

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit

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June 26, 2009

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**First Unitarian  
Universalist Church  
Organizational Chart  
2008 – 2009**

**Officers**

**President**

*Dan Wiest*

**Vice President**

*Bill McKnight*

**Immediate Past**

**President**

*Alicia Biggers*

**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**

*David Lingholm*

*Dessa Cosma*

*Marilyn Mitchell*

*Dan Rebb*

**Newsletter Editor**

*Ryan King*

**DREW'S VIEWS**

So much change! I'm thinking about change most of the time, and once in a while I want change to just stop and let me be. Of course, that is not an option. Change happens and we get some choice in how we react, and in how we might direct change in the hope of moving toward a better time and place and way of being. Little changes matter, sometimes more than big ones. So let me comment on a few small changes that might improve the odds of bettering ourselves.

During this summer I intend to sleep more; just a little bit more. Maybe you, too, have been shorting yourself on sleep, so you might consider the same idea. But if you are short on wakefulness, by all means do the opposite - get up a little earlier and enjoy the clean morning, or stay up a bit later and savor the warm nights of summer.

I think I'll try to smile more. There may or may not be scientific studies to support this idea. Regardless, I am certain that smiling makes the world a better place. In fact, I'm pretty sure that smiling is more important than paperwork, more important than putting money in a parking meter, even more important than doing the dishes. (I'll keep doing those things, too, but I'm more likely to be smiling while I do.)

And I'm going to try to surprise myself in some way by disrupting a habit, something mundane like where I put my shoes when I come home, or how I do laundry. This may be the toughest one. Disrupting a habit isn't particularly difficult, but finding a surprise as a result might be. The real message here is that I will be looking for surprises.

For the next couple of weeks I'll be around the office and trying to finish some of the church business I haven't taken care of lately. We should have a new office manager on board soon (more change!) and we should be able to work together for a while before I travel. My studies this summer are mostly related to change, too. I hope to bring back something useful! I'll be sure to be back here for a retreat with the new Board of Trustees at the beginning of August, then off for one more training.

The next Sundays you will see me will be August 16th and 23rd. And September 6th will be this year's version of the "Water Service," marking the end of our summer services. The idea on that day is to mingle the water we have collected throughout the summer, to bring together our new learnings and experiences, to bring ourselves back into community as we settle in to a new church year. I invite you to think about that idea over the summer, collect small amounts of water, or collect the much more portable memories, or bring rocks if you so choose. Prepare to share in a way that builds our community, our knowing of each other.

See you in church (soon!) -Reverend Drew

### **Rev. Lynda's Lyrics**

As we move into the slower days of summer, I'm feeling relaxed because I love the extra sunshine. But too much sunshine is trouble, even dangerous. It's lucky we're in Michigan and not in the desert. Speaking of **water**, that will be the theme of Vespers on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

I'm helping to take stock of the Adult Programs we had this past year and reflecting on what we might offer starting in the coming year. Todd Ballou is planning an exciting monthly program about music. We've had *Evensong* discussions about our spiritual journeys, *Homiletics* about the spoken word in worship, *Roundtable* discussions about theology, and a *Singing* group. If these or any others interest you, please let me know. We're open to new suggestions.

Myself and three church members are currently involved in planning the U.S. Social Forum (USSF)—Dessa Cosma, Mary Lou Malone, Stuart Smith—which will be June 22-26, 2010 at Cobo Hall and Hart Plaza. The national committee anticipates 20,000-25,000 people. What is USSF? Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellerman, Pastor of St. Peter's Episcopal Church – Detroit writes, “By one account, a line runs from the rise of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas 1994 (when NAFTA went into effect) through the Battle of Seattle in 1998 to the first World Social Forum in Brazil, 2001 which was set as a peoples' alternative to the World Economic Forum (G-8)...Since then there has been a World Social Forum each year, moving around the globe. Each one celebrates alternatives to corporate globalization or what is sometimes represented as the agenda of 'neoliberalism'.” Detroit was chosen because “we've been living for decades what the rest of the economy is just falling into. We've learned some things. The tagline for the forum here is: *Another World is Possible. Another U.S. is necessary. Another Detroit is happening.*” Detroit may be in the process of becoming the “first post-industrial city”.

I believe that First UU is part of that process. One simple example is the urban gardening that Glenn Maxwell, Dave Robinson, Carolyn Ludwig, and Stuart Smith are doing in the lot at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Willis, across from Mario's Restaurant. Way to go! – in faith,

*Rev. Lynda Smith, Assistant Minister*

### **President's Ponderings**

To loosely borrow from the Buddhist tradition, there is no past or future, only the present. Yet, to function in the present, past happenings and future considerations influence how we act.

So in composing my initial column as president, let me first express gratitude to our past boards and presidents/ moderators. They persevered for our institution (note the word) to have at turns existed, survived and thrived on the corner of Cass and Forest since 1916. They were our stewards through world wars, a depression, recessions, riots, population flight, cultural revolutions, ministers good and not so good, Ronald Reagan and George Bush. They had to adapt to the times, drawing upon their past in making plans for the future while still needing to deal with broken pipes and ruffled feathers among congregants.

How will we cope with the considerable challenges we face? One of our former ministers, Bruce Johnson, once used the metaphor of seasonal geese migrations. The one in the lead would trade places with another in the formation so that effort could be shared and maximized over a long journey.

I'd like to think that with the composition of the current board, the guidance of our very effective minister and by staying true to our mission and ideals, our efforts can be shared and maximized so that we can hope to continue in the best tradition of our people to the benefit of our church and our city.

*Dan Wiest*



*Always ready with his guitar, Dave Robinson leads the picnickers in singing “Woke Up This Morning With My Mind Stayed on Freedom” at the Juneteenth Picnic outside 1<sup>st</sup> UU on June 21, 2009. (Ed Collins)*

### **Goodbye... and Hello**

The actor Dean Martin was once quoted as saying “I’ve got seven kids. The three words you hear most around my house are ‘hello,’ ‘goodbye’ and ‘I’m pregnant.’”

I’m not pregnant and I don’t have seven kids like Dean Martin did but, like him, I do know that ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye’ are inevitably common in life. It was little more than five years ago when I first said hello to our church community. Most of you probably don’t remember me from back then because I was very shy (I know it’s hard to believe!), but I got to know more of you when I

took a “temporary” position coordinating programs for children and youth in 2006. I had so much fun creating programs, taking trips with the youth, teaching classes and watching people grow spiritually. We have a great community here and I’ve learned so much from both the adults and the kids that I’ve worked with.

Three years later I’m saying ‘goodbye’ to my job at First UU. Life has made me super busy with a doctoral program, a huge urban garden, an exchange student, a teenage daughter, and a full time social work job. Next week I’m taking off for a short trip overseas and I already have a full summer planned here in Detroit. So this is a ‘goodbye’ for now, but in the fall I’m looking forward to saying ‘hello’ to you all again as just a regular, normal, non-staff person at church.

If you want to get in touch with me, or if you have an overwhelming urge to talk about doctoral dissertation subjects, or even if you just want to check out my awesome garden, feel free to ask the church office for my contact information, message me on Facebook, or look for my address in the church directory.

Much love,

*Rev. Athena Kolbe*

### **Membership Musings**

It's been a great church year for 1st UU with both new and "old" members returning to us. Since the beginning of Drew's time with us (January 2007) at least 35 members have signed the Membership Book and several more plan on doing so very soon. Most of these members have remained with us and are active. That's important as in the past, many people may have joined, but didn't always stay for long.

We want to thank the entire congregation for all your kindness, outreach, and genuine welcome to our many visitors and newer members. It is because of you that people stay. Remember, we don't all agree on many things, but we agree on the need for truth, kindness and love as a mainstay of our commitment to each other. So take a bow, 1st UU'ers!

As for the summer, we will continue to have “Potluck Sunday” on the third Sunday of each month, but with cold food only for the summer months. We will also bring back Sundae Sundays to have ice cream sundaes on the 4th Sunday of each summer month. Only \$2.00 per sundae.

And we are planning another boat trip on the Detroit River! Many 1<sup>st</sup> UUsers enjoyed this trip last summer. Look for the date soon.

So please continue to give us your ideas and energy to continue to develop membership activities that will interest many of us.

Your Membership Committee

Nora Holt, Alma King, Dan Rebb, Maysel Brooks, Mary Neale, Ryan King and Sally Borden with ex-officio member, Rev. Drew Johnston

*Sally Borden*

### **Thanks from the Women’s Alliance**

The Women’s Alliance would like to thank many people, so rather than write the words Thank You many times, here is one big THANK YOU and the list of who they go to and why:

To Nora Holt, Ruth Seifert, Yvonne Fowler for their persistent work to have a blood drive for 1<sup>st</sup> UU at the Red Cross Headquarters in June;

To the church members who showed up to give blood;

To anyone who was a speaker for our monthly programs;

To members who took the responsibility for acting as “chair of the day”.

To all who attended our events;

To those who supported our canned food drive last fall by contributing;

To those who supported our bake sale fundraisers.

To the Women’s Alliance officers for the past year: Alma King, Ruth Seifert, Yvanne Ham, Yvonne Fowler, Eiko Takemoto; To the officers for next year: Alma King, Ruth Seifert, Yvanne Ham, Yvonne Fowler, Eiko Takemoto, and Lee Thume;

To the nine enthusiastic members who showed up on June 17 to plan our next year’s events;

To Elayne Sikelianos, our dedicated and creative chef;

To Andee Seeger who donated some profits from jewelry sales to our treasury;

To Sharon Mills who is researching a fundraising idea for us;

To Joe Brimmer who sets up the tables for us and cleans up after us;

And, of course, to Rev. Drew for his support and encouragement.

Over the summer we will finalize our plans for next church year. We plan to challenge ourselves with some new ideas and look to the future and deal with that difficult word “change”!

*Alma King*



*Ed Collins, Dan Rebb, Carrie Yager, Linda Kernohan, Wesley Middleton, Rev. Drew Johnston, and many others helped represent First UU at Motor City Pride in Ferndale, MI on Sunday, June 7, 2009. (Photo: Dessa Cosma)*

### **1<sup>st</sup> UU at Motor City Pride!**

*Motor City Pride* was a fabulous day for activism and fun, and 1<sup>st</sup> UU was in the mix! Our festive table was staffed by lots of 1<sup>st</sup> UU volunteers who gave out info about Unitarian Universalism, our open and affirming values, and our church, not to mention suckers tied with ribbon to a little card Rev. Drew made about how we actually *live* our equality based values. I think we will definitely see some new faces this summer as a result of our outreach at *Pride*.

Thanks to Carrie Yager, Alma King, Linda Darga, Gene Perrin, Marilyn and Jerry Mitchell, Dan Rebb, Wesley Middleton, Suzanne and Ian McGill, Linda Kernohan, Ed Collins, Alicia Biggers, Lee Gaddies, and Rev. Drew for their time and energy tabling at *Pride*. Thanks also to Sally Borden, Alicia Biggers, Mary Lou Malone, and Rev. Drew for gathering up and creating all the materials we used there. And thanks to Sherry Wells, who lives just a few blocks from the festival, for offering up some free, day-long parking!

It was a beautiful day in Michigan and a great day to be a UU! You can bet we'll be there again next year!

*Dessa Cosma*

## **Help Wanted: Arts and Crafts Exhibition**

1<sup>st</sup> UU is seeking a few good men and women to form a sub-committee to put on an arts and crafts exhibition and sale in Pullman Hall in September on the same weekend as Dally in the Alley. This is a fund-raiser for the church. All ideas are welcome. Please contact Marilyn Mitchell at [mmitchell@evansluptak.com](mailto:mmitchell@evansluptak.com) to indicate your preferred meeting dates and times.

*Marilyn Mitchell*



*Please welcome Mark Schwing to First UU Detroit! (Photo: Linda Kernohan)*

## **"About Us"**

*This is part of an ongoing series of profiles of members of 1<sup>st</sup> UU Church of Detroit.*

Mark Schwing, b. 1957 Ann Arbor MI

Many members of our denomination are refugees from other religions, but Mark remembers how much he enjoyed Birmingham church as a child. He went to Roeper, and then Lahser High School for 11th and 12th grades. He won a scholarship to attend Parsons School of Design in New York City and a scholarship for an Art Study Tour in Europe in 1975 called the TRAUB scholarship. As a student, artists such as Rosanne Vihos, Ruth Janes, Norman Stewart, Clinton Koupus, Ken Wade and Daria Dorosh among others were inspirational and supportive.

Mark was introduced to Detroit's Art Scene via Detroit Focus Gallery, having shows beginning around 1983 and eventually becoming a member. He showed with artist Bob Downs at the Detroit Focus Gallery, but at the same time at the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art in Grand Rapids in 1989. He has also shown at the Detroit Artists Market, Sixth Street Gallery (Royal Oak MI), Willis Gallery (Detroit), 1st UU of Detroit and Birmingham Unitarian Church. He became involved with The Artist's Cooperative (1997-2006), Swann Gallery and Sherry Washington Gallery (1996-now), all located in Detroit. The cooperative proved to be supportive and he enjoys being with fellow artists.

In 2007, Mark was accepted into the Windsor Biannual Art Show. He continues to pursue his interest in art, paints and draws showing mostly in and around the Detroit area.

Mark ensures the church signs are updated regularly and volunteers on the Gallery Information committee at the DIA. He lives in the neighborhood and believes the cultural center is a fine place to live. He is single, a vegetarian, and likes cats. He enjoys pizza, escaping to the bar for a beer, down to earth people, science fiction, and cares about the environment. He enjoys playing Trivial Pursuit, Ping Pong and Gin Rummy. His new favorite gallery is MOCAD. Mark's website is: [www.markschwing1.com](http://www.markschwing1.com) and he would enjoy hearing from you.

*Mary Neale*

## **Finding the Burnett Heart**

Many 1<sup>st</sup> UU Members enjoyed seeing "Finding the Burnett Heart" on Saturday afternoon, April 18. 1<sup>st</sup> UU's treasury is \$50 richer. Although the play did not get 3 or 4 stars in the *Detroit Free Press*, it was enjoyable and had a message.

*Margaret Beck*

*Editor's Note: This article was mistakenly omitted from the April and May issues.*

## **A Message From Your Outgoing Office Administrator**

As Brian and I head off to Boston to start the next chapter of our life together, I just wanted to say thank you to everyone at First UU for being so friendly and welcoming to us during the past year. We were especially touched by the lovely send-off the congregation gave us, along with Mike and Laurel Hoa.

We have had a wonderful time being involved in the church and getting to know so many great people here. I just hope we'll be able to find a church in Boston where we feel equally at home – you're a hard act to follow!

It has also been my honor and pleasure to serve as your Office Administrator for the past six months. It's not often that you find a job where the idea going to work each day is vitalizing and motivating, rather than an oppressive chore, because you believe in the organization and look forward to helping facilitate its mission.

I hope I've left the office a little better than I found it, and I'm confident that things will continue to

run smoothly with my successor. If I could ask for a parting gift from the congregation, it would be to welcome your new Office Administrator as warmly as you welcomed me. A bit of patience will be in order as it might take the new person some time to get the hang of things – I had the advantage of having been a congregant for several months before joining the church staff. Also, remember that the church office is a resource for everyone who participates in church activities; communicating with the office about appropriate ways for the administrator to support your activities will benefit everyone involved. Don't forget that the office can help publicize church events and activities, via the online calendar and the Order of Service.

I've been telling everyone that saying goodbye makes me too sad, so I'll just say see you later! If you plan a visit to Boston, let us know!

Linda Kernohan & Brian McMichael  
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## **JULY BIRTHDAYS:**

July 4- Mildred Robinson  
July 5- Rose LaBolle, Ruth Seifert  
July 7- Tracey Martin  
July 12- Edie McKnight  
July 18- Trey Greene  
July 25- Stuart Smith

## **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The deadline for all newsletter submissions, both printed and electronically submitted material, is Wednesday, July 28 no later than 9:00pm. Please send articles to the Newsletter Editor at [newslettereditor@1stuu.org](mailto:newslettereditor@1stuu.org). Your feedback is welcomed and appreciated in the spirit of liberating truth, radiating kindness and loving courageously.