

First Unitarian Church
A Member Congregation of the Unitarian
Universalist Association

Volume 18 Number 9 **September 2012**

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Celebrations of Life **Sunday Services begin at 11:00am**

First Unitarian Church

Steepletalk

Sept 2 *General Assembly is Coming to Get Us!*
Speaker: The Rev. Dawn Cooley

Sept 9 *Question Authority???*
Speaker: The Rev. Dawn Cooley

Sept 16 *100Years of Baha'i*
Speaker: Dr. Jahangir Cyrus

Sept 23 *Do You Remember When?*
Speaker: The Rev. Dawn Cooley
Do you have a story about the church from before 2000 that you think folks today should know? Please contact Rev. Dawn if you have stories you would like to tell her, or to share yourself. This service will contain many of the stories that get shared.

Sept 30 *Fifth Sunday Social Justice Service*
A hands-on multigenerational service.

Exploration Hour Opportunities for Adults

Room	Sept 2	Sept 9	Sept 16	Sept 23
101	Paganism	Non-theism	Paganism	Bible Study
103	<i>Journey of the Universe</i>	Sunday Morning Books	<i>Journey of the Universe</i>	<i>Journey of the Universe</i>
205		Creative Arts		Creative Arts

206 Meditation Available weekly
 214 UU Parenting meets weekly
 Social Hall Coffee and Current Events meets weekly

See pages 7-9 for more detailed information.

Love is the spirit of this church...

I am honored to welcome Chris Rothbauer, our new ministerial intern, to First Unitarian Church. Chris will be with us for two years. During this first year, he will mostly be observing how we do church at First U: coming to staff meetings and all sorts of other meetings and events. He will also be participating in our Religious Exploration Hour and Celebrations of Life. The second year will see Chris take on more leadership.

Chris and I will be meeting each week to theologically reflect on his experiences. This fall, we will be looking to put together an Intern Committee for him. This committee will meet with him each month and help him process his experiences, give him helpful insight to the history and vision of the congregation, and generally serve as his support team. The Intern Committee is also charged with writing regular evaluations.

And without further ado, I will let him use the rest of this space to introduce himself!

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It is my pleasure and honor to be serving at First Unitarian Church the next two years! I am a member of Clifton Universalist Unitarian Church, Church of the Larger Fellowship, the Drepung Gomang Institute, and a second year student at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. I am also a substitute teacher for Greater Clark County Schools. I earned a BA in Philosophy and English at Indiana University

Southeast and a MA in Philosophy from the University of Sheffield in Sheffield, England.

I draw inspiration from many world religions but have a background in Christianity, Buddhism, humanism, and the Baha'i faith. I came to Unitarian Universalism while completing a master's degree in Sheffield, England, through the British Unitarian church. I was attracted to the emphasis on social justice and found the religious home I had been searching for for so long.

I felt a call to ministry in my childhood but, after leaving the church of my childhood, I felt that dream was over. With my discovery of Unitarian Universalism, I felt a renewed call to ministry and decided to enter seminary. I especially feel a call to work with people in crisis, trauma, and transition. This past summer, I completed a chaplaincy internship at University of Louisville Hospital.

My social justice activities have included work with Fairness Campaign, Showing Up for Racial Justice, Interfaith Paths to Peace, and Amnesty International. I am also a "big" with Big Brothers Big Sisters Kentuckiana. In my spare time, I love watching films, traveling, playing soccer and baseball, hiking, reading, and video games.

I look forward to meeting all of you and serving you the next couple of years. I will be in the office on Wednesdays and invite you to say hello!

**Board Bites****Geneva Fry**

On Saturday, August 11, at 9am, 18 First Unitarian Church leaders and our minister, Dawn Cooley, met to make plans for the coming year and share ministries' and committees' goals. On this beautiful day we met at Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center in Floyds Knobs, IN. Our first mission was to transcribe goals for each ministry and the board. After these were written on easel paper, they were read and explained to the group at large. We then went for lunch and a short break and then back to work, for a game of "Whose Job is it, Anyway?" -- Rebecca's, the office volunteer of the day, or Ministry/Committee volunteers. Claudia, the board president, cut up the job descriptions of each and jumbled them into envelopes and divided us into 5 groups. We then tried to figure out who does what. I'm not sure who won (though I'm sure they will tell you) but I know it was not my group. Just when you think you know something about the church, something changes! It was a great learning experience. By 3:30 we were all on our way back home. Many of the goals set by the board reflected the wishes of the congregation as expressed at the last congregational meeting. Better and more transparent communication and working towards a fair share congregation were among this year's Board's goals. Each month I hope to have a word from your board here in Steeptalk.

# Notes from the Ministries

## **MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY**

"There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions." This statement by Dr. Hans Kung expresses why Interfaith Relations is one of the four responsibilities of the Mission and Outreach Ministry.

First Unitarian engages in interfaith dialogue in many ways, sometimes to participate in mutual education, sometimes to show support for religious freedom, and sometimes to accomplish goals we share with representatives of other faith traditions. When the local Sikh Gurdwara held a candlelight vigil for the victims of the Milwaukee shooting, UUs were there; when the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice called for volunteers to staff a table at the state fair, UUs stepped up; when a leading expert on Dominionism came to Louisville, First U was a co-sponsor of his speech. If Interfaith Relations interests you, consider these upcoming opportunities: Sullivan University Religious Diversity Fair, **October 9**; "Joining Voices" Conference addressing how faith leaders can respond to domestic violence, **October 16**; Conference on Economic Justice, **October 20**; Festival of Faiths, **November 14-18**. This year we are especially excited about an interfaith partnership we are undertaking with St. Marks UCC in New Albany, and a number of opportunities will be arising from that connection. For more information, or to let us know of other opportunities, contact Jo Ann Dale or Kathy Gapsis. [missionandoutreachministry@firstulou.org](mailto:missionandoutreachministry@firstulou.org).

In late August, the Ministry invited you to declare your special interest regarding any of the four areas of M&O (Denominational Affairs, Interfaith Relations, Partner Church and Social Justice), toward the goal of having M&O lend its energy and organization to enthusiasm and concern. The Ministry is now in the process of formulating its goals and developing a plan of action for meeting them, but if you did not have an opportunity to share with us your passion, it is not too late: Contact Jo Ann Dale or Kathy Gapsis. We would love to hear from you.

## **RESOURCE MINISTRY**

Resource Ministry Teams have been up and running this summer taking care of building and grounds issues.

*Church Yard Friends* met on 4th Saturdays; planting, trimming, and pulling weeds.

*House and Grounds* had a "to do" list which included repairing chairs and windows, painting stripes and letters on staff parking spaces, fixing wheels on rolling carts, and mowing the lawn.

*Aesthetics* prepared a draft of a "Donation to the Church" policy to be reviewed and sent to the Board. And did their usual pattering around inside the building -- looking to see what might need attention.

**Thank You to Resource Teams for your hard work and diligence!**

Resource Team Leaders  
for 2012 --2013 church year:

Ministry Co-Leaders: Kathy Drehmel and Michelle Pierce

Church Yard Friends: Carol Findling and Tonya Stevens

House and Grounds: Bob Ballard

Aesthetics: Ann Ulinski

Technology: Brian Daly

Resource Ministry would like to welcome Tonya Stevens, who will be Team Co-Leader with Carol Findling --- Church Yard Friends. Tonya has hit the ground running -- putting forth ideas and taking a leadership role.

As usual -- Please be aware that we are all stewards of our church and members of Resource Ministry. In consideration of others, please pick up an area after you leave it, turn off lights, lock doors -- the usual responsibilities when owning a space. Thank You!

Reminder: If you have an accident of any kind at church please fill out an Incident Report Form. They can be found in the volunteer area by the staff mailboxes. This is for your protection and the protection of the church. Something may not seem like much when it happens, but could develop into something more serious later.

If you have any questions or thoughts about this Ministry, please contact Kathy Drehmel or Michelle Pierce at [Resourcesministry@firstulou.org](mailto:Resourcesministry@firstulou.org), leave a note in the Resources mailbox, or speak to us in person.

## **MEMBER MINISTRY**

The Member Ministry is having a New UU Class on **Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**, from 9am to 3pm. If you'd like to know more about First Unitarian Church and a history of Unitarian Universalism and have some fun, please join us. We ask that you RSVP to [memberministry@firstulou.org](mailto:memberministry@firstulou.org) because the class includes lunch. If you have questions ask Holly Hogue or Dan Hill. Please call the office if you'd prefer to RSVP by phone (585-5110).

## **WORSHIP MINISTRY**

Worship Ministry invites you to become part of the Sunday Celebration of Life as a Worship Associate. Mark your calendars now for Worship Associate training on Saturday, **Oct. 20**. For more information, contact Worship Ministry co-chair Trish Ramey at [tramey@alum.bu.edu](mailto:tramey@alum.bu.edu) or 502-565-5505.

## First U Happenings

### **BOOK CLUB**

Please join us in the Parlor at 6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month to discuss the following books.

**September 10th** *In the Garden of the Beast* by Eric Larson

**October 15th** *An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England* by Brock Clarke

**November 12th** *Periodic Tales: a Cultural History of the Elements, from Arsenic to Zinc* by Hugh Aldersey-Williams

**December 10th** *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks

**January 14, 2013** *How to be Black* by Baratunde Thurston

The lists of all books suggested since January 2010 are available on request.



### **JEWELRY & SCARF SALE**

The Jewelry and Scarf sale is changing seasons to spread out the joy. It will be (probably) the 3rd Sunday in November, **November 18, 2012**.

### **RED, WHITE & BLUE PIE SALE**

**September 2**, Once again members of the Women's Alliance will be making their favorite fruit, cream and savory pies to sell just in time for Labor Day celebrations. Check out those delicious home-made pies at the library lane entrance after the Celebration of Life. The cost is still only \$10 for each pie.

### **BROWNBAGGERS ASK, "WHERE WERE YOU ON 09/11/01?"**

**Monday, September 10**, 2012 the Brownbaggers will gather for lunch at 11:40am or so in the church library and share thoughts concerning the attack on the World Trade Center towers eleven years ago. We will also make known our program preferences for this year. Join us if you can.

### **UU CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

*Begin Again in Love*. Thursday, **Sept 13**, 6:00 – 7:30pm, library. Review the UU Christian Fellowship reason for meeting, select a meeting schedule, and brainstorm topics. UUCF meetings are open to anyone who is interested of any gender identity or sexual orientation: seekers, doubters, skeptics, critical thinkers, former Christians, current Christians, questioning Christians, Christian-curious, believers, agnostics, atheists, and followers of other faith traditions or none. For more information, contact Jasmine Walston at [jasminegld@aol.com](mailto:jasminegld@aol.com)

## Solar Array Project

Joe Kremer

Did you know the church has an ongoing project to raise money for a photovoltaic solar array for our perfectly aligned roof? Phase I is to make changes that will cut down on the amount of electricity we use and to that end we have been able to replace both refrigerators and the freezer with Energy Star products. Our sights are now set on replacing the fluorescent fixture in the elevator which is on 24 hours a day, with an LED unit.

The funds for these items have come from cash donations and the sale of scrap metals from gold and silver to aluminum, copper and brass. **Aluminum cans can be left in the green trash can in the courtyard labeled "Solar Array Project."**

It has been suggested that we consider changing the project name to "Energy Use Reduction Project." We would be going from SAP to EURP. What do you think?

If you have any gold, silver, platinum, brass, copper, aluminum (other than cans) or cash you'd like to donate, I can be reached at [joe\\_kremer\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:joe_kremer_99@yahoo.com).



It might be sitting still, but an idling car is really very busy. Even the most efficient cars and trucks burn gas and cause wear on their engines while they idle, and that costs you money. In fact, according to Kentuckiana Air Education, the average driver wastes at least \$70 a year just sitting still with the engine idling. Unnecessary idling also contributes to air pollution, as well as contributing to the development of asthma.

If you're going to be sitting for more than 10 seconds in the school pickup lane, waiting at a drive through, or stopping at a long light, turn off your vehicle. If you're worried about this being hard on your car, modern cars are robust enough to handle frequent restarting.

Some myths from KAIRE include:

**Myth 1:** Idling is good for your engine

**FACT:** Idling can actually damage your vehicle. Engines don't operate at peak temperature when they're idling, so fuel is only partially burned. This leads to fuel residue buildup, which may harm engine parts and reduce gas mileage.

**Myth 2:** Restarting a car uses more fuel than letting it idle

**FACT:** Engines don't work efficiently when they're idling. Experts say that after idling more than 10 seconds, cars waste fuel. Today's engines are designed to get more miles to the gallon. But when you're idling, you're getting zero, and your engine's not working efficiently.

**Myth 3:** Idling doesn't waste much fuel

**FACT:** Idling for an hour can waste half a gallon or more of fuel.

**Myth 4:** Restarting is hard on your engine

**FACT:** Restarting your engine puts no more stress on it than any other normal use. But idling forces it to run inefficiently, reducing engine performance and fuel efficiency over time.

Since I've been working to reduce idling in the past year, I've noticed a couple of things. One is that being aware of when to turn off my car does take some focusing. Another is I now notice it more when I see someone leave the car idling while attending a yoga class (True story!) I keep wondering what to say or do when I notice someone idling, especially for long periods. What are your thoughts? "Carol Findling" <cnfindling@gmail.com>,

To learn more go to Kentuckiana Air Education (KAIRE), [www.helptheair.org/](http://www.helptheair.org/) You'll find lots more information about lots of different things.

## First Unitarian of Louisville Covenant of UU Pagans



With equal hours of light and darkness  
we celebrate the second harvest,  
May we find balance in our lives  
as we find it in our hearts."



The Covenant of UU Pagans of First Unitarian Universalist Church or **CUUPs** offers Sabbat Celebrations and classes in topics relating to earth based traditions or nature spirituality.

**Please join CUUPs as we celebrate the Autumn Equinox on Sunday, September 23, 2012.**

At the **Autumn Equinox** or **Mabon**, the days and nights are again equal. This Sabbat is the second harvest and a time of balance. In the "earth based" tradition, we take time to reflect on the balance within our own lives and we give thanks for the blessings we have harvested.

Our Sabbat Celebrations are on Sunday night. The doors open at 5:30pm and the Circle starts at 6pm. A potluck dinner will follow around 7 pm. CUUPs is a free and open community of people who practice earth-based spiritualities.

Our classes are a blend of lecture and discussion with seekers, those new to the path and experienced practitioners in attendance.

We meet the **first** and **third Wednesday** of each month.

Our classes start at 7pm and last till about 8:30pm.

Our upcoming classes are on:

**September 5, September 19**

October 3, October 17

November 7, there will be **no class** on Wednesday November 21

The upcoming classes include a variety of topics including Principles of Pagan Belief, The Wiccan Rede: Ethics and a Magickal Life, The Elements and the Basics of Magick and many other topics.

If you need additional information, please email us at [cuups@firstulou.org](mailto:cuups@firstulou.org)

**There is no charge for Circle Celebrations or classes.**

*Love is the spirit of this church...*

## Interweave

"Interweave Continental is a membership organization actively working toward ending oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity, recognizing that we will not be free until all oppression is a thing of the past."

• Next Meeting. Sunday, September 16, 12:30-2:30pm, library. Please bring your own lunch or snack. All First Unitarian members, friends, and visitors of any gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship orientation, or faith path are welcome. Movie time! General hob-knob/get to know each other as we kick off the church year and make upcoming plans for the rest of the year. Talk about participating in the Louisville AIDS walk on Sunday, October 14, 2012. Co-sponsored meeting.

### • COMMITMENTS

By voting to become a Welcoming Congregation, First Unitarian Church agreed to the "Commitments" listed in The Welcoming Congregation Handbook.

Commitment #2 states: "A Welcoming Congregation does not assume anyone's affectional/sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Vocabulary of worship reflects this perception; worship celebrates diversity by inclusivity of language and content."

### • REFLECTION

Did I take an action this month to promote civil rights and full inclusion for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people?

### • ADVOCACY

*Gay married couple allowed to file joint bankruptcy in Kentucky.* Despite living together for 16 years, Bob Joles and Joey Lester of Louisville could not legally marry in the state of Kentucky. Even after they wed May 9 in Buffalo, N.Y., the state of Kentucky wouldn't recognize their union. But that didn't stop them in June from becoming the first gay married couple to file jointly for bankruptcy in Kentucky. Nor did it prevent a federal bankruptcy judge from confirming their reorganization plan July 24.

*Let's support schools' stand against discrimination.* The Fayette County Board of Education has taken the best step forward in broadening its anti-discrimination policies to include sexual orientation and gender identity. This change speaks to the Lexington Fairness Ordinance, which was adopted in 1999, adding sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes against discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations.

*Meanwhile in Indiana...* Working with key legislative friends and allies, Indiana Equality Action supported the introduction of legislation to address the recent surge in suicide among American teens including Billy Lucas, 15, from Greensburg, Indiana, who hung himself in his family's barn after being bullied relentlessly. Indiana Equality Action organized an informal coalition of groups and organizations to help craft and support such legislation.

Suicide prevention and bullying legislation introduced this year included Senate Bill 538 – bullying prevention, Senate Bill 4 – suicide prevention training for school personnel, and House Bill 1019 – training for child suicide prevention. While SB 538 was unexpectedly defeated on a three to five vote in a meeting of the Senate Education and Career Development Committee, SB 4 passed both chambers and is headed to the Governor for his signature.

*Indianapolis City-County Council approves domestic partner benefits.* The Indianapolis City-County Council has approved an ordinance to provide healthcare benefits to the domestic partners of city employees. The measure passed Monday, August 13th by a vote of 20-8, receiving bipartisan support — it now goes to Mayor Greg Ballard for his approval and signature. The legislation applies to opposite-sex as well as same-sex couples and, according to supporters, would increase the city's health insurance costs by about \$200,000 for an estimated 27 employees, less than 0.4 percent of the estimated \$58.2 million spent annually by the city and county on health benefits.

### • MORE INFORMATION

For more information or questions about Interweave, please contact Interweave co-chairs Lori Martin (interweave@firstulou.org) or Clare Zigner, or leave a message in the Interweave mailbox in the volunteer area.

...and service is its law.

## Religious Exploration Highlights for September!

The dedicated Religious Exploration Hour had a wonderful kick-off Sunday on August 19 complete with the second annual RE Fair. Classrooms were open, teachers were present, and the community made a valiant turn-out to participate by registering, filling out interest sheets, and enjoying samples of the Intermission snacks. There was a very positive energy emanating from all over the facility as children, youth and adults alike began the journey of transitioning into a dedicated RE hour at First Unitarian. One of the most exciting elements of the whole day was the presence of new faces, new families blending in with those returning from summer vacations. It was a great day.

***Please be reminded of the new Sunday Schedule:*** RE Hour takes place from 9:15 until 10:30 a.m. “Intermission” (10:30—11:00 a.m.) provides time for healthy refreshment of all kinds from snacks available at a low cost in the Social Hall, to taking time to gather younger members of the family for bathroom stops, to the opportunity to stretch the legs between class time and community time. All ages gather at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary (Infant care is available in the nursery!) for Celebration of Life. At a designated time in the service, children from preschool age through grade 3 will be invited to participate in a Children’s Celebration upstairs in Rooms 212-213 (Preschool Rooms); there, they will be enjoying guided activities specifically designed with their needs in mind.

*September has many developments currently in the works.* Dates and times will be announced in various ways throughout the month via the Mid-Week Update, FYI pages in the Celebration of Life service orders, and as posts on the church’s website. Most of these opportunities will involve the youth of the community as Youth Adult Committee will be taking shape for the 2012-13 year and youth groups will be setting dates and times for regular meetings. As the community makes changes to scheduling due to the transition to a dedicated RE hour, information will be made available so that all can participate.

*September has a fifth Sunday!* This means that the church will be involved in a hands-on project with all ages working together to make a positive difference in the larger community. Sunday, September 30, will see adult and youth classes meeting together for a joint session and preschoolers through Grades 3-5 are scheduled to meet in the Open Classroom for a multi-age workshop. Then all ages will gather and remain in the sanctuary to take part in Celebration of Life services that include hands-on activities designed to take the community into the realm of action!

*Exciting days are ahead in September.* Please make every effort to participate and grow along with friends, old and new. It’s gratifying to see all ages coming together in a common time of exploration and service.

### Adult RE Programming

Sundays, 9:15-10:30

Participants engage in their own faith development and contribute to that of others who are present. Attendance in some classes may be limited due to room capacity or course requirements. Nursery care is available for infants.

### UU Parenting

The group will select topics from the blog of UU Religious Educator and author Michelle Richards ([blogs.uuworld.org/parenting](http://blogs.uuworld.org/parenting)), such as “Why UU parents should help their children pray” or “Helping children understand white lies.” Carol Uebelhoer and Lisa Mascio-Thompson, leaders.

## Theologies

Rotating weekly, theologies classes will explore different faith paths from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. All classes are open to any and all of faith and non-faith traditions, believers and non-believers.

- **Sept 2:** Paganism: What is a pagan? Examine the roots of this word and what it means to people today. When was this path added to the UU family of faiths and to First Unitarian? Lori Martin, leader.
- **Sept 9:** Non-Theism: Definition of Non-Theist Terms – What is Humanism? What is Naturalism? What is Atheism? What is Agnosticism? What is Physicalism? etc. Jo Ann Dale, leader.
- **Sept 16:** Paganism: Thankfulness. As fall equinox approaches and our gardens explode let us examine what it means to be truly thankful. Lori Martin, leader.
- **Sept 23:** Creations & Generations (Genesis). Approach the Bible in an effort to understand its place in our culture and in history by using historical, textual and literary criticism. The Rev. Dawn Cooley, leader.. The Rev. Dawn Cooley, leader.

## Round Table

*The Journey of the Universe* (through November) View the award winning documentary by Brian Thomas Swimme & Mary Evelyn Tucker. Follow-up sessions will each explore a different chapter. Facilitated by Mark Steiner of Cultivating Connections ([journeyoftheuniverse.org](http://journeyoftheuniverse.org)). First, third, and fourth Sundays. Kris Barski, program planner.

- **Sept 2** *The Journey of the Universe*, screening of the one-hour film
- **Sept 16** Beginning of the Universe
- **Sept 23** Galaxies Forming

## Sunday Morning Books

Selections focus on science, environment, theology, leadership, history, politics and their connection to Unitarian Universalism and to the life of First Unitarian Church. Second Sundays; Jill Sampson and Kathy Rogers, facilitators.

- **Sept 9** A stone of hope: prophetic religion and the death of Jim Crow by David Chappell
- Oct 14 Wounds not healed by time: the power of repentance and forgiveness by Solomon Schimmel

Additional books will be listed on the website

## Creative Arts

Explore the art of creativity through improvisation, theatre, and mime. Gaining both basic creative skills as well as liberal and social minded experiences. Second and fourth Sundays. Stefan Gearhart, leader.

- **Sept 9:** Basic Improv #2. A further exploration of learning how to think outside the box and connect with people better all while laughing and having a good time.
- **Sept 23:** Creating Characters. Learn how to change your body shape and axis to find characters inside of you waiting to be born. You may find your inner self.



## Coffee & Current Events

This group meets in the social hall each week with no formal curriculum for conversation about current events as informed by UUA principles and faith.

## Fifth Sunday Multigenerational Project

*Anne Braden: Southern Patriot.* This first person documentary explores the extraordinary life of a Louisville American civil rights leader. Braden's story exposes the dangers of racism and political repression but also celebrates the power of a woman's life spent in commitment to social justice. All youth and adult classes are encouraged to attend.

## Meditation Room

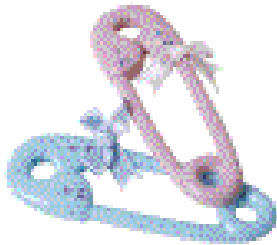
Quiet space has been designated on the second floor for silent reflection, prayer, or meditation. A number of meditation aids are available in this room.

## Coming in the Spring

Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Adults. Clarify values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Carol Uebelhoer, leader

**More Information** The First Unitarian website will be updated with additional information about the curricula described above. To learn more, visit [firsttulou.org](http://firsttulou.org) or contact Edward Adamson, Director of Religious Exploration.

## It's a Baby Shower!!



All are invited to a baby shower for Jenny Morse and David Allgeier on **September 9, from 4 - 6 p.m.**, in the social hall of First Unitarian. We hope that you can join us to celebrate this joyous occasion in our church family. Please RSVP by contacting Claudia Runge at [c.runge@insightbb.com](mailto:c.runge@insightbb.com) or 608-5710. Hosted by Pat Allison, Beverly Moore, and Claudia Runge.

### **STEEPLETALK**

Published every month by First Unitarian Church of Louisville  
809 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Louisville, KY 40203

**Editor:** Rebecca Dimon

Next Deadline: September 15 (Covers the month of October)  
[editor@firsttulou.org](mailto:editor@firsttulou.org)

## Ministry Theme for September: Authority

Authority is sometimes confused with power. Power is the ability to directly influence others or the outcome of events. Authority is "rightful" power granted to a person or entity. For example, a boss or teacher has authority to make decisions that may influence you, whereas a bully may have power to influence your life, without having the authority to do so.

Or, in other words, authority is legitimized power.

Sociologist Max Weber defined three types of legitimate authority: traditional authority, legal rational authority, and charismatic authority.

Each of these types of authority is legitimate because it rests on the implicit or explicit consent of the governed. One who can successfully claim any of these types of authority is regarded as having the right to compel obedience at least for some time.

### (1) Traditional Authority

Of all the legitimating of authority, the appeal to tradition is certainly the most common. People obey traditional authority because "It has always been that way." Tribal leaders and monarchs have always relied on traditional authority. From the historical point of view it has been the most common source of legitimating of power. This type of authority tends to be more common in organizations which stress upon continuity with the past and the upholding of widely shared values and beliefs, such as established churches, the higher reaches of government, and the courts and the familiar organizations based on kinship ties.

### (2) Rational Legal Authority

In this kind of authority power is legitimized by explicit rule and procedures that define the rights and obligations of the rules. Such rules and procedures are commonly found in a written constitution, and set of laws. This kind of authority is commonly found in most of the political system of modern societies. Here the legitimacy of authority is derived from the respect for the legality of power.

### (3) Charismatic Authority

This type of authority is legitimized by the unusual or exceptional qualities that people attribute to particular political, religious, or military leaders. Human history provides classical examples of such leaders with that quality of 'Charisma'. Example- Jesus Christ, M.K. Gandhi, Hitler, Napoleon, Mao, Castro, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Churchill and so on.

Charismatic authority is inherently unstable. It has no rules of traditions to guide conduct since it is based on the unique qualities of particular individual. It is undetermined if the leader fails or dies. Subsequent leaders may lack the reason and qualities. Hence systems based on charismatic authority are usually short lived.

### Reflection Questions:

- Do you like the word authority, or do you resist it? Why?
- What are your experiences with "authority"? Were they healing or harmful?
- What authorities do you currently recognize? Why those and not others?
- What are some illegitimate authorities operating on the world stage right now?
- What authorities do Unitarian Universalists explicitly recognize?
- Do you have a sense of inner authority? Where does it come from?