



# FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

## March 2018 Newsletter

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

### Wobbles and All Rev. Teri Schwartz

*Equanimity doesn't mean keeping things even; it is the capacity to return to balance in the midst of an alert, responsive life. I don't want to be constantly calm. The cultural context I grew up in and the relational life I live in both call for passionate, engaged response. I laugh and I cry and I'm glad that I do. What I value is the capacity to be balanced between times.*

—Sylvia Boorstein, from *Don't Just Do Something, Sit There*

Have you heard of a wobble board? It's a board that has a rounded bottom under a flat platform for your feet. The wobble board is used in physical therapy for people rehabbing from surgery or an accident. It's also used by casual gym-goers and athletes alike who are seeking to improve their fitness.

To build strength and balance, you stand on the board, wiggling and wobbling and trying not to fall off. At first, most people need to hold on to the wall, even if just a little bit. With practice, you start to build a bit more stability...and strength, and balance. It might look like all of the effort is in the legs, but it's coming from the core of the body.



It gets easier with practice. Once you achieve a reasonable amount of balance, it's time to take your hand off the wall. Try the wobble board in the middle of the room. When that gets easier, then it's time to try it on one leg, or to add upper body movements. And eventually, here comes the kicker: You swap the ball under the platform

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for a smaller ball, making the balancing act even harder. Our worship theme this month is balance. Life is always changing. The ground beneath our feet shifts, metaphorically and literally. The cycles of life continue onwards, and we try to keep our balance with the ups and downs. Balance isn't static—it's not an end goal. Rather, balance is dynamic: it's the ongoing work of constant little and big adjustments to keep ourselves from falling down.

And in life, like in exercise, there are two keys to staying balanced: the core and the base. What forms your core, the strength at the center? What is essential to keep your sense of balance...and humor? The other key to balance is the base: The smaller the base, the harder it is to maintain balance. How do you keep a wide base to keep you upright?

The church community can widen our base, making balancing a bit easier. Our spiritual core—like our physical core—gets stronger with practice; we do spiritual practice as a

community, and individually. The stronger our core, the more resilient—and balanced—we can be.

But there is a larger question: What are we seeking balance for? In physical therapy, you work on balance so you can better handle the activities of daily living, prevent falls, and be able to have adventures and live life to the fullest. As an athlete, the objective is not to be perfect at the wobble board, but that practicing with the wobble board will improve your performance in your sport. Ultimately, improving our balance is for living out our lives, the best we can—for times when we're upright with ease, when we fall, and all of the wobbly times in between.

Come to church. Here we broaden the base, strengthen our core, and we hold one another up, wobbles and all.

May it be so,  
Rev. Teri

### From Your Student Minister Thom Thomas

I apologize for this column. This has been a tough week. Of course, they all seem tough lately. I find that I can't yet grieve, because I am too angry. 17 more of our children died, and still the alleged leaders of our country want to talk about treatment for the mentally ill, or about the FBI failing to do their job, or really anything at all except the idea that maybe our children are dying because too many of us have access to weapons for which they have no legitimate use. It doesn't seem all that complex. No other nation on the planet has anything like our number of mass shootings, and no other nation on the planet makes it as easy as we do to own weapons that were designed for use on the battlefield.

Children of my generation carry trauma from learning to hide under our desks in case someone ever dropped atomic weapons on our country. We all learned how to react in case that happened, and we were scared! And, of course, it never actually happened. We laugh at it now.

Children of this generation have mass casualty drills, and shooter drills, and there is a very real possibility that they will face a shooter in their school. It has happened, again and again. Children this age should not be forced to confront their own mortality.

Still...I see the faces of the teenaged survivors of this latest atrocity, who are not sitting in a corner sobbing as they have every right to do, but holding protest signs, talking to

reporters, and planning a march on Washington. Maybe this time change will come. These kids are not old enough to vote—yet—but they aren't letting that stop them. Maybe these children will be the leaders we need to finally stand up as a society and with one voice declare that this is where it stops. Maybe, just maybe, this can

be the last time our children have to be slaughtered. Maybe this time we can tell our representatives: no more thoughts, no more prayers, no more legislative cowardice, and no more of our children will die. Maybe. Have you told your representatives how you feel about this? Have you done it today? Will you do it again tomorrow?

## This Month in RE: Balance

Beth Moss, Director of Religious Education (RE)

Balance is a pretty hot topic in schools right now, as shown in a video from a school in Boston that has “replaced detention with meditation.” (See References for a link.) While some would argue this sort of intervention isn't right for every child in every situation, this is an important step in the right direction, away from suspension.

A suspension isn't just a simple punishment. This type of discipline has far reaching consequences, and those consequences are disproportionately applied to students of color. According to The Brookings Institute, as of 2017, black students were 3-4 times more likely than their white counterparts to get suspended, which is unacceptable. While one may say, “well, that not great, but still it's only a suspension,” the problem goes deeper than just a simple day out of class.

According to Nelson & Lind from [justicepolicy.org](http://justicepolicy.org), as of 2015, “those students who have been suspended are more likely to be held back a grade and drop out of school entirely.” Worse yet, Nelson and Lind went on to say that, “students who have been suspended or expelled are three times more likely to come into contact with the juvenile probation system the following year than one who wasn't.” This leads to part of what is known as, “The School to Prison Pipeline,” (Nelson & Lind, 2015). If reading the words school and prison in the same sentence makes your heart sink a little, then you

understand the importance of reducing out of school suspensions.

The principal of the school in Baltimore noted that after they implemented the mindfulness program, the number of out of school suspensions was reduced dramatically. The old way didn't work because sending kids home, away from the safest place in some kids lives, wasn't the way to help them understand the consequence of their actions. Nor did the old model help the kids learn the self-regulation skills they needed to control their emotions. Rather than just telling kids to do better, meditation and other mindfulness work can give kids the tools they need to thrive. These types of activities can help kiddos who are struggling, but they can also prepare any child for stressful situations they have yet to face as well. Want to know about how to implement mindfulness work with kids? Check out this article from the New York Times to get started: <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/mindfulness-for-children>.

Namaste,  
Beth Moss

### Resources

Bloom, Deborah. 2016. *Instead of detention, these students get meditation*. CNN. Retrieved February, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/04/health/meditation-in-schools-baltimore/index.html>

Gelles, David. (n.d.) *Mindfulness for Children*. New York Times. Retrieved February, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/mindfulness-for-children>

Nelson, Libby & Lind, Dara. 2015. *The School to Prison Pipeline, Explained*. Justice Policy Institute. Retrieved February 24, 2018, <http://www.justicepolicy.org/news/8775>

Loveless, T. 2017. *Racial Disparities in School Suspensions*. Brookings Institute. Retrieved February 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/03/24/racial-disparities-in-school-suspensions/>

**Addendum:** If you want to know more about what what CPS is doing to reduce suspensions, read about their policy changes at WBEZ.org <https://www.wbez.org/shows/wbez-news/cps-softens-strict-discipline-policies/8607769c-153f-4e60-af2e-a59e1dfbbb13t>.

## NEW TO FIRST U: Mystery Friends!

**What is Mystery Friends?** You see the kids head to the front of the church for *A Time for All Ages* each week, and you might think to yourself, “My, they are so great!” But, as an adult in the church, do you know these amazing little people? You might not!

The goal of Mystery Friends is to help First U members have intergenerational communication with kids so everyone gets to know one another other a little better! Essentially, this is like a month long secret Santa, but the real gift in the end is friendship.

**How Does It Work?** Let Beth know you want to participate! Sign up will happen in March.

The Mystery Friend pairs will communicate with each other at church every Sunday in April by posting anonymous notes in a Mystery Friends mailbox. The adult friend should add an inexpensive gift to their note

each Sunday. Examples of inexpensive things to add would be a pencil, a keychain, silly putty, a \$1 DQ or other gift certificate, a button, stickers, or a piece of candy (if parents didn't indicate to avoid sugar or other food issues on the sign up forms.)

Each Sunday adults should place their notes NO LATER THAN 10am (IE: BEFORE CHURCH!). You will know the age range of your young friend and perhaps a few interests, but not much else. In your note, drop hints about who you are, but don't give away the mystery! You might add details like: I have been a church member for 30 years, I have 3 kids, I wear glasses, I love tennis, etc. Be sure to ask questions in the note that might lead the child to write back with an answer. Kids will check the mailbox after church (11:15), and they will leave a short note or drawing back to be found the following week.

Mystery friends will be revealed on April 29th during a coffee hour Mystery Friends Reveal event.

**When Will I Need to Be at Church? (I don't come every Sunday—is that a problem?)** As long as you can be here for most Sundays in April and you know you can absolutely attend the mystery friend reveal event at church on April 29th, you are welcome to participate. Please note: If you know you will not be able to attend some April Sundays—life happens!— still please do provide me or a trusted friend with a note for your buddy if at all able. This is very important, because I can guarantee that kids will look for their notes/gifts every Sunday and they are sad when they get skipped.

**The Mystery Friends Reveal** The Mystery Friends Reveal event will be Sunday, April 29 after worship service. The adult Mystery Friend and the student are both expected to attend. Each pair member will receive a number. Those numbers will be placed on tables. Find the number, find your friend! The

expectation is that adults will sit with their Mystery Friend student for about 10-15 minutes and enjoy a treat and a chat. It's OK for parents to join the pair during the event, especially for preschool kids and for other kids that are shy, nervous, etc. The parents' role would be to encourage interaction between the pair. If parents wish to hang out on the sidelines OR if they have their own mystery friend to attend to, that's a-ok too! The DRE will present to supervise and encourage conversation as well at this fun event.

Thanks so much in advance for your participation in this new church endeavor!

### March Schedule

**March 4:** Regularly scheduled RE. Chalice children continue to learn about the gifts of

the UU faith through Wonderful Welcome. Upper elementary and middle school youth are working on social justice via Harry and UU. They continue to learn about food insecurity and they are working towards a service project (see Feb 17).

**March 11:** Regular RE continues. Chalice lighter dedication during services. OWL@ First U: *Sexuality, Social Media, and the Internet, Bullying and Bystander Responsibilities*. RE Council meeting 11:15-12:00.

**March 18:** Regular RE continues. Mystery Friends sign up begins.

**March 25:** Regular RE continues. OWL@ Hobart: *Abstinence and Lovemaking*. Mystery Friends sign up continues—first mystery mail is due April 1!

## March Worship Services

Our March worship will explore the theme of balance. We'll wonder together, "What does it mean to be a people of balance?" Our lives are often busy and demanding; we may first think of balance as a state of calm and rest. Yet, moving to a balance of justice requires upsetting the status quo, and being off-balance with our culture. Through it that life throws at us, we must also care for ourselves in the middle of it all. This month we might find ourselves asking an even better question: what is balance for?

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM  
*An Ocean of Mystery*  
Rev. David Schwartz

Chet Raymo describes human knowledge as an island in an ocean of mystery, and the more we learn, the longer the shoreline grows where we encounter that mystery. In this green sanctuary service, we explore a religious naturalism that joyfully engages the natural world around us.

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM  
*Another Boring Sermon*  
Rev. Teri Schwartz

In our culture, we have information overload. Activity overload. Many of us are rarely bored; there's just too much to do, too much information to process, too much coming our way. Yet, boredom is vital to original thinking. Studies in neuroscience and cognitive psychology suggest that our brains do a lot—especially when we do nothing at all...it's all about balance.

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM  
*Living in an Unbalanced World*  
Charley Earp

Erich Fromm wrote, "A person who has not been completely alienated, who has remained sensitive and able to feel, who has not lost the sense of dignity, who is not yet 'for sale,' who can still suffer over the suffering of others, who has not acquired fully the having mode of existence—briefly, a

person who has remained a person and not become a thing—cannot help feeling lonely, powerless, isolated in present-day society." Guest Minister Charley Earp will explore the paradox of balance vs imbalance in an unbalanced world.

Charley Earp is the current Ministerial Intern at Third Unitarian Church of Chicago. He lives in Evanston with his wife, Teresa.

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM  
*Past, Present, and Future Tense*  
 Rev. David Schwartz

How do we balance where we are, where we've come from, and where we're going? How do we hold it all without being overwhelmed, overconfident, or overanxious?

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 7 PM  
*A Service of Laments*  
 Rev. David Schwartz  
 Hull Chapel

A spare, intimate service that faces plainly and without deflection the stark reality of

suffering and the experience of hopelessness, ending in silence and darkness.

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 6–8 PM  
*Passover Seder*  
 Beverly Unitarian Church,  
 10244 S. Longwood Dr.

The Passover Seder retells the story of the Jewish people leaving Egypt 3,000 years ago. It's a celebration of freedom—and it's a great opportunity for fellowship and connections (the meal will be a potluck, more details when you RSVP). If you have Jewish heritage, come and celebrate, and if you don't, come and learn—all are welcome!

This year, Beverly Unitarian Church will host the Seder at "the Castle," their church in Beverly, and has extended a warm invitation to us at First Unitarian and UU Community Church in Park Forest. RSVP to Rev. David: david.schwartz@firstuchicago.org. If you're available to help with setup and preparations, please reach out to Rev. David!

## Windborne Singing Workshop and Concert

Jeffrey Hamrick, Music Director



03/31/2018 Saturday 7:00 PM –9:00 PM  
 Hull Chapel

I am delighted beyond words to have this dynamic quartet of young musicians join us

for what promises to be an educational and uplifting afternoon of singing and fellowship. Following the release of their now [viral video](#) (filmed on January 14, 2017, in front of Trump Tower in Manhattan,) the quartet embarked on a wildly successful fundraising campaign toward the creation of a new "songbook and album of social struggle" titled *Song on the Times* (<https://www.songonthetimes.com>).

With their commitment to social justice and performing and teaching the songs of peoples from around the world and across history, Windborne is a perfect complement to our music ministry at First Unitarian Church. I encourage you to spend a few hours with your friends at First on Saturday

afternoon, March 31, learning some new songs and finding new expressions of our cry for social justice. Come sing with us!

For more information, contact me at [music@firsttuchicago.org](mailto:music@firsttuchicago.org) or come find me after church!

In harmony,  
Jeff Hamrick

## Board of Trustees Report

### Joan Pederson, President, First Unitarian Church

The Board of Trustees took several actions at its February meeting. Some were the results of long consideration, others were the beginnings of new initiatives. If you have questions about any of them, I encourage you to speak, call, or write to me or any member other of the board. Names of current trustees appear at the end of the report. Contact info is available from the church office at ext 10 or 11.

**Spring 2018 Pledge Campaign:** As most of you already know, the capital campaign will conduct joint canvassing: both for the capital campaign itself and for regular support of the 2018-19 church year. The joint canvass cannot be finished, though, before we must complete work on the 2018-19 operating budget, which the congregation will vote on at the Annual Meeting on May 20.

The board decided that the budgeted gross pledge total in the budget it proposes for 2018-19 will be the sum of (1) actual pledges received by April 20, (2) prudent estimates based on 2017-18 pledges for those whose actual pledges aren't reported by then, and (3) actual pledges sought during a small campaign addressing those now active in the congregation who did not pledge for 2017-18. The board's motion that the congregation approve the 2018-19 budget will include the authorization and requirement that the board adjust the figure for budgeted pledge income by replacing all estimates with the remaining actual pledges not later than December 2018, and that it

adjust expenses as necessary to preserve a budget that is balanced and includes no borrowing. If you didn't pledge last spring—and especially if you weren't yet attending First Unitarian last spring—look forward to hearing more about pledging within the coming month.

**Visionary Retreat Results:** In the wake of the Visionary Retreat attended by over 40 members of the congregation on Saturday, January 27, the board happily accepted the recommendation of our consultant, Steve Pratapas, to join the CLT (see above) in presenting the conclusions coming out of the retreat at a First Forum on Sunday, March 4. I especially urge those who could not make it to the retreat to attend.

**Denominational Delegation:** The board somberly and unanimously voted to disqualify Finley Campbell from serving as a delegate of First Unitarian to any denominational meeting for one year. The grounds involved his misleading self-identification when introducing himself before speaking to an issue on the floor of a plenary session during the 2017 UUA General Assembly. None of the content of his opinions was at issue, nor did they ever come up for discussion during our deliberations. I invite you to speak with me or other trustees if you have questions about the board's decision to take this action.

**Appointments:** The remaining members of the Capital Campaign Leadership Team (CLT)

are now in place. The board appointed Kristina DeGuzman, John Eatinger, Margot Horn, Evelyn Johnson, Ivan Lappin, Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams, Cindy Pardo, and Richard Pardo as Vice Chairs. They join Co-chairs Lisa Christensen Gee and Jim Proctor, previously appointed, and member ex officio Rev. Teri Schwartz.

The Ministerial Internship Committee for Thom Thomas, our Student Minister, is now chaired by Barbara Randolph, also appointed in February. (By the way, Thom's position is called "Student Minister" until August, then "Ministerial Intern." He won't be "Rev. Thomas" until his ordination, which won't occur before the end of his internship here.) Want to learn more? Take the opportunity to ask Thom, who is a wonderful person to get to know in case you haven't already.

**Departures:** The resignations of trustees Dennis Koehn for personal reasons and Beverly Bennett for medical reasons were accepted with appreciation for their service. Beverly's health is on the mend and she expects to be able to return to the board in July. We appointed alternate Christine Harrell to fill Dennis's seat through the end of June, and are seeking replacements to fill Beverly's seat and the alternate seat through the end of June as well.

**2017-18 Board of Trustees:** Joan Pederson (church president), Jim Proctor (church vice president), John Eatinger, Christine Harrell, Joseph Harrington, Margot Horn, one vacancy; alternate: vacancy; Rev. Teri Schwartz and Rev. David Schwartz (ex officio).

## March Meetings and Events

### Criminal Justice Task Force Meeting

03/01/2018 Thursday 6:45 PM

Chris Moore Parlor

At this meeting, special guest Rev. Chauncey Harrison of Teamwork Englewood will describe the successful reduction in violence in Englewood achieved by community organizations including Teamwork Englewood and Chicago Police Department. All are welcome.

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

### Denominational Affairs Committee Meeting

03/13/2018 Tuesday 4:15 PM-4:00 PM

RE Classrooms

First U's Denominational Affairs Committee generally meets on second Tuesdays of the month to educate and inform our congregation regarding social justice activities and events in the Chicagoland area.

For more information, please contact Marie Cobbs at [marie.cobbs@att.net](mailto:marie.cobbs@att.net).

### Young Adults Happy Hour

03/13/2018 Tuesday 5:00 PM-7:00

Woodlawn Tap, 1172 E 55th Street

Save the date for our inaugural "Second Tuesdays at Jimmy's, AKA the Woodlawn tap. Jimmy's is cash only (there is an ATM on premises.)

For more information, please Christine at [youngadults@firstuchicago.org](mailto:youngadults@firstuchicago.org).

### First U Christian Group

03/13/2018 Tuesday 7:00 PM-9:00 PM

Chris Moore Parlor

Welcome. Our meetings are open to all church members and friends—of any religious beliefs—with an interest in learning more about the Christian faith.

For the remainder of 2017-2018, the group will continue its study of world Christianity. First we will view the opening lectures of a

Teaching Company course, *The History of Christianity in the Reformation Era*, taught by Brad S. Gregory, Assistant Professor of History at Stanford University. We will also begin a Bible study, focusing on the *Gospel of Matthew* and the *Gospel of Luke*. For more information, please contact Phiefer Brown at PhieferBrowne@comcast.net or Finley Campbell at FinleyCampbell5222@comcast.net.

### First U Book Club

3/13/2018 Tuesday 7:30 PM

Home of Joanne Michalski—please email for directions.

The purpose of this group is to share thoughts about the book read, to get to know each other, and to have fun. Members come when they are able. We read non-UU books, both fiction and non-fiction. Books are selected by club members. Our March book is *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert.

For more information, please contact Joanne Michalski at jomichal@sbcglobal.net.

### Spring Fling

03/17/2018 Saturday 6:00 PM–9:00 PM

The Racial Justice Task Force is in the process of planning a Spring Fling—with dancing, a small talent show, card playing, and other games—all based on the principles of multiracial unity, multicultural synergy, and international solidarity. Interested? Come sign up for the planning committee at the Social Justice Council table and/or contact Kennie James at 773-752-4019.

### Soup Lunch

03/18/2018 Sunday 11:15 AM

Hull Chapel

Soup Lunch happens every third Sunday of the month. Everyone is invited! This is a wonderful time for all members and friends to gather and learn a little more about each other. Please bring a pot of your favorite soup. You can bring it at room temperature and reheat it in crockpots in Hull Chapel.

Not bringing soup? Please consider contributing bread, salad, bread, drinks, or sweets, or offer to help with the coordination. For more information, please contact Lisa Martin-Eatinger, lisaeatinger228@gmail.com.

### SJC First Forum: Women's Issues

02/18/2018 Sunday 11:45 AM -1:00 PM

Chris Moore Parlor

These forums sponsored by the Social Justice Committee are held after the service on the third Sunday of most months.

This month's topic, sponsored by the Spiritual Adventures—Third Principle Project, is Women's Issues,

### History of the Rise and Triumph of Neo-Racism in U.S. Culture

3/18/2018 Sunday 1:00 PM—2:00 PM

The Nature of Racism is an annual offering by lay member Finley Campbell, with a different focus or theme each year. This course reflects his personal views and analysis of the personal/historical nature and impact of neo-racism within the UUA, with some impacts that reach further.

Sponsored by the Racial Justice Task Force. For more information, please contact Finley Campbell at finleycampbell5222@comcast.net.

### First U Men's Group

03/19/2018 Monday 7:00 PM -9:00 PM

RE Resource Room

This group is open to men at least 18 years old. Men in the group come together to share their experiences, help each other work through problems, and identify opportunities to support the church and its individual members. Some discussion topic for meetings have been "Politics in Chicago and Illinois," "God Is a Question, Not an Answer," and "The Beloved Community."

For more information, please contact Joseph Harrington at [joseph\\_harrington@att.net](mailto:joseph_harrington@att.net).

### Meadville Lombard Prospective Student Conference

3/29/2018 Thursday 11:30 AM—

3/30/2018 Friday 12:00 PM

Meadville Lombard Theological School,  
610 S Michigan Ave.

Are you passionate about justice-making?  
Thinking liberal religious leadership—whether

in a congregation or a non-profit organization—might be your life's calling? The master's degree programs at Meadville Lombard will equip you with the knowledge, skills, and experience you will need to activate the justice-making, peace-building power of liberal faith. The \$75 registration fee includes lodging and most meals. If you have any questions, please write Jim Proctor, Officer of Recruitment, at [jproctor@meadville.edu](mailto:jproctor@meadville.edu) or call (312) 212-0671.

### 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

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