

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit

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December 7, 2008

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First Unitarian
Universalist Church
Organizational Chart
2008 – 2009

Officers

President

Alicia Biggers

Vice President

Dan Wiest

Immediate Past

President

Linda Darga

Board Secretary

Alma King

Treasurer

Sharlene Gage

Staff

Minister

Rev. Drew Johnston

Minister Emeritus

Rev. Larry Hutchison

Minister of Faith and Development

Rev. Athena Kolbe

Assistant Minister

Rev. Lynda Smith

Music Director

Todd Ballou

Choir Director

Gwen Foss

Office Admin

Huey Gray III

Building & Grounds

Joe Brimmer

Leonard Swint

(Sunday)

Trustees

Trey Greene

David Lingholm

Bill McKnight

Newsletter Editor

Volunteer Needed

DREW'S VIEWS

Pacing may be the key. . . there are ways to get through December unscathed, and perhaps pacing is the key. This is a month of celebrations and holidays which bring some stress and work along with them. At First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit we have two events to mark the month – starting every year with Noel Night, when we host many, many people who come through and enjoy music and food and activities. Now that I've been here almost two years I have a better idea what happens on Noel Night, so I did attend and enjoy the festivities.

At the other end of the month we have a Kwanza concert, this year on Saturday the 27th. I remember well the concert from last year, Barry Harris playing piano as if it was an extension of his hands and his feelings; the other musicians blending together in a seemingly effortless manner. I felt like I was witnessing a slice of genuine Detroit culture. I encourage you to attend!

As these events mark the beginning and end of December at our church they must be part of our church life, right? Well, sort of. In each case the event would not happen without one person committed to making it happen. We would probably not have our long history of Noel Night without the devotion of Dan Wiest, who manages to pull together all the details that are needed to make it happen. This year, on the Friday evening before, several folks showed up to help decorate the church and help prepare. (Reverend Athena Kolbe, our Minister of Faith Development, had folks helping prepare crafts for as many as 500 children and youth! It was fun to see them glue sticks together!) And on Noel Night we seemed to have almost enough people staffing the event – warm, smiley faces greeting the hundreds who came through. There have been years when Dan did almost everything himself.

The Kwanza concert has always relied on Mildred Robinson to arrange the details. James Robinson does his part, I'm sure, but it is pretty clear that Mildred makes it all happen. The first year I was here you had cancelled the concert because Mildred was not available; no one was able to step up and take charge.

So . . . if we have these two examples of big events happening at our church, and we note that careful pacing might be an important part of getting through December, and we also note that a couple of individuals take on all the work . . . how can we reconcile these things? How can we sustain our activities unless we also sustain our people? It seems to me that sharing the responsibility of making things happen is a good place to start. And I know it's hard to "get your foot in the door" sometimes, it isn't always clear how to help.

Here's my thought for the moment – I believe that we like our church being an active place; and that many of us want to help keep it busy; and that instigators like Dan and Mildred are vital to, well, to instigate. I also believe that it's hard to know how to

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help, and that only a few people have the natural ability to show up and help without some knowledge of what needs to be done.

Finally, I believe we have ways to make this work better. Reverend Lynda Smith is working to coordinate volunteer tasks and is quite approachable. Consider talking to her about what you would like to do around here. You can also talk to me about how you want to get your "foot in the door" and I can help. "Many hands make light work." Maybe that is even more important than pacing!

See you in church –

Reverend Drew

Rev. Lynda's Liner Notes

Two parts of my Assistant Minister charge is helping with Adult Programs and supporting church volunteers. Here are some exciting developments.

First, the Mid-Week Church Night: On Wednesday's at 6pm we begin with food catered by either a local Thai or local Middle Eastern Restaurant. At 6:30pm we have a half hour Vespers Service. The way we UU's do Vespers is to create a reflective, relaxed time to renew our energy for the rest of the week. Last week I used a UU meditation booklet to select pieces about the seasonal change, interspersed with music from Vivaldi's Four Seasons. Drew usually leads Vespers, but the Worship Committee has guidelines that a congregant can use to develop their own ½ hour of calmness and re-freshment. Al Acker has paved the way by already leading a couple of Vespers and volunteering to lead more. After Vespers ends at 7pm, we sometimes have committee/Board meetings, but we always have an Adult Education Discussion or a singing group to choose from.

In January, I will begin a Meditation and Buddhist Discussion group. Finally, the first and last Wednesday's of January and February will be the last four meetings of the Evensong group. Evensong makes space for each participant to really listen and to really be heard about spiritual

and religious experiences and beliefs. If you are interested in Evensong, please let me know and we will plan a new group to begin in March.

Next, on the Volunteer Front: Sharon Mills is doing terrific work coordinating our refreshments for the Social Time after Sunday Services. If you would like to take a turn, please let Sharon know. Linda Kernohan is keeping on top of bringing recyclables to the Detroit Recycling Center. If you would like to add your helping hands to hers, please let her or me know. Finally, Glenn Maxwell and I have developed a Volunteer Service Log for you all to record your contributions of time and energy. This information will be useful when we apply for grants, either UUA or other sources.

I think of Church Volunteers as making bright, new bubbles of inspiration and kindness that float through the Congregation, helping us feel lighter and cared for. We give care and we receive care. Thank you so much for being part of a renewed vitality at First UU.

Lynda

President's Ponderings

We thank the Nominating Committee for its efforts to identify a candidate to replace the vacant Trustee position. Please welcome Dessa Cosma as our newest member of the Board. Dessa is a lifelong UU with a passion for social justice.

Your Board of Trustees continues their efforts in the areas of policy, portfolio and planning. The work is starting to take shape now in the form of a policy manual with our goal of accepting, reviewing then adopting at least two policies per Board meeting. Then portfolio work continues as Trustees link into the areas of Church life we have accepted accountability and this linkage also supports our policy and planning efforts.

Policies adapted to date include:

1. Disruptive Behavior
2. Newsletter
3. Calendar
4. Canvass
5. Phone Tree
6. Building Key Access
7. Sunday Social Hour (Coffee Hour)
8. Membership

I expect to have the policies adapted to date posted on our governance board, available in the Church Office then eventually posted securely to our web site. If you have specific questions regarding policies, please contact any of the Trustees for answers.

Your Board has also stepped up and dedicated itself to a "Policy Workshop" to polish its efforts to create policy to support decisions and operations of the Church.

We continue to dedicate select Saturday afternoons to work on the Church's comprehensive plan. We have assigned ourselves with a deadline of March 2009 to present a draft to the Congregation, however, before that time; you will be informed of the plan as you will have helped craft the plan.

As you see, there is much to do and as your Board steps up to do its role, I hope as a pledged member, you step up for your role too! Unsure where or how to step up? Just ask any of us.....email available from our 1st UU Detroit website.

Your Board of Trustees for 2008-2009 is as follows:

President – Alicia Biggers
 Vice President - Dan Wiest
 Treasurer – Sharlene Gage
 Secretary – Alma King
 Trustee – Dave Lingholm
 Trustee – Trey Greene
 Trustee – Bill McKnight
 Trustee – Dessa Cosma

Please feel free to contact any Board member or any of our three ministers: Rev. Drew Johnston, Rev. Lynda Smith or Rev. Athena Kolbe and let us know what you feel about the Church, the ongoing changes, how you want to be of use or service, as we are listening but really need to hear from you, continuously!

Finally, I want to extend greetings of the season to everyone and may you have a peaceful month of joy with a wonderful New Year!

Alicia Biggers


Our Sunday Sermons are on the Web.

Yes we have a web site, but, wait there's more. Now you and the whole world can enjoy Reverends Johnston's and Smith's sermons from the comfort of your own home.

All their sermons since January 2008 are now available by going to our web site:

www.1stuu.org and clicking on **Sermon Audio** under **Worship and Faith Development**.

This will direct you to a new page with a tool called the **Sermon Player**. On that player you will see a list of the sermons from the latest to the earliest. Scroll down the list to see them all.

Click on any sermon, click  (play) then sit back and enjoy. It's like having Drew or Lynda right at home. It's especially nice if you miss a Sunday or if you want to introduce a friend to our ministers and their inspiring words on life, peace, and spiritual living. There are also options for podcasting and .mobi right on the player.

Listen to what people are saying about sermons on the web:

"I enjoy the service but there is something more personal and intimate when listening to Drew at home on my headphones."

*"I find Drew's voice very soothing and it helps me relax for his spiritual journey."
 "After a wild Saturday I nodded off during Drew's sermon. I was so happy to be able to get what I missed using the Sermon Player."*

Please enjoy this and let us know what you think and if you have any suggestions. This is very exciting. Only the sermons are available on the web site. The entire service is still available on CD. Contact Dan Secrest at danielsecrest@gmail.com or Glenn Maxwell at glenn@mbwgroup.com for any comments. You can also leave comments by selecting the **Details** tab and then the **comment icon** under the word **Bible**.

CD RECORDINGS OF THE SUNDAY SERVICE Every Sunday Service is recorded on CD by the sound crew. Copies are made after service in coffee hour at the sound table. Please fill out the order request form as soon as possible so we can graciously make your copy for only \$5. Copies of past sermons are also available. The sound crew schedule is as follows:

First Sunday: Linda Darga
Second Sunday: Len Zettel
Third Sunday: Glenn Maxwell
Fourth Sunday: Dan Secrest
Fifth Sunday: Dave Lingholm

Contact them on their respective Sunday for questions. If you are interested in being on the sound crew, contact Glenn Maxwell or Dan Secrest.

Help UUSC Provide Humanitarian Aid

In the spirit of giving, we at First Church remember the Unitarian-Universalist Service Committee with its contributions to help improve the lives of many people around the world. We have begun the ‘Guest At Your Table’ campaign by distributing boxes in which you can drop money when thinking of the many who will benefit from your generous donations.

Please bring your checks (not cash) to church and ask Mary Neale to forward them to the UUSC, so that our church can receive credit for these contributions. Checks will be collected for the next few weeks, and we plan to end this Guest at Your Table by January 18, 2009.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for printed material is **Sunday, December 14, 2008** no later than NOON or the following Monday, no later than 9:00 a.m. for electronically submitted material. Please send your material to Huey Gray at office@1stuu.org.