

**May
2019
Edition**



Newsletter

First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

Upcoming Sermon Schedule

May 5th — “Cinco de Mayo”

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, Minister

One of the most popular celebrations of the year, Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of Mexican-American culture. But do we even know what we are celebrating, or that this is a much more popular celebration in the United States than it is in Mexico? Today, we will explore the commemoration of the Mexican Army's victory over the French Empire at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862 and understand better what this celebration has become for us today.

May 12th — “Birthing Revolution, Birthing Hope”

Siwatu-Salama Ra, Guest Speaker

Mother and organizer Siwatu-Salama Ra will share her experience being raised by an activist mother along with a village of Detroit organizers, and how she passes on the generational wealth of love, social justice, and community power to her children.

May 19th — “Hospitality and Welcome”

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, Minister

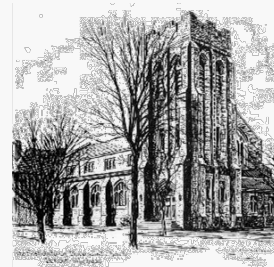
Two days before this service, the world will commemorate The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. This is a day to raise awareness of LGBT rights violations and stimulate interest in LGBT rights work worldwide. As we seek to become an ever more welcoming church, I want to discuss the very concept of hospitality and what we might do to become increasingly welcome to our LGBT neighbors and friends.

May 26th — “On Service and Memory”

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, Minister

This weekend is Memorial Day Weekend, the traditional entry point to the summer vacation season in the United States, but far more importantly, our federal holiday for remembering and honoring persons who have died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Today, we will explore what service to this country means, both in the military and otherwise, and how we might honor all of those who have served our country.

Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, May 19th — 12:30 PM — Social Hall
To be continued Sunday, June 2nd



4605 Cass Ave.
Detroit, MI 48201
313-833-9107
www.1stuu.org

Our congregation-wide focus is
[Immigration](#)

We are a [Welcoming Congregation](#)

We believe [Black Lives Matter](#)

We stand in solidarity with [Muslim communities](#)

We are a Member of the [Unitarian-Universalist Association of Congregations](#) — in the [MidAmerica Region](#)

Vision: First Unitarian-Universalist Church is an urban center in Detroit for spiritual renewal and social justice.

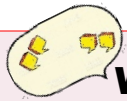
Mission: First Unitarian-Universalist Church strives to be an expanding transformative community whose mission is to liberate truth, radiate kindness, and love courageously.

Minister: The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray

Music Director: Todd Ballou

Board President: Dan Hale

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote [seven Principles](#).



Words to live by

“Organized Religion: A Tool for Ignorance, Power and Control”

Allen Clifton writes in [Church and State](#): “I’ve talked ‘religion’ with Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Atheists (yes I consider Atheism a form of religion) and it’s amazing how personally we’re all pretty much the same. Our core values as human beings are basically identical. Things like being a good person, helping the helpless and defending the defenseless. Generally just being good people.

And isn’t that what life is about? Isn’t that what we should all strive to be as humans?

Why is it so many care so much about the personal religious views of others? If everyone kept their beliefs private (as they should be), practiced them in the appropriate places and didn’t judge others who believed differently – can you imagine how much more peaceful the world would be?

How many murders, wars, acts of terror or any number of other heinous acts have been committed in human history in the name of religion?

Not faith, spiritual guidance or belief in humanity – but human-made religion.

It’s one group of humans telling another that they’re wrong. It’s one group of people using religion to manipulate the masses to oppose another grouping of people based on their own interpretation of a faith.

Because that’s what organized religion is – control.

It’s an easy way to take a group of people with like-minded beliefs, group them together and manipulate them for some kind of ulterior goals.

It’s why our Founding Fathers had it right by wanting to keep church and state separate. They didn’t put God into the United States – Christians did much later. Phrases like “One Nation Under God” and “In God We Trust” didn’t show up in the United States until long after this nation was founded. How can anyone honestly argue that this country was “founded on Christianity” when the words “Christian” or “Christianity” don’t appear even once within our Constitution?

Not. One. Single. Time.

I believe faith to be a wonderful thing. But by faith I mean spiritual faith. If you want to believe in Jesus Christ or Muhammad I don’t care – as long as you’re not taking that faith, forming it into a belief and then forcing it on others.

Hell, you don’t have to believe in anything at all. Just don’t try to force others to believe in nothing either. I’ve met plenty of atheists who act just as obnoxious as religious radicals about their lack of a belief in a God. If you don’t believe how they do, you’re an idiot.

Because at the end of the day, who really cares?”

An argument could be made that UUs “really care.” The seven principles at the forefront of our organized religion demand, for a start, that every human has inherent worth and dignity [First Principle]. Unitarian Universalism defies the content of this essay. We are “a group of people with like-minded beliefs” who “group together” for “ulterior goals,” such as the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all [6th Principle] and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part [7th Principle].

To advocate for UUism and its religious “control” is to advocate for justice, equity and compassion in human relations [2nd Principle]. Is that a worthy “ulterior goal” to “force on” others. Should we keep our beliefs private?



Announcements

Congratulations, Rev. Murray!

Rev. Murray has received a[nother] award, best explained by him (from Rev. Murray’s post on our [Facebook group](#)): “I am amazed and humbled to share that I have been chosen for the Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award by the American Baptist Churches USA, the highest honor given by my denomination for work in ecumenical and interfaith ministry. Awarded once every two years, I look forward to travelling to Virginia Beach in June to receive the award at the ABC-USA’s biennial meeting. This is something I never expected. I was blown away when I received word from the office of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer.

I have led an unusual and ecumenical life in ministry, having served as a pastor of churches within six different denominations. Case in point, the good people of the First

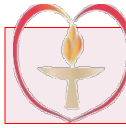


Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit are kind and open enough to let an American Baptist like me serve as their Minister! That has been alongside my work in higher education, where I've served as a seminary president, dean of a college, and as chaplain and on the faculty at Harvard, Skidmore, Endicott, and Suffolk, and as an administrator at Yale's Dwight Hall Center for Public Service and Social Justice. The work of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue is all about people and living well in and among and with diverse communities. I have been blessed to have had the opportunity to share my life with such a rich and vibrant variety of human beings who believe differently from one another and yet who are open to being shaped, changed, and transformed by their interactions with what and who is not familiar. But too, I have been blessed to have spent the great majority of this ecumenical journey with my invaluable partner and brilliant wife **Cynthia Dawdy** and our amazing son **Hunter**, who have climbed on in and been involved with every faith community along the way and made the sacrifices of moving to new cities and uprooting from what was known in order to explore and embrace the new. Cynthia's gifts and vision are different than mine, and I would not be the minister, scholar, or person that I am without our complementing, collaborating, and course correcting one another all along the way. This honor is as much hers as it is mine, and I'll say so in Virginia Beach.

This award is a surprise, a delight, and a cause for celebration! But most of all, an affirmation that this ecumenical life is a good one to live, and so on to more and more of it!"



Cynthia Dawdy & Hunter Murray



Member News

Rhonda Rogers in Lansing

On April 16th **Rhonda Rogers** joined about 300 other Michigan activists in Lansing to present social justice issues to 30 Michigan senators and representatives.

Charlie King and **Elvita Kondili**, who have been attending UU Detroit services for some time, were instrumental in getting Rhonda to the chartered bus arranged by [Michigan United](#). While in Lansing, Charlie and other volunteers accompanied Rhonda to State offices and the Capitol Building.

Rhonda participated in the Social Action march from the Lansing Center to the State Capitol Building and the offices of the leaders of the Michigan House and Senate.



Rhonda Rodgers (front right) & Charlie King (in green)

Rhonda was among a group of five that met with [Senator Stephanie Chang](#) (also a UU Detrouiter). During that meeting Rhonda discussed the challenges that she has faced to get proper health care and support for herself.

We can be proud of the effort of Rhonda and the rest of the team to present real people with real problems directly to our elected officials about the issues that are most important to us. As a result of Rhonda's participation —



and difficulty getting on the bus — next year Michigan United has pledged to provide accessible transportation.

Rhonda is an inspiration for those that represent our underserved populations to attend in the future. Thank you, Rhonda, Charlie, Elvita, and all supporters.



See **Susan Matthews, Glenn Maxwell**, and many more activists at Michigan United's [Capitol Day](#) Facebook photos.

Board & Committee News

Annual Canvass Campaign

Dan Secrest is chairing the annual pledge drive this year, **Getting to Ye\$**, working with Kathe Stevens. Thank you to all who have made generous pledges for the July 2019 - June 2020 fiscal year. The canvass team will be sending out personal acknowledgements soon.

If you haven't pledged yet, you can use the quick and easy [Electronic Pledge Form](#), or send your name and the annual pledge amount, plus any additional comments, to CanvassChair@1stuu.org

If you'd like to know more about the church, including financial details and church priorities, here are some resources:

- [Pledge Brochure and Printable Pledge Form](#) (pdf) (electronic link)
- Readings and sermon from April 7 pledge drive kickoff church service:
 - [Getting to Ye\\$ - service text](#)
 - [Getting to Ye\\$ - service audio](#) (electronic link)
 - [Online Pledge Form](#)

Annual congregational meeting

Pursuant to [Article IV §2\(A\) of our by-laws](#), the annual meeting of the congregation of the First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit has been called for Sunday, **May 19, at 12:30 PM**, in the Social Hall.

The purpose of the annual business meeting is to hold elections; approve a budget for the next fiscal year; receive committee reports; and conduct other business of the church. Because of timing considerations this year, at the

May 19th meeting, your board will offer a motion immediately to **adjourn the annual meeting to June 2nd**.

More information about both the May 19th and June 2nd meeting dates will be provided in future emails, newsletters, orders of service, and pulpit announcements.

We'll need a quorum in order to vote to adjourn. See you on May 19th — and June 2nd!

Community



UU Detroit birthdays!

- 5/5 Mary Lou Malone
- 5/8 Jerald Mitchell
- 5/16 Todd Ballou
- 5/18 Vercina Hollis
- 5/29 Valerie Lauer

Women Walking Woodward for Peace

[WWWP](#)'s mission is to revisit and reinvent the early Mother's Day theme of peaceful conflict resolution. The annual Mother's Day walk is created by women, organized by women, and focused toward women.

On Sunday, **May 12th**, as they have since 2015, WWWP marchers will gather at UU Detroit/Cass Corridor Commons for this annual peace demonstration. At **8:00 AM**, they will walk south to Grand Circus Park and return to UU Detroit by **11:00 AM**, a three-mile loop. Immediately following the walk, participants are invited to attend a **special service and potluck** at UU Detroit.

WWWP provides signs and banners to walkers. The walk will be undertaken in the spirit of peace, unity, and transformation. All are welcome who come in *peace*. WWWP affirms that we will not support raising our children to kill other mother's children!

Vespers

April vespers featured **Nancy Owen Nelson** and Alexander Payne Morgan, who presented poetry about the historical and more recent South. Nancy Owen Nelson is the author of a memoir, [Searching for Nannie B: Connecting Three Generations of Southern Women](#) (2015) and a poetry chapbook, [My Heart Wears No Colors](#) (2018).



She is a member of Detroit Working Writers, Detroit Writers' Guild, and Springfed Arts.

Alexander Payne Morgan's poetry has appeared in *Dunes Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Peninsula Poets*, *Sequestrum*, and *Crack the Spine* among others. His chapbook [Loneliness Among Primates](#) was published in 2018 by Kelsay Books. He's a member of the Detroit Writers' Guild, Michigan Writers, and the Poetry Society of Michigan.

The next monthly vespers is **May 22nd** at [Henry Ford Village](#) at [15101 Ford Rd, Dearborn, MI](#), from **6:00-7:00 PM** in the Library Reading Room, which is accessible from the Great Lakes entrance. The library is labeled 13 on this [campus map](#).

Share the Plate

In conjunction with *Earth Day*, our *Share the Plate* guest recipient on Sunday, April 21st, was the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth ([UUMFE](#)). UUMFE envisions a world in which reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth are central to the lives of all people. Its purpose is to inspire, facilitate, and support personal, congregational, and denominational practices that honor and sustain the Earth and all beings. It affirms and promotes the seven principles of the UUA, including: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Although the UU Ministry for Earth has close ties to the UUA, it is a separate not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization with an independent Board of Directors.

Denominational News



March was a time of reckoning, learning to listen, and making amends in our denomination.

When transgender and gender nonbinary leaders in the Unitarian Universalist movement expressed alarm at an essay in the Spring 2019 issue of *UU World* — "After L, G, and B" — about trans people but written by a cis person, centering cis people and cis perspectives, editor Christopher Walton appended an [apology](#) to the article. Walton committed to better listening going forward, as well as changing the editorial process and developing stories

that center the voices and experiences of trans and nonbinary UUs.

MidAmerica dropped the "Intersectionalities" theme of Regional Assembly after being called out on the use of this theme without also centering the work of [Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw](#), "[Mapping the Margins](#): Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." MidAmerica staff issued an [apology](#) and added to the RA agenda a chance for people to talk with the MidAmerica program staff about the mistake, and a showing of Dr. Crenshaw's [TED talk](#) on Intersectionality with conversation in caucus groups after.

It's satisfying UU leadership are advocating clearly and insistently, and UU staff are able to acknowledge error, apologize, and take corrective steps for the future.

Church Life



Communicate:

Send an email:

[Choir](#) (Todd Ballou)

[Email listserv signup](#) (Webmaster Dan Secrest)

[Minister](#) (The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray)

[Newsletter](#) (Newsletter Editors Kathe Stevens & Nancy Shattuck)

[Office administrator](#) (Nancy Shattuck)

[Webmaster](#) (Dan Secrest)

[Weekly email digest](#) (Ruby Jones)

Go to a link:

[Board Members & Committee Chairs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Facebook group](#)

Community:

Send an email:

[Amnesty International](#) (Dan Wiest)

[Share personal business cards](#) (Ruby Jones)

[Sign the Membership Book](#) (Deanna McGraw)

[Suggest sermon topics](#) (Worship Committee)

Learn about us:

Send an email:

["Intro to UU Detroit"](#) (Sally Borden)



Go to a link:

- [Facebook page](#)
- [History](#)
- [Parking](#)
- [Website](#)

Participate:

Send an email:

[Help with Sunday child care](#) (Sally Borden)

Go to a link:

- [Flower Donation Signup Sheet](#)
- [Greeter Signup Sheet](#)
- [Visitor Table Signup Sheet](#)

Reserve a room:

Send an email:

[Sunday morning/afternoon or Wednesday evening](#)

(Newsletter Editors)

[Other days](#) (Dee Collins — or call 313-556-1702)

Dates and Deadlines 

Women Walking Woodward for Peace: Sun., **May 12**, 8:00-11:00 AM — meet at the corner of Cass & Forest (Ruby Jones)

Potluck: Sun., **May 12**, 12:00-1:00 PM — Social Hall (Omar Davis)

Annual Congregational Meeting: Sun., **May 19**, 12:30 PM — Social Hall (FOR PURPOSES OF ADJOURNING TO JUNE 2: Dan Hale)

Amnesty International meeting: Mon., **May 20**, 7:30-9:00 PM — Social Hall (Dan Wiest)

Vespers: Wed., **may. 22**, 6:00-7:00 PM — Henry Ford Village, 15101 Ford Rd, Dearborn (Dan Secret)

Social Justice Committee meeting: Sun. **May 26**, 12:30-2:00 PM — Parlor (Dan Wiest)

Continuation of Annual Congregational Meeting: Sun., June 2, 12:30 PM — Social Hall (Dan Hale)

Weekly Sunday order of service deadline

Send your item/event to be included in our order of service to officeadmin@1stuu.org by **12:00 PM Thursday**

June newsletter deadline

Send items to newsletter@1stuu.org by Mon., **May 20th** — the next issue covers June 1-30 — no submissions accepted after the deadline

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

4605 Cass Ave at the corner of Forest Ave

... in the [Cass Corridor Commons](#) ...

Please visit us at www.1stuu.org,

email us at officeadmin@1stuu.org,

or give us a call at (313) 833-9107

Our history of fighting for civil liberties in the world and advocating for Detroit at home is long and strong. Our roots in Detroit go back over 185 years: Universalists first worshiped in Detroit in 1831, Unitarians in 1833. One hundred years later, an experimental union of the two congregations led to an official merger, preceding the national merger of the two denominations (in 1961) by 27 years.

Radical thinkers who worshipped, spoke, met, and organized within our congregations include ground-breaking African-Americans; civil rights crusaders and martyrs; progressive politicians; icons of women's movements; promoters of worker's rights; LGBTQ pioneers; peace activists and martyrs for peace; environmental champions; immigration reformists; trailblazing authors, poets, educators, scientists, architects, and musicians.

We are also ordinary people seeking solace and a vision of how to put faith into action. From 19th century abolitionists to 20th century suffragettes to 21st century water warriors, we have lived out and continue to live out our Sixth Principle: *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.*



**SIDE WITH
LOVE**

First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

4605 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48201