

First Unitarian Church

2015 Summer of Faith Preaching Series





Summer of Faith 2015 Theme

Faith and Justice

What is Justice? The prophets of the Hebrew Scripture were constantly talking about it. When they did, they were not talking about individual justice or a future state of reward or punishment for individual sins. No, they were talking about systemic justice, Sin with a capital “S,” the sins of Kings and institutions that controlled wealth. They were talking about economic systems designed to keep the poor in scarcity and the elite in abundance.

Prophets like Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah focused on Israel's oppression of the poor and lack of justice, describing the kings of Jerusalem as rebels who mistreated the powerless and defenseless people in society. To Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, this was the primary evidence of unrighteousness and sin.

What about us? Are we a just country? If Amos and Isaiah and Jeremiah could speak to us today, what would they say? Come to Summer of Faith and hear what six present-day prophets have to say about Faith and Justice.

Guest Preachers for 2015

ANDY BRANHAM - July 12

REV. ERIC POSA - August 9

REV. BETH LEFEVER - July 19

REV. ERIC POSA - August 16

REV. CHRISTOPHER D. GIRATA, RECTOR - July 26

REV. ERIC POSA - August 23

MAYOR A.C. WHARTON - August 2

REV. EYLEEN FARMER - August 30

Our Guest Preachers



Andy Branham
Guest Preacher, July 12

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.



Rev. Beth Lefever
Guest Preacher, July 19

Beth was a sociology major at Indiana University South Bend, and received a 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 Neshoba UU Church. Beth has been with Neshoba UU Church for four years.



Rev. Christopher D. Girata, Rector
Guest Preacher, July 26

After serving churches in Georgia, Alabama, and Washington DC, Chris Girata moved to Memphis to become the rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in 2012. Chris has degrees from Stetson, Emory, Virginia, and is currently in a doctoral program at Duke University.

Chris is a passionate preacher and teacher, speaking regularly at churches, conferences, and schools about current issues in the church. He takes particular interest in world religions, technology in the church, marketing and communication, and the use of social media. Chris and his wife, Nicole, have three young children, Brayden, Layna, and Annemarie.



Mayor A C Wharton, Jr.
Guest Preacher, August 2

A C Wharton, Jr. was elected Mayor of Memphis in October 2009. Winning 61 percent of the overall vote, he became Memphis' 63rd Mayor and its first new Mayor in 18 years.

Upon taking office, Mayor Wharton immediately set about focusing his administration to execute a new agenda of transparency, responsiveness, innovation, and delivering efficient, equitable, and excellent service for the people of Memphis.

Mayor Wharton believes that Memphis can be a City of Choice for people, families, entrepreneurs, artists, and businesses of all types. His vision is to align civic, commercial, and political leaders to move our economy forward and improve the quality of life for all residents. In every word and deed since taking office, he has called for the City of Memphis to celebrate its successes, honor its singular accomplishments, confront its challenges, and claim its place as a great American city.

The Wharton administration and its partners have received national recognition for Memphis' remarkable revitalization. The Mayor has focused specifically on new initiatives that dramatically increase jobs and capital investment, reduce crime, improve government efficiency and transparency, add more parks and green space to the core city, and improve public education for all children.

Prior to being elected Mayor of the City of Memphis, Mayor Wharton served as the Mayor of Shelby County for seven years and was the first African-American elected to that office.

Mayor Wharton received his law degree in 1971, graduating with honors from the University of Mississippi Law School. He became the University's first African-American professor of law, where he taught for 25 years.

The Mayor and his wife, Ruby, have raised six sons in Memphis.



Rev. Eric Posa

Interim Minister, August 9, August 16 and August 23

Rev. Eric Posa is the newly-selected Interim Minister for Church of the River. An Accredited Interim Minister in the Unitarian Universalist Association, Eric and his spouse, Suzi Posa, are moving to Memphis in late July, for him to begin serving our church August 1st. He has served churches in his home state of Texas, as well as North Carolina and Pennsylvania. His sermon series on Aug. 9, 16, & 23 - "A Living Tradition of Change" - will consider resources from the living religious tradition of

Unitarian Universalism that aid us in coping with and embracing times of transition and change in our lives.



Rev. Eyleen Farmer

Guest Preacher, August 30

The Rev. Eyleen Farmer was ordained a Baptist minister in 1994 and served as a hospice chaplain for over a decade before finding her way to the Episcopal Church. From her Baptist upbringing she learned to love the biblical story; from her hospice experience she gained insight into the depths of the human condition. In the Episcopal Church she discovered the poetic beauty of liturgy. Bringing these elements together--the story, the human condition, a poetic sensibility--is, in a wide variety of expressions, the foundation of her ministry today.

Eyleen holds a B.A. in History and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of Memphis. She earned her M. Div. degree from Vanderbilt Divinity School. She was first called to Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tennessee, in 2006 to work with youth. After a brief time in Maryland, she was called to return to Calvary in 2010. Her responsibilities have included pastoral care, adult formation, and oversight of Calvary's flagship ministry, the long-standing Lenten Preaching Series. Currently she is leading the development of a multi-faceted outreach initiative for some of Memphis' most vulnerable women.

Eyleen is married to The Rev. Tom Momberg who is currently serving Holy Cross Episcopal Church in West Memphis. AR. She loves spending time with grandchildren, exploring new places, learning new things, and getting lost in a really good novel.



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.