

# First Unitarian Women's Alliance

## PROGRAMS & INFORMATION

### 2022-2023



Enrichment • Friendship • Service

## About The First Unitarian Women's Alliance

Established in 1882, The Women's Alliance is unique among the organizations of the First Unitarian Church of Providence in that it has been an autonomous society of dues-paying members and has its own endowment. Many of its members have played leading roles in education, suffrage, and social services.

In 2014 The Women's Alliance became an affiliate of the church and the name was changed to The First Unitarian Women's Alliance.

The mission is to:

- offer enrichment through timely and informative programs,
- nurture opportunities for friendship, inspiration, and support among the members, and
- contribute to community organizations benefitting women, children, and families through fundraising activities and service.

Activities of the Alliance have included:

- Monthly programs for members and friends
- Fundraising through the sale of organic coffees and cheeses, an indoor yard sale, and other activities
- Annual donations to selected charities
- Hymnal donations in memory of deceased members
- A theater event with The Players at Barker Playhouse
- Service projects at local nursing homes
- A Facebook Group with the Women's League from our partner church in Transylvania
- A Cookie Recipe Exchange with our partner church women

The Alliance meets on the first Monday of the month from October through May, with an end-of-year outing in June. The business meeting and monthly programs featuring engaging speakers will be held via Zoom and in-person in the Parish House Auditorium.

Membership dues (\$35) support the programs and business expenses of the Alliance. Fundraising profits, after expenses, benefit selected charitable organizations that support women, children, and families.

## Meetings

Business Meetings	10:00 am
Programs	11:00 am

Our monthly business meetings and programs this year will be held in the Parish House Auditorium in person and virtually via Zoom in order to connect to as many members as possible.

## Programs

**October 3, 2022      The Struggle for African American and Indigenous Equal Rights**  
Speaker: Keith Stokes

Keith was the lead researcher and author of "A Matter of Truth," a report that provided evidentiary documentation of the institutions of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous people, and the racialized discrimination in Providence that began in 1620 and resonates to the present day. The report has been widely used as a learning tool by RI civic, business, and educational institutions.

*Keith Stokes is Director of Business and Development for the City of Providence. He has served as Executive Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and Executive Director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce and has been an Advisor for Rhode Island with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He holds degrees from Cornell University and the University of Chicago.*

**November 7, 2022      Reading Against the Grain: Using Archival Documents Creatively**  
Speaker: Traci Picard

History is not one linear story but many, many stories patched together. Reading against the grain can help challenge dominant narratives; it requires curiosity, creativity, and a lot of time. Traci will explain why she does this, some of the methods, and a few of the results that have come out of the process.

*Traci Picard is a public historian and a Brown graduate student from Providence, RI. She is co-organizer of the Snowtown Research team, a tour guide for the Center for Slavery and Justice at Brown University, and a researcher for various projects that aim to look below the surface of history in Providence and beyond.*

**December 5, 2022 The Refugee Experience in Rhode Island**

Speaker: Kathy Cloutier

In the past year, world events have resulted in two waves of refugees seeking support from the global community. Kathy will focus on the refugee process in Rhode Island; the support offered to recently welcomed Afghan refugees; and how they have settled into jobs, housing, and schools. She will also describe the role of community partnerships in providing this support.

*Kathy Cloutier is the Executive Director of Dorcas International. She is a founding member of the RI Immigrant Coalition and Treasurer of the International Charter School's Board of Trustees. She is also a member of the Greater Providence Adult Education Consortium and Rhode Island's Refugee Support Network.*

**January 9, 2023 Woodblock Dreams Tarot**

Speaker: Annie Bissett

Annie created and self-published Woodblock Dreams Tarot, the woodblock print tarot deck, during the COVID pandemic. Her talk will include a slide show about the printmaking process she used to make the images, an introduction to the simple mechanisms that underpin the operation of tarot, and a hands-on demonstration of how tarot can be used as a tool for self-inquiry and reflection.

*Annie Bissett has been working primarily with Japanese-method woodblock printing since she took a 2005 workshop with New Hampshire printmaker Matt Brown. Her printmaking work builds on her 20 years as a freelance digital illustrator/designer. Annie has been a member of First Unitarian since she moved to Providence from western Massachusetts in 2018.*

**February 6, 2023 Nature as a Way to Heal and Empower**

Speaker: Melissa Guillet

Melissa will share her journey in environmental advocacy through stories and slides of community programming, citizen science, and simple friendships.

*Melissa Guillet runs 15-Minute Field Trips, a nonprofit dedicated to helping youth advocate for the environment through art and community action. As much as time allows, she hikes, gardens, plays bass, and practices martial arts. Melissa joined First Unitarian in 2008 and is a member of the choir, Community Band, Art Collaborative, Green Team, and Loaves and Fishes.*

**March 6, 2023 Meeting the Challenges of Environmental Racism and Justice**

Speaker: Darrèll Brown

“Environmental impacts touch every aspect of our lives and it’s time policies here in Rhode Island caught up with that reality,” says Darrèll Brown. It’s no

accident that incinerators and power plants end up in poor and minority communities and that those residents get sick and die at higher rates. Darrèll leads the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) efforts in Rhode Island to reduce these impacts on the lives and health of our low-income neighbors.

*Darrèll Brown is Vice President of CLF. He previously served as Director of Economic Development for Charles County, MD; as Director of State and Local Relations for Brown University; and as Chief of Staff for Attorney General Sheldon Whitehouse. He holds a JD from Howard University School of Law and a BA from The American University.*

**April 3, 2023 Singing as a Spiritual Practice**

Speaker: Beth Armstrong

We will interactively explore the benefits of group singing and the many physical, spiritual, and psychological benefits of this simple means of expression. Beth has been singing for as long as she can remember and she thinks she is lucky to have made a career from the thing she truly loves.

*Currently serving as interim Music Director at First Unitarian, Beth Armstrong is also music director of two local, non-auditioned community choruses. She served as Music Director at the Unitarian Church of Concord, New Hampshire, for 16 years and as the sabbatical Music Director at First Unitarian in fall of 2019. She taught public school music for 12 years and has sung in chorales, choirs, septets, and community theater productions most of her life.*

**May 1, 2023 The Impact of Climate Change on Our Fragile Coastline**

Speaker: Elizabeth Rush

Elizabeth will share her well-researched insight into the impact of climate change on sea-level rise and, in particular, the fragility of our coastline, giving the example of Jacob’s Point in Warren. She will address the necessity of coastline retreat for humans and animals and how this might be “managed” to greet the inevitable sea rise – versus simply responding in chaos.

*Elizabeth Rush is the author of Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction, and Still Lives from a Vanishing City: Essays and Photographs from Yangon, Myanmar. Her essays have appeared in The New York Times, Harpers, Granta, and others. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Science Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Howard Foundation, and others.*

**June 5, 2023 Annual Outing at The Audubon Center, Bristol, RI**

Speakers: Audubon Society Staff

Program at 10:00am with a brown bag lunch to follow

Staff at the Audubon Center will present a program about the center and lead a tour of the facility.

## Presidents of The Women's Alliance

1882-1884	Mrs. Thomas R. (Adeline E.H.) Slicer
1950-1952	Mrs. Paul A. (Marian L.) Merriam
1952-1954	Mrs. Alonzo W. (Alice) Quinn
1954-1956	Mrs. Roger T. (Millie) Chandler
1956-1957	Mrs. F. W. (Helen J.) Twaddell
1957-1959	Mrs. Royal W. (Roberta) Knight
1959-1961	Mrs. Benn (Dolores) Weiner
1961-1962	Mrs. F. W. (Helen J.) Twaddell
1962-1964	Mrs. Guy C. (Alice W.) West
1964-1966	Mrs. Thomas H. (Jeanne) Walsh
1966-1968	Mrs. Leallyn B. (Florence) Clapp
1968-1970	Mrs. Wade C. (Dorothy) Johnson
1970-1972	Mrs. George (Frances) Balch
1972-1973	Mrs. Heston S. (Ruth) Hirst
1973-1976	Mrs. Timothy N. (Jean) Buffum
1976-1978	Mrs. Frederick P. (Hope) Bowden
1978-1980	Mrs. Randall E. (Charlotte) Stratton
1980-1982	Mrs. Ceylon A. (Betty) Randall
1982-1984	Dr. Isobel R. Abbott
1984-1986	Mrs. Thomas H. (Jeanne) Walsh
1986-1988	Mrs. Nathan J. (Arline R.) Kiven
1988-1989	Mrs. Philip R. (Ellen) Pearson, Jr.
1989-1991	Mrs. George (Frances) Balch
1991-1993	Mrs. A. Richmond (Elsie) Peirce, Jr.
1993-1995	Mrs. John (Janina) D'Abate
1996-1998	Marilyn M. Meardon
1998-2000	Mary Finger
2000-2001	Janina D'Abate
2001-2002	Helen King / Martha Manno
2002-2005	Nancy Weiss-Fried
2005-2007	Rebecca Alberg
2007-2009	Marilyn Eanet
2009-2011	Nancy Libby Fisher
2011-2013	Mary Frappier
2013-2016	Janet Downing Taylor
2016-2018	Nori Duncan
2018-2020	Gail Brule
2020-2022	Barbara Westlake
2022-	Nancy Safer

## Snapshots from the Alliance June Outing at the Audubon Society Nature Center in Bristol, RI

