



news @ first . u . providence

The Monthly Newsletter for
The First Unitarian Church of Providence
Corner of Benefit and Benevolent Streets
Providence, Rhode Island

O C T O B E R 2 0 0 8

All-Parish Events

All-Church Program Fair
October 5

With Principle and Purpose:
A Congregational Dialogue
October 7

All-Parish Supper
October 10

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Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
Posey Kooris, Administrator
Frederick Jodry, Music Director
Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
Jaime Durango, Building Manager
Paul Webber, Evening Security
Tadesse Tsega, Sunday Building Manager

N E W S L E T T E R

Posey Kooris, Managing Editor
Susan Fisher, Editor
Carol Pentleton, Designer

Services in October

October 5 The Art of Conversation

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James will speak of spiritual practices and, particularly, of our home-grown Unitarian Universalist discipline better known as Small Group Ministry but which James thinks of as the "Art of Conversation."

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

October 12 Association Sunday

10:30a

Rev. Christana Wille McKnight

We'll join with the majority of Unitarian Universalist congregations across the country today in observing Association Sunday. This annual event celebrates our deep connections and common vision. This year's focus is A Campaign to Grow Our Faith. As our Association president, Rev. William Sinkford, says, it is time "to let the world know we are here, and to welcome those who seek our community of peace, justice, and love. Now is the time for our congregations to grow stronger and more effective because our religious values are sorely needed to help heal a wounded world." Our community minister, Rev. Christana McKnight, will be in the pulpit.

The collection will be dedicated to the Campaign to Grow Our Faith. Half of the receipts collected across the nation will go as grants to our seminaries, districts, and congregations to create programs for lay theological education. The other half will be divided among continuing education programs sponsored by the UU Minister's Association, seminary scholarships, and support for our ministers of color.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

October 19 What I Learned from the Sisters

10:30a

Rev. Suzanne Spencer

Unitarian Universalist minister (and long-time friend of James) Suzanne Spencer spent nearly two years, between 2006 and 2008, in the Community of the Holy Spirit, an Episcopalian women's religious order. She will reflect on her experiences and what lessons might be of use to us in our contemporary lives. James will be participating in the service.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

October 26 Written on Our Hearts

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James has long felt there is, somewhere in each individual, some sense of harmony that informs all the ethical codes of humanity. He will try to convince us that he knows what they are and even list them. (In case you're wondering, he thinks there are eight . . .)

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

And in November...

November 2 Days of the Dead – An Intergenerational Service

10:30a

DRE Cathy Seggel and Rev. James Ford

In our Western culture, the end of October and the beginning of November are celebrated as liminal times, where things fray and rips appear in the fabric separating the living and the dead. Cathy and James will consider the two worlds and that shabby cloth holding them each in their place.

Young people in grades K and older participate in worship in Meeting House.

Origins, Play Circle, and Preschool classrooms are open.



NEWS AND NOTES

"Cuppas" with James Ford

Our Cuppas series of small gatherings over dessert with our new minister, James Ford, have been a great success. Final sessions are scheduled for early October. If you're still interested in this smaller-than-usual venue to get to know James and let him know what's important to you, you can still sign up on Sunday, October 5 in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. If you are not able to be at church, please email Gerry Spremulli at gspremulli@cox.net.

Path to Membership

Thursdays, October 9 and 16, 7:00-9:00p

The Path to Membership class is for those interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism – its values, history, and principles – and about First Unitarian and its programs and people. Members of the congregation are also welcome to attend to meet newcomers and learn more about your church.

In October, a two-session Path class will be led by Rev. James Ford and D.R.E. Cathy Seggel and hosted by the Deacons, who will provide dessert. There will be an opportunity to join the congregation at the close of the class. Childcare is available for those who reserve in advance.

Registration required by Sunday, October 5.
Contact: Walter Sotelo at 401.421.7970 or assist@firstunitarianprov.org. Indicate the age(s) of children you will bring.

Deacons' Corner

Rev. James Ford joined the Deacons for our first meeting of the church year in September. A lively discussion ensued about Deacons' activities past (acquainting James with our "ancient history"), present, and possible new initiatives for the future. We decided to hold three Communion services this year. In addition, the Deacons will staff the Photo Directory sign-up during Coffee Hour, co-host the Path to Membership classes, usher on the fourth Sunday each month, and continue with EMT (Emergency Meals & Transport), coordinated through the Church Office.

– Paul Brule and Mary Kollar, Senior Deacons; Richard Boober, Nancy Weiss-Fried, Robert O. Jones, Janet Downing Taylor, Mary El Finger, Judy Bowden, David Bridgehouse, and Russell Gifford.



MONKEY MIND

Like many religions, Unitarian Universalism has struggled over the years with balancing its concern with the quest for meaning and its intuition that spiritual community should somehow be engaged in the concerns of the world. Our various liberal congregations have staked out various positions, so one church might be better known as focused within the "spiritual" while another might be seen as all about "social justice." (This is setting aside for the moment our rather interesting approach to the spiritual, which is itself often confusing to outsiders and even to us...)

With my inaugural sermon at First Unitarian on September 14, I've staked out a position I consider the authentic middle ground of a Unitarian Universalist way, our middle way. In Buddhism, the middle way is between the extremes of asceticism and self-indulgence. In Unitarian Universalism, the middle way is between focus on the interior life and social engagement. I focused in that first sermon on what I consider to be the heart of a liberal religious spiritual path, with its emphasis on the questing heart and its embrace of an engaged agnosticism. In the next sermon, I focused on how that heart needs to be connected to a hand – on what it means, as best I understand, to be religiously or spiritually engaged in the dealings of the world.

Here's the point of this reflection: I am actually challenging us. I'm telling people who are given to the spiritual life and don't understand why people are so preoccupied with social justice that they need to give this a second thought. I'm also telling people who are all about social engagement and find this navel-gazing self-centered and a waste of time that they need to give this a second thought.

I try to present kindly, but I'm actually pushing something here. This is not about being nicey-nice to each other. Rather this is something I think is critical to our health, spiritual and otherwise. This is true for the congregation and it is true for our association of congregations, our denomination.

I declared in that first sermon how I believe that to be focused on the inner path without finding some concrete expression in the lived world is to give oneself over to a dream. What I meant by that was that thought, feeling, spiritual insight without manifestation has no power for living. And, I said, social engagement without some sense of interiority is to give oneself over to a monster – by which I meant that action without grounding in an intimate sense of connection and purpose beyond some ideology – think Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, liberal, conservative as slogans that we can embrace without actually reflecting on the why and how of our deepest connections with each other – that such action opens one to all sorts of cruelty and abuse in the name of some grand goal. Without some serious reflection, one can buy a bill of goods and all too easily be seduced by those "ends justify the means" arguments.

Here's the simple truth as I've come to understand it: There is no end; there are only means.

And if we miss this, we miss everything . . .

Now, I want to underscore here some good news: we don't have to all do it by ourselves. It would be ideal if each of us were totally balanced beings with equal measures of reflection and action. But I've never lived in an ideal world and I suspect strongly no one else has, either. In reality, we find we depend upon each other for the totality of our lives. I need you. You need me. This doesn't let us off our individual hooks, but it does say we support and are supported in this task. There is more mutuality here than might immediately be obvious.

In fact, this is the point of spiritual community, of our gathering into religious institutions. We shore up each other's weaknesses, and we encourage each other's strengths. As an example, one is good at meditation. We encourage it, we provide opportunities to deepen it and to share it with others and, at the same time, to see that there are suitable vehicles for action, in intimate ways and larger, that are offered within our community. And the same thing for the activist . . .

Within the bonds of spiritual community, each informs the other, each balances the other, each influences the other. Not always comfortably. But nearly always for the better. And in that, the true middle way of liberal religion is revealed . . .

At least that's how I see it.

See you in church,

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
and Thursday, 9:00a-12:00p
Appointments are recommended.



SPIRITUAL
PATHWAYS

Whose Are We?

Perhaps you read the opening words in the latest issue of the *UU World* magazine, where Rev. Victoria Stafford points to a Quaker teaching that extends the usual human question, "Who am I?" to a more holistic and inclusive "Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? And with whose lives is your own bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?"

These are the queries that I shared with our 40-plus volunteers when reflecting about faith development at teacher orientation. I see those ethical, moral, religious questions as helpful benchmarks in charting a course as spiritual guides for the children, youth, and adults in our community. They can apply to all of us as we build the welcoming, healthy, safe, multigenerational faith that we are poised to become.

I have certainly enjoyed welcoming our congregation of all ages over the last few weeks. It has been a successful, spirited start-up, with over 130 young people enrolled on the first day in our Spiritual Pathways program. On fall Sundays, the priority for teachers and learners is to build classroom community as they share stories and material in curricula and worship. October also heralds some new adult education offerings, parent open houses, and many opportunities to help here at the church and in the wider community. I am pleased to be working with Rev. James Ford in serving the collective ministries at First Unitarian.

As we remember to ask ourselves how we are connected, I hope this autumn brings a fresh, positive energy to our congregation, our country, and our world.

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

401.421.7970
dre@firstunitarianprov.org
October Office Hours: Monday-Friday and Sunday

Parent Open Houses: Making Connections in Our Sunday school

This school year, the Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth and I have decided to provide special opportunities for parents, volunteer teachers, students, and staff to get together for breakfast or lunch gatherings on Sunday mornings. These open houses will be scheduled throughout first semester and will replace our traditional one-day, Coffee Hour open house. Invitations will be mailed to families and will be listed in the weekly *Meeting House Times* and church emails. These smaller events are intended to help families get to know one another, while providing a time for teachers and parents to communicate. We are hopeful that this new process will be well received and attended.



NEWS AND NOTES

Teacher Teams for the 2008-09 Spiritual Pathways Program for Children and Youth

We are proud to share the names of our enthusiastic and generous volunteers who teach on half of the classroom sessions in teams of two or more. There are still a few unfilled spots. Contact Cathy in the church office to express your interest in hopping aboard.

Origins (0-24mo) REC Liaison: Tricia Wilhelm; Staff: Sally Diorio, Kiera Wilhelm, Katherine Wilhelm, Erin Capra

Playcircle (2-3 1/2) REC Liaison: Tricia Wilhelm; Staff: Chelsea Waite Volunteer Teachers: Tricia Wilhelm, Amy House, Samantha Sasse

Pre-K (3 1/2-4 Yrs) REC Liaison: Tricia Wilhelm; Teachers: Cindy Hiatt, Joe Grady, Charlie Hunt, Emily Sasse

Kindergarten (Creating Home) REC Liaison: Lisa Voutes; Teachers: Kathy Ahlquist, Dena Quilici, Sarah Sasse, Krisin Curry

1st Grade (Treasure Hunting) REC Liaison: Lisa Voutes; Teachers: Ariadne Greenberg, Jennifer Huntley-Corbin, Anisa Raoff, April O'Malley, Jenn Nardone

2nd Grade (Free To Believe/ Web Of Life) REC Liaison: Lisa Voutes; Teachers: Dee Bento, Chris Matos, Ayla Ahlquist, TBA

3rd Grade (Moral Tales) REC Liaison: Amy Webb; Teachers: Janet Hinton, Cynthia Rosengard, Kathy Kahn, TBA

4th Grade (Bibleodeon) REC Liaison: Amy Webb; Teachers: Paul Brule, Glenn Wurz, Laura Laurence, Erin Lawson

5th Grade (UU Traditions) REC Liaison: TBA; Teachers: Noella Walters, Philip Swayze, Michael Dawkins, Sharon Weinberg, TBA

6th Grade (Neighboring Faiths) REC Liaison: Amy Webb; Teachers: Amy Webb, Sally Barker, Mardee Carson, Jim Edwards

7-8th Grades (Junior High Youth Group) REC Liaison: Anne Connor; Teachers: Norm Seggel, Judy Bowden, Lenny Bento, Odile Mattiauda, Rita Rossi, Tom Epstein (special events)

9th-12th Grades (Youth Group) REC Liaisons: Jon Henson; Teachers: Cindy Bapties, Jill Cicero, Nancy Dooley, Joe Killilea

NEWS AND NOTES

Sign Up for the New Picture Directory in October!

We're creating our first church picture directory in more than 10 years. The new directory will help all of us connect names with faces – especially helpful for Rev. James Ford as he gets to know us.

The process is simple. You'll come to the church just once. Pictures will be taken by a professional photographer from Olin-Mills, a company that specializes in church directories, and then you'll meet with a Portrait Consultant to view your portraits. Every household that selects a pose for the directory will receive a complimentary 8x10 portrait and have an opportunity to order additional portraits for family and friends. Every household that selects a photo will receive a free copy of the directory.

To participate, sign up during Coffee Hour on any Sunday in October. The Deacons will be in the Atrium scheduling appointments – sign up early to get the best appointment to fit your schedule.

WHEEL OF LIFE

Condolences to the family of James Barnett, who had been a member of our congregation since 1963.

HATS OFF!

To Sally, Emma, and Ralph Caruso, Olivia Boone, Judy Bowden, and Lincoln Oliver-O'Neil for their help in the Homecoming Service.

Our Coffee Hour providers last month: Tom Getz, Cynthia Rosengard, Jacqui Nye, Erica Napolitano, Kate Menard, Mary Frappier, Spence Hobbs, Ryk McIntyre, Gerry Spremulli, Anne Connor, Linda Gulley, Roberta Groch, Susan Harrison, Christy Chase, Janet Hinton and all of you who just brought something in anonymously!



SIGHT LINES

Saturday morning September 20, 5:30 am. I am in the habit of rising early. I make my way down to the kitchen, led by Pandora, our cat. She will run on ahead and then turn around, run back to me and then on ahead again. She is torn between her desire for a good-morning pet and breakfast; the desire for breakfast always takes precedence – the usual morning ritual. I feed her and then step outside to pick up the morning's *Providence Journal* from the front walk. Only then, with yesterday's news in hand, do I flip on the kitchen light. Always a harsh moment.

Today's headline reads: "A multibillion-dollar bailout plan." I scan the front page: "struggling to stave off disaster . . . intervention essential . . . financial system perilously close to collapse . . ." This from the *Providence Journal* . . . I turn to page A2. There's the usual stuff: bus fares go up; hospital executives try to stay out of jail; racial profiling by police continues unabated; Iraq.

My morning spike on the anxiety meter. It's as much a part of my morning ritual as Pandora's greeting, though I must say, I can't recall ever before having read that a U.S. Treasury Secretary urges action to ward off global financial collapse. Not in my lifetime.

At the back of our Meeting House, centered on the wall of the balcony, hangs an old clock. I think it's hung there since our Meeting House was dedicated in 1816. On Sunday mornings, during the silences of our service, I like to listen for the tick of that clock. I like to listen to it mark the passing of the moments in the life of our congregation.

That quiet clock has marked the moments as our congregation has gathered together on Sunday mornings through almost 200 years now. Many of those years were good years. But not all. Financial panics have swept through people's lives before. During those 200 years, a civil war rolled across this land, along with two world wars and a great depression. Most of us have never lived through days like that. But the life of our congregation has been through it all.

And through it all, the clock has continued to mark the passing of the little moments of all of those Sundays, when people in our congregation paused in their daily tasks of work and family to come together in our Meeting House. They came together for the same reasons we come together now. Among those reasons, I think, is the need to affirm and draw strength from a shared faith in the power of generosity and tolerance and reason to make a difference in our lives and in the world around us. For almost two hundred years, that faith has prevailed.

Now, this is our time. On this Saturday morning, out there in the larger world somewhere, Henry Paulson and Ben Bernanke are very busy trying to avert financial collapse. We all hope for their success, never mind the greed, the indifference, and the deception that created this mess. For us, though, the work is the same as it's been in our congregation for more than 200 years. We come together to sustain and pass on our faith in those things that really matter in life, a faith that includes a belief in the power of generosity, tolerance, and reason.

See you on Sunday.



Cy O'Neil, President
pres@firstunitarianprov.org
401.272.9454





CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Fellowship Committee Introduces an Expanded Program

The Fellowship Committee is experimenting this year with ways to accommodate the wide variety of members and friends who would like to gather in social settings. The first expanded opportunity has already begun: there will be two, simultaneous Saturday Social Suppers in most months. One of the dinners each month will have a special focus – such as an opportunity for singles and/or young parents to get to know each other, or bringing people together by geography, or a dinner for those with a particular interest, or even an alcohol-free option.

The Friday night All-Parish Potluck Suppers, hosted by Jim Estey, will continue to offer interesting and exciting programs each month (except for November, when there will be two!). The time for the dinners has been moved up to 6:15 to allow more time for socializing.

Plans are under way to expand the Thanksgiving Day dinner and to offer opportunities for fellowship after each of the Christmas Eve services. Look for a note about New Year's Eve in the sidebar on page 10. And please let us know if you have suggestions for additional activities.

In January and again in May, there will be many simultaneous small dinners. These Round-the-Table Dinners are a new version of Dinners for Eight. After we all sign up, expressing any preferences we may have, we will be "sorted" and creatively assigned to a host who will organize the menu and ask us to bring a particular item. The idea is that, along with delicious food and good conversation, we will each get to know a few "new" people fairly well over the course of the evening as we sit together around the same table, part of one conversation for however long the evening lasts. (Imagine the buzz as we all arrive on Sunday morning and begin greeting our new friends!)

If you have questions, suggestions, or comments, please speak to a member of the Fellowship Committee: Carol Adams, Jim Estey, Mary Frappier, Kate Menard, Janet Noble, Dave Spremulli, Gerry Spremulli

Sharing Our Gifts . . . Receiving the Bounty

Save the Date: Saturday, November 8

This year's special fall fund-raiser will feature talent shows for both children and adults and a silent auction along with delicious hors d'oeuvres – all at a very affordable price. Support your talented friends and First Unitarian at the same time.

UU Youth Talentpalooza – 1:00–3:00p

A very special Youth Talent Show for the whole family.

UU Idol plus A Silent Auction – 6:30–10:00p

A chance to vote (with your dollars!) for your favorite UU Idol, bid on great items (including week-end vacations and restaurant certificates), and take part in the 50/50 draw.

You can help make this event a big success – the program committee is still recruiting talent and silent auction items.

Adults who want to perform, contact Barbara Slater at 401.454.8825 or barbara.bslater@verizon.net

For young people who would like to perform, contact Judy Bowden at 401.270.6984 or jbowden5@cox.net

To donate to the silent auction, contact Tom Getz at 401.726.1867 or thomas1getz@prodigy.net. Donations should be in the form of a gift certificate for a restaurant, a vacation weekend, a trip to the health spa, etc. No personal items, please.

To volunteer for set-up/clean-up, contact Jacqui Nye at 401.461.0971 or funjac@hotmail.com

Tickets are \$10 per person or \$25 per family and will be on sale throughout October. Look for the ticket sale table at Coffee Hour or contact Dave and Gerry Spremulli (401.434.3346 or gspremlulli@cox.net or dspremlulli@cox.net). Even if you can't attend, buy a ticket and support First Unitarian!

Would You Like to Spend August in Transylvania?

The Transylvania Partner Church Committee is holding two meetings in October to discuss the future direction of this initiative following the congregational vote last June to form an official church partnership with the Unitarian church in Szentegyhaza, Transylvania. If you want to learn more about Unitarianism in Europe, or would be interested in joining a summer 2009 trip to this fascinating part of the world, please plan to attend these two meetings.

On Sunday, October 5, the group will host a meeting before the service to provide a brief history of the Unitarian movement in Transylvania as well as information on what other UU congregations in the U.S. have accomplished with their partner churches. Two weeks later, on Sunday, October 19, the group will begin the planning process, focusing on ways to make this partnership flourish. Watch the *Meeting House Times* for more information on specific times and locations.

In the summer of 2006, Marida Hollos, Jim Anderson, Richard Boober, Betty Finn, Bob Frederickson, Tom Getz, Susan Hardy, Steve McCloy, Marilyn Meardon, Janet Dowling Taylor, and Bill Twaddell took a wonderful trip to Szentegyhaza. Any of them will be glad to tell you about it.



Parking Alert!!

The designated handicap spaces in the church parking lot are for handicap parking only. Please display your official handicap certificate in an obvious location (your rearview mirror or dashboard). There are also marked handicap spaces on Benevolent Street (opposite the breezeway between the Meeting House and the Parish House) for use on Sunday mornings.

Parking for anyone attending Sunday services is available – on Sunday mornings *only* – in the Hope Club parking lot. Please be aware that the City of Providence reserves the right to ticket cars parked on the church side of Benevolent Street, since they block the ability of fire trucks to get through.

SATURDAY SOCIALS

Come one, come all! These dinners are for all adults who would like to participate –newcomers, old-timers, and in-betweeners!

The Killileas (October) and the Koelzes (November) extend a special invitation to those on the younger side – single, coupled, and/or with young children – and anyone who would like to get to know folks in this special group in our congregation.

Space for each dinner is limited and reservations are required. For reservations and menu planning for any of the dinners, please call Kate Menard at 401.437.6322.

Saturday, October 4

Hosts: Julie Meyers and David Keller
170 Ridge Street
Pawtucket, RI

Hosts: Kate and Joe Killilea
19 Martin Avenue
Barrington, RI

Time: 6:00–9:00p for both October dinners

Saturday, November 1

Hosts: Doris and David Bridgehouse
138 Stillwater Road
Smithfield, RI

Time: 6:00–9:00p

Hosts: Stephen and Heidi Koelz
176 Oak Hill Avenue
Providence, RI

Time: 5:00–8:00p

If you would like to host a future Saturday night dinner, please contact Carol Adams at 401.433.4365 or carol.adams6@cox.net.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

The Media and the Elections of 2008

Monday, October 6

10:30a Business meeting
11:00a Program
12:00p Catered luncheon (\$8.50)

Our speaker will be Scott McKay from the *Providence Journal*. Everyone is welcome.



October All-Parish Supper – Friday, October 10, 2008

Everyone, young and old and in between, is invited to join us for our monthly potluck suppers.

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

6:15p Potluck Dinner – (*Note the earlier start time*) Please bring a dish to share that serves at least 8 people: choice of a main dish, a vegetable, a salad, or a dessert.

7:45p Program: The Election of 2008: Issues and Trends

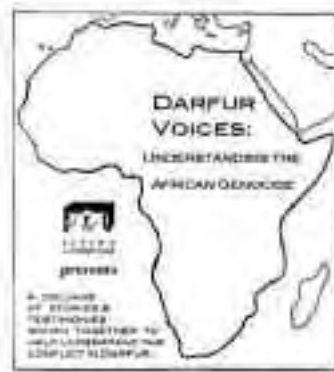
Our two presenters are popular professors of political science at Bryant University. Richard Holtzman teaches American government and courses on the U.S. elections and the presidency. His research and writing is about “presidential rhetoric.” John Dietrich teaches American foreign policy and courses in international relations. His most recent book is on Bush’s foreign policy.

Both scholars have been monitoring the campaign closely. They will attempt to explain and clarify the issues and the positions of each of the major candidates. They will also comment on trends in recent American voting behavior and, perhaps, make some predictions. Questions and discussion will follow. If you wish to be “an informed citizen,” you won’t want to miss this informative and interesting program.

Reservations are requested. Please fill out the sign-up slip in the Sunday *Meeting House Times* and put it in the collection plate, mail it to the church office, or call the office at 401.421.7970.

Childcare will be available for parents who request it. Call Jim Estey at 401.351.1748 to sign up.

There will be TWO All-Parish Suppers in November!



Darfur Voices

Friday, November 14

We must not ignore or forget the continuing violence and genocide in Darfur. To help us understand the conflict in Darfur, an innovative program weaving together poignant stories and testimonies will be performed by actors from the Living Literature group, who created this dramatic collage of voices from Darfur. Questions and discussion will follow.

Understanding Iran

Friday, November 21

Iran has been vilified by the Bush administration as a dangerous nation of terrorists and accused of refusing to conform to the parameters of international law. Should we be afraid of Iran? Are current U.S. policies toward Iran appropriate or misguided? Professor JoAnn Hart, a dynamic speaker who is a scholar at the Watson Institute at Brown University and teaches Middle East history and politics at Lesley University, will join us to explore these issues. Questions and discussion will follow.





GETTING INVOLVED

Make New Connections at the All-Church Program Fair

Sunday, October 5 during Coffee Hour

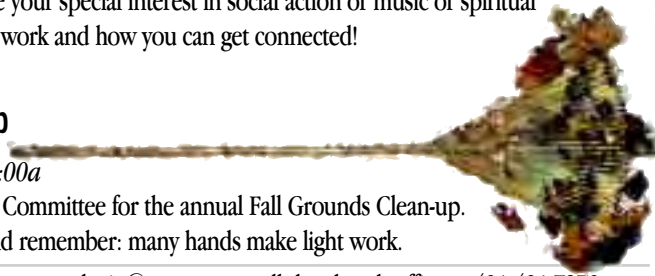
Are you wondering how you can become more involved in the life of the church? Or just curious about what all those groups and committees do? Plan to be at this year's All-Church Program Fair, where representatives of church groups, committees, and ministries will be eager to talk with you about their activities and opportunities to join in. Learn more about Small Group Ministry or the Women's Alliance. Meet others who share your special interest in social action or music or spiritual pathways. Find out how things work and how you can get connected!

Fall Grounds Clean-up

Saturday, October 25 from 8:00a

Join the Building and Grounds Committee for the annual Fall Grounds Clean-up. Come for as long as you can and remember: many hands make light work.

For questions, contact: Art Lusignan at alusicg@cox.net or call the church office at 401.421.7970.



Join the Volunteers at the Community Food Share Food Pantry

Next distribution day: Monday, October 20

Our Community Food Share Food Pantry serves needy people in the Providence area. Our "Grocery Store" is set up in the Atrium on the third Monday afternoon of each month. With the weakening economy, the number of people who depend on our pantry is increasing – and so is the need for volunteers. Working with the Food Pantry is a rewarding experience and there are many ways to participate. You can help with setup, be a personal shopper to help clients select food items, or, of course, work clean up (we particularly need volunteers for the late afternoon).

To find out about participating or to get more information, contact Elesa Amand at 401.253.9602 or Sara Slate at 401.435.2039.

Ride to Cure MS with the Wholly Rollers

Fall Foliage Bike Ride, Saturday, October 11

In 2008 the Wholly Rollers raised \$2,960 for the Rhode Island Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society to support a cure for MS and to provide services for Rhode Islanders with MS. The RI MS Society raised more than \$600,000. Congratulations to Jeff Herman, Paul Hossfield, Greg Kniseley, and Wendy Litke who raised funds and cycled in the two-day 2008 MS 150 Bike Tour, and many thanks to First Unitarian members, friends, and family who contributed.

You can join the Wholly Rollers for a fun fall foliage bike ride on Saturday, October 11, 2008. There will be short (10–15-mile) and longer (25–30-mile) routes. Learn more about how you can train for and fund-raise with the Wholly Rollers for the 2009 MS Bike Tour! The Wholly Rollers is a program of the Social Justice Ministry at First Unitarian.

Contact: Greg Kniseley, mkniseley2@cox.net. And, visit <http://www.silversmithing.com/whollyrollers/>

Habitat for Humanity

Next work day: Saturday, October 17

The First Unitarian Habitat Work Group is working with the Providence chapter of Habitat for Humanity of RI (www.habitatprov.org), which usually has several houses under construction at any one time. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome – the only requirements are a willingness and ability to do physical work and minimum age of 16.

Sign-up is required as space on each work crew is limited.

Contact: Peter Van Erp at 401.351.4881 or petervanerp@cox.net

Empties4Cash Printer Cartridge Recycling Program

You can participate in this easy, effortless, and environmentally beneficial program to recycle your printer cartridges – and help out First Unitarian! Just bring your empty printer cartridges to church and put them in the collection box in the Atrium – the church will receive cash for the empty cartridges that are returned for recycling.

The Empties4Cash program has saved over a million printer cartridges from overcrowded landfills to be recycled into new, compatible ones. You can buy these remanufactured cartridges at up to 80% savings at www.inksmile.com.

For additional information, contact Posey Kooris in the church office at 401.421.7970 or admin@firstunitarianprov.org.

Coffee Hour Co-op!

Our Coffee Hour after the church service is really a cooperative effort. Whether you like to bake or not, you can help. Eight people are needed each Sunday to bring in goodies to keep up with the ravenous crowd. You can bring in either home-baked or store-baked goods; cheese and crackers and fresh fruit are other welcome offerings. Sign up with Janet Downing Taylor at the Coffee Hour Bakers Table in the front parlor during Coffee Hour. She'll send you home with a reminder so you won't forget!



CONTINUING PROGRAMS

Knitting Connection

Every Tuesday, 7:00p

Join others in the congregation for an evening of knitting/crocheting and conversation. Bring your own project or work on our group project; share your skills and ideas. Beginners are always welcome!

No registration necessary.

Contact: Julie Meyers at kelmey@cox.net

UU Women

Second Tuesday, October 14, 7:00p

How do we “discover” each other? Maybe if we are lucky, pay attention, stay faithful, and don’t mess up, we have a friend for life. Is one basic condition for the development of friendship (love at first sight being a wonderful possible exception) that we keep going back to the same place over time? What place is that? We will challenge the writings from David and Faye Wetherow. The real question is: “How do we cultivate, nourish, and cherish our friendships?”

No registration necessary.

Contact: Terri Smith at 401.941.6865 or esscetee123@yahoo.com

Green Sanctuary at First Unitarian

Second Sunday, October 12, 9:30a

A Green Sanctuary congregation lives its commitment to the Earth by creating a sustainable lifestyle for its members as individuals and as a faith community. Our goals include building awareness of environmental issues and injustices, motivating community action, and fostering a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.

Registration not required.

Contact: Bekah Greenwald at 401.521.3446 or bekah@apeiron.org



GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

New Programs

With Principle and Purpose: A Congregational Dialogue

Tuesday, October 7, 7:00–8:30p

One bit of evidence that the Principles and Purposes are not a creed is that they are meant to be revisited from time to time and revised when the UU Association deems appropriate. The UUA Commission on Appraisal has been charged with such a review and, after a lot of work, has produced a draft document to possibly replace the P&Ps we’ve lived with for the last several decades. Individual UUs are invited to comment on this draft document, although there is a deadline: October 15. On October 7, Cathy and James will lead a conversation for UU congregants to explore the text as a whole as well as its various parts. They hope to provide any interested person with enough information to feel they can make a reflective contribution to the denomination-wide conversation.

No registration required.

Leaders: Cathy Seggel and James Ford

Introduction to the Zen Path

Mondays, October 6, 13, and 27 at 7:00p

Zen is a school of Buddhism that has specialized in certain meditation disciplines. This three-session class will explore Buddhist foundations, the emergence of the Zen school in China, and its various expressions in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and now the West. The class will include lecture and discussion but will be grounded in an exploration of the meditation discipline called shikantaza, or “just sitting.”

Our minister, James Ford, has received permission to teach in two Zen lineages. His most recent book is *Zen Master Who? A Guide to the People and Stories of Zen*. A weekly Zen Meditation Group led by Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford will begin on Monday, November 3 (see page 9).

No registration required.

Leader: Rev. James Ford

First Unitarian Women’s Chorus

Sundays, October 12, 19, 26, November 2, 9, 16, 12:00–1:30p

Women of all ages (including teens) are invited to get together to sing. Beth Armstrong will direct. She has years of experience singing and directing choruses of all types and special experience with women’s voices. She also has a vast collection of songs that are accessible, not only to the experienced vocalist, but also to the beginner. Music reading is not required, so this is a good chance to grab your mom, your best friend, or your daughter and come to church to sing just for the joy of it. If the group chooses, it’s possible that the chorus will sing in a Sunday service. Join us on all or any of the Sundays.

Registration requested.

Contact: Beth Armstrong at bestar3@aol.com





GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

Yoga for Anxiety and Depression

Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00p

Anxiety and depression go hand in hand. Anxiety revs you up and burns up your energy, leaving you depleted and depressed. Simple and effective yogic techniques can help ease anxiety and elevate your mood. In this two-hour class, you will have an opportunity to learn about a basic yogic model of human energy that has a strong correlation with Western understanding of physiology. Experience the effects of calming and nourishing practices. Teacher Karen Lee is a registered yoga therapist and owner of Breathing Time Yoga.

Registration requested but not required. Contact: Karen Lee at 401.421.9876

Consider the Cosmos

October 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30, 7:00-9:00p (weather dependent)

These two hour explorations of the night sky offer an interesting path to deeper awareness of our place in the Universe. We will view objects within our solar system, within our galaxy, and far beyond our galaxy while we discuss related, mind-bending facts and theories that, in the words of Einstein, cause one to "pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe." Wishing Star Observatory in Barrington houses a 14-inch telescope and was designed for programs such as this. Some of the objects to be viewed are spectacular. Others are no more than small faint fuzzy patches of gray light; in those cases, it is understanding what we are viewing that makes the light so exciting.

Class size is limited to nine people per session with a minimum of at least three participants committed to each night. Repeat participants welcome as space permits.

Registration required; signing up for one of the first sessions is recommended in order to be able attend at a later date if your session is clouded or rained out.

To sign up, see Pete Peterson in the Atrium during October Coffee Hours, or call him at 401.245.4068.

Coming Up in November

Benevolent Street Zendo: A Weekly Zen Meditation Group

Every Monday at 7:30p, beginning November 3

Boundless Way is an interfaith Zen community, maintaining close connections with the Soto Zen Buddhist Association and the American Zen Teachers Association. (All three of its senior teachers – including our minister, James Ford – are Unitarian Universalists.)

We are a member community of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha; to find out more, visit www.boundlesswayzen.org.

No registration necessary. Brief instruction will be available to those who come at 7:15p.

Leaders: Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford.

Contact: benevolentstreetzendo@gmail.com



CONTINUING PROGRAMS

UUMeN

Second Sunday, October 12, 7:00-9:00p

Topic: Men and the End of Life

End-of-life decisions often do not get made. How should we as men be involved in making our own death arrangements? Is suicide ethical? Can suicide be a rational answer to pressing health, financial, or family circumstances? Or are we just running away from the aging process? How and to what extent should we try to control the end of our lives?

All interested men are welcome.

Facilitator: Dr. Steven McCloy 401.244.5321

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays, October 14 and 28, 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. The group currently discussing the need to enunciate a "non-mythical" world theology, drawing on Lloyd Geering's autobiography, *Wrestling with God*.

Registration not required.

Contact: Tom Hall at 401.647.2925 or twh2nd@aol.com

Spiritual Cinema

Third Sunday, October 19 at 7:00p

Featured film: *Eve and the Fire Horse*

Two sisters, growing up in a Chinese family in Canada, try to understand religion. Picking and choosing their favorite parts of each religion, they form their own faith – and then face the challenge of forging a place for this faith within their traditional Buddhist family. Roger Ebert called this film "luminous, intelligent, delicate, and touching." Suitable for all ages.

No registration necessary.

Contact: Marilyn Eanet at 401.433.1299 or meanet@cox.net; or Maureen Johanson at 508.557.1173

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

GAIA'S HEARTH

Cornerstones of Wicca

Thursdays, October 2, 16 and 30, 7:00-8:30p

This class offers instruction in the basic tenets of Wicca as well as the practical techniques of magical work for an intensive, homework-oriented experience. Our members come from varied magical backgrounds and experiences. Topics in October are:

October 2: Laws and how they pertain to UU theology

October 16: Grounding, centering and psychic protection

October 30: Trees/safe-place relationship/guided meditation

Registration requested.

Leader/contact: Diane Donnelly at dianednnlly@yahoo.com

Sylvan Circle

Second Sunday, October 12, 12:30-1:30p

At this family-friendly gathering, we all share, learn, and teach each other as we pass around a talking stick and explore all types of traditions. Each meeting starts with the Celtic Tree of the month and then "branches out" to explore and honor each other's paths. Children are welcome to participate, as sometimes they are the best teachers.

Registration not required.

Leader/contact: Arte Ezikovich nimuix@cox.net



New Year's Eve at First Unitarian?

The Fellowship Committee is considering the idea of a New Year's Eve event and would love to hear your reactions. Would you be likely to attend an event at the church if: 1) it's pot luck? 2) children are included? 3) it's adults only? 4) it's catered at a nominal charge? 5) there's music and dancing? 6) it ends by 10:30? Or do you know you wouldn't attend, no matter what?

Your quick response to these questions (and any other thoughts you might have or interest in helping with planning) will really be appreciated. Please email the office - and thanks!



GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

**Introduction to Spirit of Life:
Exploring Spirituality for Unitarian Universalists**

Sunday, November 2, 12:00-1:30p

Part of the new UUA Tapestry of Faith curriculum, Spirit of Life seeks to bring meaning, beauty, inclusivity, and growth to Unitarian Universalist adults as they deepen their spiritual awareness and connections. The program taps into one of the central functions of religion, eloquently described by minister Kendyl Gibbons: "how we, each of us, in our uniquely constituted beings, recognize and understand and make sense of that unbidden, overwhelming awe at the wonder, magnificence, danger, demand, and delight of being alive."

The November 2 session is an introduction to the full program, which offers participants space, time, and community to explore their Unitarian Universalist spirituality. Program sessions focus on different aspects of the spiritual life, framed by the lyrics of Carolyn McDade's song "Spirit of Life." Like the song, the workshops are designed to be welcoming to Unitarian Universalists of many spiritual and theological persuasions. Upcoming workshops in the series might include Sing in My Heart: Celebrations and Rituals, The Stirrings of Compassion: Caring for One Another, Move in the Hand: Living Our Spirituality in Our Day-to-Day Lives.

Leader: Cathy Seggel, DRE

Registration required. Childcare available on request.

Contact: the church office at 401.421.7970 or email dre@firstunitarianprov.org



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Our Lay Ministry Program is Up and Running

The Caring Committee initiated the first phase of its lay ministry plan in June. The Caring Crew is now offering cards or notes, calls, and friendly visits on request from members and friends of First Unitarian. This summer they responded to needs of several members experiencing a death in the family or surgery or illness and have collaborated with the Deacons when meals or transportation were needed.

Referrals and requests can be made by filling out a pew card and leaving it in the box at the Joys and Sorrows table in the back of the Meeting House, calling the church office, or calling Janet Noble, Interim Chair, at 401.732.0256.

The Caring Committee will be working closely with James Ford to continue the evolution toward a fuller offering of this important ministry. Watch the *Meeting House Times* for an announcement about an orientation/appreciation event in October.



THIS MONTH @ FIRST UNITARIAN

October 2008

"There was no 'before' the beginning of our universe, because once upon a time there was no time." — John D. Barrow

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p	<u>2</u> Deacons 6:00p Finance 7:00p Wicca 7:00p	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> Saturday Social Suppers
			<u>5</u> Transylvania 9:00a Sunday Service 10:30a Committee Fair 11:30a Gaia's Hearth 12:15p	<u>6</u> Women's Alliance 11:00a R.E. Committee 6:30p Zen Path 7:00p	<u>7</u> Principle & Purpose 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>8</u> Worship Committee 7:00p
<u>12</u> Green Sanctuary 9:30a Association Sunday 10:30a Women's Chorus 12:00p Sylvan Circle 12:30p UU Men 7:00p	<u>13</u> COLUMBUS DAY Office Closed Zen Path 7:00p	<u>14</u> Re-imagining Religion 7:00p UU Women 7:00 pm Knitters 7:00p	<u>15</u> Deadline for November newsletter	<u>16</u> Path to Membership 7:00p Wicca 7:00p	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>19</u> Transylvania 9:00a Sunday Service 10:30a UUSC 12:00p Women's Chorus 12:00p	<u>20</u> Food Pantry 4:00p	<u>21</u> Yoga 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> Building & Grounds Cleanup 8:00a
<u>26</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Women's Chorus 12:00p	<u>27</u> Zen Path 7:00p	<u>28</u> Re-imagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p	<u>29</u> Executive Committee 7:00p	<u>30</u> Wicca 7:00p	<u>31</u>	

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Introducing Our New Chalice

The new chalice in our sanctuary was commissioned by the Worship Committee last spring after considerable deliberation – indeed, in the best UU tradition, it was a selection fully five years in the making. The chalice we finally settled on has deep roots in our UU history of faith and social justice.

The flaming chalice symbol was created in 1941 by Hans Deutsch, an Austrian artist and refugee, at the request of the Rev. Charles Joy, executive director of the Unitarian Service Committee. He asked Deutsch to design a logo that would embody the spirit of the Service Committee's work in helping Jews – and Unitarians – escape Nazi persecution. After World War II, the symbol spread into the wider Unitarian community. Following the merger of the Unitarians and the Universalists in 1962, the chalice began to appear within two interlocking circles, representing the conjoining of the two traditions.

Our chalice was designed and cast by Mordecai Roth, a UU and retired dentist who lives in Arizona. Dr. Roth's chalices grace many of our churches and a larger version of our chalice is lit at the opening of our annual UUA General Assembly. To give the chalice a suitable support, the Worship Committee asked a local woodworker, Philip Gruppuso – who is also a doctor and husband of church member Martha Manno – to propose a compatible design. Phil carved and built the elegant mahogany pedestal on which the chalice stands.

Over the summer, an anonymous donor offered to make a gift of the chalice in honor of a very special member of our congregation, Hannah Rosenbaum, for the exuberance and joy in life that she shares with all of us. On Sunday, September 14, the chalice was lit for the first time by Hannah, accompanied by her mother, Claire, and her brother, John.

The Worship Committee invites you to find within the chalice whatever evokes the deepest meaning for you.