

# FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER



OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

APRIL EDITION

## *Upcoming Sermon Schedule*

April 5:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"April Is the Cruellest Month."**

In T.S. Eliot's poem, "The Wasteland" he begins with images of revitalization and hope after a season of struggle and suffering. On this Easter morning, may we be reminded of the tenacity of life.

April 12:

Penny Herrington, Mary Liuzzo Lilleboe, Tony Liuzzo, and Sally Liuzzo,

### **"Reflections on Dr. Viola Liuzzo by Her Children."**

Viola Liuzzo's children will speak on Viola's legacy, carrying on her legacy, personal reflections, and relevance to today's issues.

April 19:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"Earth Day."**

As we celebrate Earth Day, we are drawn to ask the question of what our personal relationship with the Earth may be, and how we might make it better.

April 26: **"Detroit Musings Series."**

Frank Rashid,

### **"The Exact Center of the Modern World: Philip Levine's Detroit".**

May 3:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"The Meaning of Work."**

May 1 is International Labor Day, a time for celebrating the importance of work, and working people, in our lives, and in our culture.

May 17:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"Diving Into the Future."**

This is Rev. Mohr's last Sunday in the pulpit with First Church. Let's take a moment to celebrate the possibilities of new beginning, new cultivations, and new possibilities.

## FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2014-2015

### Officers

#### President

*Marsha Bruhn*

#### Vice President

*Danny Rebb*

#### Immediate

#### Past President

*Sally Borden*

#### Board Secretary

*Katbe 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

*Alexis Mitchell*

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



## *Letter from the President...*

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR ONE OF THE HOUSE CANVASS MEETINGS? WE WANT TO SEE YOU THERE! What better time to hear how we are meeting our financial obligations and our plans for providing for ministerial services for the next year? What better way than coming together in the relaxed setting of a member's home?

You might be thinking that you're already too busy with other things, or that you already know how much you want to pledge for the coming year, or that you're just not interested. But this isn't a one-way conversation. We have information to share, but we want to hear from you. Now that we're about to embark on the process of finding an Interim Minister for the next year, how are you feeling about this? What are your expectations? How will this impact our church?

Last year at the Canvass Meetings, I quoted from the Reverend John Wolf, retired Senior Minister at All Souls in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who impressed me with his reasons as to why we should want to support a UU Church – because it's a free pulpit, a place where walls between people are torn down, a place for religious displaced persons, where concern is for human beings rather than dogma, where you can learn that religion is for joy and comfort, for gratitude and love. I would add that it's about community, and sustaining that sense of community.

We're grateful to Ken Meyer, Dave and Katherine Vaillencourt, Aletha and Matt Oberdier, and Al and Lencha Acker for opening their homes for these canvass meetings. I'm grateful, too, to the members who have agreed to be part of an Interim Minister Search Committee in order to meet the April 17 application deadline – Kathe Stevens, Matt Friedrichs, Danny Rebb, Robert Johnson, Aletha Oberdier, and Nathan Strickland. Let's support them, and let's support this church.

Marsha Bruhn

## *The Rev's Room*

Ahhh, Spring! I am, in fact, a Sun worshipper. The long, cold, dark nights of winter leave me feeling more than a little low energy, and the growing light awakens my spirit. As a friend of mine says, we are mammals, animals, carbon based units. Our bodies – including our brains – have much to say about how we feel, despite our wills. And our bodies respond to sunlight. The Sun is, for some of us, the kiss of life.

As the Sun reappears, I am aware of a growing sense of energy and excitement, new purpose and possibilities. The Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaton thought so much of the power of the Sun that he rejected the entire religious hierarchy of his time to create a new religion of solar worship. To me, that is a sublime choice, a decision that changes everything. Indeed, many scholars believe that Akhenaton's choice was the foundation of monotheism. The Sun is God. I am not sure that Akhenaton was wrong about that. Certainly, from my point of view, he and I share the same faith.

It is widely argued that our use of fossil fuels is beginning to cause a change in the global climate. One might make a case that the climate is simply changing, and it has nothing to do with human carbon waste production (whether that is convincing to any one of us, or not). But I think it is possible to argue, as do the vast majority of our climate scientists, that our world is changing, and fast. Our culture and our governments need to be moving forward with strategic responses to a changing world. One might be solar power, and there are alternatives. May we hope they find the wisdom to do identify and invest in alternative energy sources.

And in our church, things are also changing fast. We also have the opportunity to think strategically about our congregational environment, and to look for more sustainable alternatives. May we find the wisdom to seek and engage our alternatives.

Namaste,  
Rev. Roger Mohr

## *From the Welcoming Task Force...*

**Update from the Welcoming Task Force:** On a frigid day, about a dozen people warmed themselves with lively conversation at the second session of our congregation-wide book discussion on February 22. The participants agreed that they wanted to continue discussing essays from *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays, and the Struggle for Equality*. We're going to keep the warmth, and discussion, going!

The Task Force will take up a special collection at the March 29 service featuring Ken Mogill, one of the attorneys in the Michigan marriage rights case being heard at the U.S. Supreme Court on April 28. Half the proceeds will go to the National Marriage Challenge (NMC) and half to First UU. The NMC is an accredited 501(c)(3) which is the sole entity authorized by the DeBoer family to fundraise exclusively for the DeBoer v Snyder case; 100% of funds raised through NMC will be used to support the lawsuit.

A panel discussion on marriage equality follows the service. Panelists include Mr. Mogill; Andre Gilford II, a graduate of the LGBT Detroit leadership academy; and Gina Calcagno, Campaign Director of Michigan for Marriage. We're excited to be able to use this opportunity to continue our tradition of supporting civil liberties!

As part of our outreach, members of the Task Force met with staff at Affirmations, metro Detroit's community center for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies. As a result, First UU has been invited to membership in Affirmations' Faith Alliance. We're really proud that Task Force members Sharon Mills and Deanna McGraw will represent First UU in the Faith Alliance.

The Task Force is committed and passionate and so we've discussed continuing our activities, with some members perhaps morphing into a committee on outreach, or blending with another committee to work on outreach. Discussions will continue as we count down the days to the expected renewal of our Welcoming Congregation status, which is the end goal of the Task Force as it exists now.

We'll continue to keep the board and congregation updated on our progress. Thank you for your support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Al Acker, Deanna McGraw, Kathe Stevens

## *From the Canvass Committee...*



It's here! The First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit 2015-2016 pledge campaign: **Give with a Loving Heart, Love with a Giving Hand.**

As we approach our centennial year, we're grateful for your past support and your loving heart and giving hands which will propel us into the next 100 years. The Governing Board invites you to attend a House Canvass Meeting to learn about present and future plans.

To attend a House Canvass Meeting, choose a date and location from the list below and RSVP to Canvass Chair Kathe Stevens via email at [kathestevens@gmail.com](mailto:kathestevens@gmail.com) or via text or phone at 313-675-1553:

- **Tuesday, March 31, 2015, 6-8 pm:** the home of Kenneth Meyer, Oakwood Commons, 16351 Rotunda Dr, Apt 218, Dearborn (limit 8 guests)
- **Thursday, April 9, 2015, 6-8 pm:** the home of Dave and Katherine Vaillencourt, 360 W Oakridge Ave, Ferndale (limit 11 guests)
- **Sunday, April 12, 2015, 2-4 pm:** the home of Aletha and Matt Oberdier, 103 Hazelwood St, Detroit – New Center (limit 10 guests)
- **Saturday, April 18, 2015, 3-5 pm:** the home of Al and Lencha Acker, 1701 Orleans St, Detroit – Lafayette Park (limit 6 guests)

Please pick a date, attend, share information, and decide your most comfortable level of giving for the next fiscal year. We'll be able to answer your questions about our options and opportunities, our financial capacity, and the future at First Church.

Many thanks to our hosts for opening their homes so we may gather together and share information in loving spirit!

Respectfully submitted,

Kathe Stevens, Chair, Canvass Committee



## *Church Announcements and Events*

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

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

|         |                            |                |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------|
| April 8 | Whole Foods Community Room | 7:00 - 9:00 pm |
| May 13  | Whole Foods Community Room | 7:00 - 9:00 pm |

All are welcome at board meetings. Whole Foods is located at 115 Mack Ave at John R, Detroit. 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)

### **Vespers Wednesday**

Vespers runs from 6:00 - 7:00pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

### **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.

### **Singing Circle**

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

## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **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.

### **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.

### **Young Adults Activities**

The first UU Young Adults group participates in two activities per month. To learn find out about upcoming Young Adults activities, visit us on Facebook at: [groups/young1stuu/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/young1stuu/) or contact Beth Bailey to be join our Google Group.

### **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!

### **UU Regional Picnic & Spring Gathering!**

The date is set! Our second annual Regional Picnic gathering will take place on Saturday, May 16th from 10am - 3pm at Shelter 12 on Belle Isle. Volunteer activity in the morning, and a potluck & BBQ picnic and games to follow. UU Congregations from throughout Southeast Michigan are welcome to attend!

The picnic planning committee is seeking volunteers to assist with set-up/break-down, cooking, and activities (contact Aletha Oberdier, 248-872-3837 or [alethafaye@gmail.com](mailto:alethafaye@gmail.com)) and donations of food & condiments (contact Beth Bailey, 313-244-4796 [elizabethbailey88@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethbailey88@gmail.com))



## *Church Announcements and Events*

### **NOTICE OF ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

First UU Detroit's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 17, at 12:30 P.M. in the Sanctuary. The order of business shall include:

1. Approval of the Minutes of June 15, 2014 Reconvened Annual Congregational Meeting
2. Amendments to the By-Laws
3. Election of Board President, Board Vice-President, two (2) Trustees-at-Large, 2015 Nominating Committee, two (2) delegates for the UUA General Assembly, and two (2) delegates for the UUA MidAmerica Regional Assembly
4. Approval of the 2015-16 Budget

### **New Care Committee**

The newly-formed Care Committee will address pastoral cares of our church community. It is chaired by Nancy Owen Nelson. Other members are Sally Borden, Edie McKnight, and Nathan Strickland. Please contact Nancy Owen Nelson, [nelnan@aol.com](mailto:nelnan@aol.com) or call her at 313-914-3475, if you would like a member of our Care Committee to reach out to you in a time of need.

## *Joys / Concerns*

Just returned from a wonderful trip to Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, and Phuket, Thailand (the beach area). Fabulous trip and nice to get out of the cold and snow for three weeks.

*Submitted By; Margaret Beck*

Sherry Wells' father passed February 3, at the age of 93. her immediate family will have a private memorial- and roast!- in Georgia in April.

Dan Secrest's father Fred, suffered a stroke recently. He is doing well, but is have trouble speaking well. Please keep him in your thoughts.



**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

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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*

### **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**.

### **May Newsletter Deadline**

Monday, April 20th

Next issue covers May 1 - May 31, 2015

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

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