

# FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

FEBRUARY EDITION

## *Upcoming Sermon Schedule*

February 2

Rev. Roger Mohr

### **“Lessons From the Ancestors.”**

In the book, *Five Regrets of the Dying*, we can learn from the decisions other people have made in their lives, and wish they would have done differently.

February 9

Mary Lou Malone

### **“1st UU and Civil Rights.”**

Our members reflect on their roles in the Civil Rights Movement and how it affected their lives. Sally Borden, Ivan Louis Cotman, Sharon Mills, and Kathleen Jacobs-Johnson.



February 16

Katherine (Maurer) Clover

### **“Love and Justice.”**

On this post-Valentine's Day Sunday, we will be celebrating Love, but a Love re-imagined. Dubbed “Sharing the Love Sunday”, we will look at the necessity of love in social justice as Standing on the Side of Love campaign concludes their Thirty Days of Love spiritual journey.

February 23

Rev. Roger Mohr

### **“Moving the Goalposts.”**

As we move into the spring, we begin to think about what we need to accomplish next year.

## **FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2013-2014**

### **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*

*Sean McAde*

### **Staff**

#### **Minister**

*Rev. Roger Mohr*

#### **Music Director**

*Todd Ballou*

#### **Cantor**

*Gwen Foss*

#### **Office Admin**

*Tamara Halliburton*

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



## *President's Letter – A Story of Hard Times and Survival*

A January 20, 2014 article in BBC News Magazine – “Detroit: The branding of a bankrupt city”—tells of how Detroit’s financial misfortune has opened opportunities for successful marketing of Detroit-based products. Sent by my youngest daughter, she writes: “This story resonates with me, having spent the bulk of my childhood there and my mother...still lives there, committed as ever to the city’s future. I often say ‘I survived Detroit’, but I think more accurately the human story is all about survival regardless where any of us is from.”

So this letter is about survival—about our church, about us as a congregation. Last year, the church had a vision of itself, and cast its budget in view of this vision. The vision was embedded in the \$112,064 budget for 2013-14 -- \$99,172 or 89% of the budget targeted to payroll and contractual services to provide for a full-time minister, music director, cantor, office manager and social hour services. Without the strain of ownership of the three-building complex, the Board breathed more easily and envisioned a stable and secure financial future. The plan was to work at getting membership behind the vision in terms of the financial support to realize it.

We’re now at a stage where we find we need to undergird our efforts in terms of financial support. The need is stark for the church as a whole to reclaim the vision and decide on how it will provide the financial support that’s needed to forward what we hoped would be our accomplishments for this budget year. According to our Treasurer, we have \$10,000 in the bank but are facing a \$17,000 deficit for this fiscal year, in part because of retirement payments for the minister that have been carried over from the 2011-12 and 2012-13 budget years but were not included in the current budget. With most of our budget committed to staffing, we need to look at increasing our revenue. Our two fundraising events raised money for organ and sound system upgrades, but not for operations.

Let us not confuse ourselves with the upcoming canvass – that’s focused on next year. What do we need to do now?

Those who have pledged need to fulfill their commitments for the current year.

Those who come and are members, but haven’t pledged, should do so.

Those who just attend and aren’t members need to be giving more.

Those who have pledged for this year are asked to increase their giving.

Those who are working on a short-term agreement to lease 10 spaces in the Prentis lot should complete negotiations.

It’s incumbent on all of us to give more. It’s time to step up. This is about our survival!

## *The Rev's Room*

I am told that I am sometimes a bit too direct in the way I communicate, and that may well be so. But, with that said, I am going to be very direct about the issue of the day for First Church. It seems our annual income is about 10% short of actually covering our expenses. We need to find about \$10 to \$15 thousand dollars in additional funding to balance the budget.

Now really, that is not a huge number, only about fifteen dollars per member per month. But in terms of strategy, the problem is more about how we, as a church, raise funds for operations. I have learned quite a lot about fundraising since I came to Detroit, by working with Rotary. The ultimate question in fundraising is not so much about how much you can get from your members as it is about who is on your mailing list, and how you can help those people to make a difference in the world. How does what we do make a difference in the world, and how can we get people to help us in our work?

That begs the question of what we actually do, as a church. And that question is easily answered. We are an urban center for social justice and spiritual renewal, in the heart of Detroit. But perhaps that answer is facile. What do we DO? We do offer outstanding Sunday services, such that other regional churches are reaching out to us to help support their Sunday services, as well. We are becoming a regional presence in terms of our worship services, providing spiritual guidance and inspiration to southeast Michigan, not just our own gathered members.

But that is not a full expression of our mission. We can, and must, reach out beyond our selves, to make friends, and provide services, beyond our own walls and membership rolls. We have ideas that must be expressed as programs and events. We have ideas that others find worthy of financial support. And of course, we have to be willing to invest in our own ideas, offering our resources in hopes of growing our presence and influence in Detroit, and in Michigan, and Ontario.

The challenge right now is financial. We must grow our income to meet our expenses. But really, I think it is more strategic. We need to start living up to our mythos as "The Mother Church." UU churches in our region are struggling. We need to be a nurturing and loving presence, offering care and support for UUs in our region, a safe and strong place for other churches to look for support and guidance. We have to "Mother-Up."

We have the reach and the presence to be a significant force in Detroit, in our region, in Michigan, and in the nation. Let's make it so.

Namaste.  
Rev. Mohr



## *Membership Committee News*

### Becoming a Unitarian Universalist at First Church-Membership Path

The decision to become a Unitarian-Universalist is a personal choice. The majority of our members were not born into the faith, most have self-identified. If you are interested in learning more about the First UU, please join us for two sessions in February about becoming a member:

Sunday, February 2, 2014-12:30 pm, Introduction to Unitarian-Universalism

An overview of First Church, UUism, your responsibilities as a member and any questions you may have.

Sunday, February 23, 2014-12:30 pm-Getting Involved

The strength of our church is the involvement of our friends and members. Learn how you can be part of the church by learning about the activities, committees and groups of the church.

### Happy Anniversary

*The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.*

Vince Lombardi

The Membership Committee would like to recognize the efforts and hard work of the following individuals who joined the First UU in January or February, from 1961-2014.

### January

1961-Eiko Takemoto (53 years)	1993-Rhonda Rogers (21 years)
1963-Faye Colling (51 years)	2013-Matthew Friedrichs (1 year)
1972-Bill McKnight (42 years)	2014-Alayna Ohneck

### February

1973-Margaret Beck (41 years)	2008-Gladys Santiago (6 years)
1988-Jerry Mitchell (26 years)	2009-Julie Brock (5 years)
1996-Larry Hutchinson and Gloria Williams (18 years)	2014-John Angry

## *Membership Committee News (continued)*

### New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the First UU.

December 2013-Beth Bailey

January 2014-Alayna Ohneck

February 2014-John Angry

### Pledges

Thank you, to the many individuals who stepped up to pledge for the 2013-2014 year. We are now developing the 2014-2015 pledge drive. We encourage you to participate and so our church community can meet the challenges of the next year.

### Membership Committee Members Sought

We are expanding the role and activities of the Membership Committee. We are looking for 1-2 new members to assist with quarterly programs for our new members. If interested, and you're willing to help, please see Joan Smykowski.

### 2014-2015 Annual Giving Campaign

The process has started to begin the 2014-2015 Annual Giving Campaign. Though some of our members just completed their 2013-2014 Pledge Forms, we will again be seeking for our upcoming Annual Giving Campaign.

This year, we will be having an exciting two step process for the campaign. More details will follow about the changes for 2014-2015 campaign.



## *Meet your Development Committee!*

First UU's Development Committee was formed last August with a mission to fundraise and a charge to supplement the church's budget. Committee members are Kathe Stevens (Chair), Rev. Mohr (*Ex Officio*), Matt Friedrichs, Marilyn Mitchell, and Sydney Schaaf.

Members of the committee were involved in organizing a benefit to raise money for organ repairs last spring, we were behind the wonderfully entertaining Jazz Vespers fundraiser last November, and committee member Matt Friedrichs took the lead on the hugely popular "Uncommon Grounds" café at Noel Night.

Fundraising is not only the committee's mission, it is mission critical for First UU. The committee will be looking for new members to expand its organizing capacity and bring in fresh ideas. We hope the whole congregation will be engaged in the committee's work; the financial health of our beloved church is not just committee-centric, but community-centric.

We're busy working on our next fundraiser and planning for 2014. You'll be hearing more from us!

Kathe Stevens, Chair

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## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **Upcoming Changes for Social Hour**

In order to economize and have continuity, we will be asking church members and friends to bring items for "coffee hour" all Sundays except Potluck Sundays. This will be in addition to the items our kitchen helper, Kevin, will be buying.

We will be asking each person to bring items once or twice a year, so that no one has to do too much. So when you get a call to bring cookies, cheese & crackers, and/or veggies, please step up if you can.

## *February Activities Coordinator, Sherry A. Wells*

UUs have been called "God's frozen people." So speaking about activity, I have been pleased to notice that fewer of us, than in other UU churches I've attended, fit that description when we sing. (I've tried to stand still during music but absolutely cannot.) And it's not only our African-American members who move to the rhythm. We are a movin' people!

My sources for activities are congregants--Jennifer Young, Matt Friedrich, Joel Batterman, Margaret Beck, Mary Lou Malone, Sally Borden and others; sources that Kathe Stevens, John Angry and others have told me about which I regularly check, and the riches of the Cultural Center surrounding us.

So keep them coming, including your ideas, and don't be bashful about following-up with me. Like you, I get snowed under (sorry about the weather reference) and a call-back leads me to bring your suggestion back up to the top.

The Order of Service deadline is Thursdays but sometimes my calendar tells me I must do it earlier.

Sometimes I learn about intriguing events too late for print (and I forget the yahoo group) but I've availed myself of them--a fringe benefit of this position. Many have been at the African-American Museum--I suggest you put yourself on its email or regular mail list.

Finally, the most recent suggestion came from a conversation with Rhonda Rodgers, fine-tuned (!) by Todd Ballou. Let's start having picnics with other UU congregations, pairing up with one at a time, visiting their site or inviting them to ours. Who has a contact with one and will help this happen? (Ultimate goal--an annual all-UU congregations' picnic.)



## *News from EMEAC – Aquaponics!*

In the courthouse next to the mansion, EMEAC has developed a space for aquaponics, "a system of aquaculture in which the waste produced by farmed fish or other aquatic animals supplies nutrients for plants grown hydroponically, which in turn purify the water."

The current EMEAC Aquaponics lab started 3 years ago as a collaboration between Nsoroma Institute and EMEAC's environmental education program. This past summer, after the close of Nsoroma, the lab was relocated to the Commons. It has proven viable even in the long cold Michigan winter. Some of the steps taken to ensure this include a hoop house that has been fashioned as a temporary experiment on how an Aquaponics system can exist outdoors in a cold climate. The hoop house works to hold heat and another layer of plastic and bubble wrap help keep it even warmer as winter sets in. In addition, EMEAC's building manager, Kim Sherobi, arranged for a dedicated outdoor electrical outlet to be installed. Because of her efforts, three heaters have been added to keep the water warm.

Plants will also be added to the system. These plants make sure there is enough filtration to keep the fish water clean. In addition to adding the plants, at least one more grow light will be added. Grow lights will also help keep the plants and hoop house warm. A drawback of the particular grow light used is that it consumes a lot of energy. The goal is to obtain more efficient grow lights for seedlings to be cultivated in the EMEAC Environmental Lab.



## *Passing Of Church Members*

We sadly report the passing of two long-time First UU members:

### JULIA MEYER

Julia joined First UU in the 1950's and was active in the Church's Religious Education program, especially when her two sons, Eric and Kurt, were in the Church School. Married to Dr. Ken Meyer, she was a joyful, even-tempered person with great intellectual curiosity and a loving personality. She and Ken lived in Dearborn. Their sons and their wives blessed Ken and Julia with five grandchildren. Julia passed in December.

The Meyers and a number of other First UU couples formed "The Study Club" many decades ago. The group has participated in dinners, travels, study and discussion of current events topics, poetry readings and classical music. Several members of that club, nearly all former church members, continue to meet and share those traditions. Julia's absence will be strongly felt.

### JOE LENZO

Dr. Joe Lenzo, husband of Susie, father of six and grandfather and great-grandfather of "many", died on January 15 at his home in Detroit. Joe was a psychiatrist. He participated in many civil rights and anti-war activities. He was on the five-day march from Selma to Montgomery, and was involved in many social action organizations in the Detroit area.

Joe (and Susie) were very active in First UU Religious Education and church governance activities. While fundraising was not exactly Joe's favorite activity, he participated willingly in that church arena, carrying out assignments with his usual energy and good humor. Joe was a loving man with many friends and his passing is a real loss.



## *Church Announcements and Events*

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

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

February 12	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
March 12	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
April 9	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)

### **Mildred Robinson**

Longtime member Mildred Robinson is recovering from a recent surgery and would love to receive cards and letters of encouragement. Please contact the office for contact information.

### **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.

### **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*

**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.

### **Vespers Wednesday**

Al Acker calls the February Vespers Service "A Small Celebration of Love". Part of our mission is "to Love Courageously." Most of this is a reprise of a service I did 3 years ago with some added poetry, and Danny Rebb's selection from Keillor. Join us Wednesday February 12 at 6 pm in the parlor. We'll try to end a little early so those who want to attend the concert at the Main Detroit Public Library will be able to do both. Vespers runs from 6:00 - 7:00pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

### **Singing Circle**

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



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **WSU Public Safety Tour**

The event includes a tour of WSU Police Headquarters, an overview of the successful CompStat crime prevention system, and a discussion between Police Chief Tony Holt and Center for Urban Studies Director Lyke Thompson about the collaborative efforts that have made Wayne State one of Michigan's safest campuses. Insiders will also view demonstrations and learn important strategies to keep them safe on and off campus. The event runs from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at WSU Police Headquarters, located at 6050 Cass Avenue. Sign up here: <http://events.wayne.edu/2014/02/05/wayne-state-insiders-visit-police-hq-50798/>

### **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!

### **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.

### **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.

# FEBRUARY 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2 11:00am - "Lessons From the Ancestors" 12:30pm - Intro to First Church	3	4	5 12:30 - 2 p.m. WSU Public Safety Tour 7:00pm - Singing Circle	6	7 <b>Happy Birthday Kathleen Jacobs Johnson!</b>	8
9 <b>Welcoming New Members</b> 11:00am - "1st UU and Civil Rights" 12:30pm - Potluck	10	11	12 6:00pm - Vespers 7:00pm - Board Meeting 7:00pm - Singing Circle	13	14 <b>Happy Birthday Anne Neale!</b>	15
16 11:00am - "Love and Justice." 12:30pm - Young Adults Meeting	17 7:30pm - Amnesty International Meeting <b>Happy Birthday Erin Martinez!</b>	18 <b>Happy Birthday Al Acker!</b>	19 7:00pm - Singing Circle	20 7:00 p.m. Ugandan activist with film about worldwide LGBT civil rights.	21	22
23 11:00am - "Moving the Goalposts."	24	25	26 7:00pm - Singing Circle	27	28	



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

4605 Cass Avenue  
Detroit, MI  
48201

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*

### **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 **12:00 pm Thursday**.

### **March Newsletter Deadline**

Thursday, February 20th

Next issue covers March 1 - March 31, 2014

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

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