

FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER



OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

DECEMBER EDITION

Upcoming Sermon Schedule

December 7

Rev. Roger Mohr

"Crisis and Commercials."

It seems that we are confronted with increasing levels of urgency and hysteria every day. But why?

December 14

Rev. Roger Mohr

"A Queer Tradition."

Unitarian Universalism is a unique faith. We affirm and promote the fullest possible opportunities for our members to explore and create their best selves...even when those choices seem a bit queer to others.

December 21

Rev. Roger Mohr

"The Significance of Friendship."

We are often reminded of the centrality of family in the definition of "The Good Life." However, most philosophers and spiritual directors put a much higher priority on friends and chosen relationships.

December 24 (at 7:00 p.m.)

Todd Ballou and Reverend Roger Mohr

Christmas Eve Service

Todd will lead our annual Christmas Eve service of carols and hymns, with a homily from Reverend Mohr.

December 28

Paul Chislett

"Practicing a Personal Internationalism: Finding a Place in a Globalized World."

Traveling from Windsor to Detroit most Sundays can be routine, and yet the border crossing formalities are a reminder that one has crossed a frontier. How can community be extended across borders? Expect more questions than answers to be generated by this talk...

January 4

Rev. Roger Mohr

"A Resolution of Joy."

As we begin the New Year, it is a time for resolutions. As we make commitments to recreate our realities, let's make a resolution to live more joyfully this year.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2014-2015

Officers

President

Marsha Bruhn

Vice President

Danny Rebb

Immediate

Past President

Sally Borden

Board Secretary

Kathe Stevens

Treasurer

Dan Wiest

Board Members At-Large

Matt Friedrichs

Joan Smykowski

Joel Batterman

Paul Chislett

Staff

Minister

Rev. Roger Mohr

Music Director

Todd Ballou

Office Admin

Tamara Halliburton

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



Letter from the President...

As indicated in last month's letter, I was anticipating a lot of news for this newsletter, and that is the case. First of all, the church has signed a seven-year agreement with Motor City Brewing Works and Cass Café to lease the center section of the Prentis lot. This will not only provide a steady monthly income for the church but will provide greatly improved parking for Sunday services. They have already graded the lot and reworked the parking configuration for angled parking and have increased the number of spaces from 26 to 30. Per the agreement, First UU will have access to their spaces on Sundays from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Members needing parking for Wednesday night Vespers or other meetings should use the parking spaces along the alley which are shared with EMEAC and other tenants of the Commons. Signage will be going up shortly.

The second big piece of news is the Board's adoption of the 2015 Strategic Plan—in effect a work plan of goals, objectives and action steps that will guide our work for the next 12 months. The goals are to 1) increase membership by 15% annually; 2) expand our vision and mission to reach 100 non-church members; 3) improve organizational support to mission by having at least six new or improved management tools; and 4) raise \$1000 above budget projection for 2015. I appreciate Deanna McGraw's leadership in taking us through this process and her commitment to work with church members in overseeing the implementation of the plan.

On December 7, following church service, we will have a short informational congregational meeting to present the 2015 Strategic Plan, provide an update on our financial condition, learn about plans to be a Welcoming Congregation, and hear a report by Rev. Mohr on his developmental ministry goals. This mid-year meeting was initiated by the Board as one way to better communicate with church members. I hope you'll plan to attend.

Notices have gone out on the job posting for the Office Administrator position. Because of financial constraints, we are cutting the position to 5-6 hours per week, with some of the duties shifted to the Finance Committee and Board. We are grateful to church members who are stepping up to fill previously paid positions. One of these is Sean McAde who volunteered to run the social hour for an entire year. He comes in early to set up and make coffee, and stays late to clean up and wash dishes. He was assisted for the first three months by Carolyn Ludwig and now by Brad Bierwirth. Stop by the kitchen and thank Sean for helping make our church experience such a pleasant one, and be sure to thank Carolyn and Brad for their support.

We have a busy year ahead of us, as you will see on December 7. I never fail to be amazed at the energy and commitment of the members of First Church!

Warm wishes,
Marsha Bruhn

The Rev's Room

Here we are, already half way through another church year. This is my fourth year with you, and I am very pleased with the progress First Church has made during our time together. I am with you as a developmental minister, with a certain discrete agenda, in terms of where I focus my time and energy in support of your efforts. My agreement with the church consists of these five points:

- 1) Steady growth and recruitment of new members
- 2) Organizational restructuring.
- 3) Improved internal communications.
- 4) Leadership Development--particularly focusing on young adult leadership.
- 5) Improved relationship with the UUA at both regional and national levels

I am very pleased at the progress First Church has made on all of these points. And we still have two and a half years left in further developing your effectiveness in addressing these goals. I believe that when our agreement is completed, in 2017, First Church will have become a sustainable and vibrant religious community.

What does sustainability look like? I expect that in 2017 we will be approaching 150 members, with a comfortably balanced budget – First Church will be a growing, high functioning, mid-sized church, and a very attractive congregation in any future ministerial search processes. That is point number one in our agreement. However, for you to be in that position today required successful work in regards to points two through four to support that growth. We have by no means finished our work in those areas. Our newly developed Strategic Plan will carry us into 2016, and I expect implementation of that plan to be central to the growth of your membership and resources. The Prentis Street parking lot agreement will also provide supplemental income. The point of developmental ministry is for me to support the growth and performance of First Church as an organization. You have been very successful in that work. Well done!

However, I will be frank with you about the challenges, as well as the successes thus far. You are still struggling to balance the budget, and when our beloved administrator, Tamara, leaves you in January, you will reduce her position to a very part time, five hours a week, Sundays only role. The church owes a considerable amount of money due to confusion arising from the disorder left from more turbulent times. Those financial stresses are a concern, and for those who have felt uninformed of such issues in the past, please note this warning. There is reason to expect that you will manage to balance the budget at the end of the year, but it will be close. Next year, hopefully, you will be in a better place, with less financial stress. But now is not the time to relax.



The Rev's Room (continued)

The second concern revolves around our relationship with EMEAC. First Church gave the church buildings to EMEAC, with some rights in perpetuity, but with considerable room for interpretation on both sides. Moreover, financial times have changed for both organizations since the agreement was made, and there have been many misunderstandings and difficult interactions. Clarifying and improving your relationship with EMEAC is important. However, the central question will be around your ability, as a church, to build a sustainable organization, in a sustainable physical space, with a sustainable budget.

You are very close to achieving something no one ever expected for, or from, this church. After fifty years of decline, you are a success story, creating a growing, sustainable congregation, an urban center for spiritual renewal and social justice in the heart of Detroit. And your future is bright. Make it so.

Namaste.
Rev. Mohr

Child Care Coming--

A great group of 1st UUers have volunteered to help with the care and we will have a short training session before we begin providing the care. We hope to begin providing child care during each church service starting in January. Alayna O. works with Head Start and is a great resource for this undertaking. If you have any of the following items to donate to our newly decorated child care room, please let Richard Hillier, Alayna O. or Sally Borden know, but **DON'T BRING THEM TO CHURCH YET**:

- small kids size table and chairs
- a low shelf for toys that kids can reach on their own
- Boppy pillow and an activity gym for infants
- any Toys appropriate for ages 8 months to 4 years like:
- larger Legos
- puzzles with two to six pieces
- toy cars, trains
- Fisher price Little People are always a good choice for kids between these ages
- balls
- stuffed toys and dolls

We think we have a rocking chair and a changing table.

It will be great to see even more young children coming to church.



Membership News



UU're Home Bed and Breakfast Network Coming to First Church

A number of Church members have stated an interest in being part of the UU're Home Bed and Breakfast network. If you are interested, please contact Joan Smykowski at joan.smykowski@gmail.com.

There is an application process to complete before your home or apartment or condo can be considered. Unfortunately, your home may not be a match due to the following concerns: safety, insurance requirements or cleanliness.

The amount charged for staying in your home, is a donation to First UU. We hope to start January 2015.

To volunteer your home, please contact Joan Smykowski.

Interested in staying within the UU're Home Network?

Please visit <http://uurehome.com> for more information.

Helping to Make the Next Generation of First Church Members Charitable Remainder Trust

A charitable remainder trust (CRT) allows you to retain income for an unlimited number of individuals, provide specialized management of your gift, and it may increase your capacity to make gift to First UU. A charitable remainder trust is a separately invested irrevocable trust you create by designating First UU to receive annual income payments. Trusts can accept a wide range of assets, including cash, securities, closely held stock, or real property. At the conclusion of the income payments, the trust principal is distributed to the named charities. A charitable remainder trust involves administrative and start-up fees. Because of the increased flexibility of this gift option, it can also be somewhat complicated. Therefore, trusts must have a minimum value of \$100,000. For more information, please contact your tax advisor.

Membership Requirements

As stated in our Church by-laws, there are three parts to membership:

- Signing the Membership Book,
- Making a pledge to the Church and/or
- Making a donation a record.

Are you fulfilling your obligation? If your financial situation has changed, please let us know. We will ask you to complete another Pledge Form to reflect the change.

Thank you, for your support!

Membership News

Why Become a Member? Membership Begins the Journey of Deeper Commitment

Newcomers are always welcomed in Unitarian Universalist congregations. There is no formal conversion process, so becoming a Unitarian Universalist is simply a matter of self-identification. Membership is voluntary and does not require renouncing other religious affiliations or practices.

To learn more, please plan on attending one of the upcoming "Introduction to First Church" on December 7, 2014 or January 4, 2015.

December Membership Anniversaries

1973 - Linda Darga

1990 - Sean McAde

1993 - Daniel Wiest

2008 - Danny Rebb

2012 - Melissa Duffy

2013 - Beth Bailey

Thank you for being part of our community.

Important Upcoming Membership Dates

To help newcomers discern whether or not the First Unitarian -Universalist Church of Detroit is a right fit, we encourage you to attend a variety of services, join us for activities and attend an "Introduction to First Church" and the "Getting Involved Session."

December 7, 2014, 12:30 pm - Introduction to First Church

December 14, 2014 - Membership Book Signing

January 4, 2015, 12:30 pm - Introduction to First Church

January 11, 2015 - Membership Book Signing

January 25, 2015, 12:30 pm - Getting Involved Session

Radical Hospitality Practiced at First Church During November 2014

Thank you, to the best ushers and gushers of any and all UU churches in November.

John Angry	Bill McKnight	Felice Rizzo
Margaret Beck	Edie McKnight	Sally Borden
Kathe Stevens	Glenn Maxwell	Dan Hale
Dan Wiest	Sharon Mills	Colin Gillis
Sherry A. Wells	Marilyn Mitchell	Jody Wise
Jerry Williams	Carolyn Ludwig	Althea Oberdier

Welcome to our September-October 2014 Guests

A. Alm	E.&J. Brisson	D. Brodway
C. Cavell	A. Chester	J. Donthiredy
E. Drutchas	J. Fortgang	J. Gross
A. Howell	S. Johansson	A. Kuzon
T. Longenecker	M. Mayers	T & T. Mitchell
T. Nelson	M. Tylanda	D. Williams
	T. Wells	



Church Announcements and Events

1st UU Board Meetings

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

December 10	Whole Foods Community Room	7:00 - 9:00 pm
January 14	Whole Foods Community Room	7:00 - 9:00 pm
February 11	Whole Foods Community Room	7:00 - 9:00 pm

All are welcome at board meetings. Whole Foods is located at 115 Mack Ave at John R, Detroit. 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

Vespers Wednesday

Vespers runs from 6:00 - 7:00pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

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.

Singing Circle

Wednesdays at **7:00 pm** - Singing Circle at the church. Open to all. Contact Gwen Foss bookdoc-torgwen@gmail.com for more details.

Church Announcements and Events

Acknowledgements

If you have a milestone (joy or sorrow) to share or a visitor to introduce during a worship service, please write the message on one of the index cards which can be found in the backs of the pews, and place the card in the offering basket during the collection. Milestones and visitor names will be passed to the minister for sharing with the congregation as part of our closing circle.

Informational Congregational Meeting

There will be an informational congregational meeting on Sunday, December 7, at 12:30 PM in McColleston Hall, to give updates on the status of the budget and on Rev. Mohr's developmental ministry goals, to present the 2015 Strategic Plan, and to report on the work of the committee beta-testing the UUA's outreach program.

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.

Write for Rights Campaign

To help celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights anniversary, the local Amnesty International group welcomes First UU to participate in our Write for Rights campaign during the social hour after the December 14 service. As we have done the last few years, there will be petitions to sign and letters to write on behalf of prisoners of conscience, torture victims, LGBT rights and other issues. We also hope to have visitors from Freedom House refugee center joining us and enjoying your hospitality as you shown in years past.

Young Adults Activities

The first UU Young Adults group participates in two activities per month. To learn find out about upcoming Young Adults activities, visit us on Facebook at: [groups/young1stuu/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/young1stuu/) or contact Beth Bailey to be join our Google Group.

Music Program Meeting

On Sunday January 18, after the worship service, there will be a meeting with Music Director Todd Ballou, to discuss the music program. This will be an opportunity to discuss the program with Todd and to share any feedback or suggestions you may have. Please mark your calendars.

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed to clean and update the Church Office. A date has not been set, however, the Building and Grounds Committee is looking for hard working individuals that would like to assist. You do not have to be a member of the Building and Grounds Committee to help. Please see or contact Tim Bailey at tbailey44444@yahoo.com.



Church Announcements and Events

Chancel Flower Donations

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 suggested donation of \$20 is negotiable if your situation requires. Lencha Acker purchases the flowers each Saturday at Eastern Market and brings them to church. The donor takes the flowers home to enjoy and returns the vase later. If you have any questions or would like to sign up, see Tamara after service or send her an email. Thank You!

Extra Generosity Needed

Todd's Choir, "Sing Out Detroit" will be providing special music at our December 14th service and we have invited them to join us for potluck after the service. We will also have some visitors from Freedom House, so please be extra-generous in planning your dishes that day. Our choir will be providing extras too. Our choir guests will need to eat quickly so they can get on to another performance that afternoon, so let's let them be first in line and show them our legendary 1st UU hospitality. Thanks!

December Newsletter article on Blessings Video

The "Blessings From Our House To Yours!" photo sent from us for the building dedication service of the new Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters in Boston is part of a video featured on the uua.org homepage. The video will be promoted through all of the UUA's social media channels and also will be used to welcome groups as they meet at the UUA. Our marvelous Dan Secrest has added the video to First UU's website, check it out at <http://www.1stuu.org/Features/UUAblessings.php>. First UU's photo appears at approximately 2:10 on the counter.

December 14th Sermon

Todd's choir, "Sing Out Detroit," will perform as our special guests with a preview of their upcoming concert, "Fa-La-La Frozen" December 21st. Sing Out Detroit is a diverse, inclusive chorus that provides a supportive environment for LGBT people and Allies to share the joy of musical performance, creating harmony among people. Our choir will join them for one number. And there will be news of an exciting new congregational welcoming endeavor. A service not to be missed!



Your Friendly Membership Committee plans to begin recognizing the Good Eggs in our congregation. You know who they are. Or maybe you don't. They're folks just like you who are busy behind the scenes, making sure things run smoothly. Or they show up on Sunday with whatever we need to worship together, or on Saturday for clean-up, or ... you get the idea. Watch for a shout-out to our Good Eggs, soon!

Joys / Concerns

Nancy Owen Nelson is so grateful that her sister-in-love, Mary Grace McCord, was blessed by the Dali Lama, including the meeting of foreheads. Mary is fighter her third bout of lymphoma.

I have a huge joy to see the parking lot, newly graded, flattened out, and the bumpers laid out in a herringbone pattern, a vast improvement. THANK YOU to everyone who fixed up the parking lot!

Let's thank those who have worked on fixing up the Bride's room for child care: Tim Bailey, Omar Davis, Glenn Maxwell, Richard Hillier and Kevin McKinney and anonymous donors are supplying the money to prime and paint the room. Yah!

Ann Harvey recently had successful surgery. She and Earl want to share their gratitude with First U.U. friends. They still miss us. *Submitted by Edie McKnight.*

Please send your prayers or healing thoughts to Joan Smykowski's sister, Donna. Donna has been diagnosed with cancer the 4th time. Thank you.

Please pray for my cousin as she may lose her leg. *Submitted by Dale Compton.*

I would like to thank Kathleen Jacobs-Johnson for obtaining the music for Downton Abbey.

Happy 50th birthday to Robert Johnson!

A few days ago, my 100 year old political friend, David Greenspan, passed away. I was so fortunate to have know David. He was so knowledgeable about politics. It was a joy to be friends with him. David thought so well of our Unitarian minister, Emily Belcher. She gave his family wonderful counseling when his son and daughter-in-law had a special needs child. *Submitted by Margaret Beck.*

Grateful for Al Acker and his ongoing work with Poetry Vespers. *Submitted by Nancy Owen Nelson.*

Sumarah Yaa Karen Smith, often times a visitor to First U.U. passed on 9/27/14. Her memorial service was November 8th at Fellowship Chapel.

NOTE: There was an error in last month's Joys/Concerns section, Detroit's American Revolutionary, Grace Lee Boggs, has NOT passed way and is in hospice care.

DECEMBER 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>7</p> <p>11:00am - "Crisis and Commercials ." Speaker - Rev. Mohr</p> <p>12:30pm - Intro to First Church</p> <p>12:30pm - Informational Congregational Meeting</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7:00pm - Singing Circle</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>14</p> <p>New Member Sunday</p> <p>11:00am - "A Queer Tradition ." Speaker - Rev. Mohr</p> <p>12:30pm - Potluck</p> <p>12:30pm - Write for Rights Campaigning</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Happy Birthday Robert Neale!</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6:00pm - Vespers</p> <p>7:00pm - Board Meeting</p> <p>7:00pm - Singing Circle</p> <p>Happy Birthday Emirene Mendoza!</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Happy Birthday Marilyn Mitchell!</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>21</p> <p>11:00am - "The Significance of Friendship ." Speaker - Rev. Mohr</p> <p>Happy Birthday Lee Thume!</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:30pm - Amnesty International Meeting</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7:00pm - Singing Circle</p> <p>Happy Birthday Kenneth Meyer!</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>28</p> <p>11:00am - "Practicing a Personal Internationalism: Finding a Place in a Globalized World ." Speaker - Paul Chislett</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:00pm - Christmas Eve Service.</p> <p>Happy Birthday Emma Estela Velasquez!</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>			



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

4605 Cass Avenue
Detroit, MI
48201

Please visit us at www.1stuu.org,
email us at info@1stuu.org, or give
us a call at (313) 833-9107.

Church Announcements

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 by **12:00 pm Thursday**.

Janaury Newsletter Deadline

Saturday, December 20th

Next issue covers January 1 - January 31, 2015

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

Send items to office@1stuu.org