

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

1 | MAY

GOOD NATURED: THE BIRTH OF ALTRUISM

Rev. Rachel Tedesco

The Reverend Rachel Tedesco will provide a look at our close cousins the higher primates and their altruistic behavior.

8 | MAY

SPIRITUALITY OF BASEBALL

Richard Corso and Steve Barreto

In this fourth annual baseball service, we will once again explore the spiritual connection fans have with the game of baseball and to the stadiums it is played in.

15 | MAY

FRIENDING JESUS

Rev. José Ballester

Social networking has permitted us to connect with old friends and get to know new ones. It is time to re-examine our relationship and perhaps develop new connections with a great teacher and social justice advocate.

22 | MAY

RE SUNDAY

Kate Gillis, Children of Religious Education

The children of Bell Street Chapel celebrate what they have learned this year about being a Unitarian Universalist.

29 | MAY

MEMORIAL DAY

Rev. José Ballester

As in the past the Religious Society of Bell Street and the First Unitarian Church of Providence join to celebrate a worship service together.

FROM THE BOARD: WELCOME REV. CJ

On April 10, by a unanimous 27-0 vote, Bell Street Chapel voted to call Reverend CJ McGregor as Bell Street Chapel's first settled minister in over 4 years. A little less than a year ago, I worried we were too ambitious to find a minister in a year. Most churches are in search for two years, and the last time we were in search, it seemed like even too much to do in two years. I was wrong. Not only did the Search Committee find a candidate for ministry, they found a great one, CJ McGregor, who shares our values, our vision of the future, and our big heart. Without the incredible and exhaustive work of the Search Committee (Don Laliberte, Wendy Schwartz, Greg Greco, Carol Wiseman and Chad Welch), I would be writing a very different article today.

Candidating week began April 2, with a reception at Carol Crowley's home that was attended by CJ, his husband Richard, and over 25 Bell Streeters. CJ led worship on Sunday, April 3, and preached about pain and sympathy. He shared how he has been able to support and comfort his hospice patients by being present and attentive to their pain without carrying their pain himself. Throughout the week, CJ got to know us, both as a congregation and as individuals, and we got to know CJ. He met with every committee and spent time with individual members and families. On April 10, CJ led a service called "Who We Are," about Bell Street Chapel, a little church that, though tired, has an indomitable spirit and refuses to be defined by others. After the unanimous vote immediately after church, we had a celebration luncheon, catered by Luigi's and beautifully decorated by our incredible Search Committee.

CJ and his husband Richard are planning to move to the Providence area sometime over the summer. CJ will start out as a part-time minister, working 20-30 hours per week and leading 2-3 workshop services per month, but he shares our desire to grow, and eventually hopes to become a full-time minister.

Candidating week brought an infectious energy and excitement to Bell Street. Both services were attended by over 55 people, our largest services in several years. In addition to our excitement about CJ, we have moved even closer to our dream of a stair lift to the sanctuary, a dream that may well be realized by the beginning of the summer. This is a truly important time at Bell Street, both the beginning and the end of an era. We are near the end of an era of introspection and of discernment. We have spent a great deal of time figuring who we are and what's important to us. It feels like we are entering an era where we share our quirky, funky selves not only with each other with the world.

Welcome CJ, to our little church, to our new beginning.

*In faith,
Daniel Greco, President*

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CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

Among US

It's an exciting time for Bell Street as we savor the promise of new beginnings! We welcome our incoming settled minister, Rev. CJ McGregor, congratulate the congregation on the success of our ministerial search, and thank the members of the Search Committee, Don Laliberte, Wendy Schwartz, Greg Greco, Carol Wiseman and Chad Welch, who worked so hard to make this dream possible.

And to pile on the reasons to celebrate, we also welcome three new members of Bell Street Chapel! Dan and Pama Brown and Siobhan Ritchie Cute joined our congregation together on April 17, and bring with them their gifts, their enthusiasm and (perhaps most fun!) their children! Dan's and Pama's teenage sons Ryan and Connor are here just as much as their parents and are a joy to have around, and Siobhan's little daughters Zoe and Qwin are as smart and insightful as they are adorable. Welcome, Siobhan, Pama and Dan, and your families!

Celebrating birthdays this month are Stu Smith (May 6), Frank Faltus (May 24), Zack Friend (who turns 8 on May 26) and Ren Christophall (who turns 3 on May 30!) We celebrate the eighth anniversary of our installation of Ren's dad, Rev. Ben Hall, as our community minister on May 11. And May 22 marks the 6th anniversary of a big day for our other community minister, Rev. Mary Margaret Earl: She was installed with us that day, but wasn't here because it was also her wedding day! Happy occasions to all!

One more anniversary to mark: Arline Davis and her beloved late husband Joe were married on May 20, 1972. Joe passed away a year ago this month, and our Step-a-thon on May 8 to raise money for the stairlift is being held to honor him. He was very dedicated to the project, and would be thrilled to see how close we are to its completion now.

*~In love,
 The Membership and Caring Committee*

Wish List

Wanted for our church:

- One legal-sized filing cabinet for sheet music storage.
- Two small cabinets, one for each bathroom, in which we can store a few rolls of extra toilet paper. This will prevent anyone from falling victim the unfortunate no-TP situation!
- Cloth tablecloths for Eddy Hall. We don't know where they've been going, but we're running out. And frankly, the ones we have are in rough shape. Preferably matching ones. Alternatively, if you have time and some sewing skills, we have a large bolt of cloth, and would love for someone to turn it into tablecloths.

If you have one of these things and are willing to give it to Bell Street, please contact Meredyth Waterman at (401) 451-2322 or MeredythW@aol.com

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the next issue of *Bells Street Chapel Columns* is May 15 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

HANDICAPPED ACCESS FUND-RAISING

Help make the stairlift to the Bell Street Chapel sanctuary a reality.

We are making great progress toward our goal of getting a stairlift to the sanctuary with only about \$2,500 more needed. On May 8, there will be two exciting opportunities to help raise the remaining money.

JOE DAVIS STEP-A-THON

Joe Davis was a great supporter of Bell Street's goal to improve our accessibility. Our Step-a-thon, scheduled May 8 after service, in his memory will give energetic Bell Streeters a chance to go up and down the 17 steps to our sanctuary 10 times – that's 340 steps to remind us of the effort needed to climb those stairs. The rest of us can be supporters of the stair climbers and give a donation for our handicap accessibility fund.

To participate or for more info, please contact Kate Gillis at ksgillis@netzero.net or (401) 823-7929.

SERGEY SCHEPKIN CONCERT

World-renowned Russian-American pianist Sergey Schepkin (and friend of our music director Irina Tchantceva) will perform at Bell Street Chapel on Mother's Day, May 8, at 3 p.m. as a benefit for our handicapped access fund. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for seniors and students and will be sold at the door on a first-come, first-served basis. The program includes Bach: Fantasia and Fugue in A minor, BWV 904; Brahms: Six Pieces, Op. 118; Schubert/Liszt: Five Lieder; Bach: Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor, BWV 904. Mr. Schepkin, a spectacular pianist with a devoted following, performed at Bell Street in 2005, packing the sanctuary and giving an amazing performance. For more information on Sergey Schepkin, visit www.schepkin.com.

BELL STREET T-SHIRTS AND MORE

Visit www.cafepress.com/bellstreetchapel and get your own Bell Street Chapel T-shirts, sweatshirts, canvass bags, mugs, bibs, doggy shirts and lots of other stuff!

David Whitty, fiancé of Board member and Membership Committee Co-chairperson Meredyth Waterman, created the original design at left, which is now available on all kinds of things through our Cafepress.com shop . (Look carefully at the people in the design. You may recognize some!)

And just to make a good thing even better, 10 percent of each sale comes back to Bell Street Chapel.

Wear your Bell Street pride and help spread the word about our great church community!



CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

MINISTERIAL SEARCH

Happily, this is my last ministerial search committee column – you have called Rev. CJ McGregor as Bell Street's next settled minister! If you have been at Bell Street during his candidating week, and been present for the two services he led, you have witnessed the palpable energy he has brought with him in his sermons, his credo writing religious education class, his time with the children, the introduction to us of his own family, and in one to one interactions. There is no reason to believe that this energy will not continue and that, through calling him as our next settled minister, we at Bell Street Chapel – all of us, members and non-members alike – are at the brink of a new stage in our spiritual lives individually and as a congregation.

Many of you have thanked those of us on the search committee, but it feels a little disingenuous to accept the appreciation. When we first met as a committee, we wondered whether there would be a candidate who would be willing to grow with us toward a full-time ministry once again, who would truly “get us,” and who could provide a steady guiding hand, preferably with a healthy dose of humor. We discussed how we were not

willing to “settle.” However, we also anxiously broached whether we had to be in complete agreement or whether we would be willing to tolerate some degree of committee dissent about who we would present to the congregation. Thankfully, this latter issue became moot almost from the moment we met Rev. CJ – and you echoed that in your unanimous vote to call him as your next settled minister.

As a final note, I want to express on behalf of this committee our appreciation of your support this year. I speak for the committee when I thank all of you for kind words, encouragement and advice in this process. It has been a privilege to serve this congregation in this capacity and we feel so fortunate to have found in Rev. CJ a minister with whom we can worship, love, learn, and laugh!

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

CANVASS CELEBRATION

If you haven't made your 2011-2012 pledge to Bell Street Chapel, what are you waiting for? We'll celebrate our canvass this year on May 1 with a May Breakfast following the Sunday Service. At the breakfast, we'll announce the total Bell Streeters have pledged for the coming year. Step up and be counted!

We the members of Bell Street Chapel are on a journey month by month, weeks by week, step by step. We follow our path together to maintain the vision and spirit of our congregation. Bell Street Chapel has amazing assets and big dreams. We are excited about securing Rev. CJ McGregor as our new settled minister; and we dream of being able to make him full-time. We are fortunate to have our music director who enriches our services and programs including musical guests. We would love to see our music program expanded. We share our weekly collection with a variety of social justice groups; we wish to do more. We would love to expand our religious education for both adults and children. We hope to improve our Sunday services through upgrading the sound systems in the sanctuary and Eddy Hall. With congregational support, these are achievable dreams.

If you have not yet made a pledge, please do! There are brochures and pledge cards on the back table in Eddy Hall. You can return the card either in the box there, or in the collection basket during service. Also, remember that the fiscal year begins July 1, 2011, so you don't begin paying on next year's pledge amount until July 1. We know that our generous congregation will step up to the spirit and support Bell Street Chapel and our dreams for the coming year.

Much thanks go out to Sally Gabb and Beth Grossi, who chaired this year's canvass together. Their creativity, organization and dedication is a gift to our congregation, and an inspiration that reminds us why Bell Street Chapel is a special community. Step up and use your gifts to make our chapel's dreams a reality!

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR INCOMING MINISTER

I'm in a Bell Street state of mind. I am still reeling from our time together last month.

A special thank you to our Search Committee. Don, Chad, Carol, Greg and Wendy worked tirelessly to bring us to this point. Thank you to everyone for making my family and I welcome and for inviting me into your hearts.

This is an exciting time for all of us. We have much to look forward to and to share. You will see me again before August 1, 2011. I plan on attending the May 8 service and concert and I have other meetings planned. I'm grateful to each of you.



Rev. CJ with the children of Bell Street Chapel as they hang birdfeeders they made together.

*Blessings,
Rev. CJ McGreggor*

ON THE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE: CELEBRATION!

Congratulations Bell Street, your long wait is over. With the congregation calling the Rev. CJ McGreggor to be your next pastor, you have entered a new chapter in the storied history of this congregation. Do take the time to celebrate your accomplishment. And don't forget to thank both the current and prior search committees as well as the elected congregational leaders.

As an interim minister, I have had to maintain a neutral attitude. I was not permitted to comment on the ministerial candidate nor to influence the Search Committee or the congregation. However, now that you have made the call, I can say that you have made the perfect choice. I have worked with CJ before and I was on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee panel that evaluated CJ and judged him ready to serve as a Unitarian Universalist minister. In addition I know CJ as a colleague and I am thrilled you have made a great choice.

However, I am still an interim minister and have to pass on some suggestions:

1. Remember CJ is human and is bound to make mistakes, so forgive him when he fails at something.

2. CJ has a family and they, too, will need his time.
3. Settled ministers (pastors) are called, not hired, so they have a special relationship with the congregation.
4. Unitarian Universalist congregations are not lay lead; they are lay governed. The pastor leads from among the parishioners. One of the main responsibilities is to support and nurture the leadership of the congregation.
5. CJ is a unique individual; he is not your previous ministers. He has unique gifts and his own style. Do not expect him to do things as your previous ministers and he is not responsible for the faults of your previous ministers.
6. Do not expect more from CJ than he or anyone is capable of.
7. The challenges that the Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel faces can only be resolved by the minister, congregational leadership and parishioners working together.
8. Have fun and love each other.

Again, congratulations and well done.

~Rev. José Ballester

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS

MARSH CLEANUP - MAY 14, 8 A.M.



Illustration by Sally Gabb.

Bell Streeters and anyone else interested in helping the earth are invited to take part in the fall cleanup at the salt marsh we've adopted on the Providence waterfront. This year's spring cleanup is scheduled Saturday, May 14 at 8 a.m.

We will meet directly at the marsh, which is located off Allens Avenue at the end of Oxford Street. Please contact Meredyth Waterman at MeredythW@aol.com or (401) 451-2322 to sign up. Please provide your name, phone number and e-mail address.

Thanks to Save the Bay, we have plenty of garbage bags and plastic gloves. However, we have only a few work gloves, rakes and shovels, so you are encouraged to bring your own if you want them. Please wear sturdy shoes or boots. Sunblock and hats are also advised. Only if it rains very heavily will this event be rescheduled to May 21, at 8 a.m..

We usually wander across the street after our cleanup for a satisfying breakfast at the Sea-plane Diner, so bring a few dollars if you are interested.

This is a fun and satisfying way to make a difference in the world. It's often amazing what we find. And along that vein, our cleanup always features the popular Bell Street Biohazard Contest, which arguably makes otherwise unsavory discoveries a treat. Nonetheless, please do not bring pets or young children to this event due to the dangerous nature of the rocks and the items we find. Please join us and bring a friend or two for this fun morning of helping the earth.

~Meredyth Waterman

BOOKS THROUGH BARS FUND-RAISING CONCERT

On Saturday, May 14, Bell Street Chapel is hosting three very special bands for a terrific folk/blues/country fund-raiser for Books Through Bars. The lead band will be Joe Fletcher and the Wrong Reasons. Here is an excerpt from a review on his latest album:

"Joe Fletcher, who seems to have solidified his Wrong Reasons band here, brings a maturity and strong sense of accomplishment to his (second) effort. It's a much more fleshed out sounding album compared to his debut, *Bury Your Problems*. *White Lighter* respectfully conjures the ghosts of country's past, while adding some rock n' roll swagger with the immediacy of a good old honky-tonk bounce. The variety of tunes on *White Lighter* give the album a lot of twists and turns, and showcase the songwriter's strengths equally as both a songwriter and performer. It's a well-paced and carefully crafted collection of county-blues tunes."

-Chris Mateer for the Uprooted Music Revue

cent of bands like The Counting Crows, Phish and Pink Floyd. This album makes you think by weaving vivid images in your mind through the folk-like lyrics of Dennis Emsley."

And, last but not least, is Daniel Chase.

"Daniel Chase is folk music. He is an observer and a listener above all else and his music is a product of this. A simple interpretation of personal insight and examination turned into song."

The concert will be held in our acoustically fabulous sanctuary, and the doors will open at 7 p.m. Music begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance at www.brownpapertickets.com and \$12 at the door (\$10 for students, seniors and BSC members). This is an all-ages concert.

For information about Books Through Bars, please go to our new Web site at providencebtb.org

Another of the bands Dennis Emsley's Hiding Behind Youth.
"Hiding Behind Youth is a seamlessly melded collection of music reminis-

~Carol Wiseman, Peace and Social Justice Committee

CONGREGATIONAL AFFAIRS



MAY 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
1 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Canvass celebration (EH) 11:30 am Cross-roads (S)	2 6 pm Empire Review (S)	3 6:30 pm Worship (PH)	4 6 pm Order of Service deadline	5 7 p.m. Outside Group (PH)	6	7 8 am meditation (EH)
Mother's Day 8 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 Mother's Day baskets 11:30 Stepathon 3 pm Schepkin concert (S)	9 6 pm Empire Review (S) 6:30 pm Finance Committee (PH)	10 6:45 pm Governing Board (PH)	11 6 pm Order of Service deadline	12 7 pm Membership Committee (PH)	13 6:30 pm Movie Night (EH)	14 8 am meditation (EH) 8 am Marsh Cleanup (OS) 7 pm Books Through Bars Fund-raiser (S)
15 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11:30 Discussion Group (PH) 8pm newsletter deadline	16 6 pm Empire Review (S)	17 7:15 pm House Committee (PH)	18 6 pm Order of Service deadline	19 7 pm Gay Bingo (OS)	20 7 pm Drum Circle (EH)	21 8 am meditation (EH)
22 9 am Choir (S) 10 am Service (S) 11 am Social Hour 11:30 am RE Committee	23 6 pm Empire Review (S)	24 6 pm Peace & Social Justice (PH)	25 6 pm Order of Service deadline 7 pm RIIF Best of the Fest (EH)	26 6:30 p.m. Book Club (PH)	27	28 8 am meditation (EH)
BSC hosts 1st Unitarian 29 9 am choir 9 am newsletter folding EH 10 am Service (S) 11 am Social Hr	Memorial Day 30 6 pm Empire Review (S)	31				

MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 6:30 P.M. EDDY HALL

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.

Our final movie for the 2010-2011 season, during which we have focused on foreign films, is a 1997 French-language film by the Belgian director Allain Berliner. It is the story of a transgender child and her confused and troubled, but ultimately loving and accepting, family. The film won a Golden Globe award for best foreign film. We cannot cite the movie by title because of our licensing agreement, but, trust me, it is wonderful!

So bring some food or non-alcoholic beverage to share and join us at Movie Night!

~Carol Crowley

Peace and Social Justice Committee Chairwoman



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.”**

