

# FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF DETROIT NEWSLETTER



OUR MISSION: LIBERATE TRUTH - RADIATE KINDNESS - LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

MARCH EDITION

## *Upcoming Sermon Schedule*

March 1:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"The Ragged March of Progress."**

Sometimes it seems that things are getting worse. But it is easy to make the argument that things are getting better, even when it seems like we are falling.

March 8:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"Blessed to be Human."**

The foundational theology of Western culture presents a pretty negative picture of human nature. But we are better than we might believe that we are.

March 15:

Rev. Roger Mohr,

### **"Circling the Sun."**

As we move toward the Spring Solstice the significance of our path around the sun becomes more apparent, as well as more significant. Isn't it nice to know that we can achieve relative certainty about the realities of our universe.

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.

## 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

*Alexis Mitchell*

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

## *Letter from the President...*

One of the greatest assets at First Church, I believe, is our current Board of Trustees. The nine-member Board meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM in the Whole Foods Community Room on Mack. I couldn't ask for a better group of members to work with – highly committed and well-informed problem solvers truly accountable to the Congregation.

We were all pleased by Bob Lauer's report at the February 10 meeting that we are doing well in adhering to this year's budget and anticipate receiving the pledged amount. As you know, we had to make some hard staffing decisions at the beginning of this fiscal year. I'm happy to see that we are living up to our fiscal responsibility—covering not only current expenses but addressing past due pension obligations to the Minister. You will be getting more specific updates in the upcoming canvass parties. Your participation is important, and I hope to see you at one of them.

One action of the Board was to approve establishment of a Committee on Ministry to monitor and nurture the health of the ministry of the congregation and serve as a liaison, where appropriate, between the Congregation, the Board and the Minister. The whole purpose is to facilitate a healthy ministry here at First UU Detroit through support, objective counsel and encouragement of the Congregation and the Minister. As stated in Barbara Child's and Keith Kron's book, *In the Interim, Strategies for Interim Ministers and Congregations*, "the goal of a Committee on Ministry is to maintain the equilibrium of the church as a peaceable, thriving body." Following collaboration with Rev. Mohr, the Board appointed Mary Lou Malone (chair), Danny Rebb and Nancy Owen Nelson to serve on the Committee. We don't want it to become a "complaint bureau" but its members are available if you need to share any concerns.

It won't be long before you'll be asked to vote on Board leadership for next year. In the process of discussing Board positions for 2015-16, Colleen Dolan-Greene discovered some discrepancies in the By-laws as a result of changes made at the annual congregational meeting last May. We're now "fly-specking" the By-laws for consistency with those changes and will be presenting proposed amendments to the Congregation beginning in April.

This has been a hard winter. I received an email from one member asking whether we should have the February 15 service because of the weather. I replied that we should have the service and was pleased to see that, despite the snow and frigid temperature, about 40 people filled the church to hear an inspiring message from Rev. Mohr. Coffee, cookies and conversation were especially welcome that day!

Be careful and stay warm.  
Marsha Bruhn

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

Welcoming Task Force updates: We continue to plan and implement a series of educational programs with the goal of voting to renew First Church's Welcoming Congregation status at the May 2015 annual meeting.

Task Force co-leaders have been participating with members from several other churches in UUA Learning Circle teleconferences led by Carey McDonald, UUA Outreach Director. The discussions centered around branding, which was the original focus of the Welcoming Task Force as it tested the UUA's new outreach program. The testing is completed and we're looking forward to receiving Carey's report on findings.

The congregation-wide common book read/discussion on January 25 was led by Irene Brisson and Danny Rebb on Audre Lorde's essay, "There is No Hierarchy of Oppressions," from *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays, and the Struggle for Equality* and essays by Rev. Michael Tino, "Saved by Love," and Rowan McDowell Thompson, "Love May Not Be Concerned," as well as "A Note on Language" and the "Glossary" from *Coming Out in Faith: Voices of LGBTQ Unitarian Universalists*. Over 20 members and friends attended. As it turned out, a good deal of the time was taken up by forthright experiences participants shared by way of introductions. The ensuing discussion covered only the "A Note on Language" and the "Glossary." Consequently, the group unanimously agreed to meet again to continue the book discussion. At the committee's February 1 meeting, we agreed to reconvene the discussion.

At that same meeting we approved details for a "community conversation" on March 29 which will be sponsored by Michigan for Marriage, a statewide grassroots public education campaign to build support for marriage equality. Ken Mogill will be in the pulpit. Ken is one of the attorneys in the Michigan marriage rights case – *DeBoer v Snyder* – being heard at the U.S. Supreme Court in April. His topic, "Reflections on the Struggle for Marriage Equality," will be a personal examination of what marriage is and how the *DeBoer* case has affected people's views of marriage as a matter of law and social/religious conceptions.

After the worship service on March 29, Michigan for Marriage will sponsor a panel discussion on marriage equality. Gina Calcagno, the Campaign Director of Michigan for Marriage, will participate as a panelist, as will Ken Mogill. Gina will arrange for another panelist and do publicity, supplemented by our advertising subcommittee. Michigan for Marriage will provide light refreshments.

An LGBTQ oral history discussion is also in the works and we've identified a potential speaker. At the time this newsletter went to print, we did not have a date and time set for the discussion, but watch for details soon!

The Task Force is considering how to build relationships and partnerships with LGBTQ-focused organizations. What do we want and need from these relationships? Further programming of an educational nature. What do we have to offer? A spiritual home, the pulpit, advocacy and supporting/attending events. We don't want to rest on our renewal after we obtain it; we want to be an authentic Welcoming Congregation!

Members of the Task Force – Al Acker, Lencha Acker, Irene Brisson, Trey Greene, Mary Lou Malone, Deanna McGraw, Sharon Mills, Danny Rebb, Joan Smykowski, and Kathe Stevens – are happy to provide details. Look for us in social hour. We've got the rainbow tags on our name badges!

We will continue to keep you updated on our progress. Thank you for your support.

Al Acker, Deanna McGraw and Kathe Stevens, Co-Leaders

## *Church Announcements and Events*

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

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.

March 11	Whole Foods Community Room	7:00 - 9:00 pm
April 8	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!

### **Directory Updates Now Available**

Updates to the 2014 church directory are available in the office.

### **UU Fundraiser Movie Night**

When: Friday, March 13th at 7:30pm

Where: To be held at Kathleen and Robert Johnson's home.

In conjunction with being a LGBTQ welcoming congregation, we are showing Iron Ladies, based on a true story of the 1996 Thailand National Champion Volleyball Team. Made up of gay and transgender players with a lesbian coach, help cheer them on as they win against adversity. Donations go towards 1st UU church. Popcorn provided. Hope to see you there! Next movie night will be Friday April 10th.

## *Church Announcements and Events*



Your Friendly Membership Committee plans to begin recognizing the Good Eggs in our congregation. You know who they are. Or maybe you don't. They're folks just like you who are busy behind the scenes, making sure things run smoothly. Or they show up on Sunday with whatever we need to worship together, or on Saturday for clean-up, or ... you get the idea. Watch for a shout-out to our Good Eggs, soon!

### **Child Care Coming--**

We hope to begin providing child care during each church service starting in January. A great group of 1st UUers have volunteered to help with the care and we will have a short training session before we begin providing the care. Alayana O. works with Head Start and is a great resource for this undertaking.

If you have any of the following items to donate to our newly decorated child care room, please let Richard Hillier, Alayna O. or Sally Borden know, but **DON'T BRING THEM TO CHURCH YET**:

- small kids size table and chairs
- a low shelf for toys that kids can reach on their own
- Boppy pillow and an activity gym for infants
- small play kitchen set (is usually a hit with kids)
- any toys appropriate for ages eight months to four years (larger Legos, puzzles with two to six pieces, toy cars, trains, Fisher price Little People, balls, stuffed toys and dolls)

We think we have a rocking chair and a changing table.

It will be great to see even more young children coming to church.

### **Grant Coordinator Needed**

We're looking for a grant coordinator. If you can help, please see Matt Friedrichs, chair of the Fund Development Committee, or contact him at [friedrichs.matt@gmail.com](mailto:friedrichs.matt@gmail.com).

### **Change in Vespers Schedule for March**

The next Vespers will be on the 4th Wednesday, March 25th at 6 pm in the parlor as usual. It will feature various poets' views of God and some poems by Philip Levine, the Detroit-born poet laureate who died in February. There will also music from Paul Simon. We hope to see you there for a respite in your busy schedule.





## *Joys / Concerns*

On Sunday February 8 we were happy to recognize Al and Lencha Acker as GOOD EGGS! Al and Lencha have been members of 1st UU, Detroit, since the 1970s.

Al wrote the dedication when his son, Chris, was dedicated in 1977. He has been the vice- moderator, moderator and immediate past moderator, along with serving on two search committees and being chair of one of them. He has been a tenor in the choir for many years, wrote brochures for the canvass and capital campaigns, Second Story Church plays and is a trustee of the Church Trust. He was a religious education volunteer teacher and was a host and MC for various dinners and auctions. Currently, Al produces the Vesper service once a month in the mansion.

Lencha has been a member of 1st UU Church for almost 36 years. She first went to the 1st UU Church in Atlanta for a wedding of friends and really like the way they "did church." She was raised as a Lutheran and felt it was too authoritarian and too sexist.

When her son was born, she and Al attended the Detroit church and liked it. She worked on ethnic dinners and worked in religious education, was on two search committees, served on the Board and chaired the Religious Education Committee. She was involved in the Black Concerns Working Group, the Grand Prix and Day of the Dead Services. Lencha has also sung in the choir for over 20 years and as brought the Sunday service flowers for almost 5 years.

---

Montgomery Greene has been cast in "Maggie's Plan", a major film that begins filming in NYC at the end of the month. The film is starring Ethan Hawke and Julianne Moore. Monty's mother is played by Maya Rudolph. Submitted *By: Trey Greene*

---

Former member Henry Amick, who managed educational programming at the city of Detroit's former Historical department before moving to Oregon, has been experiencing more frequent severe pain spikes since late December.

He asks for the supportive healing thoughts of the community. And, he hopes his case will be moved ahead on the long wait list of a Seattle neuro-muscular specialist, so that he might be more properly diagnosed and treated before symptoms worsen.

Henry's condition has slowed visual tracking, causing additional pain spikes with use of online modalities, so he appreciates paper mail. Thank you! Submitted *By: Henry Amick*

# MARCH 2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 11:00am - "The Ragged March of Progress." Speaker - Rev. Mohr 12:30pm-Welcoming Task Force meeting 12:45pm - Intro to First Church	2	3	4 7:00pm - Singing Circle  Happy Birthday Cynthia ZurSchmiede!	5  Happy Birthday Julia Meyer!	6	7 Happy Birthday Janet Thompson!
8 New Member Sunday 11:00am- "Blessed to be Human." Speaker - Rev. Mohr 12:30pm - Potluck	9	10	11 7:00pm - Board Meeting 7:00pm - Singing Circle  Happy Birthday Carmen Mendoza-King!	12  	13 7:30pm -UU Fundraiser Movie Night	14
15 11:00am - "Circling the Sun." Speaker- Rev. Mohr	16 7:30pm - Amnesty International Meeting	17	18 7:00pm - Singing Circle 7:00pm- Worship Committee Meeting	19  Happy Birthday Linda Darga!	20	21
22 11:00am - "Look at the Heart." Speaker- Kevin Szawala 12:30pm- Getting Involved Session	23	24	25 6:00pm - Vespers 6:00pm- Development Committee meeting 7:00pm - Singing Circle	26  	27	28 Happy Birthday James Harvey!
29 11:00am - "Reflections on the Struggle for Marriage Equality". Speaker- Ken Mogill Happy Birthday Lencha Acker!	30	31 Happy Birthday Janice Berry!				





**FIRST UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF DETROIT**

4605 Cass Avenue  
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*

### **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**.

### **April Newsletter Deadline**

Friday, March 20th

Next issue covers April 1- April 30, 2015

No submissions accepted after the deadline.

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