

# FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER



OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

AUGUST EDITION

## *Upcoming Sermon Schedule*

August 3

Wardell Montgomery

### **"Prayin' for the Big Easy God."**

Speaker Wardell Montgomery, Jr. is an urban folk poet and a member of Plymouth United Church of Christ. He will give us a sermon in poetry exploring a literal interpretation of the Bible versus a metaphorical one.

August 10

Mary Minock

### **"In Praise of Memory ."**

Mary Minock, a poet and memoirist, and long-time Detroiter, reads from her published memoir, *The Way-Back Room: A Memoir of a Detroit Childhood* (Bottom Dog Press, 2011). She then offers examples from her process of writing it to comment on the transcendent power of an active memory of the past. Memory is actually a dialogue with the present, and so truth(s) that are uncovered are ever-changing and ever rich in possibility. Studied excursions into memory promise to keep us from the rocks of nostalgia and guide us as we navigate the future.

August 17

Rev. Roger Mohr

### **"Regional Religious Progressives."**

At First Church's annual planning retreat we agreed that FUUD has a mission to provide leadership and support for the Detroit metropolitan region, for regional UUs, but also for regional progressives. We are the Chalice Church. How do we make that claim into a practical reality?

August 24

Rev. Roger Mohr

### **"The Social Lifeboat."**

The "Lifeboat Dilemma" is a classic philosophical problem about how we make choices. Sound social policy requires clarity of thought in terms of our decision making criteria.

August 31

Mary Lou Malone

### **"Water Rights and Responsibilities ."**

A Water Ceremony will be included in the service.

## **FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2014-2015**

### **Officers**

#### **President**

*Marsha Bruhn*

#### **Vice President**

*Danny Rebb*

#### **Immediate**

#### **Past President**

*Sally Borden*

#### **Board Secretary**

*Kathe Stevens*

#### **Treasurer**

*Dan Wiest*

#### **Board Members At-Large**

*Matt Friedrichs*

*Joan Smykowski*

*Joel Batterman*

*Paul Chislett*

### **Staff**

#### **Minister**

*Rev. Roger Mohr*

#### **Music Director**

*Todd Ballou*

#### **Office Admin**

*Tamara Halliburton*

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



## *Letter from the President...*

Over 20 members came together on July 13 for the church's annual Leadership Retreat. I find that these retreats never disappoint because they give everyone a chance to reflect on who we are and where we want to be. We asked ourselves: Has what we've done for the past year helped to fulfill the vision of First UU as *an urban center in Detroit for spiritual renewal and social justice*? How have our goals meshed with our mission to *liberate truth, radiate kindness and love courageously*? And what is our capacity to execute?

While there was strong support for our current vision and mission statements, there was also the recognition that we have been more focused on recovery this past year rather than who we want to be. We've focused on putting people in the pews, building a foundation for growth, and developing a sense of community. We haven't had the resources to expand our vision to the greater community and to become an agent for change. The good news is that we are moving in the right direction—that we're rebuilding ourselves, addressing organizational, financial, and procedural matters, nurturing relationships, and recognizing emerging possibilities.

There was a lot of discussion about goals for 2014-15, eventually condensing them into three broad areas:

Grow the organization.

- Add 15-20 members
- Increase income
- Develop social activities for different age groups
- Ramp up our religious education
- Foster spiritual growth and guidance
- Engage people through social media

Expand our public voice and mission

- Develop core of leadership for the region
- Hold forums on major issues (e.g., access to water, Middle East relations) and invite the media
- Improve our technical ability to transmit
- Build and strengthen our relationships with other organizations
- Participate with the UUA's new branding and outreach program (beta testing)

Strengthen and better define our organizational structure

- Ensure accountability of staff and volunteers
- Address fundraising, policies and procedures, committees, worship
- Improve our communication and transparency (e.g., newsletter, calendar, order of service, quarterly congregational meetings)

Our challenge now is to develop action steps necessary to implement these goals and objectives. Who will take responsibility to help plan and implement them? And, even more important, do we have the resources—the capacity—to achieve this ambitious agenda? I am optimistic because I've seen how much was accomplished in the past year. I'm optimistic because of the skills that I know exist among our members to bring our church to the next level. So, let us begin!

Marsha Bruhn

## *The Rev's Room*

I will be gone the second week of this month to experience a full week of intensive leadership training with Gamaliel/MOSES. As I have participated in the National Clergy Leadership Training and Advanced Leadership Training, I have developed a vision of our ministry as a church, as well as my own work as a minister. This training session is about developing a concrete plan of action in terms of setting and achieving specific goals related to our organizing activities. When I come back, I expect that I will have a clear idea of what I will attempt to accomplish this year in terms of my ministry in our community.

I believe that First Church has a ministry to other regional UU churches to facilitate and express our regional voice and identity. My role in that ministry is to act as the liaison for our church with other ministers, and churches, as we discern how best to make that ministry come into being. However, the church has a role in actually envisioning and creating opportunities for regional UUs to join together as a larger faith community. If we are the chalice church, we need to create events that allow regional UUs to come together to experience that larger identity, and also to simply come to experience the city of Detroit itself. We are centrally located at the heart of our region's cultural and economic life.

However, my vision for our ministry together goes one step further. By the terms of our agreement with the UUA and with one another, I have three years of developmental ministry left with you. We are doing very well in achieving our goals together, as FUUD's leaders discussed at the annual retreat. The plan discussed above addresses the one goal we have not been entirely successful in achieving: reconnecting with the larger UU movement. Thus, I will need to set some larger goals, as well. I think that the major project, beyond simply reconnecting with other UUs, is to create an inter-faith network of religious progressives in the Detroit metro area, such that we can begin to exercise power in the decisions made concerning our region and our city. We can become the Chalice Church, not just for UUs, but for the entire progressive community. Let's make it so!

Namaste,  
Rev. Mohr



## *Activities*

When I first began the Activities Coordinator concept about three years ago, with my crew, which included Joan Smykowski, Gwen Foss and Maysel Brooks—put together an Activities Smorgasbord.

It included activities of the church, wider UU up to the denomination level, “Midtown Magic,” and further group outings such as the Riverwalk. It led to many of us, in groups of different combinations, walking and talking together on the way to a Midtown museum.

We did some before and after church programming, showcasing some members' knowledge and interests. Later, we pulled off a Talent Show and learned much about each other that way, too.

When I attended Birmingham Unitarian for a few years, I organized two Bazaars of a sort for coffee hour. At one, a member could have half a table to show his/her vocation. The minister surmised that, all things begin equal, congregants would prefer to do business with a fellow congregant. Heard at least 4 times by most of us was, “I didn't know you did that!”

The second one was avocational. I asked the woman, who staffed the Hosteling International display, whether it was a hobby or a cause, because I've had the same question about my beloved Esperanto. She said, “Both.” I can understand internationalism having to be cause in the U.S.

Look forward to a these Bazaars in the fall, and perhaps, because we have so many new members, a repeat of the Activities Smorgasbord. What do you think about it?

## *Upcoming Activity -- July 30!*

Please join regional UUs in the sanctuary of First UU Detroit (4605 Cass Ave, Detroit MI) at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday July 30th, for a forum to discuss our responses to the Detroit Water Department's delinquency collections and shutoff programs, as well as efforts to protect and support our most vulnerable citizens. There has been a great deal of national attention around the issue, and many voices within our congregations have been lost in the intensity of media interest. What do we, as Detroit area UUs, want to say about the issue, and on other regional issues such as transportation, economic development, etc.? The goal is to create a consensus among ourselves as we address the issue in public. Please share this announcement with your churches and local UU friends and post to your church email groups and social media. In the interests of the right of conscience and observance of democratic process, we want the broadest spectrum of perspectives to be heard. Thank you, and Namaste.

## *Membership News*

### **Membership Anniversaries**

**August 2006**

Maysel Brooks

Greeters and Ushers for practicing Radical Hospitality during July 2014, at First Church:

Dale Adcock	Beth Bailey
Margaret Beck	Brad Bierwirth
Dale Compton	Sally Borden
Carolyn Ludwig	Dan Rebb
Felice Rizzo	Sherry A. Wells

**A Special Thank You to Sherry A. Wells for conducting the Introduction to First Church sessions for June 2014.**

### **June and July Visitors at First Church**

Welcome! In Unitarian Universalism, you can bring your whole self: your full identity, your questioning mind, your expansive heart.

We hope to see you again soon.

Alexis	Camell	Karl	Mahim	Onica
Bill	Derek	Kelly	Martin	
Bryan	Erin	Leah	Nia	

### **New Pledge Period Has Started July 1st**

Please give the new amount that you pledged for the new fiscal year.

Thank you!

## **Helping to Make the Next Generation of First Church Members Making a Gift by Will**

Making a gift by will is easy. Please consider naming the First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit to receive a gift from you through your Last Will and Testament. Make a gift through a family trust, a life insurance policy, or an individual retirement account.

Consider yourself invited to join the UUA Legacy Society by letting us know that you have included a gift to the Association in your estate plans. Your example may encourage others to join suit and provide for the future of our liberal religion.

## **Getting Involved at First UU Be Part of a Church Committee, Group or Activity**

Attending the worship service on Sunday is a very special experience, but most members and friends find out that, over time, it is not enough to sustain their commitment to the Church. We encourage members and friends to attend one of the next Getting Involved sessions to learn more about our various groups, committees and activities. Our next Getting Involved sessions will be Sunday, August 24th, 12:30 pm in the sanctuary and Sunday, October 26th, 12:30 pm in Memorial Hall.

## **Why is it Important to Become a Member of First Church?**

Unitarian Universalists are a diverse group with many different beliefs, practices and religious backgrounds. In general, most of us would agree with the following statements. We believe, along with many philosophers in the past, that the force of love is the greatest force for good between human beings. This and other beliefs are expressed in our "seven principles". We believe in freedom of religious expression and tolerance of all people. We believe that our personal reason and conscience can be as valuable a guide to how to live our lives as dogma or past writings of any religion. We believe that one of the most important and rewarding parts of life is an ongoing search for Truth, which may be different for different people. We believe in the worth and dignity of each human being. And we believe that by joining together we can strengthen each other's determination to live a good life and to serve humanity. Members are encouraged to develop their own philosophy, which may change as their lives evolve.

If this is the type of faith community you would like to be a part of, please consider becoming a member. To help you make your decision, we offer the following sessions, usually in Memorial Hall, unless noted, to inform you:

### **Introduction to First Church**

Sunday, August 3, 2014, 12:30 pm  
 Sunday, September 7, 2014, 12:30 pm  
 Sunday, October 5, 2014, 12:30 pm

### **Getting Involved**

Sunday, August 24, 2014, 12:30 pm (in the sanctuary)  
 Sunday, September 26, 12:30 pm (in Memorial Hall)



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **1st UU Board Meetings**

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

August 13	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
September 10	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
October 8	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm

All are welcome at board meetings. If you have an item you wish to have included on the agenda for discussion at the meeting, please contact Kathe Stevens, Board Secretary at [kathestevens@gmail.com](mailto:kathestevens@gmail.com)

### **SECOND Sunday: 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.

### **Vespers Wednesday**

Vespers runs from 6:00 - 7:00pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Vespers on August 13 will offer a special treat. Dunya Mikhail, an award-winning Iraqi poet will be our guest. So please join us to make her feel welcome. She'll read some of her work and answer questions. There's plenty of room at 6 pm in the church parlor. Thanks to Nancy Nelson for suggesting this possibility! Your host, Al Acker

### **Singing Circle**

Wednesdays at **7:00 pm** - Singing Circle at the church. Open to all. Contact Gwen Foss [bookdorgwen@gmail.com](mailto:bookdorgwen@gmail.com) for more details.

### **Monthly Young Adults Meeting**

Join young adults from the congregation and beyond to discuss the development of this new social and community group within First UU. They meet on the third Sunday of the month at 12:30 in Memorial Hall.

### **September 7th Sermon**

"Pro-Choice Is Pro-Life." Women's rights are under attack from the right, with not only abortion but contraception in jeopardy. Our tradition demands that we defend women's right to decide.



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **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 have any questions or would like to sign up, see Tamara after service or send her an email. Thank You!

### **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.

### **Announcement from Alena Acker**

I am doing the New York City Triathlon this summer. I'll be swimming 1500 meters (about 1 mile), biking 40 Kilometers (about 24 miles) and running 10 Kilometers (6.2 miles) to raise money for a charity called CityKids. CityKids Foundation uses the arts as an engagement tool to help at-risk youth succeed in high school and go on to college. Anyone interested in supporting CityKids on my behalf can donate at:

<http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/AlenaAcker/nyc-triathlon-2014>

### **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.

### **Share Your Voice - a sermon seminar for anyone!**

This eight session seminar is an opportunity to practice telling your story in a collaborative environment. Participants will develop a sermon which they may share with the congregation. The group meets the second and fourth Monday of the month at 7pm, beginning October 13. Space is limited and participants must commit to attend all eight sessions. Please contact Beth Bailey at [eliza-bethbailey88@gmail.com](mailto:eliza-bethbailey88@gmail.com) with questions.



# August 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>3</b> 11:00am - "Prayin' for the Big Easy God." Speaker - Wardell Montgomery 12:30pm - Intro to First Church	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 7:00pm - Singing Circle	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Happy Birthday Mark Schwing and Rev. Lynda Smith!
<b>10</b> 11:00am - "In Praise of Memory." Speaker - Mary Minock 12:30pm - Potluck	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6:00pm - Vespers 7:00pm - Board Meeting 7:00pm - Singing Circle	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Happy Birthday Maysel Brooks and Rhonda Rodgers!	<b>16</b> Happy Birthday Dan Wiest!
<b>17</b> 11:00am - "Regional Religious Pro- gressives." Speaker - Rev. Mohr 12:30pm - Young Adults Meeting	<b>18</b> 7:30pm - Amnesty International Meet- ing	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7:00pm - Singing Circle	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 11:00am - "The Social Life- boat." Speaker - Rev. Mohr 12:30pm - Getting Involved Session <b>Happy Birthday Sharlene Gage!</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Happy Birthday Patricia Pilafrican!	<b>27</b> 7:00pm - Singing Circle	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 11:00am - "Water Rights and Responsibilities." Speaker - Mary Lou Malone						



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

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Detroit, MI  
48201

Please visit us at [www.1stuu.org](http://www.1stuu.org),  
email us at [info@1stuu.org](mailto:info@1stuu.org), or give  
us a call at (313) 833-9107.

## *Church Announcements*

### **Sunday Worship Service**

The Worship Committee generally plans for Sunday worship service to run for about 1 hour. However, the Worship Committee does allow our speakers to take a few more minutes if needed to finish their point. So as a general guideline, please plan for Sunday worship services to end between 12:00 and 12:15pm.

### **Message Topics**

Remember, Rev. Mohr is always open to new ideas for sermon topics, either in terms of texts and sources, or in terms of topics. If you have an idea for a sermon, please do feel free to share it.

### **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](mailto:office@1stuu.org) by **12:00 pm Thursday**.

### **September Newsletter Deadline**

Wednesday, August 20th

Next issue covers September 1 - September 30, 2014

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

Send items to [office@1stuu.org](mailto:office@1stuu.org)