

The Discoverer

The monthly newsletter of the
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus
93 W. Weisheimer Road, Columbus Ohio 43214
May 2019

Our Mission Statement

We are here:

To learn and practice true hospitality
To revere the reasoning mind and the generous heart
To claim our diversity as a source of our strength, and
To relinquish the safety of our unexamined privilege for
the freedom to engage in transforming justice.

MYSTERY

Rev. Dr. Marian Stewart, Senior Minister

The blank page. The empty calendar. The silence...

As I consider this month's theme, **mystery**, I realize it comes in many forms. I know the opportunity – and the tyranny – of the blank page. I wait for minor miracles to see what an empty space on my calendar would look and feel like. But what about silence? I don't know about you, but I crave those bits of time when the world is quiet and I get to listen. Just listen. What would that be like?



I believe the kind of silence where we can listen is one of the rarest of gifts we can give or receive. After feedback from the first of two workshops Rev. Eric and I led based on the work of Nic Askew, we re-titled our work. The initial group decided that what we were doing was not listening to Soul Stories, we were Soul Witnesses. The process of sitting with someone to intentionally listen – and letting silence appear in the gaps – was not only OK, it was valued. “What’s on your heart?” “How goes it with your soul?” were open questions that got underneath the details, the rationalizations, the frameworks. Scary work but oh so desperately needed in our personal and relational worlds where we so often bounce between actions and reactions and rarely reflect, pause, or listen.

Mystery can be transformative. It is the next question in science. It is the next moments in life. It is also the unknown that is within us. For better or worse, I can transform a blank piece of paper into a bit of writing or sketch. I haven't yet figured out how to empty a calendar page – that's still a mystery to me...so much to do! But I can listen. We all can. We can ask a simple question, “How goes it with your heart/soul?” and wait.

Listening would go a long way toward bringing peace to our lives and our world. Below the bombast, the insults and one-upmanships, the insensitivities which mar relationships, the act of witnessing to each other in a deep way, is a gift. We can all offer this to each other and to ourselves.

Blessings for listening into the mystery,
Rev. Marian

LINKS

Rev. Eric Meter, Associate Minister

When I lived in California, every now and then I'd go to a small campground on Pt. Reyes, just north of the Golden Gate, on a spot of land overlooking Tomales Bay. Because I would head there late Sunday afternoons after church, most of the other campers would have already headed home for the workweek by the time I arrived. Sometimes I even had the place to myself.



The dozen or so camp sites were tucked under the branches of several large bay laurel trees. In the middle was a central fire pit over which branches from the surrounding trees arced. By the time I had set up camp, the fog would almost certainly have rolled in. Sleep came early there. But almost always, I would wake up in the middle of the night to find a clear sky above the trees, so I'd go walking along a path that headed up into along the wooded hill and down to a little beach on the small bay. These star- and moon-lit hikes always felt set apart, and more than a little magical. I often wondered if I dreamed them when I woke for good later in the morning.

Now, looking back, I miss that younger self who slept so comfortably on such a thin sleeping pad. But mostly I'm grateful for the time I gave myself overlooking Tomales Bay.

The state park system closed the campground several years before I left California. Without it, I had one less reason to stay. That little campground was a sort of second home to me during a time when I wondered what place the world had for me. It was a place of mystery, beauty and hope, and remains so in my memory.

With all that in mind, I return to this prayer by the Rev. Michael Schuler:

Lord of all being, the longer I walk upon this great green earth the less do I understand my purpose in being here; the less am I able to fathom the reason of my birth and span of life.

But strange though it seems, the task of finding solutions to the riddle of me and the mystery of you seems less urgent these days. It's not that the question has lost significance, but that slowly I am learning to have faith—faith that if I live my life intently, reverently, self-consciously, moment by moment, your universe will slowly unveil itself, in its own good time.

And so I do not force the issue—and so within life's splendor I am at peace. Amen.

If you have needed places like the little campground I used to frequent, I hope you found them, or may find the like sooner than later, so that you may be at peace within life's splendor.

In shared faith,
Rev. Eric

MYSTERY

Amanda Hays, Ministerial Intern

I was talking with a friend yesterday about the “correct” (or small “o” orthodox) Christian theology of the Trinity and its history. My friend's complaint about the Trinity was that it was far too particular a doctrine about God to be at all reasonable: If God is infinite, how can we, as finite beings claim to know anything about God, much less something as particular as that the Trinity is “one God in three Persons”?

I agree with my friend's complaint. I think the divine is much more mysterious than a formula that can be written down. And yet, I admire the restraint and respect for mystery that the historical development of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity showed. One person, trying to make sense of the Trinity, would argue that it means there are three Gods. But the tradition held fast to the idea of one God. Another person, also finding the idea of 1=3 confusing, would argue that the Parent, Child, and Spirit are merely different modes of one God, one person. But the tradition held fast to the separateness of the Persons of the Trinity as well. I love the restraint that the mainstream Christian tradition has shown in *not resolving the mystery*. Essentially, if you think you fully understand, you can be sure that what you understand is not God.

Living with mystery is hard, even for Unitarian Universalists. We'd like to be certain that God doesn't exist – or that God created the world and then left – or that God is one with the universe. It would be nice if someone – perhaps a minister – could tell us what happens after we die, or what the meaning of life is.

But the beautiful thing about our tradition is that we have the freedom to admit that there are just some things that *no one knows*. We're not here to proclaim the secret of life that we alone have discovered. If anything, the secret is that there is no secret. There is no instruction manual for life. There is no moment when you magically become an adult (or some other enlightened being) who always knows what to do.

To live out our free and responsible search for truth and meaning is to restrain ourselves from certainty and accept mystery. If we think we fully understand, we can be sure that what we understand is not the whole truth, is not the full nature of reality, is not divine.

Peace and Love,
Amanda Hays (she/her), Ministerial Intern

Please send articles for the June issue of the newsletter by Sunday, May 26, to office@firstuucolumbus.org.

Rev. Dr. Marian Stewart, Senior Minister
Rev. Eric Meter, Associate Minister
Rev. Kathleen Fowler, Minister Affiliated
Rev. Suzan McCrystal, Minister Affiliated
Amanda Hays, Ministerial Intern
Rev. Mark Belletini, Minister Emeritus
Rev. Wendy Fish, Minister Emerita

Elizabeth Mount, Director of Religious Exploration
Mel Herzog, RE Assistant
Tony McDonald, Music Director
Brandon Moss, Chalice Choir Director
Michaela Jones, Spirit of Life & Rising Voices
Choir Director
Cath Saveson, Children's Choir Co-Director
Leigh Mamlin, Children's Choir Co-Director
Nathan Hamm, Pianist/Accompanist

Brian Hagemann, Director of Administration
Marian Garcia, Office Manager
Joe Voltolini, Bookkeeper
Christine Davidson, Congregational
Life Coordinator
Amy Rudawsky, SYC Co-Director
Susan Roscigno, SYC Co-Director

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RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Elizabeth Mount, Director of Religious Exploration

In May, we are exploring the theme of Mystery, and something I've been noticing as I'm working with the children in Religious Exploration is that many of us, young and old, have a tendency to like mysteries that wrap up with a solid answer. We like mystery novels, where the perpetrator is exposed and the mystery wraps up with a solid answer. We like the kind of exploration in a chemistry experiment where the mixture of various elements results in a reaction, and something bubbles or changes color so you know you did it right.

What our children, and perhaps our adults as well, have a harder time sticking with are the mysteries where there is no sure answer. Mysteries like, what happens to us after we die? Mysteries like, what makes life feel meaningful? Or, where does happiness come from? For our children, and perhaps for our adults too, we have wrapped personal value in academic achievement, and for that kind of advancement in elementary and into high school, you need the answers.

Yet, for a meaningful life, we also need the capacity to sink into the questions that don't have easy answers, or where the answer truly is, "it depends." To live, we have to constantly know that life is unfinished and that there is no certainty about what comes next.

These are the questions we come to church to explore, knowing that the easy answers are not enough, and are not what our spirits need. If we don't learn ways of sinking into the mystery, then life becomes a shallow place, and our reservoirs of wonder and awe dry up in the deserts created by our certainty.

So, as summer approaches, perhaps now is the time to go outdoors (and bring any children you have connections to) and lean into the great mysteries and wonder of the world. "Why is it raining?" might be a question with a scientific answer, but why not expand to wondering about what it means to live in a place with a lot of rain, or a little rain? How is water meaningful in your life? What is the impact of water on humans and on our communities? These are the kinds of questions that can spark a deeper conversation about values and about what connects us to the world around us.

Try making up and telling stories to make meaning together about something. Try letting mystery surround you and expand your creativity this month! Then come back to church, this church where "even to question truly is an answer."

Come and share what the mysteries are that make your life worth living, drive your dreams, and uphold your values. Come, and listen deeply to what others are finding hidden in the mystery. Come, and be together in moments of stillness, settling into all that is possible together.

May mystery enfold you, and enrich your life. May you let it.

In faith,
Elizabeth Mount

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Patricia Boughton, Chair

Check out our [First UU Spring Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1355075108) that highlights wonderful happenings at First UU Columbus. (At [wevideo.com/view/1355075108](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1355075108))

Your support is needed to sustain all of what makes First UU fabulous and to accelerate our impact with our children, our members, our community, and our world. Your contribution can make a difference! If you have not already, you can pledge online now, at <https://firstuucolumbus.org/connection/donate/> Or stop by the table Sunday, or put your pledge form in the collection basket.

Thanks to all who have already made their pledge for the upcoming fiscal year!

This is all of our church. It matters that you are here. Your generosity helps us live our values inside and out.



FIRST UU MUSIC

Tony McDonald, Director

The choirs of First UU will present their annual **Spring Concert on Sunday, May 19th at 4:00 pm.** The concert, entitled “How Can I Keep From Singing?” will include all four choirs: Peace Pals, Rising Voices, Spirit of Life and Chalice.

Rising Voices and Spirit of Life will be singing songs about music, such as “Let There Be Music!” by Jerry Estes, “If Music Be the Food of Love” by Henry Purcell, arranged by Russell Robinson, and the lively “Come to the Music” by Joseph M. Martin. They will also be performing songs with a moderate tribal groove plus an Appalachian folk song.

Chalice Choir will present mostly contemporary songs exploring the many impacts of music on the psyche, including "Festival Jubilate" (Daniel Pinkham), "Dance, Dance My Heart" (Emma Lou Diemer), "My Dream" (Tony McDonald), "When I Hear Music" (Michael Martin), and "Music Comes" (Ruth Watson Henderson). Chalice Choir will combine with Rising Voices and Spirit of Life Choir to present Gwyneth Walker's arrangement of "How Can I Keep from Singing."

Peace Pals will sing two core UU anthems: “I've got Peace like a River” and “Come and Go with Me,” plus Ruth Pelham's “Rainbow 'Round Me,” a celebration of the diversity of nature's colors, and Dave Mallett's whimsical folk classic, “The Garden Song.”

This concert will be the last one for Music Director Tony McDonald, who is retiring at the end of May, and also for Cath Saveson and Leigh Mamlin, the directors of Peace Pals, who will be retiring as well. In honor of that occasion, there will be a special guest at the concert, the Executive Vice-President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Carey McDonald. And, as always, there will be a reception in Fellowship Hall afterwards.

Farewell

I am retiring from my position as Music Director at First UU, as of May 31, 2019. I have done this job joyfully for 12 years, but I will be 70 years of age in November, and I believe it is time for me to move on.

Those of you who have been around a while may remember that the music department underwent a major change after the retirement of Les Kleen and Myra Hine in 2006. A committee was put together to consider what greater direction music should take now that we were a large church. This hard working committee surveyed the entire church and came to the conclusion that we needed a bigger music program that included four choirs (two adult, one teen and one children's), a concert series, plus special events, like a sing-along and a multi-generational choir, among others.

The committee also decided that the church needed a music director to oversee this new expanded music program. I was lucky enough to get that job, and so this all went into effect in the fall of 2007. Though my job came with some specific mandates, see above, other “duties as assigned” developed. A major one was overseeing the hiring of new personnel for the music program. In my time here, there have been four different directors each for Chalice, Spirit of Life, Rising Voices and Peace Pals choirs.

What has made my job work, from the beginning, was the consistent unquestioning support I received from the church in all my endeavors, whether it was finding soloists to provide music when that choirs do not sing, presenting a concert series on no budget, or trying out some original ideas like the talent show, or creating an orchestra – the First UU Philharmonic. This congregation clearly loves and appreciates music and it has been my pleasure to help facilitate that appreciation.

As is customary after a staff member leaves their position, I will be stepping back from the church for a while in order to give you space to determine your own musical direction. I know that great music will continue at First UU, and I wonder what will happen to my spacious office.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Seth Kraut, Chair

I was excited to see Reverend Marian's Tuesday Talk about how Tim Berners Lee was influenced by UU principles when he designed the World Wide Web. The interconnected web of life led to a technological invention that encouraged the same level of connection. It's an astounding accomplishment that has changed the world in dramatic ways.

As a computer programmer, I've always been a techno-utopian. I thought improvements in software and computers would always make the world better. After the last few years, I don't think that anymore.

Even as the technology connects us, it seems to encourage shallowness. People present a curated version of their lives on social media. The omnipresence of connected phones distracts us from the people and moments in front of us.

In 2014, an intelligence analyst named Martin Gurri self-published a book called *The Revolt of The Public*. It has recently been republished, because it turned out to be rather prescient. It described the moment we are in now before the rest of us saw it. The democratization of communication and information has resulted in the dominant internet emotion being anger and outrage.

One of the founders of Instagram described this moment as the pre-Newtonian phase of social media. We know it works, but we don't know why. We don't really understand it. In fact, social media algorithms emphasize engagement, which seems to result in slowly presenting more extreme information. On YouTube, it seems like no matter what video you start on, you're only a few videos away from watching conspiracy videos.

So, a technology influenced by UU principles has turned into something that doesn't seem so aligned with our principles. Where does that leave us? How can we harness technology rather than being owned by it. I loved the description of Universalism as "loving the hell out of this world." I wonder how we can apply that online.

Our church has a new website and a Facebook presence. What else should we do online? I'd like to see our sermons available as a podcast feed. How would you like to see our church engage with technology? The Board can be contacted at board@firstuucolumbus.org. We'd love to hear from you. Tell us what you think about this or something else.

"Who Cares?"

**Song Lyrics by Caroline Mocharski
From the Youth Service on March 24, 2019.**

My worth and dignity are fading like daylight from the sky
Building walls and breaking laws
My future shatters before my eyes

How do we put back the pieces
How do we tear down the walls
Neighbors standing shoulder to shoulder
Together one for all

Days are short but life is long
One more child falls
One foot in front of another
The path may lead to a brawl

Please protect our lives

How do we put back the pieces
How do we tear down the walls
Neighbors standing shoulder to shoulder
Together one for all

The old versus the young
Left versus the right
The strong versus the weak
How do we stand up and fight

Please protect our lives

How do we put back the pieces
How do we tear down the walls
Neighbors standing shoulder to shoulder
Together one for all

Children separated and lost
Tear gassed behind the fence
Who cares about the small ones
Please don't call it defense

Please protect our lives

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Art at First UU Our new spring exhibit is "Painting at the Center." It features Thursday morning painters from the Columbus Cultural Arts Center and instructor painter Brent Payne. May 1- June 30.

Join us for a reception Sunday, May 19, 12:30-2:30.

Come for art, conversation and food, and find out why we all get together to paint, and have for many years.

Questions or purchase info? Contact:

Deb Baillieul, debbsyc@yahoo.com

First UU Senior Gathering Thursday, May 16.

10:45am Piano Music with Kristen Figg

11am Rev. Marian, Rev. Eric and Cheryl Ryan of Red Oak Community School. The K-2 elementary school uses our facility. It was started by, and is managed by, the families whose students attend. They are dedicated to cultivating joy in learning, fostering self-confidence and agency, and preparing students to be environmental stewards and champions of social justice.

12noon Complimentary Lunch

RSVP: Carole Wilhelm, wilhelm.carole@gmail.com or 614-889-1182, by Sunday, May 12.

Bookbites will meet Tuesday, May 21, 7-9pm, in Slowter Lounge. The topic will be *Family*.

Kathleen Boston, 614-262-4025

Book Discussion: *Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World.*

(This Fearless Scholar, Michael Servetus, is almost entirely responsible for a Unitarian understanding in Christian history. His story is our story.)

Every Wednesday, 7pm, beginning May 15 and going through June 12, in Room A/B.

Where to get the book: The first two or three lucky people who email Dana Reynolds, danafr3@gmail.com, to sign up, can get copies from the First UU Library! Others, for new books: <https://amzn.to/2PmdJ3y>. For used (about \$10.55): <https://amzn.to/2Ix6x3T> OR, save money here: <http://bit.ly/2KUrGqZ> Or here: <http://bit.ly/2UvUW6I> Sign up with: Dana Reynolds, danafr3@gmail.com.

Feed My Sheep food pantry Stop by the JAM table in Fellowship Hall to see how you can help. We always need: diapers for children and adults (all sizes), gently used children's clothes, feminine hygiene products, children's books, peanut butter, chunky soup, dried pinto beans, canned stew, and dog and cat food. First UU has several direct social justice missions such as Feed My Sheep,



YWCA and Faith Mission cooking. We also have systemic missions such as Fair Food and Move to Amend. Jacques Angelino, 614-439-0245.

Bill Cohen Concert: *Facing Death...Celebrating Life*

Saturday, June 29, 7:30pm. The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Ohio invites you to this concert at First UU, featuring folksongs, 1950s oldies, a children's tune, a dramatic Irish song, and some country touches...Danny Boy, Pete Seeger, John Prine, Teen Angel, Sarah McLachlan, Shel Silverstein, Eddie Fisher, Phil Ochs, and Satchmo, plus a surprise or two. Admission is free. Donations are welcome. www.funeralsohio.org

Marylou MacDonald, 614-433-7273

macdonaldmarylou@gmail.com

Death Café Saturday, May 18. 1:15-2:30, at First UU. Hosted by the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Ohio (FCACO). All are invited. We'll form small groups to discuss feelings about death and dying, in a way that is free of ideology and respectful toward all, without leading participants toward conclusions about life, death, or afterlife, apart from one's own thoughts. There will be conversation starters and light refreshments. More information is available at deathcafe.com.

Prior to the Death Café, starting at 12 noon, FCACO members will have their annual business meeting and lunch. (FCACO members, please make reservations with Cathy Elkins, 614-267-5884, cathyelkins2975@gmail.com).

Immigration Assistance

- **FILA=Benevolence Fund** First UU's new Fund for Immigration Legal Assistance (FILA) has been established, and is accepting donations (tax-deductible) and applications for assistance. Brochures are available in the Gallery and Window Hallway, and information is also available at: www.firstuucolumbus.org/fila. Donations can be made via check (payable to First UU, with FILA on the memo line) or the website, above. So far, the fund has helped a mother of two children to pay for her asylum application.
- **Meals for Edith Espinal** Edith remains in sanctuary at Columbus Mennonite Church. You can help by preparing a meal or by giving a grocery store gift card. To sign up, visit: www.mealtrain.com/trains/r3y3ed.

For more information: Jan Phillips, (614)261-3234

FILA@firstuucolumbus.org

On Monday, May 6, join 3000 people from over 40 congregations from across Central Ohio in asking our local decision-makers for real solutions to the problems in our community:



BREAD Nehemiah Action

Monday, May 6, 6:40 pm

The Celeste Center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds
717 E. 17th Ave, Columbus, OH 43211

BREAD (*Building Responsibility, Equality, and Dignity*, 614-220-9363, www.breadcolumbus.com, www.facebook.com/breadorganization) is Central Ohio's congregation-based, multi-faith community organization, founded by First UU and ten other congregations over 20 years ago. Each year BREAD researches community problems and identifies steps officials can take to address those problems. Officials listen to BREAD because we're able to turn out thousands of people to the Nehemiah Action each May to hold them accountable. This year BREAD has five campaigns: **Better Elder Care, Affordable Housing, A Municipal ID, Jobs, Juvenile Justice**

Central Ohio faces huge challenges. There is a 27-year difference in life expectancy between different zip codes. Over 50,000 families spend over half their income on housing. In fact, Columbus is one of the most economically segregated cities in the country.

That's why we need **you** at the Celeste Center on May 6. You may be busy and/or uncomfortable in large gatherings, but think of how busy and uncomfortable our most underprivileged are just trying to survive. When we come together in large numbers, we can win real change.

Avoid the traffic and long walks, and save BREAD your parking cost by taking advantage of **door-to-door bus service** from First UU to the Nehemiah Action: \$5/person or \$10/household. Childcare is available for children out of diapers up to age 8.

Get your **free tickets** from your Justice Ministry Network member! Come to our table in Fellowship Hall on Sunday to ask questions, get information, sign up for the bus, and buy a yellow *Standing on the Side of Love* T-shirt. BREAD Rises!

Alice Rathburn, 614-895-2109, 614-563-0536
eulala1905@me.com

Chris Johnson, 614-946-1287
chris@underspecified.com

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

2019 General Assembly June 19-23, in Spokane, Washington. This is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to send voting delegates. This year's theme is *The Power of We*. Information on registration and housing, programming, and financial aid are available at <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

Your Chalice Lighter dollars help spread UUism throughout the Central East Region, funding projects such as: hiring an Assistant Minister of Congregational Life at a UU church in New Jersey; supporting a Membership Coordinator at the Washington, D.C. Ethical Society; and improving the facilities at a church in Wilmington, DE. You may donate via check made out to UUA-CER with CER CL in the memo line or online at <https://www.uua.org/centraleast/programs/chalichelighter/erelcurrentcall>. Mail check to: CER Chalice Lighters, 100 W 10th Street, Suite 1008, Wilmington, DE 19801.

Rev. Kathleen Fowler

kathleenclarkfowler@gmail.com

CARING CORNER

Congratulations to:

- **Rev. Kathleen** and **Joe Fowler**, who celebrated their wedding anniversary May 1. They were married in 1972.
- **Kyle Pigman**, who placed fourth in a Bowling Tournament for Special Olympics Ohio.

Welcome to:

- **Anna Leigh Seidt**, daughter of member Cara Seidt and her husband Jeremy, who was born in October. She arrived sooner than expected, and spent two months in the NICU, but now at 11 lbs, 3 oz, is doing great.

Caring thoughts to:

- **Patricia Reed**, bone marrow transplant

Condolences to:

- The family of **Ruben Castilla Herrera**, a leading justice advocate for the marginalized of Columbus, following his sudden death. Ruben was a leading voice in the Fair Food Campaign and also the local Sanctuary movement.
- The family of **Edie Reed**, a longtime member who died on April 6. She had been living in Bloomington, Indiana. A memorial service for her will be held Sunday, May 26, at 3pm.

CALENDAR

- Adult Programs: 1st Thursday, 7-9pm
- All-Ages Book Group: 3rd Wednesday, 7pm
- Archives Team: Tuesdays, 9:30am
- Atheists/Skeptics/Humanists: 4th Tuesday, 7pm
- Bookbites: 3rd Tuesday, 7pm
- Board of Trustees: 4th Wednesday, 7pm
- Book Discussion: Out of the Flames: Wednesdays, 7pm
- BREAD Team: 3rd Thursday, 7pm
- Breakfast: Sundays, 8:45am
- Bridge Group (614-499-2434): 4th Monday, 6pm
- Care and Share Time Bank: 3rd Sunday, 6:30pm
- Caring Team: 1st Tuesday, 7pm
- Chalice Choir: Thursdays, 7:30pm
- Coming of Age Team: 3rd Wednesday, 6:30pm
- Contra & Square Dance: 2nd Friday, 7:30pm
- Cooking for Faith Mission: 1st & 3rd Friday, 12pm
- Covenant Group Facilitators: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30pm
- Drum Circle: 1st Saturday, 3pm
- Engagement Team: 1st Thursday, 7pm
- Expressive Collage: 2nd & 4th Thursday, 7pm
- Families with Young Children: 2nd Saturday, 10am
- Finance Committee: 3rd Wednesday, 7pm
- First Friday: 6:30pm
- Food Co-op: every 4th Wednesday, 1pm
- Francophones Bavard(e)s: Wednesdays, 6pm
- Getting to Know UU: Sundays, after each service
- Grief Recovery: Mondays, 7pm (starts 3/25)
- Hispanohablantes: Saturdays, 10:45am
- Improvisational Dance: Thursdays, 9:30am
- Interfaith Association of Central Ohio (IACO) Spiritual Sharing: 1st Wednesday, 12pm
- Justice Action Ministry: 2nd Wednesday, 7pm
- Library Team: 2nd Tuesday, 1:30pm
- Little Minyan Kabbalat Shabbat: 1st Friday, 7:30pm
- Memoir Group: 2nd Wednesday, 7pm
- Monday Men's Spirituality: 1st & 3rd Monday
- Move to Amend: 3rd Saturday, 12pm
- Navigator Scouts: 1st & 3rd Sunday, 3:30pm
- NIA Exercise Class: Fridays, 11am
- Nominating Committee: 1st & 3rd Tuesday, 6:30pm

- Peace Pals Choir: Sundays, 10:25am
- Rainbow Connexion: 3rd Friday, 5:30pm
- RE Team: 2nd Tuesday, 6:30pm
- Rising Voices Choir: Tuesdays, 6:45pm
- Sacred Song Circle: Wednesdays, 6pm
- Scriptures Class: 3rd Saturday
- Spirit of Life Choir: Tuesdays, 7:30pm
- Stewardship: 3rd Tuesday, 7pm
- This Month in Science: 2nd Tuesday, 7pm
- Town Hall: 1st Sunday, after each service
- Trans Youth Support Group: 3rd Saturday, 2pm
- Transparenting: 3rd Thursday, 5pm
- Women's Book Group: 4th Wednesday, 1pm
- Women's Creative Circle: Mondays, 3-5pm
- Worship Team: 1st Tuesday, 7:30pm
- Young Adult Covenant Group: 1st & 3rd Sunday, 6:30pm
- Zen Meditation: Saturdays, 8:30am; Tuesdays, 7pm
- Zen Meditation Orientation: Sundays, 8:45am

Monday, May 6, 2019

6:40pm BREAD Nehemiah Action, offsite at the Celeste Center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds, 717 E. 17th Ave, Columbus, 43211
(For information, see page 7.)

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

Election Day (First UU is a voting location.)

Saturday, May 18, 2019

12:00pm Funeral Consumers Alliance Annual Meeting (All are invited, 614-433-7273)

Sunday, May 18, 2019

12:45pm Art Reception

4:00pm Spring Choir Concert

For Election During Annual Meeting, June 2, 2019, 11:30am

Board Candidates



LISA BRANDT. I joined First UU with my husband John almost five years ago, after we moved to Columbus and had our son, Sebastian. Our previous UU congregation, in the Phoenix area, had been a significant part of our adult lives up to that point; through Covenant Groups, the Labor Day retreat, and other family events, this church gave us a new place to call home. I've been active on the Worship Team and in the Music Program, helped coordinate a series on social justice parenting and, most recently, facilitated Beloved Conversations.

Through First UU, I became connected to local organizers and am active in RestoreCBUS, which promotes restorative justice and practices in our community with the vision of dismantling the prison industrial complex. I teach music for Columbus City Schools at the its international school, where I have the privilege to work with an energetic, diverse student body. I'm excited to bring my experience as a parent, teacher, and activist to the board, and I'm grateful for the congregation's love and support of my little nuclear family and the interconnected web of which we are all a part.



HEATHER PIERSON. I first came to First UU 21 years ago, looking for a spiritual community in which to raise our child. I found my own spiritual home as well. Early on, I served on the Justice Committee, (JAM equivalent) and the R E Committee. I taught many RE classes before Carol Robison and I helped the youth start a youth group community. I coordinated the youth groups for nine years. Currently I'm teaching OWL and working on the Racial Justice Immigration Team. I'm honored to be asked to serve on the Board and serve the church in a new capacity.

Moderator Candidate



TONY RICE. I began attending First UU in 2009, and joined the choir. I became a member in 2010. I currently serve as a greeter and facilitate Getting to Know UU sessions. I have served on the Leadership Development Committee. I was facilitator for several years for the Covenant Groups. I have also served on the board of BRAVO (Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization), twice on the board for CGMC (Columbus Gay Men's Chorus) and New Moorefield United Methodist Church, where I was also the Lay

leader. Although my degree is an Associate degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology, I have worked the last 33 years for Discover Financial Services, currently as a Senior Associate in Data Center Operations. I also serve as Business Continuity Planner for our facility, serve on the Culture Counsel for the campus, and I am a member of Pride (our GLBTQIA group). I currently sing with Illuminati, the sacred ensemble of the CGMC. In my past, I have been a director, choreographer, singer, dancer, and actor in many productions across Central Ohio.

Nominating Committee Candidates



HEIDI BALLARD. I am honored to receive nomination, since I celebrate a life-long relationship with our church. My family joined the First UU in 1968. I regularly attended K-12 Sunday school and the former national, high school, UU youth organization, Liberal Religious Youth. Attendance continued during college, often with my father, former Treasurer and Board Member Harlow G. Ballard. In 1985, during my work with the national sanctuary movement, I introduced a proposal to our congregation to become a sanctuary church. I returned after completing my Ph.D. in Sociology in New Mexico, was married to my former husband by Rev. Carol Brody, and attended Path to Membership classes. Since his naming ceremony, our son Sky has faithfully attended Sunday school and OWL classes up to 10th grade. I have served on the Social Justice Committee and attended BREAD Nehemiah Actions. I have long desired deeper involvement with our church. I bring a strong skill set to this committee, since I also serve in many capacities at Otterbein University, where I am an Associate Professor and former department chair of 18 years. I envision a bright future for our church as we continue to diversify our membership while increasing our leadership in social justice and sustainability in the community.



HEIDI DRAKE. I am honored to be considered for a seat on the Nominating Committee. My husband, Larry, and I have been members of First UU for six years. During our time here, I have served on the Membership Committee; provided administrative support to Path to Membership classes; led the team that produced one of the membership photo directories; helped to serve dinner monthly at Faith Mission; participated in Covenant Groups; sung with the Chalice Choir for several seasons; and helped to support stewardship efforts. I am retired from my professional life as a nurse/hospital administrator, as well as a later position as

the Coordinator of Volunteers at Ronald McDonald House. I serve and sing with Harmony Project, a 500-person choir representing the diversity of Columbus and committed to volunteering and performing in our community. I never knew that a UU church existed before we found our way here. I feel that we have found a home that has brought us many friends, fulfills our spiritual life, and provides so many ways to make a difference. I am grateful for the opportunity to hopefully serve on the Nominating Committee and to give back to a community that has given so much to me.



SHIRLEY LANGE. It is an honor to be chosen as one of the candidates for the Nominating Committee. My spouse, Kris Elliott, and I joined First UU in 1993, after attending church activities for two years. By then I had already joined the choir and we were part of the L/G/B group that founded This Way Out, the precursor to Interweave. I had the privilege of working with This Way Out members to design and build the Memorial Wall that graces the front of our church, as well as chairing the regional Interweave Convocation, which brought representatives from several states to First UU for a weekend of events and fellowship. When we joined the church, we were drawn to a congregation that seemed open and accepting of who we were. When our daughter Casey was born in 1994, this church fully demonstrated how welcoming it was to our family, which was especially important to us, as we were on the leading edge of what would become known as the “lesbian baby boom.” Over the years, I have been an SYC parent, have continued to participate in multiple aspects of the music program at First UU, and co-chaired the Search Committee that called the Reverend Wendy Fish as our Associate Minister. Kris and I were also involved in First UU’s Freedom to Marry initiative, presenting our life experiences at several area congregations, as well as media interviews about our family. First UU has been a spiritual anchor to me for many years, and I hope to give back in a new way to this church if I am elected to the Nominating Committee. In my professional life, I have been a practicing psychologist for nearly 30 years, and hope to use my ability to really see, listen to, and connect with others to the benefit of the Committee and our church.



KELLY MCCONAUGHEY. When I came to First UU in fall 2016, I knew I had at last found a church home that not only resonated with my personal belief system, but put those beliefs into action. In my time here, I’ve become an OWL Teacher, been an active BREAD Justice Ministry Network member, participated in the Rainbow Connexion, covenant groups, and many camping activities. I’m thrilled to raise my daughter, Ahmie, 9, within such a loving and supportive community. In my work life, I have 15 years of nonprofit leadership experience in which I have worked closely with the board of directors and nominating committees. Currently, I am the Director of Development for the Worthington Resource Pantry. I would be honored to contribute my experience to the efforts of this church. I truly enjoy getting to know those who have a passion for making a difference, help them connect to the right opportunity, and prepare them to be successful. I am grateful for this nomination. If elected to the Nominating Committee, I hope to help embrace efforts to be a more welcoming congregation, encourage a greater depth of cultural competency and diversity, and carry on the essential work of this church in making lasting and meaningful change.



DANA REYNOLDS. I have been a member of First UU *twice*, once in the early 90’s and again for the last year and a half. In between, I moved from Columbus, moved again to go to Meadville Lombard Theological School and served as a UU minister from 1999 until my retirement in June 2014. These days, I volunteer for Columbus City Schools at their Spruce Run Environmental Study Center and for Avanza Together, a non-profit working to keep immigrant families together. I am on their board of trustees and serve as their treasurer. At First UU, I sing in the Chalice Choir and am a member of the Monday night Men’s Spirituality Group. I have also led Adult Religious Exploration classes. I have a passion for human development, creating a welcoming climate for members and visitors, and, as a fourth generation Universalist, for sharing the unique contribution of Unitarian Universalism to the world’s religions.



CINDY WHICKER. I have been a member at First UU since 2007, actively involved in many Covenant Groups, advising on the RE committee for five years, attending several BREAD events, and participating in a Search Committee. I’m an extrovert, and like to chat with people, even with total strangers while riding the bus to work. I am married to Will Whicker (not an extrovert), and have one amazing son, Josh. We have an adorably weird Shih Tzu rescue dog named Buttercup. I received my bachelor’s in education from Bowling Green State University, and my Associates in ASL Interpretation/Transliteration from Columbus State Community College. I work at the Ohio School for the Deaf doing new student enrollment. I also work as a Pure Haven Ambassador helping families learn about organic, toxic-free products for their everyday lives. When I have free time, I enjoy doing crafty thing like scrapbooking and cross-stitching. I also have many Pinterest boards full of craft ideas and DIY projects

Two Reflections Written for the Youth Service on March 24, 2019

Reflection: *Truth Like Doors* by Lilly Colegrove

Sometimes I like to think of truth like a blurry glass door that is almost too hard to see through. We can look and see the outlines of something new or different that we've never seen or heard before. It could be someone's self truth or beliefs, maybe even something we have believed in our younger years. We can open that glass door and take a look, but never have to walk through it, or we could walk through and explore something new.

But some may be afraid of what lies beyond the door. They are afraid of getting hurt by it, doing something wrong, or finding something that is true to them but others see as a wrong...and yes, it might not be right to them, but it is being true to ourselves and showing who we are and what our self truth is. And we do not have to open the door; we could look, or even peek, through and shut it again, and keep slowly opening it bigger each time, until we have the courage to take the first step through the door and take a better look, and each day make it farther and farther through the door.

And we could see more doors, or none at all...but a different door could take us further or somewhere new. We can learn about ourselves and who we are, what we believe, or see what others believe. We could learn more about the world, where we come from, where we live, and who we grew up with. And if we were to reach a hill where we could look back at what we have seen, heard, or learned...then these glass doors become the stars that finally come into focus and become clear, showing who we are and our self truths.

Reflection: *On Being Truly Religious* by Eliza Fish

So, I am going to tell you a story that I am sure many of us in this room will be able to relate to in some way. When I was in about second or third grade, I had a friend, and for our purposes we will just call him Ben. Ben was Christian, and his family was fairly religious.

One day, on the playground, I was talking to Ben, and he asked me what I had done that weekend. I told him about the various things I did, and when I mentioned that I went to church, he asked me what church I went to. I explained to him that I went to a UU church called First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus. He asked me if that was a Christian church, and I told him it wasn't. Ben was very surprised at this, and a little bit upset.

He told me that if I didn't believe in God, then I was going to go to hell. He was not trying to be unkind; in fact, he was genuinely concerned about my wellbeing. At first, I thought this was funny, the idea that when I died my soul would be cast into a fiery pit of doom was completely hilarious to my third grader mind. I should take the time to say that I don't mean any disrespect to anyone who has this belief, and I am simply expressing how I felt at the time. Anyway, the first thing I said to him after he told me I was going to go to hell, was that I don't believe in hell, so the thought that I was going to go to it was not intimidating.

He didn't say anything for a while, but he finally said that he couldn't be friends with me because I wasn't Christian. This made me sad, though not in the way that you think. I wasn't sad that I lost a friend, I was sad that I lost a friend **because** of my religion. Slowly, he stopped talking to me, and eventually he wouldn't even say "hello" in the hallways. We had simply drifted apart.

Sometimes I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't told him that I wasn't Christian. I feel like it was my fault for being honest, but I know that it wasn't. It is Ben's job to accept me for who I was, not my job to conceal the truth.

I think our society has become too dependent on common ground as the basis of relationships, and thinking that differences are a negative thing. But I believe our differences make us stronger, and if we learn to except those differences we can build stronger relationships and a better world.

So, the next time you have a chance to accept someone, whoever they may be, I hope you will take that chance and set aside your differences.

The Discoverer

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May 2019

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

May's theme: Mystery

Sunday, May 5, 9:15am & 11am

UU Principles Series: 7th Principle

Rev. Dr. Marian Stewart, with Sylvia Howe and Paul L'Herrou

Sunday, May 12, 9:15am & 11am

Wild Geese, Grasshoppers, and Flowers: The Poetry of Mary Oliver

Rev. Dr. Marian Stewart

Sunday, May 19, 9:15am & 11am

Religious Exploration Sunday

Elizabeth Mount, Director of Religious Exploration

Sunday, May 26, 10am

(Memorial Day weekend. One-service schedule begins.)