



Services in the Meeting House

Hope is our theme for December.

Sunday, December 3 Grief and Praise: Staying Alive in Challenging Times

10:30a **Rev. Martha Niebanck**

How shall we enliven our communities when the news leads us into anger or despair? As we prepare for the celebration of light, we will consider how grieving together might lead us toward the joy of praise.

Rev. Martha Niebanck is Minister Emerita of First Parish in Brookline. She has served the Doolittle Home; the Congregation of South County, RI; First Parish in Waltham; and the First Parish in Brookline. Martha is a graduate of Tufts, Boston University, Andover Newton Theological School, the Kantor Family Institute, and the Harvard School of Education certification program for Immunity to Change Coaching.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, December 10 What Does Hannukah Hold for Adults?

10:30a **Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay**

Hannukah begins the night of December 12, and while it's often considered a children's holiday, the story and themes within the story are complex and sophisticated and surprisingly relevant for us here and now. Come learn some ancient history about Judea and Greece and Hasmoneans and cultural conflict, history that has a lot to teach us today.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, December 17 Solstice: A Multigenerational Service

10:30a **Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Cathy Seggel, DRE**

Our multigenerational solstice celebration will have something for all, as we enter the time of Yule and honor the season's power and beauty, here and now.

Childcare for newborns–three-year-olds open in the Parish House.

Sunday, December 24 Christmas Eve Services

Note: Because we have multiple services later in the day, we will not hold a morning service.

5:00p Multigenerational Christmas Eve Service

This joyful worship is for all ages, featuring lively music and carols, Christmas blessings, the Christmas story, and, of course, the magic of candlelight in a special space. Come celebrate and invite your friends and neighbors to this spirited service!

Note: A Wassail reception hosted by the Deacons will follow the second service.

9:00p Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Our second service will be full of atmosphere, the coming of light amidst darkness and hope in adversity, the heart of the Christmas story. Come join us for lessons and carols, readings and candles, and wonderful music as we share this night of anticipation and wonder.

Sunday, December 31 Mother of Us All: A New Look at Eve and the Serpent

10:30a **Rev. Richard Trudeau**

With the turning of the year, the preacher invites us to rethink this foundational story of our religious heritage. He claims that a careful reading will show that the story is *not* about sin, the weakness of humans, or the inferiority of women. On the contrary, it is an uplifting and very UU story, and Eve is the hero!

Rev. Richard Trudeau was, for 17 years, the minister of the UU Church of Weymouth, MA and, for 35 years, a teacher of math and the history of astronomy at Stonehill College in Easton, MA. His latest book is Bible Stories for Skeptics.

No Sunday School. Childcare for newborns–three-year-olds available in the Parish House.



We are a Welcoming Congregation

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Lately . . .

“Hope is the thing with feathers,” so the poem goes –
*Hope is the thing with feathers –
 that perches in the soul –
 And sings the tune without the words –
 And never stops – at all.*

It’s an Emily Dickinson poem. She goes on to say that this little bird, hope, sings even – and sweetest – in a storm, in the “chillest land” and “strangest sea” – and it never asks, even in the most dire circumstances, anything of us who hear its song, not even a crumb to sustain it.

Somehow over time, I’ve conflated that poem with lines from another, “The Shadowy Waters,” a “dramatic poem,” a long prose piece by W. B. Yeats: “What can they know of love that do not know she builds her nest upon a narrow ledge above a windy precipice?”

My mother loves to quote those lines from Yeats. She declaims them regularly, with a formal intonation reserved just for them. “What can they know of love?” she begins grandly, and goes on from there . . .

It’s funny that I’ve conflated them, because apart from the shared bird imagery, they actually offer almost opposite messages. The resilience of the bird of hope, singing even in the bleakest, direst circumstances. And the fragility, not exactly of the bird of love, but of love’s nest, love’s foundation – always precariously placed and beset by sharp winds.

But love is so much about hope, for our beloved, for ourselves, for the future . . . and hope is so much about love, we hope about things, people, events we cherish.

So, in this season of hope, in this state whose motto is Hope, in these precarious times, when we spend holidays with those we love – even when they make us crazy – let’s remember perhaps the cumulative message of those poems – hope and love, they are both resilient and fragile, they are with us when things are most dire, and we cannot take them for granted. They are winged and they lift us with them, but they always return from flight to a place where they are vulnerable.

May hope and love abide with us now, and may we abide with them and keep their nests safe as we are able. Happy holidays, everyone.

See you in church,



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

Names in a Book

In the office of Posey Smith Kooris, our Office Administrator, is a bound notebook with the handwritten names of eight persons who have indicated their intent to leave a gift to the church in their will. This evidence of future giving has been totally unsolicited, and is all the more appreciated for its spontaneous generosity.

These, and others who choose to join them, will become the first members of our revitalized Benevolent Society, restoring a tradition that was present in the congregation from 1770 to 1866. Any who would like to add their names to the notebook are invited to join them. Simply see Posey and let her know that your name also belongs in the notebook of those supporting the future presence of our church in the wider community.

Countless religious, educational, and charitable organizations in America do good work today only because past benefactors made it possible for them to serve others in coming years. Our church community in Providence is almost 300 years old. We plan to carry on for a long time to come. Those who now dedicate a portion of their assets for the future will enable that to come true.

– Ralph Mero

To contact Posey, email her (admin@firstunitarianprov.org or call 401.421.7970).

Deacons’ Corner

Do you know your Deacons? Check their pictures on the wall in the front parlor – right behind you as you pick up a bit of cake at Coffee Hour.

You will also see, on the table in that corner, the Deacons Suggestion Box. A few people have put in notes, and we’d like to let you know that we got them and we’re taking action about them. Several have asked for juice at Coffee Hour; if you want to bring juice, Janet Downing Taylor invites you to sign up at the table for sign-ups for Coffee Hour goodies. It is voluntary, so whether that happens is up to you.

Requests to add spirituals to music, to have more and different adult education programs, and to form a social fellowship committee are being communicated to the appropriate liaison persons on the Prudential Committee. The suggestions were not signed, but if you put one in and want to know more about what we’re doing as follow-up, ask one of the Deacons. We’ll check the suggestion box regularly and do our best to respond.

In other news, Joe Fisler, who is a Senior Deacon this year (and who has been doing a great job at it), has also agreed to head the Annual Pledge Drive. This is a major responsibility for him, so the Deacons agreed to lighten his Deacon duties, and Judie Knilans will take on some of the duties of Senior Deacon.

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

The Caring Network

The First Unitarian Caring Network includes Challice Circles, Mindful Grieving, the Deacons, the Women’s Alliance, Membership, the Care Crew, and Phone Buddies.

The Care Crew

The Care Crew is ready to assist the congregation in times of need, such as illness, surgery recovery, transportation, errands, meals, home visits, cards, and calls. The Care Crew uses “Meal Train” to organize meals, transportation, and errands for people who are ill and/or recovering from surgery.

To be connected, contact Shirley DiMatteo (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com), Steve McCloy (steven.mccloy43@gmail.com), or Posey Kooris in the church office (admin@firstunitarianprov.org).





Spiritual Pathways

“Hope Changes Everything: Sing, People, Sing”

– Emma’s Revolution

The colder, shorter days are upon us. Winter holidays approach, full of joyful and exhausting traditions and celebrations. The local and global scenes feel like heavy burdens to hold as we live our daily lives. How can we be a community of hope when, at times, hope is hard to find? How about finding a balance of faith and action to help us navigate?

Our families need relaxed, fun time together. We also feel responsible to be brave, change makers. Our children and youth are watching and learning, forming their own vision of what is important. Teaching them to share what they love is one way to transform gift giving. Teens could invite an elder to be together to listen to each other’s music. Children could take a parent on a walk to a favorite outdoor spot. Adults could regift a personal treasure to family members. When I focus on slowing down and being patient with myself, I do find sparks of hope laced with action.

From Soul Matters Sharing Circle: “Hope speaks soothing words about trusting and waiting, but it also takes the form of a holy impatience that declares, ‘Enough is enough.’ Hope reassures, but it also emboldens. It doesn’t just offer us a promise; it gives us a push.” So, maybe this is the time to share resources of time and money with causes we believe in. Maybe it is a good idea to write those letters to legislators, get trained to be a Sanctuary host at church, or visit an elder or friend who is waiting. And, we can also sing, meditate, dance, and rest!

In fact, we have an interactive, all ages, musical opportunity happening this month – the *Joyful Noise Family Sing-Along* is on Friday, December 8. More about this event is on page 7.

I couldn’t resist sharing this poem, “Hope; An Owner’s Manual,” by Barbara Kingsolver.

*Look, you might as well know, this thing
is going to take endless repair: rubber bands,
crazy glue, tapioca, the square of the hypotenuse.
Nineteenth-century novels. Heartstrings, sunrise:
all of these are useful. Also, feathers.*

*To keep it humming, sometimes you have to stand
on an incline, where everything looks possible;
on the line you drew yourself. Or in
the grocery line, making faces at a toddler
secretly, over his mother’s shoulder.*

*You might have to pop the clutch and run
past all the evidence. Past everyone who is
laughing or praying for you. Definitely you don’t
want to go directly to jail, but still, here you go,
passing time, passing strange. Don’t pass this up.*

*In the worst of times, you will have to pass it off.
Park it and fly by the seat of your pants. With nothing
in the bank, you’ll still want to take the express.
Tiptoe past the dogs of the apocalypse that are sleeping
in the shade of your future. Pay at the window.*

Pass your hope like a bad check.

You might still have just enough time. To make a deposit.

Whatever your brand of celebration might be, my wish is for you to feel warmth, love, wonder, and the hope and will to make peace.

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

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).

Holiday Season Schedule

Sunday, December 3

10:30a Children and youth worship in Chapel and attend Sunday School classes.

12:00–1:30p Mentor/Mentee & Parents Lunch and Program

Sunday, December 10

10:30a Children and youth worship in Chapel and attend Sunday School classes.

12:00p Recycle-a-Toy Sale in the Auditorium led by the 6/7th-grade class to benefit a cause to be determined by the young people.

Sunday, December 17

10:30a Our multigenerational Winter Solstice Service with Child Dedications

Sunday, Christmas Eve, December 24

5:00p Joyful worship for all ages, featuring lively music and carols

9:00p Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 31

10:30a Worship in the Meeting House

No Sunday School. Childcare rooms open for infants–three-year-olds.

Sunday, January 7

10:30a Children and youth worship in Chapel and attend Sunday School classes.

Guest At Your Table 2017-18



Don’t forget to put your Guest at Your Table boxes out during this holiday season and plan on returning them by January 7.

Upcoming Adult Faith Development Opportunities

“Harry Potter and the Sacred Text”—

Inaugural class, Monday, January 22 at 7:00p

Are you a fan of Harry Potter? Are you a fan of the Podcast? Facilitator: Erin Newell

Coming in February – Stay Tuned

UUA Common Read – *Centering: Navigating*

Race, Authenticity & Power in Ministry

Facilitator: Cathy Seggel

Dismantling White Supremacy – Who are we? Where are we going?

Facilitators: Tiffany Reed & Cathy Seggel



Sight Lines

“There’ll be a change in the weather and a change in the scene...” – a generational ear worm from Sophie Tucker to begin my December newsletter article.

This is the time of year when we celebrate Thanksgiving and thanksgiving. In a world in constant turmoil, there is nevertheless much to be thankful for. As the forces of change spin our world, the employees at First Unitarian make our lives a little easier and a whole lot better, working tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain a functioning, expanding church. One of those employees is Posey Kooris.

Posey has been our Office Administrator (now Congregational Administrator, a more apt title given all she does) for over 20 years. In June 2018, Posey will step down from her position with the church and move on to the next chapter of her life. She has places to visit, things to do, and people to meet. Posey is leaving on her own terms, at the height of her skills, with her fastball intact. She has been our administrator, gate keeper, den mother, sounding board, and all around go-to person. As they say across the pond, she has “performed her job splendidly; brilliantly, really.” If J. W. Goethe was correct – that “a talent is constructed in solitude; a character, by facing the waves of the world” – then clearly we have been blessed with a woman of the highest character, one steeled during her tenure at First Unitarian by numerous ministers, Presidents, Prudential Committee members, and congregational members from Church Pillars to curmudgeons. Posey will be sorely missed – and difficult to replace. During this period of transition, Posey is working with Kate Bowden and the Personnel Committee to help define and determine the skill set required for a new administrator. As always, she wants to make sure it gets done right.

Change is inevitable and necessary, but rarely easy. Just as you were asked to embrace our new minister, I now ask you to embrace the process of hiring a new administrator while we say goodbye to Posey. And as we enter December, remember to thank all of those people who lighten your load and lift your spirit simply by doing their jobs well. It is more than just a job to our employees, and they deserve your thanks. Especially Posey.

Sincerely,

Jay Glasson
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org



On October 20, Harvest the Power kicked-off its sophomore class with a dinner hosted by the group’s facilitators: Jay Glasson, Kimberli Gray, Cynthia Rosengard, Cathy Seggel, and Peter Van Erp. The next day, participants enjoyed a retreat experience that involved workshop sessions held at the UUA Headquarters in Boston. The workshops so far this year have focused on discussing leadership and UU journeys and beginning to understand power and authority and the difference between leadership and management.

The facilitators are excited by the energy, enthusiasm, and love that we have already shared and look forward to a dynamic year ahead!



2017-18 participants and facilitators gather for a retreat at UUA Headquarters; (l to r) Alison Green, Derek Smith, Sally Caruso, Katy Killilea, Cynthia Rosengard, Michael Currier, Jess Duckett, Judie Knilans, Peter Van Erp, Annette Casparis, Beth Anterni, Kimberli Gray, and Jay Glasson. (Photo by Cathy Seggel)

Treasurer’s Report

Where are we financially as we approach the mid-point of our fiscal year? With 33% of the fiscal year completed, we have received 35.9% of the amount budgeted as pledge receipts. This is slightly behind last year at this time. Our rental income is approximately 4% ahead of last year at this time. Sunday collections are at the same level as last year, and this is slightly behind what is budgeted.

Last year, First Unitarian had the best year for the receipt of pledges in many years. It is important that we make sure that our pledges are completed as pledged. Of course, if your financial situation changes, your pledge can be adjusted (either up or down). If this is the case, please notify Walter Sotelo (assist@firstunitarianprov.org) or me so that we can adjust the budget accordingly.

You can take advantage of a tax-deductible contribution by paying all or part of your pledge by the end of this calendar year. You will be receiving a statement for tax purposes early in December.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer



Happy
Holidays!

Hats Off To ...

Coffee Hour Providers last month:

Gail Brule, Maureen Pryor, Marilyn Eanet, Mary Frappier, Tony Allen, Erica Rusley, Bev Koteff, Gerry Spremulli, Jackie Wheelock, Steve McCloy, Anne Connor, Suzanne Francis, Jess Dolan, Karen Keohan, Joan Rollins, Anne Calderella, Tom Getz, Elissa Emerson, Carol Buckley, Shirley DiMatteo, Nancy Shand, Rachel Spaulding, Roberta Groch, Lyn Bradford, Maria Marble, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



Community Life

December All-Parish Supper

Friday, December 15

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: *A Child's Christmas in Wales*

Our after-dinner program will be a special holiday celebration featuring the Aurea Ensemble's presentation of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, by Dylan Thomas. This beloved story will be narrated by popular Rhode Island actor Nigel Gore, with musical interludes of old English carols and holiday chamber music from earlier times, featuring our own Fred Jodry (voice and harp-sichord), Chris Turner (harmonica), and a string quartet led by Consuelo Sherba.

Discounted tickets will be available for those who attend the supper.



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

In December there will be two social suppers.

December 2, 5:30p

At the home of Rich Rudert in Providence.

December 16, 5:30p

A multigenerational family supper at the home of Katy Killilea in Barrington. It will be gluten free.

People new to the church are encouraged to attend; it's a very nice way to meet others from our church family. We are looking for hosts for the upcoming year. Please contact Shirley DiMatteo for meal planning and reservations (shirley.dimatteo@yahoo.com).

Atrium Bookstore

Stop by the Atrium Bookstore to see the display of gift ideas for the coming holiday season. The bookstore is open every Sunday during the regular church year during Coffee Hour. Besides the books that we get from the UUA's own Beacon Press and Skinner House, we now offer books from Skylight Paths Publishing, an interfaith publisher of various faith traditions. And don't forget: we also carry books written by several church members. Come and browse.

The Women's Alliance

Monthly Meeting

Monday, December 4

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom: Building Bridges across Religious Difference

Speakers: Aisha Manzoor and Sarah Mack

Aisha and Sarah will share the story of their own friendship and how they have worked with partners in both of their communities to build strong ties between Rhode Island's Jewish and Muslim communities.

Aisha Manzoor earned an M.A. in Islamic theology and jurisprudence in Bradford, England. She taught at Islamic schools for six years and now home schools her three children. She is a volunteer with the RI Muslim community and at Masjid al-Islam, where her husband is the imam.

Sarah Mack is a rabbi at Temple Beth-El, where she has served for 14 years, and president of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island.

All are welcome to attend the Women's Alliance programs and luncheons.

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.

Gourmet Coffee Sales in the Atrium

Why settle for any old coffee? You can create your very own unique blend using the gourmet coffees sold by the Women's Alliance. They sell two bolds, one medium, and two decafs. All types come in both beans and drip-grind in 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



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



Community Life

Art in the Atrium

Exhibit Opening

Friday, December 15 before the Parish Supper

December is the Annual Collective Holiday Exhibit month, open to the artists of our congregation. The theme is Winter, Christmas holidays, and spirituality in general, but it is not strictly enforced. Any other subjects are welcomed as well.

If you would like to participate, contact Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

The Art Collective – New Members Always Welcome!

The art displays in the Atrium each month are one of the joys of our community life. We are fortunate to have so many talented artists among us whose creations stimulate, amuse, and inspire us. All church members who are artists – and those who just want to support our artists and their shows in our Atrium Gallery – are invited to join the Art Collective. Membership in the Collective allows you to propose shows of your own work during the church year. Chiara Van Erp schedules and curates the shows. All members will receive notices of our shows, plus shows in other galleries in the area where our members are showing their art.

Membership dues are \$10 per year (payable by check to First Unitarian Church, with a notation “Art Collective”). This gives us a funding base to work with for advertising, receptions, and maintaining/improving our hanging technology.

Greetings from Szentegyháza!

Dear Friends,

Winter came here for a few days. It was cold, and I had to use the fireplace already. Leaves have gone from yellow to brown and everything everywhere seems to prepare for winter. We like to say that it is too soon for winter, but I remember, when I was a child, winter was from October to the end of April. Now, we like to say, winter is too soon, and I have to chop wood.



We are happy that your monthly newsletter has space for your sister church news. It is an opportunity to learn more about each other. I hope to send updates along with those from our president, Zoltan Ibi, leader of our women’s group and others in our congregation.

I am happy to hear that your congregation is pleased with your new minister. In every congregation there can be a number of feelings present when a new minister arrives. Some people may be sad to see the previous minister leave and may try to compare the new minister with the one who left. Others may enjoy a new minister because it is a change from the past and they welcome a different approach to her ministry and her different ways of solving problems. When a new minister arrives, it is a challenge for the congregation too. There may be a need to formulate and implement new goals, which can result in the need for more self-reflection.

I hope that Rev. Maclay will provide a good experience for your congregation and that you both meet your expectations of each other. In this way your relationship will be rewarded with a joint happiness that will be seen in her service to the congregation.

The early part of a ministry can be a festive, magic time. I wish that this feeling never goes away and hopefully will continue in her time with you.

Dear friends, this season is filled with memories and festivities. We are with you in this time of celebration. May God give us the opportunity to feel the love we have for each other and create the future together.

With love,
v. Kelemen Szabolc, Minister of the Unitarian Church in Szentegyháza, Romania



The History Committee Welcomes New Members

Monthly meeting, Sunday, December 3
12:00p in the History Room

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 the committee as it plans for the 300th anniversary of the gathering of the congregation in 2020. The committee meets on the first Sunday of every month in the History Room at the top of the stairs in the Parish House.

Contact: Janet Downing Taylor

Newcomers’ Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

If you’re new to the church, the Café is a great place to meet people in a less daunting setting than the regular Coffee Hour. Held in the elegant and intimate Paneled Parlor (behind the fireplace), the Café is hosted by church members and offers coffee, goodies, and fellowship.

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)

Don’t Let the Grinch Steal Our Coffee Hour!

The holidays are here! When shopping or baking for these special times, remember to make or buy extra for our Coffee Hour! This cooperative effort is organized by the Women’s Alliance with donations from our congregation of peanut- and peanut butter-free baked goods, brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake, and more. We welcome donations made at home or bought at a store. Each Sunday, we need eight people to bring 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.

Remember – Your Name Tag Is Now in the Meeting House!

Wearing your name tag is a thoughtful way to help newcomers, including our new minister, to find their way into our community.

Before the worship service, please pick up your name tag from the board located at the front of the church in the Benefit and Benevolent streets corner. And thanks for wearing it!

Holiday Happenings



Christmas Plants to Decorate the Meeting House

Submit orders to the church office by Sunday, December 10

Each holiday season, the church is filled with poinsettias given in memory or celebration of a loved one(s). The cost is \$20 per plant per person.

To order your poinsettia, contact the church office (401.421.7970) or fill out the form in the order of service on Sunday. Please specify the first and last name of each person you are honoring, as well as your name and phone number (in case we need to contact you).

Sixth/Seventh-Graders Host Children's Recycle-a-Toy Sale Open to the Church Community

Collection of Toys: Sunday, December 3

Toy Sale: Sunday, December 10, 12:00–12:30p in the Auditorium

Our Children's Recycle-a-Toy Sale offers a way for young people to buy gifts for family and friends on a very small budget. Prices range from 25 cents to \$2. We hope that our children will seize the spirit of the season and shop for others they love.

We encourage families to donate gently used – or even new – toys, games, and books for preschool- through high school-age children. Donations will be collected on the Sunday prior to the sale. Our goal is to encourage children to recycle their toys and do good for their community.

Through a democratic process, young people will choose the recipient for the money raised. All toys not sold will be donated to Camp Street Ministries in Providence. The sixth/seventh-grade class is organizing the event with help from teachers.

Questions? Contact John Dooley (dool@cox.net)

Annual Gift Card Drive for Immigrants and Refugees

We will again collect gift cards to enable Dorcas International Institute to purchase appropriate necessities for our neighbors in need. A gift card drive is one way that we reach out to help families in the Rhode Island community. Our senior high youth group and their advisors will facilitate this project. Please bring gift cards to the church (RE office).

A tradition of collaboration between our senior high youth and Dorcas International Institute has grown over time. This year there is a natural connection between the mission of that agency, our Sanctuary effort, and the passions of our teens to actively support immigrants and refugees. A dedicated Refugee Resettlement Services staff member is scheduled to meet with our youth this month. That conversation will inform our group's continuing collaboration with Dorcas International Institute.



UUSC Holiday Card and Gift Sale

Sundays as long as supply lasts

Our sixth/seventh-grade class is selling beautiful greeting cards from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Look for them at the RE table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Proceeds benefit social justice efforts of the UUSC. By buying these cards, we choose compassionate consumption and support human rights efforts.

Joyful Noise Sing-Along

Friday, December 8, 7:00–8:00p

The Religious Education Committee is happy to invite everyone to a "Joyful Noise Family Sing-Along." There will be songs from a variety of traditions as the winter season of celebrations draws near. All ages are welcome and encouraged to come share their voices and desserts. No experience necessary. Bring your friends. We are looking forward to being with you.

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 inter-faith Zen community.

If you have never attended the Monday night sessions, please arrive at 6:45p for a brief orientation. Call or text Cindy Bapties (401.573.0881) for more information.

A Full-Day Meditation Retreat

Saturday, December 16, 8:30a–4:30p

All are welcome.

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

An ongoing attempt to come to grips with issues raised by radically new developments in the study of religion in the twenty-first century.

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)

UUMen

Sunday, December 10, 7:00–9:00p

Control: How Much Do You Have?

Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that knowing – really knowing – how much control you have and how much you don't is the key to the good life. The key to happiness, they said, is to analyze our experiences in terms of what is "up to us" and what is "not up to us."

Join us as we explore a viewpoint that continues to resonate in modern times.

Facilitator: Tony Allen (401.521.3908, tonyallenRI@gmail.com)



Social Justice

The Girl Effect Holiday Sale Continues

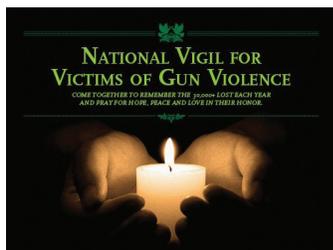
December 3, 10:00a–12:30p

Sunday, December 3, is your last chance to buy beautiful, unique, fair-trade gift items made by local artisans from around the world. Look for markdowns on some items! Come to the Girl Effect Holiday Sale in the Atrium before and after church to choose gifts and to benefit girls' education

All proceeds from the sale are donated to nonprofits committed to girls' education.

Please contact Suzanne Alden (suzannealden@comcast.net), our volunteer coordinator, if you would like to join this effort.

Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence



**5th Anniversary of Sandy Hook
December 5, 2017, 7:00p
First Unitarian Church
One Benevolent Street, Providence**

The Religious Coalition for a Violence-Free Rhode Island, Standing on the Side of Love of First Unitarian Church Providence, the Board of Rabbis of Greater RI, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence, and Moms Demand Action Against Gun Violence in America are joining the Newtown Foundation and Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence in a nationwide interfaith memorial observance.

Standing on the Side of Love has been asked to help host, greet, and direct parking and people for this memorial. If you would like to help, contact katherine.ahlquist@gmail.com.

For information contact: Rev. Gene Dyszlewski (edyszlewski@gmail.com)

Annual Write-a-thon for Human Rights

Sunday, December 10, 1:00–5:00p, Open House

This year will be the 30th annual Write-a-thon for Human Rights to help free prisoners of conscience. Come to the parlors at the First Unitarian Church on Sunday afternoon, December 10 to participate in this highly effective program. You write the letters; we mail them. All materials provided. Guest speaker to be announced. Refreshments, prizes, fellowship, and inspiration. Free and open to the public.

Sponsored by World Affairs Committee, Amnesty International, and Benenson Society 49.

Our Mitten Tree Goes "Live" on December 31

Our knitters have been busy all year making things for our Mitten Tree, but we can't keep it stocked until spring without your help! Please start gathering mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, mittens, and socks to donate to our Mitten Tree. The basket will be out after Christmas to collect things, but if you can't wait, put them in the Resource Room in a bag marked "For the Mitten Tree." We will tag them and start to put them on the tree the first Sunday after Christmas, then keep it stocked though out the cold weather.

Join us for the dedication of the Mitten Tree after the service on December 31.



Volunteer at First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, December 18

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

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

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

Contacts: Martha Manno (Mmanno7@comcast.net) or Judy Ortman (jbortman@aol.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, 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.



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! Like it! Share it!

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



Social Justice

Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly Meeting, Sunday, December 3 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

Tuesday, December 5 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.

For more on NSJ and the Loaves & Fishes mission, contact Joe Salvatore (joesuu@gmail.com)

– Chiara Van Erp, NSJC Co-Chair

Standing on the Side of Love (SSL)

In November, SSL members were invited to help the Providence mayor's office facilitate an Interfaith Forum, sponsored by the Mayor's Muslim American Advisory Board. SSL made some great connections and is hoping to be able to meet again in the new year. One of the primary needs that was identified by this meeting was making connections between people of different faiths, with a unanimous agreement that the easiest way to do this is through sharing a meal together. We know from experience how well this works, and look forward to helping plan something in the coming months.

Mayor Elorza introduced his plan for Municipal IDs at this meeting, and SSL will be exploring how we can be involved in the roll-out of this program, which will benefit many of the vulnerable communities we are committed to helping.



Sanctuary Training, Tours, and More!

Second Training Session, Saturday, December 2, 10:00a–12:00p

On November 16, the Sanctuary Host Steering Committee held its first training session to a crowd of 50 members from our congregation. Members of our committee facilitated the training, with the help of Carl Krueger from Dorcas International. Due to the overwhelming response to this offering, we will be holding a second training on Saturday, December 2, 10:00a to 12:00p. The training offers instruction on how to be a host to someone staying in sanctuary in our church, as well as detailing other ways to be involved if hosting is not for you.

The weekend after our first training, we started setting up the space on the third floor that will be our Sanctuary Guest Room. During the month of December, until such time as we have someone living in this space, we will have tours of the room for those interested. We may also be looking for various items to make the room look comfortable and welcoming, so keep an eye on your email or the *Meeting House Times* for opportunities to donate items.

As we go to print, we are still hoping to meet with Mayor Elorza to confirm that we have the support of his administration in using our building as a sanctuary. We feel it is important to have the backing of the city in this endeavor, as we will be using our building in an unconventional way. We want our space to be as safe as possible, so it is important that all first responders understand that we are housing someone here. It is the hope of the Steering Committee that all of our requirements will be met by mid-December. We will keep you up to date with announcements in church or through the *Meeting House Times*.

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 28 – 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!

Thursday, December 28, 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.), visit at www.firstunitarianprov.org

December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday					
					1	2 Sanctuary Training 10:00a-12:00a Saturday Social Supper (R. Rudert)					
3 Girl Effect Sale 10:00a-12:30p Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ History Comm.	4 Women's Alliance 10:00a Business Meeting 11:00a Program followed by luncheon Zendo 7:00p	5 Loaves & Fishes Mission 12:00-7:00p Sandy Hook Memorial Vigil 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	6 Prudential Committee 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	7	8 Sing-Along 7:00-8:00p	9					
10 Worship 10:30a Recycle-a-Toy Sale 12:00-12:30p Write-a-thon 1:00-5:00p UU Men 7:00p	11 Zendo 7:00p	12 Deacons 5:30p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimaging Religion 7:00p	13 Meditation 7:00p	14	15 Atrium Art Exhibit Opening 5:00p All-Parish Supper 5:45p Program 7:45p	16 Saturday Social Supper (K. Killilea)					
17 Worship 10:30a	18 Food Pantry 2:00p-6:00p Worship Comm. 6:00p Zendo 7:00p	19 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	20 Meditation 7:00p	21	22	23					
24 No Morning Worship Christmas Eve Services at 5:00p & 9:00p	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 	26 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimaging Religion 7:00p	27 Meditation 7:00p	28 Green Team 7:30p	29	30					
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td>CHURCH</td> <td>OFFICE</td> <td>CLOSED</td> <td>ALL</td> <td>WEEK</td> </tr> </table>							CHURCH	OFFICE	CLOSED	ALL	WEEK
CHURCH	OFFICE	CLOSED	ALL	WEEK							
31 Worship 10:30a Mitten Tree Dedication 12:00p											