

First Unitarian Church - The Church of the River

2013 Summer of Faith Speaker Series



LISA JENNINGS
July 14, 2013



BETH LEFEVER
July 21, 2013



ANDY BRANHAM
July 28, 2013



JACK RICHBOURG
August 4, 2013



RABBI HARRY DANZIGER
August 11, 2013



REVEREND SONIA LOUDEN WALKER
August 18, 2013



DANISH SIDDIQUI
August 25, 2013

Summer of Faith 2013 Theme

The Summer of Faith theme for 2013 is Faith and Sacrifice. For millennia, sacrifice has been closely intertwined with faith. The word is derived from the Latin words, “sacro” meaning sacred and “facere” meaning to make. The root meaning of sacrifice, therefore, is to make holy or sacred.

This meaning can be reflected in the burnt offerings made to God by ancient Hebrews to atone for their sins. In Christian scripture it can be seen in the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection. But what does sacrifice have to do with men and women living in the 21st Century? Just how are you and I “made holy” today?

In psychological terms, the basis of any loving relationship requires the sacrifice of ego by inviting others to share in our lives. But are there limits to the sacrifice of ego? Where do we draw the line? Are there “healthy boundaries?”

We, people of faith, often ask God to help us. We ask for God to do something for us. Perhaps we should be asking what we can do for God. Maybe we become holy by making God more manifest in the world by the sacrifice of ego through love.

Come hear seven sermons this summer on Faith and Sacrifice.

About our Guest Preachers

July 14, 2013 - Lisa Jennings

Lisa comes from a family of ministers from the Methodist church tradition. Once in college, she was introduced to the writings of Channing, Thoreau, and Emerson and had a brief exposure to Unitarianism by attending Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church that was pastored by Rev. John Buerhens. When she and her husband, David, moved to Memphis in 1976 they started attending the First Unitarian Church and quickly became involved in church life. Lisa has served on the board of trustees over the years as President for 4 three-year terms, and as a Past President she continues to serve the church in leadership roles. She is also a Past President of the UU Southwest Conference, a district of the UUA. In 1999, she was drawn to the pulpit and has lead worship and other services for her home church as well as congregations in MS and AL. She has attended classes at Meadville Lombard UU Seminary in Chicago, IL. Lisa is currently a Professor of Vascular Biology at the University of TN Health Science Center and a serial entrepreneur in the biotechnology sector. David, a physician at The Church Health Center, and Lisa have two children, Ian (Johanna) Jennings and Laura (Paul) Yacoubian and one grandchild, Cooper.

July 21, 2013 - Beth Lefever

Beth was a sociology major at Indiana University South Bend, and received an M.Div. degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. She completed field work in Kalamazoo, Michigan and Muncie, Indiana. She served the Berrien UU Fellowship in St. Joseph, Michigan for four years as their half-time religious leader, and was doing poetry workshops for county jail inmates in her hometown of Elkhart, Indiana, before accepting the call to the Neshoba UU Church in June of last year. She has been serving Neshoba since July.

July 28, 2013 - Andy Branham

Andy is an honors graduate of the University of Memphis School of Law and Rhodes College. Upon graduation from law school, he served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Robert M. McRae, United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee. Andy is licensed to practice law in Tennessee. He is Member and Immediate Past Chair of the Tennessee Bar Association Attorney Well Being Committee, Member and Past Chair of the Tennessee Bar Association Access to Justice Committee, Board Member and Past President of Memphis Area Legal Services, former Board Member of the Memphis Community Legal Center, Member and past Chair of the Memphis Bar Association Access to Justice Committee, is a Fellow with the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Foundation and the Tennessee Bar Foundation and a Master Member of the Leo Bearman Sr. Inns of Court. Andy works extensively with lawyers concerning balance of life issues and is a volunteer and Commissioner for the Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program. He is a pretty good member of the Church of the River and married to Pam Branham who is a great member of the church. They have a cat named Jimmi and are dedicated Midtown Memphis residents.

August 4 - Jack Richbourg

Jack is Senior Counsel with Siskind Susser and has been practicing law since 1974. The principal emphasis of his practice is immigration law. Jack graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1970. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 1974.. He is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the Tennessee Bar Association, and the Memphis Bar Association. Jack has served as the Staff Attorney for the Community Legal Center's Immigrant Justice Program, which provides pro bono legal representation to poor immigrants in the Memphis Immigration Court. He is the former Secretary of the Board of Latino Memphis, an association that advocates for the betterment of the Hispanic Community in the Memphis area. Jack has written several articles on immigration law. He is a past president of the Church of the River and oversees the Summer of Faith Program every year.

August 11 – Rabbi Harry Danziger

Born in Huntington, West Virginia, Harry is the son of the late Rabbi and Mrs. Jacob Danziger. He is married to the former Jeanne Chaban of Memphis and is the father of Jeffrey, David, and Michael Danziger, and grandfather of three. Rabbi Danziger's education includes a B.A. in Sociology from University of Cincinnati, an M.A. in Hebrew Letters. He was ordained rabbi in 1964 at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. Dr. Danziger received two honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees – one from Rhodes College and the other from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He served as Assistant/Associate Rabbi at Temple Israel, Memphis, TN, 1964-1969; 1973-1978, Rabbi, Temple B'nai Israel, Monroe, LA, 1969-1972, Associate Rabbi, Temple Oheb Shalom, Baltimore, MD, 1972-1973, Rabbi, Temple Israel, Memphis, TN, 1978-2000, Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Israel, Memphis, TN, Visiting Rabbi, Temple Adath Israel, Cleveland MS, 2001-present. Rabbi Danziger is Past President, Central Conference of American Rabbis (conference of Reform/Liberal/Progressive Rabbis in North America and beyond), has been on the faculty at Rhodes College since 1989, served as Board Chair, Metropolitan Interfaith Association (the Midsouth's largest Social Service Agency), 2003-2005, was a member, Twelve person task force to create new Guiding Principles for North American Reform Judaism (1999), Alumnus in Residence, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, 1985, Alumnus in Residence, HUC-JIR, New York, 1991, Sylvan and Sylvia Schwartzman Distinguished Alumni Lecturer, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, 2006, served on the Board, Planned Parenthood of Memphis, and was Chairman, Commission on Rabbinic-Congregational Relations, Reform Judaism.

August 18 - Reverend Sonia Louden Walker

Sonia accepted her call as Associate Pastor at First Congregational Church, UCC after graduation in her “vintage” years from Memphis Theological Seminary. She was ordained in the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, (DOC) and approved for clergy standing in the United Church of Christ. Her degrees and experience in education and social work from Bennett College and Howard University, respectively, equipped her to add value with vision and vitality to new and existing ministries at First Congo; especially in the food and other outreach ministries, congregational nurture, liturgy and community engagement. Pastor Sonia’s professional collage includes positions in pre-collegiate education, and social work practice in agencies and non-traditional settings. To many in the Mid-South, she is known as a former public affairs television personality, who kept critical issues on the civic radar; especially public education and hunger. Through media she gave birth to widespread community awareness and understanding of food drives and food banking. Her diverse volunteer affiliations, Memphis Symphony Board; founding board, Leadership Memphis; Emeriti Board, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, are now limited to the DOC Commission for Empowering Quality Leadership and the Mid South Food Bank Board. She has received many awards and acknowledgements for her service that include an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from Tennessee School of Religion; The Mertie Buckman Empowerment Award, Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis; Friend of Education Award, Memphis Teachers’ Association; The Henry Logan Starks Outstanding African-American Alumna Award, Memphis Theological Seminary; and Women of Achievement Award for Initiative. Sonia and the late Dr. Walter L. Walker, were married at All Souls’ Unitarian Church in Washington, D. C., and reared three sons, who married three wonderful women. She beams about being the grandmother to six grandchildren including two sets of twins.

August 25 - Danish Siddiqui

Danish is a lifelong Memphian, avid Memphis Tigers and Grizzlies fan and a graduate of The University of Memphis. Since his college days, he has been deeply engaged in a variety of civic, interfaith and nonprofit work. Over the years he has served on numerous boards, commissions and committees to support that work. Additionally, he’s campaigned and organized for both Republican and Democratic candidates for office. Currently Danish focuses on connecting people and communities of all faiths and ethnicities to foster mutual understanding, build stronger communities and encourage civic engagement. He serves as Chairman of the American Center for Outreach, a Tennessee based advocacy organization that aims to better connect people and government while supporting citizens in becoming a catalyst for positive change in their neighborhoods and localities. Also, he serves on other boards including the Memphis Friendship Foundation, Memphis Interfaith, and Memphis Islamic Center.



The Covenant of the First Unitarian Church The Church of the River

The purpose of this church shall be to promote the high ideals of a rational, progressive, and exalting religion, in the love of God and service to humanity, and to hold regular church services in this community. To this end, all activities of the church shall be conducted without distinction related to race, color or previous religious affiliations; and the right of private judgment and the sacredness of individual conviction shall be recognized in all things. To join our church is to walk with other members of the congregation in the spirit of our covenant.

Remember every Sunday this summer is Ride Your Bike to Church Sunday. Be a good steward of creation by taking care of yourself and the environment.