppers. One at the home of Anne Caldarella in North Providence, the other at Beth and Stew Armstrong's in Bristol. People new to the church are encouraged to attend; it's a very nice way to meet others from our church family.

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

April All-Parish Supper

Friday, April 21 (Note: the third Friday)

After-dinner topic: "On Being a Muslim in America"

Our presenter will be Imam Sami Aziz, Muslim Chaplain at Wesleyan University. Imam Aziz is a fine speaker and is nationally known as an insightful speaker on Muslim issues.

People from local Muslim congregations will be invited to join us for this event.

Please come and get to know our Muslim neighbors.

Art in the Atrium

The March show is "One Way – Recollections of Texas," by guest artist Alfredo Lorenzo. A RISD graduate in landscape architecture, he is known for his joyous pastel and acrylic work, reminiscent of the serenity and color palette of the Caribbean, his homeland.

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

Atrium Bookstore

The 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. We have copies of the two books for the reading groups sponsored by the Deacons and Standing on the Side of Love: *The New Jim Crow* and *The Third Reconstruction*. Please stop by and browse our selections.

Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff will determine if church will be canceled.

A decision will be made by 7:00a on Sunday and conveyed to 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, 95.5 WBRU.

If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, church will be canceled. If the parking ban is lifted by 8:30a and you feel safe traveling, there will be limited programming including Worship and Religious Education.





Community Life

Join the Women's Alliance for A Night at the Theater

Thursday, March 9, 7:00p at the Barker Playhouse

The First Unitarian Women's Alliance is hosting A Night at the Theater for a performance of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, presented by The Players at the Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street. The Alliance has purchased half the house (50 seats) on the evening of Thursday, March 9, and is inviting members of the congregation to join us.

Discounted, limited-seating tickets are \$20. There will be a dessert reception before the performance at the Barker Playhouse.

Reserving your ticket now will help the Alliance plan for the evening. You will be given a ticket as a reminder. Net proceeds will be donated to the First Unitarian's Capital Campaign.

Antiques & Uniques – Annual Indoor Yard Sale

Saturday, April 1, 10:00a–2:00p

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

You can arrange for pick-up and storage now until the sale by contacting Janet Downing Taylor (401.751.7969 or jdtaylo39@verizon.net). Items can be brought to the church the week of the sale only. The sale is sponsored by the Women's Alliance; proceeds from the sale after expenses will benefit local charities supporting women and families.

2017 Alliance Easter Desserts

Order forms available beginning Sunday, March 12

Pick up desserts on Easter Sunday, April 23, during Coffee Hour

The Women's Alliance is once again offering a selection of desserts for your Easter Sunday dining. Order forms will be in the order of service beginning in mid-March. Net proceeds support Alliance contributions to local charities that support women and families.

Almond Cake with Strawberry Sauce – This delicious, single-layer almond cake gets a triple almond whammy from almond paste, sliced almonds, and amaretto. It comes with a strawberry compote and is even better if you add whipped cream. Serves 8–10 \$25

Decorated Easter Egg Cake – Back again because it's a favorite with the children. This yellow cake shaped like an egg with colorful decorations is a sight to behold. Serves 12–16 \$25

Pecan Coconut Cake – This is the first year we have offered coconut cake. This one was the favorite in the Alliance coconut cake taste test. It is a perfect blend of coconut and pecans. Serves 12–16 \$35

Pineapple Pie – Our fresh fruit pie this year is a pineapple pie. The pineapple is covered with a streusel topping and looks like a giant flower nestled into a delicious, flaky pie crust. Serves 10–12 \$15

Walnut Nut-Roll Cake with Chocolate Ganache Frosting* – A flourless cake with a smooth nut-cream filling and chocolate covering makes this a dessert to savor slowly. It's not heavy, so it's good after a big meal. Serves 12–16 \$35

Yogurt Panna Cotta with Caramel Crunch* – Light, creamy, and smooth, this is the perfect dessert after a large meal. It comes in individual portions. 8 for \$26, 6 for \$22, or 4 for \$18

French Silk Mousse* – Chocolate to die for, not too sweet but so-o-o smooth. It comes in the individual portions like the panna cotta (above). You can mix and match with the panna cotta for something for everyone. 8 for \$26, 6 for \$22, or 4 for \$18

*gluten-free

The Women's Alliance

Monthly Meeting

Monday, March 6

Community Music Works

Speaker: Sebastian Ruth

The mission of Community Music Works is to create a cohesive urban community through music education and performance that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians.

Sebastian Ruth, founder and Artistic Director of CMW, is a violinist and violist who has performed widely with orchestras and chamber music groups. A Brown graduate, he is the recipient of an honorary degree from Brown and a 2010 MacArthur Foundation ("Genius") Fellowship.

Camp Street Ministries

Save your grocery 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 collects them for the benefit of Camp Street Ministries.

Women's Alliance Coffee Sale

The Women's Alliance supports community charities with the proceeds from its coffee sales.



New Harvest is now supplying smaller, 12 oz. bags of coffee (instead of the 16 oz. bags), and the cost is proportionally less: Regular \$12 and Decaf \$13. Stop by the Alliance coffee table in the Atrium.

Our Coffee Hour Needs You!

You don't have to be Irish to have good luck this month! Just sign up to bring goodies to our Coffee Hour to feel lucky. Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by the Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of peanut butter- and peanut-free 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. You will feel lucky all day!



Community Life

Transylvania Partner Church

On Partner Church Sunday, January 29, the offering for our partner church in Szenteghaza, Romania, amounted to \$1,956. Our partner church and the Partner Church Committee would like to express our sincere thanks for our congregation's generosity.



That same Sunday, Nori Duncan read a letter from the minister of our partner church that included a poem about friendship by the early twentieth-century American poet Edgar A. Guest. We want to share it again here.

A Friend's Greeting

I'd like to be the sort of friend that you have been to me;
I'd like to be the help that you've been always glad to be;

I'd like to mean as much to you each minute of the day
As you have meant, old friend of mine, to me along the way.

I'd like to do the big things and the splendid things for you,
To brush the gray from out your skies and leave them only blue;

I'd like to say the kindly things that I so oft have heard,
And feel that I could rouse your soul the way that mine you've stirred.

I'd like to give you back the joy that you have given me,
Yet that were wishing you a need I hope will never be;

I'd like to make you feel as rich as I, who travel on
Undaunted in the darkest hours with you to lean upon.

I'm wishing at this time that I could but repay
A portion of the gladness that you've strewn along my way;

And could I have one wish this year, this only would it be:
I'd like to be the sort of friend that you have been to me.

I think this is a wonderful poem, and expresses our feelings to you. May God give us opportunity to meet again.

With love,
Szabocs Kelemen, Minister
The Szenteghaza Unitarian Church

– Janet Downing Taylor
for the Transylvania Partner Church Committee

Calling All History Buffs!

Sunday, March 5 at noon

The History Committee meets on the first Sunday of the month to plan new projects and review ongoing and recent work. The committee invites all who are interested to attend and find out more about our plans. The next meeting will be on Sunday, February 5, at noon in the History Room at the top of the Parish House stairs.

– Janet Downing Taylor
for the History Committee

Spiritual Development

Benevolent Street Zendo

An Ongoing Zen Meditation Group

Every Monday at 7:00p

Benevolent Street Zendo is a member community of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha, an interfaith Zen community. 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 6:40p for a brief orientation. You may call or text Cindy Bapties (401.573.0881).

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, 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

2nd and 4th 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)

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).

UUMen

Sunday, March 5, 7:00–9:00p

Topic: Telling Our Life Stories



What is yours? With the help of some prompt cards, we will look at our Life Stories.

Facilitator: Steven McCloy (steven.mccloy43@gmail.com)



Social Justice

Standing on the Side of Love Supporting Vulnerable Communities

Standing on the Side of Love (SSL) has been exploring how our congregation might respond to possible Executive



Orders threatening vulnerable peoples. These are communities we pledged to take an active role in standing up for through the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and through our commitment to equal rights and fair treatment of members of the LGBTQ community. This has been a difficult process, since we could only speculate about what might be coming, until on January 25, a travel ban was put into place, which unfairly stopped law-abiding immigrants – vetted refugees, visa holders, legal residents, and students – from entering the country. While this matter is now in the hands of the courts, a new order may be implemented against immigrants and refugees.

In an effort to help start a conversation outside our church, we hosted, with the RI State Council of Churches, an interfaith discussion on the need for a sanctuary movement in our state. Over 200 people attended. A committee has been formed under the direction of Rev. Sharon Key to determine how we can build an infrastructure of support. Katherine Ahlquist has agreed to be on this committee.

During Coffee Hour conversations, SSL has determined a desire within our congregation to play some part in the sanctuary movement. To help determine what our role might be, SSL, in collaboration with the Prudential Committee, hosted a congregational conversation on February 26 following the service. We heard questions and comments from the congregation.

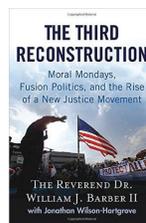
We are hosting two upcoming events to further our education about BLM and the New Sanctuary Movement.

- **Friday, March 10** – Parish Supper to learn about and discuss the importance of being white allies.
- **Friday, March 24, 6:30p** – Dessert and discussion with guests who can talk about and answer questions about the New Sanctuary Movement, and people from communities affected by the immigration and refugee orders. We hope you can join us and bring a dessert to share, we will provide beverages.

Book Club Meetings

Discussion of Rev. William Barber's *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement* will be scheduled for March and April, so if you signed up, stay tuned for an email! If you didn't sign up but would like to, it's not too late!

Contact: Tiffany Reed (tiffanyreed@gmail.com)



Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly Meeting, Sunday, March 5 at 12:15p

Neighborhood Social Justice 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.

Loaves & Fishes Mission

Tuesday, March 7, from noon to 7:00p

On the first Tuesday of every month, volunteers deliver food, clothing, and respectful companionship to those at Emmanuel House, a homeless shelter in Providence. All are welcome and encouraged to come to the church at 12:00p to prepare sandwiches or at 3:00p to collect clothes and help to load food and clothes in the cars.

Thanks to all who so generously donate to the monthly Loaves & Fishes Missions. We appreciate your ongoing support.

Contact Joe Salvatore (joesuu@gmail.com)

Volunteer at First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, March 20

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

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p,

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p,

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

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

The Pantry Is Open to All

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

Knitting for a Better World

Every Tuesday from 7:00-9:00p

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



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

Find Us on Facebook!



First Unitarian's Facebook page is loaded with updates, useful links, photos, and more! Type "First Unitarian Providence" in the search box and check it out!

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

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

March 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | | 1 Prudential Committee 6:00p Meditation 7:00p | 2 Search Committee 6:30p | 3 | 4 Harvest the Power 9:00a-12:00p Saturday Social Suppers (Caldarella/Armstrongs) |
| 5 Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Mentor/Mentee History Comm. at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ Caring Network UU Men 7:00p | 6 Women's Alliance: Meeting: 10:00a Program: 11:00a Luncheon: noon Zendo 7:00p | 7 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12:00-7:00p Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p | 8 Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Meditation 7:00p | 9 Worship Committee 6:00p Search Committee 6:30p | 10 Art in the Atrium Opening All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p | 11 |
| 12 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS Worship 10:30a | 13 Zendo 7:00p | 14 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00 Reimag. Rel. 7:00p | 15 Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Harvest the Power 7:00p Meditation 7:00p | 16 Deacons 5:30p Search Committee 6:30p | 17  Musicale Fundraiser Concert 7:30p | 18 |
| 19 Worship 10:30a at 11:30a Food Pantry Food Shuttle | 20 Food Pantry Open 2:00p-6:00p Zendo 7:00p | 21 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p | 22 Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Meditation 7:00p | 23 Search Committee 6:30p Green Sanctuary 7:30p | 24 Dessert & Discussion on Sanctuary / SSL 6:30p | 25 Vision Retreat 9:00a-12:00p |
| 26 Worship 10:30a | 27 Zendo 7:00p | 28 Tai Chi 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimag. Rel. 7:00p | 29 Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p Harvest the Power 7:00p Meditation 7:00p | 30 Search Committee 6:30p | 31 | |