



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

M A R C H 2 0 0 9

All-Parish Supper
Friday, March 13, 2009



I N S I D E

Monkey Mind	2
Spiritual Pathways	3
Sight Lines	4
Together in Fellowship	5
Getting Involved	6
Congregational News and Events	8
Growing in Wisdom and Spirit	9
Church Calendar	11
Gathered in Purpose, Together We Thrive ..	12

S T A F F

- Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister
- Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
- Frederick Jodry, Music Director
- Rev. Christana Wille McKnight,
Community Minister
- Posey Kooris, Administrator
- Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant
- Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator
- 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

Sundays in March

March 1

Jazz and the UU Spirit

10:30a

Tom Stites

Jazz provides an extraordinarily apt metaphor for Unitarian Universalism, and this special service will bring not only jazz music into our worship but jazz theology as well. Our pulpit guest will be Tom Stites, the retired editor of *UU World* magazine, and this will be the 26th jazz service he has conducted in UU congregations from coast to coast.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

March 8

God Is One:

Reflecting on the Meeting of Hungarian- and English-Speaking Unitarianism

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

What happens when middle class and highly educated Unitarian Universalists encounter spiritual cousins who have suffered generations of persecution for their faith? James will reflect on what this has meant for him and how this might have significance for all of us.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

March 15

Engaged Spirituality

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James is active in both our congregational First Unitarian Legislative Ministry Committee and our statewide Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, Rhode Island project. He considers this one of the more creative and exciting aspects of a larger commitment to bring our faith into action and thinks he can tell us why.

Young people begin in classrooms and worship in Chapel.

March 22

On Spiritual Cooperatives – An Intergenerational Service

10:30a

Cathy Seggel, DRE, and Rev. James Ishmael Ford

Cathy and James have thought a lot about the nature of religious communities, particularly as contained in the words *church* and *sangha*. They will explore and celebrate this peculiar, and they believe essential, aspect of human relationships. This is our celebration Sunday as we come to the end of our annual pledge drive.

Nursery, Toddler, and Preschool rooms will be open.

March 29

On Dying

10:30a

Rev. James Ishmael Ford

James made the mistake of asking our membership coordinator, Katy Killilea, what she thought would be an interesting sermon subject. We'll see...



OUR LARGER FAITH

UUA Elections Approaching

Two ministers – the Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman and the Rev. Peter Morales – announced in January 2008 that they are running for the office of president of the UUA, presently held by the Rev. William Sinkford, who will leave at the end of his second term in June 2009. (UUA bylaws limit a president to two terms.)

Laurel Hallman is senior minister of the First Unitarian Church in Dallas; Peter Morales is senior minister of Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colorado. Their profiles can be read at the UUA's elections webpage, UUA.org/elections.

The UUA president is the chief executive officer of the Association and is its primary spokesperson.

A candidate forum will be held at the 2009 General Assembly in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The General Assembly also elects the UUA's moderator and financial advisor. Moderator Gini Courter will complete her first full term in 2009. (She also served a partial term from 2003 to 2005, after the resignation of Diane Olson, and is eligible to run for a second full term.) Financial Advisor Dan Brody will complete his first term in 2009 as well.

— Courtesy of UUNWorld.org

UUA Cuts Spending

The UUA is cutting spending as the economic recession deepens. Tim Brennan, UUA treasurer and vice president of finance, said that UUA income for the current fiscal year was down 7.5 percent, although projections indicate that the budget will be balanced. Brennan projected that revenues will be down by 10 percent, or \$1.8 million, in 2010, as the recession continues.

The Association has begun taking steps to reduce the impact of the revenue loss. UUA staff groups were asked to reduce spending wherever possible. The Association has imposed other measures including a hiring freeze, reduction in staff going to GA, staff travel expenses, and event catering expenses, conducting more meetings online or by phone, and ending the printing and mailing of three publications, *Inter-Connections*, *The Religious Leader* and the annual UUA Directory, all of which will be available online.

— Courtesy of UUNWorld.org



MONKEY MIND

Late Thursday afternoon, February 12, I was asked to be one of the speakers in support of Marriage Equality at the Rhode Island State House. This is what I had to say...

Over the years there have been too many stories of women and men denied access to their dying partners, of surviving partners denied access to insurance or even their homes. and of children being taken away from a loving parent: all because the adults involved were of the same gender.

There is so much hurt in this world: hunger, loss, war. Human tears could fill an ocean. There is somewhere within our human hearts a knowing that what has been done to one can be done to another. Out of this there births a universal call spoken by all the prophets of all the world's faiths to some deep equity, to a call of reconciliation and justice.

Today we stand together, people of many faiths and people of no particular faith, but all called by that spirit of reconciliation and justice written on our hearts, to stand before our sisters and brothers, and to bear witness.

Among the last prejudices enshrined in law and by custom are those that would drive lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people into the shadows. For too many years, people who have loved people of the same sex have been tormented, reviled and persecuted.

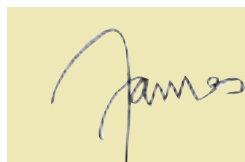
I come here as minister of the First Unitarian Church of Providence. We were gathered by the inspiration of God among people in this community in 1720. We covenanted to stand with each other through bad times and good. And as a people of faith we have witnessed revolution and civil war. We have passed through panics and recessions and depressions. And we have kept faith with each other, growing over time, learning, and broadening our perspectives. What fed this is what has fed our American republic: a fierce dedication to constantly searching our own hearts, to seeking the deepest places, and to act always, as best we can, from a spirit of fellowship and love.

We have failed many times. Of course we have. Challenging our prejudices is hard. Change is hard. But this is the good news of our human condition. If we open our hearts, if we search our minds, if we look to each other and to that greater which binds us to each other, then, hard as it may be, we can change. Yes we can. Prejudice can dissolve. Hatred can turn. And justice can, once again, roll down, like waters.

My prayer today is that we look into the faces of the women and men among us, and see within their bodies our own hearts beating. My prayer is that we see love where it happens, and that we cherish it, and that we strive to protect and foster it. Out of that seeing ourselves in each other, I pray we repent of any ill will toward one another, and strive to work for that world of equity and justice for which our parents longed, and sometimes, died.

Let us turn from prejudice to justice. Let us allow those who love to marry.

Thank you.



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





SPIRITUAL
PATHWAYS

Embrace the Winds

Even in New England, March means thaw, the time known for wind and our hibernating souls, yearning for newness. Even in Rhode Island, spring is actually on the way. It's time to open up to the wider world, to what's next. It is said by Brian Nelson that the March winds bring us smells from other places, set the trees in motion, invigorate us, and propel us. The origin of the word *inspiration* comes from the idea of spirit or wind. The more that the wind breathes through us, the more our souls may be opened. Lifespan faith development is all about growing souls, and the climate is just right for that now.

And, just as we negotiate winter's windy retreat, the hopes and dreams we share for our ministries at First U are preparing to bud. The Religious Education Committee for Children and Youth warmed up to the wider world by spending a winter evening meeting uncovering what was spiritually meaningful to them. That exercise was followed by identification of priority elements in a model faith community and, finally, what was most important to share with children and youth on their spiritual journeys. The committee allowed the winds to wash over their hearts and minds, and I was not surprised to see common purpose in their visioning. Highlights included opportunities to forge connections and healthy relationships between the generations; reliable worship, ritual, celebration, and rites of passage; development of moral compasses with understanding of the UU principles in action; and chances for leadership and social responsibility. It was apparent that formation of a strong Unitarian Universalist identity with a sense of membership/ownership able to be carried with young people throughout their lives was the primary goal.

Next, in the fresh air of pre-spring, the committee will review curriculum, gather feedback, and plan ahead. We will regroup, allowing the winds to show us new ideas and possibilities, almost like spring cleaning. Then, the generosity of the congregation will allow for the growth and health of our faith community for adults, youth, and children.

So, go outside and embrace the winds. Remember that they bring fresh smells, thoughts, and the promise of transformation. Even in Providence, that means spring is approaching.

Take good care,

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
401.421.7970
dre@firstunitarianprov.org
Office Hours: Monday-Friday and Sunday

NEWS AND NOTES



**Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Guest at Your Table Collection Results**

The congregation contributed over \$800 to this year's UUSC Guest at Your Table project. Thank you to all who generously gave, and to the seventh- and eighth-grade junior high group for facilitating this effort.



**UU Camp and Conference Centers:
Is This Your Year to Attend?**

March is the month to sign up for one of the many wonderful UU camps and conference centers and for the UUA General Assembly in June. These settings provide opportunities for children, youth, and adults to meet other Unitarian Universalists from all over the continent. Some funding is available.

For more information and registration materials, contact Cathy Seggel in the church office.



NEWS AND NOTES

First Unitarian Welcomes New Members

On a wintry Saturday morning, 23 participants gathered for a Path to Membership class. Information on First Unitarian and UUism came from representatives of Small Group Ministry, the Prudential and Stewardship Committees, the Deacons (who provided their signature luscious brunch), and from James and Cathy as well.

At the end of the class, twelve signed the membership book. The congregation recognized these twelve new members, along with the others who have joined this church year, during the service on January 25.

This is a diverse group with many different interests; you will likely see these fresh faces around on Sunday mornings and at church events and meetings, where you will have the opportunity to meet and welcome them yourselves.

The next Path to Membership class is scheduled for Saturday, April 18 from 9:00a until 12:30p. If you have been thinking of becoming a member, please sign up.

Contact: Katy Killilea, Membership Coordinator at 401.421.7970 or mem@firstunitarianprov.org

Christmas Eve Offering Raises Funds for New Hymnals

The special offering on Christmas Eve was designated for the purchase of new hymnals. The total collected from both services was \$1,671. We have purchased 30 more grey hymnals and 50 new hymnal supplements.

WHEEL OF LIFE

We wish a speedy recovery to Karina Wood.



SIGHT LINES

March is a special time in the life of our congregation.

This is the time of year when each of us makes a commitment to the congregation – and thus to each other. This commitment is a pledge of financial support for the coming year. The sum of our pledges is then taken into account when, in the spring, the budget for next year is developed.

In one sense, by way of our annual canvass, we attend to business and do the fundraising necessary to prepare for next year. But, in a deeper sense, by virtue of this process, we join together in a rite of commitment and generosity. It is a rite as old as our congregation, one in which we are both the inheritors of the generosity of those who have gone before us, and stewards for those who will come after.

The theme of this year’s fundraising effort is “Gathered in purpose, together we thrive.” We seek to thrive by growing our ministries, such as our Lay Ministry and our membership programs. We seek to thrive by acting on our core values in the larger world, supporting efforts like our Third World Village Banks; our Food Pantry; our Welcoming Congregation program for gays, lesbians, and the transgendered; and our Legislative Ministry. And we seek to thrive by being responsible stewards of the resources and facilities that have been passed down to us from the generosity and foresight of earlier generations.

During the month of March, there will be a number of opportunities to talk about what makes us thrive and about our vision for the coming year and the future. Watch for more information, both at church and in your mailbox. If the opportunity arises, take some time to talk with a Canvass Visitor. And finally, please make a generous pledge of financial support for our congregation and all that it does.

Good things,

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





TOGETHER IN FELLOWSHIP

Exciting Social Events Ahead

March and April will each feature two Saturday Socials. There are both adult-oriented and child-friendly events planned. Please see the specific information in the column at the right for dates and locations, and be sure to make your reservations as soon as possible.

Our Friday night Parish Suppers will balance a thoughtful discussion of marriage equality on March 13, with some lighthearted fun on April 3, spotlighting our fabulous First U storytellers, always a hit with young and old.

Round-the-Table Dinners will return on May 9 for the final time this church year. It's not too early to mark your calendars for these intimate and engaging events. Check for details in a future edition of the newsletter.

Please call any of us with your ideas, questions, or comments. We are all listed in the church directory, and we wear orange name tags on Sunday.

— *The Fellowship Committee: Carol Adams, Jim Estey, Mary Frappier, Kate Menard, Janet Noble, Dave Sprenulli, Gerry Sprenulli*

March All-Parish Supper – Friday, March 13, 2009

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

6:15p Potluck Dinner: Please bring a dish to share that serves at least 8 people. You can bring a main dish, a vegetable, a salad, or a dessert.

7:45p Program in the Auditorium: Marriage Equality

Presenter: Rev. Gene Dyszlewski, Chair, Religious Coalition for Marriage Equality Rhode Island



Marriage equality is one of the most divisive issues confronting our nation today. Why is this such an important issue for gay and lesbian couples? Our speaker will discuss the arguments, both pro and con, and will provide information and insight into the social and political history of this controversy. Several

gay/lesbian couples will be with us to share their feelings and experiences.

This is a vital issue for us as a congregation to learn about as we prepare to participate in the UUA's Welcoming Congregation program. Please plan to join us. Childcare for infants and young children will be available for those who sign up in advance. Call Jim Estey at 401.351.1748.

Reservations for the dinner are strongly requested. Fill out the sign-up form in the *Meeting House Times*, see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour, or call the church office at 401.421.7970.

April All-Parish Supper – Friday, April 3, 2009

(Please note the date change, one week earlier than usual)



Program: The Annual First Unitarian Storytellers' Festival

This promises to be a wonderful evening of storytelling, designed to appeal to all ages: young school-age children, older adults who are young in spirit, and all those who are in between. We are making a special effort to make programs child-friendly, so bring the whole family.

Our talented storytellers will be Jeanne Bent, Len Cabral, and Marilyn Murphy Meardon – all celebrated Rhode Island storytellers who are members of our parish community and who have captivated us in the past with their fascinating tales.

SATURDAY SOCIALS

These Saturday evening potluck suppers are for adults, except where noted. Newcomers, old-timers and in-betweeners who would like to meet new friends in the congregation are all encouraged to attend.

Reservations: Space is limited and reservations are required. To reserve space and select a menu item to bring for either dinner, please call Kate Menard at 401.437.6322.

March Saturday Socials

Saturday, March 7

Hosts: Joan and Rick Richards
15 Creighton Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Time: 6:00p to 9:00p

Hosts: Ariadne and Ben Greenberg
77 Governor Bradford Road
Barrington, Rhode Island

Time: 5:00p to 8:00p

The Greenbergs also invite young people, ages 9 – 14, who are accompanied by parents. As space permits, others who like spending time with this group are welcome. For specific questions, please call Ariadne at 401.247.7557.

April Saturday Socials

Saturday, April 4

Hosts: Gail and Paul Brule
4 Hedge Road
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Time: 6:00p to 9:00p

Hosts: Rick Jardon
23 Wilson Drive
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Time: 6:00p to 9:00p

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

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Monday, March 2

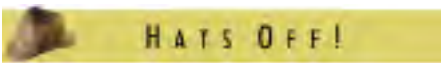
11:00a Program: Grow Smart Rhode Island's Executive Director, Scott Wolf, will talk about sensible alternatives to suburban sprawl and urban decay.

12:00p Catered luncheon
(cost: \$9 or bring a sandwich)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Coffee Hour's March Madness!

You will have good luck this month when you bring in goodies for March Coffee Hours – and you don't have to be Irish! or like basketball! Cookies, breads, brownies, fruit, or cheese and crackers will cheer the crowd this month. Check in at the sign-up table and you'll go home with a reminder so you don't forget. Coffee Hour on March 8 will be provided by the Transylvania Partner Church Committee in gratitude for that Sunday's offering donated to their project.



To our Coffee Hour Providers last month:

The RE Committee for Crossroads RI, Philip Swayze, Susan Harrison, Jess and Pat Gross, Suzanne Craig, David House, Tom Getz, The Lay Ministry, Anne Connor, Marilyn Eanet, Erica Hanson, Elsie Buffum, Polly Walker, Liza Malony and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.

To those who worked so hard in putting together a stellar Installation Service for Rev. James Ishmael Ford:

Susan Fisher, mistress of ceremonies; Rebecca Alberg, reception coordinator; Nancy Weiss-Fried, reception food coordinator; her assistants Judy Bowden and Nan Godet Huseby, and many others.

To our youth participants in the installation service, Peter (Allie) Verrechia, Lincoln Oliver-O'Neil and Flannery Brown.

To Carol Pentleton for designing the beautiful, deep blue signs that show newcomers the way to our parking lots.

To all teachers and parents who purchased, prepared, and delivered 200 sandwiches each Sunday in February for Crossroads RI Sandwich Brigade, including the sixth-, seventh, eighth- graders and youth group.

To Judy Bowden for leading a chapel service in Cathy's absence.

To our Wholly Families: Claudia and Vyanna Ford, Carol and Nova Drewes and Carl Freeman, Anne and Sean Connor, and Fred Jodry for sharing their stories in worship.



Join the Wholly Rollers 2009

Learn more about the Wholly Rollers by joining us on Sunday, March 22, 12:15p at the First Unitarian Church. We will discuss how to register for the MS Bike Tour, costs, equipment needed, training tips for the bike tour, fund-raising strategies, and providing mutual support. And you'll receive a schedule of weekend training rides from April to June.

Wholly Rollers works together to raise funds for the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Each Wholly Roller sets a personal goal for funding-raising and cycling in two MS events: the April 10 MS 25 Quick Ride in Narragansett or the June 27–28 MS 150 Bike Tour from Narragansett to Connecticut College in New London and return. Wholly Rollers prepares for the events by riding together on weekends from April to June. It's fun, a challenge, fellowship, and a great opportunity to serve others! The Wholly Rollers is a program of the Social Justice Ministry at First Unitarian.

For more information and images of past rides, visit our website at www.silversmithing.com/whollyrollers/

Contact: Greg Kniseley at mkniseley2@cox.net

Will You Be at General Assembly in Salt Lake City This Year?

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. This year's GA in Salt Lake City, Utah, from June 24 – 28 promises to be especially memorable, with the election of a new UUA president and a vote on the adoption of a new statement of conscience on peace-making.



A wide variety of events is being sponsored by the General Assembly Planning Committee. In addition to business (plenary) sessions, the GA program comprises more than 300 workshops, lectures, and worship opportunities over the five days of the meeting.

This year, UU University will be integrated into the GA calendar. UUU 2009 will be the *only* GA program from noon on Thursday to noon on Friday, and will offer a choice of six tracks of intensive programming designed to promote best practices within congregations. Each track will provide opportunities for reflection and engagement, integration and experiential learning. Programs are designed to speak to GA participants of all ages, with all levels of experience of Unitarian Universalism, and from congregations of all sizes.

Registration opens on March 2. GA registrants receive access to all workshops, performances, lectures, and events listed in the GA Printed Program, as well as an official name badge to identify them to fellow participants, event staff and security. GA name badges are required for admission to all GA programmed events, including evening entertainment, the Exhibit Hall (Wednesday–Saturday), the Opening and Closing Celebrations, and the Ware Lecture. The only GA programmed events that will be open to the public are the Service of the Living Tradition, the Sunday Morning Worship, and, on Sunday only, the Exhibit Hall.

More information about GA, including registration, housing, financial aid, programs, schedules, and UU University is available online at <http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/index.shtml>.

Interested in attending GA as a member of First Unitarian? Contact Cathy Seggel or James Ford in the church office



GETTING INVOLVED

Unitarian Universalists Legislative Ministry – Rhode Island

As our State legislative advocacy enters its seventh year, Unitarian Universalists Legislative Ministry - Rhode Island (UULMRI) has made many changes to strengthen its efforts. The new title above replaces the RI Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (RIUUSJ). The new title more fully represents its mission and rallies support as an association/denomination across Rhode Island.

Rev. Ford has joined the board of directors to serve as liaison with all its ministers. The organization will shortly be requesting each of its governing boards to formally affiliate and support UULMRI and rally congregation members to its cause.

The group is also extending its education and orientation efforts. Before its annual meeting on March 15, UULMRI expects to organize legislative training sessions in each congregation.

The UULMRI Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 15, from 2:00p to 4:45p at First Unitarian. It is important to recognize that the annual meeting determines the group's legislative priorities for the year; everyone's presence and insights are imperative. The state of Rhode Island faces huge obstacles; an informed UU electorate can make a disproportionate impact by organizing effectively. For the commitment of two hours per month from March through June, *you* can make a significant impact.

UULMRI Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 15 from 2:00p – 4:45p at First Unitarian.

First Unitarian Community Orchestra/Band

March 1 and 8 rehearsals right after Coffee Hour for about an hour and a half.

It is time to dig out from your closet that instrument you haven't played in years, and to build up those musical muscles!

The First Unitarian Community Orchestra/Band is making a return appearance!

This is a fun opportunity for those in the congregation who play instruments to get together and make music. It's also a good way to encourage middle or high school aged children who play in school bands to get involved in a church activity.

We will play through some hymns and a few other well-known pieces. Then, we have been invited to play on Sunday, March 15 during the church service.

Those who have folding metal music stands are asked to bring them along to rehearsals.

This group will be directed by Stew Armstrong, a former band director, school music teacher, and brass player. Please contact Stew before March with your name and instrument so we can prepare parts for everyone.

Contact: Stew Armstrong at 401.253.7987, 401.523.8018, or bestar3@cox.net

OUR LARGER FAITH

Womensphere Spring Gathering

The Goddess and You: Exploring the Relevance of the Goddess for Women Today
Saturday, March 21, 2009 9:30a –3:00p

First Unitarian Church

Womensphere organizes sacred circle gatherings for women of the Ballou Channing District. Its spring gathering will celebrate the energizing power of the goddess. There will be time to share the impact of the goddess in our own lives. Then the gathering will cross the street to the Rhode Island School of Design museum to stand before artists' visions of Isis, Hathor, Maat, Kuan Yin, and others. Cost is \$25 including lunch, plus admission to the museum (\$10 adults/\$7 62+). A limited number of scholarships are available.

To register or for more information, please contact Susan Emmer Schmidt,
emmerschmidt@verizon.net

Wine Country Holidays

The UUs of Napa, California 2009 program will run from April through October. Fees for lodging are at least 25% below market rate (and include a scrumptious breakfast!) and tours are about 50% below commercial rates. There are two vacation choices: Comfortable lodging in members' homes with full breakfast (up to three nights), or lodging plus our renowned Wine Country Excursion two-day tour package.

For information, contact Tom Wilson
707.254.7443 or 2wilsons1dog@comcast.net

WhaleCoast Alaska 2009

Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience their eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer with UU homestays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau, and Sitka. UUs host events and lead tours. Visit Tlingit and Inupiat native Alaskans, see lots of wildlife including bears, moose, caribou, whales, sea otters, and bald eagles, and visit Denali and other national parks. Dave Frey, a 28-year Alaska resident, leads the programs.

For information, visit www.whalecoastak.org.
Email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call
907.322.4966.
Reservation deadline is March 21.

NEWS AND NOTES

Transylvania Partner Church News

Second Sunday of each month 12:00p

The Pen Pal Project has started with kids from both congregations matched up and some correspondence has already begun.

At the March 8 Sunday service, special plaques made by the Szentegyháza congregation will be presented to the presidents of our congregation along with gifts of books on the history of the Transylvanian congregation.

Plans for the Taste of Transylvania fundraising dinner on May 1 include great food and entertainment. The proceeds will help defer the cost of building a steeple for the church in Szentegyháza, to make it more visible in the community, and renovating the second floor of the church to accommodate visitors. Tickets cost \$15 and will be available at Coffee Hour or in the church office. Those who attend will receive a complimentary cookbook with authentic Transylvanian recipes.

Artists and other volunteers are needed for this event!

Everyone is invited to participate in this committee, including those interested in a pilgrimage to Transylvania.

Contact: Betty Finn at 401.726.1867 or bettyfinn99@yahoo.com or Rick Jardon at 401.439.1816 or rickjardon@hotmail.com .

Atrium Bookstore Open Every Sunday

The Atrium Bookstore offers books on a variety of topics including daily meditations, Buddhism, Bible studies, inspiration, environmental concerns, poetry, global values, family life and rituals, and stories for children. Suggestions are welcome for specific titles, authors, or general topics. All profits go to First Unitarian.

Further information: Irene Allen at iallen112@aol.com



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Welcoming Congregation Program and the Attitude Questionnaire

Thank you to all who took the time to fill out the Welcoming Congregation Attitude Questionnaire. Your candor and self-examination is critical to this important congregational work, which ultimately makes us more welcoming to all. We received over 180 responses – a remarkable level of participation!

The Attitude Questionnaire was developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Welcoming Congregation Program. It serves as a tool for evaluating our attitudes and feelings about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people. By the time you read this, the committee will have reviewed and tabulated the questionnaire results, which will guide our next steps. If we discover that we harbor misconceptions as a congregation, we may schedule some workshops to address the areas of confusion. If we discover that we're largely free of prejudice, we may be close to finishing the work required to become a Welcoming Congregation.

The Welcoming Congregation is very proud to sponsor the program for the March 13 Parish Supper. Please come to hear a presentation from Rhode Island Marriage Equality. You'll find it informative, moving, and, we hope, inspiring!

If you have questions please contact:

Brian Paradis at 617.827.2335 or briananddeacon@comcast.net

Michael Currier at 617.680.6083 or mcurrier@gmail.com

Jan Seymour-Ford at 401.305.5361 or seymourford@gmail.com

Easter Desserts

Instead of making a dessert for your Easter Dinner you can once again order one, freshly made, from the Alliance. Choose one of the following delicious desserts, and surprise and please your guests. You can order your desserts at the Alliance table in the atrium.

Rustic Apple Pie – Filled with over three pounds of apples, this rustic, freeform pie is everything an apple pie should be: not too sweet and full of apple flavor. It will be baked Sunday morning so it will be very fresh. Serves 8–10/\$16

Pear and Almond Tart – Poached pears are nestled into a frangipane layer making a tart a little different something to offer to your guests. Serves 8–10/\$17

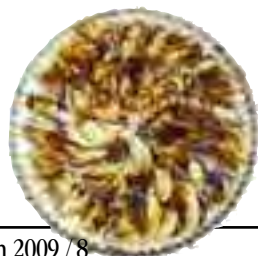
Hummingbird Cake – This is a pineapple-banana-spice cake with a delicious cream cheese frosting, decorated with dried pineapple rings. Serves 12 easily/\$22

Chocolate Decadence* – The name says it all! This single layer, very chocolate cake is rich and smooth; wonderful paired with ice cream or whipped cream. A special treat for chocolate lovers. Serves 12–16/\$19

Cardamom Yogurt with Fragrant Orange Sauce* – If perfume tasted as good as it smelled, this is what it would taste like. Light, refreshing and unbelievably delicious, this is the dessert to choose after a large, holiday meal. It comes as individual servings of a panna cotta-like base with a container of the orange sauce to spoon over the top at serving time. 8 for \$20 / 6 for \$16 / 4 for \$12

*Gluten free

All desserts will be ready to be picked up after Church on Easter Sunday.





GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

First Aid for Stress

Tuesday, March 10, 7:00p

Got stress? Get rid of it! Chronic stress is really bad for your health. The immediate effects of stress are to raise blood pressure and blood sugar, and susceptibility to infection inflammation. Long-term stress can lead to or worsen diabetes, cardiovascular disease and autoimmune disease. Don't despair. Help is available. In this workshop you will learn two simple, effective yogic techniques that can be done at your desk, or anywhere. The techniques, once learned will take from 5 to 15 minutes and have an immediate tangible effect on reducing stress. Registration requested but not required.

Teacher Karen Lee is a registered yoga therapist and owner of Breathing Time Yoga.

Contact: Karen Lee at 401.421.9876

Professional Job Search Discussion

Tuesday, March 24, 7:00p-8:30p

This economy has caused many people to be in a position to look for alternative employment. We are offering a discussion of how to approach a job search in professional leadership positions, or to deal with the questions you may have about a current job search. There is no charge.

Our facilitator, Stan Davis, is a long-time friend of our congregation and has more than 40 years experience in matching professional talent to opportunities.

This discussion will be limited to fifteen people; so registration is required.

Contact: The church office at 401.421.7970 or admin@firstunitarianprov.org.

Benevolent Street Zendo:

An Ongoing Zen Meditation Group

Every Monday at 7:00p

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 also Unitarian Universalists.)

Everyone is welcome. Brief instruction will be available to those who come at 6:45p.

Leaders: Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford at benevolentstreetzendo@gmail.com

We are a member community of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha. More information: www.boundlesswayzen.org

Knitting Connection

Every Tuesday, 7:00p-9:00p

Join others in the congregation for an evening of knitting/crocheting and conversation. Bring your own project or work on our group project: knitting warm items for immigrant families in Olneyville. Beginners are always welcome!

No registration necessary.

Contact: Julie Meyers at kelmey@cox.net

UU Women

Second Tuesday, March 10, 7:00p

Women are welcome to participate in a group of support and sisterhood. Meetings begin with a roundtable check-in, followed by the introduction of a topic or focus for the evening. This format is flexible and can be adapted to deal with more pressing issues brought to the group. All participants are encouraged to contribute ideas as to how our group can meaningfully flourish.

No registration necessary.

Contact: Terri Smith at 401.941.6865 or essceetee123@yahoo.com

Reimagining Religion

Second and fourth Tuesdays, March 10 and 24, 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's discussions draw on Lloyd Geering's autobiography, *Wrestling with God*.

No registration necessary.

Contact: Tom Hall at 401.647.2925

or twh2nd@aol.com

Green Sanctuary at First Unitarian

Second Sunday, March 8, 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 program goals include building awareness of societal environmental issues and injustices, motivating community action, and fostering a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.

No registration necessary.

Contact: Bekah Greenwald at

bekah@apeiron.org or 401.521.3446

Spiritual Cinema

Third Sunday monthly, March 15, 7:00p

Three short films: "West Bank Story," Academy Award winner for best live action short blends musical comedy and serious politics in a crazy scenario for Middle East peace. In "Humanity Ascending," futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard takes us from the beginning of time to an optimistic view of our future. "To Paint the Portrait of a Bird" looks at the power of art to capture life.

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

(continued on page 10)



NEWS AND NOTES

Why Wasn't Your Name Listed in the Church Picture Directory?

If your name is not listed in the directory, it may be because you are new to the church since September 2008, or we do not have you listed in our church database, or the information listed is not complete.

Please contact Posey in the church office at 401.421.7970 or admin@firstunitarianprov.org

Handicap Parking Alert

Please be mindful that the designated handicap spaces in our parking lot are to be used for handicap parking *only*. Please display your official handicap certificate in an obvious location (your rearview mirror or dashboard). You can also find marked spaces on Benevolent Street for Sunday use. There is additional parking, on Sunday mornings only, at the Hope Club (across Benevolent Street). The City of Providence will ticket cars that are parked next to the church on Benevolent Street.

Winter Storms and Church Activities

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff decide if church services will be cancelled. A cancellation decision will be made by 7:00a on Sunday and conveyed to TV channels 10 and 12 and radio stations WJAR, WHJJ, WPRI, WWBB, WHJY and WSNE.

If church is open during a storm, no one should make heroic efforts to get to church. Use your own best judgment about whether it is safe to drive or come to church on foot during any stormy weather. If the City of Providence announces a ban on street parking, remember that space is limited.



GROWING IN WISDOM AND SPIRIT

UUMeN

Second Sunday, March 8, 7:00p-9:00p

Topic: The Value of Dreams

At various times in our lives, and especially when we were young, we have all entertained dreams about who we might become and what our lives might be like. But then the reality of our circumstances have intervened, and many of our dreams have been dashed.

What happened to the dreams of our youth...and of our adult years? Does it make sense for us to dream at all? Each of the men in the group will have the opportunity to listen to the dreams of others and to share and reflect on his own dreams. All interested men are welcome to join us. No registration necessary.

Facilitator: Paul Rossignol 401.640.3599.

Cornerstones of Wicca

Thursdays, March 5 and 19, 7:00p-8:30p

March 5 Herbal Teas and Tinctures

March 19 Kitchen Witchery

This ongoing class offers instruction in the basics 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.

Registration requested.

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

Sylvan Circle

Second Sunday, March 8, 12:30p-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 "branch out" to explore and honor each other's paths. Children are welcome to participate, as sometimes they are the best teachers.

No registration necessary.

Leader/contact: Arte Ezikovich nimuix@cox.net



THIS MONTH @ FIRST UNITARIAN

March 2009

"Mathematics is the music of reason." — James Joseph Sylvester

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><u>1</u> Sunday Service 10:30a UU Orchestra 12:00p Gaia's Hearth 12:15p Membership 12:15p</p>	<p><u>2</u> Women's Alliance 11:00a Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><u>3</u> Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitters 7:00p</p>	<p><u>4</u> Prudential Committee 6:00p</p>	<p><u>5</u> Deacons 6:00p Wicca 7:00p First U. Legislative Ministry 7:00p</p>	<p><u>6</u></p>	<p><u>7</u></p>
<p><u>8</u> Green Sanctuary 9:30a Coffee with the PruComm 11:30a Transylvania 12:00p UU Orchestra 12:00p SGM Facilitators 12:15p Sylvan Circle 12:30p UU Men 7:00p</p>	<p><u>9</u> Nominating Committee 7:00p Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><u>10</u> Re-imagining Religion 7:00p Social Justice 7:00p UU Women 7:00p Knitters 7:00p First Aid for Stress Yoga 7:00p</p>	<p><u>11</u> Worship Committee 6:30p</p>	<p><u>12</u> Stewardship Committee 7:00p</p>	<p><u>13</u> Parish Supper 5:45p</p>	<p><u>14</u> </p>
<p><u>15</u> Sunday Service 10:30a UU Legislative Ministry Annual Meeting 2:00p Spiritual Cinema 7:00p</p>	<p><u>16</u> Food Pantry 4:00p Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><u>17</u> Knitters 7:00p</p>	<p><u>18</u></p>	<p><u>19</u> Wicca 7:00p</p>	<p><u>20</u></p>	<p><u>21</u> Womensphere 9:30a</p>
<p><u>22</u> Sunday Service 10:30a Wholly Rollers 12:15p</p>	<p><u>23</u> Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><u>24</u> Re-imagining Religion 7:00p Knitters 7:00p Job Search Discussion 7:00p</p>	<p><u>25</u> Executive Committee 7:00p</p>	<p><u>26</u> Stewardship 7:00p</p>	<p><u>27</u></p>	<p><u>28</u></p>
<p><u>29</u> Sunday Service 10:30a</p>	<p><u>30</u> Benevolent Street Zendo 7:00p</p>	<p><u>31</u></p>				



First Unitarian Church of Providence
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Gathered
 in purpose,
 together we
 thrive

thrive: (verb) 1. to grow vigorously: flourish;
 2. to gain in wealth or possessions: prosper
 3. to progress toward or realize a goal despite
 or because of circumstances

Annual Pledge Drive: March 8 – 22

First Unitarian thrives on the generosity of members and friends. Our vision for stronger and deeper ministries, our vision for serving our community and the wider world, our vision for a vibrant and healthy church for those who come after us – these visions are nurtured and thrive by the commitments we make to our spiritual home.

For First Unitarian to flourish, to prosper, to progress toward and realize our goals – to grow into our full potential – we need to take full financial responsibility for the work of our church. And we can do that if all of us move toward or into the growth pledge range.

Income	Growth Pledge						
	1%	2%	2.5%	3%	3.5%	4%	5%
\$15,000	150	300	375	450	525		
\$30,000	300	600	750	900	1,050	1,200	
\$50,000	500	1,000	1,250	1,500	1,750	2,000	
\$70,000	700	1,400	1,750	2,100	2,450	2,800	3,500
\$100,000	1,000	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,500	4,500	5,000
\$125,000	1,250	2,500	3,125	3,750	4,375	5,000	6,250
\$150,000		3,000	3,750	4,500	5,250	6,000	7,500
\$200,000			5,000	6,000	7,000	8,000	10,000

A growth pledge is not unique to First Unitarian, or to UU churches. It is the level necessary for any congregation to achieve financial responsibility. Indeed, pledging in most UU churches falls within the growth pledge range.

March is the time when each of us is asked to reflect on what our church means to us and how generously we can support it. Please help ensure that First Unitarian thrives!

—The Stewardship Committee