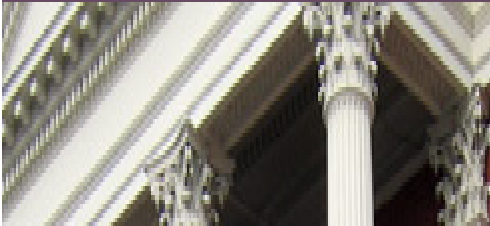


BELL STREET COLUMNS



NEWSLETTER FOR THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF BELL STREET CHAPEL

WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10 A.M.

TODDLER CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL AVAILABLE

2 | MAY

THE OBESITY PARADOX

Mary Flynn, PhD, RD, LDN

As part of our on the series on the current 4 year Unitarian Universalist Study Action Issue, Mary Flynn will address the Obesity Paradox: Why are the most obese in our population the most food insecure?

9 | MAY

MOTHER'S DAY

Audrey Greene

A collection of readings by, about and for mothers. Observations, advice, humor, and sagacity from the women who brought you...life!

16 | MAY

A MIND ON FIRE

Rev. José Ballester

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Margaret Fuller. In her life she learned, lived, struggled, loved and loss. No stranger to depression and despair; she asked questions and reshaped her faith (and her life) again and again.

23 | MAY

THE MAN BEHIND THE DOORS

Richard Corso and Wendy Schwartz

We have all seen and read the quotes on most of the doors at Bell Street Chapel, but have you ever wondered about the man behind the doors, James Eddy? In this service we will explore how these sayings related to Mr. Eddy's life.

30 | MAY

MEMORIAL DAY

Rev. José Ballester

Bell Street Chapel and the First Unitarian Church of Providence will join in our traditional cooperative service. Ministers, choirs, and congregants of both churches will be featured.

ON THE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE: I AM A MASON

I belong to a lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons; or more specially I belong to a lodge of Freemasons. I have been a member of the lodge (Balis Sanford A.F. & A.M) for almost 20 years. For most of that time I have been an officer in the lodge.

Last September I was asked to take responsibility for certain tasks at the lodge. Admittedly I possessed the skill and experience to accomplish these tasks. However the tasks were not ones that I enjoyed doing and consequently I began to resent my involvement. Somehow I kept delaying the tasks until the last moment. As time progressed I kept finding more and more excuses as to why I could not attend the monthly lodge meeting. It finally occurred to me that all the reasons for which I joined the lodge, camaraderie and personal growth had been subsumed by the tasks. I found myself working for a lodge that I was no longer attending; I was utilizing my skills to help maintain a community in which I no longer participated.

Recently while shopping, I met a former parishioner. It seemed that she had stopped attending worship services at her congregation. She was still active as a volunteer, helping with publications and finance, but her involvement in the other congregational activities had slowly declined and soon, she realized, she was finding reasons for not attending. She admitted that her volunteer work, while enjoyable at first, had become burdensome; especially as she was not deriving any benefits herself.

Listening to her, I thought about the story of the minister visiting a parishioner who had stopped attending services because he thought he could derive all he needed without the congregation; then a dying ember popped out of the fireplace and the ember was revived when placed back in the fireplace. It was an often-repeated story told by many ministers to people who have stopped attending. It was at that moment that I truly heard the story and placed myself in the position of the parishioner and not the minister.

We all join groups, with the highest expectations. Often we become disillusioned for some reason and find ourselves distancing from those groups. I did not become a mason to create, publish and distribute the monthly notice and I certainly did not to be the one who collected and recorded the yearly dues. My former parishioner did not join her congregation for all the tasks she had performed over the years. And while we both were not entirely pleased with the current leadership of our particular organizations neither of us could contribute our perspectives if we were not being part of the community.

We both decided that we needed to return to those communities for a variety of reasons. The only question was "how to return?" If we just slipped and no one noticed would we feel underappreciated however if we returned and were greeted as the prodigal son had been greeted would we feel guilty for our absence? Eventually we both decided that returning to the community far outweighed any and all anticipated reactions.

So on the night of the next lodge meeting I will rejoin my fellow masons for their friendship and camaraderie. My former parishioner will do likewise in her congregation. And we encourage all who are not part of their community to return; we cannot truly build a beloved community without you.

Rev. José Ballester

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NED FOSTER, SEXTON
IRENE ZABEK, CHILDCARE MANAGER

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DAN GRECO, PRESIDENT-ELECT
JIM GILLIS, TREASURER
CAROL CROWLEY, SECRETARY
RAY PERREAULT, AT-LARGE
DON LALIBERTE, PAST PRESIDENT

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FINANCE, GREG GRECO
HOUSE, STEVE BARRETO
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT,
JASMINE APPLEBERRY
MEMBERSHIP/CARING, RICHARD CORSO
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, KATE GILLIS
PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, OPEN
WORSHIP, AUDREY GREENE

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

EDITOR, RICHARD CORSO &
DON LALIBERTE
COPY EDITOR, ELLEN SMITH
ORIGINAL DESIGN BY TERRY BARBOUNIS

FROM THE GOVERNING BOARD

It's hard to believe that another church year will soon come to an end. As I write this, our church has just enjoyed a fantastic canvass celebration luncheon (thanks to Beth Grossi and Sally Gabb for catering and organizing it!) kicking off what we hope will be a successful canvass. Once again, as has been the case for the last several years, the outcome of this canvass will help shape the kind of church we can be in the next year and the years to follow.

As this issue is going to press, the board is pondering the future of Bell Street Chapel's ministry. We are now finishing our second year of having a consulting minister, Rev. Jose Ballester. Before him, Rev. Bill Robinson, left for another church after one year of what we had originally intended to be a two-year interim period during which we would search for a settled minister. Our congregation then decided to change directions and concentrate on growth and defining our congregation before we call a settled minister.

During the last two years, we've successfully worked at becoming more welcoming. The result is a number of new members. Our Vision and Mission Workgroup is also now in the midst of leading us in defining our congregation's goals in the near and distant future. These are big steps toward being able to articulate what Bell Street Chapel is all about, steps that will help inspire our work, draw new members and attract a settled minister who will be as excited as we are about our special community and help us be the best church we can be.

At our March Conversation with the Board, Bell Street members expressed some concerns that while we have focused on growth and defining ourselves in recent years, we have had less time and energy to spend on other important aspects of being a church, such as caring for each other and social justice, which have traditionally been hallmarks of our congregation. And there were worries that in all our preparation for the future, we may not be fully embracing the church we are today. Instead of focusing on growth so we can be big enough to support a full-time minister, perhaps we should be more concerned with being the best church we can be now, and living out our mission as a loving community that welcomes all, works for social justice, draws from various faith traditions to encourage our individual spiritual journeys and lives out our Unitarian Universalist principles.

The future of our ministry is not up to the Board – it is up to the members of our congregation, and we will be looking for your guidance in shaping it. We hope that you will participate by letting us know what you want and need as a congregant, and by attending the annual meeting on June 6.

I should note that after that meeting, I will no longer be president. Dan Greco, who has been president-elect alongside me this year, will begin his yearlong presidential term then. I've been proud to serve you for the past year, and am confident that Dan will lead enthusiastically. I'll still be on the Board one more year as past president, and look forward to continuing to work for Bell Street at this turning point in our congregational life.

In spirit,
Meredyth Waterman,
President

CONGREGATIONAL

AFFAIRS

MARSH CLEAN UP

Please join us for the spring cleanup of Bell Street Chapel's adopted marsh on the Providence waterfront on Saturday, May 22, at 8 a.m. A sign-up sheet will be available in Eddy Hall, or you can contact Meredyth Waterman at (401) 451-2322 or MeredythW@aol.com.

We clean up this marsh in collaboration with Save the Bay once in the fall and once in the summer, and we've found this event to be both fun and fulfilling. We've found some interesting stuff over the years (including a shark carcass last fall!), and we've noticed improvements in the forms of less trash and a comeback in plants and animals. There's a good chance that with all the rainfall and flooding this spring, we could be in for some pretty interesting finds.

We will all meet directly at the marsh (at the waterfront end of Oxford Street, Providence), not at church. If you need directions, contact Meredyth.

Please wear sturdy shoes or boots. Sunblock, hats and bottled water are also advised. You may want bring your own work gloves, especially if your hands are large. You should also bring rakes or shovels if you want them. Only if it rains very heavily will this event be rescheduled to June 5. Usually, we finish off our cleanup with breakfast across the street at the Seaplane Diner.

Once again, our cleanup will feature the popular Bell Street Biohazard Contest, which arguably makes otherwise unsavory discoveries a treat. Nonetheless, please do not bring small children to this event due to the dangerous nature of the rocks, the water and the items we find.

Join us for this fun morning of helping the earth!

Meredyth Waterman

ETHICAL EATING: THE UUA STUDY ACTION ISSUE (SAI) FOR 2008—2012

Eating hamburgers causes global warming. Say what?! Yup, it's true. The prevailing methods of producing meat for fast food industries and supermarkets cause substantial contributions to greenhouse gases.

Critics of meat-eating point out that cattle produce huge quantities of methane, the second largest greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide. Most of the problem results from the diet fed to cattle in industrial livestock facilities. It gives the poor cows massive gas, more politely called "enteric methane emissions". The manner in which factory farms handle manure (you don't want to know) also leads to methane production.

In addition, huge industrial livestock operations use many mechanized systems for feeding, sewage removal, temperature control, and ventilation – all of which use electricity, which generates carbon dioxide for its production. And finally, these large animal-feeding operations use corn or soy feed, which has to be transported long distances from where it is grown, generating more greenhouse gases.

So what's a carnivore to do? Fortunately, there is a way to have your beef and not pollute the environment. You can eat locally raised, grass-fed animals. Smaller, traditional farms keep their animals outdoors on pasture, use little machinery, and do not buy transported feed. After eating a natural diet of grass, these happy animals (without gas) deposit their manure in the pasture; it is often collected and used as natural fertilizer for the vegetables produced on a diversified, traditional farm. Voila, no pollution!

Locally-raised pasture-fed beef is available at local farmers' markets. It is more expensive, but you shouldn't be eating so much meat anyway. And it tastes a bit different and is not as tender as the supermarket products you've become accustomed to. But it is a more healthy alternative and it is better for the environment!

Carol Crowley

ANNUAL MEETING—SUNDAY JUNE 6 SAVE THE DATE

Bell Street Chapel's annual congregational meeting will be on Sunday, June 6, after service. All members are asked to attend. Meeting packets will be distributed soon.

NEWSLETTER REMINDER

Please remember the deadline for the June newsletter is Sunday, May 16, at 8 p.m. Early submissions are encouraged and appreciated. Please do not wait until the last minute. Please e-mail your submissions as a Word attachment (in .doc format,) to Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com. Thanks!

AFFAIRS

AMONG US

"Want what you have. Do what you can. Be who you are"
—Forrest Church

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 Carol Crowley (ccrowley8@cox.net).

Ben Hall and Mary Margaret Earl were installed as our community ministers in May, 2003, and May, 2005, respectively. We are grateful for the many ways in which they contribute to our congregation.

Joe and Arline Davis have been married for 38 years this month. Although Joe suffers from vascular dementia, they remain very much a devoted couple and an inspiration to us all.

Mary Margaret Earl and her husband, Sunair, also celebrate their wedding anniversary in the month of May.

Happy birthday to Stuart Smith (soon to be a granddaddy!), Frank Faltus, Zack Friend, and Ren Christohall, all with birthdays in the lovely month of May.

Our thoughts are with Greg and Dan Greco, whose cousin passed away recently. And also to Sally Gabb, Ellen Smith, and Carl Freese, who continue to deal with medical issues. We love you all!

A generous member of the congregation has offered to provide rides to doctor appointments for anyone in need; if you would like to take advantage of this kind offer, contact Carol Crowley (ccrowley8@cox.net).

—The Membership and Caring Committee

SUMMER WORSHIP SIGN UP SESSION

The Worship Committee will hold the sign-up session for summer services on May 16th towards the end of coffee hour. Summer Services are held in Eddy Hall where it's cooler. The chairs are arranged in a circle, the atmosphere is casual. Past service topics have ranged from children's books, a celebration of work, Mr. Rogers, Catholicism, to gospel singing, and travelogues.

If you're a member of the Chapel and have taken a worship workshop, we'd love to sign you up and help you to create a wonderful summer service. Please feel free to contact a member of the worship committee if you have an idea. We are here to help.

Phil Smith will start off the summer on June 20 with his annual Father's Day service. Audrey Greene ends the summer with the "Bell Street Sings" service at the end of August. As of now, all other summer Sundays are open.

—The Worship Committee

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 president, Meredyth Waterman.

During our next to last meeting, the 2009-2010 Board spent most of the time discussing transitional issues concerning leadership and ministry.

Jasmine Appleberry, chair of the Leadership Development Committee, attended the meeting. We discussed the slate of officers and chairs that will be presented to the congregation for a vote at the annual meeting on June 6. We have not been able to fill all positions and some people are taking on two roles in order to avoid even more vacancies. And we are "recycling" several current leaders into new positions. Finding enough willing and capable lay leaders is one of our greatest challenges as a congregation during the next few years. We feel the need for new ideas and enthusiasm.

We also discussed the future of our ministry. The members of the congregation who attended the recent Conversation with the Board expressed the desire to begin a search for a settled minister, although we cannot afford a full-time settled minister. Our members are ready to accept the fact that it is not possible for our membership to grow sufficiently at this time; we have tried everything. We must be who we are and hope that we attract like-minded people, but "growth for growth's sake" does not seem to work. We are exploring the possibility of resuming the search for a settled minister beginning in the 2010-2011 church year.

Plans are under way for the Vision & Mission Workshop on May 8.

We approved the Music Director's contract. All the job descriptions for our employees are complete and will be discussed with them at their annual evaluations.

The plans for the chair lift are proceeding well.

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

Carol Crowley, Secretary

CALENDAR



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
						<p>1</p> <p>8 am Meditation (EH) 8 pm Daydream Theatre Performance (EH)</p>
<p>2</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Coffee Hour (EH) 11:30 am Crossroads Project</p>	<p>3</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH) 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7 pm Outside Group</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8 am Meditation (EH) 9 am Vision and Mission Workshop (OS)</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Coffee Hour 11:30 am Cleaning Blitz</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S) 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:45 pm Governing Board (PH) 7 pm PEAC (S)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7 pm Membership and Caring Committee (PH)</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6:30 pm Film Night (EH)</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8 am Meditation (EH)</p>
<p>16</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Coffee Hour (EH) 11:30 am Discussion Group (PH) 8 pm Newsletter Deadline</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7 pm PEAC (EH) 7:15 pm House Committee (PH)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7 pm Gay Bingo (OS)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>7 pm Drumming Circle (EH)</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8 am Marsh Clean Up (OS)</p>
<p>23/30</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Coffee Hour (EH) (5/23) 11:30 am RE Committee (PH)</p>	<p>24/31</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>6:30 pm Peace and Social Justice Committee (PH) 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>26</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 7 pm RIFF Best of 2009 Festival Encore Screenings (EH)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>2 pm Big Train Farm CSA (EH)</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>

FILM NIGHTS AT BELL STREET CHAPEL

Bell Street Chapel in conjunction with the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF) are pleased to announce the following film nights

LGBT MOVIE NIGHT

May 14, 6:30 PM – Eddy Hall

We continue the 2009-2010 Movie Night Series – our third year of screening films with a gender identity or sexual orientation theme – on Friday evening, May 14, at 6:30 PM. During the past several years, we have seen some stunning, artistically significant films, which have ranged from heartbreaking to hysterically funny. Besides seeing some great movies, we live out our commitment as a UUA Welcoming Congregation, and have a great time together as well!

This month's film, which our licensing agreement prohibits our citing by title in public communications, is about a likeable character, Gabriel. He is a gay aspiring musical theater writer/composer, whose life seems to be stuck in the first act. Unhappy and frustrated, Gabriel seeks relief at a local gay cruise bar and is enthralled by the resident go-go boy, Mark. Having all but secured a perfect one-night stand, Gabriel is left with one little problem. They have no place to go...

Join us for the last movie night of the 2009-2010 season. Bring some food or non-alcoholic beverage to share – and bring your friends to Movie Night at Bell Street!

RI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2009 ENCORE SCREENINGS

May 26, 7:00 PM—Eddy Hall

Join us on Wednesday night, May 26 at 7:00 PM as we celebrate the best of the 2009 Rhode Island International Film Festival. As always a discussion of the films immediately follows the screenings. This month's offerings are:

The Stars Don't Twinkle in Outer Space – A 1940's space adventure in which two children, "Starman" and "The Princess", struggle to escape their doom. As the truth of their situation becomes clear, we realize the terrible nature of their predicament.

Love and Savagery—In 1968 Newfoundland poet Michael McCarthy travels to Ballyvaughn, Ireland. He meets Cathleen, who captures his heart, but because of her chosen path she cannot allow him to capture her heart. Cathleen has to choose between a desire she has recently discovered and a desire she has felt throughout most of her life. Will



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.”**

