



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2018

Services in the Meeting House

Our themes for March are **Balance and Brokenness**

Sunday, March 4 "For Where Your Treasure Is, There Your Heart Will Be Also"

10:30a

Our service this morning will be one of celebration, spirit, surprises, witness, and wonder as we explore what this beloved community means to us, and what we mean to it. There's so much we already are, and so much we can be, that we need to be, for ourselves and each other. The gifts and lessons and opportunities this deeply honorable and every-deepening faith gives us come in many forms. We'll take this Sunday to explore some of them, and to reconnect to each other and why we're all here.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in chapel.

Sunday, March 11 Social Justice Advocacy: The Necessity of Discomfort



10:30a (Note: Daylight Saving begins)

Rev. Gene Dyszlewski

Although the central concern of our Social Justice Ministry is legislative advocacy, the broader perspective also includes winning hearts and minds. In the long run, logic and reason alone will not soften frightened hearts hardened by insecurity, resentment, and entitlement. Engaging with a compassionate and respectful presence, even if it is one-sided, may reduce anxiety and have a civilizing effect. Tolerance diminishes the sting of insult. The risk of failure is borne readily by the wise.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in chapel.

Sunday, March 18 Blessing of the Animals: A Multigenerational Service

10:30a

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, DRE Cathy Seggel

Come one, come all as we honor the creatures with whom we share our world. We especially welcome pets and companions who share our homes and our lives to receive blessings and gratitude for the gifts they offer us every day. Bring your beloved animal, in real or virtual form; all creatures are welcome, just make sure they're appropriately leashed, crated, or otherwise contained in ways that keep them safe and comfortable. If you don't have or can't bring a companion pet, stuffed animals or pictures can stand proxy for the blessing. Feel free to invite friends/family/neighbors to join us with their pets; this is an especially welcoming service to all. If you have lost a pet or animal companion in the past year, please bring a photo to put on the pulpit table before worship so they can be seen during the service.

Childcare for infants to three-year-olds will be open on the second floor of the Parish House.

Sunday, March 25 We're All Omelettes (Broken and Free)

10:30a

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

None of us comes through life unscathed. Some of us have come through a lot – and maybe aren't done, by a long shot, with what we've come through. How do we manage in lives and a world that can throw us so off-balance, that hurt us, sometimes even break us – and yet we live, and life calls us on. What does it mean to live like this – what does it require of us, and what does it, even improbably offer us, to live on these trying, and inevitable, terms?

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in chapel.

Sunday, April 1 Easter (and Passover!): A Multigenerational Service

10:30a

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, DRE Cathy Seggel

As spring blooms, it's time to look at aspects of the Easter story for lessons, wisdom, maybe some things we've forgotten, or never knew, about Easter and the meaning it can hold for UUs. This rich, multi-age service will offer something (at least one something) for everyone.

Childcare for infants to three-year-olds will be open on the second floor of the Parish House.



We are a
Welcoming Congregation

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Lately . . .

We are moving into March, and our themes for this month are the linked elements of Balance and Brokenness. The examples of brokenness seem everywhere we look now, as much in our nation and our government as in our own local systems – and even now and then in ourselves.

I remember how hard it was for me to learn, when I was a skinny little girl, a special running mount onto the balance beam in gymnastics.

I always dreaded gymnastics. Flipping my body around on the high uneven bar petrified me. I felt awkward and unwieldy on the vault. My floor routine repertoire was pretty much cart-wheels and pointed-toe stepping – boring even to me. I didn't even understand how gymnastics came into our program. All of a sudden, it seemed, there it was. And, mysteriously, all the kids around me somehow knew how to do stuff, even fancy stuff, and weren't afraid of anything – or so it seemed to me. I felt mystified and alone almost all the time.

Except for the balance beam – that, somehow, I could handle. Not like I was doing walkovers on the beam or anything – but nor was anyone else, at least not at the elementary school I went to. So the beam became my friend. I learned to walk on it and feel pretty confident. I could do those dip steps without a wobble. I could turn on one foot or two. But my best move was my mount. I would run up to the side of the beam, bounce off the board with a jump and land on the beam in a split. Then I'd turn sideways, swing my legs and drive them up behind me so I ended up in a crouch, and rise gracefully from there. It was a hard mount, and somehow, I was willing to do the work to learn it. Stretching until I could do a pretty flat split. Practicing my jump and bounce and landing. It didn't scare me; all it took was a lot of work on flexibility and balance.

I think back on that now, and it feels like a lesson to remember these days. With everything that's assailing us in politics and climate change and culture wars, it's hard to find and keep our balance. Maybe that's not always a bad thing, maybe we need to learn to steady ourselves on new ground in new ways. But if so, it will surely require practice, and lots of work on flexibility and balance.

I'm working on keeping that in mind as I strive for my own equilibrium lately. I offer it in case it's of use to you as well. We don't always get, in life, to choose the equipment we have to work with. But if we put in the time, and put attention into our footing, our timing, our readiness for what moves and forms are required, we will gain flexibility, and our balance will improve, which means that no matter what our footing, our balance will be better.

See you in church,

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
Home study: Thursday
Day off: Friday
min@firstunitarianprov.org

Frontline Series: "From Jesus to Christ"

Monday evenings, March 5, 12, 19 & 16, 7:00–9:00p

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay will be leading a four-week adult religious education class on the Frontline series "From Jesus to Christ," for which she was a consultant. This series looks at the scholarly, archaeological, textual, and interpretive records for the life and times of Jesus as he lived and grew into a religious leader in a turbulent and challenging time.

Each session will present an hour of the show, then we will spend an hour in questions and discussion. Space will be limited, so reserve your space soon. Hope to see you there!

To sign up for the class, email Liz (min@firstunitarianprov.org) with "Jesus to Christ" in the email subject line.

What Five Things Will You Do for Justice?

Remember those five things Liz talked about back in January? Ways to make a difference that you can commit to for this 2018 year? She's interested in learning some of the thoughts and initiatives people decided to do.

Please email Liz (min@firstunitarianprov.org) with some or all of the five things you took time to decide on in January. Please put "5 Things" in the subject line.

Sunday Late Lunch and a Movie!

Sunday, March 25, 2:00–4:00p

145 Wayland Avenue, Providence

Join Liz for a late lunch and film screening, hosted by the Turkish Muslim organization

Dialogue Foundation at their Wayland Square location: 145



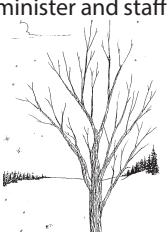
Wayland Ave. All are welcome. The movie will be *The Turkish Passport*, tracing the true and little-known efforts of Turkish embassy officials to save Jews during WWII.

The Dialogue Foundation in Providence is a group of Turkish immigrants, interested in building multicultural, interfaith community and deeper understanding and good works among the people and faiths of our city. For more about their work, read here: <https://dialoguef.org/mission-vision-and-goals/>

Winter Storms

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff will determine if church will be held or cancelled. A cancellation decision will be made by 8:00a on Sunday and conveyed to the following media outlets:

TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI PBS and radio stations 630WPRO, 920WHJJ, 1180 CCNX news radio, 1290WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM.



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

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



Spiritual Pathways

Having and Sharing

I am very tuned in to the natural balance that the Spring Equinox holds. The return of more daylight hours seems to fuel my hunger for the energy to change myself and everything else. Easier said than done, in these overwhelming, scary, and unjust times. As a mother, grandmother, teacher, nurse, and constant project manager, I perpetually seek ways to find my own center and to share that path with others.

There are clues to help clear the way to focus on our priorities. UU minister and my friend Meg Barnhouse wrote this advice that is funny and true: "I need to have a surly waitress inside myself that I can call on when it seems everyone in the world is waving an empty coffee cup in my direction. My Inner Waitress looks over at them, keeping her six plates balanced and her feet moving, and says, 'Sorry, Hon, not my table!'" That's fine for those extraneous requests. But, what about the majority of work, responsibilities, concerns, and causes that really are important in the lives of people of all ages? Before we begin, it probably doesn't hurt to do what my mother always advised, "Drink plenty of water and get lots of sleep." Okay. Once we practice some form of self-care, put on our own oxygen masks first, and all of those other clichés and overused examples, what then? I do not have the answer.

I do know that others can guide me. I have read that the students who lived through the recent Florida school shooting are turning their rage into activism. They are creating a national movement. They've announced plans for a massive rally against school and gun violence in Washington, D.C., on March 24, with smaller rallies and protests in cities around the U.S. I am following local and global efforts and will inform and encourage our youth to take part. In our own congregation, we may soon be welcoming a guest needing sanctuary due to an unjust immigration system. There will be many opportunities to help. The Green Team is ramping up to move us along toward environmental justice practices. I am looking forward to learning at the Revolutionary Love conference in April and to more antiracism work with the Rev. Thandeka in her "Love Beyond Belief" program.

March is also when our congregation focuses on committing to generously supporting all we are and wish to be as a faith community. Our gifts – of time, caring, love, ideas, and our money, in their best use – all make it possible for our congregation and our Unitarian Universalist Association, our religion, to be a sacred presence in the world. Why? To be able to be with each other, on full and empty days, as we become our best selves, resist hate, and insist on changes in our world. I am counting on the generosity of our congregation to fund and support the next chapter of this faith community. 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, resist, and change.

As we approach the spring equinox, a natural balance in nature, I continue to find my center, to balance having a healthy personal life and sharing with others. I'm beginning to embrace the idea that we must make time to fill our own wells while remaining diligent in our care for our world. We can teach this balancing act to our children, students, friends and family by modeling the practice.

I look forward to experiencing this spring in our faith community and beyond,

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

Child Dedications

Easter Sunday, April 1

The next child dedication ceremony will take place on Easter Sunday, April 1, during the service. Church members with a baby or smaller child who needs dedicating can contact the church office (401.421.7970).

A Sing-along for All Ages

March 25 following the service in the Atrium

The Spiritual Pathways team invites everyone to a sing-along, led by Youth Music Director Marcia Taylor, on Sunday, March 25, following the service. We will sing a variety of old and new tunes with some open mic opportunities for other song leaders, too! There will be snacks to munch on, and you are welcome to bring something to share, like cheese and crackers or fruit.

Contact Cathy in the church office for questions (dre@firstunitarianprov.org)

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 covering 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).

LRE Week at Star

Cathy Seggel and others from our congregation will be attending the Star Island Lifespan Religious Education Week, July 14–21. The 2018 theme is Me to We: Building spiritual communities that value relationships and nurture spiritual transformation."

Contact Cathy (dre@firstunitarianprov.org or 401.421.7970) for funding options.

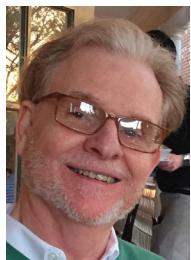


This year's General Assembly of UU churches will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, from June 20 to 24. The GA theme, "All Are Called," addresses the question: how can we faithfully meet the demands of our time?

First Unitarian has nine delegate slots, based on the size of our membership. Our delegates will be chosen by the PruComm from among those expressing interest in being a delegate.

Online registration for GA attendance and housing begins at 10:00a EST 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).



Sight Lines

We have the King James Bible, the English Standard Version Bible (Gideon), the Catholic Bible, and a host of others, but the bible I read most often in my formative years was the Stewart Brand bible, otherwise known as *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, and its subsequent iterations, *Co-Evolutionary Quarterly* and *Whole Earth Review*. If you were coming of age in the 1960s and wanted to break away from the "earning learning" educational paradigm, *The Whole Earth Catalogue* was your window to an alternative universe. This bible offered information on every conceivable subject: Eastern religions, feminism, communes, Western philosophy, computers, tools, farming vegetables and pot, skinning and butchering animals, repairing automobiles, building a house, and living off the grid. You name it, these publications covered it, long before the advent of personal computers and Google, providing you with the knowledge and power to get off your butt and try new things. This bible truly opened the doors of perception.

In all of the articles and reviews I read from these publications, there is one that stands out for me, and directly impacted my life. It was an article on the benefits of personal giving as a way of life. The article referenced a now-unknown book by a now-unknown author; all I remember is the page layout, with a picture of the author standing somewhere on the Pacific Crest Trail. Essentially, the author believed that by giving your money, your time, your knowledge, your empathy, or your smile to others, you would reap numerous benefits for yourself – happiness, grace, wealth, health, and well-being – which benefits would far outweigh whatever you gave to others. His proposition, while neither new nor revolutionary, was counterintuitive and resonated with me. I decided to give it a try, to be a more generous person. Can I say now, many years later, that the premise of the author was correct? Absolutely. Can I prove it? No. Do I understand why he was correct? No. Do I care? Not really. All I know is that when I am a generous person (and I am not always generous, in word or deed), my giving comes back to me many times over, and has helped me understand what is important in and to my life.

You don't have to take my word on it. A researcher who has done numerous studies on human well-being is Richard Davidson, a neuropsychologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, founder and chair of the Center for Healthy Minds, author, contributor to the UN Annual State of the World Happiness Report, and confidante of the Dalai Lama. He developed four criteria for well-being/happiness: resilience, outlook, attention, and generosity (the latter being the most predictable of the four). Give it a try; what do you have to gain?

Sincerely,

Jay Glasson
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Restoration Project Begins! Parking Restricted!

Scaffolding of the Meeting House begins on Monday, March 5. The entire building will be surrounded by scaffolding; the sidewalk on the north side and the front and back entrances to the Meeting House will be accessible under the scaffolding.

On Monday, March 12, the parking spaces adjacent to the south side of the church will become a work and storage area, eliminating all unrented spaces in the parking lot on weekdays. That means *no parking for the staff or any visitors*; please be respectful of this situation for the duration of the construction.

Until the project ends around September 1, staff and members of the congregation **must use street parking on weekdays**. The lot is available for church parking any evening after 6:00p and all day on weekends.

If you have any questions, please contact David House (dlhouse51@comcast.net).



Treasurer's Report

One of the most frequently asked questions related to the use of the church's Endowments pertains to the relationship of what is drawn from the three Endowment Funds.

The three Endowment Funds are:

The Consolidated Fund

Bequests to the church are to be used as designated. If there are no restrictions as to the use of the gift, it will be placed in the Consolidated Fund.

The Sunday School Fund

This Fund was established to be used in maintaining and supporting a Sunday School as a part of the church's religious activities and in fostering Unitarian liberal teaching.

The Property Fund

This Fund is to be used for the upkeep, insurance, and preservation of the church buildings and furnishings and the upkeep and improvement of the grounds.

Each year, 5% of the three-year "rolling average" of the funds is used to help support the annual operating budget. For the fiscal year 2018, \$224,627 will be used. The Sunday School Fund will provide \$56,168 toward the budgeted amount of \$100,891 for religious education. The Property Fund will provide \$122,335 toward the budgeted amount of \$155,100 for the cost of facilities operation. The Consolidated Fund will provide \$46,225 toward all other budgeted costs.

The new regulations related to federal income tax had a positive effect for this year's pledge receipts, with a higher number of pledges paid in December. Pledgers paid more of their pledge up front for tax advantage purposes. Sunday cash collection receipts are strong and will reach 100% of the budgeted amount. In addition non-pledge receipts have gone well over what was budgeted. With 58.3% of the year completed, we have received 67.4% of the projected receipts.

– Graham Nye, Treasurer

Please mark your calendar for the Congregational Conversation about CHURCH SAFETY on Sunday, March 18 at 11:45a in the Auditorium



Community Life

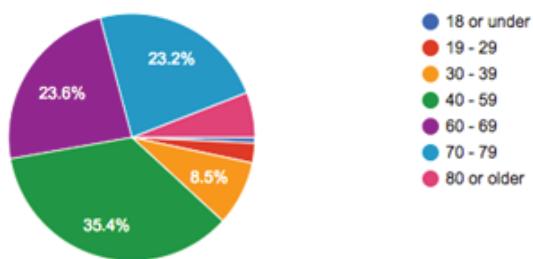
Who Are We?

Demographic Results from the Congregational Census

Between November 24 and December 24 of last year, members and friends of the church were asked to complete our very first Congregational Census. Two hundred and sixty-six individuals (members and friends) responded to the census (about 55% of our total population).

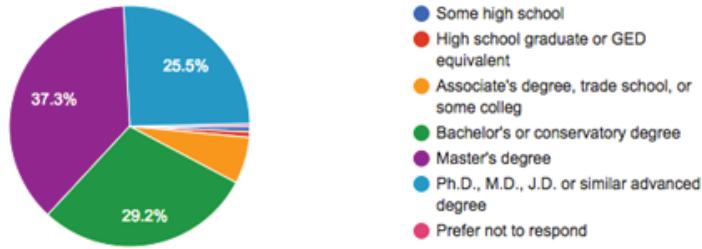
Here are some of the demographic results that we received from this sample: 90% counted themselves as "members" and 10% indicated that they are "friends" of the congregation. Almost 20% have been affiliated with the church for 2 years or less, while 14% reported 3 to 5 years; 29% reported 6 to 15 years; a whopping 30% reported 16 to 35 years; and 7% reported more than 36 years of affiliation. The majority (almost half) reported attending church or Sunday School two to three times per month, with almost another third reporting weekly attendance. The age breakdown of our sample ranges from those under 18 to those older than 80, with the largest age group being those between 40 and 59 years of age (see below).

What is your age?



The sample is predominantly (64%) female; predominantly heterosexual (80%); and mostly white (non-Hispanic) (90%). Our sample is highly educated (see below).

What is the highest level of education you have completed?



Our sample lives in cities/towns throughout Rhode Island (and some even cross the border from Massachusetts!). The largest number of respondents live in Providence, with Cranston, Barrington, Pawtucket, and Riverside not far behind.

Stay tuned for a future report on the ideas generated from respondents about offerings for the congregation.

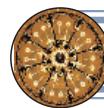
If you didn't have an opportunity earlier and would like to participate in the Congregational Census, we would welcome your input; please use this link to get to the census form: <https://goo.gl/forms/Tfzv1MiSSBb6ii4C2>

Happy Birthday to ...

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



David Anthony
Dolores Braica
David Bridgehouse
Nancy Robert Dooley
Janette Greenwood
Jon Henson
Hannah Rosenbaum
Judy Sheehan
Kathie Vitolo



Wheel of Life

Congratulations to:

Bob and Mona Speaker, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on February 7.

Hats Off to ...

All the cooks who participated in the Annual Cook-Off. This year's theme was stews, and the winner was **Rebecca Alberg**.

Our Coffee Hour Providers:

Tony Allen, Mary Frappier, Tracy Hands, Roberta Groch, Joyce Booher, Anne Connor, Suzanne Francis, Maureen Johanson, Girl Scout Troop 178, Roxanne Stern, Steve McCloy, Amy Donadio, Erica Rusley, Nancy Shand, Aida Wilby, Jess Dolan, Karen Longeteig, Karen Boulanger, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



Find Us on Facebook!

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

If you are interested in posting a church-related event, send an email to Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or contact the church office (401.421.7970).



Community Life

Ignite the Fire of Commitment with the Power of Love

Our 2018 Commitment Drive got off to a great start in February. Focusing on generosity and mission-based giving, Joe Salvatore and Bela Teixeira shared with the congregation two very impressive, heartfelt testimonials, devoted to how First Unitarian has impacted their lives in dramatic ways. Then, over Valentine's Day weekend, the Commitment Committee demonstrated its own version of generosity by presenting two events: A free concert by the Atwater-Donnelly Trio on Friday evening set the stage for a major surprise on Wholly Family Sunday. In lieu of the normal offering, every person in attendance received a Share the Love envelope with money enclosed, along with a challenge to do good somewhere in the world.

The outpouring of testimonials about how our members decided to put their contributions to use is truly heartwarming. Many dollars came back to the church for projects including the Sanctuary shower and the Loaves & Fishes program, while others went to programs for the homeless in Providence, for education in Africa, and medical efforts around the world. Check out our bulletin board in the Atrium to read many of these inspiring stories first hand. If you haven't already told us your giving story, please do so.

March is just around the corner, and our real work will begin. Pledge envelopes and related materials will be distributed after the service on March 4 to those present (saving us a big chunk of the mailing costs). Special Sunday events will continue until the drive ends, and regular updates regarding our progress will be posted every week for all to see.

It's one thing to talk about generosity and commitment – now we need to see it in action! Everyone will need to pledge generously if we want to see our church moving forward and making a difference for our members and our community.

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

– Joe Fisler, Chair, Commitment Committee



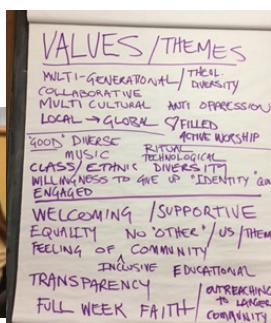
Leadership Program Envisions the "Perfect Church Community"

Since the fall, the Harvest the Power program has shifted focus to "Purpose" or a sense of what ends leaders serve. Twice a month, we gather to share fellowship and educational experiences that deepen our senses of self, community, leadership, and vision.

Our most recent workshop was the result of collaboration between Cynthia Rosengard and Michael Currier, who challenged the participants to engage their Imagination, Creativity,

and to Dare Greatly. We began by brainstorming our visions for a "perfect church community" and then met in smaller groups to identify themes/values that our visions held in common. In the end, we cultivated the ideas in the larger group to arrive at core themes/values that our perfect church community visions reflected. Our program runs until April, with a graduation and acknowledgment of our graduates in May.

Please contact Cynthia Rosengard (crosengard@gmail.com) if you are interested in learning more or joining a future year's class.



Getting to Know Our Partner Church in Transylvania

The Transylvania Partner Church Committee has been putting a face on members of our Partner Church.

This article is from Laszlo Zoltan.

When our minister, Kelemen Szabolcs, asked me to write a note for your monthly newsletter, it immediately came to my mind what he taught me. According to the Bible: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."



Well, during my church manager duty, and in my everyday life, I'm trying to achieve this. If I accept a task, I like to do it well, with a whole heart and soul. That's the kind of person I am. I have been the manager of the Szentegyhaza Unitarian Church for nine years. During this time, I have gathered a deeper understanding of the church.

During this time, we extended the minister's apartment with two guest rooms and we remodeled a part of the house into an office, where the minister works. With your help, and the minister's devotion, looking for supporters, we built a belfry, with a small bell inside. We are proud that the belfry was made by local wood carvers, and the bell was poured by local metal workers. We tore down the old, ruined barn and replaced it with a gazebo or summerhouse. We use it during bigger gatherings of our congregation.

We have a saying that goes like this: "A lot of good people can fit in a small place." If there are a lot of us, we can't fit in our church, though, because there is not enough air inside, and sometimes people have passed out, and we have had to call the ambulance. Therefore, a big dream of ours is to build a church. Unfortunately, the local bureaucracy and the complicated regulations make our work more difficult.

Although our current church is small, we have good church attendance. Not many churches can proudly say that 30 to 40% of the congregation goes to services. This is the result of the minister's devoted work.

When some of you were here, you could witness how much people love each other within the church community. We wish to maintain this. We greeted you with this love, and will greet you whenever you visit us. I hope you have a good opinion about us, and we will have the opportunity be together again.

– Laszlo Zoltan
Szentegyhaza Unitarian Church



Community Life

The Women's Alliance Monthly Meeting

Monday, March 5

Inside Dorcas International
Speaker: Kathleen Cloutier

Refugees and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries face many challenges as they resettle in Rhode Island: from securing housing and getting kids enrolled in school to dealing with cultural intolerance, learning English, and finding jobs. Kathleen provides an insider's view of the current refugee crisis and what Dorcas International is doing to empower both individuals and families.

Kathleen Cloutier is Executive Director of Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, the state's leading nonprofit organization offering advocacy and client-centered services – including legal assistance and adult education – to refugees, immigrants, and the native-born.

A Night at the Theater: *Twelve Angry Jurors*

Thursday, March 8 at Barker Playhouse

Reception at 6:30p, performance at 7:30p

The Women's Alliance is hosting a Night at the Theater for a performance of *Twelve Angry Jurors*, by Reginald Rose, performed by The Players at Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street. The Alliance has purchased half the house (50 seats) on the evening of Thursday, March 8, and is inviting members of the congregation to join them for a reception and the play.

Originally set in 1956 and titled *Twelve Angry Men*, the once all-white, all-male play has been updated to current-day Brooklyn, New York, with a diverse cast of men and women. Few changes were made to the powerful script, and though some details are less than current – there is no death penalty in New York, for example – the basics of the story and characters are timeless (sometimes unfortunately so). When a single juror is the only holdout for an innocent verdict in a patricide trial, what develops is a picture of America at its best . . . and worst.

Tickets (\$20) available from Edie Warren (ediewarren@gmail.com) through March 6. Net proceeds from this event will be included in the Alliance's year-end donations to charities that support women and families.

Round-the-Table Dinners

Saturday, March 24

We are looking for a number of people who can host a dinner for six to ten people around their dinner table. On this night, multiple dinners will take place throughout the community.

If you would like to host a dinner, sign up in the Atrium during Coffee Hour or email John Dooley (dool@cox.net) or Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org).

If you would like to attend a dinner, sign up in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. This is a great way to get to know others in a smaller-group setting.

Building Resilient Children and Adults

Mental Health Education Series for Faith Community Leaders

Tuesday, March 6, 6:30p–8:00p at First Unitarian Church

How can mindfulness practices in the classroom, community, and workplace bolster emotional resilience, giving us the strength to persevere through and ultimately bounce back after adversity? Join Vanessa Weinger, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Resilience, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering people to empower themselves through mindfulness practice. This organization fosters success by teaching strategies for managing stress, overcoming obstacles, cultivating compassion, and thriving through adversity – outcomes that benefit both the individual and society as a whole.

Contacts: Rev. Gene Dyszlewski (edyszlewski@gmail.com) or Christine King ([cwing@interfaithri.org](mailto:cking@interfaithri.org))

Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

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

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

Gourmet Coffee Sales

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

Our March Coffee Hour

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 8 people bringing donations that serve 24 each.



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

Atrium Bookstore

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



Spiritual Development

Easter Plants

Reservations by March 25

If you wish to give plants to decorate the church for Easter Sunday (April 1) in memory or celebration of a special someone, please look for the form in the *Meeting House*

Times or contact the church office no later than Sunday, March 25. You will need to specify the first and last name of each person you are honoring.

Donations of \$20 minimum per name. Those who donate plants are welcome to take them at the end of the service on Easter Sunday.



Spirit in Life Worship Service

Wednesday, March 21 at 5:00

Please join the Spirit in Life group in a worship service on Wednesday evening, March 21. This service is our way of connecting our ongoing group explorations back to the congregation. Come if you are curious about the group or just would like a worship service in the early evening to calm down your day. The service will be followed by a reception in the Hope Club. Because refreshments will be served, please let Rick Richards or Pat Gifford know if you plan to attend the reception (pgifford1259@gmail.com).

First Unitarian Passover Seder!

Monday, April 2 at the church, 6:00–8:00p

Passover is around the corner and we're having a seder! Our First Unitarian seder. This multi-generational event welcomes people of all ages – singles, families, kids, elders, neighbors, and friends. We'll have a seder, tell the story of Passover, sing songs, pray some prayers, light candles, drink wine and juice, eat matzah and maror, and enjoy a full, potluck dinner. Seder recipes available. It's a great way to honor this essential story in human history, eat great food, drink great bad wine (Manischewitz Concord Grape anyone?) and enjoy a fun evening of participatory story and ritual. Sign-ups will begin shortly. Keep an eye out and hope to see you there!

Art in the Atrium

The present textile show by the Women's Alliance will remain on display through the month of March.

For further information, please contact Amy Webb (amy.webb7@verizon.net) or Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

Call for Artists for April

We have decided to make the April show a group Collective Exhibit on the theme of Social Justice. We invite you to take this opportunity to create new work or consider past work relevant to the theme of Social Justice issues.

It's a broad palate to work within, touching on immigration, poverty, race, gender, politics, environment, etc., and we hope you can find the time and inspiration to express your ideas.

There will be group exhibits in the future that are open contributions, but for April we will explore the theme of Social Justice for the Collective and welcome your feedback.

We ask that you also be sensitive to our family audience, as we are not a traditional gallery in the sense that folks choose to walk through the doors; we are part of a multifunction space, so please keep that in mind.

For further information, please contact Amy Webb (amy.webb7@verizon.net) or Chiara Van Erp (romano-vanerp-design@cox.net).

Ongoing Programs

UUMen

Sunday, March 11, 7:00–9:00p

The topic is "Sons of Our Fathers"

We will consider:

What is your father's legacy to you?

Are there elements you are in recovery from?

Are there portions you aspire to?

What did you learn about manhood from your father?

What did you learn about being a son?

What did you learn from your father about being a father yourself?

A positive memory of your dad ...

Unfinished business ...

Questions unanswered or never asked ...

Conversation you wished you had had ...

Facilitator: Tim Dawes (dawg1280@gmail.com)

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. All are welcome.

Brief orientation for newcomers at 6:45p. Call or text Cindy Bapties (401.573.0881) for more information.

Innate Wisdom and Compassion Meditation

Every Wednesday at 7:00p

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

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00p

Reimagining Religion is an ongoing attempt to employ the best recent scholarship in coming to grips with issues raised by radically new developments in the study of religion and thereby achieving a fuller appreciation of what religious literacy entails in the twenty-first century.

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)



Social Justice

Side with Love!

On February 22, Side with Love welcomed Resist Hate RI to its first meeting in our Auditorium. Many people showed up for the event, which we are hoping will be occurring on a quarterly basis.

Last month, a discussion of the UU Common Read for this year, *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity and Power in Ministry* by Mitra Rahnema, drew nine people, who had a lively conversation about the book and its relevance to current events.

On March 9, Side with Love is excited to be welcoming **SisterSong** to First Unitarian (see below). The evening is part of a two-day event, sponsored by social justice groups in our community looking to educate white allies as well as women from affected communities about the disparity in options available for indigenous women and women of color, and how we can work together toward a resolution in this gap. If you are interested in reproductive justice, healthcare justice, Black Lives Matter, and how you can become an active advocate for the rights of all women, you are encouraged to attend. This event is open to all who are interested. You are encouraged to share this information with people in your social justice networks.

To get tickets to this free event, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-night-with-sister-song-in-providence-tickets-42947650579>. Donations will be accepted and will go to community groups represented at the event.

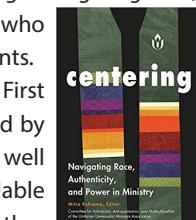
Please keep your eyes on the *Meeting House Times* each week to stay up to date on social justice events coming up in our community. After the shooting in Parkland, Florida, in February, we expect that there will be many gun-related events coming up in the next few months that will need our support. We will do our best to keep you informed about what is happening, and how we can respond as a congregation.

SisterSong: A Presentation about Reproductive Justice

Friday, March 9 at 7:00p at First Unitarian Church

SisterSong's mission is to strengthen and amplify the collective voices of indigenous women and women of color to achieve reproductive justice by eradicating reproductive oppression and securing human rights. All are invited to join the discussion.

More information: info@thewomanproject.org. Sponsor: First Unitarian's Side with Love



Sanctuary Host News

February was a busy month for our Sanctuary Host Steering Committee, as well as for our congregation president, Jay Glasson. After our initial meeting with Mayor Elorza in January, we continue to work with the city to get various approvals. Thanks to Jay for his help in guiding us through this difficult process. While awaiting word from the city, our committee has been busy conducting trainings, preparing final touches for our room, and gathering and writing information we will need to distribute once we can move forward.

We held two very well attended nonviolence trainings with the help of Maggie Meany and Fr. Raymond Malm from the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence during late January and February. During the first session we learned about Martin Luther King's Six Principles of Nonviolence; and in the second training, we applied those principles to role playing different scenarios we might encounter while we are serving as a sanctuary. If you missed any of the trainings, we will be offering them again in the near future.

Thank you to all the people who donated their **Share the Love** envelopes to our shower fund. To date, we have raised nearly \$1,000. Many people matched the amounts in their envelopes, and all the contributions are greatly appreciated.

Our efforts to get a **Faithify** account ready to share have hit some delays. Watch the *Meeting House Times* for news about the status of our page, and any updates on Sanctuary.



Knitting for a Better World and The Mitten Tree

Thank you to all who have donated items for our Mitten Tree. The temperature has been up and down, but on many of the cold, dry days, we have managed to have a few things on our tree. On Food Pantry days, the tree has been stocked with many items, which quickly disappear. A special thanks to Julie Meyers and knitting4peace for their contribution of 20 pairs of colorful hand-knit and -crocheted mittens for our tree.

As spring rapidly approaches, before you put away those hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens for the season, why not pass on those items your family has outgrown? There will be a basket in the Atrium until March 18 to collect your lightly used warmings.

We're Building Fairy Houses!

On Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00p throughout the month of March, our knitting group will be building **fairy houses** for the annual Fairy Garden event at Roger Williams Park Botanical Garden. Would you be interested in joining in on the fun? We will supply the materials, you supply the creativity – and if you have one, a hot glue gun.

Contact: Alison (dalisonb@yahoo.com) to RSVP.



Join the Green Team!

Second Sundays monthly at 12:15p

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)



Social Justice

Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly meeting, Sunday, March 4 at 12:15p

Loaves & Fishes Mission, Tuesday, March 6 from 12:00p

As we evaluate the new political reality we find ourselves in, it becomes increasingly clear that there will be local human consequences to the choices being made in Washington. Now more than ever, it is important to look around us and spot injustice and inequality where we live. Locally, there are new initiatives addressing income inequality, homelessness, hunger, and other issues too numerous to mention.

Do you have an issue or project that concerns you? Is there a burning desire to stamp out an obvious wrong you perceive? The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee meets on the first Sunday of every month. The next meeting is March 4 after Coffee Hour. You can also visit us in the Atrium after services during Coffee Hour.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for all the volunteers who regularly attend our Loaves & Fishes Mission. This amazing monthly experience provides an opportunity to interact with the local homeless population and make a real difference. Volunteers make sandwiches and distribute them to homeless people in the streets. A dinner is prepared and served by volunteers at the Emmanuel House in Providence, a local men's shelter. The next Loaves & Fishes Mission is Tuesday March 6.

We look forward to meeting you!

— Raffaele Gianfrancesco

Take a Stand for Human Rights – The Benenson Society

Sunday, March 11, 12:15p

The right to one's own conscience, and to be one's self, are the essential, universal human rights. This means the right to think for yourself; to express your thoughts; to practice a religion of your choice; the right to your racial, ethnic, and gender birthright and to your self-choice or sexual or gender identification. These basic rights are under constant attack around the world. Men and women are in prison who have committed no crime except to think for themselves or be who they are. Obscure, ordinary persons are buried alive for these rights.

If you are interested in helping to protect them, or help out to reach them, come to a short meeting that will explain the work of the Benenson Society, an international organization devoted to human rights, and our congregation's partial affiliation with Amnesty International. We do this kind of work for our annual Write-a-thon for Human Rights.

Volunteer at First Unitarian's Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day: Monday, March 19

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

Set-up: 2:00p–3:00p

Shopping with clients: 3:00p–5:00p

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

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

The Pantry Is Open to All

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

Seniors: Show Your Strength

Tuesday, March 6, 9:30–11:00a

Support a Better System for Aging in Community

How: Attend a Legislative Forum

Who: With House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello and Senate President Dominick Ruggerio

Where: Crowne Plaza Grand Ballroom, Warwick

Free Admission: For information and to register, call 401.351.6710.

Forum Sponsors: Senior Agenda Coalition, RI Senior Center Directors, Leading Age RI, etc.

Church contacts: Bob Cox (rcox45@cox.net) or Dick Bidwell

Community Collections 2017-18

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

September 10 (Homecoming)

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

October 15 – Pawtucket Backpackers

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

November 19 – Loaves & Fishes Mission

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

January 21 – Transylvania Partner Church

Assistance to our Partner Church in Transylvania for expansion of their worship space. The collection brought in \$2,513.

February 25

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

news at First Unitarian

CALENDAR

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

March 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Sanctuary 7:00p World Affairs 7:00p	2	3
4 Worship 10:30a <u>Commitment Drive Begins</u> at 12:00p Mentor/Mentee at 12:15p Neighborhood SJ History Comm.	5 Restoration Work Begins Women's Alliance 11:00a Jesus to Christ 7:00p Zendo 7:00p	6 Loaves & Fishes 12:00–7:00p Stand with Love 7:00p Building Resilient Children 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	7 Prudential Committee 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	8 Alliance Theater Night 6:30p	9 SisterSong 7:00p	10
11 DAYLIGHT SAVING Worship 10:30a at 12:00p Cong. Conv. on Safety at 12:15p Green Team Benenson Society UU Men 7:00p	12 Jesus to Christ 7:00p Zendo 7:00p	13 Deacons 6:30p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimag. Rel. 7:00p	14 Harvest the Power 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	15	16	17
18 Worship 10:30a Blessing of the Animals	19 Food Pantry 2:00p–6:00p Worship Comm 5:30p Jesus to Christ 7:00p Zendo 7:00p	20 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	21 Spirit in Life Worship 5:00p Finance 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	22	23	24 Round-the-Table Dinners
25 Worship 10:30a RE Team Sing-along after church Art in the Atrium Collective 12:15p	26 Jesus to Christ 7:00p Zendo 7:00p	27 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimag. Rel. 7:00p	28 Harvest the Power 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	29	30	31