



November 2012

FIRST UU NEWS

We gather in community to nourish souls, transform lives, and do justice

Welcoming actions

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse

First, some thank-yous:

Thank you to Kiya Heartwood and the Equinox Auction team for the church year's biggest fund-raising event. They worked together, worked hard, and brought in around 13,000 dollars! They also brought in a lot of fun and good involvement from local businesses.

Thank you to Jairy Grisaffe, Sean Ramsey, Chris Heidel, Gary Bennett and Gary's team of more than 30 canvassers for their ongoing (as of this writing) hard work on the annual fund drive. I also want to thank those of you who have made generous pledges. This work determines with what quality and reach we live this church's mission.

Five simple actions to make the world a better place, beginning with our church:

Our first "end," or goal, as a congregation is to be "intentionally welcoming." We have had Town Hall meetings on two Sunday afternoons in order to talk about how we could do even better with welcoming. We have talked about space issues, as we want to get this conversation revved up again before it becomes a screaming crisis. Right now it's just a whispering future crisis. Okay, maybe it's starting to raise its voice.

Church growth studies say that if your parking lot or your sanctuary is more than 80 percent full, you're at capacity, and visitors will perceive that there is no room for them: <http://albiston.com/2-absolute-barriers-to-church-growth-and-why-youre-unaware-of-them/> (For those of you reading paper newsletters, please type "absolute barriers to church growth" into the search bar.)

Our issues with space create a non-verbal communication that is much less welcoming than we would like to be. We can expand our building, make room in the parking lot, make room in our services, start a new church, buy another building and become a multi-site church, start a third service, or move to a site that has more room for us. The third Town Hall meeting is Dec. 2 at noon in Howson Hall.

Some suggestions for actions we could take to become more welcoming immediately:

Our first "end" goal as a congregation is to be intentionally welcoming.

1. A hundred members could agree to choose the first service consistently for six months, making room for more visitors in the second service. If you are willing to be on the list of people who make First UU more welcoming with this simple but important action, please email me at Meg@austinuu.org. We now offer full RE classes at the first service."

2. Fifty members could commit to parking at the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired when they attend on Sunday mornings in order to leave more spaces in the First UU parking lot for newcomers. We have

an electronic copy of a map that will show you where to park. If you are willing to be on this list of people who make First UU more welcoming with this action, please email me at Meg@austinuu.org.

3. When you arrive for the second service, choose your place with a welcoming intention. Move toward the middle of the pew if you can, to leave seats near the outside for people who come in later. If the choir is not singing, choose to sit in the choir loft in order to make more room in the pews.

4. At coffee hour and up and down the halls, please be mindful that we have folks here who identify as Christians, or as Libertarians or Republicans. Part of the fun of coming to church is to have lively conversations with like-minded people, and I am not asking you to give that up even a little bit. However, when *continued on page 2*



Welcoming actions

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we speak as if people in those groups are incomprehensible idiots, we may inadvertently contribute to creating an atmosphere into which our members and friends would hesitate to bring guests or family members. (I say “we” because I am as likely to do this, in a thoughtless moment, as anyone.) It is perfectly possible to be theologically progressive and politically conservative, or politically and socially liberal and cherish a robust liberal Christian faith. You already knew that.

5. Please try to be in the sanctuary when the service starts. There is a lot of milling around for the first 10 minutes of the service, which is disruptive for people trying to get settled into a mood of sacred quiet, joy or expectation. If you miss the beginning, please be willing to wait to be seated until the first hymn begins. The ushers will not grab you, but they may ask if you would be willing to wait to be seated. Whatever you decide, please treat our ushers with kindness and good manners.

I appreciate your giving these five simple actions your consideration. ■

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

How big are we and why does it matter?

by Susan Thomson



This is the third in a series of columns I am devoting to church growth. Last month I asked us to consider two questions. How big are we, and why does it matter?

Ponder this question. “If I were a better UU next year than this year, how would I know it?” Loren Mead, author of *More Than Numbers: The Way Churches Grow*, describes maturational growth in churches as growth in the stature and religious maturity of each member, as well as growth in the ability to nurture and be nurtured. He further explains that a healthy, growing congregation empowers its members to contribute their unique talents and gifts for the well being of the whole.

Our congregation has adopted a mission and ends (or goals) that are very much aligned with maturational growth.

We say in our mission that we gather in community to nourish souls and transform lives. And we have two groups of ends, intentional hospitality and nourishing souls/transforming lives, which speak to this type of growth. Look at these ends:

First UU Church of Austin is an intentionally hospitable community where:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity.
- All people of goodwill are welcomed.
- People are supported in times of joy and need.
- People find connection with one another in fellowship.
- We are fully engaged and generous with time, treasure and talent.

It is hard to nourish others without being nourished oneself ...

- We invite people of goodwill to find a spiritual home with us.
 - We engage as UUs in public life.
- First UU Church of Austin nourishes souls and transforms lives by:
- Engaging and supporting one another in spiritual practice and growth;
 - Providing worship, programs and activities that awaken meaning and transcendence; and

- Providing a caring, supportive and safe place to rekindle the spirit.

As we make progress as a faith community toward achieving these ends, we will be

achieving maturational growth.

Another way to illustrate maturational growth in a congregation, according to Mead, is people using their own unique talents and gifts and challenging others to use theirs in order to minister to one another and to the wider community. This concept of ministry is important if a church is to be vital and growing. Meg is a wonderful minister, but we shouldn’t expect all of the “ministering” to fall on her very capable shoulders.

As we move toward this concept of ministry, we move away from an orientation of “church membership,” which is a consumer orientation where we as members expect the church to deliver our spiritual care and where *continued on page 3*

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we simply show up on Sunday mornings to be fed or nourished. Instead, we move toward an orientation of “personal ministry” in which we each contribute our unique talents and gifts to others. We feed as we are fed.

We have many opportunities at First UU to share our talents and gifts. We all have something to share. This is not to say that we don't need to be nourished personally. It is hard to nourish others without being nourished oneself, although the very act of nourishing others helps us nourish ourselves. When we actively engage in the life of our church in order to receive and give

nourishment, we grow in the maturity of our faith and deepen our spiritual roots. As we do this together, we strengthen the welcoming path for newcomers. So . . . if I were a better UU next year than this year, how would I know it?

When I belonged to the First UU Church in Lubbock, I led the children's Chalice Worship Service on Sunday mornings. We began the service by singing this hymn together: “From you I receive, to you I give, together we share, and from this we live.” That kind of says it all, doesn't it? ■

Thomson is president of the First UU Board of Trustees

Welcome new members!

Below is a list of new members who have joined First UU since February 2012. Those who have joined since June 1, and who missed the June potluck, are invited to a potluck dinner on Nov. 10 in Howson Hall. New members will be recognized at the Nov. 11 worship service. Please look for them (they'll be wearing blue New Member ribbons) and make a point of welcoming them to the congregation.

*Mary Jane Allen
Charlene Ansley
Susanna Bond
Kristina Bordine
James Brush
Rachel K. Brush
Meg Coe
Ann M. Cooper
Victor Cornell
Suzanne Daniels
Della Molloy Daugherty
Carol E. Edwards
Gordon Flack
Janie Flack
Samantha Fredrickson
Linda Funderburg
Amanda M. Grayson
Meredith Hunt
Julie Lipton
Jared Jackson
JoAnna Johnson
Tom Johnson
Melanie Kofnovec*

*Drew Liedeker
Eileen Liedeker
Julie Lipton
Chris Magyar
Vernonica Magyar
Brenda K. McDaniel
Jamie Price
Jordan Price
Tom Priem
Barbara Romano
Lizette J. Reyes
Laura Favorite Rice
Monica Ross
Albert B. Sanders
Virginia M. Sanders
David L. Scott
Laura Smith
Nicole Smith
Shandy Smith
Craig Thompson
Stacia Thompson
Kirk Zottnick*

Sign up for Nov. Sharing Supper

Attending Sharing Suppers is a great way to meet lots of newcomers and long-time UUs. Sharing Suppers are casual adult dinners, the third Sat. of each month. Groups of 6-10 people gather in various participants' homes, and everyone contributes to the dinner.

Sharing Suppers are open to anyone in the church, new or established, couples or singles, and you need not be a member to participate. Sign up for one dinner at a time; no long-term commitment. Participants take turns hosting and planning the meal or helping co-host in another's home. The Nov. Sharing Supper will be held on Nov. 17. The signup deadline is Nov. 11. Contact Jeanne Barker at sharing@austinuu.org to sign up. For monthly reminders, join the email list: sharingsupper-subscribe@yahoo.com. ■

Six Women, Six Visions Reception

**Fri., Nov. 2
Gallery
6:00-8:00 pm**

Check out the wonderful artwork of the six women artists who are featured in the Gallery during November: Melinda Barker, Debbie Buie, Renee Harvey, Johnnie Sielbeck, Gail Sneden, Priscilla Wicker. ■

Caring Ministry is here to help!

We all need help from time to time. We may be grieving from a loss, recovering from an illness, dealing with a transportation problem, or just need someone to talk with. The caring ministry at First UU is here to help. The people in the caring ministry are devoted to helping you while maintaining confidentiality. If you or someone you know needs help, please contact the caring ministry at 512-452-6168 ext. 315 or caring@austinuu.org. Our team will contact you to see how we can help. ■

Floater needed

If you see one of our members circulating around greeting visitors with a big smile on his or her face, that is one of our "floaters." A "floater" is a member who has generously agreed to donate his or her time to make visitors and new members feel welcome when they attend one of our Sunday worship services. If you would like to participate in this important program, please contact either Gary Payne or Rue Wood, co-chairs of the Membership Committee, membership@austinuu.org. ■

Social Action

Raise your voice ... join the Texas UU Justice Ministry

No matter how the Nov. 6 elections turn out, we need to organize locally and raise the voice of Unitarian Universalist values in the public arena as state legislators return to Austin for the next session in January.

Join the Social Action Committee as we meet Tuesday, Nov. 13 to discuss how we want to organize and choose one or two main issues to promote in the upcoming legislative session.

At this meeting, we'll hear speakers from both the budding Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry, which seeks to have UU values enacted into legislation and promulgated in public policy, and the established Texas Impact Group, which is a statewide religious grassroots network that First UU Austin has joined.

Most important, we want to hear from

Austin UUs who want to speak out and act on state and local issues. Our UU voice has been missing on issues such as immigration, family planning, GLBT rights, education financing, evolution and other issues under consideration by the Texas Legislature. Let's choose one or two main issues to advocate.

Consider that First UU Austin attracts members from not only Travis, but also Williamson, Hays and Bastrop counties, our small congregation has an opportunity to impact legislation that reflects our liberal religious views. We hope members from all areas will attend our planning meeting.

For more information, contact Social Action Chair, Peggy Morton, at socialaction@austinuu.org. ■

Shop early and for a good cause!

Rather than buying more landfill this holiday season, invest in farming enterprises or sustainable art to help lift indigenous tribes out of poverty, and show loved ones a new way to celebrate the holidays.

Visit Howson Hall on Sunday, Nov. 18 from 9:30 am - 1:30 pm as it turns into an International Alternative and Fair Trade Market offering goods from indigenous artists and farmers around the world.

- Buy bees, chicks or part of a water buffalo to support farmers or give beautiful cards with photos and explanations of the projects by Church World Service organizers.
- Buy coffee, tea, chocolates and holiday cards from the UU Service Committee.
- Find woven scarves, belts, bags, purses, jewelry and wall hangings from Guatemala to support Unidas Para Vivir Mejor, a group of women who live on the outskirts

of Guatemala City in an impoverished area, called Esperanza (Hope).

- Find African crafts from the True Vineyard Ministries group in San Marcos, which creates sustainable employment opportunities for widows in Rwanda.

- Buy Kuna Kicks, beautiful shoes made from molas by the Kuna natives of Panama, which we will be selling for the very first time. Teysha sponsors them as they work

to create socially and environmentally just enterprises that protect nature and people.

- Buy a "Standing on the Side of Love" T-shirt and take all your gifts home in your First UU fair trade shopping bags.

Questions? Want to volunteer to help on Nov. 18? Contact Judy Sadegh, 512-496-5771 or giffair@austinuu.org. ■

Show loved ones a new way to celebrate the holidays at the Fair Trade Market.

FIN

Music matters

Spotlight on our Children's Choir Directors

The church's Children's Choirs are in full swing, but it is not too late for children to expand their spiritual experience through music at First UU. We have two amazingly talented directors, both of whom are highlighted below...



Brigitte Smith, director of the First UU Secondary Choir (grades 4-8), is a passionate music educator, vocalist, and conductor. She holds a bachelor's degree in Choral Music Education from Texas State University where she was a member and section leader for Chorale, a student conductor for the Women's Chorus, president of NAFM, and steward for Mu Phi Epsilon. She is currently the head choral director at Goodnight Middle School in San Marcos, Texas. Under her direction, the choir has grown from just under 40 members to a flourishing 200+. In the past four years, the Goodnight Choirs have consistently won superior ratings at UIL contests and festivals. Brigitte also enjoys performing solo and in local choirs. In the past, she has been the soprano soloist, section leader, and guest conductor for University Baptist Church.



Danielle Solan, director of the First UU Elementary Choir (K-3) has delighted in teaching music to children for nine years, in Austin for the past five of them. She is the general music teacher at Bluebonnet Trail Elementary School and the violin coordinator for the Manor Independent School District. A highlight of her career has been teaching music in Panama, Ecuador, and Japan. Danielle has a master's degree in Music and Human Learning from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's of music degree in Music Education and Bassoon Performance from Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio. Her hobbies include traveling, creative writing, and doing yoga.

Questions about our Children's Choirs? Please email our Parent Coordinator Chris Heidel at cc@austinuu.org. ■

Interested in joining the adult choir?

The adult choir meets in the Sanctuary, Wednesdays, 7:30 pm. The choir sings on average at two to three services per month, and explores a wide variety of music. It is open to ages 15 and up. No audition required. Come check out a rehearsal with no long-term commitment. For more info, email director of music, Brent Baldwin, at brentb@austinuu.org. ■

Leadership journey

Come join us to start or further your leadership journey.

You've heard Meg's invitation to leadership and wondered whether that was something you wanted to do. Maybe you have wanted to be more involved in this community and connected to its people, but didn't know how. Perhaps you have felt a growing commitment to your faith, but weren't sure how to give it voice. If this sounds like you, please join us on Dec.1 from 9:00-11:00 am to explore The Leadership Journey.

To register, please respond to lyndawest@earthlink.net or sign up with one of the nominating members in the gallery. ■

Calling all volunteers ...

We need volunteers for the Second Tuesday Collate Group at People's Community Clinic to collate and stuff patient information packets. We have taken on additional responsibilities and need more help. We meet next on Nov. 13 in the workroom at PCC. Arrive anytime after 9:30 am and leave when you need -- we are always finished by noon. You don't need to participate each month, just as you can. There are usually around four to eight of us and it is a nice opportunity to visit with each other. Please email Sheri Overton at pcc@austinuu.org. ■

Little Suppers: Sharing Suppers for the toddler set

Toddlers, bring your families for play, potluck dinner, and conversation. We'll take turns hosting in our toddler-proofed homes. We'll meet on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm. This month we will meet on Nov. 15.

Please RSVP to robin.w.richardson@gmail.com by Nov 8. ■

Operation Freshen UUp continues

Isn't it fun that relatively small accomplishments can make a big difference? So far, we have completed updates in the gallery, office, and Howson Hall—tasks that have provided connections with other members while at the same time improving our church space! In the months ahead, we will tackle more cleaning and painting tasks—are you willing to help? If you'd like more information about Operation Freshen UUp, please contact coordinator Vicki Almstrum at freshenUUp@austinuu.org. If you'd like to join the new yahoo group to discuss and coordinate efforts, please send an email to Freshen-UUp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. ■

Seniors luncheon

**Tuesday Nov 13
Howson Hall
12:00 noon**

Join us for soup, salad and dessert with a lively performance by the New Austin Polka Band to start off the holiday season. Only \$5. RSVP to Alice Cashman, 512-837-0988 or seniors@austinuu.org. ■

Mark Your Calendars ... Upcoming Congregational Vote!

Pre-congregational Meeting, Nov. 11

Congregational Meeting, Dec. 9

On Dec. 9, at 1:30 pm, the First UU congregation will gather to vote on the annual budget and potentially other issues as well. We will gather on Nov. 11, at 1:30 pm, to discuss the annual budget and other potential agenda items for the Dec. 9 meeting. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend both meetings.

Remember: in order to vote, you must meet the qualifications described in the bylaws, Article II, Section 4: "Individuals who have been members of the church for 30 days or more and who have (as an individual or part of a family unit) made a recorded financial contribution during the past 12 months and at least 30 days prior to the meeting (Nov. 9), have the right to vote at all official church meetings."

For more information about becoming a member, please contact our Director of Membership and Communications, Carla Jo Schaefer (carlajo@austinuu.org; 452-6168 x 301). To make your gift of record, at least 30 days but no more than 12 months before each vote, any gift will do (cash, check, stock, etc.), provided that we have received it within the date range and that we can connect it to you (cash in an envelope without your name on it, for example, does not qualify).

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about any of the above, please contact Sean Hale Director of Finance & Operations, sean@austinuu.org 512-452-6168 ext. 308. ■

Jump in and get your hands dirty!

**First UU "Spruce & Juice"
Grounds Work**

Our award-winning wildlife habitat gardens on the west side of the church need a little sprucing up. So, pull up your sleeves, put on your gardening gloves and "dig in." Join the grounds and green sanctuary committees and your other friends for a morning of fun easy work and fellowship as we weed, trim, mulch and "jump into work head first!" Whether you are a novice or an expert gardener, we need you. Bring your hat, gloves, and gardening tools. Bring the whole family! We will have some fun child-size jobs for the kids.

We will also have live music, food, raffles and lots of fun! Our gardens have been lovingly created and maintained over the years through the hard work of many. Let's continue that tradition! For more information, contact green@austinuu.org or grounds@austinuu.org. ■

*...the work of the world is common
as mud.*

*Botched, it smears the hands,
crumbles to dust.*

*But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and
evident.*

Greek amphoras for wine or oil,

*Hopi vases that held corn, are put in
museums*

*but you know they were made to be
used.*

*The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.*

Marge Piercy from "To Be of Use"

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

Unitarian Universalist Association and district changes

Kenn Hurto, Executive Lead for the Southern Region
Connie Goodbread, Congregational Life Consultant

We know it is not news to you that changes are happening within our association and districts. After several years of planning, Fla, Mid-South, Southeast, and Southwest Districts have initiated steps toward unifying our identity and working as the "UUA Southern Region." Our four governing boards have reduced their size, approved cost and income sharing, and authorized staff to work as a team across district boundaries. Beginning with the 2013-14 fiscal year, we will initiate a new funding structure to replace the way congregations now pay our UUA "Annual Program Fund" and District Fair Share. We will be changing from the per member assessment to a single "ask" based on a percentage of congregational budgets (more detail on that in weeks to come).

The UUA field staff are now referred to as Congregational Life Consultants, doing away with the old District Executive and Program Consultant distinctions. Connie Goodbread is one of our Congregational Life Consultants. We have four staff portfolios:

- Faith and Leadership Development, Connie Goodbread and Jennifer Nichols;
- Administration and Stewardship, Rev. Susan Smith;
- Transitions, Rev. Kenn Hurto;
- Evangelism/Growth, Rev. Sue Sinnamon.

Coincidentally, our colleague, Annette Marquis of the Southeast District, is moving to a new position as the LGBTQ and Multi-cultural Ministries Program Manager for our UUA. For additional information, see the Denominational Affairs bulletin board.

UU-UNO Celebrates 50 Years!

The UU-UNO has worked to support international human rights, climate change policies, security and peace building for women, and many other issues for the past 50 years. First UU is very fortunate to have Judy Sadegh as our envoy representing UU-UNO. Speak to her to learn about our denomination's international social justice work, or see: <http://www.uua.org/searchoursite.shtml?q=uu-uno>

New Justice General Assembly eBooks

Check out two new Skinner House Books eBooks at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/>: *Assembled, 2012: Select Sermons and Lectures from the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association* and bonus eBook *Resistance: A Memoir of Civil Disobedience in Maricopa County* by Annette S. Marquis ■

Save the Date!

Nov 9-11, 2012—SWUUC Fall Leadership Training, Glen Lake, Texas

Feb 9-11, 2013—SWUUC Winter Conference, Dallas

Feb 22-24, 2013—SW UU Women's Conference, Corpus Christi, Texas

Mar 21-24, 2013—SWUUC Spring Training

Apr 19-21, 2013—SWUUC Spring Conference & Annual Meeting

Jun 19-23, 2013—UUA General Assembly, Louisville, Ky.

Jun 30-Jul 6, 2013—SWUUC Primary Camp, U-Bar-U, Kerrville, Texas

Jul 7-13, 2013—SWUUC Junior Camp, U-Bar-U, Kerrville, Texas

Jul 14-20, 2013—SWUUC Senior Camp, U-Bar-U, Kerrville, Texas

Jul 21-26, 2013—Southwest UU Summer Institute (SWUUSI), Western Hills Guest Ranch, Tahlequah, Okla. (everyone welcome, with or without children!)

Beyond Belief: reflections from the UUA President (blog)

See <http://president.blogs.uua.org/> to read the blog of Rev. Peter Morales. Some of his latest posts are "Wealth and the 47%," "Service and Military Chaplaincy," "Sacred Ground, Shine and Shadow" (Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America by Eboo Patel and Shine and Shadow: Meditations by Kathleen McTigue, the new director of the UU College of Social Justice), "The Road Ahead," and "Fear and Denial in Politics." ■

Thanksgiving is coming!

Potluck Dinner, Nov. 22, Howson Hall, 4:30 pm

Our annual Thanksgiving Pot Luck will be held at the church in Howson Hall on Nov. 22 at 4:30 pm. We are requesting some vegetarian dishes for our vegetarian members. Turkey and all the fixins' will be served. \$6 donation is requested and/or bring a dish!

Sign-up sheets in the Gallery. To offer your help, contact the Fellowship Committee or Michael and Irene Tobis, 512-739-7173 or mtobis@gmail.com or fellowship@austin-uuo.org. ■

Curricula for fall

Pre-K: Rainbow Seekers

K-1st Grade: Picture Book UUism

2nd & 3rd Grade: Moral Tales

4th & 5th Grades: UU Explorers

**Jr. High Group
10:45-11:45 am**

**Sr. High Group
10:45 am-12: 45 pm**

For full curriculum descriptions, see the September newsletter. ■

Fall schedule

**9:15-10:30 am
& 10:45 am-noon**

Preschool
(3 and 4 year olds)
Kindergarten-Grade 1
Grades 2-3
Grades 4-5

9:15-10:30 am only

Two Children's Choirs
(first service)

10:45 am-noon only

Jr. Youth Group
(Grades 6-8)

10:45 am-12:45 pm

Sr. Youth Group
(Grades 9-12)

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan Religious Education

by Marisol Caballero

Each year, starting in November, we pay special attention to gratitude and generosity by participating in the UU Service Committee's (UUSC) annual fundraiser, "Guest at Your Table." Since 1975, UU households have placed the colorful "Guest at Your Table" box on their dinner table and contributed to it at every meal. Each contribution helps to fund the work of the UUSC's global work. The UUSC is an organization that, "through a combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots organizations, UUSC promotes economic rights, advances environmental justice, defends civil liberties, and preserves the rights of people in times of humanitarian crisis. [The UUSC's] work is built on the conviction that all people are entitled to basic human rights, which transcend divisions of class, race, nationality, sexual orienta-

tion, ethnicity, religion, and gender."

Sunday November 18 will be our kickoff Sunday for "Guest at Your Table." Please stop by the RE table in the gallery or the Welcome table in the lobby to pick up your "Guest at Your Table" box and information on the program and its beneficiaries.



Other dates to remember:

Nov. 8 - Adult Religious Education Committee Meeting, 6:30 pm

Nov. 18 - Children and Youth Program Committee Meeting, 1:30 pm

Enjoy the feasting and cooler weather! ■

Caballero, is interim director of Lifespan Religious Education

"Every Child Is Our Child" successful fundraiser!

The Religious Education Department is proud to report that, this summer, the children and youth raised \$132.77, which will send a child who has lost a parent to AIDS, to school for one year in Ghana. This was part of the UU-United Nations Office's "Every Child Is Our Child" program, which our RE kids and youth elected to support over the summer.

Thank you to all who contributed to give the gift of education to a deserving child. ■

Volunteers needed: assistant teachers for fall children's program

Deepen and grow your connection to this church community. Increase the level of joy in your life. Renew your sense of spiritual exploration. Have fun while getting to know our kids!

- All ages and grade levels, during first OR second service.
- Assist in lesson from curriculum (and gather supplies as needed)
- Help maintain spirit of learning and cooperation in classroom

Apply to mari@austinuu.org. ■

"We will be offering Our Whole Lives, our comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, for 4th - 7th grade and high school youth starting in January. For more information, please contact Andrew Young at andrew@austinuu.org."

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Rally UUnDead

by LuLu Newton

In our high school youth program we have several large weekend events where youth come from all over the district - as far away as Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. In other parts of the country these are called Cons, which is short for Convention. However, in this district we call them Rallies. We attend three a year where upwards of 100 youth come together for the weekend. Our cluster - Heart of Texas - holds the first rally of the year in either Austin or San Antonio around mid-October each year. This year we had 10 youths attend the Heart of Texas rally at Live Oak UU Church. This article describes how one youth experienced the event.

Since this was my first year in the high school youth group, the rally in mid-October was my first rally. I met so many amazing people and connected with my friends in a completely new way.

The theme of our rally was UUnDead. Our dance was "zombie" themed for Halloween, and some of us wore Zombie makeup. I, of course, had to get in on that. Even though the equipment broke down, we had fun.

We held all kinds of workshops. There was magic, the gathering, sewing pillows, zombie makeup, zombie apocalypse survival, and plenty more. We played games like Silent Football whose rules are insanely complex, so I won't get into that. We sang hilarious songs. Our guest speaker, Dwayne Windham, gave a very wonderful speech and presentation about communicating love. I tend to forget how much I can learn while at Unitarian Universalist youth events. I learn new things about new friends, new things about old friends, and new things about me. I look forward to these events because they can bring out the best in everyone. The rallies are places where you can be yourself and have people accept you for the way you are.

UU is big on community, and our rallies are just a bunch of kids getting together to love one another and join in family and community. Our worship also was very meaningful to me. We burnt our problems on paper in a fire and let them die. Each of us probably had a different experience, but I hope everyone else had as great of an experience as I did.

I met so many people who were there for the same reason I was: to meet other people and have fun. And that's exactly what we

did. Of course it was very upsetting to leave. Very sleep deprived (no one ever sleeps), lonely (no one is ever alone), and disoriented states (no one knows what the heck is happening) do not mix well. It hits hard. But with the events we are planning, we will hopefully get to see all the lovely youth from our cluster. We have a lock-in planned in early November, and possibly a cluster U-Bar-U retreat in December. Two or three of our members will be attending chaplain training. It's been awhile since we had youth chaplains, so this is very exciting! I look forward to the events to come, and to having chaplains in our group! This fall holds many high hopes and possibilities. ■

Join the Heritage Book Club

Heritage Book Club meetings are on the second Friday of each month. We have a potluck supper at 7:00 pm and book discussion at 8:00 pm. Everyone is welcome, even if you have not read the book.

November's book is *City of the Century*, by Donald L Miller. The Nov. meeting will be at Frances Morey's home: 4906 21 Waller St. (the RBJ Building, just east of I-35, north side of the river) 512-517-3162.

RSVP is preferred, but not mandatory to frances_morey@yahoo.com. December's book is *A Walk in the Woods*, by Bill Bryson. ■



Full Moon Circle

Tues., Nov. 27
7:00 pm

Join us to celebrate the fullness of the moon and the fullness of our hearts. Our circles are open to anyone of any spiritual tradition as long as you come with an open heart.

Each circle is intended to be thought-provoking and insightful. We each have our own path on our spiritual journey, and we honor your choices as you make the decisions that lead you to your Source. This is an intimate time to join in a sacred space and be safe, mindful, and welcome.

The new time for winter circles is 7:00 pm. Check our calendar page for the room number. We will be indoors! More info at austinuu.org/yewgrove. ■

Spring into Action 2013!

The focus of the 2013 church-wide project is immigration. We are looking for suggestions for possible forum speakers, educational activities, and/or volunteer opportunities that relate to this issue. If you have any ideas, please contact Wendy Erisman at churchwideproject@austinuu.org. ■

SUNDAY WORSHIP

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

NOV. 4

Our Religious Imagination

WITH REV. BRIAN FERGUSON

Albert Einstein was one of the great thinkers of the 20th century and knew a lot, but said "Imagination is more important than knowledge." Our Unitarian Universalist religious tradition places great emphasis on the use of reason to interpret our experience to derive meaning in life. But the solutions to some of the most difficult intractable problems in our lives seem to lie beyond our experience and reason. This worship service explores what possibilities could be open to us if we make imagination a bigger part of our religious life.

Rev. Brian Ferguson is currently serving in his third year as the Consulting Minister to the San Marcos Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

NOV. 11

Equilibrium with Elegance: Jazz and UU Theology

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Wynton Marsalis writes: "To improvise means to find your own way of intelligently using what you have in order to improve your environment; to swing means to maintain equilibrium with elegance, to be resilient; and to play the blues means that no matter how tragic a situation may be you have the capacity to conquer it with style." UU theology and practice is very much like jazz.

New members will be recognized during the service..

NOV. 18

"Thank You, I'm Going Down Hill"

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

One of the spiritual practices I enjoy is the practice of gratitude. I don't always remember to do it, but it's easy and, in my experience, it changes things immediately.

NOV. 25

The Lovers, the Dreamers, and Me

WITH REV. MARISOL CABALLERO

Kermit T. Frog's famous ballad, "The Rainbow Connection," has had a profound impact on my life, my theology, and my call to ministry. As I age, I have begun to recognize that Jim Henson's words and characters have helped form so many of us in similar ways. This sermon will celebrate the wisdom of this unexpectedly prophetic man, who together with his puppets, continues to help change the world more than 20 years after his death.

THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

NOV. 4

Water Wars in Texas

WITH LUKE METZGER

Last year Texas experienced one of the worst droughts in history ... reservoirs dipped to record-lows, stretches of the Guadalupe ran dry, as many as 500 million trees across Texas died. While spring rains brought some relief, 72 percent of Texas remains in drought and 11 reservoirs are still less than 10 percent full.

Despite these very real and current conditions, some of Texas' most powerful industries are still wasting billions of gallons of water. In this forum, Mr. Metzger, founder and director of Environment Texas, discusses the drought's impact on our environment, identifies some of the state's biggest water hogs, and talks about how the Legislature can protect our water supplies.

As a sponsor of this Forum, the Green Sanctuary Committee invites you to join us after the Forum presentation for further discussion of these issues facing our planet. We will meet at Central Market, 4001 N. Lamar, around 1:30 pm.

NOV. 11

Advanced Research in Biomedical Engineering at UT Austin

WITH DR. GRADY RYLANDER

Professor H. Grady Rylander, MD III will discuss his ground breaking research at the UT Austin as well as highlights of the other research and educational opportunities available as part of the well established Biomedical Engineering program at UT. Dr. Rylander obtained both a B.S. in Electrical Engineering at UT Austin as well as Masters in Electrical Engineering while

a first year medical student. He received both his M.D. and specialty training in Ophthalmology at the UT San Antonio. He joined the Faculty of Biomedical Engineering in Austin in 1978 and became a full professor there in 1989. Currently he is both teaching and doing glaucoma research and practicing ophthalmology in Austin.

NOV. 18

Politifact Texas: What Is It and How Does it Work?"

WITH GARDNER SELBY

It's the year of the fact check in American politics, and the public is loving this new system for holding politicians accountable for their words. Politifact Texas, a project of the *Austin American Statesman*, is now approaching its third birthday. In the 2012 campaigns, who's been getting things right most often and who's been missing their facts? How does Politifact choose what it checks? How does it describe each rating? This will be a brief presentation followed by a wide open question and answer period.

Gardner Selby is the editor of the *Austin American Statesman's* Politifact Texas. Gardner Selby joined the *Statesman* in 2005, after having been a reporter in the Capitol bureaus for newspapers in San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas. Over the years, as a journalist, he has covered dairy farms in Wisconsin, city hall in Wichita, and a range of topics in Texas politics and government. He graduated from U.T. Austin in 1983.

NOV. 25

No Forum

Eclectic folk jam

Nov. 9
7:00-10:00 pm
Howson Hall

The Eclectic Folk Jam, an open jam session for singers and instrumentalists, is held on the second Friday of every month. Suggested song material includes 1960s folk, bluegrass, Appalachian, blues, Dixieland, cowboy, gospel, original, and the "Rise Up Singing" songbook. More info: Pete and Kim Akenhead, 512-834-0188 or Mary Jane Ford, 512-926-4122, or singalong@austinuu.org. Next month's session: Dec. 14. ■

UU/Quaker singalong

Nov. 24
7:30-10:30 pm

This is held regularly on the fourth Saturday of the month at the Friends Meeting House, 3701 E. MLK Blvd. Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing. "Rise Up Singing" songbooks provided. This is an alcohol-free event. For more information contact Larry Vaughn 512-469-0029. If you want to add somebody to the email list, contact Mary Jane Ford at singalong@austinuu.org. Next month's event: Dec. 22. ■

**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.
Austin, TX 78756
512.452.6168
austinuu.org

Senior Minister
Rev. Meg Barnhouse
ext. 304

Director of Finance
and Operations
Sean Hale
ext. 308

Interim Director of
Lifespan Religious Ed.
Marisol Caballero
ext. 306

Director of Music
Brent Baldwin
ext. 314

Director of Membership
and Communications
Carla Jo Schaefer
ext. 301

Board President
Susan Thomson
president@austinuu.org

Special offering for November

North Central Caregivers

What would you do if you could no longer drive your car? How would you get to the doctor's, grocery store, bank, or library? Lack of reliable transportation is a reality for hundreds of older adults living in our community—and a major reason why seniors can no longer live independently in their own homes.

Since 1989, North Central Caregivers has been providing free transportation services to benefit older adults living in north central Austin, with the mission of enabling seniors to remain independent in the community for as long as possible. The most requested service is the transportation that Caregiver volunteers provide to allow our older neighbors to access medical care, shop for groceries and other quality of life destinations.

First UU is a long-time supporter of North Central Caregivers. Many First UU members serve on the board, volunteer in the office and participate at fundraising events. The financial support provided annually by First UU is instrumental in ensuring that seniors have the assistance they need.

North Central Caregivers also do minor home repairs, yard work, errands, friendly visits and reassurance telephone calls. In 2011, North Central Caregivers provided 4,140 rides and other services for 298 seniors. Our 174 volunteers gifted over 12,160 hours of service to their community.

Please make a generous donation on Nov. 11 to our special offering, and make sure that this vital support is available for older adults today and into the future. Contact Linda Buehlmann 512- 323-5334 or ncc@austinuu.org. ■

A NOTE ABOUT SPECIAL OFFERINGS

On the second Sunday of every month, our church collects a special offering. Your generous donations at the worship service go to the First UU Justice Fund, which is divided among worthy organizations, thereby extending our church's mission into the greater community. Organizations are nominated and then approved by the congregation.