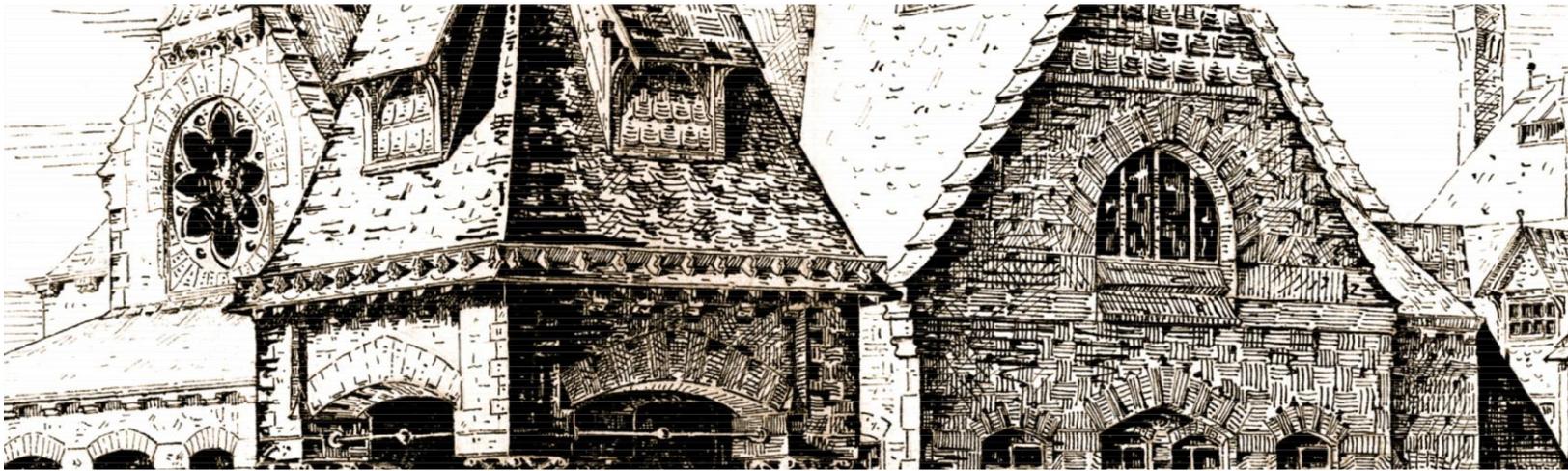


The Beacon

The Monthly Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia

June 2015



June Worship Services

Dreaming on a World

Sunday, June 7, Sanctuary, 11:00 AM

Led by: Ranva Hammamy

We often speak about what is possible. But what can happen when we think about what is beyond possible? What can our wildest imaginations achieve? We are delighted to welcome 1st UU's sponsored ministerial student Ranva Hammamy, MDiv, back to our pulpit this morning. She is a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary NYC and will be the Ministerial Intern at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek, California beginning this summer.

Are We Done?

Sunday, June 14, Sanctuary, 11:00 AM

Led by: Reverend Dr. Susan Veronica Rak

As a religious institution, Unitarian Universalism has been a force for good in LGBT rights. And with Marriage Equality a part of mainstream society, some may think it's time to retire "Pride Month." But we say, "not so fast..."

This is also *Flower Communion Sunday*, a celebration of diversity and community. Don't forget to bring a flower to church this morning (see article in this *Beacon* for more information)

Finding Joy in Complexity

Sunday, June 21, Sanctuary, 11:00 AM

Led by: Reverend Dr. Susan Veronica Rak

This morning we celebrate several themes: the turn of the seasons with the Summer Solstice; the faith journey we share through all our transitions; and we will honor *Juneteenth*, an important milestone in our country's journey toward justice and wholeness. Through this all find we'll find a golden thread of joy and possibility.

Practicing Partnership

Sunday, June 28, Parish Room, 10:00 AM

Led by: Elizabeth Ralston, Worship Associates

Cooperation and collaboration are hallmarks of the UU way of approaching problem-solving and communication. Join Elizabeth Ralston as she explores the concept of partnership from the context of her exposure to these UU principles, as well as from her personal history, which she's shared in her recently published book, *The Mother And The Manager*.

Sunday June 28th marks the beginning of our Summer Services. These begin one hour earlier - at 10:00 AM - and are held in the air-conditioned Parish Room.

Newcomers Corner

Welcome to the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia! We are an intentionally diverse religious community inspired by our historic urban ministry: we seek to be guided by the wisdom and experience of people of all genders, theologies, ages, abilities, colors, classes, and sexual orientations. We aim “to lead meaningful lives, to love one another without prejudice, and to build a just and sustainable world.” If this congregation has become a religious home for you, we encourage you to become a member. We invite you to join us as we move into our third century as a center of liberal religious thought and action in Philadelphia.

Newcomer Corner

Following each Sunday Service, we invite newcomers to stop by the Welcome Table for refreshments and conversation. While there, please fill out a Visitor Information Sheet so we can keep in touch.

Membership

To become a member of the First Unitarian Church, you must be 18 years of age and have attended one of our UU & You orientation sessions (see below), or met with the minister in a scheduled appointment, or belonged to a UU church elsewhere. Members are expected to take part in our congregational activities and to make a financial contribution according to their means. If you wish to join, contact Membership@PhilaUU.org.

UU & You

UU & You are our informal orientation sessions where you can meet with church members to ask questions and learn more about Unitarianism and this congregation. These sessions return to regular scheduling in September, but you are welcome to contact Rev. Susan (interimminister@philauu.org) or one of the Membership Team co-chairs, Phyllis Belk (Phyllis.belk@verison.net) and Mary Kirk (mck0840@gmail.com) if you have any questions before then.

Tending the Fire

We warmly thank those who served as Greeters or Ushers during the spring season, and welcome others to serve in the months ahead. Serving as an usher or greeter is a great opportunity to participate more fully in the congregational life of First Unitarian Church! To learn more, contact Connie Simon, connie@cmsimon.com.

April-May Service Attendance

- *April 26: 79*
- *May 3: 104*
- *May 10: 75*
- *May 17: 100*
- *May 24: 79*



Artwork by Leroy Forney

We bid farewell to Reverend Addae

Sunday, June 14, during services

Our Affiliated Community Minister Reverend Addae Ama Kraba has announced her departure from our congregation - she will be leaving the Philadelphia area this summer, relocating to Texas. Her presence and ministry among us will be sorely missed! Rev. Addae's last Sunday here at First Unitarian will be Sunday June 14th - so mark your calendar and come offer your appreciation of her ministry!

Ministerial Musings

June's Ministry Theme:
Joy - Celebrating the journey thus far

"Maturity is the ability to joyfully live in an imperfect world."

-Richard Rohr, *What the Mystics Know*



For all our positive assertions about human nature, historical and otherwise, Unitarian Universalists seem to sometimes be suspicious of joy, reticent or even fearful of letting it out. Perhaps this is a side effect of our reliance on the intellectual and rational aspects of human nature. A wag once characterized UU's as "God's frozen people" due to our emotional restraint.



Joy is an aspect of life we need to embrace more fully, more enthusiastically. It is not the same as being happy - they are related, but not the same.

"Happiness" is more like a byproduct of joy. Joy is something a little more complex...something that does not always wear a happy face. Yet joy can be present and felt in some of life's deepest, most serious or even dread experiences.

So think about what joy means to you and how it is felt in your life. Here are some questions to ponder:

- Who has modeled joy for you?
- Do you choose joy or does joy most often choose you?
- Does it sneak up on you, or is it something you have to make room for?
- Are there ways in which you hold yourself back from joy?

- Is there something about joy that you distrust?
- When was the last time you had an experience of joy that you wished could last forever... when were you so lifted up in joy that everything else fell away?

These questions help us focus on this as a spiritual practice as we head into the summer, when life might just invite us to take joy seriously.

In the faith, with hope and love,
Reverend Dr. Susan Veronica Rak
interimminister@philauu.org

* A note about Rev. Susan's schedule

Summer is fast approaching and Unitarian Universalist ministers are often away from congregational responsibilities for much of July and August. My last Sunday in the pulpit until the fall will be June 21st. I will be taking "vacation" time in New Jersey for the month of July. Although I am free of all usual ministerial obligations for this month, I am available for pastoral emergencies. The Office at First Unitarian, plus the Board President and the Caring Ministry Team will have my contact information, should an emergency arise.

August will be devoted to what we call "study leave" - dedicated time to reading and planning for the coming year. I'll be in Philadelphia every so often, attending various 1st UU meetings and appointments, and my usual schedule will resume in September. Please be in touch if you have any questions.

General Announcements

Welcoming Our New Board of Trustees & Committees

At our Annual Congregational Meeting on May 17, the following members were voted on to serve First Unitarian Church.

Nominating Committee:

Diane Frey	Erika Parker
Kitty Jauregui	Anne Slater
Katy Morris	

Settled Search Committee:

Liam Dougherty	Heather Speirs
Wendy Jastrzab	Karin Tetlow
Eric Orts	Becky White
Lisa Schilansky	

Board of Trustees:

Caroline Winschel	President
Daniel Widyono	Vice President
Michael Johnson	Treasurer
Michaela Goff	Secretary
Craig Freden	Trustee
Portia Sperr	Trustee
AnneMarie Vaeni	Trustee

Worship Arts Associates Needed

The Worship Arts Team is always looking for new members. If you are interested in crafting quality worship in our liberal religious tradition, have good public speaking skills and can commit to participating as a Worship Associate or Summer Worship Leader, please contact the Rev. Susan Veronica Rak at InterimMinister@PhilaUU.org or Ed Greenlee at edwin.greenlee@gmail.com for more information.

Looking for Church Members from 1980s

The church was recently contacted by UU Reverend Darrell Berger from Staten Island, NY who is looking for First Unitarian Church members from the 1980's. From his email:

"In the early 1980's some women members of your congregation volunteered to teach meditation to prisoners at the NJ State prison, near Camden. One inmate there was serving a life sentence and was paroled last year after 30 years. He attributes being able to turn himself around to a kind warden and his learning to meditate.

I met him about three years ago, helped him with his parole and am now working with him on a book about his life. If we could contact those volunteers, it would be so great on so many levels."

If this is you or if you know who we should put in touch with Rev. Berger, please contact communications@philauu.org.

Caring Ministry Team - Help Support a Member In Need

One of our members, a single mother, is coping with stage four cancer. She is participating in a clinical trial and the ongoing chemo can make keeping up with household duties difficult. To lighten her load, the Caring Ministry Team would like to provide homemade or store-bought prepared meals for her and her children. We're shooting for one meal per week.

We suggest:

- Chicken dishes (baked, breaded tenders)
- Mexican food (beef or chicken soft tacos, rice beans)
- Indian food (samosas, vegetable dishes)
- Thai (green curry with veggies, simple chicken dish)
- Breakfast for dinner (pancakes, French toast, etc.)
- Hamburgers
- Salads
- Hoagies
- Fruit

Please contact caring@philauu.org or thejudybird@gmail.com if you would like to donate a meal or if you have any questions. Thanks for being part of this special effort and a member of our caring community.

Best practice notice: please, note that the Caring Ministry Team seeks to balance the mutual goals of rallying the community to help those in need while also practicing discretion. Therefore, please practice direct communication with the member in need and do not talk to others about the recipient of the church's services. Please do not assume that a member's family or employer are aware of their situation. Thank you.

Upcoming Events & Programs

Architectural Tours of First Church

First Sundays of the Month

Sunday, June 7, Promptly after services, Sanctuary

Are you curious about the history of our First Unitarian Church Building? Join an informal tour designed to give you an understanding of the architecture and decoration of the church, designed in 1883 by Frank Furness. This 30-45 minute guided tour (which happens on the first Sunday of the

month) takes you to all parts of our great historic building. All are welcome. Meet tour guide Richard Frey or Dane Wells after the Sunday service, at the bust of Joseph Priestley, on the west wall near the organ.

Return of the Coffeehouse Concert!

Sunday, June 7, 5:00-7:00 PM, Sanctuary & Parish Room
Here comes the concert we've long been waiting for! Please join us for this musical celebration of the many talents of First Church members and friends. Enjoy eclectic musical selections, luscious treats, coffee, tea, and early evening revelry! Admission is free though donations are gratefully accepted to support the Armstrong Musical Instruments Fund.

Come Celebrate Flower Communion!

Sunday, June 14, 11:00 AM, Sanctuary, during services
On Sunday June 14th we will hold our annual "Flower Communion" celebration! This distinctive ritual is part of our Unitarian Universalist heritage - a simple but profound ceremony symbolic of our diverse community and our choosing to be here. So bring a flower of any kind (it can be from your yard or garden, or store-bought; it can be a flowering or leafy branch) with you this morning. Don't worry if you cannot bring one or you forget - we will have plenty of extras on hand. With these we will create a bouquet and at the end of the Service, each participant will be invited to take home a flower different than the one brought.

Ongoing Adult Programs

Women's Book Club

Open to all women to join in discussion of previously chosen books held in members homes on the first Monday of the month at 7:30PM for hospitality and 8:00PM for facilitated discussion. Contact coordinator Ginny Beier at vhbeier@hep.upenn.edu for info.

- June 1 - *Survival in the Killing Fields* by Haing Ngor, facilitated by Kristen Cortez. Discussion will take place at 7:30 PM in the home of Ginny Beier. Please RSVP to

vhbeier@hep.upenn.edu or 215-545-7831 to get directions.

- July 6 - *Clara and Mr. Tiffany : A Novel* by Susan Vreeland, facilitated by Jean Sue Libkind. Host TBD.

Social Justice

Visit the Social Justice Ministry Team website (PhilaUU.org/justice) for information about our many ongoing projects, including the Task Force Against Mass Incarceration.

DecarceratePA

DecarceratePA is a dynamic, diverse, all volunteer grass roots coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to stopping construction of new prisons, reducing the prison population, and reinvesting money in our communities. Meetings for new members occur monthly on the fourth Monday of the month. At these general meetings you will learn about and be invited to join one of the various committees: Action, Policy, Steering, Finance, Outreach, Media, Newsletter, and the Formerly Incarcerated and Families Working Group and projects including a letter writing group that corresponds with those inside. Whether you want to work on policy issues, lobby legislators, research and write op-ed pieces or take direct action at a rally, there is a place for you in DPA. Check out the website: www.decarceratePA.info

Become a Supporter of UUPLAN

Unitarian principles for legislation

Do you support adding sexual orientation and gender identity to Pennsylvania's Hate Crimes law? Would you like to see legislative changes aimed at ending mass incarceration in the state? Do you believe that your Pennsylvania legislators should be mindful of harm to our environment when they pass laws and enact policies? If your UU faith energizes you to ask your legislators to do these things, I ask you to support UUPLAN. UUPLAN is the UU Pennsylvania Legislative Action Network. It serves to connect members and friends of UU congregations in the state with their legislators so that the positions of UUs are heard loudly and clearly in the halls of our state legislature. Contact Ed Greenlee for more information (edwin.greenlee@gmail.com)

Books Through Bars

First Unitarian supports this all volunteer program to support prisoners by providing books and educational programs for free. A book bin is maintained on the front porch of the church to receive book donations for those members and friends unable to get to the A-Space at 4722 Baltimore Avenue where packing takes place every Tuesday 7:30-9:30 PM and on first and third Saturdays 11 AM-2 PM.

Tutoring Adults

The Literacy Project has begun linking tutors with returning citizens at the Institute for Community Justice at 21 South 12th Street. We envision a gradual expansion of the program, and volunteers are welcome at any time. If you are interested in joining the tutoring group, please contact Martha Copithorne at 315-751-2124 or Betsy Wice at 215-864-0612.

Membership Ministry Team

Thinking About Membership?

Have you been attending Services regularly and find yourself in sympathy with the Principles of Unitarian Universalism and the goals of this congregation?

Do you feel "at home" here with this group of people and wish to deepen your connections to them?

Do you want to keep growing spiritually and intellectually—expanding your heart and mind?

Would you like to find ways to offer service to the larger community and work to make the world a better place?

If you respond positively to these questions, we invite you to consider joining as a Member! First Unitarian Universalist Church is happy to have visitors and friends as part of our community, but our congregation really comes alive through the commitment of our Members.

Please contact one of the following to become a Member and receive additional information:
Rev. Susan Rak (interimminister@philauu.org or 215-563-3980 x303); Membership Ministry Team
membership@philauu.org

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are welcomed to be 'buddies' for new members-- the Membership Ministry Team would like to have a pool of current members who represent a range of ages and interests. We will connect you to a new member and ask that you keep in touch with the person for six months or so after he or she joins to make sure they are feeling a part of our congregation. Ideally, you will meet the person before they join and then introduce them at the new member ceremony. Let Mary Kirk or Phyllis Belk know if you are willing to help us make our congregation a warm and welcoming place by being a 'buddy'.
(membership@philauu.org)

We welcome your involvement and commitment and believe you will find it most rewarding to be a full member of our caring religious community.

Financial Update

Year-to-date Financial Status

7/1/14 - 04/30/15

	Actual	Budget
Cash Sources		
Annual budget drive	129,012	143,118
Facilities rental	182,531	167,375
Endowment draw	39,955	39,955
All other income	24,346	27,290
Total cash sources	375,844	377,738
Cash Uses		
Human resources	285,893	290,980
Property operations	60,767	70,774
All other expenses	19,372	21,976
Total cash uses	366,032	383,730

Guest Column

A Different Kind of Hello
by: *Ranwa Hammamy*

When I first came to Philadelphia, the First Unitarian Church on Chestnut Street was impossible to miss. With its rainbow flags gently moving in the April breeze, it was forever etched in my memory as a place

that I would need to visit when I officially moved to the city. Sure enough, less than four months later, I attended both my first young adult evening worship and a summer choir retreat, and knew that this place was indeed the home my spirit so desperately needed. Here I could lay down my burdens, reveal my brokenness, hold the joys and sorrows of my fellow faith journeyers, and live into a new tradition that counted on all of us working together to change the world. Here I could be part of a chorus, both in song and in deed, that celebrated the transformative and healing power of a diverse and fiercely loving community. And here, within these walls and within your hearts, I learned that the path I was meant to follow was filled with a few more unexpected turns.

On May 15th, I graduated from Union Theological Seminary. It was the end of a three-year portion of my journey that somehow managed to take me away from all that was familiar, and yet bring me closer to truths that my soul already knew. My learning in and beyond the classroom introduced me to scriptures and prophets; poets and scholars; struggle and resilience. My formation as a minister-to-be and as a human-always-in-process involved feelings of hope and despair, certainty and confusion, strength and humility. I learned to trust, celebrated my limitations, and lost and found faith in unexpected places – places I had long tried to push aside. I found new ways to nourish the roots of my life and faith, and in that process re-discovered that it was my roots that gave me wings. It was what I had received that kept me accountable to the possibility of what I could be and do. It was who and what surrounded me in love that reminded me of the love that I am – that we are – called to cultivate in this world.

When I first started out on this heart-opening, tear-inducing, chocolate-requiring journey, I did not expect the intensity of the changes it would bring. I did not expect the ways in which I would need to let go of what had been secure and stable in exchange for a faith in the unknown and unpredictable. I did not expect to cry, laugh, or bake as much as I did. But one thing that I did anticipate was that there would be a time when I would come back to First Unitarian, back to the rainbow flags, back to the faces, voices, and spirits that had welcomed me home during that first fall service. Back to the roots that had given me wings. I knew that I would eventually return to First Unitarian Church not to say that I am leaving, but to

share my gratitude for the love, memories, songs, and stories that we have shared. I knew that I would come back, not to say goodbye, but to share a different kind of hello.

Flowers

Celebrate, Honor and Beautify

We're now accepting flower reservations for our summer services. Flower donations are a great way not only to beautify our sanctuary for Sunday worship, but also to honor, celebrate or remember loved ones, life milestones, and our community intentions. The cost of a donation arrangement is \$30.00, and at the end of the service, you get to take the flowers home. If interested, please contact flowers@philauu.org.

Save the Date!

June 1 - Women's Book Club

June 7 -

Sanctuary, 11:00AM - Worship led by Ranwa Hammamy

Sanctuary, following services - Architectural Tour of First U

Sanctuary & Parish Room, 5:00 PM - Coffeehouse Concert

June 14 -

Sanctuary, 11:00 AM - Worship led by Rev. Rak
Flower Communion Ceremony

June 21 - Sanctuary, 11:00 AM - Worship led by Rev. Rak

June 28 - Parish Room, 10:00 AM - Worship led by Elizabeth Ralston

July 6 - Women's Book Club

Looking to July & August

Submit summer *Beacon* submissions to Julia at Communications@PhilaUU.org by **Wednesday June 24**. Please send E-Beacon & Announcements information by 9:00 AM on Wednesdays

Word count guidelines for *Beacon* articles:

- announcements: 25
- church events: 50
- longer columns: 350

THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Ministers

Rev. Susan V. Rak Interim Minister

Executive Staff

Norman Fouhy Business Administrator
Matt Miceli Building Superintendent

Program Staff

Julia Wierski Communications Director
Elizabeth Miller CRE Coordinator
Lorrie Greenridge Nursery Director
John B Hedges Music Director

Sextons

Travis Barton, Jonathan Blount, Jim Devenney, Jeff Klebauskas

Board of Trustees

Caroline Winschel President
Daniel Widyono Vice President
Michael Johnson Treasurer
Michaela Goff Secretary
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Congregational Moderator

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Carol Peterson
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Ken Olin