

BELL STREET COLUMNS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF BELL STREET CHAPEL



WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10 AM

TODDLER CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL AVAILABLE

6 | JUNE

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

The Religious Education program

Join us as we take a look at the seven UU principles from a child's point of view and celebrate with the children of our church school.

13 | JUNE

HEIRLOOM FAITH — FLOWER SERVICE

Rev. José Ballester

The Flower communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. It was brought to the United States in 1940 by Dr. Capek's wife, Maja V. Capek. Please bring a flower to the service as we explore, honor deepen our Unitarian Universalist faith.

20 | JUNE

FATHER'S DAY

Phillip Smith

Come celebrate Father's Day at Bell Street Chapel.

27 | JUNE

PRIDE

Raymond Perreault

Pride is important in creating a sense of self-worth and a focus of social movements. Somehow it is also one of the seven deadly sins and is know to cometh before a fall. What does this tell us and how do we reconcile these two aspects of pride?

FROM THE BOARD

As the church year draws to a close, we face some big decisions at our annual meeting on June 6. Perhaps the biggest item on the agenda is a vote to end our period of consulting ministry and enter into a year of interim ministry and search for a new settled minister.

During our most recent Conversation with the Board and in other conversations with Bell Street members and friends, it seems there is a strong desire for more permanence in our ministry. People have expressed that we need a minister who is settled, who is with us on a long-term basis and will be part of our community, who will help challenge us to live out our mission and goals and who can provide pastoral care. Two years ago, when we chose to suspend our last search for a settled Minister and try growth-focused consulting ministry, we had hoped it would increase our membership and make us stronger. Since then, we've learned that growth must occur organically. We need to concentrate on being the best church we can be at whatever size we are. That, more than anything else, will not only help others want to come to our wonderful congregation and stay, but will be fulfilling to the people who are already here.

The Governing Board can hire both consulting and interim ministers, but the congregation must vote on which model of ministry it's going to be. Because the congregation's vote two years ago was to have up to three years of consulting ministry, the Board is asking for a new vote to move to interim ministry this year.

The outgoing Board has also voted to recommend that the incoming Board retain Rev. José Ballester as the interim minister for that year. José has successfully led five other congregations as an interim minister, resulting in their finding a settled minister, and we feel his experience will be a good resource. The outgoing

Board feels that the new Board should work very closely and carefully with him to ensure that all activities relating to the search are done thoroughly and that we are on schedule, and that the congregation experiences the healing and growth that are necessary during an interim year and the search process.

The Board will also ask for separate votes to restart the settled ministerial search process, and to appoint six members to the search committee that will carry out that process. The Board recommends a one-year search, which is the standard period of time for this process. (Although we had intended to go through a two-year search process when we began the search that was halted two years ago, two year searches are not the norm. They are typically used by churches that have particular challenges that need to be addressed before they can call a settled minister.) We feel that the new search committee should make ample use of the records and work of the previous search, and with that – plus the use of the settled ministerial search handbook and guidance from José – will be well-equipped to complete this process in one year.

As of press time of both the newsletter and the annual meeting packets, we had not finalized the candidates the Board and the Leadership Development Committee will recommend for a search committee, if the congregation indeed does vote to form one, but we will do our best to identify members before that time.

After the meeting, President-Elect Daniel Greco will take over the presidency. It's been an honor to serve as our congregation's president, and I thank you for your dedication to our church and our Unitarian Universalist principles this year.

*~In hope,
Meredyth Waterman, president*

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CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

BOARD BITS

In this monthly column we summarize the recent activities and decisions of the Governing Board of Bell Street Chapel. It is our goal to keep you as informed as possible about what we do at our meetings, as we represent and are answerable to you, the congregation. Also, we remind you that all our meetings are open. We would be happy if members of the congregation attended. If you would like to make suggestions for the agenda, speak to the incoming president, Dan Greco.

During our last meeting of the 2009-2010 church year on May 11, the Board discussed the budget for the 2010-2011 church year. Greg Greco, chair of the Finance Committee came to the meeting to present the proposed budget. Our canvass was not as successful this year as it was last year. The Trustees will provide the same amount of support as they did last year, but cautioned that they cannot spend much additional money for building renovations this coming year. Thus, the budget is quite austere. We can afford only a half-time minister. We cannot hire a cleaning service or increase the hours of our office manager. The congregation will vote on the proposed budget at the annual meeting.

We voted to endorse the slate of officers and chairs for the 2010-2011 church year; the congregation will vote on the slate at the annual meeting.

Don Laliberte made a motion for a bylaws change to allow the immediate past president to become a voting member of the Board. The comment was made that, with the smaller 2010-2011 Board, lacking a secretary and one at-large member, there is a great danger of not achieving a quorum at meetings, severely limiting the work that can be done; allowing the past president to vote would help alleviate this problem. The motion passed unanimously. The congregation will vote on the bylaws change at the annual meeting.

Progress continues on plans for the installation of a chairlift for handicapped access to the Sanctuary level and to Eddy Hall. We hope to begin the fund-raising effort soon. The cost will be \$20,000-\$25,000.

We made plans for a Committee Appreciation Day on June 13. We will treat our volunteers to a PawSox game. Dan Greco is planning this event. The Committee Chair Orientation will be re-scheduled to Monday, June 14; Meredyth and Dan will plan it.

We spent most of the time discussing transitional issues concerning ministry. At the annual meeting we will seek a vote from the congregation to resume a search for a part-time settled minister. The members who attended the last Conversation with the Board strongly felt that we should no longer continue to try to grow the congregation in the hope of affording a full-time minister. We hope to call a settled minister by the beginning of the 2011-2012 church year. If the congregation approves this plan we will form a Search Committee.

That is a summary of the important work of your Board in May.

~Carol Crowley, Secretary

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



ON THE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE: DETOUR

Ever since April, my e-mail account has been drowning in messages about Arizona, and the punitive legislation Gov. Jan Brewer has been signing into law or intends to sign. Those e-mails have all been condemning the laws and going into excruciatingly painful details as to what will result: all immigrants or those suspected of being immigrants must carry with them at all times proof of their status (I have applied for my U.S. Passport, just in case.) If you have an accent you cannot teach English classes (with my slight New York/Brooklyn accent I won't be teaching and neither will my children with their New England accents. But what about a southern or Midwestern accents? Are they acceptable? What does an Arizona accent sound like?) There are to be no ethnic studies, especially those who place one ethnicity above all others (like Anglo ethnicity?) Courses must not emphasize as heroes those individuals who were or are revolutionaries who advocate overthrowing the government (Adams? Jefferson? Franklin?) or who by their violent actions against non-combatants are to be classified as terrorists (General Sherman?)

And finally, any legal resident of Arizona can legally carry a concealed firearm without a permit. That last one worries me as I remember that when James Reeb, the Unitarian Universalist minister murdered in Selma, Alabama, in 1965 it was not the police or any government official who attacked him; it was a group of thugs who had been emboldened by the rhetoric and actions of then-Gov. George Wallace and Birmingham police chief "Bull" Connors. The thought of going to a state where the governor and a very vocal sheriff (Joe Arpaio) are stirring up ethnic intolerance in a population that can carry concealed firearms does not sound like somewhere I would want to visit.

Which brings up the other issue clogging my e-mail: the call to boy-

cott Arizona. Numerous groups have called for a boycott to economically force Arizona to cease its anti-immigrant measures. The Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees has asked the delegates at the forthcoming General Assembly in Minneapolis whether or not to move the 2012 General Assembly out of Phoenix. Given the vitriol of the previous emails I did not expect such a negative reaction to a boycott. Many individuals feel we should not boycott and instead go to Arizona and protest. Still others cite the cost of canceling and how the boycott will hurt the workers we are trying to protect. Still others just want more time to discuss the matter.

When I read some of those comments I remembered some words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: *Today in all too many Northern communities a sort of quasi-liberalism prevails, so bent on seeing all sides that it fails to become dedicated to any side. It is so objectively analytical that it is not subjectively committed. A true liberal will not be deterred by the propaganda and subtle words of those who say, 'Slow up for a while; you are pushing things too fast.' I am not calling for an end to sympathetic understanding and abiding patience; but neither sympathy nor patience should be used as excuses for indecisiveness. They must be guiding principles for all of our actions, rather than substitutes for action.*

Permit me to remove any doubts; I heartily condemn the actions of Governor Brewer and the legislators in Arizona. If General Assembly is held in Phoenix I will not attend. In fact it would take some extraordinary circumstances to get me to set foot in Arizona. It may be shortsighted but those are my feelings born out of my faith and call to justice.

~Rev. José Ballester



2010 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It's open to all Unitarian Universalists across the nation, and thousands attend. This year it's in Minneapolis, MN. Registration is required.

If you are going this year, please let president Meredyth Waterman know. (You can reach her at MeredythW@aol.com or (401) 451-2322.) There's a special event for congregations entering search, and Bell Street Chapel has been invited.

For more information about General Assembly, visit www.uua.org/ga. For those of us here, there will be opportunities to follow it online through live streaming video, audio podcasts, the GA blog, Twitter, Facebook. Check out the site for more info.

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE RETREAT SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 10 A.M.

The Peace and Social Justice Committee coordinates and promotes Bell Street Chapel's efforts in peace and nonviolence advocacy as well as social, economic and environmental justice. Our inspired work in these areas has always been out of proportion to the small size of the congregation.

Currently, we are leaders in the community in advocating for GLBT rights. We are a UUA Welcoming Congregation; we sponsor a monthly movie night where we show and discuss a film with a GLBT or gender identity theme; we sponsor Gay Bingo, the profits from which support Rhode Island citizens who suffer from AIDS; we have a booth and participate in the parade at the R.I. Pride Festival each year; we demonstrate in support of Marriage Equality at the State House; we offer the use of our space to other community groups advocating for gay rights.

Our work for social and economic justice includes providing lunches for the clients of Crossroads R.I. on the first Sunday of each month. We provide holiday gifts for the single adults of a subsidized housing project in Woonsocket. We made Mother's Day baskets for the women of McAuley Village. But wait! That's not all.... We are the site for Providence Books Through Bars, a prison literacy project. We clean our adopted marsh on the urban waterfront several times a year.

We invite anyone who is interested in having input into our activities for the 2010-2011 church year to a retreat and brunch on Saturday, June 26, at 10 a.m., at the home of Carol Crowley. We will use this time to plan and prepare, but also to recommit ourselves with energy and enthusiasm to the year ahead.

Everyone is encouraged to attend the retreat. There is no obligation; we welcome your participation. Brunch will be provided. Sign up with Carol Crowley at ccrowley8@cox.net.

~Carol Crowley

MISSION AND VISION DAY

On May 8, 18 members of Bell Street Chapel gathered at Murray Unitarian Universalist Church for Mission and Vision Day. Peter Bowden, the Ballou Channing District's growth consultant, led a three-hour workshop designed to help us chart our future course, to assert our common purpose, and to create these together in a spirit of loving community.

For the past several months, the mission and Vision Task Force, consisting of Kate Gillis, Dan Greco, Brian Kovacs, Ray Perreault, and Kate Gillis, has been planning Mission and Vision Day, with the goal to create not only a vision and mission statement, but to help us identify our common purpose in an intentional, inclusive way. While the committee is charged to create a vision and a mission statement, the goal of the committee is to create a mission and vision.

Peter's workshop gave us an excellent push toward that common mission. At the end of the workshop, we had already identified several areas of focus that seemed common to most workshop participants (social justice, spiritual depth, modernizing our physical space, and congregational growth). We have also been given a rich collection of words and texts with which to craft

our mission.

The Mission and Vision work group will next create phrases from words, and vision and mission statements from phrases, but we do not intend to create this in a vacuum. Look for opportunities to provide feedback over the next few weeks and months.

When I teach writing to high school students, I always start with the importance of a strong thesis statement, which gives an essay clarity of purpose and generates ideas. A strong mission and vision accomplishes the same thing for a church. A strong vision can give the work of our church focus, clarity, and direction. It's important that our mission and vision is the product of all Bell Street's stakeholders. We are proud that so many people invested a Saturday morning to help start create that vision. We are hopeful that more will help us to create that vision in the future.

~Dan Greco
Chairperson

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

ETHICAL EATING

As a child I disdained “housewifery” somewhat. My parents coached me toward career, and I never once saw my mother (who, as an educator, won the Presidential Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, meeting Hillary Clinton in the process) holding a vacuum cleaner hose, or scrubbing a toilet bowl. Ever.

We kids did that.

But, she cooked.

She cooked on a budget while raising five children. She cooked crazy dishes like liver and oranges. She cooked extravagantly – Paul Prudhomme’s Cajun dishes and Julia Child’s butter-drenched French ones. And after she was finished with the pots of sauces and pans of concoctions, she repaired to the TV room and her chair, to let others wash and scrub what she left behind. “I cook” was her motto. “I don’t have to clean.”

I am a different from my mother. Not necessarily more liberated nor necessarily less. Because of both of my parents, because of the time during which I became a woman, because of my husband and who he is, and my stepsons, because of my genes, I am different. I, like my mother, find deep fulfillment in my professional work life. Unlike her, I do the dishes. And like her, again, I relish kitchen creativity and thriftiness. Though I hold my domestic work with ambivalence – pride, resentment, satisfaction – I have come lately to step more fully into the role of Kitchen CEO.

I have come to acknowledge its power.

Those who manage their kitchens have enormous impact on the earth, on their families, on the animals, on human working conditions.

I have witnessed the power of daily family meals. In the rhythm of this ritual – sharing our day, debating, inquiring – I have seen my stepsons grow more secure.

I have learned how what I buy matters to the very air I breathe. In practicing a vegetarian diet, the choices I make impact the earth more dramatically than the car I drive.

“A 2006 United Nations report found that the meat industry produces more greenhouse gases than all the SUVs, cars, trucks, planes, and ships in the world combined.” (*GoVeg.com*)

According to a New York Times news (not opinion) article:

Vast swaths of forest are being cleared for (cattle) pastures, robbing the planet of trees, which absorb carbon dioxide. Cattle and sheep also release vast amounts of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. A recent study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations produced startling findings: The animals' burps, the nitrous oxide gases from their decomposing manure and other factors, including the energy needed to store and transport meat, were responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions - more than the entire transportation sector.”

My family’s diet impacts working conditions for immigrant men and women. According to the book *Slaughterhouse* by investigator Gail Eisnitz, the workers in animal slaughterhouses – many of them Mexican, Latin American, Asian - suffer injuries and illnesses *six times more frequently* than coal miners.

And my family’s diet impacts the lives of animals themselves by not encouraging their killing.

The phrase “Ethical Eating” can conjure prohibitions and a pointing finger. Food is intimate, and emotional, and we don’t like being chastised.

I have come, though, to think of my journey of buying, preparing and eating food as “Powerful Eating” ... practices that impact the earth more certainly than trading my Honda Accord for a Prius; that perhaps assists workers more than protests, and that protect the animals more than petting them.

I have come to believe that kitchen work isn’t subservient work. It’s among the most important work there is.

And I think, perhaps, my mother knew that all along.

~Rev. Mary Margaret Earl

AMONG US

“This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

In this column we celebrate milestones and other life events, request healing thoughts for those in need, and remember departed loved ones. If you or anyone you know is in need of assistance or support, please notify the Membership and Caring Committee.

It is with great sadness that we report the recent passing of our beloved long-time member, Joe Davis. Although Joe had been suffering from dementia for about a year, his death was unexpected. His widow, Arline, moved into the Tockwotton Home, an assisted living facility, soon after Joe's death. She will need and receive the loving support of this church community in the months to come as she grieves so many losses. Amazingly, Arline maintains her usual optimism and sunny disposition. We wish her peace in her new home.

Stuart and Ellen Smith became the proud grandparents of a baby boy in May! Congratulations.

Jim Gillis will undergo heart surgery in June. Our thoughts will be with him and we wish him a speedy and uncomplicated recovery.

Welcome back to Jim Ellison, who spent the winter at his retirement home in Mexico. It is wonderful to have Jim back for the summer and we plan a visit to a Mexican restaurant to celebrate his return.

Birthday wishes go out to Owen Goulis, five years old on June 1; Sophie Barreto (could she really be ten?!); Lily Campanile-Boyle; Ben Hall; Richard Corso; and our favorite twins, Dan and Greg Greco.

Enjoy the coming of summer, Bell Streeters!

From The Membership and Caring Committee

COLUMNS DEADLINE

Remember the next issue of the newsletter is combined for June and July. The deadline is June 13 at 8 p.m. Please submit your articles as a Word attachment – not in the body of the e-mail – to Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com. Our newsletter is one of the most effective means of communicating with our members and friends, so don't miss out on this opportunity. Please help us get our 42-cent stamp's worth!

COMMITTEE APPRECIATION EVENT

Calling all committee members: To thank you for your dedication to our congregation, the Board is organizing a trip to a Pawtucket Red Sox home game Sunday, June 13, as this year's committee appreciation event. We all know that baseball is a spiritual experience, and even if you're not a sports fan, McCoy Stadium has the best Moose Tracks ice cream on the planet. (Served in a plastic helmet, of course.) Come and enjoy America's pastime with your fellow Bell Streeters!

This event is free to anyone who is on any committee in our congregation. Guests, as well as Bell Streeters who aren't on a committee, are also welcome, and are asked to pay just \$6.

The game is at 1:05 p.m., so we'll leave from church. We'll be in the bleachers, so bring your sun block, hat and seat cushions if you want them.

Please RSVP (and pay, if you need to) by June 6 by contacting Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com or (401) 451-2322. Be sure to include the number of guests you're bringing, if any, and what committee(s) you're on.

Thanks for all your hard work and dedication this year, committee members!

~Meredyth Waterman, president

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



JUNE | CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PH=PARISH HOUSE | S=SANTUARY | EH=EDDY HALL | MPL=MEET IN PARKING LOT | OS=OFFSITE | RE=RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ROOM

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<p>1 6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH)</p>	<p>2 6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>3 4 pm Big Train Farm (EH) 7 pm Outside group (PH)</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 8 am meditation (EH)</p>
<p>6 9 am Choir (S) 9 am newsletter folding (EH) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Annual meeting (EH)</p>	<p>7 6 pm Empire Review (S)</p>	<p>8 6:45 pm Governing Board (PH) 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>9 6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>10 4 pm Big Train Farm (EH) 7 pm Membership (PH)</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 8 am meditation (EH) 7:30 pm RIIFF GLBT preview</p>
<p>13 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour 12:00 Committee recognition (OS) 8 pm newsletter deadline</p>	<p>14 6 pm Empire Review (S) 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH) 6:30 Chairperson orientation (EH)</p>	<p>15 7:15 pm House Committee (PH) 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>16 6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>17 4 pm Big Train Farm (EH)</p>	<p>18 7 pm Drum Circle (EH)</p>	<p>19 8 am meditation (EH) 8 pm Providence String Quartet (S)</p>
<p>20 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 Crossroads 11:30 Discussion Group (PH)</p>	<p>21 6 pm Empire Review (S)</p>	<p>22 6 pm Peace & Social Justice (PH) 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>23 6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>24 4 pm Big Train Farm (EH)</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 10 am PSJ retreat (OS)</p>
<p>27 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 RE Committee (RE)</p>	<p>28 6 pm Empire Review (S)</p>	<p>29 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>30 6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>			

MOVIE NIGHT TAKES AN INTERMISSION

**Annual Meeting
June 6
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Eddy Hall**

*All members are asked to attend.
Please bring a brunch item to share.*

In order to live out our commitment as a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation, Bell Street Chapel sponsors a monthly movie night, at which we view and discuss a film with GLBT or gender identity themes. Over the past few years we have seen countless artistically significant comedies, dramas, musicals and documentaries in this genre. We show the films on a large screen donated by the Rhode Island International Film Festival.

We will take a break for the summer and resume Movie Night on Sept. 17 at 6:30 p.m. Stay tuned!



The Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel

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**“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.”**

