

BROOKLYN UNITARIAN

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

From the Senior Minister

The spring holidays of Easter and Passover are upon us. We celebrate both at First U with special Good Friday, Palm Sunday, and Easter services and a Passover Seder. But are they really “holy days” for Unitarian Universalists? Theologically do we have any use for them? Especially when we doubt that the events they commemorate actually happened? I say yes.

These holidays of the Christian and Jewish traditions each celebrate an overturning of reality. In each story a dominant political power rules while a powerless minority is occupied or enslaved. In each, God allies with the poor and the oppressed. In each, the powerless prevail in a surprise ending impossible victory. In the Passover story, the Israelites escape slavery, overcoming the powerful Egyptian army and birthing to their new life through the parting of the Red Sea. In the Easter story Jesus overcomes death itself. His spiritual movement, which the Romans had tried to violently crush, resurrects itself in a way that turns out to be unstoppable.

These are traditions of hope, and we are heirs to these traditions. They remind us that the power of spirit ultimately defies and conquers earthly power. The poor and oppressed shall not be held down forever; truth and justice will triumph. As such, they are Unitarian Universalist traditions and they are human traditions. As we tell these stories together over the next month, and contemplate them and sing them and marinate in them, I invite you to let their truths into your hearts. I'm looking forward to celebrating impossible victories together.

In faith, Rev. Ana

Palm Sunday

Missa Mundi Mixta

Missa Mundi Mixta, which translates to Mass of Eclectic World Music, will include the four traditional movements of the Christian mass (*Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei*) from four different composers and musical traditions.

The *Kyrie* from *Misa Criolla*, was written by Ariel Ramirez in 1963, and is based on South American folk music, especially the rhythmic and melodic vocabulary of Argentina. *Gloria* from Paul Basler's *Missa Kenya* (1995) is described by the composer as a “synthesis of sorts between two musical cultures”. Some of it is drawn from Catholic mysticism, and much of the music and its gestures from choral traditions in East Africa, where Basler spent a residency in 1993.

Venturing west but remaining in the African tradition, our *Sanctus* comes from Fr. Guido Haazen's mass in the Congolese style, *Missa Luba* (1963), which draws heavily from the improvisatory nature of African music. The choir will close with the *Agnus Dei* from American composers Paul Winter's and Jim Scott's *Missa Gaia* (*Earth Mass*, 1982). Paul Winter writes about this movement: “The inspiration for our *Agnus Dei* came from the words of Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, a medical missionary to Labrador in 1909: ‘It has not been easy to convey to the Eskimo mind the meaning of the Oriental similes of the Bible. Thus the lamb of God had to be translated *kotik* or young seal. This animal, with its perfect witness, as it lies in its cradle of ice, its gentle, helpless nature, and its pathetic innocent eyes, is probably as apt a substitute, however, as nature

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From the Board of Trustees

Warm greetings as we move into Spring. A lot has happened since our last newsletter. We had a wonderfully successful end-of-year fundraiser. Through the generosity of numerous members and friends we raised nearly \$10,000. With these funds we are now able to:

- Upgrade our kitchen, replacing our old sink and work tables in June. The team planning this work is led by Connie Newsom.
- Purchase video equipment to increase First Unitarian's online presence, especially our music. Music Director, Adam Podd, has been testing equipment and expects to make this purchase shortly.
- Purchase new long tables for all of our congregational events. We have already bought these tables and used them for this year's Stewardship Kick-Off Brunch on Feb. 28.

Speaking of generosity, the congregation received an amazing gift from longtime member Elaine Macken - \$25,000 to replace our chapel floor. This project is planned for June, and I know many of us are really looking forward to seeing how great the chapel will look. THANK YOU, ELAINE!

From the Director of Congregational Life

As of this writing, we have welcomed more than 30 people into membership at First Unitarian so far this year. That is a 15% increase over the audited number from February 2015. Our current total membership is 264 and growing! Clearly we are doing something right.

But what is that magic formula? Truth be told, if I could bottle and sell it, I would (and I'd profit nicely, I'm sure). We know that our Sunday mornings are firing on all cylinders. We regularly have more than 200 adults and 50 children and teachers in our building on Sundays. The choir has doubled in size and our religious education program now has more than 80 registered children.

But there is something else, some secret sauce, that I'm challenged to articulate. It has to do with the feeling

At our March 6 congregational meeting we had two major items of business:

- 1) The members: Elected delegates to the NY Metro District Annual Meeting (Judy Boals, Ashley Curl, Cindy Kerr, Sam McKelvie, Mi Puchon, Skylar Salerno) and the UUA General Assembly (Bob Bero, Kathy Ivans, John Lenker, Edwin Lord, Derek Pearl, Rita Pearl). (Since the meeting, Ashley has resigned as delegate and the board has approved Cara Haft in her place).
- 2) Voted to purchase and display for one year a Black Lives Matter banner. Members also donated over \$300 that day to purchase the banner.

In Faith and Fellowship,
Lee Pardee, Board President

Trustees

Roger Cooper, Liz Davis, Sean Fischer,
James Goward, Elaine Macken, Rachel Michael,
Mary Most, Kurt Steele

LATE NEWS: The board has approved James Goward to fill the term of Jeff Muller who resigned for personal reasons.

we all get when we walk into the space, whether it's for worship, for a meeting, or a program. It's there at fellowship hour, in the welcome during worship, even in the many emails that I get with their thoughtfully worded questions and comments. There's a joyfulness, an optimism and a sense of sharing and caring that is mirrored in our worship, but isn't because of it.

It is us, all of us, who are creating our congregation and building something that I, for one, am proud to be a part of. I watch all of you work together with kindness, integrity and joy and I do what I can to support that work. It is an honor to do so.

Yours in Service,
Garnett

Welcoming Our New Intern Minister: Kevin Jagoe

I am thrilled to share the news that starting this fall an intern minister will be joining our staff. His name is Kevin Jagoe and he is a student at Meadville Lombard Theological School – a Unitarian Universalist seminary based in Chicago. He will be half time with us for two years. Through many conversations with Kevin over the course of this year, I have come to know him as a thoughtful, practically-minded, and compassionate person. He is a skilled communicator, with far more wisdom than I had at his stage of preparation for ministry! I believe he will be a real gift to this community. I am looking forward to all that he can teach us and all that we can teach him as we support him in his journey toward Unitarian Universalist ministry. Look for his intro letter in our e-news. -Rev. Ana

Sustainability Fair

Learning about and living a more sustainable life will be the theme of the first Sustainability Fair on March 20th from 1:00 until 3:30 PM in the McKinney Chapel on Pierrepont Street between Clinton Street and Monroe Place. The event is sponsored by First U's Sustainability Group and Weaving the Fabric of Diversity.

Information and guides to action will be featured at more than 10 tables in the Church Undercroft, including recycling and composting, energy conservation and solar energy, "green" volunteering in parks and community gardens, and water conservation, among others. There will be children's activities illustrating the theme and a special performance by Judy Gorman. Keynote speakers at 1 PM will be Ishi Sahni, Development Director of GrowNYC and James White, Lay Leader of St. Mary's Episcopal Church-Harlem. Ms. Sahni will describe Project Farm, the organization's planned sustainability and education center. Mr. White's presentation will be "Fighting Global Warming Means Environmental JUSTICE!

Following the presentations, participants will be invited to browse the tables and speak with the organizers and presenters. Coffee and tea will be made available, throughout the event.

All are Welcome.
Nancy Wolf, Sustainability Team

First Unitarian Identity Groups Planned for Spring

Unitarian Universalists pride themselves on being radically inclusive: welcoming of people without regard to their age, sexual or gender identity, ethnicity, religious background or theological disposition. At First Unitarian we are working to put that inclusiveness to the test. Are we really welcoming of all people? Are we meeting the needs, both spiritually and socially, of all who come through are doors? Are we open to new ideas?

This spring the First U staff will be hosting a series of six sharing circles. These circles will be for people who self-define as Atheists, People of Color, LGBTQ, Young Adult, Senior, Parents & Caregivers and those with conservative religious backgrounds. Each group will be hosted by members of the program staff. You will be invited to share your experiences at First U with the staff and with each other. Together we will explore how we can move closer to our Forward! goal of "cultivating a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world."

All meetings will take place on Sunday at 12:30PM in either the library or the Frances White Room (please watch the E-News and Order of Service for details) except as noted.

March 20th – Conservative Religious Backgrounds
April 10th – People of Color
April 19th (11:00AM, Tuesday) - Seniors
May 1st – Young Adults
May 22nd – Parents & Caregivers
May 29th – Atheists

Palm Sunday (*continued from cover*) offers?" Winter used his piece *Seal Eyes* as the basis for the composition, over which Jim Scott has written an exquisite choral composition.

This Palm Sunday, come enjoy a newly curated **Missa Mundi Mixta** from our choir and soloists, as well as guest instrumentalists, including percussion, soprano saxophone, and double bass.

In peace and of course harmony,
Your Director of Music, Adam Podd

A Message from Meagan, Director of Education Ministries

Dear Friends,

As I write this it is the first day of March and it is sunny and beautiful outside. It feels like Spring really is in the air! Maybe it's the weather, or maybe it's just that I truly love this ministry I am called to do at First U that I am so pleased to tell you about the many positive and exciting things happening in our Lifespan Religious Education Ministries.

First off, I should explain that although many see me as primarily the children's RE director, and that is where most of my energies have been focused for the past two and a half years, I also oversee Adult Religious Education. I am currently staffing a Forward Team tasked with creating an Adult Spiritual Growth program, and I am thrilled to be working with June Wohlhorn, Drew Peterson-Roach, and Waciuma Wanjohi under the incredibly capable guidance of Sean Fischer to formulate strategies for implementing a program. Up until now, we have been approaching Adult RE in a sort of "cafeteria style" manner by offering a variety of classes and workshops. The program has certainly been received well enough and many people have enjoyed engaging with these programs. Moving forward, we see a real need to identify and create a Spiritual Growth Path for people to move along throughout their time at First Unitarian. We expect to offer ways in which people new to Unitarian Universalism can learn about who we are as well as more advanced explorations of our faith, theology, and history for folks who are ready to go deeper. This is just in the beginning stages right now, but do keep an eye out for updates and feel free to reach out to me or anyone on the team if you'd like to get involved.

You've probably noticed a dramatic rise in the number of children coming to the front for our Wisdom Story and leaving for RE classes under our rainbow arch. Our children and youth RE program is growing rapidly. In fact, the number of registered kids has doubled since the 2013-14 church year. This is likely a result of some positive changes to our program, such as adding monthly Children's Chapels that match Rev Ana's sermon series theme, our new social justice initiative: Justice Sundays, and our steady RE volunteer teachers. In general, there is a positivity and happy energy surrounding our RE program and the children are feeling

it. They notice when the adults smile and greet them as they enter on Sunday morning, and they feel safe and loved in our congregation, so they enjoy their time here. Many thanks go to our Religious Education Council for their vision and hard work to keep our Children and Youth program running along smoothly. None of this could happen without our engaged volunteers, and especially the RE Council Chair, Becky Huffman. She works tirelessly on the program and does the work of a part-time RE assistant. We are so lucky to have her in this role!

One of the more exciting big projects underway this year is the High School Youth Group's Unitarian Pilgrimage trip to Transylvania, Romania at the end of June. Last year, the Youth Group traveled to Boston and learned about our American Unitarian and Universalist roots. This year, they will go even further back in time to the beginnings of Unitarianism. The group will visit the very first ever Unitarian church in Kolosvar/Cluj. They will visit the Transylvanian Unitarian headquarters and hopefully get to see the Unitarian Bishop (yes, they really have one!), and see the Unitarian boarding school. The best part of the whole trip will be connecting with the Unitarian Youth Group at our partner church in Sepsiszentgyörgy. They plan to get to know one another and hopefully build lasting relationships. When the group returns, they will host an event for the congregation to share what they learned and experienced. If you'd like to lend your financial support to the youth pilgrimage, donations are welcome! You can send a check to the church with "youth trip" in the memo line or donate to their indigo campaign which will be launched this Spring. For more information about the Youth Group and their trip, see Rebecca Chin's letter on pages 5-6. And while you're at it, take a moment to say Hi and thank Rebecca for all her hard work and dedication to our Youth Group this year. Her position is funded by the Women's Alliance and we are so grateful to them for their generosity.

In Faith,
Meagan Henry

Special Spring Sundays for Children and Youth

Our Annual Spring Festival will be on Easter Sunday, March 27th from 11:15-1:00PM. We are planning a fun celebration for all ages, including an egg hunt, treats and crafts! All Are Welcome! This is a great event to bring cousins or grandparents to!

Our series of lessons and activities around Justice work will continue on March 20th (Palm Sunday), April 24th and May 29th. Does your work serve others or do you help to bring more peace, beauty and justice to the world? Come share your efforts with our children and youth! Email Becky Huffman becky7676@gmail.com to be a guest at an upcoming Justice Sunday!

The Children's Chapel series on the Seven Days of Creation will continue on March 13, April 10th and May 8th. The 6th Day is jam-packed (Animals! Adam! Eve!) We will discuss it over two Sundays. On May 8th we will talk about Rest and Sabbath. Does your family have any special traditions or practices that help you recharge and reconnect? Come share them with us in May! And make sure to bring a flower to church on May 1st for Flower Communion!

On Mother's Day, May 8th, we will celebrate the 101st Davol Bible Day! Bibles (both regular and Children's Illustrated editions) will be given to children born in 2009, as part of a generous gift of the Davol Family in 1915.

Finally, please mark your calendars for June 5th! We will celebrate several important milestones, including Bridging for our High School Seniors and Teacher Appreciation. Then we will celebrate at our annual Congregation Picnic!

We look forward to a busy and rewarding Spring! As always, we welcome your feedback and questions.

The Religious Education Council.
Becky Huffman, Chair
becky7676@gmail.com or 917 640 3488

Hip Hop Hooray! It's Springtime!

We will be celebrating the coming of warm weather, flowers and all things green on March 27th, Easter Sunday, with our annual Spring Festival! Children will begin in worship as usual, and then head down to the Chapel for games, crafts and snacks!

We need some helping hands to make the Festival festive! Please sign up to do a craft, bring a treat or help decorate!

Here is the link: <http://tinyurl.com/hwyke5k>

Youth Ministries

The High School Youth Group has been incredibly busy this year! We regularly have ten youth each Sunday, and I am incredibly proud of them all! I have seen such growth in the youth group program from when I was a high school youth at Brooklyn First U. These youths are all passionate, hard-working and thoughtful individuals, and together they are a strong force that can truly make lasting change in this world. And everything they have done so far is leading up to the big Romania trip this summer!

But first, from the beginning... we kicked off the year with a strong Sunday Service, entitled "First Thought, Second Thought". The youth chose this topic so they could explore how to challenge the judgments and biases society has thought us, and feel ownership over reflecting on and formulating our own opinions. They also explored how to stand strong and have belief in oneself. It was a great way to show off our unique talents; we played our own instruments, we sang our own songs (of course, with amazing support from the choir!), we gave our own homilies, and even performed our own skit from Dr. Seuss's "The Sneetches." Hosting a Sunday Service for the second year in a row was fun and a fabulous way to help feed people's spirits. But that's not all we did, we also fed people's bodies... with FOOD. We hope you remember the Pie and Bread Bake Sale we ran to provide treats and dessert for your Thanksgivings meals. We have also hosted three delicious lunches on the Sabbath Sundays, including one the day after the massive winter snowstorm!

Along with the work we've done at our own congregation, we've also started to get involved with the local community. This spring we've joined the Brooklyn Heights Interfaith Youth Group Service Projects, an ongoing collaboration among local churches, synagogues, and mosques to provide interfaith service opportunities for young people. The first service project we attending was hosted by St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church, where we learned about Lent from an Episcopal minister while cooking dinner for local firefighters. We even got to deliver the meal ourselves and get a tour of the firehouse! Being in service to our community is an important part of our identity as Unitarian Universalist youth, so we signed up to host our own service project. Perhaps you all remember the outreach for school supplies for Latin American refugee children who are currently living in Long Island? As a people of faith, the youth group believes in radical hospitality and the inherent worth and dignity of all people, so we based this service learning and justice activity in our theology of love. And we did that by packing up school supplies to send to these children. A big thank you to everyone who donated items to the cause, including backpacks, children's books, coloring books and crayons. We were thrilled to be able to host and share our beliefs and theology with youth of other faiths.

Of course, we are constantly in the process of developing and practicing how to articulate our faith. In February, we invited Rev. Ana to our youth group meeting, where we had the wonderful opportunity to dive into a discussion about what it's like to be a UU youth. We've also been working on our own elevator speeches to answer the question "What is a Unitarian Universalist?" And the most exciting news on how we will be exploring our faith... our summer trip to Transylvania, Romania! Our youth pilgrimage to Romania will be a wonderful opportunity for us. Over the first week of July, we will be spending time at our partner church in Sepsis St George where we will get to know their youth group, as well as some time in Cluj, the "capital" of Transylvania and the location of the Unitarian headquarters. Our European pilgrimage will give us the unique opportunity to deepen our faith while focusing on the history of Unitarianism, making connections with our Unitarian siblings there, and providing a chance for a youth cultural exchange. We could not be more excited about this opportunity! In preparing for the trip, the Brooklyn youth are spending a lot of time reflecting on the importance of this pilgrimage, considered questions such as: "What do we hope to

gain from this trip?" and "How might Unitarianism look different in Romania?"

Brooklyn First U has such an amazing youth group; we should all be proud of them! It is clear that the amount of support and encouragement from this congregation has allowed the youth group to grow into the strong program it is today. The idea of going to Romania would not be possible without all of you, and we are truly grateful for everything you have done so far. If you have not done so already, we invite you to visit our crowd-funding site and support our fundraising campaign. We cannot wait to share our experiences and stories when we return!

I also want to send a big thanks to the families of all of our youth, our Advisors, KatyAnna Johnson and Koren Manning, and always, Meagan Henry. None of the fabulous things the youth have accomplished this year would have been possible without your support and dedication! Thank you so much!

Rebecca Chin, Youth Ministries Coordinator



As of this writing, 80 households have turned in their pledge forms promising financial support for the fiscal year beginning July 1st and the response has been overwhelming. So far the average pledge increase from the current year is over 20% and we are 53% to our goal of \$340,000. If you have not yet turned in your pledge form, please come to the undercroft any Sunday to pick yours up and return it as soon as possible.

All members of the congregation are required to turn in a pledge form every year in order to retain their voting status. Of course, we hope that everyone who considers First Unitarian to be their spiritual home will give as generously as possible in support of our congregation's mission and purpose

If you need information about the status of your current year pledge, please contact Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org). If you'd like to speak to someone about your pledge, contact davidgarvoille@gmail.com.

The Next Step Forward

At our meeting on March 6, the congregation heard about the exciting work that some of our Forward First teams are doing. Some people also expressed a desire to learn more about our Forward work as it progresses.

What is Forward First?

Adopted at the annual meeting in May 2015, our Forward plan is a strategic vision meant to guide our work over the next 3-5 years. At the heart of the plan is our congregation's statement of purpose, which can be found on our website and many of our official documents:

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn is a joyful, caring, religious community that inspires and empowers people to grow spiritually, care for one another, and work for social justice and stewardship of the earth.

The goal of our Forward work is to examine how well the congregation's activities and culture align to our purpose and determine what we can do to transform ourselves to more completely fulfill these aspirations.

Last year, a Forward First study group recommended five broad areas that the congregation should focus on, as well as individual strategies within each area, to accomplish the work. The plan they developed can be found on our website at: www.fuub.org/home/community/forward-first-brooklyn/

Who is leading the work?

The Board is charged with overseeing Forward First, although work "on the ground" will be done through 13 different teams (usually one team for each strategy in the plan). Most of these teams are new, and some teams are still being formed.

What will the teams do?

The work will look different for each team, although all teams will begin by crafting a vision for their

work that articulates how and what they specifically aim to accomplish in 3-5 years.

I want to learn more about the work of each team.

The first step to learning about the work is to read the plan (link provided above). The Board intends to update the congregation as teams make progress on their individual goals. In addition, some of the teams will need to seek information directly from the congregation, solicit feedback on possible activities, and pilot ideas.

Who can I contact for more information?

Sean Fischer, a member of our Board of Trustees, is available for questions and feedback. He can be reached at sean.fischer@gmail.com.

auction Fest 2016

**Saturday,
April 16th**

6:00 PM
Music with the Podd Brothers
Cocktails & Silent Auction

7:00 PM
Dinner & Live Auction

Paddle Fee
(entry fee)

\$25

Includes drinks, burrito bar
(gf/veg options), dessert, and
entertainment

Bid & Win

Home dinners, vacation stays,
tours, a day at the races, special
treasures, workshops, and other
one of a kind experiences.



FIRST UNITARIAN BROOKLYN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Worship Schedule - Spring 2016

March 20th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching, Palm Sunday Music Service

March 25th (Friday, 5pm)

Rev. Kelly Murphy Mason, Preaching, Good Friday Communion

March 27th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching, Easter Sunday

April 3rd

Debbie Almontaser Preaching

April 10th

Rev. Ana Levy Lyons Preaching, Jazz & Creation Series

April 17th

Rev. Ana Levy Lyons Preaching, Sabbath Sunday

April 24th

Guest Preacher, TBA

April 26th (Tuesday, 6:30PM, Undercroft)

Passover Seder

May 1st

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching, Flower Communion

May 8th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching, Mother's Day, Davol Bible
Jazz & Creation Series

May 15th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching,
Service of the Living Tradition, Annual Meeting

May 22nd

Meagan Henry Leading

May 29th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching

June 5th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching, Sabbath Sunday,
Multi-Generational Worship, Bridging, Teacher Appreciation

June 12th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons Preaching, Jazz Sunday

June 19th Juneteenth

All services at 11:00AM in the Sanctuary unless noted otherwise

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY BROOKLYN

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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.

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Adam Podd Music Director

Garnett Losak Dir. Congregational Life

Carl Davis, David Loughlin Custodians

Rebecca Chin Youth Ministry Coordinator

Elizabeth Deterville Nursery Coordinator

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Olive Hoogenboom Historian

In Memorium



Rev. Dr. Orlanda Brugnola
Chaplain Emerita
First Unitarian Congregational
Society in Brooklyn

April 1, 1946–February 25, 2016

Memorial to be held
Sunday, April 17 at 3:30pm
Community Church
40 East 35 Street, Manhattan

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Thank You to the volunteers who help with production!