

FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER



OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

AUGUST 2015 EDITION

Upcoming Sermon Schedule

August 2:

Dawn McDuffie

"My Mutual History with Detroit"

Dawn McDuffie's poems celebrate Detroit as she has seen it through 47 years of intimate engagement. There are poems about neighbors, the homes that are restored to beauty, and the homes that sink into oblivion. Although her poems include some of the tragedies she has witnessed, she insists the city has a beauty all its own. Detroit is at the center of every one of McDuffie's books, and it is the inspiration for her next book as well.

August 9:

Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray

"Starting Our Conversation"

Beyond what we believe, how are we connected? How do we depend on one another and on the earth? Are there images or language we can use that evokes meaning and purpose for all when talking about these things?

August 16:

Robert Johnson

"Another Tale of Two Cities: Detroit and Cleveland"

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ..." After a recent trip to Cleveland, Robert Johnson observes comparisons between Cleveland and Detroit and the duality in each city itself.

August 23:

Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray

"The New Religious America"

The United States often is described as a "Christian" country, but in fact this is perhaps the most religiously diverse country on the planet, while also steeped increasingly in a secular culture. How do people of faith respond to these changes in society, and what should a church that stands for social justice and religious liberty do in such a city?

August 30:

Olga Klekner and Danny Rebb

"Flower Communion"

Hungarian poet Olga Klekner will read new poems she composed specially for this service. Just as individual flowers form a bouquet more beautiful than the sum of its parts, our congregation formed by the covenant we share is better able to liberate truth, radiate kindness, and love courageously more than all of its members individually. Please join us for our annual celebration of community!

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2014-2015

OFFICERS:

President

Kathe Stevens

Vice President

Paul Chislett

Immediate Past

President

Marsha Bruhn

Board Secretary

Danny Rebb

Treasurer

Dan Wiest

Board Members At-

Large

*Joel Batterman**Matt Friedrichs**Sydney Schaaf**Dave Vailliencourt*

STAFF:

Minister

*Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler
Murray*

Music Director

Todd Ballou

Office Administrator

Alexis Mitchell

Social Hour

Coordinator

Marcellis Lewis

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



Letter from the President...

By the time this newsletter is published, you may have heard about our newly-hired half-time interim minister, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, whom we introduced on July 19. If not, I'll explain a little bit about the hiring process and then you can get to know Rev. Murray by reading his letter on page 4.

When we learned last spring that Rev. Mohr would be leaving us early, the board immediately appointed an Interim Minister Search Committee: Matt Friedrichs, Robert Johnson, Aletha Oberdier, Danny Rebb, Nathan Strickland and me. The committee's goal was to find a half-time interim minister to help us prepare to hire a settled minister in a couple of years. The board approved a half-time position in order to be financially ready for a settled minister.

In April the committee applied to the Unitarian Universalist Association for an interim minister. During the process, we were informed by the UUA that there were more churches seeking interim ministers than there were ministers seeking churches. We continued to participate in the process, but as we got through the second round without receiving any applicants, we realized that we would not find a minister through the UUA. And so the committee became creative. We reached out beyond the UUA and began conferring with church members for ideas, contacted colleagues and current and former UU ministers, and worked with the UUA transitions office and our MidAmerica regional representative.

Serendipitously, at the same time we were creatively exploring options, we received an application from Rev. Murray, who was looking to serve a UU congregation. After a thorough vetting process, the committee selected and the board approved Rev. Murray as our new half-time interim minister.

Rev. Murray will serve both First UU and Ecumenical Theological Seminary, at Woodward just south of Mack, bi-vocationally. This is consistent with his past practices; in every academic/administrative position he has held, he has also maintained an active ministry with a congregation to fulfill his passion for pastoral ministry. Rev. Murray originally was ordained as a United Church of Christ pastor and now considers himself to be "post-denominational" in his religious beliefs. His current religious outlook aligns with Unitarian Universalism strongly. Rev. Murray impressed the Committee with his impeccable credentials, strong commitment to social justice, belief that people are always in transition in their search for spiritual meaning, warm personality and quick wit. We were also impressed with Rev. Murray's considerable contacts and presence in the community.

Rev. Murray will fill the pulpit three Sundays a month, work with the committees and board to strengthen the church, and work with the congregation on our collective vision for the future.

In one of those funny coincidences of life, ETS is next door to the site of the former First Unitarian Church, which burned to the ground last year. I have a vision of Rev. Murray in his ETS office, fanned with the flames of Unitarian Universalism from that old building.

I want to thank the Interim Minister Search Committee for its diligence and thoughtfulness. Looking outside of the UUA was taking a risk, but we are sure our final choice for an interim minister will be great for the congregation.

Please join me in giving a warm welcome to Rev. Murray as our new half-time interim minister!

... cont'd



Letter from the President cont'd

Speaking of new staff, I hope everyone has had a chance to say hello to our social hour coordinator, Marcellis Lewis. Sean McAde has passed on to Marcellis his considerable knowledge about the workings of coffee hour. Thank you Sean, for all you have done to keep us in coffee and cookies! Welcome, Marcellis! You're doing a great job.

A July 25 clean-up crew dusted and cleaned the sanctuary, scrubbed and polished the pews, organized envelopes and sharpened pencils, mopped and waxed the floors, washed the corner sign, and edged, weeded, pruned, swept, raked and then loaded Tim Bailey's trailer. Thank you to Tim, Matt Friedrichs, Richard Hillier, Bob Lauer, Carolyn Ludwig, Glenn Maxwell, Aletha Oberdier, Sydney Schaaf, Mark Schwing, Dave & Katherine Vaillencourt, Regina Weiss and Dan Wiest; special thanks to Tim, Dan and Glenn for organizing and to Tim for refreshments, hauling in tools, and hauling out yard waste. While working we enjoyed camaraderie and conversation, reminisced about the old "Cass Corridor," and shared ideas about the future. We are so lucky to have such a committed volunteers to tend to the building and grounds.

"Black Lives Matter" is now on the old sign in front of the church. Thank you to Ruby Jones for the inspiration, to Marsha Bruhn for the follow-through, and to Mark Schwing for getting it done. I'm meeting with the Social Justice committee to talk about how racial justice work may be done in our faith community; it is so important.

The "Singing the Journey" ad hoc committee is an enthusiastic group led by our Music Director, Todd Ballou. I sat in on a meeting to plan fundraising to purchase the UU hymnal supplement, "Singing the Journey," which has many of our favorite hymns. After the meeting, I was humming "Blue Boat Home" all afternoon. ("Blue Boat" is one of the songs we'll be able to include in our services once again when we own the supplements and have no copyright issues.) The plan has the blessings of the Development Committee and we hope to kick off the fundraising on August 23. Watch for more details in the Order of Service and on our Facebook page.

And may I sign off by saying, Todd is a treasure. His talents of course are appreciated, but I also want to take a moment to thank Todd for the generosity of personal time he gives to First UU outside of his paid duties as Music Director/Organist/Choir Director.

best ... *Kathe Stevens*



Letter from the Minister...

To the Members and Friends of First UU,

Sunday, July 19th was a special day, as it was the first time that I met many of you after Kathe Stevens announced in church that I would be serving as your Interim Minister. I wanted to come and greet you all before my time with you begins in August, because I wanted a sense of what your church is like, how your sacred time together “feels,” because one thing I have learned about UU churches over the years is that every single one of your churches is different. So, even though I come with my own background, with my own ideas and vision for what we will do together as I help your church prepare for its next Settled Minister, I also come wanting to listen and learn about who you are, what your church is and aspires to be independent of who currently is serving as its spiritual leader. Part of my role as Interim Minister is to help you recognize and live into the reality of what your church is and where you are going, and I am eager to jump in and be part of this dynamic community of seekers and believers in Detroit.

As many of you heard, since July 2014, I have served as the President of Ecumenical Theological Seminary on Woodward Avenue in Detroit, where I also am Professor of Systematic Theology and Preaching. Once described by someone introducing me at a conference as “an ecumenical movement unto himself,” I have served previously as the minister of American Baptist, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches, and I am excited to add Unitarian-Universalist to the mix! I come from a Protestant Christian background, but served for years in intentionally inter-religious settings as a college and university chaplain and on the faculty at Harvard University, Skidmore College, Endicott College, and Suffolk University. I also have been deeply involved in inter-religious work locally, nationally, and internationally, perhaps most evidently as the founding Managing Editor of the Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue (now Journal of Inter-Religious Studies), as a member of the academic think-tank of the Elijah Interfaith Institute in Jerusalem, and the ongoing national Baptist-Muslim Dialogue program across multiple denominations. My undergraduate work at Bucknell University focused on the Dharmic traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism, before pursuing my master’s at Yale Divinity School and Ph.D. in Christian theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, a seminary long affiliated with Columbia University.

That said, I am aware that while First UU in Detroit has plenty of believers from all sorts of background, that it also is a community of seekers. My work on university campuses and religious institutions over the years has taught me the importance of reaching out intentionally not only to those who are “spiritual, but not religious,” but to the “nones,” those who do not find any particular faith tradition to answer their deepest questions. Nonetheless, in my experience, every person seeks an understanding for their values, answers for their questions, or at least yearns for companionship on the journey, and I want to be sure to honor and serve those members of this community who find that to be their reality as well.

In the weeks and months ahead, you will learn more about me and I will learn more about you. I want to meet you, to hear your stories and know your backgrounds, because it is only in our being open and authentic with one another that I will serve this community and the individuals who comprise it competently and well. Most of all, I want you to know that I am approaching this time with you in joy, that I genuinely am excited about the opportunities ahead for the potential and growth of your church, for exploring the issues of faith and social justice that define why communities such as First UU come together, and in living into a vision for the future of this church, in this great city of Detroit, that all might live into our full humanity and help others around us, near and far, have the freedom and ability to live well into theirs in love and respect, curiosity and hope.

Peace be with us all,

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray

p.s. A few of you have asked, “What do we call you?” Stephen, Dr. Murray, Rev. Murray... whatever you are most comfortable calling me, any of those is fine. And as you figure out what you want to call me, please forgive me the time that it will take to learn all of your names. I’ll get there, I’ll know every last one, but it will take time and effort and a whole lot of conversations.



Membership Path

At the First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit, we believe membership begins the journey of a deeper commitment. Newcomers are always welcome in our congregation. 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.

Introduction to First UU

The Introduction to First UU sessions are usually held the first Sunday of most months, at 12:30 pm, in the “mansion.” The session will answer any questions you have and share a brief history of the Church.

Upcoming dates are:

- August 2, 2015-12:30 pm
- September 6, 2015-12:30 pm
- October 4, 2015-12:30 pm

Getting Involved

Learn about the committees, groups and activities offered at the Church. The sessions are held at 12:30 pm, usually in the “mansion.”

Upcoming dates are:

- October 18, 2015-12:30 pm

Membership News

The First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit is one of the most multicultural churches in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. Multiculturalism means nurturing a religious community where people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures see their cultural identities reflected and affirmed in every aspect of congregational life—worship, fellowship, leadership, governance, religious education and social justice.

Multiculturalism means that we create religious homes where encounters between people of different cultural identities intersect with Unitarian Universalism to create a fully inclusive community where, in the words of a vision statement adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Leadership Council, “all people are welcomed as blessings and the human family lives whole and reconciled.”

Multiculturalism means that one cultural identity does not dominate all other identities; that people are able to participate in their faith community without denying or hiding their cultural identities, that the role of cultural identity is part of pastoral and prophetic ministry; and that leaders have the competency to understand how their multiple identities and socialization influence their values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and interactions with others.

We welcome each other into shared community just as we are;

We welcome the many ways that people define, express, and experience the Holy and respect what is considered sacred in our diverse cultures;

We understand public witness and all social justice work as ministry in partnership with communities to make the world more compassionate, equitable and just—a place that is safe, nurturing, supportive, and fair for all people;

We support communities and individuals in their search for truth and meaning—and a sense of aliveness—in their quest to make a positive difference in the world;

We offer mutual aid and comfort through life's challenges in



Thank You to the
Outstanding Greeters and
Ushers of First Church for Ju-
ly 2015

To volunteer as an usher or greeter, please contact Glenn Maxwell at:
detroitglenn@gmail.com

To sign up or to check which date you volunteered, please visit:
<http://www.1stuu.org/Worship/worship.php>

New Member Sundays

A monthly celebration of the new members who have signed the Membership Book. Upcoming dates are:

September 13, 2015

October 11, 2015

November 8, 2015

December 13, 2015

For more information please contact Regina Weiss at:
regina.hollinshead@gmail.com

I'm Interested In Joining the First UU. What Should I Do Next?

We encourage you to attend a variety of services; join us for activities and attend our Introduction to First UU, usually the first Sunday of the month at 12:30 pm. There are three requirements to becoming a member:

- Sign the Membership Book (the second Sunday of each month),
- Make a financial pledge to the Church and/or,
- Make a contribution of record to the Church.

For more information, feel free to contact Regina Weiss at:
regina.hollinshead@gmail.com.

Famous Unitarian Universalists

A number of notable people have considered themselves Unitarians, Universalists and, following the merger of these denominations in the United States and Canada in 1961, Unitarian Universalists. This month, we'll feature some famous women UUs:

Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888) – author of *Little Women*

Ysaye Maria Barnwell (born 1946) – member of Sweet Honey in the Rock, founded the Jubilee Singers, a choir at All Souls Church in Washington, D.C.

Phebe Ann Coffin Hannaford (1829–1921) – first lesbian minister, biographer

Mary White Ovington (1865–1951) – NAACP founder

May Sarton (1912–1995) – poet

Mary Safford (1851–1927) – Unitarian Minister and leader of the Iowa Sisterhood

Joanne Woodward (born 1930) – actress, wife of Paul Newman



Church Announcements and Events

1st UU Board Meetings

Meetings are held the second Wednesday* of each month.

August 19 (date change*)	Whole Foods Community Room	7:00 - 9:00 pm
September 9	Parlor, 1st UU (location change)	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 Danny Rebb, Board Secretary, at secretary@1stuu.org.

Vespers Wednesdays

Vespers runs from 6:00 - 7:00pm on the last 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 offers 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 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! For more information please contact Regina Weiss at regina.hollinshead@gmail.com.

SECOND Sundays: Welcoming New Members.

This is a regular 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 Sundays: 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 bookdoctorgwen@gmail.com for more details.



News about General Assembly 2015

Delegates Joel Batterman and Kathe Stevens attended 2015 General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, from June 24 to 28. As delegates, we participated in six General Sessions, at which the business of the assembly is conducted, as well as Mini-Assemblies, at which the issues were debated. We voted on

- Statement of Conscience for Reproductive Justice
- Proposed Bylaw Amendments:
 - Change the Commission on Appraisal from an Elected Committee to a Board Appointed Committee
 - Change the Finance Leadership Roles on the UUA Board of Trustees
 - Presidential Election Campaign Financing Rules
 - Governance Structures of Districts and Regions
- Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW):
 - End Immigrant Child and Family Detention Now
 - Support a Strong, Compassionate Global Climate Agreement in 2015 Act for a Livable Climate
 - Support the Black Lives Matters Movement

We also attended the Opening Celebration and marched in the banner parade, along with Julie Brock (more about that later).

We participated in an impromptu Supreme Court marriage decision celebration in the plenary hall and in a [Black Lives Matter die-in](#), which was organized after the Black Lives Matter AIW was approved.

We attended the MidAmerica Region Meeting. Afterwards, Kathe met Cindy Landrum, MidAmerica Good Officer, who offered her assistance in any matters First UU Detroit might have. Kathe also met for about an hour with Lisa Presley, MidAmerica Congregational Life Consultant, to discuss the interim minister search, and past and future endeavors of First UU Detroit.

We attended workshops. Materials and, in some cases, videos from workshops will be available on the UUA website. A partial list of workshops attended:

- Black Lives Matter and Multifaith Community Organizing
- Commit2Respond: Growing Young Adult Leadership for Climate Justice
- “Leaderly” Leadership = Accountable Leadership
- Loss & Hope: Urban Ministry in the Rustbelt
- The Many Faces of Community Ministry
- Remixing UUism: How to Create an Energy Center
- A Spiritual Practice of Writing that Opens Doors
- Stories from the Spotlight: Many Paths to Young Adult Ministry
- Stories of UUs of Color
- Where Have You Been All My Life? Outreach and UUism

... cont’d



News About General Assembly 2015 cont'd

The Outreach and UUism workshop was organized by Carey McDonald of the UUA Outreach Team – the team with which we worked on the beta-testing outreach project. Carey had asked beta-testing congregations who attended GA to present the congregations' findings on the following questions: "What did you do? What did you learn? What are you doing going forward?" Kathe was joined by Linda Laskowski of the Berkley CA congregation in answering those questions and fielding Q&A from the participants.

The UUA invites a distinguished guest each year to address the General Assembly as the Ware Lecturer. The 2015 Ware Lecture featured inspiring orator, Dr. Cornel West.

Last but not least, we attended the Closing Celebration amidst joyful good-byes.

While roaming the cavernous halls of the Oregon Convention Center, it was fun to run into current and former First Churchers: Valerie Lauer, Alma King, and Janice Thompson. Kathe also made the acquaintance of the DRE of the Grosse Pointe UU Church, Julie Artis, and both Joel and Kathe met many ministers, seminarians, and leaders in UU churches.

The banner: We'd forgotten to bring the official First UU Detroit banner so we hastily assembled one with cardboard repurposed from a dumpster, a slat of wood begged from a futon store, and glitter, markers, blinking lights and, of course, duct tape (rainbow duct tape) purchased from Walgreen. As we walked to the convention center and through it, we were stopped by fellow UUs who asked us to pose for photos. During the parade it was inspiring to see people's faces lighting up and then cheering "Detroit!" as we marched by – reacting to what many people told us was the best banner in the parade. You may watch the parade at <http://www.uua.org/ga/virtual/2015/business/i> - shots of our banner start at approximately the 50.19, 51.55, and 52.10 markers. Detroit made a huge good impression at GA!

Watch for more photos to be posted on the First UU website.





Church Announcements and Events

Developing Your Leadership Workshop

Organizations are only as strong as the people who lead and manage them, whether you are a church, a nonprofit organization or a for-profit company. There is nothing more critical to an organization's success than the development of its leaders: especially today as churches are continually challenged to identify strategies that help improve organizational stability.

Leaders are needed at all levels of churches. To be an effective leader, it is critical to know yourself, your leadership style, and strategies to lead. This workshop is designed for formal and informal leaders that want to develop effective leadership styles and take their leadership to a higher level.

Your Planning Committee is pleased to announce a two-hour workshop on leadership development to be held on **Sunday October 4 at 12:30 at church**. Deanna McGraw, former Executive Director at Detroit Executive Service Corps and a member of First Church, will present this interactive workshop.

The workshop will be limited to the first 15 church members who register to attend. To register for your attendance please respond email Deanna.mcgraw@sbcglobal.net or call Deanna at 586-202-5241. Light refreshments will be served.

Planning Committee,

Deanna McGraw, Paul Chislett, Danny Rebb, Matt Friedrichs



Mark	Schwing	8/2	
Rev. Lynda	Smiith	8/2	
Maysel	Brooks	8/15	
Rhonda	Rodgers	8/15	
Daniel	Wiest	8/16	
Annie	Byrne	8/17	
Sharlene	Gage	8/24	
Patricia	Pilafian	8/26	

****There will be cards to be signed on the first radiator on the right for birthdays.**



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.

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.

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/ or contact Beth Bailey to be join our Google Group.

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 would like to signup, please visit the signup sheet on our website at 1stuu.org/Worship/worship.php, see Alexis after the service, or send an email to webmaster@1stuu.org!

Care Committee

The Care Committee addresses pastoral cares of our church community. It is chaired by Nancy Owen Nelson. Other members are Sally Borden, Edie McKnight, and Nathan Strickland.

Please contact Nancy Owen Nelson, nelnan@aol.com or call her at 313-914-3475, if you would like a member of our Care Committee to reach out to you in a time of need.



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

4605 Cass Avenue
Detroit, MI 48201

First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit, which has a long history of activism and is an affirming and welcoming congregation, is an urban center for spiritual renewal and social justice, whose members strive to liberate truth, radiate kindness and love courageously. We are located in the Cass Corridor Commons in Midtown.

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, the Worship Committee is always open to new ideas for speakers and for sermon topics, either in terms of texts and sources, or in terms of topics. If you have an idea for a speaker or a sermon, please do feel free to share it: worship@1stuu.org.

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**.

August Newsletter Deadline

Thursday, August 20th

Next issue covers September 1 - September 30, 2015

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

Send items to office@1stuu.org