

# FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

DECEMBER EDITION

## FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2013-2014

### *Upcoming Sermon Schedule*

December 1

Rev. Roger Mohr

#### **“Transcending the Family.”**

In contemporary life, the family is generally understood as the core of relationship and meaning, but family is not destiny.

December 8

Rev. Roger Mohr

#### **“The Circumspective Perspective.”**

Sometimes we become so focused that we forget to look around.

December 15

Rev. Roger Mohr,

#### **“The Transcendental Ape.”**

Human beings are spiritual animals, looking beyond what is, to imagine what could be.



December 22

Rev. Roger Mohr

#### **“The Solar Wheel.”**

On the Winter Solstice, we are reminded that the journey of the Earth around the Sun is a major influence on our inner life.

December 24

Rev. Roger Mohr

#### **Christmas Eve Service**

7:00 p.m.

January 5

Rev. Roger Mohr

#### **“Dark and Deep, Cold and Clean.”**

The New Year is a time of purification, as Nature disciplines and tests us.

#### Officers

##### President

*Marsha Bruhn*

##### Vice President

*Danny Rebb*

##### Immediate Past President

*Sally Borden*

##### Board Secretary

*Katbe Stevens*

##### Treasurer

*Dan Wiest*

##### Board Members At-Large

*Matt Friedrichs*

*Joan Smykowski*

*Sean McAde*

#### Staff

##### Minister

*Rev. Roger Mohr*

##### Music Director

*Todd Ballou*

##### Cantor

*Gwen Foss*

##### Office Admin

*Tamara Halliburton*

All those who are involved in the service on Sunday (Speakers, Worship Coordinator, Trustee of the Day, Cantor, and Music Director and/or Guest Musicians) will meet in the Sanctuary at 10:30am each Sunday to review the service.

Worship Services held every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.



## *Letter from the President*

With the holiday season before us, the Building & Grounds Committee has been brimming with activity—fixing corroded electrical wiring, rerouting circuits, installing new exterior lighting, repairing the choir loft floor, assessing the Sanctuary's flame lights, trimming bushes, clearing brush, and cleaning, cleaning, cleaning! Meanwhile, the Development Committee brought us a marvelous evening of Jazz Vespers with the Metro Jazz Voices. As a result of the great work of Sydney Schaaf and her team, the event netted \$650 to benefit the church's sound system!

What you may not have heard much about is what is happening with the Prentis lot—the church's parking lot on Prentis Street. This property was purchased by the church for \$50,000 in the 90's and has been the subject of active discussion between EMEAC and the Board for some time. It is 67 feet wide by 187 feet deep and currently accommodates up to 60 cars in its unimproved state. If the lot was improved--resurfacing, striping, and aisle widths to meet City code--it would provide 46 parking spaces (20 along the alley and two rows of 13 spaces each in diagonal parking). This is in addition to the 16-17 spaces behind and around the buildings currently available for EMEAC/Commons/church use.

A subcommittee of Kathe Stevens, Sean McAde, Dan Wiest, Sally Borden, Matt Friedrichs, Tim Bailey and I have been exploring options for the property. Our starting point has been to ensure that both EMEAC and the congregation have access to the lot. Our research has shown that there is considerable interest in the property by Midtown property owners, businesses, organizations and developers, either for purchase of all or a portion of the property, or for leasing all or a portion of it. A July 26, 2013 report by Allen & Associates Appraisal Group, Inc. for Detroit Midtown, Inc. appraised the property at \$160,000 (improved value). Unimproved, the value exceeds \$200,000.

EMEAC has submitted an offer to purchase the property for \$20,000, proposing to pay \$250 a month for five years with a balloon payment of \$5,000 at the end of five years. Over the past few months, the subcommittee has examined the pros and cons of five other options:

1. Sale of the entire site to a non-profit corporation for parking in Midtown;
2. Sale of the entire site to a developer for potential future housing;
3. Sale of the western 17 feet to an adjacent property owner for parking;

### *Letter from the President (continued)*

4. Lease of the western 17 feet to an adjacent property owner for parking;
5. Lease of all or a portion of the lot to a nearby business for parking.

The subcommittee did not consider a lease agreement with EMEAC since we were informed over a year ago that EMEAC was not interested in a lease arrangement. Each of the five options outlined above is being evaluated based on the number of spaces that would be committed to EMEAC and the congregation, the length of time of the commitments, the type of improvements that would be made to the property, the source of revenue for those improvements, how the property would be managed and maintained, the revenue that would be generated, and the flexibility in use of the property. A revenue stream would help stabilize First UU's budget, enable the church to support EMEAC's request for help in purchasing supplies (e.g., garbage bags, hand soap, toilet paper) and provide funding for space rental for church activities.

We expect that a decision will be made soon on the future of the parking lot. Currently, the lot is not generating any income, and many people not associated with either EMEAC or the congregation are parking for free.

So, while we debate this, let's look forward to Noel Night and the opportunity to showcase historical First Unitarian Universalist Church to the hundreds of visitors who will pass through our doors and enjoy the many groups performing that night, including the legendary Thornetta Davis.

My warmest wishes to you for the holiday season!



## *The Rev's Room*

This month we have our last session of the Ascendants course, and it has been a huge learning experience for me. I am aware that what seems to be missing from our lives is connection and meaning beyond the personal and circumstantial. What exactly that looks like depends very much on personalities and personal circumstances. But what we seem to lack is a deeper context from which to experience our lives. It is good to be self aware, and much of the course was focused on that piece, with personality testing being the heart of the work.

But self awareness is really only the first step. And in truth, most of us are at least moderately self-aware - we do know ourselves, even if some are a bit further along on that section. Beyond that, there is a significant hunger for a way to ground and re-frame our lives that takes the “thousand slings and arrows” of our daily experience and offers us both peace and meaning despite the challenges and struggles in our lives. That hunger for a more nourishing root or connection is the foundation of the spiritual quest.

It would be tempting to try to describe a “universal” approach to that spiritual hunger. And indeed, that is the way religions usually work: They prescribe one solution, one source of sustenance for all comers, usually called “God.” And that reference to a supreme being provides a single, ultimate point of connection and meaning beyond the self. The religion defines both the need and the solution, and then leaves it to the individual to conform to those definitions. But as I listened to the Ascendants talk about their spiritual needs, they are not really the same. They are asking different questions for different reasons, pending their personalities and circumstances. Their hungers are not the same. A big, spiritual “pepperoni pizza” is no way to truly nourish us, even if it is presented as manna from heaven. My spiritual hunger is for something specific for my personal questions and appetites, which are similar to others’, but which are as different from others as I am different.

What we need is a way for us to dig more deeply into our own sources and resources at an individual level, so that we can find the things that nourish us. That is the unique gift of Unitarian Universalism. We are not a “pizza for all” tradition, but an overflowing cornucopia of possibilities. Yet the choices themselves are overwhelming. Thus the challenge is how to make really nourishing choices between our many options and metaphors.

## *The Rev's Room*

Thus, as we move into the winter, I am mindful that the challenge for me, as your minister, is less to look for a single recipe to feed us all, than to develop a meta-recipe for how to choose. I don't have that answer yet. But I am at least aware of the question. And more importantly, I am aware that many of us are still hungry.

Namaste!

Rev. Mohr

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## *We Get Mail!*

Greetings from Faye Colling. My son met me at the airport and I'm back in Arizona, but I'm keeping my membership, since 1950, in our First U.U. Church of Detroit. I'm writing to thank Director Todd and our choir for singing my special song FLYING FREE on my farewell Sunday. I especially enjoy the times in church when the choir participates in the service. I will miss that and Todd's music on our magnificent Skinner organ.

I have a suggestion for those of you who might want a new and different experience-----Attend the Fashion Show Auction on Saturday, December 14th at downtown Jefferson Ave DuMOCHELLES, Fine Arts Auctioneers & Estate Appraisers since 1927 (sometimes seen public T.V. ANTIQUE ROAD SHOW Monday eve programs)

There will be bidding on 12 of my families hat collection which includes a Ranch Mink brim hat (every day wear), a dress-up Black Diamond Mink hat and muff, a Beaver hat and muff like in the DR.ZHIVAGO FILM and a fox cap I wore for ice skating. Also two feather-go-to-church hats which Rev. Tracy Pullman admired back in the 1950s.

I will miss the excitement of the auction, but maybe you could be there to report on the bidding and call me at (623)544-1709.



## *Jazz Vespers Fundraiser*

Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, First Church netted \$650 from the Metro Jazz Voices concert on Sunday, November 17 and provided great entertainment for the 60 or so people who attended on a windy, wet evening. Everyone enjoyed the music, food, drink and camaraderie.

A special thank you to:

**Dan Wiest**, who made sure we had a check for Metro Jazz Voices on a busy Sunday, responded timely to many phone and email questions, and who devoted hours on Saturday evening and then again on Sunday morning, working with the PayPal support desk to get our new PayPal card readers working;

**Aletha Oberdier**, for designing the flyer;

**Dan Secrest**, for getting information posted and updated on FUUD's website and distributing email information;

**Mark Schwing**, who updated FUUD's corner sign to add the Jazz Vespers concert details, did so within a short time after being asked, and followed up on Sunday to ask if there was additional information for the following week (no, but we'll make sure to give you timely information for the next fundraiser);

**Eric Cortwright**, who helped with set-up, clean-up and generally kept an eye on things and was everywhere you needed him;

**Matt Friedrichs**, who also helped with set-up/clean-up, staffed the beverage table for FUUD, and was one of the last out the door while he, Sydney and Eric tried to figure out FUUD's complicated lighting system;

**Robert Johnson**, who showed up early to help with sound and was cheerfully nonplussed when he found out that MJV was handling its own sound system;

**Kathleen Jacobs Johnson**, for patrolling the social hall door, which was left open for arriving concertgoers, and for her big smile and willingness to pitch in however needed;

**Mary Lou Malone**, who also patrolled the social hall door;

## *Jazz Vespers Fundraiser (continued)*

**Elayne Sikelianos**, for proliferate posting and re-posting to Facebook, and who showed up early to help out;

**Roger Ziegler** for staffing the ticket table at the narthex door and helping with set-up;

**Nancy Owen Nelson** for cheerleading on Facebook, helping with set-up, staffing the ticket table at the narthex door and especially for bravely using the new PayPal card reader with determination and patience;

**Marsha Bruhn, Margaret Beck and Margaret Wilkie** for agreeing to lend their iPhones for use with the PayPal card readers, although we ended up using, gratefully, the iPhone of non-FUUD member **Bob Huffman** throughout the event;

**Rev. Mohr** for his encouragement and support;

And especially **Sydney Schaaf**, who led the efforts for this successful fundraiser, distributed flyers in Corktown, created and monitored the EventBrite site, recruited and organized volunteers and food vendors, shopped for supplies, food and beverages, donated beer, wine, cups and tablecloths, set up and cleaned up the hall and sanctuary, stayed late after the concert to figure out how to turn off all the lights, and kept us communicating and committed.

I've probably forgotten to name some wonderful volunteer but you are really appreciated.

Kathe Stevens, Chair

Development Committee



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **1st UU Board Meetings**

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

December 11	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
January 8	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
February 12	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm

All are welcome at board meetings. If you have an item you wish to have included on the agenda for discussion at the meeting, please contact Kathe Stevens, Board Secretary at [kathestevens@gmail.com](mailto:kathestevens@gmail.com)

### **Vespers Wednesday**

Vespers is going to take a brief respite...There will NOT be a Vespers Service the 2nd Wednesday in December. But we will kick off the New Year with a favorite poet...Billy Collins and music from the wonderful group that performed at our November fund-raising concert Metro Jazz Voices. If you missed that concert, here's a second chance. See you January 8th, 2014 at 6 pm in the parlor. Al Acker

### **Singing Circle**

Wednesdays at **7:00 pm** - Singing Circle at the church. Open to all. Contact Gwen Foss [bookdoctorgwen@gmail.com](mailto:bookdoctorgwen@gmail.com) for more details.

### **Amnesty International**

Amnesty International is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights. Amnesty International meets at 1st UU on the third Monday of every month at 7:30 pm in the Parlor. Contact Dan Wiest for more information.

### **Monthly Young Adults Meeting**

Join young adults from the congregation and beyond to discuss the development of this new social and community group within First UU. They meet on the third Sunday of the month at 12:30 in Memorial Hall.



## *Church Announcements and Events*

**ASCENDANTS!** Wednesday, December 4, 6:00 p.m.

**FIRST Sundays: “Intro to First Church.”** Are you new to the church, or just interested in learning more about our church and tradition? The New UU class is about offering introductory information about what the church is all about, and it is an important step toward becoming a member. There are two objectives: one is to share information on the UU tradition as a whole, and a second goal is to focus specifically on the history and traditions of the Detroit church. Please do attend: We are proud of who we are, and we want you to be proud to be with us!

**SECOND Sunday: Welcoming New Members.** This is a normal service, but we also include a time to invite our new members to come forward, present themselves to the community, and sign the membership book. This is an important ceremony honoring those who have chosen to identify themselves with our values, our tradition, and our community. Make them feel welcome among us!

**SECOND Sunday: Potluck.** Time to break out your best recipe and bring it to church – share your food with FUUD! As we begin to add new members, it is a good time to share fellowship and nourishment with the people who nourish us, in return. Remember that everything must come and go the day of the event – we have no refrigerator space to keep things beyond the immediate need. If you have dietary concerns (peanut allergies, and such), please do let us know, so that food can be labeled.

### **Sunday Worship Service**

The Worship Committee generally plans for Sunday worship service to run for about 1 hour. However, the Worship Committee does allow our speakers to take a few more minutes if needed to finish their point. So as a general guideline, please plan for Sunday worship services to end between 12:00 and 12:15pm.



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **1st UU Fundraising**

We had a great time Sunday, November 10th at the Detroit Rep and Traffic Jam. 15 of us enjoyed the play and had dinner at the Traffic Jam. I was able to turn over \$80 to our treasurer.

Also gave our treasurer \$100 from Entertainment books sales. I still have 4 more books available for \$25 each. They make excellent gifts and are a great way to save money. So far I saved \$13 on two Mexican Restaurants in Southwest Detroit, \$4 on Buddy's pizza, \$10 on the Pepperoni Grill and \$40 at the Bavarian Inn Lodge.

Thanks so much for all who participated in these two fundraisers. *Margaret Beck*

### **Chancel Flower Donations - 2014 Dates Available!**

Our custom for providing flowers for each Sunday service is to have members and friends donate them in honor or memory of a person or event. The signup sheet for donating flowers is in the back of the church (some call it the narthex). Please take a moment to add your name and the person/event you wish to honor. Suggested donation is \$20 but is negotiable depending on your situation. Lencha Acker purchases the flowers each Saturday at the Eastern Market and delivers them to church on Sunday. The donor then takes the flowers home to enjoy and returns the vase later. If you have questions, see Lencha Acker after the service or call her at 313-393-8544. Thank You!

### **"Getting Involved" Especially For Noel Night**

We will be needing volunteers to help decorate the exterior, narthex and sanctuary of the church on Friday, December 6, 2013, starting at 5:30 pm. A light dinner will be served. On Noel Night, we will be needing volunteers to greet and usher guests, from 5-10 pm. The Young Adult Group will be conducting a Coffee Cafe in Memorial Hall that evening. And don't forget the clean up! See Joan Smykowski if you'd like to help!

## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **Noel Night**

Lots of company is coming! We are expecting a record number of visitors for the 41st Noel Night on Saturday, December 7, 2013. The First UU is working cooperatively with the Cass Commons to ensure a pleasurable and unforgettable evening for our visitors.

We have a full evening of outstanding performances planned for the evening.

**5:15 pm** Detroit Teachers Collective

**6:00 pm** Earhart Elementary Middle School

**6:45 pm** Duke Ellington Performing Arts Middle School

**8:00 pm** Dixon's Violin

**9:00 pm** Thornetta Davis

The Young Adult group is planning on having a coffee cafe in Memorial Hall. For more information contact Matt Friedrichs at [friedrichs.matt@gmail.com](mailto:friedrichs.matt@gmail.com).

If you have any questions about possible sales in McCollister Hall, please contact Kim Sherobbi at 313-478-7610. A decision has not been made regarding sales in McCollister Hall.

If you have an entertainment group that would like to be scheduled at another venue or would like to be informed of another location to sale items, please contact Njia Kai at [njiakai@gmail.com](mailto:njiakai@gmail.com).

If you would like information on marketing and sponsorships, please contact Annmarie Borucki at [aborucki@midtowndetroitinc.org](mailto:aborucki@midtowndetroitinc.org).

If you would like information on food permits, please contact Mark Loeb at [mark@integrityshows.com](mailto:mark@integrityshows.com).



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **Acknowledgements**

If you have a milestone or visitor to introduce, please write the message and put it in the visitor-milestone box in the narthex (foyer at back of church) or place it in the plate during the collection of the offering. For your convenience, there are forms at the end of each pew which can be used for this purpose.

### **Reimbursement Policy**

Expenditures made to benefit First UU are not always reimbursable. Budgets have been set for salaries, programming and events and it is important that we stay with the confines of them. If you want to spend money on behalf of First UU and believe it to be a reimbursable item, please seek approval beforehand. Consult a member of the Board who will research it for you. It may determine whether you proceed with your purchase. Many times members will drop off items or donate towards an event and not expect to be reimbursed. An alternative exists for you to receive a signed document from the Treasurer acknowledging your gift that can be applied to your tax return. See Dan Wiest for more information.

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## *Community Announcements and Events*

### **Sounds of the Season 2013 Concert and Luncheon**

The University of Michigan Detroit Center presents the Sounds of the Season 2013 Concert and Luncheon for Senior Citizens. Thursday December 5th 10am - 12pm Orchestra Place University of Michigan Detroit Center 3663 Woodward Ave. Ste 150 Detroit, MI 48201 Please RSVP by November 29 at 313-593-3584. Lunch, free parking and gift will be provided.

### **Sing Out Detroit December Concert**

Sing Out Detroit is an LGBT chorus that provides a warm and respectful place for its members to enjoy a singing experience that we share with each other and our community. Sing Out Detroit will present their December Concert, "Holidays Unwrapped" on Sunday, December 15, 3pm, at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, 1669 W. Maple in Birmingham. Tickets are \$15, available by calling (248) 943-2411 or visiting [singoutdetroit.org](http://singoutdetroit.org).

# DECEMBER 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 11:00am - "Transcending the Family." 12:30pm - Intro to First Church	2	3	4 6:00 pm - ASCEN-DANTS! 7:00pm - Singing Circle	5 10:00am - Sounds of the Season 2013 Con-cert and Luncheon	6 5:30pm - Noel Nite Setup	7 5:00pm - Noel Night!
8 Welcoming New Members 11:00am - "The Circumspec-tive Perspective." 12:30pm - Potluck	9 <b>Happy Birthday Robert Neale!</b>	10 <b>Happy Birthday Emirene Mendoza!</b>	11 7:00pm - Board Meeting 7:00pm - Singing Circle <b>Happy Birthday Marilyn Mitchell!</b>	12	13	14
15 11:00am - "The Transcenden-tal Ape." 12:30pm - Young Adults Meeting 3:00pm - Sing Out Detroit December Concert	16 7:30pm - Amnesty Inter-national Meeting	17 <b>Happy Birthday Kenneth Meyer!</b>	18 7:00pm - Singing Circle	19	20	21 <b>Happy Birthday Lee Thume!</b>
22 11:00am - "The Solar Wheel."	23	24 7:00pm - Christmas Eve Service <b>Happy Birthday Emma Estela Velasquez!</b>	25	26	27	28
29 11:00am - Sermon TBA	30	31				



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

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Please visit us at [www.1stuu.org](http://www.1stuu.org),  
email us at [info@1stuu.org](mailto:info@1stuu.org), or give  
us a call at (313) 833-9107.

## *Church Announcements*

### **Donation Letters**

It is not unusual for members to generously donate food, appliances, services or other items to First UU and then not ask for reimbursement. Letters may be provided upon request itemizing donations so that they may be taken advantage of for tax purposes. Please provide receipts to the office admin to receive the proper documentation.

### **Message Topics**

Remember, Rev. Mohr is always open to new ideas for sermon topics, either in terms of texts and sources, or in terms of topics. If you have an idea for a sermon, please do feel free to share it.

### **Weekly Order of Service Deadline**

Have an item/event to be included in our weekly Order of Service? We'll do our best to include it, although printed materials have significant space limitations. Send your information to [office@1stuu.org](mailto:office@1stuu.org) by **4:00 pm Thursday**.

### **January Newsletter Deadline**

Friday, December 20th

Next issue covers January 1 - January 31, 2014

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

Send items to [office@1stuu.org](mailto:office@1stuu.org)