

BELL STREET COLUMNS



NEWSLETTER FOR THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF BELL STREET CHAPEL

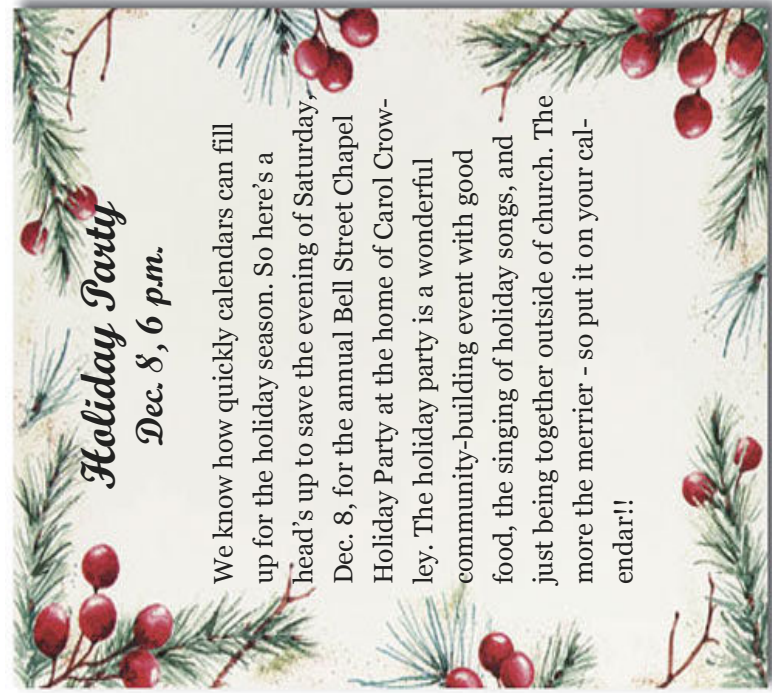
MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m. in Eddy Hall
Featuring: *Soldier's Girl*

Bell Street Chapel is proud to continue its series of Movie Nights presenting films concerned with gender identity issues. There seems to be no end to the artistically significant, award-winning movies with this theme. The 2007-2008 season got off to a terrific start with two comedies, the cult classic "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" and the hysterically funny "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar." (Yes, Patrick Swayze is just as gorgeous in drag!)

In November, we will consider the more serious circumstances facing transgender and gender-queer individuals and those who love them. We will present "Soldier's Girl," the 2003 dramatic film produced by Showtime. The film, based on a true story, concerns the relationship between a private in the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army and a transgender showgirl. The soldier becomes the victim of much harassment and violence at the hands of his fellow soldiers. "Soldier's Girl" received several awards and nominations and was hailed as one of the 10 best television programs of 2003 by the American Film Institute.

We invite you to join us to view and discuss this film. Bring food or non-alcoholic beverages to share – and bring your friends to Movie Night!



Holiday Party Dec. 8, 6 p.m.

We know how quickly calendars can fill up for the holiday season. So here's a heads up to save the evening of Saturday, Dec. 8, for the annual Bell Street Chapel Holiday Party at the home of Carol Crowley. The holiday party is a wonderful community-building event with good food, the singing of holiday songs, and just being together outside of church. The more the merrier - so put it on your calendar!!



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."**

IN THE INTERIM... ENTHUSIASM

All of this activity well before church began by these folks and others reminded me of how thankful we should be to have so many enthusiastic church members and friends. An abundance of enthusiasm is just what is needed to encourage growth in the chapel.

As 19th century Episcopal Bishop George Washington Doane once wrote, "Enthusiasm is the element of success in everything. It is the light that leads and the strength that lifts men [and women] on and up in the great struggles of scientific pursuits and of professional labor. It robs endurance of difficulty, and makes a pleasure of duty."

By the way, among the many things for which I am thankful is that I am thankful to be here with you.

Happy Thanksgiving,

~ Rev. Bill Robinson

I have always been of the opinion that November is a month with much in its favor. I enjoy the changing leaf colors and while raking is no great joy, it certainly provides an excuse for getting out in the yard for a little exercise. In years past we heated much of our home with wood, so November was usually the month when we finished cutting and stacking our supply for the next year. Wood takes a year to dry, so we had to stay a year ahead. The effort to split and stack two or three cords very quickly overcame the early cold of those fall days. Perhaps you've heard the old maxim that split wood "heats twice." It's true.

But November is really the month that reminds people to be thankful for things in their lives, even the most commonplace things. I was reminded of this last Sunday as I arrived at the chapel. The place was already abuzz with activity. People were greeting, others were setting up coffee hour, the choir and the guest soloist were rehearsing, and a few more folks were sharing some one-on-one social time.

WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10 AM
TODDLER CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL AVAILABLE

4 | NOVEMBER ORIGINS OF RELIGION

Rev. Bill Robinson

Our ancestors wrote of experiencing an uncanny feeling of awe or reverence for the mystery that occupied a religion "spot" inside of humanity. What is your idea of the holy and where does religion fit into your life, or does it? Is there room at all for religion or has this become an outmoded idea?

11 | NOVEMBER CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Kate Gillis

The service will include reflections on how we show compassion to others. Guest at Your Table boxes from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee will be distributed.

18 | NOVEMBER TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Genevieve Peri

Finding one's identity through transition. What it costs to challenge our culture's (gender and sexual) conventions and boundaries. We stand up for people's right to be themselves, with safety, support and respect.

25 | NOVEMBER THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Rev. Bill Robinson

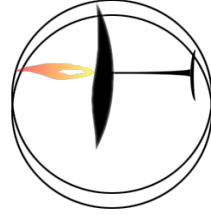
We have much to be thankful for. Join us as we celebrate the gifts of the earth and each other with cider and cornbread communion.

Special Congregational Meeting

Nov. 11
11 a.m. (after service)
Eddy Hall

There will be an extremely brief congregational meeting on Nov. 11 after service in Eddy Hall to officially vote on the length of the search process for our settled minister. This vote is required under our bylaws, and we must have a quorum for the vote to be official. Please make every effort to attend. If you have any questions, please see a member of the Search Committee or the Governing Board.

~Meredyth Waterman
Governing Board Secretary



BELL STREET CHAPEL
 5 BELL STREET
 PROVIDENCE, RI 02909
 CONTACT@BELLSTREETCHAPEL.ORG
 WWW.BELLSTREETCHAPEL.ORG
 (401) 273-5678

MINISTERS

REV. WILLARD ROBINSON
INTERIM PARISH MINISTER
 Rev. Robinson's office hours are by appointment.
 To schedule an appointment contact him at
 rwillrobinson@msri.com or at (606) 226-2910.

REV. MARY MARGARET EARL
 COMMUNITY MINISTER

REV. BEN HALL
 COMMUNITY MINISTER

CHURCH STAFF

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

GOVERNING BOARD

DON LALIBERTE, PRESIDENT
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 MEREDYTH WATERMAN, SECRETARY
 TARA ANDERSON, AT-LARGE

GREG GRECO, AT-LARGE
 ELLEN KELLNER, AT-LARGE

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS
 EVENTS, OPEN

FINANCE, JOHN SIMMONDS
 HOUSE, FRANK FALTUS

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, PEG BOYLE
 MEMBERSHIP/CARING, STEVE KAGAN

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, KATE GILLIS
 PARISH/SOCIAL CONCERNS, CLARA HARDY
 WORSHIP, AUDREY GREENE

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

MEREDYTH WATERMAN, EDITOR
 TERRY BARBOUNIS, LAYOUT/DESIGN

CONGREGATIONAL CAFÉFAIRS



BOARD BITS

From the October Governing Board meeting:

- The board met with representatives of the Events Committee for an update on its work, including concerts and organizing a service auction or a basket auction around Thanksgiving.
- The board reviewed several church policies regarding church events, reaffirming some and choosing to consider revisions to others. Among the policies we are considering changing is one that currently technically bans outside groups who rent our chapel for events from bringing in food they've prepared. We also are considering the creation of a form that allows for church members to be reimbursed out of cash receipts for an event for expenses they've incurred for it.
- The board met with the chairman of the Search Committee about the search process and scheduled the Nov. 11 special congregational meeting to approve the length of the church's search for a settled minister.

BUY NOTHING

This annual event takes place on the busiest shopping day of the year — November 23rd, 2007 (the day after Thanksgiving) — to reject consumerism and shed light on the human need for keeping warm in the upcoming winter months. Winter coats are collected and then given away on the State House lawn, in view of the many shoppers at Providence Place mall. Bell Street has participated in this event each year by asking people to bring in their old coats or new coats where we will collect them and bring them to the State House. So search your closets and bring in coats for those in need. For more information on this event, please contact Tom Lamora at tlamora@cox.net.

- The board met with Terry Barbounis, who is working on updating the church web site, and organized a subcommittee to work with him on it.
- The board approved nominations of Richard Corso and David Gleicher to the Leadership Development Committee.
- The board voted to formalize our relationship with Buddhist teacher Joanne Friday, who sometimes leads the Saturday meditations. We hope that formalizing the relationship will allow her to publicize the meditations and bring more people to these events in our church.
- We sent thank-you notes to leaders of the former First Universalist Church in Woonsocket, which has disbanded, for their gift of five boxes of religious education materials to us.

OUR FRIEND JOE

The call that went out in the order of service: We were organizing a trip on Oct. 6 and 7 to help Joe Laferriere and his sister Mary. Joe was a member of Bell Street Chapel for several years prior to moving to East Dixfield, Maine, last year with his sister, Mary. Mary has recently adopted her 8-year-old granddaughter, Patience, and things haven't worked out exactly as planned for this newly forming family. They could really use some help on several projects, like cutting down some dead trees and splitting and stacking the wood so they'll be sure to have heat throughout the winter (Last year their oil pipes froze!).

The results:

- Our Parish and Social concerns committee decided to support our efforts.

NOVEMBER | 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>4</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 am sandwiches (EH)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6pm Archivists (PH)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH)</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 6 pm Daydream rehearsal (EH)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7 pm Bible Study (PH) 8 pm Daydream Show (EH)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:30 pm Movie Night (EH)</p>	<p>10</p> <p>8 am Sitting meditation (EH) 8 pm Daydream Show</p>
<p>11</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am congregational meeting 7 pm Sakiko concert</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7 pm Finance Committee (PH)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:30 pm Governing Board (PH)</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 6 pm Daydream rehearsal (EH)</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8 pm Daydream Show (EH)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>8 pm Daydream Show (EH)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>8 pm Daydream Show (EH)</p>
<p>18</p> <p>9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Thanksgiving potluck/ service auction (EH) 8 pm newsletter deadline</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:15 pm House Committee (PH)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Thanksgiving</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25</p> <p>9 am newsletter fold (EH) 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH)</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6 pm Parish & Social Concerns (EH) 7 pm Membership (PH)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6 pm Order of Service deadline 6:30 pm Leadership Development (PH)</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	

FINANCE COMMITTEE OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

We are three months into our fiscal year and doing well financially. We are generating more income than we budgeted for and our expenses have been lower than expected as well. This is a good place for us to be right before the winter months. We have paid off all but one of our outstanding bills, which is the cleaning service bill. Heidi, our new office manager has been and will continue to be a big help in generating our financial reports. Thank you, Heidi.

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
(Joe Chaves, Jen Shimkus, John Simmonds, Phil Smith, Lyn Stein)

	JUL-SEP ACTUAL	JUL-SEP BUDGET	VARIANCE	ANNUAL BUDGET
INCOME				
- PLEDGES	\$14,049.00	\$13,750.00	\$299.00	\$55,000.00
- SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	\$2,603.00	\$1,868.00	\$735.00	\$7,472.00
- INTERESTS AND INVESTMENTS	\$13,660.00	\$11,994.00	\$1,666.00	\$47,975.00
- RENTALS	\$5,700.00	\$3,375.00	\$2,325.00	\$13,500.00
- EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING	\$0.00	\$1,563.00	\$12,098.00	\$6,250.00
- OTHER INCOME	\$90.00	\$0.00	\$90.00	\$0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$36,102.00	\$32,549.00	\$17,213.00	\$130,197.00
EXPENSES				
- SALARY AND BENEFITS	\$19,507.00	\$19,239.00	\$269.00	\$76,954.00
- ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$6,435.00	\$4,973.00	\$1,462.00	\$19,893.00
- BUILDING AND GROUNDS	\$1,369.00	\$4,750.00	(\$3,381.00)	\$19,000.00
- DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS	\$0.00	\$738.00	(\$738.00)	\$2,950.00
- OTHER EXPENSES	\$100.00	\$2,850.00	(\$2,750.00)	\$11,400.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$27,411.00	\$32,549.00	(\$5,138.00)	\$130,197.00
NET INCOME GAIN/Loss	\$8,691.00	\$0.00	\$22,351.00	\$0.00

SERVICE AUCTION

Once again, Bell Street Chapel will combine two of our favorite traditions in one big event. The annual Thanksgiving Potluck will be the same day as our Goods and Services Auction. The auction begins immediately following our Thanksgiving Potluck on Nov. 18.

A sign-up sheet is already available in Eddy Hall for the potluck portion of the event. Richard Corso will be coordinating the auction. If you have not already seen Richard to donate an item or a service to the auction, please see him on Sunday, give him a call at (401) 383-7470, or e-mail him at RichardCorso@cox.net. Remember, the deadline for donations is Nov. 9. Past favorites have included many baked goodies, yard work and rides to and from the airport. Use your imagination and donate something great! This year, we will have preview items available as a silent auction, beginning Sunday Nov. 11. So bring your appetite and bring your wallet (or checkbook – cash and checks are gladly accepted!) and prepare to have fun!

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

MEMBERSHIP/CARING

How did you first realize you were a Unitarian Universalist? The congregation welcomes you. The visitor card elicits a speedy response. You receive acknowledgment from officers. The newsletter arrives in your mail.

The social hour provides opportunities to talk with others. Services led by the minister and lay leaders will pique your interest.

These are some things we do. On Nov. 8, we will attend a special workshop entitled "into the Congregation – Welcoming Seekers Beyond the Front Door." We'll look at the art and craft of welcoming visitors and guests and integrating them into the life of the congregation.

Our new Membership/Caring committee is paddling into some fun and happy times. Like ducks we look so balanced on the outside while our feet are paddling away. Caring for others in the congregation with errands, rides for appointments, food and words of support remains a major effort.

Our plans include: updating the membership directory, group visits to Movie Night, greeting other newcomers to Bell Street, Membership/Caring leadership development and making lobby posters for upcoming events. Join Us!

Rev. Bill, Don Laliberte, Steve Kagan and Clara Hardy welcome any questions and ideas.

FROM THE BOARD

sometimes more!) volunteer positions. We have vibrant social events, including a monthly movie night. Most importantly, we support one another in our times of joy and of sorrow.

We have all of the tools that we need. I feel that it is time for us to build a sustainable structure for Bell Street.

I think that one key element to this structure is increased membership. We need to get the word out about this amazing place! Inviting new individuals and families to join our community is not just the responsibility of the membership committee. Rather, it falls to all of us to talk about how Bell Street has touched our lives. Ours is an easy story to share, for instead of proselytizing, one need only talk about our social justice activities- our commitment to Crossroads and the marsh cleanup; or share our early resolutions on gay marriage and the Iraq war. I know that this is what drew many of us to Bell Street and I believe that there are others who are interested in becoming part of a community like ours but may not know that we exist.

Along with new members, I envision a thriving religious education program. I believe that we have a responsibility to teach one another and our youth how to become leaders and face the urgent problems of our day. We have members of our congregation who are willing to share their talents and time in this area and there are parents across the state looking for a liberal religious background for their children. When I imagine the future, Bell Street is able to link these two groups and we become known for our strength in this area.

While we are well on our way to financial stability, I imagine a Bell Street Chapel that is no longer worrying about the micro-level questions, such as whether we will be able to cover the costs of our basic needs. In my

vision of Bell Street's future, we have reached a place of fiscal security, where we wonder about large-scale issues such as how to raise funding to make our sanctuary handicapped-accessible.

In this vision, we use our energy and resources to being an even stronger voice of social consciousness and channel our efforts outward to affect the world outside our doors. While Bell Street may never be a large church, I envision a day when many more people in Rhode Island hear "Bell Street Chapel" and say "I know them, they do good things."

I hope that you will begin to share your visions for Bell Street with one another and with the Governing Board. We cannot lead without your strength and support.

~ Jen Shimkus
Treasurer, Governing Board

KODAK MOMENTS

How can we best describe who we are and things we do as a congregation?

In pictures! During the next year we will clean the marsh, have potluck dinners and movies, join in celebrations and rallies. We should take our cameras to all of these events and record them as they happen. The Ministerial Search Committee is preparing a portrait of Bell Street Chapel. We will keep a scrapbook in words and pictures as a portrait of who we are. This will be one of the many ways a ministerial candidate can get a sense of who we are.

Photos should be e-mailed (with a line or two about the event) to Ray Perreault at ceviz58@yahoo.com.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

There was a great synergistic energy at the Worship Leading Workshop on Oct. 20. We started the morning after a delicious breakfast by imagining a possible topic for a service.

We then used those topics to negotiate our way through the order of service; finding readings and choosing hymns from the hymnal. We also discussed what makes a good service, how to write a reflection, involving others in our services. Then we went over into the church and practiced lighting the chalice candle, using the microphone and generally feeling at ease at the pulpit.

Attendees were asked to come up with their service topics as an exercise but really, they were great topics! You can expect some really interesting lay services in the coming months. You may also expect to be asked to do a reading, or a short reflection. Some of the best services at Bell Street are those with many voices, many stories, many viewpoints.

I think the folks who came to Worship Leading Workshop will tell you that, once you know how, running a service is not so scary. They could also tell you that everyone who leads a Sunday service has a buddy from the Worship Committee who will help them every step of the way, from choosing a topic through to locking up the church after their service.

The Worship Committee is always looking for folks to contribute their unique voices and talents to the Sunday services at Bell Street Chapel. If you've got a great service idea, or if you'd just like to help with a reading or reflection, please contact anyone on our committee.

We are: Kate Gillis, Brian Kovacs, Annette Briand, Tom Briand, Renae Chaves, Betty Lamora, Linda Skibski, Ray Perreault, and me, Audrey Greene

THANKSGIVING

Our neighbors across town at First Unitarian Church once again give us a warm invitation to their annual Thanksgiving Day dinner. Last year a group of us from Bell Street Chapel enjoyed sharing a wonderful meal and social time with them. They roast the turkeys and ask us to bring a dish to share, such as a vegetable, salad or dessert. The church will be welcoming people after 2 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 22. Dinner is planned between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. There is a nominal fee of \$3 for adults and \$1 for children, with a maximum per family of \$10, to cover the cost of the turkeys.

Please contact Phil Smith (401-699-4029) or Carey Taylor Noble (401-662-5468) to reserve your spot at the table. Everyone is welcome. Bring your whole family.

PLANNING WORKSHOP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

members, committee chairs and Search Committee members began this process of self-assessment. The next step is for the congregation as a whole to participate in the discussion. Rev. Bill Robinson will facilitate a workshop on Nov. 10 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Rev. Bill Robinson will facilitate a workshop on Nov. 10 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The goal of the workshop is to begin a meaningful and purposeful conversation about who we are as a congregation, what we value and where we want to go from here.

Your participation in this workshop is vital to making this a meaningful discussion. We encourage all members and friends of Bell Street Chapel to attend. A continental breakfast will be available beginning at 8:30 a.m., and light lunch will be provided immediately following the workshop. A sign-up sheet will be available in Eddy Hall so that we can coordinate food. So mark your calendars for Nov. 10 and join us in this important conversation.

~ In faith,
Don Laliberte, President

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

Did you know that Bell Street Chapel serves fairly traded coffee at coffee hour and events, thereby making a consumer choice that is consistent with our Unitarian Universalist values? Through this program, initiated and sponsored by the Parish and Social Concerns Committee, we are taking an action on a recent UUA Study/Action Issue, globalization.

Coffee is a heavily traded commodity on the world market. Fair trade coffee programs ensure that the coffee growers receive a fair price for their product by purchasing directly from farmer cooperatives and selling directly to consumers. This benefits the farmers, their families, and their communities rather than the large multinational corporations and the middlemen (known as "coyotes" to the Central American coffee farmers). The fair trade organization also offers affordable credit to the farmers and supports sustainable agriculture.

The coffee is of gourmet quality and is organically grown. Not surprisingly, it is somewhat more expensive than the canned product marketed by the corporate conglomerates. But we at Bell Street are willing to pay a little more to live out our UU values. So enjoy your coffee guilt-free!

COLUMNS DEADLINE

The December newsletter deadline is Nov. 18 at 8 p.m. Please submit your articles as a Word attachment – not in the body of the email – to Meredith Waterman at [Mere-dythw@aol.com](mailto:dythw@aol.com). If you are sending photos, please save them as a .jpg, a high resolution, but not a gigantic size. Our newsletter is one of the most effective means of communicating with our members and friends, so don't miss out on this opportunity. Please help us get our 41-cent stamp's worth!

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The committee has established a timeline of steps toward our goal of securing a new settled minister. One of the first steps will be to develop methods for gathering congregational input. We are presently reviewing survey instruments previously used by other congregations. As the process continues, the committee will utilize other formal ways for Bell Street Chapel members to express their thoughts, feelings, interests and hopes regarding our next settled minister. One of the other formal ways includes focus groups. We recognize how vital congregational contributions will be to the search and look forward to recording your input.

Another of the committee's initial steps is to organize a retreat for its members, as directed by the settlement handbook. The district both requires this and facilitates the retreat. We look forward to a complex but exciting journey toward securing a settled minister.

~ Jasmine Appleberry

OUR FRIEND JOE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

- Many Bell Street members (Ellen Kellner, Brian Kovacs, Carol Crowley, Jen Shimkus, Kate Gillis, Steve Kagan, Audrey Greene, Phil Smith, Renae and Joe Chaves, Meredith Waterman, Mary Margaret Earle), provided support by donating money, lending equipment, offering housing and arranging transport of heavy equipment in Maine.
- Several Bell Street members (Arline and Joe Davis, Betty and Tom Lamora, Clara Hardy and Annette and Tom Briand) and Annette's daughter Judy Matteson and her boyfriend Ray Jones made the trip up to Maine.
- One wood stove was donated by Kathy Gaetz. It was picked up in Beverly, Mass., and delivered to Joe's.
- Many small trees and a couple large ones were felled and split into firewood to

PLANNING WORKSHOP

Exploring our Purpose
A Congregationwide Workshop
Saturday, Nov. 10 from 9 a.m. to noon
As Bell Street Chapel moves along its journey as a congregation, we have begun to talk with each other about how we are doing and what is important to us. Why is Bell Street Chapel here? Why are you here? To what are we, as a congregation, committed? How do we do "church"? Who do we want to be and how do we get there?

At the leadership retreat in September, Board

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

And I'll close with an excerpt from an e-mail sent by Joe: "So imagine my surprise this morning. I was expecting maybe two carloads of people, when in rolled a caravan of five vehicles. Nine people had made the five-hour trip from Providence, and I understand that several more people at my old church had pitched in in other ways. They all spent the



day splitting wood, felling trees, and other assorted yard work. This helps us immensely in providing us with fuel for the winter and also in clearing out some land where we can plant fruit trees in the spring. They brought with them a wood stove to replace the one that cracked a few weeks ago, carpeting to use as insulation, insulation to use as more insulation, a new light fixture for the kitchen, and a bunch of other things. That included a nice gift from other old friends at Bell Street Chapel. 'Wow' doesn't begin to cover this."

-Dr. Joseph E. Laferriere

~ Annette Briand