

## MOVIE NIGHT

### Bell Street Chapel Choir Concert May 25 noon

On May 25, the small but mighty Bell Street Chapel Choir will be presenting a concert of classical and American music. With our gifted director, Irina Tchantceva, the choir will be celebrating spring with music of joy, jazz, and just plain fun.

**Tickets: \$10**  
**All proceeds to Bell Street Chapel**

MAY 9, 6:30 p.m., EDDY HALL

Bell Street Chapel's Movie Night series concludes its 2007-2008 season on Friday, May 9. Movie Night is part of our effort to live out the values that we espoused when we became a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation several years ago. Accordingly, we have been proud to present films with GLBT themes. For the past two years, we have been concentrating on films that examine gender identity issues.

The license that permits us to show copyrighted films prevents us from naming specific movies in our newsletter or on our website, but, if you are interested, just ask Carol Crowley for the name of the movie.

Do join us. Bring some food or non-alcoholic beverage to share and bring your friends to Bell Street Chapel's Movie Night!

# BELL STREET COLUMNS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF BELL STREET CHAPEL

## WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10 A.M.

TODDLER CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL AVAILABLE

### 4 | MAY

#### A TRIBUTE TO ROGER WILLIAMS

*Ray Perreault*

Celebrate Rhode Island Independence Day with a service dedicated to Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island.

### 11 | MAY

#### MOTHER'S DAY

*Rev. Bill Robinson*

Everybody has one but some of us seem to deal better with them than do others of us. Rev. Robinson will talk about mothers during this annual service.

### 18 | MAY

#### OUR ANNUAL MEETING

*Rev. Bill Robinson*

Rev. Robinson will lead the service during which we will reflect upon the importance of our form of church governance and its contribution to the American way of life.

### 25 | MAY

#### SHARING OUR SANCTUARY

*Rev. Bill Robinson and Rev. John Nichols*

We will be joined by members of First Unitarian while they loan their church sanctuary to Brown University for their Medical School graduation service. Rev. John Nichols, the interim minister at 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian will join Rev. Robinson in the pulpit.

## IN THE INTERIM: SPRINGGE IST ICUMEN IN

It's coming. Spring, that is. We are right on the edge. It's coming.

Despite being just one of four seasons, spring is different. Spring is special. We don't await the other three in quite the same way we wait for spring. Spring resonates with something deep in our basic natures. Maybe it's the sense of optimism. Maybe it's that feeling of promise and hope. We know year after year that spring will come. We can feel our spirits lift. We can feel our emotions change as the days start to get longer, as the windows are open more, and the dark, gray dullness of winter is replaced by brightness and light.

One promise that spring makes, and always follows through with, is the return of the flowers and plants. Flowers provide the first colors with which spring paints the new season.

Crocuses are budding in our yard and by the time you read this will probably have gone by to be replaced by the jonquils which are due to pop any minute. Plants have always amazed me, particularly their tenacity. Often you see grasses and even flowers that have worked their way up through blacktop on the road, or between the pavers on a walkway. Trees can actually split rock apart, a millimeter at a time - now that's perseverance.

Throughout history humankind has celebrated the coming of spring with music and dancing. The celebrations usually started around the time of the solstice and continued through May. The people thanked their gods for returning the light and implored them to make their flocks and land fertile. The celebrations were the way early civilizations petitioned their gods to continue to repeat the cycle of

nature, upon which their societies depended for survival. It is amazing that these celebrations are so similar in so many different parts of the world.

Well, I'd like to write more but I'm dashing outside for a few minutes to enjoy the sunshine. It's been a long time coming and we need to take pleasure in it when we can. I hope you will find time to enjoy the spring, too.

~Rev. Bill



## The Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel

5 Bell Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02909  
Phone (401) 273-5678 | [contact@bellstreetchapel.org](mailto:contact@bellstreetchapel.org)

“Love is the spirit of our church  
and service is its law.

This is our great covenant:  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek the truth in love,  
And to help one another.”



## ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY MAY 18 FOLLOWING COFFEE HOUR EDDY HALL

Members are asked to please make every effort to attend the annual congregational meeting following service on May 18.

The agenda includes the election of a new slate of officers, approval of the Fiscal Year 2009 budget, an update from the Search Committee, committee reports and a bylaws amendment concerning the Leadership Development Committee. Agendas and related information is being mailed to members. If you do not receive yours, please contact our office manager, Heidi Gilkenson at (401) 273-5678.

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#### MINISTERS

REV. WILLARD ROBINSON  
INTERIM PARISH MINISTER

Rev. Robinson's office hours are by appointment.  
To schedule an appointment contact him at  
revbillrobinson@msn.com or at (508) 226-2910.

REV. MARY MARGARET EARL  
COMMUNITY MINISTER

REV. BEN HALL  
COMMUNITY MINISTER

#### CHURCH STAFF

HEIDI GILKENSON, OFFICE MANAGER  
Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 9 a.m. to noon  
Tuesday and Thursday – by appointment only

IRINA TCHANTCEVA, MUSIC DIRECTOR  
NED FOSTER, SEXTON  
IRENE ZABEK, CHILDCARE MANAGER

#### GOVERNING BOARD

DON LALIBERTE, PRESIDENT  
CAROL CROWLEY, VICE PRESIDENT  
JENNIFER SHIMKUS, TREASURER  
MEREDYTH WATERMAN, SECRETARY  
GREG GRECO, AT-LARGE  
ELLEN KELLNER, AT-LARGE

#### STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS EVENTS, OPEN

FINANCE, JOHN SIMMONDS  
HOUSE, FRANK FALTUS  
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, PEG BOYLE  
MEMBERSHIP/CARING, STEVE KAGAN  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, KATE GILLIS  
PARISH/SOCIAL CONCERNS, CLARA HARDY  
WORSHIP, AUDREY GREENE

#### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

MEREDYTH WATERMAN, EDITOR  
ORIGINAL DESIGN BY TERRY BARBOUNIS

# CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

## AMONG US

"Your work is to discover your world and then with all your heart to give yourself to it."

~The Buddha

In this column we celebrate milestones and other life events, request healing thoughts for those in need, and remember departed loved ones. If you have information you would like to share in this column, or if you know of anyone in need of assistance, please contact Carol Crowley.

We have quite a few Bell Streeters celebrating special events in May. Both of our community ministers were installed in the month of May, Rev. Ben Hall in May 2003, and Rev. Mary Margaret Earl in 2005. We have been enriched by their presence in our community and are so glad they both chose to affiliate with us.

Happy birthday wishes go out to Rowan Chaves, Shannon Gemma, Beverly Hart and Stuart Smith. And happy wedding anniversary to Joe and Arline Davis - 36 years!

Our thoughts are often with Ellen Smith as she courageously battles her chronic disorder and recovers from recent surgeries. Ellen and her devoted husband, Stu, were featured in an article in the Providence Journal Bulletin in which they told of their adjustment to and acceptance of the chronic nature of Ellen's illness. They have learned to appreciate the richness of life despite changed expectations for the future.

Supportive thoughts go to Carl Freese, who is also dealing with health issues, and to Neva Hantover and Bev Hart, who have not been able to get to church recently. We miss you.

We were glad to see that David Gleicher and Tom Lamora both recovered extremely quickly from surgery.

Please keep John Tarrats' mother in your prayers, as well as James Crowley, Carol Crowley's son who is an Army Ranger currently serving in Iraq.

~ The Membership and Caring Committee

## NEWSLETTER UPDATE

The sparse membership of the Newsletter staff welcomes aboard Genevieve Peri, who has graciously agreed to take over layout duties for *Bell Street Columns*, perhaps having been moved by last month's moderately desperate plea for help. This is good news for those who like to actually find the rest of the story when it says "continued on Page 7."

What this means for everyone who submits articles to the newsletter is that, once again, the deadline must be met. I can't keep sending Genevieve revisions or additions in the days following the deadline – it's just too confusing for both of us. So, once again, please send your submissions in before 8 p.m. on each month's deadline (always the second-to-last Sunday) to [MeredythW@aol.com](mailto:MeredythW@aol.com). That's May 18 for the June issue. Please send your articles as attachments, not in the body of the e-mail. Thanks!

~Meredyth Waterman

## THE KNIT PROJECT



Tuesday nights,  
Knitting group to make knit scarves,  
hats, gloves, mittens, socks for the  
needy.  
Knitting lessons available for those who  
don't knit but would like to participate.  
Men and women welcome.  
Questions, call Richard Muto at (401)  
944-4809.

## A NOTE FROM THE COFFEE CREW

In an effort to reduce the number of disposable cups used during coffee hour we would like to encourage all members and friends to bring your own mug to church. Hooks are being installed in the kitchen so that you may wash and store your mug at Bell Street Chapel each week.

~Peg Boyle

## FERRY BEACH

Vacation at a UU Camp

Join other like minded UUs for a great vacation. Ferry Beach is a Unitarian Universalist Camp with programs for adults and children. It is located right on the beach in Saco, Maine. There is a week for gay men and one for women. There are several family weeks and camps for children and youth. A week of singing, UU Heritage, Kayaking, arts, Body, Mind and Spirit are all choices. On a budget? Consider Work Week and help maintain the camp for half a day and play the other half.

Log onto the Ferry Beach website,  
[www.ferrybeach.org](http://www.ferrybeach.org) or ask Kate Gillis for  
more information, [ksqillis@netzero.net](mailto:ksqillis@netzero.net).

~Kate Gillis

## PARISH & SOCIAL CONCERNS

### Gay Bingo, Thursday, May 15, at 7 p.m.

Bell Street Chapel is proud to sponsor a game at Gay Bingo on Thursday, May 15. Gay Bingo is traditional Bingo with drag queens, disco music, crazy themes, costumes, local celebrities, entertainment, and lots of laughs.

For \$15, you get enough Bingo cards to play nine traditional games with \$100 cash prizes. You can also buy special game cards throughout the night to win fabulous prize packages and the prize of up to \$1,000! Most people end up spending about \$20. Proceeds support people living with HIV/AIDS in Rhode Island. For more information, go to [www.aidsprojectri.org](http://www.aidsprojectri.org).

A sign up sheet will be available in Eddy Hall, so that we can reserve a table for Bell Street Chapel. Please join us for an evening of fun, laughs, and maybe even cash prizes!

### Book Discussion Group

Please contact Clara Hardy at [clarapvd@gmail.com](mailto:clarapvd@gmail.com) or (401) 231-9226 if interested in joining in the peace-making book discussion group.

### May Diaper Drive

The Parish and Social Concerns Committee will be collecting disposable diapers and incontinence products from May 1 to May 11 as part of a Mother's Day diaper drive to help the Rhode Island Diaper Bank. Diapers are not covered by either WIC or food stamps. A month's supply of diapers can average over \$60. Stretching diapers beyond their intended use compromises a person's physical and emotional health. Please drop-off your donated diapers in Eddy Hall and contact Clara Hardy if you have further questions.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

This month's finance table shows that our income is on budget and still running slightly ahead of expenses. This is good, and our expenses are not as high as expected. Pledge income is running a bit behind budget, so if you still owe on your pledge for this fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2008, please help us out with that pledge.

We have just wrapped up our canvass for next years pledges. If you have not yet pledged, please contact Phil Smith, Jen Shimkus or Lyn Stein to have your pledge counted.

	JULY - MARCH ACTUAL	JULY - MARCH BUDGET	VARIANCE	ANNUAL- BUDGET
<b>INCOME</b>				
PLEDGES	\$37,773	\$41,250	(\$3,477)	\$55,000
SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	\$9,578	\$5,604	\$3,974	\$7,472
INTERESTS AND INVESTMENTS	\$37,334	\$35,981	\$1,353	\$47,975
RENTALS	\$6,000	\$10,125	(\$4,125)	\$13,500
EVENTS & FUNDRAISING	4,641	\$4,688	(\$47)	\$6,250
OTHER INCOME	\$3,432	\$0	\$3,432	\$0
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$98,759</b>	<b>\$97,648</b>	<b>\$1,111</b>	<b>\$130,197</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
SALARY & BENEFITS	\$52,532	\$57,716	(\$5,184)	\$76,954
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$16,398	\$14,920	\$1,478	\$19,893
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS	\$15,131	\$14,250	\$881	\$19,000
DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS	\$500	\$2,213	(\$1,713)	\$2,950
OTHER EXPENSES	\$3,441	\$8,550	(\$5,110)	\$11,400
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$88,001</b>	<b>\$97,648</b>	<b>(\$9,647)</b>	<b>\$130,197</b>
<b>NET INCOME GAIN/(LOSS)</b>	<b>\$10,758</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$10,758</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Finally, we would like to thank you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Finance Committee should you have any questions, concerns or need detailed financial information and thank you for making and honoring your pledge commitment.

~The Finance Committee  
(Jen Shimkus, John Simmonds, Phil Smith, Lyn Stein)

# CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



## SUMMER WORSHIP WORKSHOP

The Worship Committee will be holding its annual Summer Worship Brainstorming Session after church on May 4. Here at Bell Street, we hold lay-led services throughout the summer. They are often held downstairs in Eddy Hall (where it's cooler) and are somewhat more relaxed than our usual upstairs service. Past years have seen services on singing, children's stories, meditation, Taos, New Mexico, humor, etc. If you've had a service topic in the back of your brain, yearning to be expressed, this is a great forum. You can lead a service, with help from the Worship Committee, or help with readings if you'd like to just dip your toe into the worship-leading experience. Needless to say, we need your ideas and energy to make this another great Bell Street summer. Please plan to attend.

~The Worship Committee

## EVENTS

### Providence String Quartet May 18, 3 p.m.

Once again Bell Street Chapel is fortunate to be able to host the **Providence String Quartet** in its spring concert series for a performance on **Sunday, May 18, at 3 p.m.** This event will be a fundraiser like last year, with a portion of the proceeds going to Bell Street Chapel. The cost for tickets is \$15 for adults, \$10 seniors and \$5 for children under 12. The program will feature Arnold Schoenberg's Romantic masterpiece *Verklarte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) for string sextet and Franz Joseph Haydn: String Quartet Opus 42 in D Minor.

See Ellen Kellner, Jasmine Appleberry or Tom Mack from the Events Committee to buy your tickets in advance and show your support for Bell Street! And don't forget! If you have a favorite poem, story or quote you have written or would like to dedicate to someone that has touched you in your life, you can have it printed in the program and support our church at the same time. Half pages will be half of an 8.5 x 11 page, for \$40. A quarter page will cost \$20. The deadline for program submissions is May 10. Attachments can be sent to Tom Mack: [t.mack321@gmail.com](mailto:t.mack321@gmail.com)

### Paw Sox outings

Sign-up sheets are out in Eddy Hall for upcoming Paw Sox games. If we have more than 5 or 6 people, we can buy tickets in advance (which also so means we need to collect money in advance) and we can all sit together.

~Tom Mack

## BOARD BITS

From the April Governing Board meeting:

- The Governing Board met at length with members of the Ministerial Search Committee to discuss communication with the congregation about the ministerial search process. The board will be sending a letter soon to the congregation to provide an update on the process and explain the process more fully.
- The board authorized the expenditure of \$150 from the advertising budget to sponsor a game of Gay Bingo on May 15. Sponsoring the game entitles us to present a live commercial for Bell Street to the hundreds who attend Gay Bingo. The Parish and Social Concerns Committee is organizing a trip to Gay Bingo that night.
- The Rhode Island Film Festival has indicated that it would like to present its GLBT movie festival in Eddy Hall in August.
- President Don Laliberte, representing the board, will join Treasurer Jennifer Shimkus and Search Committee member Ray Perreault on the negotiating team for the settled minister.
- Our century-old Membership book is in the process of being rebound.
- The committee planned to meet with the Board of Trustees on April 22 for a regular, twice-a-year meeting.

~Meredyth Waterman  
Governing Board Secretary

## MINISTERIAL SEARCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

gave us a strong sense of Bell Street Chapel as it is now; this next survey will give us a much clearer sense of where we are going, which needs to address, which strengths to grow, and which qualities we will be valuing most highly in ministerial candidates, understanding that each candidate is just as imperfect but uniquely gifted as we are as a congregation.

Thank you for your patience through this process, and we are hopeful that our final survey will gather more helpful input beyond that already collected. We are hopeful because we have seen first-hand, through the first surveys, through cottage and committee meetings, and through other interactions, just how much time, thoughtful reflection, and insight Bell Street Chapel parishioners have given to this in the past, and give to their other efforts here as well; that presents an invaluable asset even as we struggle, now, to summarize and articulate those many ideas.

~Jasmine Appleberry

# CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



## MAY | CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PH=PARISH HOUSE | S=SANTUARY | EH=EDDY HALL | MPL=MEET IN PARKING LOT | MO=MINISTER'S OFFICE | OS=OFFSITE | L=LIBRARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 8 am Sitting meditation (EH)
4 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour 11:30 am Worship-leading workshop 11:30 am sandwiches (EH)	5	6 6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH) 7 pm knitting group (PH upstairs)	7 6 pm Order of Service deadline  New member potluck (EH)	8	9 6:30 pm Movie Night (EH)	10 8 am Sitting meditation (EH)
11 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service, (New member Sunday) (S) 11:30 p.m. Cleaning Blitz (S)	12 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)	13 7:30 pm Governing Board (PH) 7 pm knitting group (PH upstairs)	14 6 pm Order of Service deadline	15 7 pm Bible Study (PH) 7 pm Gay Bingo (OS)	16	17
18 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 am Congregational Meeting 3 pm PSQ concert 8 pm newsletter deadline	19	20 7 pm knitting group (PH upstairs) 7:15 pm House Committee (PH)	21 6 pm Order of Service deadline	22	23	24
25 9 am newsletter fold (EH) 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour 12 pm Choir concert (S)	26	27 6 pm Parish & Social Concerns (EH) 7 pm knitting group (PH upstairs)	28 6 pm Order of Service deadline	29	30	31

## MINISTERIAL SEARCH

In March and April, the Ministerial Search Committee focused on gathering information through in-person contacts in groups, including cottage meetings at volunteers' homes, and visits to committees. Two members of our committee attended each of these gatherings. We thank everyone for their time and contributions, all of which have been enormously valuable in moving toward the next step, which will be a second, very different, and very crucial survey, enabling us to compile all information into a large packet for future candidates by early fall.

Unlike our first survey, where clear themes emerged within a range of perspectives, these in-person meetings yielded more questions, or areas needing further clarification, than obvious answers. This presents as a true, but perfectly timed, challenge, as we proceed toward our next survey. While certain ideas did come across very strongly, these varied from one meeting to the next, with each of the cottage and committee meetings having its own unique tone, flavor, and mix. The range of responses could lean heavily one way on Monday, but another way on Tuesday. This richness and diversity of responses leaves us reluctant to draw new conclusions now, but with a much better sense of which questions beg further investigation.

We understand that your efforts require time, thought, and energy; we view these as gifts to our search, and as valuable tools in crafting a representation of our chapel, so that candidates can accurately evaluate if it might be a long-term match for them. We seek someone who will be drawn to Bell Street Chapel for its unique strengths and challenges.

This second survey will present new questions, some of them difficult. The need for prioritizing did come up in several meetings, but the question as to which issues to give greatest weight remains; these choices could be difficult. Our first survey

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 5*

## FROM THE BOARD

In preparation for the May 18 annual meeting, the Governing Board feels it is important to share with you some information about the challenges ahead.

At this time, finances remain one of our greatest challenges. The congregation has worked hard this year to achieve fiscal solvency. However, we must remember that we have achieved this goal not by growing, but by cutting our budget. We have settled for part-time ministry and have forgone professional cleaning services and fair share payments to the Ballou Channing District and the Unitarian Universalist Association, sacrificing our right to vote in either body. In January, we lost parking lot rental fees totaling \$11,000 annually. It appears that revenue won't be replaced.

Members of Bell Street have been very generous. Our average annual pledge in this year's canvass will likely be more than \$1,000, and many have increased their pledges. However, these funds simply aren't sufficient to achieve all our goals.

Rev. Bill Robinson has agreed to serve as our interim minister for the upcoming year on a part-time basis. The congregation's goal has been to call a full-time settled minister for the year 2009-2010. However, unless we see a very substantial increase in revenue, it's very unlikely that the congregation will be able to support a full-time minister.

The Board has been exploring several options to present to the congregation. In March and April, the Governing Board discussed this situation and identified several options for the congregation to consider. We could simply call a part-time settled minister. We could seek an individual to start part-time and become full-time as we grow. A third option would be to extend our interim ministry an additional year. During that time, we would need to make a commitment sufficient to be able to call a full-time settled minister for the 2010-2011 year.

The congregation will need to make some difficult choices. The Governing Board plans to allocate time at the annual meeting to discuss these issues and develop a plan for meeting our challenges.

In the end, it is ultimately the congregation's decision. This decision will need to be made at a future congregational meeting (not the one on May 18) and will require that every voting member carefully consider the options.

In the meantime, members of the Governing Board are available to hear your thoughts. Governing Board meetings and most committee meetings are open to members and friends. If you have items you would like to see added to the Governing Board agenda, please let me know.

As we confront difficult challenges, we also have the opportunity to change and grow in ways we haven't anticipated. By making difficult choices and working together to build a stronger, sustainable spiritual community, we are putting our Unitarian Universalist faith into action. The Governing Board welcomes your input and looks forward to working with you as we build our congregation's future.