



# FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

## September 2018 Newsletter

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

### Breaking and Making Rev. Teri Schwartz

*We are mosaics. Pieces of light, love,  
history, stars....Glued together with magic  
and music and words.*

—Anita Krizzan

I have loved mosaics since I first saw them. I don't know when that was. I have always loved glass art—the reflection and refraction of light and shadow; ever changing under different circumstances of light, different circumstances of shadow.

Last winter, I moved to Woodlawn and fell in love with a mosaic under the Metra tracks at Marquette and Dorchester: a vibrant, glittering mosaic mural that transformed a place of shadow into a place of light. When assembled with care and an eye for beauty, brokenness and fragmentation can be transformed to beauty and wholeness; sharp edges into a smooth surface.

During my study time this summer, I took an art class. From time to time, I do my best



to stretch my mind and creative faculties by experimenting with art in a medium other than words. It changes not only what I see, but how I see. Inspired by the mosaic I saw regularly both on my walks and in my mind, I

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signed up for a mosaic class at the neighborhood art center.

At our first class, the teacher, a professional mosaic artist, explained basic concepts and showed us some tools. There's a tool to score the glass, a tool to break the glass along that score, and a tool called a "wheel nipper" that looks kind of like a can opener. You use that to cut a small piece of glass into even smaller pieces.

I realized I had come to class with a giant assumption. I assumed we started with broken glass. Broken pieces. From somewhere. From someone. I hadn't really thought through where the pieces would come from, or how I would find the right ones. I learned very quickly that I would be doing what I had been long trained never to do except in the case of fire: break glass.

The teacher handed out the tools, then handed out sheets of colored glass, like a drawing teacher would hand out paper. My first job was to cut the glass into pieces. Not drop the glass. Not shatter it. But thoughtfully, painstakingly, and planfully, cut the glass. I held my breath—and maybe even closed my eyes—for the first piece. I was expecting my hand to fill with sharp shards. But with the right tools, it broke cleanly, neatly, into two even pieces. I did that over again. And over and over again.

The glass we had was made to be broken. And I was the one to do it. There was no

making without breaking. That seems an apt metaphor for life. Not only was I assembling an image like assembling a puzzle, but I was making the puzzle pieces themselves, too. In parallel process, I was keeping an eye for the whole, with vision for the particular.

Unlike puzzles, in mosaic, the spaces in between the pieces are important. They are called *interstizi*. Our teacher explained that it is the *interstizi*—the space in between—that actually allows our eyes and mind to comprehend the image of the whole. This is not unlike pixels on your computer screen; step back and your brain softens pixels into curved lines; images into meaning.

We start this new church year and season with pieces of our lives that we have cut and crafted, our sharp places, our tender places, reflecting and absorbing the light and shadows of our days. There is no one else to do that work for us. We are the breakers and we are the makers—it is up to us to find wholeness in fragmentation and light in shadow. Our in-between places make the picture real. We come to church with our mind's eye holding the brokenness of the world, and our heart's mind yearning to make something beautiful from it. And we don't have to do that alone. We may have different circumstances of light, different circumstances of shadow, but we also have this: one another.

May it be so,  
Rev. Teri

## Building a New Way: First U Congregational Capital Campaign on the Way to \$1 Million Margie Gonwa, Vice Chair of Marketing

A hearty thank you to our fellow First Unitarian members who have contributed \$682,000 in lead gifts to First U's Congregational Capital Campaign! Since our

exciting campaign kick-off in June, we have raised 68% of the \$1 million goal, which puts us on track for reaching—and hopefully exceeding—our \$1 million base goal. If we are

able to maintain this enthusiastic response throughout the campaign, the Campaign Leadership Team is optimistic that member contributions will ultimately exceed our \$1 million goal, enabling us to complete more needed repairs and renovations to our beloved church home.

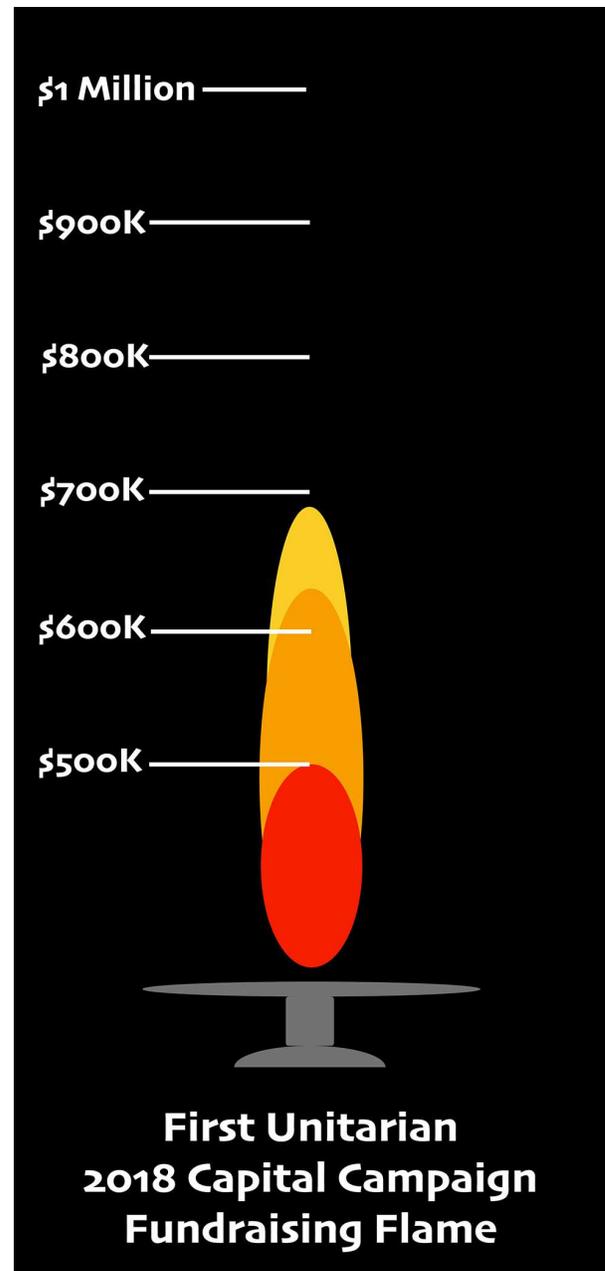
Are you wondering when you will be called? Due to the size of our congregation and the fact that campaign volunteers are making personal visits to each congregant, we've divided the campaign efforts into phases. Capital Campaign Captains are reaching out to the next members and setting up one-on-one appointments—so critical in sharing the *Building A New Way* vision, answering all your questions, and seeking your financial commitment. If you haven't been contacted about the campaign yet, don't worry! You will be before the end of the year.

Until you meet with your Capital Campaign contact and discuss both the Capital Campaign and the Annual Pledge Drive for the new church year, please continue to fulfill your annual commitment at your current level.

Exciting things are already happening! The Board of Trustees has authorized our architect, Erroll Kirsch, to begin planning for the Parish House renovation, Pennington windows, and Sanctuary windows. Architectural renderings of the new, enlarged kitchen, event space, and women's lounge are displayed in Hull Chapel.

In addition, the Board authorized the creation of a Parish House Advisory Committee, now in formation, to interact with the architect on final design approval for the plans. If you have a strong interest in assisting with the architect and design decisions throughout the Capital Campaign, contact Richard Pardo.

The flaming chalice campaign thermometers on the walls in Hull Chapel and the back of the Sanctuary track the campaign's progress.



As new pledges to the campaign are made, the flames will grow.

Please feel free to reach out to any member of the Capital Campaign Leadership Team if you have any questions about the Campaign: Co-chairs Lisa Christensen Gee and Jim Proctor, and Cindy Pardo, Richard Pardo, Ivan Lappin, Kristina Guzman, John Martin-Eatinger, Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams, Evelyn Johnson, Margie Gonwa, Rev. Teresa Schwartz and Rev. David Schwartz.

## Developments in RE

Beth Moss, Director of Religious Education (RE)

Greetings, First U families and friends! It's been a great summer here at church. Students who have attended the summer program have had so much fun with the *World of New Friends* curriculum. Activities have varied from deep conversations about Taoist sayings, to honoring the role corn plays in the lives the Hopi people by making cornbread, to lighting incense after Buddhist meditation, and more. From these lessons, students explored how those who are different from us are also like us and full of wisdom we can learn from. It's been a joy seeing the kids gain this insight that we all could stand to be reminded of. I look forward in the coming year to the important work of providing many other fun lessons that uphold UU principles and draw from the seven principles and six sources while strengthening our church community.

Offering these vital lessons that many kids don't have access to in school and building the sense of community among RE kids and families are the most important functions of my job here at First Unitarian. This job would not be possible without the help of the many amazing volunteers who have stepped up to support the program. That said, the pressure on the volunteer base to sustain the program at its current size and structure has been a challenge over the past few years.

### Teacher Recruitment 2017–2018

In August of 2017, we sent a group email seeking volunteer teaching staff to 32 people, as well as 22 individual emails to especially active volunteers from 2016. We also made 20 phone calls. The result was that 5–6 people signed up to teach on a semi-regular basis, which is counted as more than once per month. A full teaching staff for a four-class program would have been 8 to 16 regular people at a bare minimum,

depending on the rotation desired by the individuals committing their time.

Due to this shortage, one class level was eliminated. This resulted in a larger age range in each class grouping and occasional larger class sizes in the youngest class and upper elementary class levels. Over the semester, I continued to attempt to recruit people from week to week in person, online, and over the phone. Even with that volunteer group and with supplemental assistance from ten other intermittent volunteers for September through December, 22 out of 66 teaching slots went unfilled. This led to several issues:

- Teacher volunteers present few Sundays did not always know students well and therefore were unaware of student needs and preferences
- Teacher volunteers didn't always know what kids had been working on or who has been there week to week
- Few teacher volunteers were able to build lasting connections with students
- The constant "ask" to teach put a strain on a group already working hard and stretched thin in church life and otherwise.

I appealed to the congregation publicly in December and February and digitally on an ongoing basis. This yielded emergency teachers and raised congregational awareness of the issue. Many people who responded were sympathetic but uncomfortable or unable to step in on a regular basis.

Emergency teacher volunteers who did step in may or may not have had experience in leading a group or teaching, and those that stepped in did not always feel comfortable doing so, but felt obligated to help. They did an awesome job—and I am so grateful to

each person who committed to help—but emergency volunteers cannot sustain the program. Even with emergency help, there were at least two unfilled teaching positions most Sundays in the spring.

### Now for the Good News!

This year, with the help of the ministers and the board, am pleased to announce the aforementioned issues will be remedied because we are piloting an anchor teacher program for the year. The benefits of hiring anchor teachers include:

- More class offerings to better meet the needs of multiple age groups
- Increased classroom consistency
- Teachers get to know kids and build relationships
- Teachers know what goes on from week to week, and who was or wasn't there
- Teachers will get to know student needs such as who doesn't like reading in front of a group, who should sit apart or prefers to stand sometimes, who loves to talk but needs to be given space to speak, who has peanut allergies, and so on
- The DRE will be better able to plan lessons knowing what each teacher is awesome at
- The DRE can devote less time to teacher recruitment and more time to content development
- Lead teachers can better communicate with the DRE about classes and needs over a longer time
- Volunteers from first U will still be needed on a regular basis; however, they will be able to serve as helping hands as well as UU guides instead of as instructors
- Volunteers will not be stressed about "the ask" as much
- There will be increased compliance with safe church policy recommendations

- This will create a more robust program

These are the superheroes who will help make this year's RE program possible.

**April Lundberg (pre-K and kindergarten)** was raised in Rockford, Illinois, a town with excellent Swedish pancakes and the finest Japanese garden in North America. April graduated from Wheaton College (IL) where she studied Spanish and Theology. She also has a background in working with children's literature. April started going to First Unitarian when her neighbor, Norma Poinsett, invited her. April likes the church's diversity and spirit of inclusion and looks forward to sharing this with our students.

**Samantha Barklow (grades 1 -2)** is so thrilled to be joining the First Unitarian family. She has worked in Chicago Public Schools for the past three years and she is excited to continue working with children and youth here in Chicago. Having moved to Hyde Park after graduating from Florida State University, she is looking forward to building a closer connection to the neighborhood community through her work at First Unitarian.

**Lori Morrison-Contreras (grades 3-5)** is a homeschooling mother of three and a Girl Scout and co-op leader. She is a 2nd degree black belt in Taekwondo and she also has experience with theater. Lori is always taking new classes and workshops and she was drawn to First Unitarian because she sees learning as a lifelong pursuit.

**Frida Cardenas (grades 6 and up)** is a recent graduate from the University of Chicago. Her interest in First Unitarian dates back to her first moment exploring campus when she arrived at the University. Four years later, she hopes to remain involved with the community that became her home away from home. Frida has worked as a tutor since her days in high school and later moved on to be a Jumpstart leader when she became a

student at UChicago. Since then, she's been an intern at the Black Star project, a non-profit focused on education. She has worked to ensure that all students, regardless of background, were receiving the best education and opportunities possible. She joins First Unitarian in hopes to continue her work with children and she looks forward to teaching lessons that will remain with her students for a lifetime.

I am looking forward to welcoming these fine folks into the community and I hope you all will help me make them feel at home. RE kicks off the Sunday following Water Communion. Keep an eye on the website for more details, and happy end of summer everyone!

## An Invitation to Share Your Musical Gifts

Jeff Hamrick, Music Director

Whether you are a longtime choral singer or just enjoy singing along to the radio, please consider joining the Choir of First Unitarian Church of Chicago. We would love to welcome you! (We need you!)

Participation in the Choir involves committing to weekly rehearsals and Sunday services from September through early June of each church year. The Choir rehearses most Wednesday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 PM and sings for most Sunday worship services (it has been our practice in the last few years to take a furlough on the last Sunday of the month). For our Sunday we typically prepare one choral anthem: sometimes it will be simple and relatively easy to learn, and at other times more complicated, requiring weeks of learning and rehearsal. The anthem is an integral part of the service and is selected for its connection either to the minister's sermon, or to a particular worship theme in a given month.

An often overlooked but essential function of the Choir is to provide for strong congregational singing, namely, of hymns. According to a music resource published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), "a choir's role is to lead the assembly's song," but not to dominate it. We set aside time in our rehearsals to review hymns, singing through the familiar ones if

time permits but always allowing time to learn and become comfortable with any that are unfamiliar or tricky.

Apart from the role we play in our Sunday worship services, we also stress fellowship and supporting one another in loving community. We gather not just to make a beautiful sound but to experience the music we work so hard on as a channel for personal and spiritual growth.

No audition is required for membership, though some experience in part singing and reading music is helpful, and the ability to match pitch is very important.

If you are interested, please contact music director Jeff Hamrick in person following worship or anytime by e-mail at [music@firstuchicago.org](mailto:music@firstuchicago.org).

### Choir Members Speak

*In my experiences participating in Sunday church services, music has always been an integral part that enriches my spirit. I particularly enjoy choral singing, but not limited to choral singing. I love singing in the choir at First Church because we are a family within a family. I constantly learn from those around me with more experience than I have regarding music*

*and we have fun even while perfecting the more complex arrangements included in our diverse repertoire of music. Lastly, we have a very accomplished music director in Jeff Hamrick who is a patient, respectful and inspirational leader. I am one of the three members in the bass section. We would love to have more voices join us.*

—Jim Proctor

*Joining the choir at First U has been a wonderful experience for me. Jeff as leader and all the members are so friendly, interesting, fun, and supportive. When I admitted feeling insecure about my singing, one of these lovely people said, "Oh, but you will find that it will improve." And indeed it has! I have learned so much and made so many friends.*

—Jo Brill

## September Worship Services

Our September Worship series will explore the idea of vision—a vision of a fair and just society, our own blind spots, to prophetic vision of the future, as well as how we see ourselves, one another, and how we see what might be possible.

September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10 AM

*An Age-Old Issue in a New Time*

Rev. Teri Schwartz and Prof. Steven Ashby

Worker's rights are human rights. While the need for worker's rights is timeless, the shape and form of the labor movement changes over time. How do current labor organizations work toward a vision of a fair and just society? On this Labor Day Sunday, we'll explore contemporary labor issues and the life of faith, and we will welcome a guest from Arise Chicago, a local non-profit that builds partnerships between faith communities and workers to fight workplace injustice through education, organizing, and advocating for public policy changes.

Steven Ashby is a full clinical professor with the Labor Education Program, School of Labor and Employment Relations, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the co-author of *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement* (2009);

and the co-author of *A Fight for the Soul of Public Education: The Story of the Chicago Teachers Strike* (2016). He has been a labor educator for two decades, a labor activist for four decades, and is a member of American Federation of Teachers Local 6546.

September 9<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM

*Water Communion*

Rev. David Schwartz and Rev. Teri Schwartz

At this beloved annual intergenerational service, you are invited to bring a small vial of water from your home or travels to kick-off our church year with clear vision and ready hearts. We'll join them all together, uniting as one to begin this new, shared church year. We will also offer a "backpack blessing" for our children and youth, to pledge our love and support to them as they begin a new school year. Kids (and adults!): bring your backpack (or briefcase!).

We welcome back cellist Francisco Lopez Malespin, who joins with music director Jeff Hamrick in providing instrumental selections for our worship service. At our ingathering service we also celebrate the return of the Choir of First Unitarian Church following the summer break.

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM  
*An Eye for Awe*  
 Rev. Teri Schwartz

Our UU living tradition draws upon many sources, including the direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder. How do we see wonder in everyday life, especially in difficult times? How might forgiveness be part of awe and a renewed future with one another? What practices might help us refract our vision and turn our gaze to awe—in the world, in one another, and in ourselves—in the midst of the daily grind?

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10 AM  
*The Story You Belong To*  
 Rev. David Schwartz

How do you stay connected to your values and vision when you're caught in the swirl of

life? Seeking the threads that don't change even as they go among a world that does.

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM  
*How Do I Know I Have a Blind Spot  
 if I Can't See it?*  
 Rev. Teri Schwartz

Every driver has a blind spot. Every human eye has a blind spot where the optic nerve connects to the retina of the eye. Science easily demonstrates that our physical vision is fallible, as are our social constructs and assumptions. Yet we go through our days unaware of what we're not seeing, our brains and habits knitting together a cohesive image of our world...and our worldviews. Inherent in the idea of Universalism is an acknowledgement of our blind spots, and a commitment to find a broader view.

## September Meetings and Events

### Global Studies Group

9/2/2018 Sunday 12:30 PM

The Global Studies Group will continue our discussion of Stephen Cohen's *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War*. We will be discussing Chapter 5, "The Fate of the Soviet Union: Why Did It End?". You are also encouraged to review Chapter 11 ("Bonfire of a Young Democracy: Russia Chooses 'The Pinochet Option'", starting on page 220) in Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine*. All are welcome!

Since September 2 is during Labor Day weekend, we will be meeting at a member's home for a potluck picnic. For more information, please contact Bobbi Campbell at rlammer@luc.edu.

### Criminal Justice Task Force

9/6/2018 Thursday 6:45 PM

Chris Moore Parlor

All are welcome. For more information,

please contact Evan Freund at 773-624-0333 or [evan17@evanfreund.com](mailto:evan17@evanfreund.com).

### PEACEBOOK: the House of Power, Love and Hope

9/7/2018 Friday–9/22/2018 Saturday

Collaboration, a non-profit that uses theatre for social justice in Chicago, invites you to their PEACEBOOK Festival: a free theatre festival focused on peace, peacemaking, and community in Chicago. The festival features a breadth of stories and perspectives explored through theatre, dance, and spoken word created by a diverse group of artists from throughout Chicago.

In partnership with the Chicago Park District, PEACEBOOK will tour three Chicago neighborhoods on the south, west, and north sides of the city with FREE performances (each weekend different!) and FREE meals, plus community discussions on peacemaking.

**La Follette Park in Austin**

Friday, September 7: 6 PM

Saturday, September 8: Meal and Peace

Panel at 11:30 AM, Performance at 1 PM

**Kelvyn Park in Hermosa**

Friday, September 14: 6 PM

Saturday, September 15: Meal and Peace

Panel at 11:30 AM, Performance at 1 PM

**Hamilton Park in Englewood**

Friday, September 21: 6 PM

Saturday, September 22: Meal and Peace

Panel at 11:30 AM, Performance at 1 PM

Please join us for any performance of PEACEBOOK. Tickets are free and reservations for individuals or groups are encouraged. Learn more at [www.collaboraction.org](http://www.collaboraction.org).

**White Sox vs. Cubs with the Men's Group**

9/21/2018 Friday 3:10 PM

Guaranteed Rate Field

The Men's Group has an annual outing to watch the White Sox play. This time it will be versus the Chicago Cubs at Guaranteed Rate Field. All those who signed up, get ready!

(The deadline for tickets to this event has passed.)

**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, Thursday, and Sunday

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

**First Forum:****How to Die in Oregon**

9/23/2018 Sunday 11:30 AM–1:00 PM

Chris Moore Parlor

This fascinating documentary profiles several terminally ill Oregonians who take advantage of that state's pioneering law allowing medical aid in dying. Focusing on the stories of Cody Curtis, suffering with liver cancer, and Nancy Niedzelski, campaigning for the passage of a similar law in Washington state, it makes clear exactly what aid in dying is, and why it is so important. A winner of many awards including the grand jury prize for best documentary at the 2011 Sundance festival, it's profound, beautiful, and moving.

Sponsored together with Final Options Illinois (FOI) ([www.finaloptionsillinois.org](http://www.finaloptionsillinois.org)), working for the passage of aid in dying legislation for Illinois. A discussion led by FOI president Ed Gogol will follow the film.

All are welcome. For more information, please contact Richard Pardo at [pardo.richard@comcast.net](mailto:pardo.richard@comcast.net).

**Variety Show**

9/30/2018 Sunday 11:45 AM

For more information, please contact Jeff Hamrick, our Music Director, at [music@firsttuchicago.org](mailto:music@firsttuchicago.org).

**First Unitarian Newsletter**

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5650 S. Woodlawn Ave  
Chicago, IL 60637

Phone: (773) 324-4100

Fax: (773) 324-1136

Email: [administrator@firsttuchicago.org](mailto:administrator@firsttuchicago.org)Website: [www.firsttuchicago.org](http://www.firsttuchicago.org)

Editor: Tim Arehart  
[timarehart@gmail.com](mailto:timarehart@gmail.com)