



First Unitarian Church

2014 Summer of Faith Speaker Series





Summer of Faith 2014 Theme

Faith and Politics

Faith and politics, try as we might to separate them, have been tied together for as long as human beings have had consciousness. Faith implies community, and community requires politics. You can't have one without the other. They each bend toward each other until the lines of faith and politics inevitably intertwine.

Jesus was a politician. He lived in a theocracy. There was no separation of the Temple and the government. They were one and the same. Much of his ministry centered on cleansing the Temple of priests appointed by Rome who did the bidding of the emperor. His statement, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's," might be better translated as, "Give back to Caesar's the things that are Caesar's and give back to God the things that are God's." This is just as much a political statement as it is a religious one.

The politics of the modern world are no different. The issue of abortion, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the War on Terror and same sex marriage all involve an explosive mixture of faith and politics. Secular principles and religious beliefs often bleed into one another to such an extent they become indistinguishable.

Like it or not, faithful people must become immersed in politics by their very nature because loving your neighbor is both a religious and a political assertion. This summer, our guest preachers will explore the delicate balance between Faith and Politics.

Our Guest Speakers

ANDY BRANHAM July 13, 2014	LISA JENNINGS July 27, 2014	RABBI ILAN GLAZER August 10, 2014	ELLEN KLYCE August 24, 2014
REV. SENTER CROOK July 20, 2014	SERESH SIDDIQUI August 3, 2014	REV. BETH LEFEVER August 17, 2014	REV. CARLTON ELLIOTT SMITH August 31, 2014



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, July 13,
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.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, July 20,
Rev. Senter Crook*

Senter Crook received her M. Div. from The School of Theology at The University of the South in 1988. She has served as a pastoral counselor on the staff of The Samaritan Counseling Centers, as well as Interim Director. Senter has served on the clergy staff of The Church of the Holy Apostles, and as Interim Rector there, as well as on the clergy staff of Grace-St. Luke's Church and St. George's Church. She is retired from active full time ministry, but is assisting clergy on the staff of Calvary Church, as well as Chaplain Associate at Trezevant Manor. Senter is married to Dr. Joe McFadden, and they have three grown children and six grandchildren.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, July 27,
Lisa Jennings*

Lisa Jennings 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.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, August 3,
Seresh Siddiqui*

Seresh Siddiqui is from Germantown, Tennessee and has been practicing Corporate/Securities law in Memphis ever since graduating from Georgetown University's Law Center in Washington, DC. She spends time volunteering in various community service and pro bono efforts as well as participating in various outreach and interfaith activities. Running and traveling are both favorite pastimes.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, August 10,
Rabbi Ilan Glazer.*

Rabbi Ilan is excited and honored to be Rabbi of Beth Sholom Synagogue. He has worked with many Jewish environmental and social justice organizations and has led Jewish trips in the U.S., Costa Rica, and Israel. Rabbi Ilan has brought his unique blend of Torah, humor, music, and insights from the storytelling, personal growth and public speaking disciplines to synagogues, schools, JCCs, retreat centers, and army bases throughout the Jewish world. Prior to coming to Beth Sholom, Rabbi Ilan was the spiritual leader of Temple Beth El of North Bergen, NJ. Rabbi Ilan was ordained in 2012 by ALEPH: The Alliance for Jewish Renewal. He has a B.A. in Talmud and Rabbinics from the Jewish Theological Seminary and a B.A. in Comparative Literature from the City College of New York. He also studied at Pardes and with Nava Tehila in Jerusalem. Rabbi Ilan was a Rabbis without Borders fellow with CLAL: the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. He completed trainings in the art of Sacred Hebrew Chant with Rabbi Shefa Gold, in ritual theatre with StorahTelling, and was ordained as a Maggid, a Jewish inspirational storyteller, by Maggid Yitzhak Buxbaum. Rabbi Ilan is an avid cyclist and drummer and has played with a Who's Who of the Jewish musical world. He is happily married to Rabbi Chana Leslie Glazer, with whom he enjoys traveling, film, music and spending time in nature.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, August 17,
Rev. 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 served Neshoba since July.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, August 24,
Ellen Klyce*

Ellen was born into Church of the River. The daughter of a fifth generation Memphis Jewish mother and immigrant English Anglican father, Ellen grew up in the Bible belt—that would be Memphis in the 50s and 60s. She is a graduate of White Station High School, Harvard University, B.A.; Memphis Theological Seminary, Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.); San Francisco Theological Seminary, Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction (D.A.S.D); currently pursuing Doctorate in Ministry at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Ellen has taught at Memphis Theological Seminary and will be teaching there again. She considers herself to have a checkered career including: TV Producer, NPR Morning Edition stringer, Development Officer, Harvard University, various capacities at Memphis College of Art including Director of Development and Public Relations, Special Projects Director, and Assistant to the President. Ellen is currently serving on boards of Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, Hospitality Hub, and Memphis Prep Program. She also served on boards of Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, St. Mary's Episcopal School, Books from Birth, WKNO, and many others. We also know Ellen as the mother of Polly, Walter, and Rebecca.



*Our guest speaker for Sunday, August 31,
Rev. Carlton Elliott Smith*

Rev. Carlton Elliott Smith serves our Unitarian Universalist Association as one of seven Congregational Life Staff in the Southern Region. He is the primary UUA contact for Unitarian Universalist congregations in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana and Pensacola, Florida. He lives in Holly Springs, Mississippi.
www.uuasouthernregion.org/staff/uuaregionalstaff.html.



The Covenant of First Unitarian Church

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.

About our Church

The Church of the River is a community of families and individuals who provide the bridge from the ancient past to the future in the long line of people who have given themselves to the life of the spirit. We are a progressive, liberal church. Rooted in the Christian and Jewish traditions, Unitarian churches such as ours have no creed or dogma to which members must agree. We welcome anyone to visit our church, and we celebrate the diversity of our community.

We seek to...

- Raise up those things that are precious and beautiful
- Hold up those things which are to be treasured and desired, to hold them up for reverence
- Support and sustain one another no matter what befalls us through all the ages and stages of life

For additional information, visit our website at <http://churchoftheriver.org>

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.