



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

October 2017 Newsletter

First Unitarian Society of Chicago 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago IL 60637 (773) 324-4100

Building and Rebuilding Rev. David Schwartz

In third grade, my mother told me, “You have to stop building according to the directions that come in the Lego package and make new things.” Last May, taking that advice, I gathered every gray brick among the collection I’d kept all these years and built a Lego replica of the church at minifig-scale.

Don’t let the finished photos fool you. Like our collective work in the real church, I spent as much time tearing down and rebuilding as I did building.

Ten hours in I realized I had made the sanctuary two bricks too narrow: I tore the pillars to the ground and rebuilt. After finishing the flat walls between arches on the sides of the sanctuary I realized the walls were off-white, not gray: I tore them down and rebuilt.

I spent eight hours on three versions of the grand piano before getting the scale right and a lid that opened. Adding the library required tearing out the adjacent wall of the

sanctuary: To be strong the wall had to be a continuous whole, not two unconnected walls standing parallel.

Through quiet nights in the spring and summer I built and rebuilt. I patiently removed my cat Milton whose favorite place to stand was exactly in the middle of the sanctuary. Built and rebuilt and petted Milton and built and rebuilt.

Early in the process, I knew it might not come out looking good. But I wasn’t anxious about it: the work and the joy (and the frustration) was in the building and rebuilding. Maybe it would come out and maybe it wouldn’t—but I could imagine it and I could work for it, and the pleasure was in the process.

It’s the same for the brick and mortar church. Of course, literally, this is what our capital campaign is about: remaking spaces to keep the physical building serving the future of the church that gathers inside it.

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But the reality of the continual rebuilding goes beyond the bricks. Committees form, do their work, dissolve, and get rebuilt into something else entirely. Leaders formal and informal contribute to the continual rebuilding.

Sometimes, you build the invisible infrastructure that makes the pieces mysteriously sturdy: bylaws and policy, but also direct and kind communication, or modeling how to make amends. Sometimes a program grows, shifts, or changes direction—the choir finds extra chairs for its new members, sings new music. Sometimes we build whole new rooms: What if the RE program held an overnight camp-in?

Sometimes you take a program apart, back into bricks, and build something new with it.

The technical term for the stickiness of two Lego bricks as they grip each other is “clutch power.” No build holds together without clutch power. The whole is only as strong as the clutch power of any two bricks linked together.

In this present moment, we need clutch power. May the strength of those connections within this community give us the confidence to build and rebuild. May it free us of the anxiety that worries it might not turn out, and open us to the work ahead.

In hope,
Rev. David



Introducing Our Intern Rev. Teri Schwartz & Rev. David Schwartz



We are delighted to launch the Schug Teaching Congregation program. In 2013, church member Ken Schug made a generous estate donation to the church, establishing a fund for First U to be a teaching congregation. Ken was committed to multi-racial unity and equity in education. As one of the few significantly multiracial UU congregations in the country, First U has an opportunity and responsibility to participate in the formation of our next generation of UU ministers.

This year, we welcome our new ministry student, Thom Thomas! He will complete a two-year, part-time learning experience as part of his Master of Divinity program at Meadville Lombard Theological School (the UU seminary here in Chicago). Under Meadville's model, his first year is spent as student minister. During this first year, he will

focus on observational learning, while continuing full-time academic and practical ministry arts classes, as well as weekly meetings with Revs. Teri and David for supervision, theological reflection, and coaching. The second year his title changes to "intern" to reflect the increased leadership role he will take on in the church. We are excited for this opportunity for the church and proud to welcome Thom to our church community!

Thom Thomas is an experienced training professional with a background in appreciative inquiry and performance improvement. After many years running training programs in the corporate world, Thom has decided to put his training and experience to work in a different arena, and is currently a Master's of Divinity student at Meadville Lombard Theological School. Thom has more than 15 years' experience developing and delivering training in listening and feedback skills, counseling, coaching, effective business writing, and just about all aspects of effective communication, with particular emphasis on managing change. He has also served several terms as Vice President of the Program Council at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva. During his time with UUSG he served on the Committee on Ministries, led worship services, taught non-violent communication, and served in a variety of other capacities. For the past 8 years, Thom has also served as a consultant to the UUA, focused on helping congregations find their vision and live it into reality. In that capacity, he has created training for individual UU congregations, helping them deal with conflict, develop visions for the future, and guide stewardship efforts.

10 AM Sunday Services

October 1st

See Something, Say Something
Rev. David Schwartz

Stories and inspiration to help us find both the extraordinary courage to do big things and the everyday courage to live with integrity.

October 8th

Erasing Erasure
Rev. Teri Schwartz

“Indigenous Peoples Day” reimagines Columbus Day. It’s a call to look at the shadow side of one of the founding myths of our country. “In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue” is one of the bleakest stories of our country’s history: the genocide and erasure of people and culture. If we seek to erase erasure, we look for way to educate and celebrate indigenous peoples’ culture, resistance, and justice.

(Traffic alert! The Chicago Marathon will be from 7 am to 3 pm on October 8th.)

October 15th

Turn Me Around
Rev. David Schwartz

We live in a society which operates as if white people are more important and more worthy than people of color. How will we honestly and seriously face a culture that looks like white supremacy, and do it without being stuck in shame, fear, rage, minimization, blame, denial, or the ten thousand responses that keep the status quo where it is?

We are glad to welcome the Chicago Children’s Choir as our musical guests, and to celebrate its 61st birthday since it was founded in our community with the intention of building relationships across race and class lines.

October 22th

While Riding the CTA
The Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed

Riding the CTA can seem a routine necessity and it can leave us feeling isolated, despite being surround by people. That is what I was expecting when I got on the 55th Street bus when I was in Chicago last January, but there were Joan and Chuck Staples. She smiled and everything changed. It’s just one of the lessons I’ve learned while riding the Metro, TTC, the Tube, the CTA.

The Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed earned his M.A. from the University of Chicago and his D.Min from Meadville Lombard Theological School. He served as co-minister with his wife, Donna Morrison-Reed, in Rochester, NY and Toronto, Canada. Currently he is an Affiliated Faculty at Meadville Lombard and Coordinator of its Sankofa Archive.

Rev. Dr. Morrison-Reed’s newest book is about the Empowerment Tragedy in the UUA, and will feature stories and people from our First U history; it will be released in spring 2018. A renowned preacher, prolific writer, and devoted servant to communities near and far, he will retire and participate in the Service of the Living Tradition at the 2018 General Assembly in Kansas City.

October 22th—First Forum
(follows the Sunday Service)

What’s in a Name?
Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed

Around 1900 Franklin Southworth, president of Meadville Theological School, saw one of the school’s missions as addressing the “race problem;” in 1935, in the book *Unitarians Face a New Age*, he spoke of promoting a “sense of human brotherhood;” in 1943 the AUA passed a “Resolution on Race Relations;” in 1952 the AUA established the

Commission on Intergroup Relations; in 1966 the UUA passed a "Consensus on Racial Justice." The language with which we describe America's racial/cultural predicament keeps evolving. Come and explore how and why it has changed and what's next.

October 29th

All Souls

Rev. Teri Schwartz & Rev. David Schwartz

In this annual service, we will honor and commemorate those in our lives and church family who have died. We will join together in bittersweet memory and love as we reflect on the fleeting and precious gift of life. Please bring a photo or memento of a loved one who has died; you will be invited to place it on the altar during the service.

Greetings from the Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Beth Moss

When it comes to any monthly theme, I like to stop and ask, "how does this relate to the young people in our congregation?" This month's theme is courage. When I ruminate on topic the first thing that comes to mind is how much courage it takes to deal with the ever-present childhood issue of bullying. Why is this the first thing I think of? Well, I bet if I asked everyone in this congregation, each person would say they have experienced bullying, been a perpetrator of bullying at a time they didn't know better, or they know someone who was a victim of bullying. I think teaching about bullying and talking to your kids about it is one of the best ways to stop it, and man, it takes a TON of courage to do this work.

First, identify with your kids what exactly bullying is. No, it's not when your sister takes the last cookie this one time. Taking turns is important. It's not when you disagree with your cousin about which Pokémon is the best—it's okay to disagree (and, it's Snorlax, by the way.) It's not even when you don't win a game of Sorry with your best friend and you get upset and maybe even say some not so nice things. We all make mistakes, even when we are interacting with people we love and care about. No one is perfect

and there is healing that can come from remediating those situations as they arise. But bullying is different.

Bullying is targeted, repeated, and harmful. It can happen in any interpersonal interaction. Bullying can be verbal, physical, or digital. Aggressions may include name calling, put downs, impressions, physical fights, note passing or texting, gossiping, photo sharing, and more. Bullies may say they were, "just joking," but the "jokes" are hurtful. The harassment can be direct or indirect. Bullying behaviors and reactions often look different from male to female peer groups and from age to age. Now, you might be thinking, "I know this, isn't it pretty basic?" But your kids might not know when a peer relationship has crossed the line from benign to unhealthy. Just as they may jump too soon to saying, "MOM, my brother is BULLYING me," with a peer they may not speak up soon enough.

Kids, especially older kids, often feel that they are tattling if they tell an adult what's going on. If I can impart one important idea, it's this. When a kid isn't sure whether to tell an adult, have them ask themselves, "Am I trying to get a person into trouble, or out of it?" Answering that question takes a lot of

courage. Kids might be scared and think adults don't understand. Maybe feel there will be retaliation from the bully, or that telling will only make the blame fall on them. It may take time and more than one set of ears hearing the story to change the realities of what is going on, but do encourage your kids to reach out to adults they trust if anyone ever makes them or someone they know feel uncomfortable.

Also, encourage your child NOT to be a bystander who does nothing if possible. If you see something, say something. Now, that something can mean telling an adult, but it can also mean having the courage to be a friend. If a kid is sitting alone at lunch, go eat lunch with them. Pick the kid who gets picked last to be in your group. Share your crayons with the kids who get made fun of for having none. Just be kind to those others

have been unkind to. Sure, bullying happens, but it doesn't have to continue. Saying boys will be boys, or girls will be girls, or kids will be kids and letting it go doesn't cut it. We all have inherent worth and dignity no matter what age; we can spread kindness if we have the courage to try.

IN RE THIS MONTH:

October 1: Regular scheduled classes

October 8: Regular scheduled classes; Possible fall family event after church.

October 15: Regular scheduled classes.

October 22: Regular scheduled classes.

October 29: NO RE. Intergenerational Service; Halloween Party, see weekly e-mails for details.

Soul Matters Circle: An Invitation to a Journey Together

Rev. David Schwartz

The Soul Matters Circle is a monthly, year-long circle of people who meet to authentically connect with each other in reflection on monthly themes.

When a great pressure of this era is isolation—when we move too fast through too much work with too little time and too few people to connect with—the Soul Matters Circle is an invitation to slow down and to connect.

We use a packet of materials centered around monthly themes as a starting point for sharing. In the circle, each person speaks from the heart—without debate, discussion, or analysis from others, and without

theories, generalities, or advice. It's a practice of honest sharing and deep listening, of empathy and of crossing borders out of your own experience and into another's.

Beginning later this fall, we'll begin a new Sharing Circle of 8-10 people who commit to meet once a month through June.

Is this a path for journey—personally, socially, spiritually—that you might follow next year? This is your invitation to commit to a Soul Matters circle this year.

Call or email Rev. David to sign up or with questions: david.schwartz@firsttuchicago.org.

An Invitation to Share Your Time and Talent through Music

Jeff Hamrick

Music is a cherished and integral part of worship at First Unitarian. The music selected for our Sunday worship services reflects the diverse beliefs and faith practices (as well as aesthetic sensibilities) of our friends and members. To achieve even greater diversity and vitality, however, we need YOU to share your music with us. Are you interested in joining the choir or singing in occasional choirs (drop-in choir during the summer or the occasional "First Sunday" choir, convened on the first Sunday of some fall, winter, and spring months)?

Do you have keyboard skills you'd be willing to share?

Perhaps you play another instrument—wind, guitar, string, percussion—and would enjoy sharing a solo or adding to hymn accompaniment from time to time.

There are so many ways we could benefit from your musical gifts!

I invite you, music makers of all ages, to consider sharing your talents with the congregation. Please reach out to me some Sunday after church or contact me by email (music@firsttuchicago.org) so that we might discuss possibilities.

Yours in song,
Jeff Hamrick



October Meetings and Events

Criminal Justice Task Force

10/05/2017 Thursday 6:45 pm

Chris Moore Parlor

We will continue our advocacy for no-money bail prior to trial and for broader employment opportunities for returning citizens. All are welcome.

Family Apple Potluck

10/08/2017 Sunday 11:15 am-1:00 pm

Chris Moore Parlor

Please bring your favorite apple themed dish to share. Childcare will be provided until 1 pm for younger students as needed. (Traffic alert! The Chicago Marathon will be from 7 am to 3 pm on October 8th.)

First U Humanist Group

10/09/2017 Monday 7:00 pm-9:00 pm

Chris Moore Parlor

We will continue our discussion of *The Big Picture* by Sean Carroll, now focusing on Part 5 of the book, titled "Thinking." Please contact Richard Pardo at pardo.richard@comcast.net for more information or to get chapters of this section to read.

UU Christian Group

10/10/2017 Tuesday 7:00 pm-9:00 pm

Chris Moore Parlor

Social Justice Council

10/11/2017 Wednesday 6:00 pm

Environmental Book Club

10/16/2017 Monday 6:00 pm–7:00 pm

Chris Moore Parlor

The Environmental Book Club, sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Group, will be discussing the first section (on energy) of *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* by Paul Hawken.

Men's Group

10/16/2017 Monday 6:00 pm–7:00 pm

Board of Trustees

10/19/2017 Thursday 6:45 pm

Fall 2017 Church Work Day

10/21/2017 Saturday 9:00 am–1:00 pm

Whether you have a hammer, paint brush, organizational skill, or just good energy, join us for a morning of fun and hard work as we toil to make First Unitarian more functional

and beautiful for everyone, indoors and out. Sign up by emailing office@firsttuchicago.org.

Fall 2017 Church Work Day

10/21/2017 Saturday 9:00 am–1:00 pm

Whether you have a hammer, paint brush, organizational skill, or just good energy, join us for a morning of fun and hard work as we toil to make First Unitarian more functional and beautiful for everyone, indoors and out. Sign up by emailing office@firsttuchicago.org.

Indivisible Chicago–South Side

10/23/2017 Monday 7:30 pm–8:45 pm

At this meeting there will be a special guest: Illinois gubernatorial candidate Ameya Pawar.

First U Humanist Group

10/23/2017 Monday 7:00 pm–9:00 pm

Chris Moore Parlor

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Saturday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Co-Ministers' Office Hours

Rev. David Schwartz, by appointment on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday

Rev. Teri Schwartz, by appointment on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday

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Our Sanctuary Clearly Needs a Pirate Flag