

# news @ first . u . providence

## SERVICES IN DECEMBER



**Sunday, December 4 Reluctant Radical: A Meditation on William Ellery Channing and the Quest for Justice in Liberal Religion**

**10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

What does it mean to be spiritually engaged with the world? James believes the Rev. Mr. Channing was a perfect exemplar of the conflicts and the possibilities. This is the second of the two-part series exploring Unitarian Universalist spirituality.

*Child Dedications will be celebrated during the service.*

*Young people in grades K and older begin in the Meeting House for worship, then go to their classes.*

**Sunday, December 11 Creating a Community to Come Home To**

**10:30a Morgan Ivens**

Unitarian Universalism is, above all else, a religious community. Yet, too often we fall short of our aspiration toward radical hospitality, especially when it comes to incorporating our youth and young adults into full congregational life. Morgan will reflect on her journey toward creating a UU community and some lessons for our denomination at large.

*Morgan Ivens is a senior at Brown University. She has served various roles at General Assembly, involving the Youth Caucus and Right Relationship Team, and held a position on the Youth Ministry Working Group. Since coming to First Unitarian, she has been an RE teacher, Coming of Age mentor, and facilitator of the Brown University Unitarian Universalist Group (BUUUG).*

*Young people begin in their classrooms and worship in Chapel.*

**Sunday, December 18 Our Annual Multigenerational Christmas Pageant**

**10:30a Cathy Seggel, Fred Jodry, Rev. James Ford and a Cast of Many**

This will be our fourth celebration of a Unitarian Universalist/slightly pagan/fully respectful Christmas pick-up pageant. Come prepared to be delighted and edified. Please note: we need lots of kids!

*Childcare rooms open for newborn-4 years*

**Saturday, December 24 Christmas Eve Services of Carols and Lessons**

**5:00p & 9:00p** (Prelude music for flutes and strings at 8:45p)

These two services bring dignity and the values of liberal religion to a central celebration of the Western tradition. The 5:00p service is family oriented and co-led by Cathy and James, the 9:00p (or, as James says, the midnight service at 9:00) is more meditative. James will deliver a brief homily at the 5:00p service; special guest, the Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, will deliver a homily at the 9:00p service.

*The offering for both services will be dedicated to the First Unitarian Food Share Pantry.*

**Sunday, December 25 A Carol Sing**

**10:30p Fred Jodry and Rev. James Ford**

This simple and informal service will feature a carol sing led by Fred and a meditation on the holiday for the liberal spirit by James. Come for an intimate hour with some friends, old and new.

*No Sunday School*

**Sunday, January 1 Stump the Minister**

**10:30a Rev. James Ishmael Ford**

This informal service, inaugurated here at First Unitarian (at least for the first time in a number of years) last year, will feature the "question box." Cards will be provided for people to write questions (serious or not) that they think the minister might actually have an answer for. James will try to answer them. He reminds all that he knows nothing about theoretical physics and not much more about football.

*No Sunday School -- Childcare rooms open for newborn-4 years*

The Monthly Newsletter for the  
**First Unitarian Church of Providence**

One Benevolent Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02906  
Telephone; 401.421.7970  
Fax: 401.276.4291

## I N S I D E

Monkey Mind .....	2
Spiritual Pathways .....	3
Sight Lines .....	4
Community Life .....	5
Holiday Happenings/Spiritual Development ..	6
Social Justice .....	7
Church Calendar .....	8.

## S T A F F

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister  
Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education  
Frederick Jodry, Music Director  
Posey Kooris, Administrator  
Walter O. Sotelo, Administrative Assistant  
Jenn Nardone, Membership Coordinator  
Jaime Durango, Building Manager  
Paul Webber, Evening Security  
Henry Colpa, Evening Security  
Pedro Vasquez, Sunday Building Manager



We are a  
Welcoming Congregation

Website: [www.firstunitarianprov.org](http://www.firstunitarianprov.org)  
Email: [min@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:min@firstunitarianprov.org)  
[dre@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:dre@firstunitarianprov.org)  
[admin@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:admin@firstunitarianprov.org)  
[mem@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:mem@firstunitarianprov.org)

## N E W S L E T T E R

Posey Kooris, Managing Editor  
Susan Fisher, Proof Editor  
Original Design by Carol Pentleton

Next Deadline: December 15

## Deacons' Corner

There are many diverse ways to celebrate the rebirth of the sun on the Winter Solstice. We won't even try to mention them all. We'll just wish everyone the best of the season.

By the time you are reading this, the Deacons will have overseen the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. We hope all who attended had a good time.

We are still working on our Deacons Calling program and hope to have it completed by early December. If you have not received a call by then and wish to be called, please contact either Dave Spremulli at 401.434.3346 or Mary Frappier at 401.521.7951.

The next Path to Membership class will be held on Saturday, January 7, 2012. The Deacons will provide lunch and will meet with the prospective members.

The first Communion Service of the year will be held on January 15, 2012. It is currently scheduled to be at 4:00p in the Meeting House. It is hoped there will be music. This family-friendly service of remembrance is in the liberal tradition. More details to follow in the January newsletter.

Happy Holidays from the Deacons:

Judy Bowden, Mary Finger, Seniors; David Bridgehouse, Russell Gifford, Mary Frappier, David Spremulli, Jacqui Nye, Ruth Arellana, Shirley DiMatteo, Steve McCloy

---

## HATS OFF TO...

---

Our **Coffee Hour providers** last month:

Kate Guilbault, Linda Miller, Vikki Bristlin, Johannah Ash, Roberta Groch, Ariadne Greenberg, David Schrag, Linda Barron, Occupy Providence, Anne Connor, Beth Armstrong, Tom Getz, Steve McCloy, Gerry Spremulli, Lynda Gullely, Elissa Emerson and all of you who brought something in to surprise us.

## The Atrium Bookstore

Each Sunday during Coffee Hour, the Atrium Bookstore offers a broad selection of books of interest to churchgoers. Subjects include religious liberalism, spiritual practice including Zen, daily meditations, and social activism. There also are books for children. Among the wide range of authors are poet Mary Oliver, Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, and writers from the First Unitarian Church including our minister, James Ford. Profits go to supplement the church's annual operating budget.

This year's UUA "Common Read," Acts of Faith, a memoir by Eboo Patel, can be ordered through the Atrium Bookstore.



## Monkey Mind

This past Thanksgiving Day, the twenty-fourth of November, I marked the twentieth anniversary of my ordination into the Unitarian Universalist ministry. The Rev. Lindi Ramsden, my intern supervisor at the First Unitarian Church of San Jose, preached. Friends, old and new, offered guidance. And as this was also my installation service as minister at the Unitarian Church North, in Mequon, Wisconsin, I formally and officially launched into my ministerial life.

The following 20 years have been, as I've remarked upon occasion, Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. After being taught the rudiments of ministry by the congregation (turned out pretty much nothing I learned in seminary, as wonderful as those years were, actually had much to do with the practice of ministry), the family and I moved to Arizona, where I feel, with lots of help, I became a journeyman minister, then to Massachusetts for some graduate work in the arts of the cure of souls. And now, here, in lovely Providence.

Along the way I deepened my spiritual path and received some permissions in the Zen world, reflected on big issues, and have written a couple of books where I express opinions about this and that. I've annoyed some politicians, hopefully for the greater good.

And, also, during these years, the flow of life and death: my brother died, and so did my son. Both haunted by addiction that cut through the men of the family, a knife to the soul. I also learned slowly how to be a halfway decent husband (no need to consult the spouse, just take my word for this, he says), and more about real life from folding my mother and auntie into our household and our being with my mother as she died at home, and now following the doctor dance as auntie ages.

I think of pets loved and gone, of houses loved or hated, of this country, of sorrows and joys woven fine.

Twenty years. To shift the metaphor, a long time in the oven.

And, whatever, baked or half so, here I am.

But, you may ask, what have I learned over these past 20 years?

What I feel reminds me of a poem by the wonderful Jalaladdin Rumi, in Coleman Barks's translation. He said it so much better . . . . .

*I used to be shy.*

*You made me sing.*

*I used to refuse things at the table.*

*Now I shout for more wine.*

*In somber dignity, I used to sit*

*on my mat and pray.*

*Now children run through*

*and make faces at me.*

See you in church,

Rev. James Ishmael Ford, Minister

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday,  
9:00a-12:00p. Appointments are recommended.

min@firstunitarianprov.org

## The Lay Ministry and Care Crew

The Lay Ministry and Care Crew help those in the congregation in need of calls, cards, visits, rides to the doctor's office, emergency babysitting, emergency elderly companionship, or meal delivery.

The "on call" Lay Minister for December is Andy Barrett. Referrals or calls to the church will be passed on to Andy, who will call upon Care Crew Volunteers.

The Lay Ministry Team: Andy Barrett, George Beshers, Mary Frappier, Martha Manno, Kate Menard, Rick Richards, Bill Twaddell.



## Spiritual Pathways

### Resilience, Responsibility, and Relaxation

The winter months with holidays and snow days can be filled with fun as well as challenging times for adults, children, and youth. The colder, darker season may seem over-packed with tasks and commitments, regardless of weather trials and tribulations. I propose that we find ways to model the three R's in the title of this rambling.

Resilience is a characteristic that can serve people of all ages well. The winter issue of *UU World* magazine reminds us that whether it is economic hardship, disasters in the news, or other problems that we face, resiliency starts with awareness. It is inspiring to hold up stories of people rebuilding their lives after rough times and to model acts of patience, courage, and generosity along the way. The same article suggests we become aware of all that we share in "the Commons," a concept from social theory that resonates with the UU interdependent web of life. In some UU congregations, there are Resiliency Circles, where people meet regularly to help each other through tough economic times.

Responsibility: I am proud of the numerous social responsibility efforts woven into the fabric of congregational life at First U this winter. Many of our Sunday school classes are shepherding projects by advertising, collecting, and supporting our generous Social Justice Ministry. A few examples are: the UUSC Guest at Your Table, the Holiday Card Sale, Cocoa Collection for the Community Food Share Pantry, Gift Drive for International Institute and Camp Street Ministry, Kids Toy Sale for World Wildlife Fund and Children's Friend, and the Buy Nothing Day Coat Exchange.

Relaxation is quite important to well being, though frequently underrated. Spending careful time with family and friends enjoying simple pleasures like nature walks, peeking at old photo albums, or playing board games can be refreshing as well as low stress. Sharing stories and music and cooking favorite treats are nurturing and low cost. We might learn something from the hunkering down that some animals do to conserve energy in the winter. Who knows, maybe some extra rest might even help us feel refreshed to greet 2012.

I wish you health, happiness, and peace this holiday season,

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

### Announcing New RE Staff

Welcome to our new DRE Assistants, Kate Guilbault and Rebecca Teixeira, and to Dan Tatar, our Sunday RE Office Helper.

The dynamic duo of Kate and Rebecca have accepted a shared ten-hour position serving the congregation as my assistant. Kate, who grew up in our church and has been an able and caring Sunday office worker for several years now, covers the weekday hours and is serving as a dedicated youth advisor on Sundays. Becky is a new church member who brings high energy and support to teachers, parents, kids, and me.

Dan, a Brown student and campus ministry member, is eager to help and learn more about our Sunday school. I am pleased and hopeful that the service of these wonderful young adults will enhance our ability to offer excellent faith development programming.

Please help me welcome them to our staff team,

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education



The First Unitarian Community Food Share Pantry and the Spiritual Pathways Program present:

### Cocoa, Coffee & Tea Drive -- Marshmallows Welcome!

*A Special Holiday Food Drive for our Community Food Share Pantry*

The cold weather brings more folks to our Community Food Pantry and we would like to offer some special warm drinks for our clients in need. Please donate items (see suggestions below) during the months of November and December; we will need over 250 items to distribute. Bring donations to Chapel or classrooms as well as the donation barrel in the Atrium.

Our seventh-grade class will help coordinate this community food drive.

Thank you!

#### Suggested Donations:

- Instant or regular cocoa mix
- Marshmallows
- Ground regular and decaf coffee in small cans or bags (please no whole bean)
- Black teas and herbal teas

### RE Holiday Season Schedule

#### Sunday, December 4

**10:30a** Children and youth in grades K through Senior High begin in the Meeting House for Child Dedications

**12:00-1:00p** Mentor/Mentee Lunch and Program

**1:00p** Amnesty Write-a-Thon

#### Sunday, December 11

**10:30a** Children and youth worship in Chapel and have Sunday School

#### Sunday, December 18

**10:30a** Multigenerational Service  
Our no-rehearsal, almost-traditional Christmas Pageant,

#### Sunday, December 25

**10:30a** All ages welcome at this family service (no Sunday School or childcare)

#### Sunday, January 1

**10:30a** All ages welcome at this family service (no Sunday School; childcare rooms open for newborn-4 years)

#### Sunday, January 8

Chapel and Sunday School classes resume

## Generosity Considered . . .

The middle of the church's fiscal year is a good time for each of us to look at how far we have come with fulfilling our pledges made last spring. (You can contact the church at any time to find out how much you have fulfilled.) As you think about your personal finances at year's end, think also about the church's operating budget and your crucial part in it.

It helps First Unitarian's cash flow when contributions arrive regularly throughout the year. The continuing economic problems may be causing unexpected challenges for some among us. Everyone's pledge is important to the financial health of the church, and much of our church budget is based directly on the pledges we made last spring. If your situation has changed and you are concerned about fulfilling your pledge, please contact our treasurer, Tony Allen ([tonyallen15@aol.com](mailto:tonyallen15@aol.com)). Since each pledge is very important, we want to be able to plan around any difficulties in pledge fulfillment.

On the other hand, if you anticipated personal economic difficulties from which you were spared, you may wish to give more than you pledged. This could help to balance any shortfall from those who were not so blessed.

Thanks again to each of you for your generosity, which is measured, not in dollars, but in your commitment to our church's mission and vision. You make everything we do together possible!

The Canvass Committee: Jim Barfoot, Neil Bartholomew, Carol Drewes, Graham Nye, Martha Rice Sanders (chair), and Phip Wheelock

## Planned Giving at First Unitarian

Have you been considering a bequest to the First Unitarian Church in your estate planning? You will find helpful information on our church web site ([www.firstunitarianprov.org/getinvolved/giving.shtml](http://www.firstunitarianprov.org/getinvolved/giving.shtml)). If you have questions or are looking for additional resources, contact Posey Kooris in the office.

## Historic Burial Ground

First Unitarian owns a five-acre burial ground in Swan Point Cemetery. Swan Point itself has a rich and interesting history that dates back to the 1850s, but the First Unitarian section includes the graves of friends and members of our congregation that reach back to the Revolutionary War era and earlier. Crematory plots are still available in our burial ground. It is never too early to make arrangements for your burial. For details and pricing, call Posey Kooris in the church office.



## Sight Lines

### Prudential Committee Goals for the Year

You might wonder ... what exactly does the Prudential Committee do?

There are a number of basic tasks that every PruComm must accomplish each year: appoint committee chairs, monitor church finances, establish policies, develop a budget, continue the strategic planning process, and, most importantly, ensure we have the resources necessary to operate in the manner we all expect.

In addition to these standing tasks, the PruComm has approved the pursuit of a number of other goals for this year. The first five come directly from year 2 of the five-year plan adopted by church leadership in 2010:

- 1) Perform a top-to-bottom review of the church ministries
- 2) Refine the leadership development and mentoring program
- 3) Work toward becoming a Green sanctuary congregation
- 4) Develop services to meet the needs of our church's elderly population
- 5) Enhance services provided by our Food pantry

Out of a dozen other possible goals, the PruComm prioritized the following three:

- 6) Learn ways to support all members, understand their interests, and retain their commitments and pledges
- 7) Develop a capital budget
- 8) Hire a consultant for the capital campaign

This is a quite a list and, in reality, represents the work of the entire congregation, in which the PruComm only plays a lead role. The list would be insurmountable if not for our staff and the small army of volunteers who put in the time and effort to make our church run as smoothly as it does.

I have no doubt we will make major strides in all of these areas. I look forward to reporting to you as the year progresses on just how well we are doing.

My best to all,

Dan Kubas-Meyer  
President, Prudential Committee  
[pres@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:pres@firstunitarianprov.org)

## Treasurer's Report

Let's start with the good news: the Sunday cash offerings through October 31 added up to \$3,442, for a 64% increase over cash collected in the same period, July through October, a year ago.

The increase in Sunday collection implies more people in the Meeting House on Sunday. That's certainly the case: average attendance for the first eight Sundays of the church year was larger than it has been in a decade.

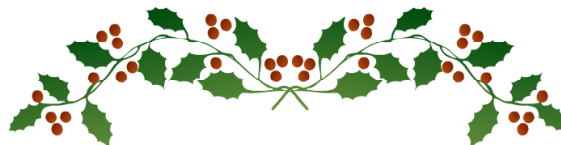
More good news: Pledge payments for the first four months of the fiscal year, July through October, are up \$3,000 over the same period a year ago. This is particularly important because payments in the first three months of the year lagged behind the amount from the same period a year earlier.

Let's give a hand to Jacqui and Graham Nye for their leadership in the Stroll Down the Boulevard on October 1. It resulted in \$2,638 after expenses. This amount goes toward the \$4,000 budgeted to be received from fundraising. Now, all we need is another fundraising effort to get us to that number.

The bad news is that the total of our three endowment funds, at October 31, was down 8% from where it was a year ago. We all know why: concern about sovereign debt in Europe and foreclosures and joblessness in the U.S.

Operating expenses are coming in well under budget, as they should, since the big heating bills are still a month or so in the future.

Tony Allen, Treasurer



## January All-Parish Supper

Friday, January 20 (Note the date: a week later than usual)

### Program: "On Being a Muslim in Today's World"

Our speaker will be David Coolidge, the Muslim Chaplain at Brown University since 2009. Mr. Coolidge is from Chicago, and he converted to Islam in 1998 while a sophomore at Brown. He is especially interested in the challenges Muslims face as they try to deepen their faith and religious practice in the context of living in a secular and sometimes unwelcoming society. Please plan to join us for this interesting program.

## The Women's Alliance

Monday, December 5

10:30a Business meeting

11:00a Program

12:00p Catered Luncheon (\$9)

### Providence at the Time of Louisa May Alcott

Louisa May Alcott left an indelible mark on the literary culture of her time. Barbara Barnes will celebrate the contributions of Alcott's contemporaries in Providence such as entrepreneur Betsy Metcalf, RISD founder Helen Metcalf, and businesswoman Christiana Bannister to the literary and cultural landscape of New England. She will also explore Bronson Alcott's friendship with two early feminists and fellow Transcendentalists: Sarah Helen Whitman, Providence author and educator; and Margaret Fuller, literary critic and principal teacher at the Greene Street School.

*Barbara Barnes is the Tourism Services Manager at the RI Historical Society, where she manages a variety of walking tours in Providence. Her talk is an extension of the popular women's history walk.*

## New Directory Available

The office has prepared a new directory (without photos) that is available electronically.

To get your copy, send an email to the office ([admin@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:admin@firstunitarianprov.org)); you will receive a pdf via email. If you do not have computer capability and need a print copy, call the office (401.421.7970) and one will be sent to you.

## Coffee Hour Bakers Wanted!!

Our Coffee Hour is a cooperative effort with donations from our congregation of breads, brownies, cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, coffee cake and more. Donations can be home baked or store bought.

Sign up with Janet Downing Taylor in the first parlor during Coffee Hour.



## Community Life

### December All-Parish Supper

Friday, December 9

Everyone -- young and old and in between -- is welcome at these monthly gatherings of members and friends of the congregation.

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

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

Please bring Hot Chocolate for our Food Share Pantry.

### 8:00p Program in the Meeting House: "A Child's Christmas in Wales"

Join us for this special holiday celebration featuring the Aurea Ensemble. Dylan Thomas's beloved story will be narrated by veteran Rhode Island actor Nigel Gore and will include musical interludes of old English carols and holiday chamber music from earlier times. Our own Fred Jodry (voice and harpsichord), Kate Lohman (voice), Chris Turner (harmonica), and a string quartet led by Charles and Consuelo Sherba will perform. This will be an enjoyable evening for children (elementary through high school) as well as for adults. Heavily discounted tickets will be available for sale in the Parish House on Sundays and on the evening of December 9 for people who attend the dinner.

Reservations for the dinner are strongly requested. Please fill out the sign-up sheet in the Sunday Meeting House Times and drop it in the collection plate, see Jim Estey at Coffee Hour, or call the church office in advance at (401.421.7970). Childcare for infants will be available for parents that request it in advance; call Jim Estey (401.351.1748).

## Winter Storms and First Unitarian

In case of extreme weather, the minister and staff decide if church will be cancelled. A cancellation decision will be made by 7:00a on Sunday and conveyed to media outlets: TV channels ABC 6, NBC 10, WPRI 12, Fox Providence, RI PBS and radio stations 630WPRO, 920WHJJ, 1180 CCNX news radio, WRNI, Lite Rock105, B101, 94HJY, 92ProFM, 98.1Cat Country, 93.3Coast FM, 95.5 WBRU.

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

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.

## Path to Membership Class

Saturday, January 7, 9:00a-12:30p

Our second Path to Membership class of the church year is almost upon us. If you have been thinking of joining us for the class, please do! If you are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism, the First Unitarian Church of Providence, or seeing if membership is for you, register for this program.

This session will be led by our minister, the Rev. James Ford; our Director of Religious Education, Cathy Seggel; and Jennifer Nardone, our Membership Coordinator. You are encouraged to bring your questions, and your appetite as the Deacons will provide a delicious lunch following the class.

Registration is required by Monday, January 2. Please fill out a registration for (which you can find on the Membership bulletin board in the Parish House, at the Welcome tables, and in the Newcomers' Café), call the church office (401.421.7970), or email Jenn Nardone ([mem@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:mem@firstunitarianprov.org)). Childcare is available for those who request it in advance; please let us know the age of your child(ren) when registering.

## Newcomers' Café

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour

The Newcomers' Café in the Paneled Parlor is hosted by a rotating cast of church members and offers coffee, goodies, and fellowship. If you're new to the church, this is a great place to meet people in a less daunting setting than the regular Coffee Hour.

If you've been around for a while, this is a great place to help new folks get acclimated. To sign on as a café host, simply contact: Jennifer Nardone, Membership Coordinator ([mem@firstunitarianprov.org](mailto:mem@firstunitarianprov.org) or 401.421.7970).



## Holiday Happenings

### Winter Gift Drive

*November 27 through December 18*

As the holidays approach, the annual Gift Drive is one way that we reach out to help families in the Rhode Island community. The need for warm winter clothes is the priority for families served by the International Institute of Rhode Island and Camp Street Ministries, both based in Providence.

Gift cards are preferred, so that these agencies may assist our neighbors in choosing their own appropriate necessities. While gift cards might not be as exciting as tangible gifts, they make a big difference in people's lives. Please purchase gift cards to stores accessible by public transportation such as K-Mart, Walmart, Payless, or Ocean State Job Lot. No wrapping is needed but feel free to include a personalized holiday card.

In keeping with First Unitarian tradition, our Senior High Youth Group and advisors will facilitate the project. Recipient's names can be picked up Sunday mornings from November 27 to December 11 in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Gifts must be brought to the church by Sunday, December 18.

### Children's Gently-Used Toy Sale

*Donations Drop-off: Sunday, December 4 in the Web Room*

*Toy Sale: Sunday, December 11, 12:00 -12:30p in the Auditorium*

Sponsored by Annie Dooley and Amy Alberg from our fifth and sixth grades, with support from the RE Committee

A Children's Toy Sale (for kids to buy gifts for family and friends) will be held after Sunday School on December 11. Prices will range from 25 cents to \$2. Kids are asked to donate gently used (or new) toys and books for the sale; bring them to the Web Room on December 4.

The funds raised will be given to the World Wildlife Foundation, as voted by the kindergarten through seventh-graders in a Chapel worship service. Unsold toys will be given to a Bryant University student service learning project for Children's Friend Spirit of Giving.

Contact: Cynthia Rosengard (crosengard@gmail.com) of the RE Committee

### UUSC Holiday Card and Gift Sale

*Sundays, November 27, December 4, 11, 18*

Our seventh-grade class is selling beautiful greeting cards and other gift items, including T-shirts and water bottles from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Look for them at the RE Table in the Atrium during Coffee Hour. Proceeds benefit social justice efforts of the UUSC.

### Village Bank Holiday Sale

*Sundays, December 4, 11, 18*

The annual Village Bank Holiday Sale will feature fair-trade chocolate and fair-trade gift items from around the world: jewelry from Chile and Haiti, wooden tableware from Kenya and South Africa, ornaments from India and the Philippines and much, much more. Many items are made from recycled materials. Proceeds go to fund our micro-financing projects in Haiti.

### Give Holiday Plants to Decorate the Church

*Order through Sunday, December 11*

Each holiday season, church members and friends give poinsettias to decorate the church in memory or celebration of important people or events in their lives. To donate plants, please fill out the form in the Sunday order of service or contact the church office. Include your name and the first and last names of the person(s) you are honoring (and your phone number in case we need to contact you). Orders must be received by Sunday, December 11.

Donation: \$20 per plant



## Spiritual Development

### Benevolent Street Zendo: An Ongoing Zen Meditation Group

*Every Monday at 7:00p*

Benevolent Street Zendo is a member community of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha, an interfaith Zen community that maintains close ties with the Soto Zen Buddhist Association and the American Zen Teachers Association.

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

Leaders: Jan Seymour-Ford and James Ford (benevolentstreetzen@gmail.com)

### Natural Wisdom and Compassion Meditation

*Every Wednesday at 7:00p*

These guided meditations of love and wisdom from Tibetan Buddhism have been adapted into new forms that can touch the hearts and minds of people from all backgrounds and faiths, to help each of us bring out the best in ourselves within our relationships, service, and social action.

Contact: Ken Bent (kenbent@cox.net)

### UUMen

*Sunday, December 11, 7:00-9:00p*

**Topic: Is that squirt of Purell really going to protect you?**

Has our health declined over the years? Are we really better off today than yesterday? Has our awareness of germ warfare benefited us or adversely affected our health? Have we injected our children's immune systems with too much or not enough? Are we really protecting ourselves or are we lacking in protection? Who is really winning this war? How has our daily consumption of food affected us? Have we developed a monster that is out of control?

Facilitator: Paul Rossignol (401.640.3599)

### Reimagining Religion

*Tuesdays, December 13 & 27, 7:00p*

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

Leader: Tom Hall (twh2nd@aol.com)

## Community Collections

The Ballou Channing District Fair Share Community Collection taken on November 20 brought in \$1,080. Many thanks to all who so generously donated.

## Volunteer at Our Food Pantry

December is Hot Chocolate month.

*Distribution Day: December 19*

The biggest social justice program at First Unitarian is the Food Share Pantry. It takes a lot of volunteers to keep the program going! Volunteer with your van or truck to transport food from the RI Food Bank to the church, or volunteer for a shift on Distribution Day: Set-up: 2:00p-3:00p, Shopping with our clients: 3:00p-5:00p; Restock, recycle, and clean-up: 5:00p-6:00p.

Contacts: Martha Manno (Mmanno7@comcast.net), Amy Webb (amy.webb7@verizon.net), or Nori Duncan (nori.duncan@gmail.com)

## Recycle Your Magazines = Food for the Food Pantry

Here's how it works: donate your high-interest magazines for others to purchase for just 50 cents to \$1. Popular categories: science, gardening, kids' magazines, handyman, *Geographics*, cars, yoga, fishing, cooking, craft, foreign affairs, current events (no weeklies), and personal improvement, just to name a few. No catalogs, please. Last year this program earned close to \$500 for our Food Pantry.

Contact: Ruth Arellana (rkarellana@yahoo.com)

## Knitting for a Better World

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

Join fellow knitters for casual evenings of knitting and conversation. Work on your own project or join in one of our many group efforts - knitting warm clothes for immigrants learning English through English for Action, prayer shawls for women in the Middle East, dolls for children in Haiti, or hats and mittens for First U.'s own Mitten Tree. Beginners are always welcome. There is plenty of yarn and needles to get you started.

Contact: Julie Meyers (kelmey@cox.net)

## Habitat for Humanity Work Day

*Saturday, December 17*

The First Unitarian Habitat Work Group volunteers once a month with the Providence chapter of Habitat for Humanity RI (www.habitatprov.org). Sign-up is required as space is limited.

Contact: Peter Van Erp (401.351.4881 or ptervanerp@cox.net)



## Social Justice

### Annual Write-a-thon for Human Rights

*Sunday, December 4, 1:00-5:00p, Open House*

The guest speaker for our twenty-fourth annual Write-a-thon will be Mohamed Fallahiya, a former Iranian prisoner of conscience and torture victim, kept for many months in solitary confinement. In prison, he came to know the prisoner on whose behalf the Providence Chapter of Amnesty International has been appealing for over five years. Join the Global Write-a-thon, with events held in communities across the U.S. and around the world.

We will provide all materials for writing letters appealing for prisoners of conscience in many countries. Our actions work: many prisoners have been freed, and human rights abuses stopped, thanks to our volume of letters. Refreshments and prizes make this event festive and fun, as well as deeply meaningful. Suitable for young people and families.

Co-sponsored by the World Affairs Committee and the Providence Chapter of Amnesty International

### Community Lunch for Providence's Homeless Community

*Saturday, December 3, 12:00 - 2:00p*

*at Beneficent Congregational Church, Weybossett Street, Providence*

It's not too late to sign up to help with our great community event on December 3 when we'll be joining folks at Beneficent Church to serve a meal to Providence's homeless community. Over this meal we'll bring together state legislators, homeless folks, and the volunteers and workers who assist them. Goal: relationship-building and establishment of trust and influence in important Rhode Island social justice legislation issues.

Standing on the Side of Love and Neighborhood Social Justice are recruiting volunteers to cook and serve at this landmark event! To join us in this work, email Jan Seymour-Ford (seymourford@gmail.com) or Joe Salvatore (joesal1956@cox.net).



### Support Occupy Providence

The Neighborhood Social Justice Committee has a fantastic new drive under way providing assistance to the Occupy Providence movement. The occupiers need supplies and clothing. Please join in and bring anything you can spare to the NSJC table located in the atrium. Because of the greatness and sincerity of Rhode Islanders and Providence's particular respect for the sanctified right of people to stand up for what they believe in and the true patriotic nature of the mission, we hope the Occupy protest will find rejuvenation and success.

Many exciting projects are currently being planned by NSJC. Among them is a project to supply a catering truck and drive into Providence neighborhoods to feed the homeless. The next meeting of NSJC is on Sunday, December 4 at noon. Please join us!

### Our Transylvanian Church Partnership: A Little History

In 2004, First Unitarian began the process of establishing a partner Church in Transylvania. According to Dr. Richard Boeke, "Exchanges with the Unitarians in Transylvania started as early as the 1830s. Unitarians were a part of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Many were killed. Others fled to America."

The relationship between American congregations and those in Transylvania continued until WWII. In fact, First Unitarian had ties with a Transylvanian congregation in the 1930s. The beautiful laced handiwork that hangs in the Parish House is a gift from this early relationship.

With help from the UU Partner Church Council, First Unitarian began to explore possible opportunities. In the summer of 2004, a number of our congregants visited the village of Szentegyháza in Romania to determine if the congregation there could be a match for us.

Szentegyháza (which means "saint's church") is near the Carpathian Mountains. In earlier times, this village was part of the principality of Transylvania and the main occupation of its inhabitants was logging. It is one of the few towns in Transylvania that continue to be settled with people who have strong ties to the Hungarian language.

The pride of the town is the Children's Philharmonic: 140 youngsters participate in a choir and orchestra that tours Europe. During our visit, our group was dismayed at the lack of children in the town. It was explained to us they were on tour to Spain and Italy!

The trip was a success. The Transylvania Partner Church Group recommended that this relationship go forward. In 2009, following a return visit by their minister and church president, our congregation voted to become partners with the Szentegyháza congregation.

DECEMBER 2011



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Community Lunch for Homeless (at Beneficent Church)  Saturday Social Supper (Home of DiMatteo/ Shelley)
4 Sunday Service 10:30a Cemetery Committee 12:00p Mentor/Mentee 12:15p Neighborhood SJ 12:15p Annual Write-a- thon 1:00-5:00p	5 Women's Alliance 11:00a  Zendo 7:00p	6  Transition Town/ Peak Oil 7:00p Lay Ministry 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	7  Prudential Committee 6:00p Meditation 7:00p	8  Worship Committee 7:00p	9  All-Parish Supper 5:45p	10
11 Sunday Service 10:30a Green Sanctuary 12:15p  UU Men 7:00p	12  Zendo 7:00p	13  Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	14  R.E. Committee 6:30p Meditation 7:00p	15  Standing on the Side of Love 7:00p	16	17 Habitat Work Day
18 Sunday Service 10:30a	19  Food Pantry 2:00-6:00p  Zendo 7:00p	20  Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	21  Executive Committee 7:00p Meditation 7:00p	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services 5:00p and 9:00p
25 Christmas Sunday Service 10:30a	26  Zendo 7:00p	27  Reimagining Religion 7:00p Knitting for a Better World 7:00p	28  Meditation 7:00p	29	30	31 New Years Eve

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED ALL WEEK