

First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

4605 Cass Avenue

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March 28, 2010

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First Unitarian
Universalist Church
Organizational Chart
2009 – 2010

Officers

President

Marilyn Mitchell

Vice President

Bill McKnight

Immediate Past

President

Alicia Biggers

Board Secretary

Alma King

Treasurer

Linda Darga

Staff

Minister

Rev. Drew Johnston

Music Director

Todd Ballou

Cantor

Gwen Foss

Office Admin

Jenn Hurtt

Building & Grounds

Joe Brimmer

Leonard Swint

(Sunday)

Trustees

Dessa Cosma

Dan Rebb

Elayne Sikelianos

Sally Borden

Newsletter Editor

Ryan King

Worship Services
held every
Sunday at
11:00

DREW'S VIEWS

There's been some extra work around church lately. In a couple of days we will meet together as a congregation to make sure everybody has heard the same stories about how we got to this point, what is going on now, and what is possible from here on. This is an important part of church, adjusting plans and expectations to match whatever we have learned. I've been wondering why it also feels like extra work, after all, this is how it's supposed to happen.

It occurred to me that there might be one piece missing - fun! So I stopped by the Spring Fling dance at church tonight, and I rediscovered one of the most important reasons we gather as a community, to simply have fun! I'm not in any shape to dance just now, but watching people of all ages hopping and twirling to the music was such a great reminder that joy is often very close to the surface, and a good dance rhythm and some friends seems like a great way to uncover that joy.

I thought of my years as a musical instrument builder. The work is often intense and fragile; one slip could ruin thousands of dollars worth of effort and materials, and sometimes it seems like there is nothing more important than doing the next step perfectly. My teacher had something to do with that, often ranting about how crucial something was, leading some of us who were worry prone to worry even more. Then one day, several weeks into construction, we were working on one of the most complex steps, a compound tapered dovetail joint between the neck and the body of the instrument, seemingly measured by intuition and cut by hand. It takes practice to develop an understanding of the fit, or even to be able to understand what you are looking at.

In the midst of that step in construction, the tensest moment so far, the teacher found some reason to say, "If you're not having fun then you're doing it wrong." I remember his heavy accent that led me to ask, "Izvinite, ta?" (I had learned a tiny bit of Serbian to help communicate with my teacher. Roughly, I said, "Excuse me, what?") He didn't repeat the phrase immediately, but said what I want to say to you:

"Everything we do here is very important. If you do things in the wrong order, you may not have any chance to fix them. If you don't think many steps ahead you won't know where you are going, maybe spending way too much time on a part that gets covered up later. If you are going to do any of this well, you have to understand the whole picture." He paused for a second with a relaxed grip on a very sharp chisel, actually shrugged his shoulders and continued, "This is a lot of work, I know, but you have to enjoy it. See what I mean?" He slid the neck and body together and they still didn't fit right, yet. With a laugh he concluded, "If it's not fun, why bother? Find something else. If you can't have fun at work then you're doing it wrong."

I wrote some of that in my notes as he made the final adjustment to the fit. Church seems to me to benefit from this attitude. Have some fun, because a lot of this is very serious.

I hope you went to the dance, and will go to the next one. I hope you will find joy in moments of church, whatever you are doing. We are dealing with life and death, and that can be a bit heavy if it's the only thing. Let's remember to have some fun!

Thanks to all those worked so hard to give us a Spring Fling -- It was fun!

See you in church -

Drew

Rev. Drew Johnston

President's Column

Tough times engage tough people.

First Church has been on the corner of Cass and Forest since 1916. Well before that, there were separate Unitarian and Universalist churches in Detroit working with the underground railroad, fighting for women's rights, battling the moneyed establishment. It seems to me that those of us who are fortunate enough (and maybe stubborn enough) to be members and friends of First Unitarian-Universalist Church at the corner of Cass and Forest will embrace the challenge of the present and do whatever it takes to stay together, love each other, love our church and commit to keeping our presence in Detroit at the corner of Cass and Forest.

Staying together will take some sacrifice and a lot of ingenuity. Hard to believe that we have lived "the good life" with lots of buildings and ample room to have potlucks, offices, parties, etc. If we are going to keep our sanctuary and maintain our congregation, we are going to have to retrench. But that's okay. I believe that if we strengthen our core, growth will follow.

Speaking only for myself, I will never affiliate with a suburban U-U church. First Church is the only church in metropolitan Detroit that offers the diversity and the grit I want in a U-U church. We take our diversity for granted because we are used to it. But venture to any of the suburban churches and you will be surprised and/or appalled by the sameness of their congregations. That's not the congregation I need or want.

So, like a U-U Martin Luther, here I make my stand, I can do no otherwise. I am committed to keeping liberal religion alive in Detroit as a beacon and haven for all those who have been "wounded by religion" and as a bulwark against the destructive fundamentalism we are seeing on the rise in Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Staying here will take more determination and service than ever before, but I believe the cause is too important to abandon. Will you join me, no matter what?

See you in church!



OUR MUSICAL ADVENTURES CONTINUE ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 7-9pm

Todd Ballou, 1st UU Music Director

Church Night is the place to be! MUSICAL ADVENTURES is a series of discussions, lessons, and demonstrations facilitated by Todd Ballou for musicians in our community to build musical skills, network, become involved, and share musical ideas for the benefit of our Sunday morning experience at 1st UU church. Topics will be driven by participants so bring your favorite musical inspiration on CD, or even perform it for us; bring a musical question you'd like discussed, or bring your most musical friend. Topics will include reading music, learning about rhythms, exploring our hymnal, finding your singing voice, sharing your musical inspirations, planning musical experiments, discovering the organ, choir repertoire, providing feedback, and instrumental music.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming topics:

Apr 7- Reading music 201- The "Key" to listening

May 5- The Musical Psychic- the magic & mystery of selecting music for next Sunday

June 2- If we don't have anything better to talk about, we'll have an Organ Tour!

Todd Ballou

MUUSJN Health Care Workshop at Annual Heartland District Spring Conference

The annual Heartland Spring Conference will be held April 9-11, 2010 at the First UU Congregation in Ann Arbor. To register, go to www.heartlanduu.org. Michigan Unitarian-Universalist Social Justice Network (MUUSJN) will be presenting a workshop on "UUs Making Health Care History!" that will empower UUs to get involved with health justice work.

MUUSJN

“About Us”

This is part of an ongoing series of profiles of members of 1st UU Church of Detroit.

Nora Holt was the oldest of 6 children, and was born on a family farm in Marianna, Ark. Three of her siblings died in infancy due to lack of adequate medical care. "One of my mother's wishes was to move away from the farm so that her children could get an adequate education and better medical care."

Nora had to walk over a mile to the one-room schoolhouse which she attended from 1st to 4th grade. Meanwhile, the bus carrying white children passed her daily. Then, the family moved to the west side of Detroit, where she attended two different grade schools before moving to Inkster, where she finished grade school.

Nora's father never adjusted to city living, and returned to work as his own boss on his family farm. He eventually returned to Detroit, where he held several factory jobs. "Mother was a determined hard worker, and a disciplinarian. She saved money in order to buy a 2 family flat and at age 65, she bought a new Oldsmobile, learned to drive and got her driver's license. Nora's younger brother died at the age of 53 of a heart attack. Her sister, Flora, lives in the Detroit area.

Nora attended Michigan State and studied nursing before changing to Social Work as her major in her senior year. She worked for the State of Michigan for several years, and then went to Wayne State University for her Master of Social Work degree. She has worked in child welfare, mental health, and served many different populations. Nora's professional experiences include working as a Family Service therapist, working with developmentally disabled people, Ecorse school social worker, and finally as phone therapist for a private agency.

Nora married the year she received her Master's degree, and daughter, Lori, was born in 1964. In 1969, she and 5 year-old Lori came to First Church. "I chose this church because I became disenchanted with traditional Christian churches, but I felt responsible for my child's education, and a friend invited me to First Church. Both Lori and her daughter, Loren, attended our church school. "We had positive experiences and I became involved in teaching in the church school and served on the Religious Education Committee."

Nora was on the Board of Trustees twice; Worship and Religious Education were her responsibilities for the Board. All-Church camping outings were held in the fall; Nora and Lori greatly enjoyed them.

Nora and Sally Borden co-chair our Membership Committee, which meets monthly on the first Thursday evening. The Membership Committee is responsible for activities enhancing growth and involvement of the membership.

"This church has been a great place for me. I have made good friends, and I tell newcomers, 'If you like our church, get to know others by choosing to work on committees and participating!'"

Mary Neale

Helga Herz Memorial Service

A Memorial Service to celebrate the life of Helga Herz will be held Sunday, April 18th, 2:30pm-4pm, followed by a Dinner Reception.

Rev. Lynda Smith will officiate along with Helga's family and friends. Helga lived her last years in Washington DC to be close to family. Helga was a vital force in Detroit's Peace Community and a long time member of this church. She is well known and admired for her strong action to create more Peace, locally and internationally. She lived her ideals with a smile of joy and light. Those planning to attend, please RSVP to the church office -so we have enough food for the meal. Thank you.

Rev. Lynda Smith

Passing of Margaret Shopbell

Margaret Shopbell's Memorial Service was held on March 13th at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Livonia. If you'd like to honor her, please make a donation in her name to the UU Service Committee. Any condolences may be mailed to the following address: Adrienne R. Kaufman, 26920 Victory Court, South Lyon, MI 48178.

Jenn Hurtt

Birth of Julianna Patricia Hosey

Member Carole Hosey gave birth to her daughter Julianna Patricia Hosey on March 22, 2010 at 10:30am. Mom, dad and daughter are all well.

Alicia Biggers

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for all newsletter submissions, both printed and electronically submitted material, is Wednesday, April 28th, 2010. Please send articles to the Newsletter Editor at newslettereditor@1stuu.org. Your feedback is welcomed and appreciated in the spirit of liberating truth, radiating kindness and loving courageously.