

# First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit



100 years at the corner of Cass & Forest

4605 Cass, Detroit MI 48201

[www.1stuu.org](http://www.1stuu.org)

A proud member of the Cass Corridor Commons

Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, *Interim Minister*  
Todd Ballou, *Music Director*  
Alexis Mitchell, *Office Administrator*  
Alyssa Bond, *Social Hour Coordinator*  
Kathe Stevens, *Governing Board President*

Please **visit** us at **[www.1stuu.org](http://www.1stuu.org)**;  
**email** the Office Administrator at **[info@1stuu.org](mailto:info@1stuu.org)**  
or **call** at **(313) 833-9107**.

**Sunday service at 11:00 A.M.**  
Child care available.

First UU is an  
urban center for  
spiritual renewal  
and social justice  
in Detroit.



Welcoming Congregation

**We are a Welcoming Congregation.**

You may find more information at

<http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program>



We strive to liberate the  
truth, radiate kindness, and  
love courageously.

**Early history of Universalists and Unitarians ...** In the early 1800s Universalists arrived in Detroit and were served by circuit-riding ministers to the few settlers scattered through the Northwest Territory. In 1846, a prominent local merchant donated a small frame church to serve the congregation.

In 1850 the First Congregational Unitarian Society of Detroit was organized. This was known as the "Railroad Church" because 35 of the 75 men who signed the roster were employees of the Michigan Central Railroad. The Unitarians erected a simple frame church at the corner of Lafayette and Shelby in 1852.

In 1880, Universalists incorporated as the First Universalist Society of Detroit; they held their first service at the Whitney Opera House and then built the Church of Our Father at Grand Circus Park and Bagley. The Unitarians built a church at the corner of Woodward Avenue and Edmund Place in 1889.

In 1913 the Universalists purchased a house at Cass and Prentis, in which services were held until the sanctuary was erected next door in 1916.

**Congregations merge ...** The **First Unitarian-Universalist Church** was formed from the 1934 merger of the two liberal Detroit congregations, preceding the national merger of the two denominations (in 1961) by 27 years.



**Cass Corridor Commons ...** In 2011 the church properties were donated to the East Michigan Environmental Action Council with an agreement that First UU may worship in the sanctuary in perpetuity. EMEAC is committed to cultivating a shared environment to serve as a multi-use non-profit and green space. UUs have always been in the forefront of social justice and reform, and thus we share common values with EMEAC. We are proud to be a member of the Commons.



**About the buildings ...** The property runs along Cass Avenue, between Forest and Prentis. It is part of the Warren-Prentis Historic District.



**About the Newcomb Memorial Window: "The Sower" ...** The window, which was unveiled and dedicated on **April 16, 1916**, is based on an original painting of THE SOWER, by William Willet and Annie Lee Willet, the artists who also made windows for the West Point Military Chapel and the dining hall of the Post graduate College of Princeton. The predominant color tone is a golden glow which is made to vibrate with the rich bits of ruby, pink, green and purple of the oriental draperies and the flowers and leafage of the foreground, while the tracery openings are rich with the glorious Chartres blues for which these artists are noted.

**About the Skinner Pipe Organ ...** The magnificent 51-rank Ernest M. Skinner pipe organ has wooden redwood pipes from California. This organ was shipped via train from Boston to Detroit in April of 1915 and dedicated one year later, in April 1916. Our organ has never been altered and is one of the earliest examples of Skinner's "all-purpose" organ that is still in its original state.



The *sanctuary*, built in **1916** in the former rose garden of the McAdow house, was designed by the architectural firm of Donaldson and Meier in Neo-Gothic style with exposed timber trusses and beams. The walls are trimmed with Indiana limestone.



The *house*, designed by architects Martin Scholls & Son in Renaissance Revival style and built by Perry and Clara McAdow in **1891**, is a registered historic landmark. The exterior boasts bay windows, Corinthian columned porches, parapet balustrades, and a modillion cornice; the interior features notable frescos, paneling, plasterwork and stained glass. The house is constructed of red brick and brownstone. It now functions as offices for EMEAC and other Commons tenants.

Behind the original house is a two-story, red brick *fellowship hall*, erected in **1917** on the site of the former McAdow carriage house.