

BELL STREET COLUMNS



NEWSLETTER FOR THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF BELL STREET CHAPEL

WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY SERVICES BEGIN AT 10 AM

TODDLER CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL AVAILABLE

4 | DECEMBER

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT

Jasmine Appleberry

Our goals motivate and invigorate us, but if we miss out on the journey, our strivings toward perfection can leave us disappointed. Today we discuss making peace with success, failure and being in the middle.

11 | DECEMBER

'TIS THE SEASON

Rev. CJ McGregor

Most of us fall into traps this time of year. We place value on practices and behaviors that upon closer examination do not serve us well.

18 | DECEMBER

THE WORTH AND DIGNITY OF EVERY FAMILY

Audrey Greene

We will be reading a letter from Heron Greenesmith, a lawyer with Family Equality Council, concerning the important work of widening the legal rights and protections for LGBT-headed families.

21 | DECEMBER - 7 P.M.

YULE SERVICE

Rev. CJ McGregor and others

The seasonal significance of the winter solstice is in the reversal of the gradual lengthening of nights and shortening of days. The interpretation of the event has varied from culture to culture, but most cultures have held a recognition of rebirth, involving festivals, gatherings, rituals or other celebrations

24 | DECEMBER - 7 P.M.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Rev. CJ McGregor

Celebrate the season with song, candlelight, and the ancient story of welcoming the stranger.

There is no service on Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec. 25.

FROM THE MINISTER

Celebration is in the air. We have much to celebrate. Whether we celebrate the birth of a savior, the promise of returning light, a festival of lights or our heritage and culture-- we celebrate nonetheless. Our world is adorned with the electric light, the candle, tinsel and simple greens. Our letter boxes are filled more frequently with greetings for the season. In our time, perhaps it is our inboxes that get more mileage this time of year. I must confess that my propensity for baking strikes during this season. You may benefit from this proclivity at coffee hour.

I usually invite folks to "simplify" this time of year. This invitation is generally followed by newsletter pages of packed with ways to provide, to donate, to attend to and on and on. How do we manage this tension? We recite an affirmation each Sunday. A piece of that affirmation tells us that service is the law of this church. Some Unitarian Universalists view service as our prayer. Let us be reminded that one of the pillars of our congregation, if you've purchased a Bell Street T-shirt recently, is service. Let this guide you.

Encouragement to slow down and simplify doesn't translate into doing nothing. The understanding that we can't do it all but must do something is enough. We are a people who have been called to heal the world and it is at this time of year that the opportunities and the necessity for healing become most evident. A stranger needs a coat, a child without a family, among other things, needs a toy, the hungry and the homeless need hospitality. We are surely blessed if we can fulfill a single need.

As is tradition, I invite you to simplify. Celebrate. Care for yourselves and those whom you love and love you. Bless our congregation and our community with what you have to give. Let us offer nothing more and nothing less. I offer you peace and blessings for the season. May the year ahead hold health, good fortune, and a congregational life rich and vibrant enough to offer us, and the lives we touch, healing and transformation.

Blessings,

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REV. BEN HALL

COMMUNITY MINISTER

CHURCH STAFF

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 Office Hours:
 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon

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

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 PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, CLARA HARDY
 AND CAROL WISEMAN
 WORSHIP, AUDREY GREENE

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

EDITOR, MEREDYTH WATERMAN
 COPY EDITOR, ELLEN SMITH
 ORIGINAL DESIGN BY TERRY BARBOUNIS

PULPIT POINSETTIAS

Soon our halls will be decked for the holidays. That is, our sanctuary will be decorated. We would like to place live poinsettia plants in front of the pulpit and would like to offer to place a plant in memory of your loved one. You are asked to offer the name of your loved one and a \$15 donation to purchase the plant. Your offering and the name of your loved one will be printed in the order of service for the month of December. Should you wish to remain anonymous it will be arranged. Simply e-mail Rev. CJ at cjmcgregor@prodigy.net with your request or place your donation and name in the offering clearly marked that it is for a plant and a plant will be placed. We'd like to collect your donation and information by Dec. 10.

ROWE CAMP

Enjoy a weekend at Rowe Camp this winter. Unitarian Universalist Rowe Camp and Conference Center, located in the Berkshires in Massachusetts, has released its new fall and winter catalogue. Several copies are available in Eddy Hall or you can contact the camp directly at (413) 339-4954 or visit its website at www.rowecenter.org.

U.U. ministers Mark Morrison-Reed, Jeremy Taylor and Doug Wilson will each be presenting a program, as well as UU troubadours Jim Scott, Nick Page and Ysaye Barnswell. Also appearing are Joanna Macy, James Howard Kunstler, Ray Moody, Kathy Bulloch and more. Topics include Writing from the Heart, Wisdom of the Celts, Thanksgiving for Single People, Our Sexual Stories, Slowing Down, Embracing Aging, Is there Life after Death? and Gospel Music.

Please explore this wonderful UU treasure, a lovely place for a mini-vacation with spiritual stimulation. You will be glad you did. See Kate Gillis or contact her at ksgillis@netzero.net for more information.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Heidi Gilkenson, our office manager, works 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. The office is open for parish business 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. Please be mindful of this schedule if you need assistance from Heidi. She may be contacted at (401) 273-5678 or contact@bellstreetchapel.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you would like to have your announcement included in the weekly e-mailed schedule of events or printed in the order of service, the information must be sent to Heidi Gilkenson at contact@bellstreetchapel.org by Wednesday evening. Please note your announcement may be edited due to limited space.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the next issue of *Bell Street Chapel Columns* is Nov. 13 at 8 p.m. Please submit your articles as a regular Word attachment (.doc, not .docx, please) to Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com.

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

YOUTH GROUP

In the tradition of "build it and they will come" the Youth Group is returning. Richard Keelan has agreed to be one of the advisors and we are looking for another. If you are interested in working with our youth contact Richard at cjandrck@prodigy.net or (508) 736-6250. If you are a youth and are interested contact Richard as well.

There are a few activities planned:

December 18, 2011, 10 a.m. in the Parish House
Youth and advisors will gather to plan their year.

January 27 to 28 Youth CON at UU Sharon

The Sharon Youth are hosting CONstellations on Jan. 27. It is a one night CON (conference) from 7 p.m. Friday to 5 p.m. Saturday.

February

Visit another local youth group Westminster in East Greenwich

March 2 to 4

Senior High Youth Con will be hosted by and held at Westminster Unitarian Church on March 2 to 4. More information to follow.

<http://westminsteruu.org>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We're off and running with our religious education classes! The children of the church read picture books, discussed symbolism and created crafts related to the themes of privilege and connections to the past. We thank our volunteers for their time in teaching our students. If you are interested in volunteering to teach a lesson this year or share a talent, please contact Shelagh Goulis at sgoulis@cox.net.

COMMITTEE FAIR JAN. 22

Have you ever heard the different committee names and wondered what they mean exactly, or what specifically the committees do? Please join us for our next committee fair on Sunday, Jan. 22, after the service, in Eddy Hall, when representatives from the different committees will have tables for discussion and sharing. This is a great way to learn more about the workings of Bell Street and some of the many great things that happen here through collaboration and community.

-Jasmine Appleberry, Leadership Development Committee Chair

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Guest at Your Table boxes and materials were distributed last month and are still available in the Shell Room. The box features people that the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has worked with recently. These people are your "guests," and you are asked to share your blessings with them by putting money in the box. As you give to your guests, you can learn about them by reading the "[Stories of Hope](#)" booklet.

The boxes will be collected on Christmas Eve and Martin Luther King Sunday. Please make checks out to Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Membership gifts of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.

Here is more information from <http://www.uusc.org/>: The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a nonsectarian organization that advances human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world. We envision a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights. Through a combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots organizations, UUSC promotes [economic rights](#), advances [environmental justice](#), defends [civil liberties](#), and preserves the rights of people in times of [humanitarian crisis](#).

~Kate Gillis, President



CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

HAPPY 122ND BIRTHDAY, BSC

I loved hearing the selection from the letter from Susan B. Anthony to Anna Garlin Spencer that Dan Brown read a couple of Sundays ago. Being a historic church gives us lots of opportunities to find fascinating tidbits from our past. We are fortunate that our first minister, Anna Garlin Spencer, was a journalist as well as a minister. She worked for the Providence Journal. Also as part of the requirements of the James Eddy Trust she had to document what happened in the chapel. She did an excellent job of preserving our early history and publishing it. We have several copies of the books that she wrote about the early events in this church.

Lucky for us, these books are also part of the collection of books online in Google Books. Several of the Bell Street books are free Google ebooks so you can read them on your computer and use the search feature to find specific topics. Go to Google Books and look up "James Eddy" and you'll find a book about the man who built our chapel. Try "Anna Garlin Spencer" and you'll find "The History of the Bell Street Chapel Movement: May, 1888 to July, 1902." There are other references to Bell Street besides the books. Type in "Shell Room Bell Street Chapel" and you will discover in the Annual Report of the Providence RI Park Commissioners that in 1908 the Curator of the Roger Williams Park Museum gave a talk at Bell Street Chapel on "Shell Animals and their Homes."

Bell Street Chapel was dedicated on December 1, 1889. So December is a fitting time to spend a while looking over some of our history.

~Kate Gillis,
President

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

It's that time again- yes, time to give to our annual holiday projects! This year the Peace and Social Justice committee will be organizing two projects. As we did last year, we will be baking cookies for the holiday party at Youth Pride, an organization that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth and one of our community partners. So, come on Bell Street bakers (you know who you are), plan to bake several batches of cookies and if we have extra, we can share with each other. YouthPride will also be the recipient for Share the Plate in December.

Our second project will be providing gifts for teens in Department of Children, Youth and Families custody. Often, teens get overlooked at the holidays as younger children are considered for gifts more often. So think of what a teen would like (iTunes gift cards, hoodies, books, sports gear etc.) These items will then be donated to DCYF to be distributed to teens in their care.

Please plan on having the cookies and gifts at service on Dec. 18.

~Clara Hardy, Peace and Social Justice Committee Co-chairperson

FROM THE TREASURER

Remember back in April.... It's this time of year that I would like to remind our congregation to look at what they have contributed toward their pledge. If you are not sure and would like to know please feel free to contact me at mdurette@hasbro.com. With the end of this tax season quickly approaching and holidays upon us we should look to get in our charitable tax deductions in for the coming year. I would also like to take this time and remind our congregation to please write "pledge" on your donation.

~Michael Durette

YULE CELEBRATION DEC. 21

On Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. we will be celebrating the winter solstice in Eddy Hall. The seasonal significance of the winter solstice is in the reversal of the gradual lengthening of nights and shortening of days. The interpretation of the event has varied from culture to culture, but most cultures have held a recognition of rebirth, involving festivals, gatherings, rituals or other celebrations. Please consider participating in the service. We need volunteers. We will use technology to connect to plan the service using a script Rev. CJ has developed. There will be no meetings! If you participate, we will meet at 6 p.m. the day of the service to review logistics. All are welcome.

DEATH AND LOSS READING GROUP

The Death and Loss Reading Group will meet on Dec. 1 at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish House. We will be reading "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. Snacks are provided, wit and insight is encouraged. Contact Audrey Greene at audreyjgreene@gmail.com for information.



DECEMBER 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
				WORLD AIDS DAY 1 3 pm Big Train Farm pickup 6:30 pm Death and Loss reading group (PH) 7 pm Outside group (PH)	2	3 8 am meditation (EH) 9 pm Bell Street Chapel Holiday Party (EH)
4 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Coffee hour (EH) 11:30 am Crossroads 1 pm Books/Bars	5 6 pm Empire Review (S)	6 6:30 pm Worship (PH)	7 6 pm Order of Service deadline 6 pm Daydream rehearsal (EH)	8 3 pm Big Train Farm pickup (EH) 7 pm Membership Comm (PH)	9	10 8 am meditation (EH) 11 am Environmental Justice group (EH)
11 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 am Coffee hour (EH) 1 pm Books/Bars 2 pm Daydream 8 pm nwsltr dline	12 6 pm Empire Review (S) 6:30 pm Governing Board (PH)	13	14 6 pm Order of Service deadline 6 pm Daydream rehearsal (EH)	15 3 pm Big Train Farm pickup (EH) 7 pm Gay Bingo (OS)	16 7 pm Drum Circle (EH)	17 8 am meditation (EH) 6 pm Lenny Schwartz (EH)
18 9 am choir 10 am Service (S) 11 am Coffee hour (EH) 1 pm Books/Bars	19 6 pm Empire Review (S)	20 7:15 pm House Committee (PH)	HANUKKAH BEGINS 21 6 pm Order of Service deadline 7 pm Yule Service (S)	22	23	CHRISTMAS EVE 24 8 am meditation (EH) 7 pm Christmas Eve Service (S)
CHRISTMAS 25	KWANZAA 26 6 pm Empire Review (S)	27 6 pm Peace & Social Justice (PH)	28	29	30	NEW YEAR'S EVE 31 8 am meditation (EH)



Bell Street Chapel Holiday Party

**Dec. 3, 6 p.m.
Eddy Hall**

You are invited to join all Bell Street Chapel members and friends for our festive holiday party. Bring your favorite food for our potluck buffet.



The Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel

5 Bell Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02909
Phone (401) 273-5678 | 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.”**

