

R.I. INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

On Friday night, June 13, Bell Street Chapel hosted the first film screening in its partnership with the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF). This was a sneak peek at the GLBT Film Festival that will take place during the festival, which runs August 4 through 10. We were pleased with the turnout and everyone who attended enjoyed the film *Tru Loved*. We were especially impressed with the 12-foot screen RIIFF provided to the chapel. I would like to thank everyone from Bell Street Chapel who participated, in particular, Philip Smith, Carey Taylor-Noble, Brian Kovacs, Genevieve Peri and Ellen Kellner.

As you know, this is just a small taste of what is to come. Bell Street will be screening many films during the week of the festival. We will be hosting the festival's KidsEye International Festival. This popular festival-within-a-festival celebrates young video makers by showcasing their projects. Those attending KidsEye will see a diverse collection of youth-produced media. This portion of the festival runs every morning Monday, August 4, through Friday, August 8. Bell Street will also screen films made by, for and about the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community on three evenings during the festival. Members have already signed up to volunteer during the festival, but we still need a lot of help. If you would like to know more about volunteering, please speak to Ellen Kellner, chair of the Events Committee.

~Richard Corso



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.”**

MOVIE NIGHT: INTERMISSION

Bell Street Chapel's Movie Night series is taking an intermission for the summer, but we are already planning our 2008-2009 season. As many of you know, Movie Night is part of our effort to live out the values that we espoused when we became a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation several years ago. Accordingly, we have been proud to present films with GLBT themes. For the past two years, we have been concentrating on films that examine gender-identity issues.

Our first Movie Night of the 2008-2009 season is planned for Friday evening, Sept. 12, at 6:30 p.m.. We share a potluck dinner while we watch the film and then have a short discussion, led by Genevieve Peri.

Although our licensing contract prevents us from announcing the name of the movie in the newsletter or on the website, here's a hint – plan to bring your raincoat, party noisemakers, and toast. Got it? See you in September!



■ JULY-AUGUST
■ 2008

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

6 | JULY AMERICAN POETRY

Brian Kovacs, Audrey Greene

American poetry is made by lovers and sages, kooks and curmudgeons. We will wade just a few meters deep. Join us.

13 | JULY YOGA

Liz Marsis

20 | JULY THE GENTLE FAITH OF FRED ROGERS

Peg Boyle

There are few personalities who evoke the warmth and acceptance conveyed by Mr Rogers. His simple wisdom and insights have been a comfort to many. Please join us as we explore his legacy; zippered cardigans are optional.

27 | JULY SPIRITUALITY AND THERAPY

Greg Greco

They are yin and yang. Heads and tails. Donny and Marie. Both spirituality and therapy seek to help people become their best selves. They can be and so often are inexorably linked. We look to explore this link and gleam insight from it.

3 | AUGUST LESSONS LEARNED FROM MOTHERHOOD

Julie Friend

Julie's two sons have taught her some of life's most valuable lessons. Reflect with her on lessons learned from our youngest teachers.

10 | AUGUST THE LGBT EXPERIENCE

Ray Perreault and Brian Kovacs

A personal and spiritual assessment of the LGBT experience. We'll consider what's changing and what's not and how it affects us all.

IN THE INTERIM: TRANSITIONS

One day last month I received a phone call the likes of which always causes me to stop, take a few deep breaths, and reflect upon life in general. The call was from the son of a church elder who my wife, Gretchen, and I have known for many years. She was the oldest member in the Unitarian congregation in Norton, Mass. As you might have guessed by now her son was calling to inform us that his mother, Lucille, had passed away that afternoon. He asked if I would be able to conduct her memorial and interment services later in the week.

Gretchen and I had last encountered Lucille at a summer service in Norton when we filled in for their usual guest minister. She was incredibly vigorous yet took the opportunity to ask both of us to conduct together her memorial service. Honored, we readily agreed. Her son was aware of his mother's choice of arrangements since Lucille had recorded our earlier conversation in a tiny notebook. Along with all her personal family

17 | AUGUST TRANSFORMING ANGER

Jasmine Appleberry

Is there a way to notice anger, examine its deeper messages, and move toward positive change? Perhaps our human capacity for insight can guide us from our cruelest instincts to our greatest capacities.

24 | AUGUST LESSONS OF TRAVEL

Dan Greco

Dan will lead our service and help us explore how the experience of traveling and encountering other cultures, languages and ways of life serves to shape our political, social and religious views.

31 | AUGUST BELL STREET SINGS

Audrey Greene

Join us for our annual celebration of music, community, and the power of voices gathered in song.

information jotted down therein, were her final instructions. She was a woman noted for her skills of organization.

At about the same time of the month a minister in western Massachusetts called to talk with me about his beloved niece and the niece's fiancé. The minister called to ask if I would be available to conduct a wedding for them in the fall. And so, another transition was initiated.

I was struck by the juxtaposition of these calls. One signaled the end of an individual's full and significant life; while the other signaled the beginning of a couple's life together, a life we all hope will be full and significant.

Life constantly presents us with transitions of one kind or another. I think it's a characteristic of our humanity. Some, like the transitions that Bell Street Chapel are facing, are both joyous and sad at the same time. Yet these are opportunities for optimism out of which your congregation will grow, perhaps not immediately in numbers but definitely in the spirit.

I hope during the course of our time together you have come to appreciate yourselves more: the people who are Bell Street Chapel. Yours is an exceptional congregation, spirited, ongoing and energetic.

Although, by the end of this church year, and with all that has gone on this year you may not feel all that energetic. Now you have the opportunity to recover, to rest up, and to let nature restore your spirits. It's important to return energized in September.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and will miss you. I am filled with gratitude for all that we shared and all that we learned together about this faith of ours and about this congregation.

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 To schedule an appointment contact him at
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REV. MARY MARGARET EARL
 COMMUNITY MINISTER

REV. BEN HALL
 COMMUNITY MINISTER

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NED FOSTER, SEXTON
IRENE ZABEK, CHILDCARE MANAGER

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NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

EDITOR, MEREDYTH WATERMAN
LAYOUT EDITOR, GENEVIEVE PERI
ORIGINAL DESIGN BY TERRY BARBOUNIS

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

THE ADVENTURE OF CHANGE

I work for the General Assembly, and one day a couple of years ago I spoke to my mother's representative on her behalf to complain about a new stop sign in her neighborhood. It changed the traffic pattern to one that I thought made no sense and made it difficult to drive from her house. This representative, who shall remain nameless, responded smugly, "Do you not like it because it's bad, or because it's different?"

I maintain that that stop sign was a bad idea (as was his flippant response to a constituent's concern) but I understand his point. Generally speaking, change makes people uncomfortable. We like the security of familiarity, of knowing what's around the corner and being able to plan for it based on previous experiences.

It's often difficult to imagine how something that has always worked before could work just as well or perhaps better a different way. Sometimes we don't even notice that the status quo isn't really working as well as it could, so we don't even consider what we could be doing to improve it.

Knowing how basic a human trait it is to reject the unfamiliar, when the Governing Board began exploring the prospect of suspending our search for a settled minister – an active and thorough pursuit by some of our most dedicated members for the last several months – in favor of a few years of consulting ministry, we expected the congregation would be very suspicious of the idea. Consulting ministry – a ministry where the minister is contracted to do very specific tasks, in our case, helping our congregation grow – is a relatively young concept in the Unitarian Universalist Association. We've never done this before at Bell Street, and most members had probably never heard of the concept before our annual meeting in May. And with Bell Street's propensity for the occasional heated debate at congregational meetings, I, for one, feared the worst for the annual meeting.

And then, Bell Street surprised me. When President Don Laliberte explained the concept and possibilities of consulting ministry, members were very interested and supportive. Questions were asked in a spirit of thoughtful consideration, without suspicion or fear of abandoning the usual process for this uncharted territory. Bell Street's members enthusiastically embraced the idea, and voted to embark on a new journey, one that will require work, self-exploration and many more decisions that will test our willingness to venture into the unknown. I left that meeting with a renewed appreciation for the kind of church we are and a sense of hope and optimism about the adventure we're undertaking.

I'm proud of Bell Street Chapel for the way we were willing to change course mid-journey in an effort to aim higher. I think it bodes well for our efforts to grow and attract the members and resources we need to be a healthier institution and a stronger social force. Having the courage to change is incredibly important and healthy for our development as a strong, loving and active church.

With hope and peace,
 Meredyth Waterman
 President-Elect

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As this is a double issue, the next issue of Bell Street Columns will be in September. The deadline for that edition is August 24 at 8 p.m. Please limit each submission to 500 words (Seriously! It's hard to fit in long ones.) and e-mail them as an attachment to Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com.

Consider the newsletter any time you have a message or idea you'd like to convey to the congregation, not just events. Especially now that we're trying to limit announcements during service, the newsletter is a vital communication tool, and we should make the most of it.

~Meredyth Waterman

MEDITATION

I am happy to report that the meditation group at Bell St. Chapel is alive and well. In case you haven't heard, last November we became a sangha (a meditation community) in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. Joanne Friday, who is an ordained Dharma teacher in Thich Nhat Hanh's Tiep Hien Order (Order of Interbeing), agreed to be the guiding teacher of our group. Her profound wisdom and dedication to the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh continue to nurture our group and keep us focused. We are truly are blessed to have her guidance.

We've recently named our group the *Radiant Bell Sangha* and will soon be registered in an online directory of Thich Nhat Hanh's worldwide sanghas. Soon, others in the area who are looking for a community with which to practice will be able to find us! We've also extended our meeting schedule as follows:

First Saturday of every month: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.
 Second and third Saturday of every month: 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Joanne is scheduled to meet with us on the first Saturday of every month, at which time we follow a traditional sitting/walking/sitting meditation format, followed by a Dharma talk and Dharma sharing. On the second and third Saturday of every month, we follow the same sitting/walking/sitting meditation format, starting with a reading of Thich Nhat Hanh and concluding with a prayer circle and Dharma sharing.

Radiant Bell Sangha is dedicated to creating a safe, welcoming and loving environment for anyone interested in joining a meditation community. All are welcome to join us. If you have any questions about our group, do not hesitate to contact me at rjrosa7@verizon.net.

~Robert Rosa

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, Don Laliberte.

The 2008-2009 Governing Board has had two meetings, a special meeting on Sunday, June 8, and our regular meeting on June 10.

At the special meeting, we formed a subcommittee to review the resumes of the applicants for the job of consulting minister, to exchange information packets with them, to conduct interviews, and to rank the interested candidates for presentation to the full Board. The Governing Board is responsible for the hiring of the consulting minister. The members of the subcommittee are Don Laliberte, Jen Shimkus and Stan Kuziel, chair of the former Ministerial Search Committee. The specific job of the consulting minister will be to help us grow the congregation so that

we will be able to afford a full-time settled minister in a few years.

At the special meeting on June 8, we also authorized a congregational membership at BJ's, specifically for the purchase of snack items and drinks to sell at the events of the Rhode Island International Film Festival that will be held at Bell Street Chapel this summer. All profits from the sale of concessions will go to BSC, as well as half of the admission.

At the regular June 10 meeting, we did not have a quorum, so the installation of Jim Gillis as treasurer had to be postponed. (Editor's note: Jim was later appointed at a brief meeting held after service on June 22.)

The only membership roster change for the month was the resignation of John Simmonds.

The Board heard a report from the Religious Education Committee chair, Kate Gillis, who is committed to restarting a small, high-quality program for children by late September 2008. It is the strong feeling of the Board that significant membership growth will require attracting and

retaining families with children, most of whom desire a good religious education program. Kate plans to hold classes in the "library" off Eddy Hall, which has been cleaned and painted recently. She has selected a curriculum and will start recruiting teachers. Thank you, Kate!

The Board also reviewed a Plan for Growth proposed by the Membership and Caring Committee. The Trustees have offered to fund activities that foster membership growth. You will be learning the details of this plan from the chair of that committee, Richard Corso.

We hired a private contractor to clean the graffiti from the chapel. The Trustees offered to pay for its swift removal, which was successful except on the Plexiglas covering the windows of Eddy Hall. The spray paint bonded with the Plexiglas, so it will likely have to be replaced.

The Board worked on the worship service that it is leading on June 29. The theme of the service will be "New Directions."

Our summer meetings will be held on July 8 and August 12 at 6:45 p.m. Please attend.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

A man is usually more careful of his money than he is of his principles.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

This is the last report for the old fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2008, showing that while our pledge income is down some, the overall budget is in the black, showing a small surplus one month before the close of the budget year.

Our new fiscal year is officially under way, as of July 1, 2008. As we start the new year during the summer, please start your pledges now, during the slow attendance period so that we can continue to pay salaries and other expenses. We may also prepay our oil bill for the winter if we have sufficient funds on hand.

	July'07 – May'08 Actual	July'07 – May'08 Budget	Variance	Annual Budget
Income				
Pledges	\$42,893	\$51,792	(\$8,899)	\$55,000
Sunday Collections	\$12,217	\$7,036	\$5,181	\$7,472
Interests and Investments	\$44,164	\$45,176	(\$1,012)	\$47,975
Rentals	\$6,800	\$12,712	(\$5,912)	\$13,500
Events & Fundraising	\$5,074	\$5,886	(\$807)	\$6,250
Other Income	\$5,456	\$0	\$5,456	\$0
Total Income	\$116,609	\$122,602	(\$5,993)	\$130,197
Expenses				
Salary & Benefits	\$69,213	\$72,465	(\$3,252)	\$76,954
Administrative Expenses	\$20,461	\$18,732	\$1,729	\$19,893
Buildings & Grounds	\$17,484	\$17,893	(\$409)	\$19,000
Denominational Affairs	\$500	\$2,778	(2,278)	\$2,950
Other Expenses	\$4,084	\$10,734	(\$6,650)	\$11,400
Total Expenses	\$111,742	\$122,602	(10,860)	\$130,197
Net Income Gain/(Loss)	\$4,867	\$0	\$4,867	\$0

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

~The Finance Committee
(Phil Smith, Greg Greco, Jim Gillis)

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



DISCUSSION GROUP

A discussion group at Bell Street Chapel

A group of six Bell Streeters has been meeting monthly since January to have a discussion. We are: Carol Crowley, Joe and Arline Davis, Joanne DeVoe, Jim Gillis, and Kathy Lannigan. We agreed to limit our number and to take turns choosing a topic; circulating some information in advance about the topic; giving each person a reminder call or e-mail a few days ahead of the meeting; and then leading the discussion. We also agreed on some rules for the discussions, including sharing the discussion time fairly; sticking to the subject; and expressing opinions respectfully rather than arguing.

All six of us have enjoyed the experience of getting to know a small group of Bell Streeters through discussions of what we care about. We want to continue our little group in the fall.

If there are any other Bell Streeters who would like to join such a group, we would be happy to share our experiences thus far. We have scheduled a time in the fall for our discussion group members to meet with anyone else who is interested in belonging to this sort of group. This meeting will be held Sunday, Sept. 14, immediately after the church service at a table downstairs in Eddy Hall. If only one or two people show up, we will open our discussion group to them. If more than two show up, then we will encourage them to form an additional discussion group.

So you have the rest of the summer to think about this discussion idea. If you would like to talk with me about it before the meeting on Sept. 14, please give me a call at (401) 247-3004.

~Joanne DeVoe

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I am told by many in this interim ministry business that over time one gets used to the pattern of arriving and leaving that interim ministers experience. Sometimes it really does resemble an emotional roller coaster and I doubt that I will ever get used to it but time will tell.

Until we meet again, I wish you joy and good fortune.

~Rev. Bill

AMONG US

"Life is a stubborn return from sorrow again and again. To suffer longing and loss makes you not a victim, but a human being."

~David Gelernter (injured by Unabomber)

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

Welcome to brand new Bell Streeter Ingrid Ren Christohall, who will be called Ren, and who was born on May 30, 2008. Her proud (and probably exhausted) parents are our Community Minister, Rev. Ben Hall, and his wife, Stacy Christo. Ben and Stacy will also celebrate the fourth anniversary of their wedding – their first one as parents – in July. Congratulations, Ben and Stacy!

Summer wedding anniversary wishes also go to our music director and BSC member Irina Tchantceva and her husband Greg Balagian; to Tom and Betty Lamora (40 years – WOW!); to Ellen and Stu Smith (35 years!); and to Peg Boyle and Chris Campanile (they're still young).

Quite a few Bell Streeters will celebrate birthdays this summer. Happy birthday wishes go out to Wendy Schwartz, Jesse Whitsitt-Lynch, Lisa Basiliere, Norma Nelson, Jen Shimkus, Jasmine Appleberry and Don Laliberte.

Happy birthday, also, to two of our favorite children, Cecily Goulis, who will be all of 5 years old on Aug. 8, and Noah Barreto, who will be 11 (is that possible?) on Aug. 28.

Loving thoughts to Ellen Smith, Carl Freese, Neva Hantover and Bev Hart.

Congratulations to Emerson Greenesmith, who graduated from Cooper Union in May. His sister, Heron, continues in law school at American University. And special congratulations to Bell Street Chapel mem-

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO START IN SEPT.

What a lovely gift Bell Street had on Sunday, June 8, when we had four children passing the flowers out during church. It was so good to see children active in church!

With that encouragement, I am writing to ask you if you would like to help with a Religious Education program starting in September. We have a lovely, freshly painted space off Eddy Hall – the former library. I think it will be perfect. We can start with one class for kindergarten through 6th grade. We have a curriculum, designed for use with a small multi-age group, from the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

I would like at least two people to join me as the RE Committee to meet once a month and plan for the needs of the children.

I would like at least five people to join me as teachers. We would have about 27 Sundays and need two teachers each week. That would work out to each of the 6 of us teaching about 9 times in the course of the year.

I would like several people to be substitutes to fill in as needed.

Everyone who will be a teacher or substitute will need to have a criminal background (CORI) check before teaching. (We need up-to-date ones even if you have done it before.)

Of course we also need students in kindergarten through 6th grade to register. Older students can also register and be helpers in the class.

Please let me know how you would like to help and if you would like to register your children. I would like to have the first RE meeting in August, have the CORI checks, RE training and student registration done by the third week in September and begin classes by the last week in September.

Thank you so much for all you do for the youth of Bell Street.

~Kate Gillis
Religious Education Chairperson
(401) 823-7929
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ber, Ed Merck, who has been nominated to represent the United States (along with about six others) at the Global Summit for Ministries and Departments of Peace in Sidney, Australia, in September. Ed is a national leader among those advocating for a cabinet level Department of Peace. What an accomplishment, Ed! We applaud you.

Enjoy the summer, Bell Streeters!

~ The Membership and Caring Committee

THE KNIT PROJECT

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



CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



JULY | CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

AUGUST | CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH) 7 pm Knitting Group (PH)	2 6 pm Order of Service deadline	3	4 Independence Day	5 8 am meditation (EH)
6 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 am sandwiches (EH)	7	8 7 pm Knitting Group (PH) 6:45 pm Governing Board (PH)	9 6 pm Order of Service deadline	10 7 pm Membership (PH)	11 6 pm Events Committee (PH)	12 8 am meditation (EH) 3 pm-8:30 pm Whitehaus Family Blastfest (EH)
13 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 pm Cleaning Blitz (S)	14 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)	15 7 pm Knitting Group (PH) 7:15 pm House Committee (PH)	16 6 pm Order of Service deadline	17	18	19 8 am meditation (EH)
20 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 am Rev. Bill farewell (park)	21	22 6 pm Parish & Social Concerns (EH) 7 pm Knitting Group (PH)	23 6 pm Order of Service deadline	24	25	26
27 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour	28	29 7 pm Knitting Group (PH)	30 6 pm Order of Service deadline	31		

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 8 am Meditation (EH)
3 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 am sandwiches (EH) 11:45 am Paw Sox	4 RI Film Festival (EH)	5 6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH) 7 pm Knitting Group (PH) RI Film Festival (EH)	6 6 pm Order of Service deadline RI Film Festival (EH)	7 RI Film Festival (EH)	8 RI Film Festival (EH)	9 8 am Meditation (EH) RI Film Festival (EH)
10 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 pm Cleaning Blitz (S) RI Film Festival (EH)	11 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)	12 6:45 pm Governing Board (PH) 7 pm Knitting Group (PH)	13 6 pm Order of Service deadline	14 7 pm Membership (PH)	15	16 8 am Meditation (EH) 12 pm BSC picnic (Goddard Park)
17 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 Discussion Group (PH)	18	19 7:15 pm House Committee (PH) 7 pm Knitting Group (PH)	20 6 pm Order of Service deadline	21	22	23
24/31 8/31) 9 am newsletter fold (EH) 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour 8/24) 8 pm newsletter deadline	25	26 6 pm Parish & Social Concerns (EH) 7 pm Knitting Group (PH)	27 6 pm Order of Service deadline 6:30 pm Leadership Development (PH)	28	29	30

LEADERSHIP RETREAT: SEPT. 5-6

The annual leadership retreat will be held at the beautiful Cedar Hill Retreat Center in Duxbury, MA, from Friday, September 5, (arrive any time after 3 PM) until the afternoon of Saturday, September 6. We hope that this opportunity to be together in such a lovely place will be spiritually uplifting and will reconfirm our commitment to serve Bell Street Chapel.

All members of the Governing Board and Leadership Development Committee, as well as the chairs of the standing committees, are invited and encouraged to participate.

The good news is that the cost of the weekend retreat will be considerably less than in previous years. The bad news is that we will also be asking for donations of food for the meals, as the staff of the retreat center is no longer able to cook for us. Consider preparing our meals a bonding experience. It will be fun, honest!! We did it last year and the food was excellent.

So make sure this event is on your calendars. Details and directions will follow soon.

MEMBERSHIP

As part of our focus on growth the Membership and Caring Committee had an opportunity to view sections of the DVD *Listening to Experience* at our June meeting. This DVD features 12 visionary ministers who discuss the phenomenal growth their churches have experienced and what they believe led to this growth. The ministers related many different reasons for growth, including excellence in worship, music and caring for each other. However, all of the ministers agreed that churches who grow are those that have an outward, rather than inward, focus. A connection to the community attracts new members and gives us the opportunity to put our faith into action.

One comment in particular resonated with committee members. This minister talked of the difference between a “bunker” and a “beacon” mentality. A congregation with a bunker mentality feels threatened by change and focuses inward as a way of protecting itself. By focusing inward, the congregation manages to stay in a comfortable place. Such a congregation often avoids conflict. It describes itself as a close-knit family. Members discuss church issues and committee work using jargon that feels unfamiliar to visitors. As a result, newcomers do not feel welcome, and the congregation loses its

energy and begins to shrink. On the other hand, a congregation with a beacon mentality feels confident in itself and is able to reach out into the community. Newcomers feel welcome and are excited by the energy of the group. These congregations grow both in numbers and in spiritual depth.

This DVD generated lively discussion at our meeting. We talked about ways to develop a beacon mentality and have developed a draft Plan for Growth. The plan includes advertising, sponsoring community activities and organizations like Gay Bingo and the West Broadway Neighborhood Association. We are also planning to reorganize the foyer and Eddy Hall to make information about the chapel and our activities more accessible both and members and visitors. We are working with the trustees to fund this initiative.

At our July meeting, we will view additional segments of the DVD. This should again lead to lively discussion and generate new ideas. We invite you to join us in this process and share your thoughts. Our meeting will be on Thursday, July 10, at 7 p.m.. We hope to see you there.

*For the Membership and Caring Committee
Richard Corso, Chair*

EVENTS

The Events Committee will be meeting regularly this summer to offer you some cool programs in keeping with those hazy, lazy, crazy days of summer.

On Saturday, July 12, the Whitehaus family will be presenting Blastfest: Providence from 3 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in Eddy Hall. The Whitehaus family is a musician’s collective based in Jamaica Plain, Mass. Along with some friends from Providence, they will be presenting an afternoon/evening concert featuring some of the best folk music, poetry, storytelling and psychedelic/experimental sonic adventures in New England. Plus peach pie. The 3-to-5 p.m. set will be geared toward families and folks of all ages. At 6 p.m. they will take an hour break from the music to have a potluck supper and pie social, and then resume a musician and poet showcase at 7 p.m. Come one, come all! For more information visit www.whitehausfamilyrecord.com.

Then on Sunday, July 20, we will have a farewell cookout to thank Rev. Bill Robinson for his dedicated service to our congregation and wish him well as he ventures into a new challenge. There will be a sign-up sheet for grills and food in Eddy Hall on July 6 and 13.

The next Sunday Paw Sox game is on August 3 at 1:05 p.m. We contacted the box office and were told that the only way a group could sit together is to arrive at the stadium at least an hour ahead of game time, buy general admission, and find a group of seats together. If there is enough interest, we will get a group together for the August 3 game and leave Eddy Hall at 11:45 a.m. to go to McCoy Stadium.

On August 16 we are planning a Bell Street picnic at Goddard Park. Stay tuned for details. Wishing everyone a safe, healthy and relaxing summer with family and friends.

*~Ellen Kellner
Events Chair*

MARSH CLEANUP

One of the ways in which we Bell Streeters take care of one another is by working together on a good cause. The camaraderie and shared feeling of accomplishment make us temporarily forget the stresses and problems of life and remind us of the special feelings we have for one another.

Such was the companionship among those of us who participated in our biannual Marsh cleanup June 7 at our adopted site off Allens Avenue on the Providence River. Save the Bay, our sponsor in this endeavor, tells us that “our” marsh has historic significance. It was the site where new immigrants to Rhode Island were registered (the Ellis Island of Rhody!) and then later a seaplane terminal.

We have been very encouraged to see the regrowth of eelgrass and other salt marsh vegetation and the increasing presence of horseshoe crabs and other wildlife. And there has been less evidence of human wildlife (although still enough to award the BSC Bio-hazard Discovery Prize to Ray Perreault – Congratulations, Ray!). There was less “big” trash, like tires and construction debris, so we were able to focus on and collect about ten trash bags full of “little” trash like cans, bottles, cups, etc. Following the 90-minute cleanup, we had a delicious breakfast at where else but the Sea Plane Diner just across Allens Avenue.

If this sounds like fun to you, stay tuned. We will be cleaning the marsh again in the fall.
~Carol Crowley

HELP THE UUSC MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.

A completely redesigned UUSC website made its debut on Tuesday, June 24. At the heart of this fully searchable new site is UUSC’s interactive e-Community, where you can connect with them on the issues you care about most.

CHINA’S EARTHQUAKES: YOU CAN HELP

Most of us know about the earthquake in Sichuan province, China, on May 12. The earthquake is devastating to the people in Sichuan, my dear home province. I would like to share my personal story about this earthquake. I was in Sichuan for three weeks and came back to the United States on May 10, just missing the earthquake. My only sister and her family and my mother are still there. Thanks to God, they are safe. However, their lives have been greatly affected. My sister and her family live in DuJiangYan, which is about 20 kilometers from the earthquake epicenter. The city of Chengdu, where my mother lives, is about 100 kilometers away.

My sister, a teacher for the DuJiangYan City Municipal Administrative School, and my brother-in-law, a surgeon, have been living and working outdoors since the first shock. They first lived in their vehicle, then a public tent. My brother-in-law worked from a tent at first. Now he works from a portable hospital facility donated by Germany. Since my sister is employed by the city, she has been working as earthquake relief staff and distributing relief materials. Her family used to have a tent, but donated it to others. She works for the government and is called to put others’ wellbeing before her own.

I have been watching Chinese TV stations daily. The scenes and stories just break my heart. There have been thousands of aftershocks since May 12. Since the affected area is in a mountain area, the earthquake causes many landslides. The landslides cut off many

valleys and rivers and form dams. The risks of flooding become very real.

On May 25, I called my sister, and I could feel her spirit was down. Even though it was midnight, I could hear people talking in the background. I asked her how she could fall asleep. She quietly stated that she is used to it now. She told me it was raining and her blanket was very damp. She also told me that one of her close friends died. One of her other friends teaches at the one of the schools that collapsed. She had more than 50 students in her class, but fewer than 20 survived. The teacher had helped to identify 23 of her students’ bodies before they were cremated. The rest of them are still missing. The teacher told my sister the job was nearly impossible both emotionally and physically, since the bodies were almost unidentifiable.

I no longer can sit still and support my sister alone. I need to do something in a bigger scale. Would you please join me in this effort? If you have not made a donation, would you please donate whatever amount you can? It would be greatly appreciated. Let’s do it together. One tells 10, 10 tell 100. Let’s get the ball rolling. We will help the earthquake survivors rebuild their lives. Thank you very much!

Donations may be made payable to:
South Park United Presbyterian Church
505 McKinley Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14220

*~Lu Meng Zheng
Sister-in-law of Clara Hardy*

Several people from Bell Street participated in the Guest At Your Table program and donated in December to the UUSC. If you would like to make a contribution now, you can click on the Donate Now spot on the website or mail a check to UUSC, 689 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139-3302. Please put on the memo line that you attend Bell Street.

*~Kate Gillis
UUSC Representative for Bell Street*