



Services in the Meeting House

Our theme for February is **Prayer / Spiritual Practice**.

Sunday, February 3 **The Crime of Innovation**

10:30 am

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

Lest anyone doubt whether Unitarians in Transylvania and Unitarian Universalists here in the U.S. really have much in common, look no further than the crime of which the great Transylvanian Unitarian and theologian Francis David was accused, condemned, and imprisoned: innovation. This June members of our congregation are taking a trip to visit our partner church in Romania. It's not too late to sign up! And for all of us, whether we'll be going or not, we'll use this Sunday to look at who our Partner Church is, where this partnership comes from, and what can it mean to us now, when the world is becoming one village, with much that is the same the world over, and much to learn still from our real differences. What is the place now, in our faith and in our relationship, of innovation?

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Our Community Collection today is in support of our Transylvania Partner Church.

Sunday, February 10 **The Wholly Family, a Multigenerational Service**

10:30 am

Cathy Seggel, DRE, Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, and Families

An annual celebration of the many ways we are family. Over the years, family stories have been shared by people of many ages, races, and economic conditions, and many family configurations: GBLTQ, "traditional" couples, one-parent and single-person families. Come and celebrate with us!

Childcare open for infants to three-year-olds in the Parish House, second floor

Sunday, February 17 **Margaret Fuller's Church – In Providence and the Larger World**

10:30 am

Phyllis Cole

Margaret Fuller, author of the nation's first consciousness-raising book for women, had surprising connections to First Unitarian during the earlier time (1837-38) when she lived and taught school in Providence. Some new digging in the archives shows how much she grew here toward her major religious vision. In light of our congregation's 300th anniversary next year, the sermon will tell this story, but it will also celebrate Fuller's messages for our own time about gender, social justice, and national borders.

Phyllis Cole was at one time a Women's Studies in Religion Fellow at Harvard Divinity School; then, for over 25 years, taught as a professor of English at Penn State Brandywine. While writing at length about women of the Transcendentalist movement, she has served as president of both the Margaret Fuller Society and the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society. Now retired to Rhode Island, she is a member of First Unitarian and its history committee.

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.

Sunday, February 24 **Sabbath – Care and Feeding of the Soul**

10:30 am

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay

Take a breath. Eat an orange. There are many recipes for feeding the soul, a meal that seems all the more precious and rare in the press and anxiety of these days. Our service will explore the theme of what is a Sabbath meant to be, and what can it mean for us, each of us and all of us, alone and together?

Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.



We are a Welcoming Congregation

Inside

Lately ...	2
Spiritual Pathways	3
Sight Lines	4
Community Life	5
Spiritual Development	8
Social Justice	9
Monthly Calendar	10

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Lately . . .

I write this on the dreariest day I've experienced in a while. It's grey and cold outside, a harsh wind is roaring around the house, rain is pelting down thick and hard, striking the windows with every gust of air, washing away the last of the heavy ice that carpeted everything the last few days.

And I think: is this a gale? What is a gale exactly? Consulting definitions tells me "gale" is a nautical term, defined by strong winds. The National Weather Service says gale-force winds run from 34 to 37 knots. (Ah, I think, that old pun in *The Wizard of Oz*, where Dorothy's last name was Gale, was more specific than I realized.) Further research converts 34-37 knots to between 39 and 54 miles per hour.

This storm is maybe a gale. Or maybe it's just a nasty storm with gusting winds. More importantly, since I still have power and heat and water, shelter and safety, within which to do meaningful work, it's only when I begin writing this that I begin to appreciate my circumstances. Until now, all day I've just been going from one thing to another, answering emails, writing, researching, talking on the phone with colleagues and parishioners. The day is almost over and this is the first moment I've appreciated the coziness of my old, sturdy home that has surely sheltered many souls through many storms worse than this. This is the first moment I've been grateful that the possibly gale-force winds haven't blown out the power in my neighborhood.

Oh gratitude. As usual, I've been preoccupied and seduced away from you by the clamor of the world and all there is to do. Thank you, old house. Thank you, strong walls, solid roof, faithful windows, for letting in light and holding in heat and keeping out the wind and rain. Electric lines that haven't given way. Thank you, dogs, for your companionship and the soothing quality of your gentle snores and your willingness to only go out twice so far in this bluster that you find inexplicably delightful. Thank you, fate and luck that have given me a home I love and work I love and so many good people to work with and a family and friends to love.

Once I get started, the doors of gratitude fly open. Thank you, life – for my safety and my health, my hopes for the future, and the lessons of the past. Thank you for my loving spouse and all his family that have become mine. (It's getting hard to stop. These wintry moments of reflection are dangerous!)

Thank you for air I'm breathing, and water that is everywhere, in and around me, especially today. Thank you for the vision of those who are determined to save this planet's future, for the miracles that are all the creatures who share this world, for its deserts and mountains, its oceans and plains, for all those who dwell there. Thank you to all those who do so much to make this world better for others.

Thank you for this moment that is my life, in this time and place, for freedom from pain and want, and for the unease of my privilege that keeps me urgent for justice. Thank you for this gratitude, for awareness of my existence and the many gifts I have right now. Thank you for the storm.

See you in church,

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

Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the staff decides if worship will be canceled. If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, the church will be closed. A cancellation decision will be made by 8:00am Sunday, posted on our website and Facebook page, and conveyed to the major local media outlets.

If the church is open during a storm, no one should make heroic efforts to get here. Use your best judgment about whether it is safe to drive or walk.

Exciting News: Kevin Carson Has Joined Our Staff

Please welcome Kevin Carson back to First Unitarian Church of Providence. Kevin and his family were active members of our congregation prior to his entering seminary. He has come back to us as our Ministerial Intern for Pastoral Care for the first six months of 2019 and will be providing support as coordinator of the Lay Ministry and Parish Care programs.

In His Own Words



It is good to be back with you at First Unitarian for the next six months as I complete my final requirement for Preliminary Ministerial Fellowship. My focus will be on helping to strengthen the Lay Pastoral and Parish Care

of the congregation with the goal of leaving a strong structure in place that is sustainable.

Specifically, for the next six months I will be assuming the role of coordinating volunteers to meet Parish Care requests, and I will be helping to develop Pastoral Care Team members to focus on the more spiritual and emotional needs of congregants. There is a lot of overlap between the work both teams will be doing, and finding the best ways to communicate needs and hand off to others as appropriate will be important.

I look forward to working with you all. I will be on site at the church on Tuesdays from 1:00 to 9:00p, and Fridays from 1:00 to 7:00p, and on many Sundays. I will be able to meet during those times or possibly other times by arrangement. My contact information is below. I check email regularly, but texting or calling my phone is best if it is urgent. I do work a "regular" job at Hasbro Monday through Friday, so it may take me some time to get back to you during the daytime." Communication regarding needs and volunteering to assist can be directed to Kevin at kmcarrson@aol.com and 401.837-5221.

Sunday Services Are Online

Our Sunday services are now live-streamed on Facebook. If you can't come to church, join us on your smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop. Go to "First Unitarian Church of Providence" on Facebook at 10:30a on Sundays to see the live video. You can also see videos of past services.

Later in the week, both the text and audio of Sunday sermons are posted on our church website (firstunitarianprov.org). Go to Worship, scroll down to Past Services, and click on the sermon you would like to hear or read.



Spiritual Pathways

A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words.
 Author Unknown

The weather in February can bring the chilliest, iciest days. However, I also notice the tiniest feeling of transition in the frigid air. I know that soon, we may notice those early rosy buds on trees, portending the leaves to come. I know that once we reach mid-month, the returning light is more palpable. These signs in nature are healthy reminders that change is what the cycle of life is all about.

This wisdom of embracing healthy evolution sure applies to our faith community. I am amazed at how this church year has been zooming by. My work in faith development, in partnership with Liz, Fred, Nancy, Jenn, Marcia, Emily, Walter, Jaime, Pedro, and others, is in full swing. This time in the cycle, it is helpful to breathe and reflect on what has been experienced and how our spiritual practices are evolving. No hibernation for this church! February is full of worship and programming that explores the possibilities that our community can hold. We will honor all families and explore an array of spiritual practices.

About Our UU Religious Education

People often wonder what our UU version of religious education is all about. I share that we offer a relational community in which to explore timeless themes of meaning-making, including wisdom from world religions, leadership development, and justice-making in action. We strive for our explicit and implicit curriculum to be alive and evolving, for our null curriculum to be mindful and intentional. In my role, I aim to help babies, children, youth, adults, and elders find faith development tools, paraphrased from my colleague Tim Atkins, that are relevant, accessible, and relational. We need each other if we are to live our values with courage, impact and resilience.

Upcoming Highlights

I share just a few highlights of upcoming happenings this winter. We will celebrate the value of supportive and caring friendships in young people's worship. Reflecting on how to be a friend as well as have friends is a concept that deserves our attention. We will enjoy Pajama Sunday as we reflect on the concept of Sabbath. Our sixth/seventh-grade small group will partner with youth from neighboring faiths on a social justice project. The senior high youth group continues a gift card collection for clients of Dorcas International Institute. The Campus UUs have resumed their weekly gatherings, following winter break.

There is inspiration to be found as we navigate our places in a troubled country. My heart is warmed by a vision of serving as a collaborative architect and curator of networks and resources that support individual, congregational, and denominational needs to transform ourselves and our world.

Take care and keep each other warm,

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

Coming-of-Age Taco Supper ¡Un Gran Éxito!

The Coming-of-Age Taco Supper on Saturday, January 26, was a resounding success.



Participants feasted on tacos with all the trimmings. Entertainment was provided by a wonderful variety of adults and youth. A lively raffle featured more than 20 items.

Thanks to all the raffle donors, attendees, parents, and kids (and, of course, staff) who made the evening such a grand success!

Drawing by Isabelle Lavallee



The Spiritual Pathways Program supports and inspires Unitarian Universalist faith formation through creating connections, empowering passions, and discovering pathways for personal transformation and to serve the world.

The Five Faith Skills

Foundational Skills to our program:

- Cultivating Spiritual Practices
- Navigating the UU Sources
- Articulating Your Faith
- Worshiping with your Life
- Serving the World

Themes

Overarching Themes for each age group help guide our path:

- Newborns - Kindergarten: Welcoming Love
- 1st – 5th grades: Exploring Community
- 6th – 8th grades: Creating Connections
- 9th – 12th grades: Empowering Passion
- Campus & Young Adults: Discovering Pathways
- Adults – Seniors: Supporting Lifelong Learning & Transitions

Annual Gift Card Drive

The Senior High Youth Group is partnering with Dorcas International Institute for our annual gift-card drive. Dorcas “provide(s) programs and services for immigrants, refugees, and those who need it most in the community,” as stated on their website diiri.org. Most appreciated are gift cards such as Walmart, Target, Price Right, and Visa – stores that are fairly inexpensive and accessible by bus. You can give gift cards directly to one of the Senior High Youth or Cathy Seggel in her church office. And thank you so much!



Sight Lines

Hello Everyone:

505. By the first of February each year, congregations within our denomination provide a variety of membership, statistical, and financial information to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). This information is used to calculate our Fair Share contribution, regional dues, and the number of voting delegates who can represent First Unitarian during General Assembly. This year, our congregation will be reporting a membership number of 505.

Having a membership number over 500 is a very important milestone. It means that our growing church is officially categorized as a “large” congregation within our denomination. It means that we are one of three large congregations in New England. It means that how we are viewed by the New England Region and the UUA will change as we are looked on as doing something right to attract and retain new members to our liberal faith. It also means that if our growth is sustained, our governance, staff, and volunteer structures will need to change.

Our current structure worked well when we were a congregation of between 300 and 400 members. But as we approach and exceed 500 members, we are seeing signs that our structures are at or over capacity and need to change. We were reminded of this by the Rev. David Pyle during a staff-assessment briefing in January with the Prudential Committee. He recommended several changes during the next two to five years, supported our long list of technology upgrades, and added a few improvements for consideration. We plan to discuss his recommendations and their implications during the February Prudential Committee meeting.

We also held our winter Board retreat in January, and I want to share two observations. We participated in two team-building exercises that initially appeared to be impossible to accomplish. But as we worked together and shared insights, minds were changed, the impossible was possible, and we successfully completed the tasks in record time. This is something to keep in mind as our congregation evolves or new ideas are introduced. We also compiled a list of our accomplishments during the past 18 months. It was a long and impressive list of accomplishments and a reminder that there is a lot going on in our church.

And now for a few updates. During a well-attended Communication Summit, Bev and Bill Koteff presented the challenges and impacts of the way church information is delivered and consumed. Many ideas and recommendations were discussed. Look for changes in the months ahead as some of the ideas are implemented.

I want to thank all those who visited our “Ask the PruComm” table in January. We are trying something new to increase the visibility of the Prudential Committee and to increase awareness of our role as the governing body of our church. We plan to host a table one Sunday each month for the rest of the church year. We will host our next “Ask the PruComm” table on Sunday, February 10, during Coffee Hour. So please stop by if you are curious, say hello, and ask a question or learn more about how we serve you the members of our congregation.



John Simmonds
President, Prudential Committee
pres@firstunitarianprov.org

Treasurer’s Report (cont’d from sidebar)

Commitment Drive Committee in describing where increased pledge amounts might be applied. This listing was presented to the Commitment Drive Committee mid-January and is available by request from the church office. The listing will be revised as more requests come in and we have a clearer picture of pledge income in April.

If implemented, these initiative requests would help drive our mission of community, spirit, and social justice. Yet, if First Unitarian income remains at our current level, most of these congregational initiative requests will not be funded. Each of us holds the key to improving our congregation’s impact by increasing our contributions to the cause. We hope this explanation of our current financial status helps in considering your annual support of First Unitarian’s Community and Mission.

– David House, Treasurer



Treasurer’s Report

First Unitarian continues to operate well within our FY19 budget for normal operating expenses. We are blessed with a congregation that stands by its giving commitments, a

cause for great celebration.

Here’s a listing of normal expense categories as a percentage of our total operations budget:

- 75.1% - Fair wages and benefits for our staff
- 11.2% - Building and grounds upkeep costs, including utilities, insurance, cleaning, minor repairs and contracted maintenance service costs like snow plowing and heating/cooling system maintenance
- 5.7% - Denominational support – UUA Fair Share contribution
- 3.6% - Worship expenses like Religious Ed programs/child care staff, sheet music/performers fees, summer service expenses, etc.
- 3.1% - Office services and supplies like independent accounting audits, telephone, and computer maintenance and supplies
- 1.3% - Community programs (e.g., Parish House suppers), Social Justice activities (e.g., Write-a-thon against political repression), Stewardship (e.g., yearly pledge drive), Coffee Hour supplies

Each year at budget creation time, the PruComm learns that income from pledges, gifts, endowments, and rentals just barely covers our normal operating expenses. Our annual pledge increases are heartening, but they cover mostly the yearly increased costs of doing business.

We know our congregation wants to do more in terms of pastoral support, programming, and improving our physical space. The PruComm just completed gathering funding requests to implement congregational initiatives during the upcoming fiscal year. We expect more requests to come in as the budgeting process continues.

The funding requests received have centered on improving pastoral care, major improvement/maintenance funding for our church properties, and social justice programming. The cost for these requests ranges from a one-time cost of \$1,000 to annual costs in the tens of thousands. None of these requests falls under the category of normal operating expenses as currently defined. Implementing all the requests would require an additional \$143,000 of annual income.

The Prudential Committee used an objective prioritization process to create a preliminary ranking of initiative requests for use by the

(continued in column to the left)



Community Life

February Parish House Pot Luck Supper

Friday, February 8

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



5:45p **Reception** in the Atrium

6:00p **Pot Luck Supper** in the Parish House parlors

Sign-up Forms: at the Pot Luck

Suppers table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour

Food Donations: Bring a dish to share that serves eight to ten people: a main dish, vegetable, salad, or dessert. Use the sign-up form to indicate what food you will be bringing.

Volunteer Task Force: Check off on the sign-up form where you want to help.

Donation: \$2 per person / \$5 per family at the door

7:30p **Program in the Auditorium**

Sharing Our Love: Sanctuary at First Unitarian Church of Providence.

The Sanctuary Committee invites you to join us as we celebrate Sanctuary at First Unitarian and all those who helped to make our first foray into hosting people in our church such a great success. Whether you hosted or rooted for us from the sidelines, many people played an important part in making our efforts successful. Come hear music, listen to stories and meet the people who made it all possible.

This event is open to the entire congregation, and any friends who participated in this work in any way. We want to meet, celebrate, and honor you!

Reservations for the Pot Luck Supper are strongly requested. Please fill out the tear-off sign-up form at the Pot Luck Suppers table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour or call the church office (401.421.7970). Childcare for infants and children to age 10 will be available for parents who request in advance.

First Unitarian Joins “Good Night Lights”

You may be familiar with the Good Night Lights program, run by Steve Brosnihan at Hasbro Children’s Hospital. Steve spends many hours marshaling the forces of Rhode Islanders to brighten the spirits of children who are staying at the hospital. Every night, at 8:30, lights around the city blink for five minutes to let the kids (and their parents) know that people are thinking about them.

Last month, First Unitarian joined the effort by installing a timed light in our steeple – a light that can be seen from the hospital.

Thanks to Steve, for bringing us an inexpensive but effective unit, to all those on PruComm who enthusiastically endorsed the idea, and to Richard Boober, who brought Steve up to the steeple one day to get everything put together.



Steve Brosnihan of Hasbro Children’s Hospital installs a blinking light in our steeple

Variety Show 2019 – Call for Acts!

Show date: March 23

This year’s First Unitarian Variety Show is shaping up to be an exciting performance of song, story, poetry, and comedy. Mark your calendars and ask your friends to join us on March 23 at 7:30p in the Parish House Auditorium for a high-quality presentation the whole community can enjoy. This performance is a celebration of our congregation and community. The show is free of charge, so please invite your neighbors and friends to attend as our guests.

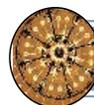
There are still a few slots left for musicians, dancers, and actors who may wish to participate in the performance. If you, or someone you know, wishes to participate and is really good at what they do, contact David House after church or at dlhouse51@comcast.net.

February Birthdays

Eva Agudelo
Kelly Baraf
Shirley DiMatteo
Janet Downing Taylor
Nori Duncan
Lisa Garcia-Sampson
Melissa Guillet
Janice Okoomian
Brett Summers
Sadie Swayze



Haven’t seen your birthday listed? Do we know when it is? Contact the church office if you want your church friends to celebrate your special day with you!



Wheel of Life

Condolences to:

Shirley Brown, Sarah Leonard, Glenn Wurz and Emily Wurz, on the death of Everett Leonard, husband, father, and grandfather, in November.

Richard Savignano and Ginny Adams on the death of Richard’s mother, Barbara Savignano, in December.

Dena Quilici and family on the death of her husband, **Jim Edwards**, on January 18. Jim had been active at First U since 1999 and a member of the church since 2011. A memorial service for him will be held on February 16 at 10:30a.

Community Collections 2018-19

On several Sundays during the year, First Unitarian donates its non-pledge Sunday offering to a charitable cause. Many thanks to those who have contributed to these collections.

So far this year we have donated over \$2,000 for **Resilient Power Puerto Rico**, over \$1,600 for **Sojourner House in Providence**, over \$2,000 for our **Loaves & Fishes Mission**, and over \$1,100 for **Providence Village** – totaling over \$6,700 to date.

Our remaining collections for this year are:

February 3

Transylvania Partner Church

April 14
Day One

May 6
The Girl Effect



Community Life

Join the Alliance for A Night at the Theater

Thursday evening, March 14, reception at 6:30p, show at 7:30p
 Tickets (\$20) available for purchase on Sundays during February

The Women's Alliance invites you to a performance by The Players at Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street. *Over the River and Through the Woods*, by Joe

DiPietro, is the hilarious, warm-hearted story of intergenerational relationships and changes that may threaten them in a close Italian-American family.

Discounted, limited-seating tickets are \$20; on sale during Coffee Hour in February.

There will be a dessert reception before the performance starting at 6:30p.

Reserving your ticket helps the Alliance plan for the event. You will get a ticket as a reminder.

Net proceeds will be donated by the Alliance to charities supporting women and children.

More on the Meeting House Renovations

We are experiencing an immediate congregational response to our request for early 2019 capital campaign pledge payments! We have received 25% of outstanding pledge amounts as of January 15. This means we are well on our way to raising the full \$140,000 required to restore the Benefit Street Meeting House foyer this spring.

Thanks to all who have already completed their pledge. We're looking forward to hearing from those with outstanding pledge amounts before March 15 so we can begin preparations for the spring foyer restoration start.

The Revere bell cap, clapper, and damper restoration work at Verdin's Bell Restoration is complete. The restored pieces will be installed and the bell ready to swing by the end of February.

Developing the bell-striker timing mechanism restricting hourly striking to daylight hours only is more challenging than originally thought. The machinist working on this project is donating his time in excess of the original estimate to make sure the custom-made mechanism is accurate and easy to adjust and maintain. Tom Geving, our antique machinist, reports he loves the building and the fact that our congregation values this antique clock works. The striking timing mechanism has become welcome challenge and a labor of love. Completion of this project is planned for the end of March.

Finally, Nancy Weiss-Fried and Fred Jodry are still working on planting designs for the restoration of the Benefit Street entrance walkway. Stay tuned for more on their design ideas in the March Newsletter.

UU Men

Sunday, February 10, 7:00–9:00p

Topic: Big boys don't cry?

Is there something wrong with men's relationship to their emotions? The rigid masculinity norms and collective socialization of men know as the "Man Box" begins suppressing the emotional expression of boys very early on. What long-term effect does this have? What effect has it had on you? How can we do better with the next generation of boys and young men? Can we still find emotional well-being and a healthier relationship to our emotions?

All those who identify as male are welcome to join us for an evening of deep, meaningful conversation and connection.

Prostate Cancer Support Group for Men

Sunday, February 24, 7:00–9:00p

We meet together the fourth Sunday of each month in the Parish House to help one another with the challenges of prostate cancer and the effects of surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy on ourselves, our loved ones, and our daily lives.

For more information, contact Steve McCloy (401.486.0333 / steven.mccloy43@gmail.com) or visit www.meetup.com/Prostate-Cancer-Mens-Support-Group/



The Women's Alliance

Monthly Meeting

Monday, February 4

Business Meeting: 10:00a

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

Program: The Refugee's Ordeal

Speaker: Omar Bah

Refugees generally flee wars, conflicts, and natural disasters. There are over 65 million displaced persons in the world, many in camps. Some countries, including the United States, accept refugees based on humanitarian grounds. Most refugees in Rhode Island come from the Middle East and Africa. Omar will share some of their stories.

Omar Bah is a former journalist from The Gambia in West Africa. After being detained and tortured for his work, he escaped, and by 2007 was accepted by the U.S. as a refugee. He settled in Providence, where he founded the Refugee Dream Center to help fellow refugees and wrote a book entitled *Africa's Hell on Earth: The Ordeal of an African Journalist*.

Coffee Sales Every Sunday

The Women's Alliance sells 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 the Women's Alliance table in the Atrium at Coffee Hour.

Camp Street Ministries

Save your grocery receipts from Eastside Marketplace and put 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.

Hats Off to ...

Our **Coffee Hour Providers** last Month:

Roberta Groch, Beth Anterni, Phyllis Cole, Nancy Weiss-Fried, Lynne Fazzi, Tony Allen, Dolores Braica, Betty Finn, Claude LeBoeuf, Margaret, Ann Connor, Suzanne Francis, Jess Dolan, Ethan Nemkovich, Lori Bellavance, Lucille Riccittelli, Marilyn Eanet, Roxanne Stern, Steve McCloy, Sue Meyer, Cynthia Rosengard, Carol Adams, Kelly Baraf, Lisa Maloney, Joan Rollins, Molly Garrison, Sine Pounder, and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.



How Will Love Guide Us?



What is your dream for First U in the coming year?

Please take some time to let us know the ways in which you imagine love will guide us in the coming year (and beyond).
 Dream big – is there a program that you would like to see offered?
 Is there a project that you would like to see the congregation take on?
 Are there connections and fellowship that you would like to strengthen and deepen with others?
 Give us a glimpse of your vision for the First Unitarian Church of Providence.

Email your thoughts to
sharethelovefirstu@gmail.com

Direct questions to Cynthia Rosengard
crosengard@gmail.com or Joe Fisler
jfisler1@gmail.com

Path to Membership Class

Saturday, February 9, 10:00a–1:00p and Sunday, February 10, 12:00–2:00p (with tour)

The Path to Membership class is for anyone who is interested in membership or in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian. The classes are led by our minister, Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay; our Director of Religious Education, Cathy Seggel; and our Membership Coordinator, Jenn Nardone. Childcare is available if requested in advance. Registration forms are in the Newcomers' Café and on the Membership Board in the Parish House hallway.

There will be a two-session class in February, on the morning of February 9 and after the service on February 10. A tour of the church will follow the Sunday class (a light lunch will be served before the tour).

Anyone interested in this class but unable to attend should let Jenn Nardone know; there will be at least one more session of classes scheduled this church year.

For questions, contact: Membership Coordinator Jenn Nardone (mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or call the church office (401.421.7970).

Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

Held in the Paneled Parlor (behind the fireplace), 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)

Coffee Hour Valentines

Be Our Valentine this month and bring treats for our Coffee Hour. Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort organized by the Women's Alliance with donations from our congregation of *peanut- and peanut butter-free* baked or bought goodies such as brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake, and more. In order to feed the ravenous crowd each Sunday, we need eight people bringing donations that serve 24 each. Sign-ups are preferred in order to plan for each upcoming Sunday.

Sign up in the first parlor during Coffee Hour and go home with a reminder so you won't forget. And – you just might get a kiss!



Spiritual Development

Partner Church Sunday Celebration

Sunday, February 3

Worship Service at 10:30a

Special Coffee Hour at 11:30a, Film and Discussion at 12:00p

We traditionally celebrate Partner Church Sunday early in the new year – this year on February 3. We have been in a partnership with the Unitarian congregation in Szentegyhaza, Transylvania, for many years. Some of us have traveled there to get to know their congregation, and their minister and president have traveled here. In order to keep our relationship fresh from year to year, we set aside one Sunday each year for both congregations to celebrate our partnership with readings, stories, and song.



Look for some Hungarian snacks to enjoy during Coffee Hour and come upstairs to the Auditorium at noon for a discussion about our partnership, the latest details on our upcoming trip, and a film on the “History of Unitarianism in Transylvania from Francis David Onward.”

For more information or for any questions for the discussion, please contact Janet Downing Taylor (jdtaylor39@verizon.net) or Tom Getz(thomas1getz@prodigy.net).

Seeking Speakers for Summer 2019 Services

Our worship services from mid-June through Labor Day are planned and hosted by the Worship Committee and other members of the extended Worship Team. These services are led by members and friends of the congregation and occasional guest speakers. They provide a unique opportunity for us to learn more about the spiritual insights, passions, and life-changing events that are important to the people who share this religious community.

The Worship Team is asking the congregation to suggest possible speakers, including yourself, interested in sharing an aspect of their spiritual path.

Please offer your ideas to the Worship chair, Neil Bartholomew (ngbart@gmail.com), or to any of our other Worship Associates: Suzanne Alden, Michael Currier, Elissa Emerson, Betty Finn, Susan Fisher, Greg Kniseley, Kelley Smith, Pam Steager, Roxanne Stern, or Peter Van Erp.

Becoming the Church We Want to Be: “Love Beyond Belief”

Through our consultation with Rev. Thandeka, we learned that many at First Unitarian are yearning for deeper and richer engagement and connection with one another. This was also reflected in the responses we received from last year’s Congregational Census – that many of us are looking for more ways of spending time together, getting to know one another, and sharing spiritual connection – through common experiences and interests, by sharing together and doing things together. As our church grows larger, we are called to discern the best ways of bringing folks together in spiritual practice with one another – to affirm our principles through small group ministry, affinity groups, and shared activity groups.

In the next month, a survey will be distributed (email, snail mail, and at Coffee Hour) to allow members/friends to indicate which proposed groups might be of greatest interest. Everyone will be able to indicate their top three groups in the survey, as well as days/times that are convenient for them. From the information that we gather, we will be able to identify the groups that have the most interest and will recruit/train facilitators/leaders in order to offer these groups in the fall.

As Unitarian Universalists, our shared experiences form the spiritual practices that allow us to affirm our principles and develop meaningful connections with one another, with ourselves, and with our larger community. Our experiences are the strands of the fabric that makes up our beloved community and it is our hope that, through offering more opportunities to share experiences together, we will strengthen our sense of belonging and community.

Please direct any questions that you have to Cynthia Rosengard (crosengard@gmail.com).

Ongoing Programs

Benevolent Street Zendo

Most Monday nights, 7:00–8:30pm

We continue to practice with monthly visits from resident teacher James Cordova Sensei and occasional guest teachers for talks.

All are welcome these sessions. For a brief orientation, please arrive at 6:45p on Monday evening.

Contact: Practice leaders Cindy and George Beshers at benevolentstreetzen@gmail.com.

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00pm

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 21st century.

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)

Tai Chi

Tuesday night Tai Chi will resume in April.

Innate Wisdom and Compassion

Meditation

Every Wednesday at 7:00pm

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 (krbent108@gmail.com)

Atrium Bookstore

The Atrium Bookstore is open every Sunday during Coffee Hour, offering an eclectic mix of titles for kids and adults on meditation, social justice, spiritual paths, inspirations from other religious traditions, and environment concerns.

– Irene and Tony Allen



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).



Social Justice

Sanctuary

Early in the morning of December 24, after spending a restless night of packing and preparing, our sanctuary family – Milli, Daisy, Danny, and Vikki – were transported to Logan airport to travel back to Mexico to be reunited with Hermangildo Benitez, the father of their family. Hermangildo had been allowed the opportunity of self-removal from the United States and was transported by ICE to the border of Mexico. He was released at the border with a few personal belongings and enough money for a bus ticket.

This is not how our family had envisioned the end of their stay with us. They hoped that justice would be served. They hoped Hermangildo would be released by ICE and the family would be reunited in Providence. In the end, self-removal became the only alternative to long-term ICE incarceration. As hard and heartbreaking as it is, the family is once again reunited and trying to rebuild their life together in Mexico.



Our Sanctuary family at Logan awaiting their flight to Mexico

A Farewell from the Family

Milli left behind a letter to First Unitarian, which reads:

Today (December 24)

I wish that all of you can see my eyes filled with joy and a new dawn of thanks to God and thanks for your support, which was an arm around us. Day after day you searched for a way to have us feel like home.

We will always remember you with love and you are in our prayers. Thanks because here we learned to smile in the middle of sadness. Thanks for making our way easier. We are gone, but you are still in our hearts

If you would like to send our family a letter or card, please contact firstsanctuary@gmail.com and we will forward you the address.

Tell Us How You Stay Green

The Green Team Environmental Task Force is offering a second opportunity to share your sustainability practices. If you've already filled out the survey sent last month – thank you! If you didn't get around to it, please take a few minutes to fill it out now.

Help Out at Our Community Food Share Pantry

Distribution Day, Monday, February 18, Presidents Day

Do you have Presidents Day off? Spend some of it at First Unitarian. We need volunteers from 2:00 until 5:30p. Come for the whole time or just for an hour. Send email to Judy Ortman if you'd like to join us (Judyortman@gmail.com).

All church members are welcome to receive food. A brief intake form is all that is required.

Volunteer with Neighborhood Social Justice

Monthly meeting: Sunday, February 3 at 12:15 in the Haynes Room

Loaves and Fishes Mission: Tuesday, February 5

The first Tuesday of every month, the NSJC sponsors Loaves and Fishes, a monthly outreach mission delivering food and clothing to Emmanuel House, a homeless shelter in Providence.

- Contribute food items, new or gently used clothing of any size and type, toiletries, and/or financial donations
- Volunteer your time to assist in the mission:
 - 11:30a–1:00p - help the Sandwich Brigade at First Unitarian
 - 2:30p–4:00p - Outreach Mission (sandwich distribution)
 - 5:00p–7:00p - Serving Mission (dinner at Emmanuel House)

NSJC sponsors other outreach and/or educational programs and volunteer opportunities. For more information, stop by the NSJC table in the Atrium any Sunday after worship service.

Our Mitten Tree Is Blooming!

Our Mitten Tree Fence opened on a freezing cold December 30. Two lengths of a stylish wrought-iron fence were placed into the ground near the small new tree just outside the front door of the church on Benevolent Street. There were mitten-shaped cookies to help celebrate the event, as friends hung hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves on the fencing.



Unfortunately, a few days later, a storm with very strong winds blew the fencing over. Two new lengths of fencing have been purchased, and hopefully the ground will thaw enough to allow them to be installed. The extended fencing should be better able to withstand the wind. In the meantime, two sections of the fence are resting against the wall of the church and have warm items hanging on them for passersby.

On Martin Luther King Day, the ground was slick with ice and the wind was bitter cold. To avoid people attending the Food Pantry falling on the slick sidewalk, the second two portions of fencing were propped up in the breezeway, and filled with warm items. At the end of the day, there were only a few scarves left hanging.

If you have any items you would like to donate to our fence, please place them in the basket in the Atrium. All of our stock was hung out on MLK Day, so we need everything: gently used or new, hats, scarves, mittens, glove and socks.

Side with Love: Opportunities to Learn

Wednesday, February 13, 7:00p

Side with Love met on an alternate date this month. Apologies to anyone who may have shown up on the originally planned date.

Some highlights of our meeting:

- Discussed how Side with Love can participate in the movement to stop the sale of the Scituate Reservoir to a private buyer
- Discussed co-sponsoring an appearance of Emma's Revolution at First Unitarian
- Planned participation in the PRIDE Festival and Illuminated Parade on June 15

If any of these actions sound interesting to you, please join us for our next meeting on February 13.

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

February 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 2
3 Worship 10:30a Partner Church Program 12:00p NSJC 12:15p Campus UUs 5:00p	4 Women's Alliance Program 11:00a Luncheon 12:00p Zendo 7:00p Harry Potter 7:15p	5 Loaves and Fishes Mission 11:00a Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	6 Meditation 7:00p	7	8 Parish House Pot Luck 6:00p Program 7:30p	9 Path to Membership Class, Part I 10:00a-1:00p
10 Worship 10:30a Cook-Off 11:30 Ask PruComm 11:30 12-2p Path Class II Mentor/Mentee/Parent Lunch 12p Green Team 12:15p Campus UUs 5:00p UUMen 7:00p	11 Spiritual Pathways Team 6:00p Zendo 7:00p	12 Deacons 6:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p Reimagining Religion 7:00p	13 PruComm 6:45 Side With Love 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	14	15	16 Jim Edwards' Memorial 10:30a
17 Worship 10:30a Food Pantry Shuttle 11:30a Campus UUs 5:00p	18 Presidents Day CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Food Pantry 3:30 - 5:30p Zendo 7:00p Harry Potter 7:15p	19 Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	20 Meditation 7:00p	21	22	23 9:00a-3:00p Regional Lay Pastoral Care Workshop hosted by First U
24 Worship 10:30a History Committee 12:15p Girl Effect Task Force 12:15p Campus UUs 5:00p Prostate Cancer Support Group 7:00p	25 Zendo 7:00p	26 Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	27 Meditation 7:00p	28		