South Ferry Church
Speaker Program Series – Summer 2025

Please join us at the South Ferry Church on South Ferry Road in Narragansett for a series of community speaking programs. Pertinent to state, national and international issues and events, the speaking programs encompass a broad array of topics important in today's ever changing and challenging world. Programs are held from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. on Mondays, and are free and open to the community.

Monday August 4 – ***Aging, Dementia and Brain Health*** – **Dr. John K. Robinson -** the Thomas M. Ryan Professor of Neuroscience at URI, is a noted behavioral neuroscientist specializing in the use of rodent models to understand nervous system dysfunction and disease. He is co-director of the George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience and Professor of Psychology in the College of Health Sciences and Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences in the College of Pharmacy at URI. In collaboration with Ryan Institute Co-Executive Director William Van Nostrand, he has made significant contributions to the understanding of modifiable risk factors for dementia, including the roles of diet, cardiovascular exercise, and cognitive and social engagement. In addition to his research achievements, Dr. Robinson is also a highly regarded educator and mentor, receiving numerous teaching and service awards throughout his career.

Monday August 11 – ***Artificial Intelligence: What's Up, What's Next*** – **Chip Hazard -** is an early-stage venture capitalist with Flybridge, a VC firm based in Boston and New York. He co-founded Flybridge in 2002 and is focused on investing in ambitious founders building our AI-powered future. He is the longest serving non-founder board member at MongoDB, a public company, and a board member and investor in many private AI companies. He is also a co-founder and investment partner with XFactor Ventures, a venture fund focused on investing in companies founded by women. Chip received a BA with honors from Stanford University and an MBA from Harvard Business School, where he was a Baker Scholar and a Ford Scholar.

Monday August 18 – ***Plantation Goods: A Material History of American Slavery*** – **Seth Rockman -** is an American historian who was named sole finalist of the 2025 Pulitzer Prize in History. He is an associate professor of history at Brown University. He is the recipient of the Merle Curti Award and the Philip Taft Labor History Book Award for his 2009 book *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore*. His recent book, *Plantation Goods, A Material History of American Slavery* includes a section on Isaac and Roland Hazard, owners of our own Peacedale Mills of Peacedale, RI, and their innovative development of slave clothing for plantations in the South prior to the Civil War. He has received outstanding reviews by American historical societies throughout the United States. Seth is also a recent finalist for the 2025 Mark Lynton History Prize, the best of American nonfiction book writing, a prestigious award given by the Columbia Journalism School and Harvard University.

Monday August 25 – ***Awe and Wonder: Exploring Science through Film*** – **Jason Jaacks** Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Rhode Island, is a documentary filmmaker whose films explore the intersection of science, climate, and community. Before coming to URI, Jason produced films for National Geographic, The New York Times, and PBS. In this talk, Professor Jaacks will discuss his most recent films about the deep sea and community-led conservation.