



WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10 A.M.

TODDLER CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL AVAILABLE

7 | JUNE

IN PRAISE OF FALSEHOOD

Ray Perreault and Audrey Greene

One of our Unitarian Principles is "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." Challenging each other's assumptions is one of the ways we get there.

14 | JUNE

FLOWER COMMUNION SUNDAY

Rev. José Ballester

Bring a flower to the service; go home with a different flower. Our annual Flower Communion will remind us of the love we share and our connection to all that is around us.

21 | JUNE

FATHER'S DAY

Philip Smith

Come join us for a celebration of fathers in song, poetry and prose.

28 | JUNE

THE STONEWALL RIOTS

Richard Corso and Don Laliberte

Forty years ago raids against gay bars were common. However on June 28, 1969 a group of patrons decided to fight back, ushering in the modern gay rights movement. What do the Stonewall riots have to say to us today?

FROM THE GOVERNING BOARD — FORWARD, MARCH!

In many ways, it's daunting to be greeting you for the first time as president of Bell Street Chapel. Don't get me wrong. I'm excited and honored. But I'll be the first to admit that I'm nervous and overwhelmed by the responsibility. Yes, I'm worried what I'll do when I get that middle-of-the-night call when the burglar alarm goes off, or that it will somehow be my fault when no one prepares coffee hour. But that's not what is foremost on my mind.

My concern is something much bigger: We are at a turning point not only here at Bell Street, but beyond our doors, in the state, the country and the world.

Outside our chapel, an inspiring new president is leading the free world toward ways that are so much more in line with the principles on which our faith is based. Guantanamo is being shuttered. Better relations between longtime foes are being fostered. Global warming is finally acknowledged by our government as real. (Duh!) And perhaps most sweetly of all, loving relationships that have long been persecuted and even forbidden are finally being recognized and celebrated – in other states.

Our chapel, after a few years of rough seas, has righted itself and is now very markedly on the upswing. Thanks to the hard work of the congregation, our leaders (thank you, Past President Don Laliberte!) and our consulting minister, we're doing a great job welcoming many new visitors. By the time this newsletter is printed, we expect to have several new members. Our finances have improved to the point that in our new budget, we were able to restore previously cut items. And most importantly, our congregation has regained its sense of confidence, its vitality. We're doing the things that so many of us came here to do: serving the homeless, the hungry, the cold, the jailed, and the persecuted.

With so much promise around us, why am I nervous? Because we suddenly are primed to make a real impact, and we've got to make sure we make the most of the opportunity. At its best, Bell Street Chapel has been – and will continue to be – a beacon that points our community toward real social justice.

We now live in the only New England state without equal marriage. Rhode Island's double-digit unemployment rate and the home foreclosure crisis are leaving people among us hungry and homeless, and other areas of the country have it even worse. Genocide is still going on in Darfur. Soldiers and civilians are still dying in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There's just so much for us to do. We can testify and protest at the State House. We can organize letter-writing campaigns and partner with organizations that share our values to heighten our impact. We can set an example and point the way for our community, our state and our country. The world needs us, so let's get moving, Bell Streeters!

~In hope,

Meredyth Waterman, President

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ON THE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE — CHASING GHOSTS

On June 3rd 1984 I

was ordained into Unitarian Universalist ministry at the First Parish Church in Norwell, Massachusetts. At the time, I thought it a radical life change, as my previous career had been 15 years in theatre (as actor, singer, techie and sometimes, roadie). A few months later, I took on my first assignment — an Interim Minister at the First Universalist Church of Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

Since that time, ministry has taken me to 7 other congregations as well as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). I have traveled to 45 of the United States, 4 Canadian Provinces, 3 Mexican States and 5 Native American Reservations. Over the years, I have served as an Interim Minister and a Settled Minister. I have also served as a Director of the UUSC Just Works program, whose volunteers have, among other things: helped rebuild 12 churches that had been destroyed by arson; provided assistance to migrant workers; rebuilt infrastructure and created educational programs on Native American Lands; conducted environmental justice surveys in urban centers; responded to naturally and humanly created disasters; and worked with inner-city gang members. There have been countless sermons, weddings, memorials, dedications, committee meetings, counseling sessions and interventions. This felt like a lifetime of triumphs, failures, frustrations and learning experiences squeezed into a few short years. And, yet, it is those few months spent in Woonsocket that keep returning to my mind.

First Universalist Church of Woonsocket, founded in 1834, long stood proud of its Universalist history, heritage and values. Their worship was steeped in tradition and they held their ministers in high regard. From the first, I felt welcomed and appreciated; I lacked for nothing. When I made mistakes, as all new “wet-behind-the ears” ministers are apt to make, they were understanding and forgiving, and they helped me grow. It is not an exaggeration to say that much of my ministerial style was forged in Woonsocket. For the past few years, I fantasized about retiring from that congregation; a kind of Alpha and Omega to my career.

Alas, the First Universalist Church of Woonsocket is no more. As of last year, facing the reality of declining numbers, they voted to dissolve the congregation. This is hardly surprising, as many mainline churches, especially liberal ones, have been losing members for years. This past year, for the first time since the early 1990's even the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has declined in numbers. So the situation at the First Universalist Church of Woonsocket was inevitable.

However, that congregation was not a failure; it simply knew that its time as a separate church was over. The members of that congregation have now gone to other Unitarian Universalist congregations where they are taking an active part in their lives. The First Universalist Church of Woonsocket will live on in one important way; they bequeathed a portion of their assets to assist the Unitarian Universalists in Rhode Island in strengthening and furthering our shared faith. A special fund in the name of that congregation has been established that will assure that the history, heritage and, most importantly, the values of the First Universalist Church of Woonsocket will be a gift for all of us. As one of your former ministers, I thank you for your faith in us.

~ Rev. José Ballester

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



ETHICAL EATING — THE SACREDNESS OF ALL BODIES AND EVERY BODY

Each month McAuley House, the meal site and house of hospitality where I work in Providence, provides help paying for life-saving medications. People who are homeless or struggling to make ends meet and who lack health insurance come to us seeking help purchasing medicines for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses. Many of these illnesses are nutritionally based. What they are eating – or not eating – is making them sick.

No matter how important we may know “ethical eating” is for our earth, for the animals, and for our bodies, it still can seem a privileged topic. That is, fodder for those who have financial and educational resources enabling them to sample organic seaweed salads and purchase \$10 loaves of hemp bread.

When you consider the lives of those who struggle to put a roof over their heads and bread – any bread – on the table, worrying about eating healthfully may seem secondary, even frivolous.

CHAIRPERSON ORIENTATION

All committee chairpersons are asked to attend an orientation session Saturday, June 13. The event will start with breakfast at 8:30 a.m., with the program itself starting at 9 a.m. At this event, which will last a couple of hours, we will distribute copies of the bylaws and relevant parts of the newly updated policies and procedures manual to each committee chairperson. There will be a presentation about what is in the new manual, and we will discuss responsibilities of chairpersons and committees, and goals for the year ahead. If you are a committee chair and are unable to attend, please try to arrange for another committee member to attend on your committee’s behalf, because we will be having some important discussions. Anyone else who would like to attend is, of course, welcome. Please contact Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com or (401) 451-2322 with any questions or to RSVP.

NEWSLETTER REMINDER

Please remember that the next newsletter is a combine issue for the months of July and August. The deadline is Sunday, June 14, at 8 p.m. Early submissions are encouraged and appreciated. Please do not wait until the last minute. Please e-mail your submissions as a Word attachment to Richard Corso at RichardCorso@gmail.com. Thanks!

~Richard Corso

But it’s not. Indeed, it is crucial.

At McAuley House, I have witnessed the suffering that flows, at least in part, from poor dietary habits: a woman on dialysis after diabetes damaged her kidneys; a man whose obesity makes it nearly impossible for him to walk from place to place; and so on.

Studies show there is a disproportionate level of obesity and its corresponding health problems among the poor. The reasons vary, but include limited access to healthy foods, cultural influences and lack of access to information about healthy choices.

One woman trying to change this dynamic is Mary Flynn, Ph.D., RD, LDN, Supervisor and Chief Research Dietitian at The Miriam Hospital and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Brown University. Dr. Flynn, a member of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank board of directors, developed a program called “Raising the Bar on Nutrition” in which she visits emergency food pantries and shows low-income families how to make nutritious, affordable meals.

Dr. Flynn advocates a vegetarian diet that includes beans, grains and lots of extra virgin olive oil (not as pricey as you may think, depending on where you get it). Participants in her program have learned how to cut their food bills while eating better and losing weight.

I am stirred by Dr. Flynn’s work because, whether she intends it or not, she advocates choices that honor the earth, the animals, and the lives and bodies of those who are financially poor. It isn’t a perfect diet – what is? But, it accomplishes much.

McAuley House does a fairly good job of providing a healthy and hearty lunch to our guests – up to 300 of them each day. But we can do better. Currently, we are applying for grants that would enable us to help our guests make life-giving food choices. And the Ethical Eating Committee has begun mulling over ways Bell Street might work with McAuley House on this very issue, such as helping to make healthy granola bars for breakfast or offering cooking demonstrations.

On Friday July 24, McAuley House will celebrate its second Healthy Body Mind and Spirit Festival from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It’s a day when we honor healthy options for those we serve, including recovery information, yoga, music, and healthy vegetarian meals and snacks. Please join us. We would love for Bell Streeters to be with us as we celebrate the sacredness of every single one of us – whatever we do, wherever we’ve been, whoever we are.

~Rev. Mary Margaret Earl,
community minister and administrator of
McAuley House

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

MOVIE NIGHT TAKES AN INTERMISSION!!

After another successful season of viewing and discussing films with gender identity themes, we will be taking a break for the summer. On September 18, we will resume our series with our annual showing of a cult classic. Stay tuned!

SHARE THE PLATE

Each month, Bell Street Chapel shares a portion of our offertory with a charitable organization in Rhode Island through our "Share the Plate" program. We donate half of the unallocated (non-pledge) donations) received to an organization chosen by the Peace and Social Justice Committee. In March we were able to donate \$234.50 to Books Through Bars, an organization that provides books to incarcerated individuals throughout the country. In April, we collected money for Youth Pride, Inc. (YPI), an organization that provides supportive services and advocacy to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth. Our cash donation to YPI amounts to \$196.75. In addition, we also collected three boxes of non-perishable food and hygiene items to support the YPI Community Food Pantry.

Donations for May will benefit Marriage Equality RI, which works for equal marriage rights for gay and lesbian individuals, and donations in June will benefit Community Music Works.

Thank you to everyone for your generosity, which allows us to share our gifts with the community.

CHOP WOOD, CARRY WATER

Meredyth Waterman has stepped up to be our new president and I, rising to my own level of expertise, have volunteered to organize our chapel-cleaning days.

I truly believe that cleaning can be a spiritual activity. The Buddhists say that enlightenment can be found in the most menial activity. When we pay attention to the everyday, when we give our full energy to the lowliest acts, we invest them with grace. Cleaning can be purifying for the cleaner as well as that which is cleaned, and another way for

us to show how much we love our community and our lovely chapel.

We will continue the schedule of cleaning on the second Sunday of each month about twenty minutes after service is over. On that day, we will need folks to dust the sanctuary, vacuum the carpet, sweep Eddy Hall, clean the bathrooms and kitchen, and generally tidy up the place. There is something for everyone to do, and if we all lend a hand, the work will be done quickly.

Please consider helping to keep our lovely historic building as polished and welcoming as possible.

If you'd like to be a core member of the cleaning crew, please contact me at audrey-jgreene@gmail.com.

~Audrey Greene



CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



AMONG US

"I would not exchange the laughter of my heart for the fortunes of the multitudes; nor would I be content with converting my tears ... into calm. It is my fervent hope that my whole life on this earth will ever be tears and laughter."

Kahlil Gibran

In this column we celebrate milestones and other life events, request healing thoughts for those in need, and remember departed loved ones. It is time to update our list of dates to commemorate. On May 17, there will be an opportunity to add your special dates at the same time that you check in for the Annual Congregational Meeting. Otherwise, you can contact Carol Crowley directly (ccrowley8@cox.net). Don't forget to add the birthdays of the children; we especially want to remember their special days!

And speaking of children, several of our younger Bell Streeters have birthdays in June. Owen Goulis will be four years old on June 1 and Sophie Barreto celebrates her ninth birthday on June 9.

Lily Campanile-Boyle has two special events in June – her 18th birthday and her graduation from Cranston East High School. She will be attending the University of Connecticut in September. Happy Birthday and Congratulations to Lily! We hope you have a wonderful summer getting ready for college – how exciting!

Grown-ups with birthdays in June include Rev. Ben Hall (June 26) and the Greco twins, Dan and Greg (June 27).

Congratulations to Ben Hall, one of our community ministers and an accomplished musician, who recently released a new CD.

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

Enjoy the lovely month of June, Bell Streeters!

~From The Membership and Caring Committee

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

During our Worship Service on Sunday May 17, Bell Street Chapel welcomed seven new members. Please join us in welcoming our newest members:

*Pamela Adams
Julie and Mykl Friend
Marvin Ronning
Elaine Stannard
Carlos Vega
Chad Welch*

We are thrilled to have you with us!

BELL STREET CHAPEL AWARDED CHALICE LIGHTER GRANT

The BCD Board of Directors selected two congregations to receive Chalice Lighter grants. The UU Fellowship of Falmouth will receive a grant to fund an upgrade of its website to improve congregation promotion and outreach. Bell Street Chapel will receive a grant to assist with the purchase and installation of chair lifts to improve handicapped accessibility in their multistory building. Donation request Call Letters will be sent to current Chalice Lighters by May 26.

Chalice Lighter grants are funded by the donations from individuals in the district who have pledged to give \$10 up to three times a year, when a "Call Notice" is sent for a growth related project.

It's easy to become a BCD Chalice Lighter to support these and future projects. Enrollment forms are available in Eddy Hall. Completed forms can be given to Dan Greco, Denominational Affairs Coordinator.



JUNE | 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 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)	2 6:30 pm Worship Committee (PH)	3 6 pm Order of Service deadline	4	5	6 8am Meditation (EH)
7 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 am sandwiches (EH) 4 pm PSQ Concert (S)	8 6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S) 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)	9	10 6 pm Order of Service deadline	11 7 pm Membership Committee (PH)	12	13 8 am Meditation (EH) 8:30 am Chairs orientation (PH) 10:30 am RISE tutoring (EH) 7 pm RIIFP Pride Flick (EH)
14 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 cleaning 8 pm newsletter deadline	15 6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)	16 6:45 pm Governing Board (PH) 7:15 pm House Committee (PH)	17 6 pm Order of Service deadline	18	19	20 8 am Meditation (EH) 12 pm RI Pride (OS)
21 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 discussion	22 6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)	23 6:30 pm Peace & Social Justice (PH)	24 6 pm Order of Service deadline	25	26	27 10:30 am RISE tutoring (EH)
28 9 am newsletter fold (EH) 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am coffee hour (EH) 11:30 am Religious Ed. comm. (RE)	29 6 pm Empire Review rehearsal (S)	30				

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Have you ever wondered what the Peace and Social Justice Committee (formerly the Parish and Social Concerns Committee) does? Here is a brief description of our committee and its work: The Peace and Social Justice Committee of Bell Street Chapel creates opportunities for members and friends of the congregation to live our Unitarian Universalist principles through **Social Service** and **Social Justice** activities.

Social Service activities involve supporting and giving assistance to members and to others who seek and need our help. Examples include making lunches for Crossroads-RI and the marsh clean-up for Save the Bay.

Social Justice activities involve changing systems and policies that perpetuate needs in our community, nation and world. Through our social service work we start asking questions like "Why are we still fighting in Iraq?" or "Why is housing so unaffordable in our area?"

We then work to change these conditions through advocacy, direct action and political involvement. Examples include our participation in RI UUs for Social Justice, Fair Trade Coffee, the Welcoming Congregation, and the Peace Movement. If you are interested in joining this important committee that helps build energy and support for, and is an active advocate of, important causes, please feel free to contact the chair of the PSJ Committee, Clara Hardy, at clarapvd@gmail.com or (401)383-1859.

PRIDEFEST 2009

Join Bell Street friends on Saturday, June 20, at the Pride Festival, where we will be managing a booth to provide information about Bell Street. Later in the evening, we will once again be marching in the parade. We will need volunteers to help at the booth. A sign-up sheet will be located in Eddy Hall.



BOARD BITS

In this monthly column we summarize the recent activities and decisions of the Governing Board. It is our goal to keep you as informed as possible about what we do at our meetings, as we represent and are answerable to you, the congregation. Also, we remind you that all our meetings are open. We would be happy if members of the congregation attended. If you would like to make suggestions for the agenda, speak to the president, Meredyth Waterman.

Our May meeting was the final one of the 2008-2009 church year. We reviewed the year and agreed that, all in all, it was a very good one for Bell Street Chapel. We felt a renewed optimism and energy in the congregation, hired a consulting minister, and implemented a "Plan for Growth", which is already having the desired results. The congregation passed a resolution opposing the ongoing War in Iraq. We established new connections with community organizations, such as Books Through Bars and RISE, and deepened existing ones with MERI and Youth Pride. We deepened our connection and commitment to the Unitarian Universalist denomination and became more involved in denominational affairs. We have been in a good financial situation for the past year, albeit with a very austere budget; we were able to make our full "fair share" payment to the UUA and the Ballou-Channing District. We began a Share the Plate program, making a monthly donation to a non-profit organization from our non-designated cash collections. We all agreed that we were grateful for the invaluable help and encouragement from our consulting minister, Jose Ballesster, and for the excellent leadership of our president, Don Laliberte. We discussed a few minor changes that the Board could make in order to function more effectively.

We discussed the budget for the 2009-2010 church year, although we were unable to vote to approve it because we did not have copies of the final draft. We will do this before the Annual Meeting. Notable was the decision of the Trustees to contribute the same amount of funds from the trust in 2009-2010 as they did in 2008-2009. Our Canvass is complete and, despite the difficult economic times, we consider it a very successful Canvass. Thank you to all who worked on it and to all who made pledges! We will be able to provide raises for our staff for the first time in several years.

We planned the agenda for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation (May 17) and the Committee Chairs' Orientation (June 13).

We discussed the principle of restricted donations to the church for specific purposes. We will continue our policy of requiring Board approval before accepting any donation with conditions attached.

We rescheduled our summer (June, July, and August) meetings to the third Thursday of each month to accommodate vacation schedules.

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

Carol Crowley, Secretary

RIIFF AND BELL STREET CHAPEL CELEBRATE PRIDE & CHRISTMAS IN JUNE

Once again the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF) and Bell Street Chapel will join together and present a Pride Flick on Saturday night, June 13 at 7:00 pm. This year we will be providing a "First Look" of an exciting new work by Rob Williams, *Make the Yuletide Gay*. The screening will also introduce RIIFF's focus on Marriage Equality which will be expanded upon during their main festival, August 4 - 9. We hope you can join us for what has become Bell Street's newest annual event!



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.”**

