

FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

JANUARY EDITION

Upcoming Sermon Schedule

January 5

Rev. Roger Mohr

"Dark and Deep, Cold and Clean."

The New Year is a time of purification, as Nature disciplines and tests us.

January 12

Rev. Roger Mohr

"The Politics of Progress."

What might a progressive political strategy look like from the perspective of Detroit in 2014?

January 19

Joel Batterman

"Community Organizing in Detroit."

Church member Joel Batterman will speak about his career as a community organizer, including his present job in Detroit.

January 26

Rev. Roger Mohr,

"Polytheism: Creating Your Own Pantheon."

Each of us has our own understanding of the Divine. And most of us have more than one.

February 2

Rev. Roger Mohr

"Lessons From the Ancestors."

In the book, Five Regrets of the Dying, we can learn from the decisions other people have made in their lives, and wish they would have done differently.

February 9

Mary Lou Malone

"Civil Rights."

Church member Mary Lou Malone will coordinate a service on civil rights.

February 16

Danny Rebb

"Standing on the Side of Love."

Church member Danny Rebb will coordinate this service on human rights and respect.

February 23

Rev. Roger Mohr

"Moving the Goalposts."

As we move into the spring, we begin to think about what we need to accomplish next year.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2013-2014

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

Sean McAde

Staff

Minister

Rev. Roger Mohr

Music Director

Todd Ballou

Cantor

Gwen Foss

Office Admin

Tamara Halliburton

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



Letter from the President

As the year nears its end, I follow an old pattern, and that is: what have we done to make a difference this year? At its retreat last July, the Board set some ambitious goals, and our plan is to do a mid-year evaluation at the January Board meeting—what have we accomplished, how well did we do, what should we be focusing on for the remaining six months of the fiscal year?

Having Rev. Mohr in the pulpit and as an active participant in so many of our activities has, I feel, brought new energy to the church. We're uplifted by his thoughtful messages, energized by his energy, and grateful for his vision. When combined with the weekly worship experience brought to us by the Worship Committee, and enhanced by the music of Todd Ballou, Gwen Foss and the choir, Sunday morning at First UU is a good place to be.

It's because of a well-functioning committee structure and the many members of the congregation who serve so willingly on these committees that a lot has been accomplished in the past six months. I've spoken about Membership, Building & Grounds, and Development in previous president's reports, so I won't elaborate here. The Transitions Task Force continues to meet with EMEAC (East Michigan Environmental Action Council) as matters of mutual concern arise, but now much of the conversation often takes place in regular meetings with other tenants in the Commons.

A newly established Finance Committee under Dan Wiest's leadership is meeting prior to the monthly Board meeting. Contrary to what was expected when First UU deeded the church property to EMEAC two and a half years ago, meeting our budget continues to be a challenge. Simply put, we are not taking in enough revenue to meet expenses. You will be hearing more about this after the first of the year as we approach the annual canvass; this is a serious issue that must be resolved if we're to achieve long-term sustainability.

In closing, I'd like to add my appreciation to Matt Friedrichs and the Young Adults Group for hosting the "Uncommon Grounds" café during Noel Night. The event was deemed a "huge success", with a steady stream of patrons throughout the evening enjoying hot cocoa, coffee, chili, cookies and sandwiches. The Board voted to split the \$540 in proceeds evenly with EMEAC, as our contribution for the use of the facilities that evening.

I wish the best for all of you and our church this holiday season and for the coming year.

Marsha Bruhn

The Rev's Room

Welcome to 2014! The image that comes to mind for me is of standing in front of a completely packed house at Noel Night. As I looked out on the crowd, there was not an empty seat in the sanctuary, the choir balcony was completely full, and many people were forced to stand in the aisles. The Noel Night organizers deserve a very grateful show of appreciation. What an amazing night! Estimates vary, but we had perhaps five or six hundred people in our church. That is a vision of possibility that I will remember as we move forward together. We are making progress!

In 2013 we did make a great deal of progress, pulling the church into working order, and making strides in learning how to be a church within the new context of a rapidly changing Detroit. Our organizational structure is revitalized, as we have launched, or re-launched, at least a half-dozen new committees. We have done several major events and fundraisers, and made steady progress in understanding how they work and what we need to do to make them successful. And we have begun to develop some creative and positive relationships with other community organizations and businesses. And of course we are also growing our membership, adding new members almost every month. This has been an excellent year!

We do have lots of room for growth, of course. Much of the busyness of the year has been around trying to not just get the committees up and functioning, not just organize the events themselves, but trying to get them all to interface with each other, and to optimize the use of our resources. There is very significant room for growth in that area, as well. We need to get our database organized and useable, even as we make an even more focused effort to grow and develop our lists and network. We have an opportunity to begin to engage our networks in the larger ministry and mission of the church...if and when we know how to reach the people that are connected to the church.

That network includes other organizations, and we have work to do developing and understanding our relationships with those other organizations. We also need to be more intentional about selecting and cultivating our community connections. The UUA also deserves much more of our time and energy. We have a significant role to play in leading the Detroit metro area as one of the stronger and better placed congregations. Many of our sister churches are currently in search for new ministry, and several are currently without ministry of their own. First Church has an opportunity to step back into the leadership role in which we have functioned in the past.

Last, there is still a problem of understanding our income and expenses in an environment in which we no longer have the expenses and income related to the building. We know that we are running a budget deficit, and that we need to generate more income. But we do not know for certain how much



The Rev's Room (continued)

additional income we will need to balance the budget. We are working on that question, and hope to have a better answer by the time we begin our pledge drive this spring. But know that we do have additional need that we must address in order to make our church sustainable.

With all of that said, I believe that we are doing very well. We cannot correct every possible problem within one year. As I stand at the middle of my third year with you, and the first of four years of developmental ministry, I am pleased and impressed with our progress. First church is a remarkable group of people, and an increasingly important part of the heart of Detroit. I am proud to minister to this congregation, and this community.

Namaste!

Rev. Mohr

Membership Committee News

The Importance of Your Financial Contribution of Record

Letters will soon be sent out to members that have not made a financial contribution of record to the church. We are required to report to the UUA on February 1st, our congregational census in January.

Though you may be attending regularly, it's equally important to make a monetary pledge of support and actually make a donation of record. Please complete the front of your donation envelope or have the information written on your check.

Members are defined in our By-Laws as one who "signs the membership book, makes a monetary pledge of support and makes a financial contribution of record." Also, stated in our By-Laws:

"A member will be sent an inquiry regarding a desire to maintain membership when that person has not made a contribution of record during the present or prior fiscal year. If an exemption is not requested, that person will be removed from the membership list."

An accurate membership figure determines the number of delegates First Church is allowed at General Assembly and also determines the amount of dues the Church owes the UUA and the District.

Membership Committee News (continued)

Be aware donations made to the Church may be applied as a tax credit for your 2013 income taxes. Please consult your tax preparer for more information.

Give for the right reasons:

- To fulfill your requirements as a member of First Church.
- To help secure a fair number of delegates at General Assembly.
- To pay our fair share of dues to UUA and the District.

If you have any questions about your pledge, please contact Marilyn Mitchell at mitchell140@comcast.net.

Becoming A Member-The Membership Journey Begins

Newcomers are always welcome at the First Unitarian-Universalist Church. There is no formal conversion process, so becoming a UU is simply a matter of self-identification. Membership is voluntary and does not require renouncing other religious affiliations or practices.

Church membership represents a deeper connection with your faith community. To help discern whether or not the First UU of Detroit is right for you, we encourage you to attend a variety of services, join us for activities and attend our Introduction to the First UU session the first Sunday of each month at 12:30 pm. Our next Intro session will be Sunday, January 5, 2014 at 12:30 pm.

We also have a Getting Involved session the fourth Sunday of the month. Learn how you can become involved in the activities, groups and committees of the First UU. Our next Getting Involved session will be Sunday, January 26, 2013 at 12:30 pm.

If you believe becoming a member of First UU is the right fit, we have our New Membership Sunday the second Sunday of each month. Our next New Member Sunday will be January 12, 2014. At that time, you will be asked to sign the membership book and make a monetary pledge of support to the church.

If you have any questions about the Membership Path please contact Joan Smykowski at joan.smykowski@gmail.com.



Church Pictures



Sherry Wells and Kathleen Jacobs-Johnson check out the offerings.

Joel Batterman writes in honor of Nelson Mandela.



Dale Compton and Sherry Wells Write for Rights.

Church Pictures - Noel Night 2013





Church Announcements and Events

1st UU Board Meetings

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

January 8	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
February 12	Memorial Hall	7:00 - 9:00 pm
March 12	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

Donation Letters

It is not unusual for members to generously donate food, appliances, services or other items to First UU and then not ask for reimbursement. Letters may be provided upon request itemizing donations so that they may be taken advantage of for tax purposes. Please provide receipts to the office admin to receive the proper documentation. 2013 donation letters will be mailed by January 31, 2014.

Singing Circle

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

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.

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.

Church Announcements and Events

FIRST Sundays: “Intro to First Church.” Are you new to the church, or just interested in learning more about our church and tradition? The New UU class is about offering introductory information about what the church is all about, and it is an important step toward becoming a member. There are two objectives: one is to share information on the UU tradition as a whole, and a second goal is to focus specifically on the history and traditions of the Detroit church. Please do attend: We are proud of who we are, and we want you to be proud to be with us!

SECOND Sunday: Welcoming New Members. This is a normal service, but we also include a time to invite our new members to come forward, present themselves to the community, and sign the membership book. This is an important ceremony honoring those who have chosen to identify themselves with our values, our tradition, and our community. Make them feel welcome among us!

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

We will kick off the New Year with a favorite poet...Billy Collins and music from the wonderful group that performed at our November fund-raising concert Metro Jazz Voices. If you missed that concert, here's a second chance. See you January 8th, 2014 at 6 pm in the parlor.

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.



Church Announcements and Events

Freedom House Donations

Jan. 5 is the first of two opportunities to donate paper products: (toilet paper, paper towels, paper tissue) and small personal hygiene items for Freedom House residents, who left homelands in fear for their lives. January is our congregation's month (the second date is January 19th). Sally Borden (313-533-1494 or Sally233@sbcglobal.net if questions) will deliver them for us.

Chancel Flower Donations - 2014 Dates Available!

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 or visitor to introduce, please write the message and put it in the visitor-milestone box in the narthex (foyer at back of church) or place it in the plate during the collection of the offering. For your convenience, there are forms at the end of each pew which can be used for this purpose.

Reimbursement Policy

Expenditures made to benefit First UU are not always reimbursable. Budgets have been set for salaries, programming and events and it is important that we stay with the confines of them. If you want to spend money on behalf of First UU and believe it to be a reimbursable item, please seek approval beforehand. Consult a member of the Board who will research it for you. It may determine whether you proceed with your purchase. Many times members will drop off items or donate towards an event and not expect to be reimbursed. An alternative exists for you to receive a signed document from the Treasurer acknowledging your gift that can be applied to your tax return. See Dan Wiest for more information.

JANUARY 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
5 11:00am - "Transcending the Family." 12:30pm - Intro to First Church Freedom House Donations	6	7	8 7:00pm - Board Meeting 7:00pm - Singing Circle	9	10	11
12 Welcoming New Members 11:00am - "The Circumscriptive Perspective." 12:30pm - Potluck	13	14	15 7:00pm - Singing Circle	16 Happy Birthday George Waterman!	17	18
19 11:00am - "The Transcendental Ape." 12:30pm - Young Adults Meeting Freedom House Donations	20 7:30pm - Amnesty International Meeting Happy Birthday Colleen Doaln-Greene!	21	22 7:00pm - Singing Circle	23	24 Happy Birthday Faye Colling!	25 Happy Birthday Elayne Sikelianos!
26 11:00am - Sermon Information TBA 12:30pm - Getting Involved at 1st UU	27	28	29 7:00pm - Singing Circle	30	31	



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

4605 Cass Avenue
Detroit, MI
48201

Please visit us at www.1stuu.org,
email us at info@1stuu.org, or give
us a call at (313) 833-9107.

Church Announcements

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 by **4:00 pm Thursday**.

February Newsletter Deadline

Monday, January 20th

Next issue covers February 1 - February 28, 2014

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

Send items to office@1stuu.org