BRWKLYN UNITARIAN

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The newsletter of the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, est. 1833



Our program year ended with a beautiful sight this spring – 200 shimmering dharma flags streaming from our front gates, blowing in the wind. For those of you who missed that last service, we had each written on a long, brightly colored strip of cloth our personal *dharma* – our soul's

mission statement or unique gift. We had then tied them in front of the church building as an offering to the outside world. They represented all that we have to give and our willingness to give it, individually and collectively.

And in case we weren't convinced enough that the world desperately needs all our gifts, this summer has made it abundantly clear. Reading the news has been heartbreaking – the recurring nightmare of war in Israel/Palestine, the brutal attacks of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the terror of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and domestically the police brutality that resulted in the deaths of yet another two unarmed people of color. Many of us probably felt overwhelmed and even hopeless reading about all the violence and suffering. What is a person of faith to do when we know we can't do it all? How are we supposed to live out our Unitarian Universalist values of promoting "world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all" when the vision feels like an ever receding horizon?

I believe that an answer lies in the metaphor of our dharma flags waving in the breeze. No one single act or effort or gift will save the world; but collectively, with each of us playing our unique role with commitment and patience, we will inch toward the future we dream of. The key is to remain focused on what we each can do with the greatest integrity. The work that is most personally authentic, I believe, will have the most impact.

This fall we have exciting avenues for you to find this authentic work at First U – ways to grow spiritually, explore your own gifts, and offer them to the world. I hope you will join us for the First U events around the People's Climate March on the weekend of September 20-21 (watch the e-news and the Order of Service for details). On October 12, please join us our first Sabbath Sunday, an experiment in how a liberal religious community can be transformed by celebrating a joyful Sabbath together. We will also be starting up Small Group Ministries again and I encourage you to try it - small groups are a wonderful way to deepen your own spirituality, practice deep listening, and build community. Consider working with one of our social and environmental justice groups to share your gifts through a UU framework. These are just a few of the possibilities for expressing your dharma here at First U. I and any of the staff members here would be delighted to talk with you about the best ways for you to connect more deeply with the community and offer your unique gifts to the world.

> Many blessings for a wonderful fall, Rev. Ana

Join Us for Ingathering Sunday, September 7, 2014 as we return to the sanctuary for weekly 11am services.

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons preaching

From the Director of Membership and Communications

Dear Friends,

If you have stayed in the northeast this summer, you, like me, have enjoyed one of the most glorious summers in recent memory. As I write this (in mid-August), a cool breeze in blowing in my kitchen window and the first hints of fall are in the air. Perhaps it was the weather, or something yet unknown (or the new comfy chairs), but our summer season at First U was also wonderful. We averaged more than 60 people in worship, with one service so far hosting nearly 90. We hosted two lovely potlucks on the church terrace and for the first time conducted two summer newcomers' orientations with 28 people attending! While the summer season may be casual, it is no longer sleepy!

Ana, Meagan and Adam, our new music director, are busy planning some really exciting new initiatives for our worship, music and religious education programs and I am honored to be working with them in whatever way I can. I am working closely with Meagan to set up two adult RE programs, a 3-part small group ministry facilitators training and a 4-part Spirituality in Practice program. You can read more about each of these programs elsewhere in this issue.

If you've been pondering joining the choir, but have been holding back, why not take the plunge this year? Adam is inviting all interested to singers to give it a shot this fall. Set you alarm clocks and meet in the Frances White Room at 9:00AM for rehearsal. All are welcome.

If you have been attending First U for awhile, are in agreement with our principles and purposes and are thinking about membership, our first New Member Sunday is November 16th. You can pick up an Intent to Join form at the welcome table on Sunday or download one at www.fuub.org/home/community/membership. Once completed, I will arrange for you to meet with a canvasser who will help you through the financial stewardship process. After that you'll be cleared for take-off. You'll be signing the very same book that our very first members signed in 1833! If you'd like to talk more about membership and what it means, Ana, Meagan and I are happy to spend some time with you. Please don't hesitate to make an appointment to meet.

To those of you who have been away this summer, I look forward to seeing you on September 7th. For you summer regulars, it's time to put on the long pants and put down the ice coffees!

See you in the Sanctuary, Garnett garnett@fuub.org

SABBATH SUNDAYS COME TO FIRST U

Last year Rev. Ana inspired many of us with her sermon and workshop on the commandment to "keep the Sabbath holy". This year we are planning four Community Sabbath Sundays and inviting everyone to try out the Sabbath concept. Put away your work and phone and striving and errands for the day and enjoy the abundance of all that you already have, together with your community. Each Sunday will begin with an early opening of the Sanctuary for quiet meditation or prayer. Following worship and coffee hour, there will be a selection of activities to choose from. Reading in the library, conversation and needlework in the Frances White Room, Yoga in the chapel, a hymn-sing in the Sanctuary, a walk across the bridge or to the park, playtime at the promenade, a men's group, baking in the kitchen. These are just some of the ideas that were shared at our first planning meeting. We will end our Sabbath with a shared snack (perhaps what was baked in the kitchen?) and a closing short worship. The first Sabbath Sunday is planned for October 12th. Let's nurture our spirits together.

[***Interested in helping plan the Sabbath Sundays? A second meeting is scheduled for Tuesday evening, September 9th at 6:30PM. Very little time commitment is required to make this program a success, but we do need to hear from you. Please join us.]

Membership - Getting to Know You!

This year, as usual, First U's Membership Council will be organizing lots of activities for newcomers, new members and long-time members and friends to get to know and enjoy each other and our congregation.

Newcomer Orientation Classes

These short, informative classes are held monthly. Newcomers (and any not-so-new interested folks) are invited to join Rev. Ana and Membership Director Garnett Losak in the library after worship to get started in learning about Unitarian Universalism and First U Brooklyn. Newcomer Orientations are held on the third Sunday of each month, except in September when the class will be held on the fourth Sunday, September 28.

Small Group Ministry

Participating in a small group is a wonderful way to get to know some people and also to develop your spiritual/religious understanding. Groups meet monthly and share thoughts and feelings about a recent sermon. Last year we drew our topics from Rev. Ana's Ten Commandment series of sermons. This year we may continue with this or draw from Rev. Ana's new series or choose something different. Some of the groups intentionally choose their own topics. Sign up for a session that fits your schedule.

FUUDGE - First UU Dinner Groups Extraordinaire

Are you looking for a fun way to get to know people? Do you want to add a few dates to your social calendar? Do you love to eat? Then a FUUDGE group is the place for you. FUUDGE groups meet once a month to eat and enjoy each other's company. Groups meet in a variety of settings: in each other's homes for pot luck suppers, in parks for picnics, at restaurants, at the church – anywhere you like. Dates are set in advance to help everyone with scheduling.

Soup and Sandwiches

Another great way to mix fellowship and food is to participate in Soup and Sandwiches. Every week one person prepares soup and another purchases sandwich fixings, and together they serve hungry congregants young and old. The modest donation we suggest covers all food expenses. If you like making the occasional one-time commitment – Soup and Sandwiches is just right for you.

Greeters and Ushers

Are you good at smiling? Do you like helping people feel comfortable and find their way at First U? Can you make it to worship services half an hour early on Sunday? You sound like the perfect usher/greeter. Do this once or make it a monthly activity.

Welcome Table

Are you already a member or a long-time friend? Do you enjoy meeting new people and talking about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation? Maybe you belong at our Welcome Table.

New Member Sundays

We hope that after a few months of attending worship services and activities that interest you at First U, you will feel that you belong and that you have found a spiritual home with us. When that happens, we encourage you to become a member. (Let us know by filling out an "Intent to Join" form.) This year's New Member Sundays are November 16, January 25, March 15 and June 7.

Getting Started

You can sign up for any and all of these activities at the Welcome Table on any Sunday and also at Membership Table at the Faith in Action Sunday, September 28th. Or email us:

Newcomer Orientation

Garnett Losak (Garnett@fuub.org)

Small Group Ministries
Meagan Henry (Meagan@fuub.org)

FUUDGE

Lee Pardee (leepar@earthlink.net)

Soup & Sandwiches

Vonda Brunsting (vondakb@juno.com)

Greeters/Ushers: Dawn Brekke (dawn.brekke@gmail.com)

Welcome Table:

Marty Bernstein (MartyB@fuub.org)

New Member Sundays Garnett Losak or Marty Bernstein

Lee Pardee, Membership Chair

From our Music Director, Adam Podd Choir Details and an Open Invitation to All

Hello friends and members of First U! Adam Podd here, your new Music Director. Hopefully most of you saw my letter back in June, introducing myself and explaining just a little about my church music experience and philosophy. If not, it is available on our website.

I wanted to reach about before our big Ingathering Sunday (Sept. 7th) to answer a few questions and explain any necessary details about choir participation. For those of you who have been in the choir before, or know how the schedule has worked in the recent past, it will be the same. So you can skip ahead, as the next paragraph will explain this to new-comers or at least potentially new-singers.

The choir meets at 9 AM on Sunday mornings in the Francis White room, where we rehearse for a good portion of our allotted pre-service time. Then most of the choir takes a short break, while one or two of the section-leaders rehearses an additional selection with me. Then we all transition into the sanctuary, sing through the choir piece again, and with a little luck, have enough time to practice the hymns as well. This is the plan, which will work great "as is" most of the time, and require some flexibility at other times. There is no regular weeknight rehearsal. The only time commitments during the normal church year are on Sunday mornings before and during worship.

If you aren't sure if choir is "for you", but have thought about getting involved, I'd like to extend

my warmest and most no-strings-attached invitation to try it out! Just show up on September 7th, (or another Sunday) at 9 AM and meet us in the Francis White room. There is no pre-requisite experience necessary only a love of singing. Other members' levels of experience range from professional to hobbyist, and everything in-between. So come, try it out, no need to RSVP, just show up. If we never see you in choir again after the one week, we won't take it personally:) and we'll be grateful for the one week you sang with us.

If you are one of my trusty regular choir members, (most of whom I've met by now) I certainly hope you'll come back and rejoin for Ingathering and beyond. I'm looking forward to building on the great work you've done already, as well as challenging and pushing you to new heights and in new directions.

If you are an instrumentalist, or are interested in contributing to the musical life of the church in some other non-choir form, I'd love to hear from you as well! Either send me a note or find me after a service. I hope to put to use the talents of many of our artistic parishioners, but I need to know who you all are first, so please don't be shy.

Questions? Ideas? Contact me at adam@fuub.org or (860) 966-2242

Shawl Ministry- Back in Swing After a Summer Hiatus

The members of the Shawl Ministry are looking forward to the new congregational year. Everyone is welcome to support our community of fellowship and yarn crafting. All are welcome to attend our meetings. We knit and crochet lovely shawls for members of the community in need of extra support. We will continue to meet on the third Sunday of each month after the worship service. Financial contributions for the purchase of yarns can be made to First Unitarian with Shawl Ministry in the memo line. All donations are received with gratitude.

If you are aware of a member of friend of the congregation who can benefit from the gift of a shawl, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Liz Shaw (ecshaw@gmail.com) and Diana Lu (d.lu3@verizon.net)

Worship and Music Committee

The Worship and Music Committee is a dedicated group of congregants who help to guide and implement the many spiritual gatherings in our First Unitarian community. We welcome others to attend our meetings and join us in our efforts throughout the year! Contact me at the email below if you'd like to be added to our Google group for committee matters. After two terrific years as chair, Bob Bero is stepping down, but will still be serving on the committee.

We've had a very robust and varied series of lay-led summer services in the McKinney Chapel this summer. Attendance has topped 80 on some Sundays, and we've welcomed many visitors and repeat-visitors through the summer. Credit goes partly to our new, comfy chairs, which were delivered and installed just in time for our first service! With our talented pianists, Harrison Beck and Robert Cookman, and our multi-tasking Worship Assistants (members of our committee), our eleven worship leaders offered thought-provoking homilies and richly spiritual shared experiences for those of us lucky enough to spend our summer weekends in Brooklyn. The committee thanks our lay leaders (in order of appearance), Melissa Simonson, Devin Judge-Lord, Lee Ilan and

Peter Engel, Garnett Losak, Cara Haft, Julie Bero, Lisa Kawamoto and Ashley Curl, Ari Hoogenboom, Jr., Stephanie Gannon, Alex Gecker and Devin McDougall, Andrew Peterson-Roach, and Samira Kawash. We urge everyone to start thinking about leading a service next summer! I can personally attest that it's a wonderful experience.

Looking to the congregational year ahead, we will be working closely with Rev. Ana and our new Music Director, Adam Podd, to create meaningful, beautiful, and welcoming services. We invite you all to offer suggestions, attend our meetings, and participate as we try additional modes to explore our Unitarian Universalist spirituality, whether in small-group ministry, Sabbath Sundays, Soulful Sundown services, or our special holiday observances.

Look for our table in the Undercroft at Faith in Action Sunday (September 21st), and please send inquiries to cara.haft@gmail.com We meet the first Tuesday of each month, September through June, at 7:00 p.m.

Cara Haft, Chair

Weaving the Fabric of Diversity

Social Justice is at the core of our Unitarian Universalist faith. And at the core of social justice lies antiracism. Unitarian Universalism has a proud and active history of fighting for social justice and equality for all.

Weaving the Fabric of Diversity (WFD) is dedicated to promoting social justice and anti-racism through activities within our congregation and in the wider community. We hold public educational forums (moderated discussions) on current events and issues such as violence towards the LGBTQ community, anti-immigrant racism, and "stop and frisk". We organize and participate in advocacy and direct action in support of civil and human rights in

all its manifestations. We host dinners with members of the local Muslim and Haitian communities. On the third Sunday in June we organize a yearly Juneteenth religious service followed by a street picnic to commemorate the date when the last slaves in the United States found out they had been freed.

In the upcoming 2014-2015 year we plan to hold Forums on the following topics: Protection of Public Assets, homelessness and violence against the LGBTQ community. We also plan to hold Training workshops on Classism and Anti-Racism. Through these events and actions we seek to put into practice our Unitarian principles, especially the

covenant "to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person."

All members and friends of the congregation are welcome to attend and participate in our monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month September through May at 7:00 pm in the Frances White Room. Everyone is also welcome to attend our yearly retreat on a Saturday in June.

Co-Chairs
Enza Itri enzaitri1@verizon.net,
Andrew Bongiorno
avbongiorno@gmail.com
Secretary
Rita Pearl rpearl112@gmail.com

A Message from Meagan

Dear Friends.

I am excited to be back at First U, after what felt like a very long and inspirational summer. I've had the great fortune to attend General Assembly, take a worship training, travel on a Unitarian Pilgrimage to Transylvania, and serve as staff to the Goldmine Youth Leadership School for the Central East Regional District. I am full of new ideas, and I'm excited to integrate what I've learned into my second year of work as your religious educator.

I continue to be passionate about the need to connect our children and youth to our larger worship community. Last year, we tried a few things to help our kids in worship, from more manipulatives to keep their hands busy, to creating a pew space at the front of the sanctuary so they can see and hear well. This year we are trying out a few additional new initiatives. We will have Children's Chapel for Kindergarten through Fifth grades one Sunday each month. During the chapel, the children will have their own service with worship leaders who ring the bell, light the chalice, serve as ushers to collect the offering. They will learn some of our simpler UU hymns, such as Meditation on Breathing, Enter, Rejoice, and Come In, and When Our Heart Is In a Holy Place. I will teach them about the different elements of worship so that when they are in the "big" worship upstairs, they will have a clearer understanding of what is happening, and hopefully they will begin to feel more connected to our worship services. When our children feel more connected to worship, they will be more likely to enjoy and benefit from it, and ultimately, continue to attend worship services as they grow into their teenage and young adult selves.

The RE Council and I are in the midst of setting up our Sunday RE teaching teams and we are still looking

Religious Education

Get Ready for RE 2014-2015!

We are going to have a great year of Religious Education! The RE Council has been planning several wonderful events, parties and retreats, as well as our regular programs for children and youth.

BUT, we can't do any of it without YOU!

We are asking each First U family to commit 10 hours to the RE program this year. Volunteered hours can be fulfor a few people to teach during the fall semester. We will offer two teacher training sessions, so don't worry you will not be unprepared. The Council and I are committed to offering you the support and guidance you'll need to engage with the fulfilling spiritual work of teaching our young children about decision-making, values, community-building, and our religious heritage. Please contact me if you are interested and have questions or if you'd like to sign up to volunteer.

This fall, I will offer four sessions of the Adult RE class, Spirit in Practice, on 9/25, 10/9, 10/23, 10/30 from 7:00-8:30 pm. The class is an opportunity for you to further your journey along your spiritual path. You will be encouraged to develop or build upon your disciplines and practices of the spirit. We'll explore various types of religious ritual and practice while seeking unity in our common quest for spiritual meaning. This is a great class for anyone who is feeling the need for a spark to reinvigorate your own spirituality and have some time to focus on your inner self. I hope you will join me!

I plan to offer a presentation about my Unitarian Pilgrimage to Transylvania this summer and my time with our Partner Church in the town of Sepsi St. George, Romania. It was truly a transformative experience! I hope some of you will be interested in learning more about it and maybe some of you will go on a similar trip soon. Keep an eye out for the time and date of my pilgrimage presentation.

Please take some time to read the message in this newsletter from Becky Huffman, the Chair of the RE Council because she explains some of the other exciting changes to our RE program.

Yours in Faith, Meagan Henry, Director of Education Ministries

filled with teaching, mentoring a youth, lay leading a Children's Chapel, helping setup or clean up at a RE event or party, helping to clean or organize our storage areas, providing treats at a celebration, writing articles for our newsletters or websites, taking photos... We invite everyone to give of their time, talents or treasure so that our Religious Education program remains strong and vibrant.

This year we are trying a couple new things in our Sunday morning program for children and youth. The newly re-organized and cleaned Nursery, staffed with our wonderful and experienced caregivers, is ready to receive our youngest children (newborns to 2 years). Children 2.5 to 4 years will participate in our Pre-K program with our paid teaching staff. Children in grades Kindergarten to 8th Grade will have classes with volunteer teachers about twice a month. There will be three semesters: Fall (September, October, November), Winter (January, February, March) and Spring (April, May, June). In December children and youth will practicing for our annual Festival of Peace and Light on December 21.

Volunteer teachers will serve one, two or three semesters. We are hoping that the shorter term teaching commitment will open up the opportunity to work with our children and youth to more members of our congregation. Teacher training will be offered for each semester, with ongoing support provided by our Director of Educational Ministries, Meagan Henry. Teacher trainings will be held on 9/10 and 9/13 before the children begin classes.

So what will the children and youth be doing during the other Sundays of the month? One Sunday a month we will hold a "Children's Chapel." This special worship experience will be created specifically for children in grades K-5 and be led by Meagan Henry and lay leaders. We are very excited that this year our Chapel topics will coincide with Rev. Ana's sermon series on the Parables of Jesus. The first Children's Chapel will be on September 14.

On other Sundays, children and youth will participate in Multi-Generational Services or special events. Save the date for this year's Halloween Party, October 26. This year some of our young teens will participate in the Coming of Age program. This is a beautiful opportunity for our youth to grow and strengthen their spiritual identities and become fully fledged participants in our UU community. Look for more information about this special program in the Fall.

Our older teens, graduates of the Coming of Age program, will continue to participate in our Youth Group, which will meet on Sundays and have special retreats, events and outings throughout the year.

During the Winter and Spring semesters we will be offering the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program to our K-1 and 4-5 classes. This is an award winning sexuality and health curriculum. More details will be available in December.

Our first RE Family event is on September 28! Come roller skating with us after worship, at the Lefrak center at Lakeside, Prospect Park! Entry fee is \$8, skate rental \$6. Bring a packed lunch or purchase snacks and drinks at the nearby cafe. All are welcome!

If you haven't already done so, please register your child/ren for Sunday School. A link to the online registration form can be found on our website, in the enews, or on our Facebook page.

We will be sending out links for an online teacher volunteer form soon. As always, please contact Meagan or myself if you have any concerns or question.

In Fellowship Becky Huffman, Chair, Becky7676@gmail.com

Small Group Ministry Resumes this Fall

Leadership Training Available for All

Our vibrant and enriching Small Group Ministry program is gearing up for the fall. The session schedule has not been finalized, but we anticipate having all the information you need to sign-up by our Faith in Action Expo on September 28. Meagan is leading a 3-part facilitator's training on Thursdays, September 4, 9, and 18 from 6:30-8:00 PM. If you are interested in leading a group this year or in the future or if you merely want to enhance your meeting and group leading skills, please join us for this wonderful series. Please RSVP to garnett@fuub.org so that we can be sure to have enough materials.

The Mother Theater Project

The Mother Theater Project is excited to be back this year continuing our spiritual exploration of mind heart balance and raising awareness of the feminine divine. There are a number of arts related outings being planned and we will continue work we started last year. We are also excited to begin a partnership with V-Day, a global activist movement to end violence against women and girls. Through that umbrella we are planning a production of "The Vagina Monologues" in March. Participation in the production and all events will be open to the congregation and friends of First U. Please contact Dawn Brekke for information and to be included in event updates.

Dawn Brekke, dawn.brekke@gmail.com

Worship Schedule and Religious Education Calendar – Fall 2014

September 7 – Homecoming, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons and Meagan Henry, Director of Education Ministries will lead with Adam Podd, Director of Music, RE family open house

September 14 – Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach, Children's Chapel (grades k-5)

September 21 – Rev. Ana-Levy Lyons will preach. IMPORTANT: IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH, WORSHIP BEGINS AT 9:30AM PRECEDED BY COFFEE HOUR AT 8:30AM.

September 28 – Rev. Ana-Levy Lyons will preach.

October 5 – Guest Preacher – Rev. Susan Karlson, CERG Disaster Response Coordinator

October 12 – Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach, Children's Chapel (grades k-5), Sabbath Sunday

October 19 – Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach,

October 26 – Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach, Halloween party, no RE classes

November 2 – Youth Led worship, Multi-generational worship,

November 9 - Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach, Multi-Age RE activity

November 16 – Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach, New Member Sunday

November 23 – Hunger Communion, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons will preach, Winter Festival Rehearsal

November 30 – Thanksgiving Weekend, guest preacher (TBA), Multi-Age RE activity

Please note: This schedule is subject to change. Please watch the weekly e-announcements and the Order of Service for updates. The nursery will be open every Sunday for children 2 and under.

Share the Plate

Do you have a favorite charity or social justice organization that you'd like to nominate for our monthly Share the Plate? Please note that all nominates must have 501(c) status. Priority is given to organizations that promote social justice and/or are local in focus. Nomination forms and the Share the Plate policy are available at www.fuub.org/home/justice/share-the-plate-2

Share the Plate Committee: Andrew Bongiorno, Jocelyn Smith, Olivia Nunez, Bob Patterson



MISSION & COVENANT

We strive to be an embracing and diverse community of all ages whose members nurture, strengthen, and challenge each other to grow. We gather to celebrate our shared Unitarian Universalist values while affirming our individual beliefs. A spirit of hope and possibility inspires us to fulfill our responsibility to the larger society by promoting justice and peace. Because the congregation is meaningful in our lives and we freely choose to be here, we commit our talents and resources to live this mission.

OFFICE The Lathrop House

48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201

HOURS Mon-Thurs, 9:30AM-4:00PM

Friday, 9:30AM—Noon

PHONE/FAX 718-624-5466/718-797-2916 E-MAIL Office@fuub.org

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