

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit

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September 25, 2009

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First Unitarian  
Universalist Church  
Organizational Chart  
2009 – 2010

## 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*

### Assistant Minister

*Rev. Lynda Smith*

### Music Director

*Todd Ballou*

### Cantor

*Gwen Foss*

### Office Admin

*Jenn Hurtt*

### Building & Grounds

*Joe Brimmer*

*Leonard Swint*

(Sunday)

### Trustees

*Dessa Cosma*

*Marilyn Mitchell*

*Dan Rebb*

### Newsletter Editor

*Ryan King*

## DREW'S VIEWS

Welcome to Autumn at First Unitarian Universalist! Having been through a few seasonal cycles here I now think this is one of the nicest seasons. I know it will be cold soon, and I'll long for more daylight, but I know that winter will just be the path to spring, my other favorite season. Autumn displays a lot of change, and you know I am always interested in change.

It is much busier in the neighborhood this time of year. New students anxiously looking for parking spots, eager to get to class at Wayne State; rental units fill up and there is generally more traffic and noise. It's closer to the Detroit of the past, in the way that it is busy; and closer to the Detroit of the future, which has to let go of that past. Detroit of the future is busy in a new way, and it might be worth catching the wave. It won't be at all like it was a hundred years ago, but it is inevitable and compelling, though complex and a little scary. Kind of like going to school, a short while into the semester it becomes normal.

Autumn has more similarity to the changing city than any other season. We know that we can't go back to summer. Any delusions are soon dissuaded by the approach of winter. Change is inevitable, natural, and something we can do together. Our church is waiting at this busy corner to start buzzing more and more with activity at all hours, not just Wednesdays and Sundays. So watch for, and join in, the future Detroit. Our corner might as well be a focal point in that future!

On a very pragmatic level, here are a few reminders about how to be in contact. In order to be as widely available as possible, I do not keep regular office hours but do respond to calls and emails in order to schedule a time to meet. Don't hesitate to contact me if you want to talk.

Reverend Lynda Smith is our Pastoral Minister this year and also focuses her time on educational events of many kinds. I hope you saw her questionnaire and that you are ready to show up for some activities! She is part-time, and best reached by phone or email.

Jenn Hurtt is in the office every Sunday, Tuesday, and very soon we're going to switch from Friday to Thursday. She checks all the phone messages and emails at the church office and deals with them as appropriate.

The three of us are your front-line staff, for almost everything staff related you will want to talk to one of us.

For big picture ideas or questions, personal concerns or counseling, theological curiosities, and anything related to transitional ministry; as well as things that don't fit anywhere else, contact me.

For pastoral concerns and educational programming questions and ideas, contact Lynda. For anything administrative, contact Jenn.

All our contact information is in the directory (soon to be updated!) or use the church number, (313) 833-9107.

See you in church!  
*Rev. Drew Johnston*

## **Lynda's Lyrics**

- 1) Thanks to Maya Thottakath (who has attended First Unitarian Universalist for many years) and Katie McIntosh (the newest staff member, who has created an informative brochure outlining our program for children and youth) we have reliable and energetic teachers. Maya and Katie are both students at Wayne State University. Preschoolers, elementary and high schoolers who come to church on Sunday with their parents will always be welcomed to a safe and nurturing space for learning and questioning and having fun. With the help of Maya and Katie, I'm coordinating a religious education program for children and youth that teaches about UU values, principles, and history through creative arts and creative conversation. Check out the corner for child care and class time in the NW corner of McCollester Hall. Check out the new Religious Education Brochure. Feel free to invite friends with children to come to church with you.
- 2) Thanks to all who completed an Adult Education Survey. If you missed it, please speak with me about your suggestions. Drew and I will be deciding what we will offer. We'll let you know soon, and there will be another brochure about the selections done by talented graphic layout designer, Katie McIntosh.
- 3) A Pastoral Care Team is forming. If you have any questions or concerns, please see Drew or I. The main goal of the Pastoral Care Team is to assist the ministers by keeping in touch with church members who are frail, recovering from a health challenge, or need some extra TLC for whatever reason.
- 4) Many heartfelt thanks to the twenty volunteers who helped on our last church clean up Saturday (Aug. 15). Their names are listed on bulletin boards in the hallway outside McCollester Hall and inside the hall. Don't worry; there will be other chances to help (like September 26<sup>th</sup> for one). Of the twenty, I want to give a special thanks to four who worked longer than one Saturday: Art Gabhart for replastering and painting the men's restroom, Bill McKnight for coordinating with contractors in sealing leaks in the roof, Dessa Cosma and Ryan King for their vision and work on reviving Pullman Hall.

A Street Retreat bears witness and raises awareness about issues of homelessness. I am working with an interfaith group of Protestants, Catholics and Buddhists to do Retreats in Midtown Detroit. Our next one is Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> (7:30 am – 3:30 pm). Flyers are on the church bulletin boards or call me for details. Each participant is responsible for asking friends and relatives for donations to sponsor them. For this one day retreat the donation is \$50 per participant and the money will be donated to the groups that help them. The last retreat, May 2009, went for 4 days and 3 nights and each participant was asked to raise \$350. The donations raised went to The Detroit Rescue Mission, Manna Meals, St. Aloysius Outreach, the Homeless BBQ, the Episcopal Cathedral Outreach, Fort Street Presbyterian Church Open Door, and First UU Church. I appreciate the generous time of treasurer, Sharlene Gage, and First UU in serving as fiduciary while we work towards our own non-profit status.

*Rev. Lynda Smith*

## **Presidential Ponderings**

From time to time, this column will focus on goals set in our long-term plan. Today's focus will be on leadership.

One of the benefits of following a long-term plan is achieving continuity. One of the ways of achieving continuity is by developing leadership with the proper training and handing off of information so that goals, policies and procedures do not get lost along the way. An oft-used metaphor for leadership is the geese flying in formation with each goose taking its turn in the lead to lessen the burden for the others. It helps for

the new leader to obtain the knowledge in order to contribute productively in the role instead of just getting thrown in front. It is the Board's goal to search out potential leaders to serve not only as a trustee or officer, but to also head up a task group or short-term projects similar to Future Facilities, Pullman Hall rejuvenation or Noel Night. Leadership can appear in short or long-term stints. It is a goal to rotate members in and out of leadership positions. We want to avoid the situation where a person feels stuck in a position because it appears there is no one else to take it.

Opportunities are available for members to expand their leadership potential by exploring opportunities that differ from what they've done outside of First UU. A Finance person who does not want to get pigeon-holed into being Treasurer might be interested in Worship or Membership. A member not accustomed to public speaking could get some experience in front of crowds as Worship Associate at Sunday service.

It is our challenge to recognize and develop the potential of our members that will eventually help First UU to further its possibilities. *Everyone at First UU can be empowered to be a leader and the church never falters when we know that there's always someone to take our place and relieve us of the hard work. Although it is often thought that there can be only one leader, the reality is that we can make every member of the church feel that they have responsibility for the entire group. ~ Unknown*

*Dan Wiest*

### **Women's Alliance October Event:**

Come and learn about term limits at the Women's Alliance luncheon, Wednesday, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>, 12-2 pm. Marjorie Sarbaugh-Thompson, an associate professor at Wayne State University in the Political Science department, is a nationally known speaker on term limits. Lunch is at noon for a cost of \$10. Reservations for the lunch portion should be made with the Church Office or Eiko Takemoto. The program will begin at 1:00. No reservations are necessary for the program portion. All are welcome!

*Alma King*



### **OUR MUSICAL ADVENTURES BEGIN ON WED OCT 7, 7-9pm**

Todd Ballou, 1st UU Music Director

Church Night is the place to be! MUSICAL ADVENTURES is a series of discussions, lessons, and demonstrations facilitated by Todd Ballou for musicians in our community to build musical skills, network,

become involved, and share musical ideas for the benefit of our Sunday morning experience at 1st UU church. Topics will be driven by participants so bring your favorite musical inspiration on CD, or even perform it for us; bring a musical question you'd like discussed, or bring your most musical friend. Topics will include reading music, learning about rhythms, exploring our hymnal, finding your singing voice, sharing your musical inspirations, planning musical experiments, discovering the organ, choir repertoire, providing feedback, and instrumental music.

If we need one, here's our map:

Oct 7- We've gotta start somewhere: Reading music 101: pitches & rhythms

Nov 4- What were they thinking: Exploring our hymnal & christmas carols

Dec 2- Stop Vocal Abuse!: Singing 101 & Christmas carols for Noel Night

Jan 6- Herding Cats & other choir topics

Feb 3- Instrumental service music- Piano, Organ & Beyond ...yond...yond..yond

Mar 3- 2nd chance: Reading music 101: pitches & rhythms

Apr 7- Reading music 201- The "Key" to listening

May 5- The Musical Psychic- the magic & mystery of selecting music for next Sunday

June 2- If we don't have anything better to talk about, we'll have an Organ Tour!

*Todd Ballou*

### **Cool Congregations**

Solving Global Warming One Family at a Time

Are you concerned about Global Warming? Wish you could do something about it? "Cool Congregations" adds a new dimension to regular stewardship programs in which interested congregants pledge to implement energy efficient measures in their own homes. They choose just three or four actions from a list of many researched options. In doing this, they are pledging to reduce their personal family contribution to global warming, and often save money in the process!

In a series of three small group sessions, "Cool Congregations" participants first measure their carbon footprint, and then choose steps to take to reduce it by 10% and submit this in the form of a pledge card to their congregation. At the end of the project they meet once again to calculate their results and celebrate.

Stewardship is more than just giving time or money, its taking good care of what we have been given - this fragile earth, our island home. We keep the faith in part by keeping the earth.

Contact Alicia Biggers or Lee Gaddies to sign up or leave your name, email and phone with the Church office.

"Cool Congregations" is a program of Michigan Interfaith Power & Light, one of twenty-eight state affiliates with Interfaith Power & Light. Interfaith Power & Light gives religious people tools to become better stewards of Creation.

Our Info Sessions will be held in Memorial Hall on the following dates:

- 1) Sunday, October 18th @ 1pm - Cool Congregations - Intro and Kick-off
- 2) Sunday, November 15th @ 1pm - Cool Congregations - Carbon Footprint Calculations & Pledge
- 3) Sunday, January 17th @ 1pm - Cool Congregations Pledge Support - what is working, what is not? Calculations, tips
- 4) Sunday, March 14th @ 1pm - Cool Congregations - Pledge Winner - Who reduced their carbon footprint the most?

Then we will meet in McColleston Hall on Saturday, February 20, 2010 for an all day Cool Congregations "Green Day" event so between 8am and 5pm. This event will provide you resources and information on how to be more energy savvy and save money yet live comfortable too!

*Alicia Biggers / Lee Gaddies*

### **Social Justice at First UU of Detroit - What's New?**

Interested in getting involved in Social Justice? The Committee is looking for you!

Social Justice Committee (SJC) just wrapped up the previous Church year hosting a series "isms" panel discussions as well as a series of Candidate Forums featuring Detroit candidates for City Council, Charter Commission, and Mayor.

Continuing on an Education theme, SJC is planning a monthly series of speakers and panel discussions around such themes as Workers' Rights, lowering our carbon footprint, and Foreclosures/Transitional Housing. Our first discussion for this Church year will take place Sunday, September 27th at 1:00pm in Memorial Hall. Our series will follow with an action item where you will be informed and make a difference.

SJC monthly meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm and are open to all who are interested in getting involved. We welcome you to be a part of the Social Justice Committee and here are a few ways: attend an SJC meeting to make the series a reality, attend one of the series, complete an action around one of our themes, or stop by our table during Coffee Hour for relevant leaflets. Together we can put our values, our faith, into action!

*Kathleen Johnson*

### **1<sup>st</sup> UU at Dally in the Alley**

Thanks so much to everyone who helped out with the First UU table at Dally in the Alley on Sept. 12th. We not only had great fun, but successfully talked to lots of people about our church and our values, and answered their questions about who we are and what we do. I witnessed great conversations and "ah ha" moments from passersby who didn't know a church like ours even existed. And I am happy to say that I have seen more than one person we talked to at Dally at church since then!

A special thanks to Dan Wiest, Alicia Biggers, Gladys Santiago, Katie McIntosh, Lynda Smith, Mark Schwing, Sean Gray, Dave Lingholm, Linda Darga, Robert Johnson, Gwen Foss, and Lee Gaddies for helping out at our table and to other church members who stopped by to say hello.

*Dessa Cosma*



### **Three generations of First UU at Lafayette Yard Sale**

First UU members spanning three generations worked together at the Lafayette Yard Sale to benefit the church. From left to right, they are Faye Colling, Sandra Thottakath, and Anarosa Mendoza-King. They had tables of donated jewelry, silk scarves, new shoes, collectables and left-over items from the last church rummage sale. They made a \$168.40 profit for the church treasury!

### **Sale of 2010 Entertainment Books Benefit Women's Alliance**

The new 2010 edition of Entertainment books are still for sale. The cost is \$20 and include all kinds of coupons to save money on local businesses. So far, the sale of these books has raised \$140 for the Women's Alliance. It has been very much appreciated and will help our church.

If you would like to purchase a book, please see me at church, call me at (313) 882-7775 or email me at [margrebeck@comcast.net](mailto:margrebeck@comcast.net). I will also have the books for sale at the Women's Alliance meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at noon.

*Margaret Beck*

### **Halloween Party at 1st UU!**

Wednesday October 28th 7pm - 8:30 pm. There will be music, games, costume contest, and treats to be had.

All ages welcome. For more information please contact Kathleen Jacobs Johnson at [lilbunniest@gmail.com](mailto:lilbunniest@gmail.com) or by phone (313)343-8871.

### **Noel Night Meeting**

Get Christmas out of your system early. Our annual quest to somehow improve Noel Night at First UU commences on Sunday, October 4 at 12:30 in Memorial Hall. Be there. Beware.

*Dan Wiest*

### **“About Us”**

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

Past President of our church board, Alicia Biggers was raised in North Carolina and in Florida with four brothers and a sister. She has a 98 year old aunt in the U.K, as well as family in Brazil. “Mine was a loving, traditional family where I learned to take the best of the old traditions and form new ones: a change agent in a positive way.” She studied social science, political science, and education at Tampa’s University of South Florida, and then came to Detroit, enrolled at Wayne State University for a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science. She now works in competitive intelligence at Ford Motor Co. in Dearborn.

“You can become part of a corporate machine but our church puts a human face on life and emphasizes self-forgiveness. We forget to enjoy life, but church reminds us of that. When I feel the life force being sucked out of me, church renews it.”

“My mother was a spiritual person, but not churched. I started coming to church in 2002 when I saw the sign outside, ‘Religion for the modern thinker’. I didn’t stay for coffee hour, but enjoyed taking tours of the church and programs such as Noel Night, and I started coming regularly.”

“I am an optimistic person and a realist. I appreciate Drew for helping me see this is a unique time for stepping up and getting more involved, as we have an incredible opportunity to grow and make a significant contribution to our community.”

“We make choices about our attitudes, and I avoid negativity. We need to be where there is an accepting attitude toward change – inducing new members under Drew’s leadership.”

Alicia lives in N.W. Detroit with her partner Lee Gaddies and they plan to marry soon. Let’s be ready in early 2010 to help them celebrate their new life commitment together.

*Mary Neale*

### **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The deadline for all newsletter submissions, both printed and electronically submitted material, is Wednesday, October 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.

