WEST SHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1820s: Settlers bring Universalism to the Western Reserve (Northeast Ohio).

1830s: Settlers bring Unitarianism to the Western Reserve.

1836: Olmsted Universalist Fellowship, still functioning today (as Olmsted UU Congregation), is founded in North Olmsted and two years later, in 1838, builds the edifice in which it still worships today.

1867: First UU church in Cleveland that is permanent & continuing is established as the first Unitarian Society of Cleveland.

1880: By this time First Unitarian Society is known as Unity Church, and its first edifice is built on Bolivar and E. 9th (next to Grays Armory).

1893-99: The Revs. Marion Murdock and Florence Buck are co-ministers at Unity Church.

1904: Unity Church builds a bigger edifice at Euclid & E. 82nd (and remains there until a new church is built in Shaker Heights and dedicated in January 1955).

1911: Unity Church officially becomes First Unitarian Church of Cleveland.

1942-47: Everett Moore Baker serves as minister of First Unitarian Church.

1946: In February and March, at the instigation of Baker and his assistant minister, Wayne Shuttee, a series of 5 lecture meetings were held in Lakewood to ascertain the degree of interest in establishing a Unitarian church on the West Side.

1946: Articles of Incorporation for West Shore Unitarian Church (WSUC) are adopted on April 18; Code of Regulations (Bylaws) are adopted on May 3; the congregation at its first annual meeting on May 14 officially calls Rev. Wayne Shuttee as its first minister and adopts a budget of $6,000.

1946: First church service of WSUC is held on September 15 at Lakewood’s Masonic Temple; by this time there are 129 charter members and 78 children.

1948: First church bazaar is held (known in early years as “Funfair”).

1951: The Unitarian Society is formed at the E. 82nd St. church when First Church moves to Shaker Heights.

1952: First Sunday service in West Shore’s original building (Baker Hall) was held on March 16.

1956: East Shore Unitarian Church is founded in Mentor; later moves to Kirtland.

1956: Peter Samson is installed as West Shore’s second minister on April 20.

1957: Baker Hall expansion and Shuttee wing are completed.

1961: In May the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America merge into one movement and form the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)

1961: Groundbreaking for a new sanctuary takes place on June 18.

1962: Sanctuary is completed and the dedication service is held on September 9.
1963: Holtkamp organ is dedicated on March 31.

1965: Peter Samson leaves for White Plains, NY, and James Curtis arrives to become West Shore’s third minister.

1968: General Assembly, the UUA’s continental annual meeting, is held in Cleveland (also in 2001).

1969: David Cole arrives in January and serves for 17½ years as the church’s fourth minister.

1976: Pro-Life and Pro-Choice demonstrations are held outside the church in March.

1980: Ordination of West Shore’s first Minister of Religious Education, Marjorie C. Skwire, on November 23.

1983: At a special meeting in October, the congregation votes to change the name of the church to West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church (WSUUC).

1984/85: West Shore enters the computer age, and also becomes a “teaching church” when it hosts the first of many intern ministers.

1985: The church establishes West Shore Child Care Center as its first church-owned childcare facility.

1985-87: West Shore hosts two different Salvadoran refugee families.

1986: Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church is begun, based on seed money from West Shore Church.

1988: Michael McGee is installed as the church’s fifth minister.

1990 & 1992: Partner Church program begins, which establishes relationships with churches in Hungary and Romania.

1993: At the annual meeting, Wet Shore votes to become a Welcoming Congregation (openly welcoming and affirming gays, lesbians, and bisexual people).

1996: West Shore celebrates its 50th anniversary.


2000: In June, the congregation calls Wayne Arnason and Kathleen Rolenz as the church’s first parish co-ministers.

2002: At the annual meeting, church members vote to apply to the UUA to become a “Green Sanctuary Congregation.”

2003: At the end of June, Midge Skwire retires as Minister of Religious Education, after 4 years as Director of Religious Education followed by 23 years as Minister of Religious Education.


2004: In August the appointments of Kathy Strawser as Director of Lifespan Development, and David Blazer as organist are announced.

2004: West Shore’s first political bazaar, “Raucous Caucus,” is held on September 11.
2005: Groundbreaking ceremony for West Shore’s $3.95 million renovation project takes place on June 5, services move to Baker Hall on June 19, services return to Sanctuary on Dec. 18.

2006: Year of West Shore’s 60th anniversary.

2008: A new Pastoral Care Team is formed.

2008: West Shore welcomes Intern Minister Neal Anderson.

2009: Women and Allies Against Human Trafficking (WAAHT) is begun. Their mission is to eradicate human trafficking through education and action.

2009: West Shore implements two services.

2010: Leap of Faith; West Shore participates in an initiative of the UUA to unite congregations on the cusp of growth with congregations that have grown to encourage collaboration.

2011: Founding Assembly of Greater Cleveland Congregations on June 6, 2011.

2012: As a result of the Leap of Faith initiative, the Justice Council is created as an umbrella structure for all our social justice work.

2012: West Shore welcomes Intern Minister Ellen Carville-Ziemer.

2013: A task force was formed to develop a plan for creating a Memorial Garden.

2013: A legacy board is installed near the rotunda honoring past and present members who have made significant capital, legacy and designated gifts to the church over the years.

2013: The Aesthetics Committee begins creating a design for remodeling the sanctuary.

2014: At the Annual meeting on June 6, 2014, the congregation votes to undertake a 3 year Capital Campaign with the goal of raising $1,200,000 in gifts and pledges.

2015: The congregation votes to proceed with researching the possible implementation of solar power resources.

2016: In May, Reverend Wayne Arnason retires from parish ministry. Reverend Kathleen Rolenz begins a sabbatical before becoming the Interim Senior Minister of the UU Church of Annapolis, MD.

2016: In August, West Shore welcomes the Reverend Patricia Hart as Interim Minister.


2017: Sanctuary renovation and Memorial Garden projects are completed.

2017: West Shore installs an array of solar panels on the roof of the building.

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