

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

First UU Church of Detroit, Board of Trustees, 5/25/2011

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

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

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

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

1. EMEAC will use the buildings to operate diverse programs that serve a number of community needs.
2. EMEAC has a solid basis of funding and available resources to maintain and improve the buildings.
3. EMEAC’s programs and interests are in line with Unitarian-Universalist principles. In fact, the Executive Director, Associate Director and bookkeeper are all Unitarian-Universalists.
4. There is a real potential for congregational growth and outreach with participants in the programs operated by EMEAC, whose interests and philosophy synchronize with our own.
5. EMEAC provided excellent references including from the City Planning Commission and Historic Designation Advisory Board who support EMEAC’s proposed adaptive reuse of the historic buildings of First Church.

6. In keeping with one of its missions, EMEAC will improve the buildings using “green” technology.
7. EMEAC has committed to allow the congregation to remain in the sanctuary in perpetuity and will be flexible in affording the congregation access to other parts of the buildings as required.

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

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