

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit

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May 30, 2009

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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 Admin

Linda Kernohan

Building & Grounds

Joe Brimmer

Leonard Swint

(Sunday)

Trustees

Trey Greene

David Lingholm

Bill McKnight

Dessa Cosma

Newsletter Editor

Ryan King

REVEREND LYNDA'S LYRICS

Many of you know my story—briefly, since becoming a member of this church in 1977, starting as a teacher in the Children's Class, to mentor in the Youth Program, later as Director of Religious Education, to Committee and Board Work, to being ordained as a minister in 2006. I've also washed dishes and cleaned woodwork. I've avoided learning how to operate the dishwasher and the furnaces. This year I learned how to play CDs on the sound system in the Sanctuary. All this to say, that it takes committed members to make church a good experience. So, please do not hesitate to talk with me if you feel the urge to participate more or in a different way.

On Memorial Day Sunday, I had the pleasure of working with four church members participating and several more behind the scenes. Alicia Biggers asked Ross Fowler and Jerry Williams to participate by sharing some memories of serving in the Military. Mary Lou Malone had the idea to read the names of the 94 men and two women who served in WWII from this congregation and are recorded on the brass scroll hanging in the Church Narthex. Laurel Hoa asked Linda Kernohan to participate by sharing a reflection on loss and love.

So with conversation among Ross, Jerry, Linda and myself, I decided on an outline of the service. And with the help of Trey Greene, the Trustee of the day, doing the usual stellar parts and more—the Litany of the WWII Honor Roll names—and with Todd as usual selecting appropriate and stirring music, plus ringing the chimes during the Litany, plus playing the cello during the Offertory—a special Memorial Day service was created. This could only have been done with openness on the part of the Worship Committee, the Homiletics Class, and several important conversations that came together to create a new worship experience. Results like this are one aspect of ministry that is really about co-ministry, when mutuality and collaboration contribute to the vitality of the whole.

Speaking of co-ministry, I conclude with a special thank you to the five committee members who met with me monthly to give me constructive criticism and moral support this past year—Mary Neale, chair; Bob Neale, Linda Kernohan, Sharon Mills, and Glenn Maxwell. They each made important observations that helped my growth as a professional and as a human being. I appreciate their commitment and so much more.

Rev. Lynda Smith, Assistant Minister

DREW'S VIEWS

In the words of my predecessor, Rev. Willis Moore (who served the congregation from 1913 to 1918):

“Sorry I missed it – next time I will write twice as good and twice as long.”

See you in church!

Reverend Drew



1st UU Choir sings with the choir of Northwest Unitarian Universalist Church (Southfield, MI) at 1st UU earlier this year. (Dessa Cosma)

President's Ponderings

It's hard to believe it's already May! Everything is thriving in green and blooming in a concert of colors. I think about my own yard and how each year the perennials planted the year or two before return each season with consistency yet something new, too.

Then I turn my thoughts to the Church to notice that there are changes everywhere, yet the consistency of our membership is always there, whether new members or members returning year after year. As gardeners, we must tend to the details knowing we must plant seeds, prune, fertilize, and monitor our plants as they change season after season. The same goes for our Church.

My past two years serving as your President have had similar characteristics. First, I have had the pleasure of working with an incredibly talented, dedicated Board of Trustees as well as officers. I have seen this Board grow in its responsibilities, which has seen an increase in accountability to itself and the Congregation. I have seen the Board learn the ins and outs of a policy governance Board, adopting portfolio management to ensure all the areas of the Church life are accounted, as well as step up for numerous 2-hour planning sessions on Saturdays to ensure our Church had a comprehensive plan to carry us into our next legacy. The Board has engaged the Trust to invest in our future while growing financial funds for our future.

I have also seen our committees grow by mentoring other members, focusing on their charge and in some cases creating that charge for clear accounting and responsibility. Our staff, led by Rev. Drew Johnston, has evolved to meet the needs of our growing Congregation. Much work has been around identifying our staff requirements including documenting the daily procedures. All of these items have led us to a healthier Congregation ready to meet its own needs and the needs of our future members!

I expect to see each of you at the Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for Sunday, May 31, 2009 at 12:45pm. We will further share the state of the Church as well as ask you to vote on the By-Laws, Budget, and Leadership Slate which will be presented to members at this meeting. You will also receive the first draft of the Comprehensive Plan with another opportunity for your input as we finalize the document for a vote at a mid-year meeting (tentatively December 2009).

Again, it has been a true pleasure serving as your President and I look forward to continuing to serve you as your Past-President.

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 our Church's life and future!

Alicia Biggers

Membership Committee Meanderings

We've been having a lot of fun lately and doing social justice, acting on our Principles. The outing to the Detroit Tigers game on 5/16/09 was a great success and the Tigers won, too.

Earlier that day, some of our members, peopled a table at the Michigan Policy Summit held at Cobo Hall to discuss issues important to progressives and to network. Thanks to Ryan King and Dessa Cosma who made both things happen. They are a great addition to our membership as are many more of you.

As our church continues to grow, please feel free to let the Membership Committee know about your concerns and ideas as they relate to issues of membership. The members of the committee are Nora Holt, Alma King, Ryan King, Mary Neale, Maysel Brooks, Dan Rebb and Sally Borden.

And another fun event coming up soon is the S.O.U.L. concert to be held on Friday, June 5, 2009 at 7:30 pm in the church sanctuary. This is a church fund raiser and an afterglow will follow. Four professional musicians from around the world will share their music with us. Reports from a previous performance indicates that this should be a great concert. The cost is only \$10.00.

And finally, while we do many things well, sometimes we mess up. Apologies to those affected by the sudden change of the May Potluck Sunday, particularly Sharon Mills and those helping her that Sunday.

We all learned something from this blooper and won't repeat it. One thing that the Membership Committee plans to do is make a list of all those who are not on the church listserv so that those people can be called personally when there's something important to tell our members.

Let's continue to work to improve our communication systems or develop better ones.

Sally Borden

Blood Drive Reminder- Thursday, June 11

The 1st UU Detroit blood drive will be held on Thursday, June 11, from 1-7pm, at the American Red Cross main office at the intersection of Mack and Woodward Ave. There is a parking lot as well as street parking. Let the Red Cross staff know that you are from the 1st UU Church. As you sign in, write "1st UU Church" in the column marked "Dept." Those who cannot make it on Thursday are invited to donate on Saturday, June 13 from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Blood drive committee:

Yvonne Fowler, Ruth Seifert and Nora Holt



1st UU members kick back at the Detroit Tigers game at Comerica Park, May 16, 2009.

Social Justice Committee at 1st UU

Everyone is welcome to attend the monthly Social Justice Committee meetings which are the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the Church.

The committee offers social justice actions and education in the Church's name. We also partner with the Church to offer special programs, support the Church's activities (Clean Sweep and Coffee Hour) and support our UUA Social Justice Committee on the national and state levels. We also work with the Church Board of Trustees in support of outreach and community service. If these types of activities interest you, then join us!

Contact Lee Gaddies, 313-585-8440 or lee337@comcast.net for more details.

This year we have done Social Justice activism affecting local, State and Federal policies. We have been involved in the Transgender 101 workshop, Clean Sweep, Coffee Hour, and Summer Services ("ism's"). We have taken actions on issues such as local recycling, health care, and grocery stores, just to name a few.

Lee Gaddies, Social Justice Chair

Women's Alliance News

Women's Alliance will hold its final lunch and program for the current church year, on the **second** Wednesday of June, June 10 at noon. We will celebrate traveling and vacation time by hearing about Toni Tront's travels to the Galapagos Islands. Join us by making a reservation for the lunch portion with Eiko Takemoto or the church office by the Monday preceding the meeting.

Our planning meeting for next church year will take place on Wednesday, June 17. We will meet from 11 to 2 in Memorial Hall to share ideas for next year's activities. Bring a brown bag lunch and there will be dessert and lemonade provided.

Alma King

"About Us"

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

Did you read about musician and church secretary Linda in the March 29th issue of the newsletter and wonder what her last name is? Our apologies to Linda Kernohan for leaving that out.

Long-time member David Robinson said, "One of the best decisions that I have made was to come to this church. I discovered it accidentally when I heard Reverend Tracy Pullman on the radio in 1957."

Dave was born in Monticello, Mississippi, and raised in the Baptist Church "where my Dad was a Deacon and my Mother schooled in the church. But I couldn't enjoy the Bible.

The Army drafted Dave, and he learned to love traveling. At age 20, he moved to Kalamazoo, lived with his uncle, and attended Western Michigan College, while studying Pre-Medicine. He majored in science and then taught 8th grade in Romulus for 10 years. "I loved teaching," Dave says.

In 1957 Dave earned a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling at U. of M. Then, he worked for some federal programs, such as the Area Agency on Poverty. Also, he worked for Detroit Public Schools to prepare young people to be successful on their jobs. Sometimes he had to get them out of bed and drive them to work. Eventually, he became Coordinator for Michigan Head Start.

In 1967-69, he was Assistant Principal of Robichaud High School in Dearborn Heights. Racism caused a great deal of dissention among the youth. He counseled them and worked with their families, but had too many disciplinary responsibilities and left Robichaud.

He was hired as Assistant Director of Admissions at U of M - Dearborn in 1969 and moved to Ann Arbor after 4 1/2 years. He enjoyed encouraging students from under-represented groups to enroll at U of M, and worked in Admissions for almost 20 years.

In 1956, Dave married Jane Alexander, and they lived in Southwest Detroit before moving to Highland Park in 1964. He is very proud of his three musically-gifted children: David, 53, who is a music teacher in the Atlanta area; Amorie, 52, a Detroit native who plays several instruments, and is a

psychologist for the Wayne County Youth Home; and Richard, 45, who is a double bassist for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. (Their parents are both musicians, and Dad has often sung solos in our church.)

Dave now lives in Detroit with his son, Rick, and his new phone # is 313-499-8442.

When speaking of First UU Church, he said, "This church has opened my eyes to the proper place for religion in my life. It has helped me to understand relationships and to find my proper role in helping society and in my self-development."

Mary Neale

1st UU at Motor City Pride!

1st UU will be having a table at Motor City Pride on Sunday, June 7th from 12-7 pm. We'll be handing out materials and encouraging passersby to come check out our welcoming congregation! We still need a few more volunteers to staff the table. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Dessa Cosma at DessaCosma@gmail.com or 231-631-4469.

Dessa Cosma

JUNE BIRTHDAYS:

June 4- John Angry, Margaret Beck

June 5- Glenn Maxwell

June 16- Ann Harvey

June 18- Joe Thomas

June 20- David Robinson

June 23- James Robinson

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for printed material is Sunday, June 21 or the following Monday, June 22, no later than 9:00 a.m. for electronically submitted material. Please send articles to the Newsletter Editor at newslettereditor@1stuu.org. Your feedback is welcomed and appreciated in the spirit of liberating truth, radiating kindness and loving courageously.