

# First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

4605 Cass Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201  
June 5, 2011

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First Unitarian  
Universalist Church  
Organizational Chart  
2010 – 2011

#### Officers

##### President

*Marilyn Mitchell*

##### Vice President

*Bill McKnight*

##### Immediate Past

##### President

*Dan Wiest*

##### Board Secretary

*Kathleen Jacobs*

*Johnson*

##### Treasurer

*David Lingholm*

#### Staff

##### Minister

*Rev. Bill Neely*

##### Music Director

*Todd Ballou*

##### Cantor

*Gwen Foss*

##### Office Admin

*Jenn Hurtt*

##### Building & Grounds

*Joe Brimmer*

*Leonard Swint*

(Sunday)

#### Trustees

*Dessa Cosma*

*Robert Johnson*

*Julie Brock*

*Sally Borden*

#### Newsletter Editor

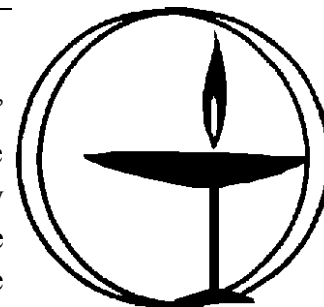
*Robert Johnson*

#### Worship Services

held every Sunday at  
11:00am.

## Minister's View

I didn't pay much attention to the recent "end of the world" prediction, and I probably won't pay much attention to the next one. But a different set of predictions recently caught my eye. Posted on Huffingtonpost.com, these five predictions are made by evangelical pastor Brady Boyd and concern the future of the local church. Boyd's predictions below are in bold. My descriptions of them, hopefully easier to apply to our religious tradition, follow:



1. **The places where we gather will become smaller.** People will seek more intimacy in the religious setting, leading them away from packed cathedrals and stadium settings and toward smaller gatherings of fewer people. Even those who worship in larger settings will increasingly find ways to additionally be devotional in smaller circles.
2. **The church will be launched into real mission.** Local congregations will become more firmly rooted in the needs of their communities, and the faithful will come together to express justice and love directly in the streets and towns that surround them.
3. **The church will return to its ancient roots.** While change and innovation leads almost every religious community on some level, people will increasingly and with intention refer to ancient resources for wisdom and guidance.
4. **The church will talk more about really important issues.** Discussions of theological distinctions and creedal insistences will lessen and the church will more frequently discuss sexuality, money, consumerism, and other topics of immediate relevance in our lives.
5. **The church will return to wonder and awe.** Our place in creation is one of certainty and mystery. Rather than so often focusing on what we think we can know, we will embrace the mystery and worship with wonder the unexplainable miracle of all that is.

Will these predictions come true? I don't know. No one does. No one can read the signs of the times well enough to predict with complete assurance what is to come, but I mostly hope he's right. In truth, however, the church to come is the one that we create. With our vision and faith, our covenants and commitment, we create every day the congregations that serve ourselves, our communities, and our world. While forces greater than us determine much about our lives, we still nonetheless gather in beloved community to shape what we can. And in the shape of love and justice, we form our lives and communities so that they bless as far as they can.

We recently watched yet another prediction of the end of the world come ... and go. We were told that believers would be raptured to heaven while the rest suffered on earth for a period of tribulation, followed by an epic battle between ... well, you know how it goes. The end was supposed to come, again. It didn't, again. And here we are; believers of every sort breathing the same air, living on the same earth, again. In the end, we begin again, all of us; together. As it was, it ever shall be. This is the only prediction proven true. Thanks be for this.



Rev Bill Neely

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## **President's Ponderings**

We have wonderful things to look forward to and a number of dates to put on the calendar for June.

First, the congregational vote on donating our buildings to EMEAC will take place after the service on Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR ALL MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING TO ATTEND so we have a quorum. 75% of the quorum of members is required to secure the donation. What happens if we do not donate the buildings to EMEAC? We walk away and our beautiful historic buildings will be lost.

One week after the vote, we celebrate JUNETEENTH with a picnic in the parking lot behind the sanctuary. The church will furnish lemonade and watermelons. We ask each person/couple to bring a picnic basket from home. This is not a potluck. We are saving the potluck for June 26<sup>th</sup> and Rev. Bill's last Sunday with us. Remember, the parking lot is not shaded and may be hot, so please apply sunscreen and wear a hat that will protect your face and head. And come prepared to sing and enjoy listening to gospel, led by Gwen.

One week after the all-church picnic, on June 26<sup>th</sup>, we will regretfully say farewell to Rev. Bill and send him and his family off to Princeton with the most splendid pot-luck ever!! Remember, Bill and his family are vegetarians, so let's come up with some spectacular vegetarian dishes.

First Church has been very blessed this past year. Once again, Phoenix-like, we have risen and taken on the daunting challenge of preserving our buildings and our congregation. We prevailed! We look forward to our partnership with EMEAC to continue to serve our community and the larger city.

First Church remains an urban center for spiritual renewal and social justice in Detroit.

Marilyn Mitchell—Board President

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## **June 2011 Worship Calendar**

June 5, *The Story of Ruth*, Rev. Bill Neely and Katherine Maurer

Full of tenderness and struggle, the *Book of Ruth* in the Hebrew Scriptures beautifully speaks to the complexities of commitment and community. Join Rev. Neely and Katherine Maurer for some thoughts on this traditional story.

June 12, *This Church of Love*, Rev. Bill Neely

Love has been the commitment of our faith and this congregation since both began, and yet as times change both have periodically needed to reinvent themselves to remain prophetic. As the congregation considers major changes, we'll consider both the stability and creativity of the Love that guides us in caring for each other and transforming the world.

June 19, *Still Waiting for Freedom*, Rev. Bill Neely

Juneteenth acknowledges former slaves in Texas being informed of their freedom more than two years after it was granted. Freedom is always to be celebrated, but more broadly, how is freedom still delayed for so many in this country? How can our faith be a more effective agent of freedom?

June 26, *A Parting Blessing*, Rev. Bill Neely

Our planned year of Interim ministry comes to a close, meaning that it is time to say good-bye. On this, our final Sunday together, Rev. Neely will reflect on what he sees as the power and promise of First Church and offer his own blessing for your future.

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## **Announcements**

A memorial service will be held June 18th for Dr Eugene Parrin. All are invited to attend.

A UU Bed and Breakfast program is now available in the Greater Lansing, MI, area (UU Church of Greater Lansing). Suggested donation \$50-60/night, one or two people. Several homes are participating; all are welcoming and non-smoking. Preferred method of contact: [UULansingBB@gmail.com](mailto:UULansingBB@gmail.com); alternate method of contact: 517-332-1221 (Gwen). Consider the B&B program any time you need a place to stay in the Lansing, East Lansing, Haslett, Okemos area. Some reasons to visit: MSU visits and graduations, weddings, memorials, East Lansing Jazz Festival (Jun 17-18, 2011 [www.eljazzfest.com](http://www.eljazzfest.com)), Great Lakes Festival (Aug 12-14, 2011 [greatlakesfolkfest.net](http://greatlakesfolkfest.net)), concerts and Broadway musicals at the Wharton Center [whartoncenter.com](http://whartoncenter.com), Ten Pound Fiddle concerts [www.tenpoundfiddle.org](http://www.tenpoundfiddle.org), the Art Fair (May), a Lugnuts game [www.lansinglugnuts.com](http://www.lansinglugnuts.com), etc. Do come visit us! --The Heart of Michigan B&B Hosts"

June 19th aka Juneteenth we will have a potluck/picnic. So bring your food and sunscreen.

## **Announcement to Members and Friends of First Church**

As you are aware, maintaining our buildings at the corner of Cass and Forrest with a membership of fewer than 100 people has become unsustainable. Several years ago, the congregation authorized the Board of Trustees to sell the buildings other than the sanctuary. Although a realtor was engaged, no realistic purchase offers were received. During the past several months, we have succeeded in renting the second floor of the school building. However, the additional income from rentals is still insufficient to meet the utility costs and maintenance needs of the buildings, let alone provide the capital necessary to make repairs and improvements and render the buildings more accessible to the elderly and disabled.

Accordingly, we entered into a memo of understanding with Tech Town to explore donating the buildings to Tech Town for creation of an arts incubator. At the same time, a committee of the board released a request for proposal, seeking proposals from organizations to purchase, lease or apply for donation of the buildings. Several proposals were received and considered. No organization offered to purchase the buildings.

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that on Wednesday, May 25, 2011, at a Special Board Meeting, the Board unanimously selected East Michigan Environmental Action Council (“EMEAC”) as the recipient of a donation of the church buildings. The action of the Board is subject to approval of 75% of the membership eligible to vote who comprise a quorum at a special congregational meeting scheduled for June 12, 2011, following the worship service. If the congregation votes to donate the buildings, EMEAC will assume responsibility for all expenses associated with the buildings while allowing the congregation to continue to use the sanctuary without cost.

The Board selected EMEAC as the recipient for the following reasons:

EMEAC will use the buildings to operate diverse programs that serve a number of community needs.

EMEAC has a solid basis of funding and available resources to maintain and improve the buildings.

EMEAC’s programs and interests are in line with Unitarian-Universalist principles. In fact, the Executive Director, Associate Director and bookkeeper are all Unitarian-Universalists.

There is a real potential for congregational growth and outreach with participants in the programs operated by EMEAC, whose interests and philosophy synchronize with our own.

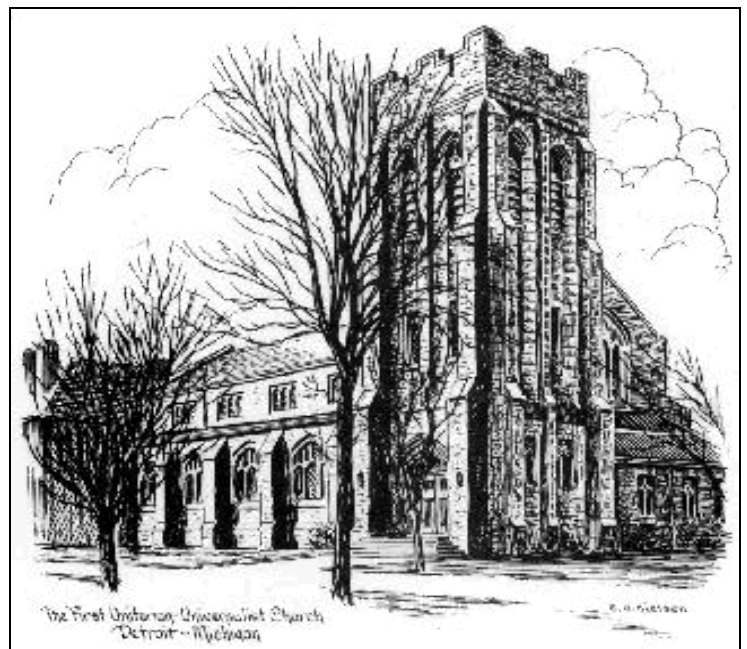
EMEAC provided excellent references including from the City Planning Commission and Historic Designation Advisory Board who support EMEAC’s proposed adaptive reuse of the historic buildings of First Church.

In keeping with one of its missions, EMEAC will improve the buildings using “green” technology.

EMEAC has committed to allow the congregation to remain in the sanctuary in perpetuity and will be flexible in affording the congregation access to other parts of the buildings as required.

The proposal with a description of the various programs EMEAC operates will be posted on the First Church website for your review prior to the congregational vote.

The Board also encourages everyone to submit questions and comments to the box in the narthex starting Sunday, May 29th, so concerns may be addressed in advance of the vote. Of course, the Board also encourages you to discuss the proposed arrangement with each other and with members of the Board of Trustees.



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