

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit

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First Unitarian
Universalist Church
Organizational Chart
2008 – 2009

Officers

President

Alicia Biggers

Vice President

Dan Wiest

Immediate Past

President

Linda Darga

Board Secretary

Alma King

Treasurer

Sharlene Gage

Staff

Minister

Rev. Drew Johnston

Minister Emeritus

Rev. Larry Hutchison

Minister of Faith and

Development

Rev. Athena Kolbe

Assistant Minister

Rev. Lynda Smith

Music Director

Todd Ballou

Cantor

Gwen Foss

Office Administrator

Linda Kernohan

Building & Grounds

Joe Brimmer

Leonard Swint

(Sunday)

Trustees

Trey Greene

David Lingholm

Bill McKnight

Dessa Cosma

Newsletter Editor

Ryan King

DREW'S VIEWS

There is so much happening now, or about to happen, that it's hard to know what to write about!

I recently saw a pair of robins on my deck, harbingers defying the silly groundhog that predicted more gloom. This change of seasons is a reminder that the harbingers of progress always prevail over silly predictions of gloom.

One of the biggest happenings that you may not know about is the comprehensive planning process we have been engaged in for a while. The whole church plan began two years ago and is continuing to take shape. Although the church has not had a plan in quite some time, those who are familiar with plans in other organizations probably expect to see charts and graphs and spreadsheets. Those will show up later. We are still in the wording phase, and it's time for you to offer some ideas. Everything is on schedule!

Some will remember that this began with one to one conversations about the place the church has held in the lives of members in the past. This was called an Appreciative Inquiry process and also collected the key information to create our Mission Statement.

Later we came together to list all our great assets and share ideas on what activities seemed most important to pursue. This was simply called Asset Mapping. There were enough program ideas shared on that day to occupy the church for many years!

Meanwhile, most of the Trustees on the Board have been getting together at extra meetings to work with that all data and shape it toward a plan. The specific technique we have been using is called logic model building, a new process for the entire Board. In a few weeks a portion of the plan will be presented for your strategic input. Although that may sound intimidating, in reality it is a chance to write your ideas on sticky notes to add to what we have assembled so far.

Since we haven't had a plan in a long time we may be unaccustomed to using one to guide our decision making. And I haven't met anyone here who says they know how to create a church plan, so it's new to everyone. Your Trustees who have committed to this process have shown a great deal of determination and I am confident that the result will be a plan that will get used constantly to set the tone of things and guide decisions. I guess this is another harbinger of progress!

As we have been using our Mission Statement to remind ourselves of our chosen focus, we will use our plan to address more specifics of where we direct our efforts and how we measure the results. The next piece that will naturally evolve will be a Vision Statement.

Of course other documents are important in the life of a church, but these three - Mission, Plan, and Vision - are the core of our identity. Only in a legalistic sense are the by laws and constitution part of our identity. So unless we identify as a legalistic group of people, those belong in a different realm. Our Mission says what we do. Our Plan says how we do it and how we measure it. Our Vision says what the result will be.

I look forward to continuing the deliberate process we have been using to put the plan together, and to the finished product - which is closer than most people can imagine!

So much is so close! I'm glad we are moving together through these days of exciting progress!

See you in church -
Reverend Drew

Rev. Lynda's Lyrics

Part of my preparation to be a minister and my first two years of ministry were community work with people in transition out of drug and alcohol addiction and homelessness. One truth became apparent to me; the people who stayed in the journey to rebuild their life did not wallow in their misery. They admitted every day that the only person who ever victimized them was their selves. Granted, some had been cheated, betrayed, and/or abused. And sometimes they got stuck in that negativity. However, they faithfully kept in touch with a support group and other friends who would point out when they were wallowing.

I came to understand that for myself and others, there is a fine line between expressing negative experience without allowing yourself to feel like a victim. When the weight of our feelings might overwhelm us, what helps? Here's a good list proposed by Greta Crosby in the meditation booklet, *Tree and Jubilee (Unitarian Universalist Association, 1982)*: "TALK, CRY, LAUGH, ACT, PRAY." You may not be comfortable with prayer if you believe it implies a magical power that intervenes in individual lives. However, listening in silence, talking, writing, and exercising are equally valid ways to relieve tension and clarify what's wrong and what we really want.

Poetry and music are also good ways to work through *stuff!* Crosby offers two haiku that I love:

"A time of darkness:
Let potentiality
Unfold, rise on wings."

"Darkness, hiding place:
From potentiality
Be reborn a child." (pp 42-43)

If you heard my sermon, *Loving the Night*, you may have noticed that I included FIVE poems. I had never used poetry regularly in sermons until I heard Rev. Drew preach. I'll probably continue to use one or two poems a sermon, but somehow the theme of this sermon called for more poetry. And I know we have at least several poetry lovers in the congregation. Might it be fun to start a gathering of poetry lovers from time to time?

Rev. Lynda Smith, Assistant Minister

President's Ponderings

Is it spring yet? I know it is coming as I see the work of your Board coming together in the form of flowers I call policy, portfolio and planning. I see all these flowers coming into full bloom! If you are not familiar with these flowers called policy, portfolio and planning, please ask one of your Board members to share their gardening tips. Your Trustees are Dan Wiest, Alma King, Sharlene Gage, Linda Darga, Trey Greene, Dave Lingholm, Dessa Cosma, Bill McKnight and myself.

Next, mark your calendars as the Board has a Congregational Activity for you to provide us the "actions" that we will include in our draft plan for the Church's future. Come see what the Board has been up to for numerous Saturdays while providing your input too! You will have four sessions to make sure your voice is heard. Our kickoff activity will be Sunday, March 29th at 1pm in McColleston Hall followed by Wednesday, April 1st at 7pm, Sunday, April 4th at 1pm and Wednesday, April 8th at 7pm all in McColleston Hall.

Our future is ours to create and we are only limited by ourselves. I, along with your Board of

Trustees, look forward to your active participation in this group activity that will provide further input for the draft plan that will be presented at the Annual Meeting scheduled for May 2009.

Alicia Biggers

Membership Committee Meanderings

The membership committee continues to meet the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm right after Vespers. All are welcome. We continue to maintain contact with all members and welcome your comments and questions.

This past month two new members have joined the church by signing the membership book and making a financial pledge. They are Julie Brock and Boyd Adams. We welcome them and encourage them to become involved in the activities of the church that interest them.

The next New Member Orientation will occur on Sunday, March 1, 2009 at 1 pm following Coffee Hour. It's a good opportunity to have your burning questions about UU-ism answered.

And the next New Member Breakfast will take place on Sunday, March 29, 2009 at 9:30 pm before service begins.

Sally Borden

Try Something New at the Volunteer Table!

Watch for a *Volunteer Table* in McColleston Hall during the Social Hour after Sunday Worship. It will give you an easy way to see what needs to be done to keep the church running smoothly. Think of these as opportunities (rather than jobs). Think of these as a way to get to know other interesting people who come to church.

We will also keep a *Volunteer Log Notebook* at the table to make it easy for you to record what you've done. This will give us some data for grant writing and information for the next people who step in to give you a break or an opportunity to try something different.

Rev. Lynda Smith, Assistant Minister

Congregational Activity – We want to hear from you!

As many of you know, your Board of Trustees has been diligently working on a plan for our Church's future. We have used your input from the appreciative inquiry, mission statement and assets mapping to develop the plan that will help fund and guide our future.

We now invite you, our congregational members; to participate again as we approach the phase of creating the actions we will take to make the plan happen. You will have four sessions to provide your input. Please join your Board of Trustees on Sunday, March 29 at 1pm in McColleston Hall to kick off the "action sessions" followed by Wednesday, April 1st at 7pm then Sunday, April 4th at 1pm and finally Wednesday, April 8th at 7pm all in McColleston Hall.

If you have any questions, please contact one of your Trustees – Alicia Biggers, Dan Wiest, Alma King, Sharlene Gage, Linda Darga, Trey Greene, Dave Lingholm, Dessa Cosma and Bill McKnight.

Alicia Biggers

OWL brings 1st UU and GPUC Together

We have now had two very successful Our Whole Lives (OWL) sessions in conjunction with our counterparts at the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church (GPUC).

Many of you know OWL from having participated in OWL yourselves, or you may have had your children participate when they reached their teens. OWL is a unique small group program that helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality and relationships. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, OWL helps people make informed and responsible decisions about their health and behavior by equipping participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture.

Teens from 1st UU and GPUC have come together to learn and get to know each other over the last month and will continue to do so through the beginning of June. Stuart Smith and I have had a blast facilitating these classes so far! As someone who went through OWL myself when I was in high school, I know what an invaluable resource this program is for teens, and am proud that we are offering our young adults such a good opportunity to learn about themselves, their faith, and most importantly, how to stay safe and happy. Thanks to everyone for their help and their support.

Dessa Cosma

1st UU Receives Commendation from UU Service Committee

1st UU Church of Detroit's members are dedicated to the UU Service Committee. Almost 50% of our members have very generously supported UUSC's charitable world-wide efforts. You contributed over \$2,000 in 2008, and our church has just received a certificate from the UUSC commending our commitment and financial support. Alma King is framing this document, and you can soon see it on the wall in McCollester Hall.

Mary Neale

"About Us"

This is part of an ongoing series of profiles of members of 1st UU Church of Detroit.

"I have had a life of adventure and have traveled all around the world," said 1st UU member, Emma Estela Velasquez. She was born in Guatemala, raised as a Presbyterian, and moved to Michigan in 1957. She had a scholarship from the U.S. government to study pediatric nursing at Wayne State University. Then she returned to Guatemala and had an opportunity to organize a pediatric communicative disease hospital, and later taught nursing in the National School of Nursing. Also, she organized a large general hospital in Guatemala City, and she worked with the Director of Nursing there.

In 1969, Emma and her 2 children came to Detroit. Emma had a Kellogg Foundation Scholarship to study nursing administration. After that, she had to return to her home country. Determined to be a U. S. resident, in 1973, she was able to return, and worked at Children's Hospital and at a private mental health agency, while living in Highland Park and in Detroit.

Emma's daughter, Emirene Mendoza, is an attorney and usually accompanies her mother to church. Emirene's 3 daughters, Carmen, Marielena, and Annarosa Mendoza King, are students and attend church when they are able to do so.

Emma's son Rodolfo is a pharmacist and lives in Massachusetts.

Emma now lives in southwest Detroit, and she is still traveling.

Mary Neale

Visitors from India on March 11

Did it ever occur to you that there are Unitarians in India? It never occurred to me that there might be, but there are! On Wednesday March 11 we will welcome 3 Unitarian women from India visiting 1st UU for Church Night dinner and vespers. And although details have not been worked out, they will be here during activity time at 7:00 and we will have a chance to learn about them and their lives as Unitarians in a culture different from ours. I've also recently learned that the Ann Arbor UU Church has had a relationship with a Unitarian group in India since about 1900. These women will be staying in Ann Arbor for several weeks after attending the International Convocation of UU Women in Houston. More details will be available as March 11 gets closer. Let's give these visitors a warm welcome!

Alma King

Women's Alliance Keeps It Green on May 18

Environmentally friendly cleaning products and how to make your own will be the topic for the program portion of our March 18 monthly

luncheon and program. Our delicious lunch, prepared by Elayne Sikelianos, is served at Noon then followed by the program at 1:00. Cost is \$10 for the lunch. Reservations can be made by noon of the Monday before the meeting by a call or email to the church office or call Eiko Takemoto.

Alma King

Detroit Tigers Ticket Fundraiser May 16

1st UU Church of Detroit and the sport of baseball have a long history together. They're approximately the same age, coming into existence around the 1840s and 50s. Both the church and the sport have evolved through many changes to get where they are today. And just like the sport, at 1st UU Church, new players are always joining seasoned veterans to create new energy and hope for the future. Fortunately, no 1st UU members have been accused of using steroids, although coffee use has been pretty common. On Saturday, May 16, at 5pm, come join your friends for a tailgate in the church parking lot, followed by a 7pm Detroit Tigers/Oakland Athletics game at Comerica Park. These will be group tickets, sitting together, and we'll get our name in lights on the Comerica Park scoreboard.

To make it a fundraiser, there will be a \$5 surcharge on the ticket face value with the proceeds going to the church.

The choice of section (and ticket price) will be chosen democratically, in the UU spirit. Please indicate your interest, number of tickets, and seating preference by 9am, Saturday, March 7, to Ryan King at newslettereditor@1stuu.org. The group ticket purchase and the section will be chosen on March 7 based on your response. Play ball!

Ryan King

Additional donors needed for Blood Drive

The date of the April blood drive at 1st UU has not been confirmed by the Red Cross pending a need for additional donors. The likely time will be 12-8pm, so if you work 9-5 your donation can be accommodated. A minimum of 45 donors are

needed and approx. 30 have signed up to donate. Please sign up at the Blood Drive table in McCollester Hall after the Sunday service, or contact Nora Holt, Ruth Seifert, or Yvonne Fowler.

Ruth Siefert- 313-340-0671

Other Upcoming Events

For a listing of Upcoming Events, please visit the 1st UU Church of Detroit's website and check out the events calendar at

<http://www.1stuu.org/calendar.php>

Memorial Service for "Dolly" Rose Wagner

Several members of our church were able to attend the Memorial Service for "Dolly" Rose Wagner, who died in Lansing on Feb. 1st. She attended our services for many years, and met her late husband, George, at our church. Dolly moved to East Lansing after she was widowed, so that she could be near her son, Robert Darios, and his family. She and George were very active members here, and we remember and miss them.

Please contact me if you wish to have news about our member or friends printed in this column.

Mary Neale

From the Mouths of Everyone

"I have a Detroit black-and-white cat named Snuggles. It's a misnomer." –Mary Lou Malone

Elayne Sikelianos

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for printed material is Sunday, March 22, 2009 no later than NOON or Monday, March 23 no later than 9:00am for electronically submitted material. Please send articles to the Newsletter Editor at newslettereditor@1stuu.org. Your feedback is welcomed in the spirit of liberating truth, radiating kindness and loving courageously.