

First Unitarian Church

2016 Summer of Faith Preaching Series





Summer of Faith 2016 Theme

Who is my neighbor? That is the question an expert on Mosaic law asked Jesus. Jesus answered him by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. We have all heard that story, but we may not be aware of the history between Jews and Samaritans.

They hated each other! Jews considered Samaritans half-breeds. They married outside the faith. They did not keep the law. Jews and Samaritans were mortal enemies, and yet, it is a Samaritan that Jesus uses to answer the question, who is my neighbor.

Today, one might call the story the Parable of the Good Nazi or the Good Communist. You can fill in your own blank: the Story of the Good _____. Would it be the Good Republican, the Good Democrat, the Good Fundamentalist, the Good Illegal Immigrant?

Are our enemies our neighbors? How can that be? Do we have to love our enemies like we do our neighbors? How do you do that?

After telling the parable Jesus asked the expert, "Who was the man's neighbor?"

"The one who helped him," was the reply.

Come to Summer of Faith and learn about the complicated relationship between neighbors and enemies.

Guest Preachers for 2016

July 26: Rev. Sandy Webb, Rector of Holy Communion Episcopal Church

July 3: Rev. Earl Holt, Minister Emeritus, First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

July 10: Rev. Beth Lefever, Neshoba UU Church

July 17: Dr. Lisa Jennings, First Unitarian Church of Memphis

July 24: Monica Dobbins, Ministerial intern at the UU congregation of Tuscaloosa and Student at Meadville Lombard Seminary

July 31: Andy Branham, First Unitarian Church of Memphis

Our Guest Preachers



**Rev. Sandy Webb Rector of Holy Communion Episcopal Church
Guest Preacher, June 12**

The Reverend Sandy Webb came to Church of the Holy Communion in August 2013, first as Priest-in-Charge and then as the parish's sixth Rector. Immediately before coming to Holy Communion, Sandy served as Associate to the Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church in Roanoke, Virginia, where he directed worship and outreach ministries in a large, downtown parish. As an extension of his work at St. John's, Sandy served as Chaplain to the Roanoke City Fire-EMS Department (a program that he founded), and as a community representative on the Institutional Review Board at Carilion Clinic and Roanoke Memorial Hospital.

Sandy is an honors graduate of Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. Sandy's scholarly work has been published in the Journal of Episcopal Church Canon Law; his letters and essays have appeared in The Living Church, Christian Century, the Memphis Commercial Appeal and The Anglican Digest.



**Rev. Earl Holt, Minister Emeritus First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Guest Preacher, July 3**

The Rev. Earl Holt is Minister Emeritus of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, Missouri, where he served from 1974 to 2001, when he accepted a call to the historic pulpit of King's Chapel in Boston, uniquely distinguished as both the oldest Anglican church in New England (1686) and the oldest Unitarian church in the New World (1765).

Retired in 2009, he and his wife Marilyn moved to Sun Lakes, Arizona, to live near now-8-year-old grandson David and family.

A fifth-generation Unitarian and native New Englander, he is a graduate of Brown University and Starr King School for the Ministry, which also awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2004. Among other publications, the second edition of his book on the Rev. William Greenleaf Eliot (1811-1887), Unitarian minister and founder of Washington University in St. Louis, is available for order on-line at www.villagepublishers.com



Rev. Beth Lefever Neshoba UU Church Guest Preacher, July 10

Rev. Beth Lefever 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 halftime 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 five years.



Dr. Lisa Jennings First Unitarian Church of Memphis Guest Preacher, July 17

Dr. 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.



Monica Dobbins Ministerial intern at the UU congregation of Tuscaloosa and Student at Meadville Lombard Seminary Guest Preacher, July 24

Monica Dobbins is a seminarian at the Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, IL, and a candidate for ministry in the Unitarian Universalist movement. She makes her home in Birmingham, AL, where she is involved in several local justice issues, including the fight for home rule and an increased minimum wage, and fair school zoning in the Hoover community. Her research interests include religious liberty law and early Christianity. Monica's ambition upon graduation and ordination is to continue to work for social justice, in community organizing or legislative ministry.



**Andy Branham
First Unitarian Church of Memphis
Guest Preacher, July 31**

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.



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.