

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

7 | NOVEMBER

LET THE FAITH LEAD

Rev. José Ballester

In a gathered community, it is often asked "Who is in charge?" Historians cite the Cambridge Platform as an indicator that the congregation leads. However our history and actions inform us that our communities follow their faith.

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SPIRITUAL DRIFT

Raymond Perreault and Audrey Greene

There is a medieval analogy of the state of spiritual drift as being like a rudderless boat. During uncertain time, we may feel adrift and wonder where the currents will take us.

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TODAY AND TOMORROW — THANKSGIVING

Rev. José Ballester

We gather what has been planted and await the future with anticipation and hope.

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INSPIRED: SPIRITUAL MOMENTS THAT HAVE CHANGED OUR LIVES

Sally Gabb

Awareness of meaning and values in our lives comes to each of us differently, and often in surprising ways. Members of our community share readings and experiences with personal spiritual significance.

MINISTERIAL SEARCH

At the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop, which took place on Oct. 3, the presenter, Eddy Carroll, noted that some of the 10 of us who attended might have been feeling a little insecure about, well, there being only 10 of us attending. He reframed this in a way that captures the spirit of Bell Street Chapel; he pointed out that, yes, this was the smallest group to whom he had ever presented in his 80 to 90 workshops given over the years. But, he said, he has been to many larger churches, including one church of nearly 1,000 members where only *twelve* members attended. He implied that there is importance not just in the *numbers* of members attending, but in the *percentage* of members who attended – a percentage that exceeds that of most churches where he has presented.



This is a testament to the commitment, enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity that is so prevalent at Bell Street Chapel. There have been bright spots the past few years, but many of us are feeling a bit tired. Yet we are on the brink of major changes and need to rely on our reserves at times to maintain the energy that makes this community so valuable to so many.

Surveys have been handed out and many have been collected, three cottage meetings have been held about the future of Bell Street Chapel and our ministry, and a Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop took place--all in about two weeks. The search committee is now compiling the data we have collected to aid in the writing of the Categorical Record which is a collection of brief descriptive paragraphs and survey demographics about Bell Street. This serves as the first part of the process whereby we reach out to potential candidates. I continue to feel privileged to be part of the process and I think I can speak for the rest of the Search Committee in saying that they feel the same. I look forward to the next couple of months which will entail putting to paper all the wonderful aspects of this community for future candidates to peruse in the informational packet we'll be compiling in November. All of this work, while time-consuming, has reinforced for me what Eddie said repeatedly of himself during the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop last week, "I've fallen in love with this church!"

*On behalf of the Ministerial Search Committee,
Wendy Schwartz*

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CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Why is Bell Street here? What do we hope to accomplish? Every once in a while, it is empowering to step back and look at ourselves and try to answer these questions. We have had several sessions over the past year where we shared our ideas. At our last meeting on Sept. 12, we reviewed and modified our ideas. Here are the resulting statements.

Mission (who we are) - We, the Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel, a Unitarian Universalist congregation, welcome all people into our loving community, nurture ourselves, deepen our spirituality together, and work for peace and social justice.

Vision (our dreams) - We strive to develop staff, finances, attractive functional space, and other resources to support vibrant ministries, provide opportunities for lifelong spiritual growth, and be out front and out spoken leaders on matters of peace and social justice.

Please think about these statements. If you have any suggestions for minor changes, please let me know now. We will vote to accept these statements at our congregational meeting in January.

~Kate Gillis, Vision and Mission Committee, ksgillis@netzero.net

BOARD BITS

The Board met with Jim Belanger of Daydream Theatre at its October meeting to about his offer to improve our Wayside Pulpit. He is busy with their show, currently, but will work on designs afterward, and will construct the sign on our stage so we can see it as it is developing. His idea is to make something more visible, possibly more horizontal than its current vertical shape. The Board's consensus is that our needs include continued use of movable letters for our service names, but aside from that we're pretty open. He will work out a design and get back to us. The board is grateful for his work and all the nice things Daydream does for us!

The Board had a discussion about declining attendance at service and Bell Street functions. José indicated that low attendance is common in churches experiencing several years of transition. The Board feels we should consider cutting back demands on members' time as much as possible. We've had a number of "discussion" events, and people are probably getting "talked" out. (Accordingly, we canceled the Oct. 26 Conversation with the Board.) We discussed even reducing the number of committees, but unfortunately, it would require bylaws changes and much other work, all of which means a significant investment in time up front, so it would not provide the relief now, when we need it.

We voted to adopt our new disruptive behavior policy. (More on that on Page 5)

We also discussed some changes to Bell Street Chapel's Board of Trustees, which oversees our trust and properties. Dick Philbrick, who has served on the Trustees for more than 50 years, is retiring. We expressed our gratitude (and awe!) of Dick's incredible service to us, and wish him the absolute best in retirement. We also welcome a new member of the Trustees, Ted Martin.

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



ON THE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE: JUSTICE

At this year's General Assembly in Minneapolis, the Unitarian Universalist Association's Board of Trustees had placed a resolution on the agenda calling for a boycott of Phoenix, Ariz., for the 2012 General Assembly. This was in response to the Arizona Legislature passing the controversial "Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act," better known as SB 1070. In essence, this bill permitted law enforcement officials to determine whether any individual was an undocumented immigrant. Since law enforcement officials did not need "probable cause" in order to stop and interrogate, this could obviously lead to racial profiling. Furthermore, there was concern for the safety of our Unitarian Universalist delegates, especially our Latino delegates, in a venue so radically charged. As a Trustee and a Latino, I was fully supportive of the resolution calling for relocating the 2012 General Assembly.

However, during the General Assembly in Minneapolis, there were calls for different responses to events in Arizona. Initially, there were two strong camps: one that wanted a boycott of Arizona and one that wanted us to go to Phoenix in 2012 to protest the repressive laws and witness for change. The debates were heated and the UUA Board of Trustees feared that there would be a schism. A gathering of leaders from the various stakeholders was convened and met for long hours into the night. I was asked to join that group, not as a UUA Trustee, but as a leader in the Latina/ Unitarian Universalist Networking Association (LUUNA), an organization I founded. From that group, six of us formed a sub-group that crafted a resolution that was eventually approved by the delegates. That resolution is can be found at the UUA website (www.uua.org) and follow the links to either "Immigrant Justice" or "Standing On The Side Of Love."

Essentially, the resolution calls for the 2012 General Assembly to take place in Phoenix, Ariz., but not to hold the usual General Assembly. The General Assembly in 2012, will be a "Justice" General Assembly that will be a transformative experience for participants. Plans are being formulated and will be announced in the next few months.

Since the General Assembly, a number of Unitarian Universalists have traveled to Phoenix to protest the anti-immigrant laws. Some of these individuals, including UUA President the Rev. Peter Morales, were arrested for civil disobedience. While this was a noble gesture, and demonstrated our faith's resolve to advocate for justice; ultimately such tactics are not sufficient to bring about effective change nor transform our congregations to be the change agents for society. The 2012 Justice General Assembly may have some elements addressing the injustice in Arizona's laws, but most likely those laws may be declared unconstitutional by 2012 or the negative picture of life in Arizona projected by the proponents of these laws will have had such a devastating effect on the economy of Arizona that voters will have changed the law, the legislators or both.

However, injustice in one form or another will still be present and we as Unitarian Universalists must address injustice, both in the distance and in our own backyards. Let us not wait for 2012 to work for justice. Let us find ways to partner with oppressed communities and work with them to bring about change. On Sundays, we state that *Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law*. Let us truly live those words and work for justice.

~Rev. José Ballester
Interim Minister

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

PSJ NEWS

The mission of the Peace and Social Justice Committee is to create opportunities for members and friends of the congregation to practice our Unitarian Universalist principles through activities that promote peace and understanding, as well as social, economic and environmental justice in our community and the world.

We will make lunches for the clients of Crossroads RI on Sunday, Nov. 7, after the service. We are very grateful to A.T. Siravo Wholesale Produce for agreeing to donate a case (at least 100 pieces) of fruit each month for inclusion in the lunches. Being able to include fruit helps make the lunches more nutritious. And thanks, also, to PSJ member Mike Durette for volunteering to pick up the fruit each month. We count on YOU to donate the juice boxes, cookies, BIG cans of tuna, lunch bags, and plastic sandwich bags. If you pick up one item each time you shop, it will help us so much! We only have a limited budget for purchasing these items, so we really need your donations. Bring them to church any time and leave them in the kitchen.

Our November activities will include observation of Trans Day of Remembrance by participation in a march and vigil on Nov. 20. People will gather at 5:30 p.m. at Youth Pride, Inc. (171 Chestnut Street, Providence) and march to Beneficent Church on Weybosset Street for the vigil. Refreshments will be served after the vigil back at YPI. We hope there will be a large turnout of Bell Streeters to support our transgender citizens.

SHARE THE PLATE

The nonprofit organization with which we will share the undesignated cash offering during the month of November is Children's Friend and Service, whose mission it is to promote the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's most vulnerable children by providing flexible, effective and culturally relevant services that support and strengthen families and communities. Founded in 1834, Children's Friend and Service is a leading provider of child welfare, family support, mental health and youth development services.

We are specifically directing our donation to the Spirit of Giving Holiday Drive, which supports a party and gifts for the children who are served by the organization.

DAYDREAM PRESENTS: BLACK FRIDAY

The Daydream Theatre Company is proud to present its fall play, "Black Friday" in Eddy Hall. The show runs three weekends in November: 4, 5, 6; 11, 12, 13; 18, 19, 20. All shows are at 8pm. Tickets are \$10 each, \$5 for Seniors and students with proper ID. "Black Friday" is a dark comedy that takes place in a retail mall on the busiest shopping day of the year. The action swirls around the mall and all the people you'd expect to see in the midst of the chaos. It's a social commentary poking fun at ourselves, a character study and a mystery all rolled into one. Don't miss it! Tickets can be purchased online at smarttix.com.

The 14th Annual Buy Nothing Day Winter Coat Exchange will be held on the State House lawn, across from the Providence Place Mall, on the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, Nov. 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (rain location: St. John's Cathedral, 570 North Main St., Providence). As usual, Bell Street Chapel will participate by collecting coats, scarves, hats and gloves to donate to the coat exchange, where people can come to select winter coats, etc. for the whole family, no questions asked. The day after Thanksgiving is the busiest day in the American retail calendar and the unofficial start of the international Christmas-shopping season. Thousands of activists and concerned citizens worldwide will take a 24-hour consumer "detox" as part of the annual Buy Nothing Day. Jim McCartin will head up Bell Street's participation in this event.

We continue our Books Through Bars project of sending books to prisoners all over the country. Many prison facilities do not provide adequate library services for their inmates. Reading is a healthy productive way for incarcerated individuals to spend their time. The letters of gratitude that we receive inspire us and renew our commitment. Please join us on Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. Come when you can. It's fun!

The PSJ committee would love some new members on the committee. See Carol Crowley or come to one of our meetings if you want to know more about the important work we do.

~Carol Crowley, Chairperson

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the next issue of *Bells Street Chapel Columns* is Nov. 14 at 8 p.m. Please submit your articles as a regular Word attachment (.doc, not .docx, please.) 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. And remember — it's not just for announcing events. If you have information like what your committee is working on, or other church-related information of interest that you'd like to share with the Bell Street community, please send it in.

~Meredyth Waterman

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



FROM THE BOARD

At the October Governing Board meeting, the Board voted to adopt a new policy regarding disruptive behavior. The policy was adopted to increase our faith community's safety and security and to improve our communication around disruptive behavior. The policy was adopted from the Unitarian Universalist Association's "Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior." Please read through the policy and feel free to contact the Board with any comments or questions.

*In faith,
Dan Greco
President*

Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion if the offending person or persons.

There have been times when disruptive behavior of an individual in the church building or on the church grounds has led members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

- Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child;
- The disruption of church activities
- Diminishing appeal of the congregation to its potential and existing membership.

The following shall be the policy of Bell Street Chapel in dealing with these issues:

If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Parish Minister, if available, and/or the president of the church. This may include asking the offended person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such time that it may be safely resumed. If further assistance is required, the Police Department may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without the Parish Minister, he or she must be notified; a follow-up letter detailing the offense and the resulting action should be distributed to the Parish Minister and the Board President.

Situations that do not require immediate response will be referred to the Governing Board, which will respond in terms of its own judgment in observance of the following

The Governing Board will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define "acceptable" behavior in advance.

Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided

The Governing Board will collect all necessary information.

To aid in evaluating the problem, the following will be considered:

- DANGEROUSNESS – Is the individual a source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property
- DISRUPTIVENESS – How much interference with church functions is going on?
- OFFENSIVENESS – How likely is it that prospective or current members will be driven away?

To determine the necessary response, the following will be considered:

CAUSES – Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual or others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?

HISTORY – What is the extent, if any, of disruption caused in the past?

PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem will diminish in the future?

The Governing Board will decide on the necessary response on a case by case basis. However, three levels of action/response are recommended:

LEVEL ONE – The Governing Board shall inform the Parish Minister of the problem, and either the MINISTER or a member of the Governing Board shall meet with the offending person or persons to communicate the concern.

LEVEL TWO – The offending individual(s) is excluded from the specific church activities for a limited

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

HELP WANTED

The Membership Committee is seeking a person willing to coordinate coffee hour. The position doesn't mean that you need to be here early each Sunday baking cookies and brewing; it means simply taking a few moments about once a month to ask people to volunteer to take charge of coffee hour on one Sunday, and monitoring coffee hour supplies.

It's usually pretty easy to get volunteers; just walk around at coffee hour with a clipboard and the dates you need filled and ask people. Bell Streeters tend to be good about taking turns with this. If this sounds like something you can do, please contact one of the Membership and Caring Committee co-chairpersons, Chad Welch at cwelch@cox.net or Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com or (401) 451-2322.

Our committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Peg Boyle, who has served as our coffee hour coordinator for several years and has decided it's time to pass the clipboard to someone else. She's done a wonderful job ensuring that someone makes the coffee and puts out the pastries for us each week and has helped give our weekly gathering the warm and friendly feeling it always has. Thanks, Peg.

AMONG US

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 one of the Membership and Caring Committee co-chairpersons, Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com or (401) 451-2322 and Chad Welch at cwelch@cox.net. Please contact Ellen Lenox Smith at ellen.smith2@gmail.com if you have any news to include in *Among Us*.

Although it was a long wait filled with delays, we are happy to announce that Jim Gillis finally had major heart surgery Oct. 26. He will be in the hospital for at least a week, and will then have at least a brief stay in a rehab center, and then will be homebound for more than a month. Our thoughts go out to him and his family as he focuses on healing. He will look forward to his return!

Betty Lamora suffered a seizure caused by a brain lesion Oct. 23. She is now home from the hospital. Please be sure to keep her in your thoughts as she recuperates from this event. She will be missed and we wish her a speedy recovery and

return to Bell Street.

With sadness, we announce that former Bell Streeter David Greenside passed away in October. Plans are in the works for a memorial service on Nov. 7 at Bell Street.

This is an exciting announcement. It seems that Carl Freese will be moving to a new apartment on the grounds of the Thomas Wilbur homestead, an 18th century farmhouse in Apponaug. You can follow his moving progress on Facebook: [facebook.com/Carl.Freese](https://www.facebook.com/Carl.Freese) What a wonderful moment to be moving to such a neat place!

Ellen and Stu Smith are now proud grandparents of two grandsons. Henry Lenox Smith was born in Brooklyn, NY, on Sept. 27, eight days early. The proud parents are Ryan and Cathleen. Ryan is their second-to-oldest son. Ellen and Stu will have their entire new family together this Thanksgiving, so now 6-month-old Landon and Henry will begin their new lives together as cousins!

Those of us that are animal lovers can appreciate the terrible loss Richard Muto and partner, David,

period of time, with reasons and conditions of return clearly written and given to the individual(s). A copy will go into the congregational file.

LEVEL ONE or LEVEL TWO action may be appealed to the Governing Board, and/or the Parish Minister

LEVEL THREE – The offending individual(s) is permanently excluded from the church premises and all church activities. If it is agreed that the expulsion take place, a letter will be written and sent by the Board President outlining the expulsion, the individual's rights, and any possible recourse.

The Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel strives to be an inclusive community, affirming the differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree the disruptive behavior compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security.

felt when their cat, Jordan died. Not many cats are described as being able to count, but Richard somehow taught this to his cat. We know they are mourning this loss in their lives as they also deal with Richard's health issues. We hope that Richard will be well enough to join us at Bell Street again soon for he is missed.

Meredyth Waterman is celebrating a lot this month. She has a birthday on Nov. 22, AND just recently announced her engagement to her wonderful man, David! We are so happy for the two of them and look forward to the events to come for them.

Heron Greenesmith, who's birthday will be celebrated on Nov. 23, is also beginning her new career in DC. We are all so thrilled for her that she landed the job of her dreams!

Mykl Friend will be celebrating his birthday on Nov. 22. May your day be filled with happiness, friends, and celebration of another year!

CONT. FROM P. 5

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



NOVEMBER 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</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review (S) 6 pm Daydream rehearsal (EH)</p>	<p>Election Day 2</p> <p>6 pm Daydream rehearsal (EH) 6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH) 7 pm PEAC (EH)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 6:45 pm Search Committee (PH)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4 pm Big Train Farm (EH) 7 pm outside group (PH) 8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6:30 Movie Night (EH) 8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>8 am meditation (EH) 8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>
<p>7</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Social Hour (EH) 11:30 Crossroads 1 pm Books (PH)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review (S) 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:45 pm Governing Board (PH) 7 pm PEAC (S)</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 6:45 pm Search Committee (PH)</p>	<p>Veterans Day 11</p> <p>4 pm Big Train Farm (EH) 7 pm Membership Committee (PH) 8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>8 am meditation (EH) 8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>
<p>14</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 Discussion Group (PH) 1 pm Books (PH) 8 pm newsletter deadline</p>	<p>15</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review (S)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7:15 pm House Committee (PH) 7 pm PEAC (S)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>18</p> <p>4 pm Big Train Farm (EH) 6:30 pm Book Club (PH) 7 pm Gay Bingo (OS) 8 pm Daydream</p>	<p>Transgender Day of Remembrance 19</p> <p>8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>8 pm Daydream performance (EH)</p>
<p>21</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Service Auction (EH) 1 pm Books PH) 4 pm Prov. String Quartet (S)</p>	<p>22</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review (S)</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6 pm Peace & Social Justice (PH) 7 pm PEAC (S)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 6:45 pm Search Committee (PH) 7 pm RIIF Best of the Fest (EH)</p>	<p>Thanksgiving 25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Buy Nothing Coat Exchange (OS)</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>9 am newsletter folding (EH) 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 Coffee hr RE Comm (RE) 1 pm Books (PH)</p>	<p>29</p> <p>6 pm Empire Review (S)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7 pm PEAC (S)</p>				

MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY, NOV. 12, 6:30 P.M. CAROL CROWLEY'S HOUSE

For the past several years, Bell Street Chapel has sponsored a monthly movie night, at which we view and discuss films with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or gender identity themes. In this way, we live out our commitment as a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation; we also have a good time together and share a delicious potluck dinner. Over the past few years, we have seen some spectacular films – dramas, comedies, musicals and documentaries – all mainstream films, many of which have won awards. We show these films on a large screen donated by the Rhode Island International Film Festival, for which Bell Street Chapel is a venue.

The movie for this month, which our licensing agreement prohibits our citing by title, is a Spanish film, a story of sexual awakening, both gay and straight, set in a seaside town near Barcelona. It is superbly acted and a winner of awards at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival.

So bring some food or beverage to share and join us at Movie Night! This movie night will be held at the home of Carol Crowley, because Eddy Hall is in use for a Daydream Theatre production. See Carol or contact her at ccrowley8@cox.net for the address.



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.”**

