



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## Did you ever wonder?

**by Rev. Meg Barnhouse**

### Do you ever wonder how to get something going in this congregation?

In trying to move toward fulfilling our mission, there are any number of projects and programs that could build community, nourish souls, transform lives and do justice. If you see a place where we're not doing much, and you feel you would like to get something started, here is what you do:

Write up a proposal and you and I will talk about getting it going. If it is something we don't already have going, and if it won't cost the church a lot of resources (money, room space on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings), if there are three or four other church folks interested in doing this with you, your chances of getting a go-ahead are pretty good. Decisions like this get a lot of input from the management team, which consists of the Minister, the Director of Finance and Operations, the Music Director, the Interim Director of Lifespan Faith Development, and the Director of Membership and Communications. Together we hold the big picture of congregational life in mind, along with committing ourselves to take the church in the direction it (in communication with the Board) has chosen.

#### Do you ever wonder what the Minister does during the week?

What I'm remembering at this writing is: lots of emails, phone calls, meeting with committees, counseling with church members, meeting with church members just to get acquainted, fund raising, visiting people in the hospital, training Pastoral Care Associates, meeting with Lay Leaders, consulting with church leaders, leadership development, administrative decision-making, participation in the community, outreach to non-members, political action, meeting with colleagues, working for the UU denomination, occasionally traveling to preach

in other pulpits, planning for the future, writing reports so the Board can monitor my efforts, writing newsletter articles, writing columns for the UU World magazine, increasing First UU's visibility in the community, reading, meditating, meeting with new members, meeting with the Board, meeting with staff for planning and supervision, spending time with church folks, socializing and building relationships, oh, and planning worship and preaching every week. A sermon takes between 10 and 20 hours, on average, for most ministers, so the rest of what we do has to fit into the other 30 or so hours.

I like my work, and I spend time at home, at the office, and out in the community working. My office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., but I'm available any time by appointment except

Mondays. If you wonder what I do with my time off, go to [kickstarter.com](http://kickstarter.com) and search for me.

#### Do you ever wonder what the name "Unitarian Universalist" means?

"Unitarian" is a contrast with "Trinitarian," and it refers to people who don't believe in the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Unitarians believe in the oneness of the Divine. "Universalist" refers to people who believe in universal salvation. Universal salvation means no one goes to hell for eternal torment. The Unitarians and the Universalists merged in 1961. ■



**In trying to move toward fulfilling our mission, there are any number of projects and programs that could build community, nourish souls, transform lives and do justice.**

**PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS**

# How do we know if we are living our mission? **by Susan Thomson**



You may have been one of the 272 First UU members and friends who completed the congregational survey distributed by the Board of Trustees last summer. We are very grateful for the response we received. We have been analyzing and discussing the results. Our plan is for this survey to become an annual measure of how well we are progressing as a congregation in living our mission and achieving our ends—making our church an intentionally hospitable community, nourishing souls and transforming lives and witnessing to justice in our personal lives and beyond. This means the first survey was particularly important because it will serve as a benchmark for surveys in following years. Trustee Eric Hepburn has prepared an excellent summary below. There is a more detailed summary with tables illustrating key results on our church website.

How do we know if we are living our mission statement? How can we measure where we are right now? How can we know if we are making progress over time?

There are many ways that we might search for answers to these kinds of important questions. One way is by asking our congregation. That is the purpose of the annual survey; to ask our congregation about how well we are living our mission. By tracking the survey over many years, we also hope to learn answers to other questions to help our community live out its mission. This inaugural survey is composed of four basic sections. The first section deals with the Ends Statements that derive from the mission, the second is about individual spirituality and engagement, the third is about evangelism, and the last section gathers demographic data.

The questions on our ends statements were all measured on a six-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. For each of the 14 measures of our ends statements the average value was “Agree.”

**Table 1: Evaluation of Ends statement by Percentage Positive Responses**

<b>1. First UU Church of Austin is an intentionally hospitable community where</b>	
All people are treated with respect and dignity	93%
All people of goodwill are welcomed	96%
People are supported in times of joy and need	90%
People find connection with one another in fellowship	94%
We are fully engaged and generous with time, treasure and talent	90%
We invite people of goodwill to find a spiritual home with us	93%
We engage as UUs in public life	95%
<b>2. First UU Church of Austin nourishes souls and transforms lives by</b>	
Engaging and supporting one another in spiritual practice and growth	93%
Providing worship, programs and activities that awaken meaning and transcendence	94%
Providing a caring, supportive and safe place to rekindle the spirit	92%
<b>3. First UU Church of Austin witnesses to justice in our personal lives and beyond by</b>	
Practicing liberal religious values in the public arena	97%
Empowering all people to access the richness of life	92%
Providing leadership to the greater UUA community to expand the reach of our movement	88%
Partnering with the interfaith community to live our shared values	93%

Based on this data there are two measures that stand out as strengths: “all people of goodwill are welcomed” and “providing worship, programs and activities that awaken meaning and transcendence.” Both of these measures had “Strongly Agree” as the median answer. Conversely, one weakness that stands out in the data is that “providing leadership to the greater UUA community to expand the reach of our movement” was the only

measure that received less than 90% positive responses.

In the second section of the survey the participants were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, how well the statement describes them, with 1 being “does not describe you at all” and 10 being “describes you to a very high degree.” The mean (average) and median (most popular) answers to the 18 questions are shown below in Table 2.

<b>Table 2: Mean and Median of Individual Description Questions on a 10 Point Scale Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Believe your actions make a difference in the lives of others.	8.30	8
Understand the relationship between your own spiritual development and your actions in the area of social justice.	7.73	8
Are satisfied with the positive impact you make on the lives of others.	7.06	8
Act in a spiritual manner.	7.06	8
Believe your life has meaning and purpose.	8.25	10
Are satisfied with your efforts to address issues of social justice.	6.43	7
Feel personally connected to the Church’s Ends Statements (Goals).	7.14	9
Feel a sense of belonging to a religious community within the church.	6.76	9
Feel a sense of belonging to a community outside the walls of the church.	6.99	8
Believe your actions contribute to the well-being of the church.	6.97	8
Live out your religious values in the world.	7.95	8
Have an appreciation of your own talents and gifts.	7.72	8
Have experienced real transformation / transformative moments in your life.	8.00	10
Have experienced real transformation / transformative moments during the past 12 months.	6.68	10
Live a life of integrity.	8.31	8
Live a life of service.	7.25	8
Work on issues related to your own spiritual development on an ongoing basis.	7.19	8
Have a sense of joy in your life.	7.95	9

In this section the noticeably strong answers related to living a life of meaning and integrity, and to experiencing transformation and transformative moments. The most notable weak answer regarded satisfaction with social justice efforts, which might indicate a way for the church to provide more access to opportunities for members to engage in social justice work.

One of the most positive responses on the survey was for section three, with its single question: on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all likely and 10 being extremely likely, “how likely would you be to recommend First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin to a friend or relative?” The median answer for this question was 10 and the mean (average) was 8.70. Of the 276 people

who answered this question, 147 of them (53.3%) said that they were “extremely likely” to recommend First UU to a friend or relative and 225 of them (82%) answered with an 8 or higher. If this measure is accurate, this bodes well for the future of our congregation.

The sample of church participants for the survey was 67% female and 32% male. The average participant age was 56. Below is a table of the ages of the participants in this year’s survey.

Age Range	20’s	30’s	40’s	50’s	60’s	70’s	80+
# Participants	11	28	52	61	83	34	8

*continued on page 4*

**Living our mission**

*continued on page 4*

The disparity between this distribution and the actual population of Austin is probably best captured in the following statistic: the median age for our survey sample was 58, the median age in Austin is 31. Of the 276 respondents, 48 identified themselves as non-members and 52 have been members for more than 20 years. Similarly, 45 have been attending for a year or less while 62 have been attending for more than 20 years.

A search for correlations in the data revealed the following general trends:

- The individual responses within the first section and within the second section were highly correlated with each other. This indicates that people who felt positively (or negatively) about the ends or about their individual spirituality were consistent about it.
- Among the demographic data: how often you attend church and how many hours you spend volunteering tended to be positively correlated with your feelings about the church's ends and your individual spirituality. In conclusion, this survey tells us a little bit about where we are, but it more importantly forms a foundation upon which we can hopefully build a solid self-understanding in the years to come. ■

**February is leadership month**

The old adage goes “Leaders are born and not made.” While there may be those select few who are born to lead—Indira Gandhi, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, to name a few—the reality is that there are many people who have the potential to be great leaders, but who have never had the opportunity nor been encouraged to develop those qualities.

Who knows just how many people would have made excellent leaders if they only had the opportunity?

At First UU we don't want to overlook these “diamonds in the rough,”

those members who are just waiting to be identified and nurtured. That's why we have decreed February as Leadership Month at the church. We encourage all members, new or long-time, to consider joining a committee or ministry, chairing a committee or ministry or serving on the Board of Trustees or the Nominating Committee.

Throughout the month we will feature “Leadership Moments” at each Sunday service. These will be short testimonials by church leaders who will talk about how they became leaders within the congregation, what that has meant to them and how for many it has led to leadership roles within the larger community.

During this month think about assuming a leadership role within the church. You don't have to chair a committee or serve on the Board of Trustees. Consider joining a committee or a working on a specific project where you can get hands-on experience, meet other members, and deter-

mine if taking on a larger leadership role is something that you would like to do.

What is the next step if you do decide that you want to take on a leadership role within the church? First, check out all of

**“The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born.” — Warren Bennis**

the committee/ministries and projects available at First UU. You can find them First UU Member Guide at [austinuu.org/2013-docs/New-MemberGuide.pdf](http://austinuu.org/2013-docs/New-MemberGuide.pdf). Then, pick up an application from the Nominating Committee or access it from the website, [austinuu.org/2013-docs/LeadershipInterests.pdf](http://austinuu.org/2013-docs/LeadershipInterests.pdf). Members of the Nominating Committee will be at a table in the Gallery during Sunday services throughout the month of February, and they can answer your questions. ■

**Timeline**

- First week of April - Applications due to the Nominating Committee
- Nominating Committee evaluates applications and selects potential candidates to be interviewed
- End of March - Interviews completed by Nominating Committee
- Mid-April - Slate of nominees presented to the Board of Trustees and to the Congregation for vote.

## Derek and Donna Howard

*In this article long-time First UU members Derek and Donna Howard discuss how they began their leadership journey at First UU and what this has meant to them personally and professionally.*

Derek Howard, an Austin attorney, and Donna Howard, a Texas State Representative, are long-time First UU members. Between them they have eight terms on the Board, a presidency, more than 10 years of teaching RE, stewardship, committee chairmanships and much more.

When Derek and Donna started coming to First UU together, Derek was no newcomer. The son of a UU minister he was a long-time UU; however, Donna was new to the church having been raised in a liberal Baptist tradition at University Baptist Church in Austin.

Unlike many UU members who work their way up to leadership roles by serving on a committee or working on a specific project and then taking on a leadership role, Derek and Donna jumped right in. “After we had been coming regularly to the church for awhile in the late 1970s, the RE director asked us if we would take on the role of advisor to the youth group at the church,” says Derek. “The current advisor was moving out-of-state and they needed someone to take over. We said ‘yes’ and thus began a long and wonderful involvement with the church.”

“They were such a great group of young people,” says Donna of the youth group. “We weren’t that much older than the kids ourselves. However, not only were the kids wonderful and we learned a lot from them, but as the youth advisors we had the opportunity to get to know their parents. Many of them were church leaders at the time—people like Aileen Butler, Daesene Willmann, Helen Burnette, Herman and Helen Nelson, Norman and Emilia Martin and so many other amazing people,” says Donna. “Being able to observe and learn from these remarkable leaders was instrumental in helping me develop as a leader myself. Without their example and my experience serving in so many leadership roles with the church, I don’t know if I would have run for the school board and started my political career.”

Not only has First UU been a wonderful place to be involved but even more important to Derek and Donna is the life-long friendships that they have made through the church. “We count among our closest friends, people who we have met through First UU,” says Donna. “Early on in the church, we learned just how important this relationship was. In 1981 when Michael Martin, son of Norman and Emilia, died in the Memorial Day flood, the church as a whole rallied together to comfort one

## MEMBER PROFILE

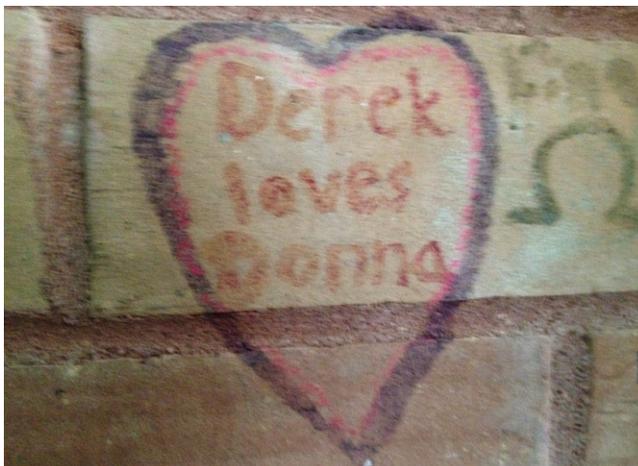
another. The youth group planted a tree outside of RE in his memory, and we had a candlelight vigil in the RE room. It was a deep bonding experience for all of us. Over the years, the connections that we have made with the youth, their parents and other members have allowed all of us to grow as a family at First UU. ■



*Derek and group in the Trust Circle*



*Derek and Donna with members of the LRY planting a tree in memory of Michael Martin in 1981.*



*Memories from the past: “Derek loves Donna” brick in the RE room.*

**SOCIAL ACTION****Social action unsung heroes****by Peggy Morton**

February is leadership month and is a great opportunity for First UU members to step up and help out some of our dedicated leaders who could use a little respite.

Every month around 50 to 100 First UU members work in community to do justice by serving fellow Austinites who live at or close to the poverty line. This is due largely to the work of a few dedicated church leaders who coordinate these projects.

As Social Action chair, I have watched in amazement as leaders such as Beverly Donoghue, Sheri Overton and Mary Ann Stafford continue to give fellow UUs opportunities to serve in our Hands on Housing, People's Community Clinic and Freeze Night Shelter projects, respectively. These women show a heart-warming devotion to fellow UUs and to our broader community. While I'm sure that they will stay dedicated forever, they do acknowledge that it would be good to have a fellow leader to share some of the responsibility, someone who could help them coordinate their projects and give them a chance to follow rather than lead for awhile.

Hands on Housing has a team of house repair and remodeling workers who take on projects twice a year. Beverly works in the background figuring out and purchasing the materials needed for the project. She's quick to say that she couldn't make it happen without the dedicated workers who help her. While I know that is true, I can also say from being there myself, that sometimes a volunteer does not show up and Beverly covers for them.

People's Community Clinic has a variety of independent volunteer opportunities. This involves spending a couple of hours on Tuesday once a month mailing out immunization reminders and photocopying and organizing informative handouts about comprehensive health and wellness care to uninsured and under-insured central Texans. Sheri enjoys the camaraderie and, just like Beverly, gives her team of workers the credit, while I see her coordinating behind the scenes and providing UUs the opportunity to do justice.

The Freeze Night Shelter brings together around 40 church members any time the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless calls on us to house 50 homeless guests in Howson Hall. This happens when the temperature drops to 32 degrees or below, or 38 degrees when it is raining. Mary Ann actually gave up her role as coordinator to me a year and a half ago but waits in the background ready to fill in when I'm out of town, something that's happened twice this season. This project needs two leaders to take over, while Mary Ann and I will continue to work in the background.

All three of these dedicated women enjoy what they do and will not leave their posts until someone shows both a willingness and eagerness to work alongside of them. If you are interested in stepping in, email [socialaction@austinuu.org](mailto:socialaction@austinuu.org) now to learn more. Or, contact Beverly, Sheri or Mary Ann directly to talk with them about how you can help. ■

**Kitty Traylor recognized by team of usher/greeters**

As mentioned in the January newsletter, Kitty Traylor recently stepped down from her job of recruiting, training and coordinating the usher/greeter team. In appreciation for her many years of service in this capacity, Kitty's team of usher/greeters donated around \$500 for her to take on a shopping spree to buy peanut butter and personal hygiene products to donate to Caritas, a group which feeds our homeless community in Austin. These are the same items we ask church members to donate weekly when they attend our Sunday worship services. Thank you, Kitty! ■



## February special collection: Texas Freedom Network

Founded in 1995, the Texas Freedom Network is a nonpartisan grassroots organization of more than 60,000 religious and community leaders from all over Texas. Based in Austin, TFN works throughout Texas to protect religious freedom, defend civil liberties and strengthen support for public schools.

The Texas Freedom Network has been instrumental in defeating a number of high profile religious-right backed efforts to censor school textbooks. TFN supports science textbooks and curriculum that reflect the best of scientific knowledge on evolution and global warming, as well as social studies texts that don't settle for just waving the flag. In a state with one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country, TFN supports sex

education in our schools that goes beyond encouraging abstinence to also providing medically accurate information about responsible pregnancy and prevention of disease. The organization has also worked for almost two decades to block the use of public money for vouchers to support religious schools.

Between services and after church, Texas Freedom Network Deputy Director Ryan Valentine will be in the Gallery to answer questions.

Many of our church members have already donated to the Texas Freedom Network. Because donations from our church need to go to 501(c)3 tax-exempt organizations, we'll be giving to the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund. Please donate generously. ■

## First UU members lobby the Texas Legislature

by Samantha Fredrickson

The 83rd Texas Legislative Session is under way and members of First UU's Action for Justice Committee are already advocating UU values at the Capitol.

On Jan. 10, just two days after the legislative session opened, a group of about 10 First UU members gathered at the Capitol to lobby the Travis County delegation.

"It was such a great experience to walk the halls of the Capitol, not as a tourist as I have done many times before, but as a constituent and a voice to be heard and a presence to be seen by our representatives," said First UU member Maria Salas. "It is empowering and uplifting to realize that as UUs we can make a difference and stand for our beliefs."

The Action for Justice committee decided to focus this legislative session advocating around three main issues: women's health, immigrants' rights, and education. At the lobby day, First UU members spoke to legislators and their staffers about how these issues tie in with UU values.

"We crossed political borders, visiting staff members of a couple of legislators who we know don't see women's healthcare like we do, and it felt good to let them know both our view and that we're here in the UU faith," Peggy Morton, another First UU member, said of the lobby day.

"It was a great day and a great experience," said member Sally Scott. "I was impressed that so many had staffers covering each individual topic."

The committee will continue to advocate for these

issues as specific bills are introduced throughout the session and will also participate in other activities including letter-writing campaigns and rallies. Action for Justice is working in collaboration with Texas Impact, the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry, and other progressive organizations and churches. All First UU members and friends are welcome to join. The committee's next meeting is Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. at First UU.

Questions or more information? Email [justice@austinuu.org](mailto:justice@austinuu.org). ■



First UU members display our "Standing on the Side of Love" banner at Roe v. Wade anniversary rally at the Capitol.

## Proposed revisions to Healthy Relations Covenant

In an effort to make our Healthy Relations Covenant more user-friendly, Rev. Meg Barnhouse and the Healthy Relations Ministry Team came up with some revisions to help First UU members incorporate the covenant more easily into our lives at church and away. Starting Sunday, Feb. 3, and continuing through Feb. 17, the proposed covenant will be displayed in Howson Hall next to our current covenant. Please use the available post-it notes to write your comments about what you like in this revision and what changes you suggest. Then post your comments on the board. You may also send comments to [healthyrelations@austinuu.org](mailto:healthyrelations@austinuu.org).

### Proposed healthy relations covenant

As a religious community, we promise:

#### To welcome and serve

- By being present with one another through life's transitions
- By living our seven UU principles to the best of our ability and understanding

#### To nurture and protect

- By communicating with one another directly in a spirit of compassion and good will
- By speaking when silence would inhibit progress
- By disagreeing from a place of curiosity and respect
- By interrupting hurtful interactions when we witness them
- By expressing our appreciation to each other

#### To sustain and build

- By affirming our gratitude and commitment with generous gifts of time, talent and money for our beloved community
- By forgiving ourselves and others when we fall short of expectations, showing good humor and the optimism required for moving forward

Thus do we covenant with one another. ■

*Your Healthy Relations Ministry Team: Margaret Borden, Ann Edwards, Sandra Ries, Irene Tobin*

## Art Mission program begins Feb. 5

Art Mission is an all-volunteer multi-generational creativity outreach program of First UU that offers workshops, art actions and events that use creativity to transform lives, build community and do justice. Art Mission's artistic director is Kiya Heartwood. If you would like to volunteer, or if you have questions about the program, please contact Kiya at [kiya@kiyaheartwood.com](mailto:kiya@kiyaheartwood.com).

### Upcoming Workshops and Events:

**Introduction to Gelatin Printmaking (2.5 hours), Tuesday, Feb. 5, Rm. 17, 6-8:30 p.m.**

Explore a fun printmaking technique that creates fabulous results and doesn't require a press! Students will learn how to create a matrix out of Jello, how to apply ink, use stencils and make fabulous prints. These prints are great for cards, collage papers, bookend papers, and of course fine art prints. Children under 12 should be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited to 10 students. Extra paper for printing is suggested if you plan on printing like crazy—you will, because it's so fun! Otherwise all supplies are included. \$35 materials fee. No one is turned away for inability to pay. Instructor: Cathy Savage: Please email Cathy to reserve your spot at [csavage@savageartist.com](mailto:csavage@savageartist.com).

**The Writing Way, Tuesdays, Feb. 12- March 5 Gallery, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

The Writing Way is a creative writing workshop for ages 10 and up that explores a variety of writing styles from

poetry to short stories, songwriting to autobiography. Learn techniques for breaking writer's block and experiment with writing from many different angles. No experience is necessary. A notebook and a pen are the only materials you need. The workshop is led by Kiya Heartwood, a prize-winning poet and songwriter, published author, composer and playwright. A suggested donation of \$5 per class will go to future Art Mission materials and projects. Drop in for all four or any individual class. No one will be turned away for inability to pay. Free childcare provided. No reservation necessary.

**Introduction to Relief Printmaking 2 (2.5 hour) workshops, Tuesdays, March 26 (Part 1) and April 2 (Part 2), Rm. 17, 6-8:30 p.m.**

Learn how to carve and print your own limited edition linoleum block print, a printmaking technique that doesn't necessarily require a press. After carving a 5" x 7" piece of artist-grade linoleum, we'll ink up our plate and try printing it by hand using a wooden spoon, then we'll try using the instructor's sign press that's perfect for relief printmaking. Students will leave the workshop with a carved plate and a set of freshly printed limited edition linocut prints on 100% cotton archival paper. All supplies are included. \$12 suggested supply fee. No one is turned away for inability to pay. Childcare provided. Instructor: Cathy Savage: Please email Cathy to reserve your spot at [csavage@savageartist.com](mailto:csavage@savageartist.com). ■

**PARADOX****PLAYERS**

**“The funniest show you are likely to see in your entire lifetime”** *Montreal Gazette*

Mark your calendars. On Friday, Feb. 8 at 8 p.m. Paradox Players will open “The

Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)” for a three-week run. As our valued supporters, it’s your night to celebrate with the cast and crew at the Gala reception after the show.

Three madcap men in tights weave their wacky way through ALL of Shakespeare’s comedies, histories and tragedies in one wild evening that will leave you breathless and helpless with laughter. The play premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1987, went on to nine record-breaking years on London’s West End, and has been the

world’s most performed stage parody for the past 20 years.

Reservations are highly recommended, as seating is limited. Visit the Paradox Players table in the Gallery on any Sunday, go to our website at [paradoxplayers.org](http://paradoxplayers.org) or call 512-744-1495 to make reservations. If you cannot make it opening night, you still have plenty of chances to see this hilarious show. It will run through Feb. 24, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. There will be a special performance on Valentine’s Day, Feb. 14, at 8 p.m.

For parents looking for a night out, free childcare will be provided on Sunday, Feb. 10, and Saturday, Feb. 16, if reserved seven days in advance. Email [childcare@austinuu.org](mailto:childcare@austinuu.org). ■

## Children’s Theater wows young audiences

*“Not only did you entertain the children, you entertained the adults, too!” teacher at Mathews Elementary School*

In its inaugural season, the Paradox Players Children’s Theater entertained 450 children at four elementary schools in Austin. The show featured actors and puppets in adaptations of “Three Billy Goats Gruff and Too Much Noise” by Jean Boehme and an original script based on “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” entitled “Marrsenbrook Moosegaroo,” by Don Fried. For many of these children in pre-K, kindergarten and first grade, this production was the first live theater they’ve ever seen. In a couple of months, we plan to perform a revised show in Howson Hall for children from private schools. We are seeking actors and stage crew who can rehearse and perform on weekday mornings. Contact Jean Boehme for details at [joboej@hotmail.com](mailto:joboej@hotmail.com). ■



*Children enjoy the Paradox Players Children’s Theater production of “Three Billy Goats Gruff and Too Much Noise” by Jean Boehme.*

## Readers’ theater

**Monday, Feb. 11**  
**Gallery**

**7:30 p.m.**

Join us for the fun of reading aloud without memorizing or rehearsing! We’ll be reading scripts about relationships—romantic and not. Newcomers are welcome. No experience required. ■

## The Love Dance

Sunday, Feb. 17

6-9 p.m.

Howson Hall

Grover Music Nights presents "The Love Dance," a night of rocking original music from Kiya Heartwood with Christa Hillhouse and Fayetteville's Big Bad Gina. Nancy Scott opens the show. Tickets are \$15. Children under 12 are free. Drinks and refreshments will be available. A portion of the proceeds goes to benefit First UU Church of Austin. ■

## Rise up and call her name

Women's Spirituality Group

Feb. 2 and Feb. 16

10:30 a.m.-12 noon

Rm. 13

On Feb. 2, the Women's Spirituality Group will focus on White Buffalo Woman (Lakotas of North America) and mask making. On Feb. 16 and March 2, the focus will be Spider Woman, Changing Woman, and weaving a web. The Women's Spirituality Group meets on the first and third Saturday of each month, from 10:30 a.m.-12 noon in Rm. 13. This group is for women high school age and older. We are open to new members at all times. We hope you will join us. For more information, please contact Linda Webster, [women@austinuu.org](mailto:women@austinuu.org). ■

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Lifespan RE highlights

by Marisol Caballero

Love is in the air in the R.E. office, as we embark on February! Our Sunday school has just begun our spring curricula, which focus on appreciation of world religions (see page 11). Many of our members are joining the ranks of talented classroom volunteers and discovering a love for religious exploration with kids as a spiritual practice. We always have room for even the most occasional volunteer, so please let us know if you would like to get in on the fun! Our youth are pitching in to improve the grounds of the church, starting with the playground's "gaga pit," and are learning about responsible relationship-building in their O.W.L. (Our Whole Lives) class. The adults in our congregation have many opportunities to connect with one another and learn. We have ongoing courses on Wednesday F.Re.D. nights (see below), book discussion groups, yoga, women's spirituality, activities for young adults, and so much more! Please remember to read the weekly announcements of church activities online to stay in the loop with the

active life of this church.

### Valentine-making party and "treat" potluck!

Feb. 10

10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Howson Hall

Join in the spirit of love in a congregational, all-ages valentine-making party! There will be all types of art materials to help your creative juices flow. Make a card for a loved one or drop one in the basket of valentines that will be given to the patients at Dell Children's Medical Center. Bring your favorite "treat" to share with the congregation (cookies, cupcakes, sandwiches, fruit, etc) and join in the fun! If you would like to help with this event, please email me at [mari@austinuu.org](mailto:mari@austinuu.org). ■



*Marisol Caballero is interim director of Lifespan Religious Education at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin*

## Children sign-in changes

Parents please sign your children in to Sunday School BEFORE heading into service. There will be four clipboards outside of the sanctuary, one for each class. This is just another step we are taking to ensure the safety of our kids. Newcomers/visitors, please complete a visitor's card before sending your kids to Religious Ed. If you do not see your child's name on our rosters, please fill out a registration form for this RE school year, also available at the RE table.

## Child and youth spring curricula

This spring, we are beginning curricula that focus on helping the children understand and articulate the beliefs of faith traditions outside our own, while continuing to develop strategies for ethical decision-making.

### **Pre-K (3 & 4 year olds):**

#### ***We Are Many, We Are One***

This tried-and-true curriculum by Colleen McDonald continues to introduce our youngest learners to playing and working cooperatively, expressing their feelings about themselves and others, recognizing congregations as places where we meet friends and care about our community, appreciating how individuals and communities are alike and yet different, viewing nature as a gift that requires our care, and celebrating the different religions and cultures of our world.

### **K-1st: Picture Book World Religions**

Last semester, this class explored Unitarian Universalism through children's literature. This course, by Kate T. Covey, focuses on Eastern religions. Each lesson begins

with a picture book. This class also will engage in sharing ideas and fun arts and crafts.

### **2nd-3rd: A World of New Friends:**

#### ***Introduction to World Religions***

This new curriculum by Sara L. Sautter begins each unit with an introduction to a new "friend," a fictional child who belongs to a different faith tradition. Children will have the chance to explore the beliefs, traditions, and celebrations of various cultures and faiths through the eyes of this fictional peer through stories, discussion and hands-on activities.

### **4th-5th: Why Do Bad Things Happen?**

This timely oldie-but-goodie curriculum by Charlene Brotman, et. al. (supplement by Cathy Cartwright) begins deeper discussion (and other activities) with our older children around issues of life and death and other complex questions through the perspective of various world religions. This course will serve as a nice segue for our fourth through fifth graders from traditional Sunday school to Jr. Youth Group. ■

## F.Re.D. continues

If you have not yet had an opportunity to participate in our Wednesday evenings of fellowship, religious education and dinner, please do so. It is a wonderful chance for First UU members to eat together, learn together and have fun together.

Dinner is great! We have soup, casserole, salad and bread. And for our vegetarians either the soup or casserole is vegetarian. Don't forget to bring the kids. After dinner, the children go off and play or watch a movie in childcare. Teens may continue to have fellowship in the youth room.

Throughout February and into the spring we continue our great Wednesday night RE offerings, which include:

### **Spirit in Practice, a Tapestry of Faith curriculum**

**led by Marisol Caballero**

**Feb.13-May 22, every other Wednesday**

This class is designed to help Unitarian Universalists develop regular disciplines, or practices, of the spirit—practices that help them connect with the sacred ground of their being, however they understand it. Spirit in Practice affirms religious diversity while seeking unity in our communal quest for meaning and wholeness. "Whether participants follow a path they identify as Humanist, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, Theist, Atheist, Agnostic, Mystic, and/or any of the other paths we follow in our

diverse congregations, the Spirit in Practice workshops offer a forum for learning, sharing, and growth that can enrich their faith journeys." (uua.org) Register at the LRE table in the gallery. There is a \$15 fee, and scholarships are available.

### **Compassionate Communication**

**Feb. 6-May 15, every other Wednesday**

The Dalai Lama says "We can deal with our emotions creatively and employ our intelligence in a beneficial way." But if you are not always so great at using your emotions and intelligence in a way that works for you, the Dalai Lama says, "despair not ... what distinguishes us as human beings is that we are capable of positive change." This compassionate communication course strives to help us focus on practical positive change in how we interact with others. Using several texts as a basis for discussion, participants will reflect upon current communication styles and explore new techniques, such as dialogue, appreciative inquiry, balancing advocacy and inquiry, and emotional intelligence.

Elizabeth Gray and Michael Kersey will facilitate the classes. Class size is limited to 12. Register at the LRE table in the gallery. There is \$15 fee, and scholarships are available. Two books are required for this course: "Emotional Intelligence 2.0," by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, and "Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High," by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler. ■

## Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, Feb. 8  
7–10 p.m

The Eclectic Folk Jam, an open jam session for singers and instrumentalists, is held on the second Friday of every month. Bring drinks and snacks to share. Contact Pete and Kim Akenhead at 512-834-0188 or Mary Jane Ford at 512-926-4122 or [singalong@austinuu.org](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org). ■

## Children & Youth RE Spring Calendar

Feb. 24 - *Surprise Pals Party*

Feb. 10 - *Valentine's Party, Howson Hall*

Feb. 22-24 - *SWUUC Youth Ministry Extravaganza at Camp Allen*

March 22-24 - *North Texas Youth Rally*

March 29, 6-8 p.m. - *Passover Seder, Howson Hall*

March 31 - *Easter Celebration. We will be collecting canned food during the month of March.*

*Youth-led Worship Service (TBD)*

*Youth Bridging Ceremony (TBD)*

April 21 - *multi-generational Worship, Gaia Psalms*

May 19 - *"Thank-an-RE-volunteer" Sunday!*

May 26 - *multi-generational Worship, Flower Communion*

## RE youth update by Lulu Newton

So far in 2013, the First UU youth group has been up to a lot and we have a lot more planned. We have begun a new social action project and are considering making the playground prettier, pitching in to improve the grounds of the church, starting with the playground's "gaga pit," and are learning about responsible relationship building in our O.W.L. (Our Whole Lives).

We have plans to repaint our beloved youth room. Messages, quotes, and pictures have been accumulating on the walls for years and we believe that it is time for it to go. Although we will certainly find a way to make the walls beautiful without writing, I will miss the messages from youth past.

Throughout January, we have had a few events such as the lock-in with Wildflower church and the 2013 Houston MUUstache Rally during MLK weekend. The rally was fantastic. I was very happy to see all my friends from the last rally and make many new ones. I guess that's what happens when you stick more than 100 Unitarian Universalist youth in a church for a weekend. Our theme this time was MUUs-taches. It was all about shaving off your facades; not hiding behind your metaphorical facial hair.

There was a guest speaker from Houston

who gave a wonderful speech about different identities and it resonated with me. I think we all hide behind something about ourselves; whether that something is true or not, and each of us should find a way to get past that. I always get a lot out of the rallies and I hope my fellow youth do, too. I learn a great deal about personal growth from being with these people. I am definitely looking forward to the upcoming North Texas Rally in March. ■



*Members of First UU youth display blankets they made for elderly people in need.*



*Sleepy First UU youth watch the talent show.*

**DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS****SOUTHWEST UU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE****Feb. 22-24, Omni Bayfront Hotel****Corpus Christi, Texas - Registration deadline Feb. 16**

Women and maidens 13 and older, there's not much time left to register for this year's SWUU Women's Conference. See the Denominational Affairs bulletin board in the hallway across from Meg's office or visit [www.swuuw.org](http://www.swuuw.org) for more information about the conference. If you are attending and would like to arrange to carpool or share a room with someone, contact Karen Franks at [denom@austinuu.org](mailto:denom@austinuu.org)

**Keynote speaker: Kimberly Dark**

As a sociologist and a performance artist, Kimberly Dark uses entertainment to illuminate potentially contentious cultural themes. She calls it artistic activism and uses it to open dialogue about themes that are hard to discuss, such as gender, sexuality, the environment, parenting, poverty, race and privilege.

**Musical guest: Kit Holmes**

Known for her captivating live shows and compelling song-writing Grammy Award nominee Kit Holmes merges her extensive musical talents, creative insight and spiritual journey experiences into ear-pleasing piano-driven, jazz-infused pop.

**SWUUC SPRING CONFERENCE and ANNUAL MEETING****April 19-21 at First UU Church of San Antonio**

Have you registered yet for this Southwest UU Conference event, "Journey to Justice?" It will be held close to home this year! Social justice has been a hallmark of Unitarian Universalism.

The Keynote Speaker is Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz, president and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, a nonsectarian organization that advances human rights and social justice in the U.S. and around the world. The special musical guest will be fabulous singer-songwriter Peter Mayer.

Those who have less time available that weekend can register just for the keynote lecture at 10:45 a.m. and/or the fiesta (dinner) and Peter Mayer concert at 7:30 p.m. on April 20. Youths aged 12-18, attending the conference with an adult, are also encouraged to attend. For information about the conference schedule, breakout sessions, lodging, childcare, registration, and cost, see the Denominational Affairs bulletin board or this link: <http://www.uusouthland.org/swuucspring2013.html>

If you will be attending and would like to arrange to carpool or share a room, contact Karen Franks at [denom@austinuu.org](mailto:denom@austinuu.org). Register before the cost goes up on March 1!

**SAVE THE DATE**

April 19-21 - SWUUC Spring Conference and Annual Meeting, San Antonio

June 19-23 - UUA General Assembly, Louisville, Ken.

June 30-July 6 - SWUUC Primary Camp, UBarU

July 7-13 - SWUUC Junior Camp, UBarU

July 14-20 - SWUUC Senior Camp, UBarU

July 21-26 - Southwest UU Summer Institute (SWUUSI), Western Hills Guest Ranch, Tahlequah, Okla. (Everyone welcome, with or without children!) ■

**Brigid's Bardic Circle and moon ritual****Feb. 21, 7 p.m.****Rm. 17**

Come for the song, story, and poetry of this special celebration. Talented poets, singers, and storytellers will entertain you on this traditional evening of honoring the spoken word.

[YewGrove@AustinUU.org](mailto:YewGrove@AustinUU.org). ■

**Share a supper and make new friends**

Attending Sharing Suppers is a great way to meet lots of newcomers and long-time UUs from across the greater Austin area. Sharing Suppers are casual adult dinners, the third Saturday of each month. Groups of six to 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 next Sharing Supper is Feb. 16. The signup deadline is Feb. 10. Contact Jeanne Barker at [sharing@austinuu.org](mailto:sharing@austinuu.org) to sign up. If you would like to receive monthly reminders, send a request to [sharing@austinuu.org](mailto:sharing@austinuu.org). ■

## Little suppers— sharing suppers for the younger set

Wee ones, bring your families for play, potluck dinner, and conversation. We'll take turns hosting in our child-proofed homes. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. RSVP to Robin at robin.w.richardson@gmail.com by Feb. 14 for the Feb. 21 Little Supper. We all have young children, so if you're tired, late, or overwhelmed by the thought of bringing an entree, you'll be in good company! Join us for conversation and community, even if all you feel up for bringing is a bag of chips. ■

## Neemidge games night

**Friday, Feb. 15**  
**6:30-8:30 p.m., Rm. 13**

In honor of the Academy Awards, Games Night will have a movie theme. The Neemidges have put together a "Name That Movie" game that has short clips from approximately 40 movies. You get to name the movies, plus the themes that the movies have in common. While the movies shown are not all G rated, the movie game itself is probably PG. Even if you don't know the answers, the game is entertaining to watch. I hope you'll be able to come play with us as we celebrate movie magic. ■

# SUNDAY WORSHIP

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

## FEB. 3

### God the Huntress

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

A topic requested by one of the Equinox Auction sermon topic winners. What are the effects of various metaphors for the Divine? When you think of God as female, how does that change thoughts and feelings about God? When you think of God as a huntress, what kind of stories does that evoke? How would people, animals and the planet be affected by this picture of God?

## FEB. 10

### A Juicy Slice of UU History: Theodore Parker

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

"The arc of the Universe bends toward justice," he said. Parker was a Unitarian minister, a tireless and militant abolitionist, and a proponent of women's rights.

## FEB. 17

### Recovery from Fundamentalism

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

What is fundamentalism? Why is its world view compelling? What is destructive about it? How do you let go, not only of the content of its thinking, but of the structure of its thinking?

## FEB. 24

### We've Come this Far by Faith

WITH MARISOL CABALLERO

We are living in an extraordinary time and many of us will see significant social progress within our own lifetime. The struggles for justice have not been easily won, and we certainly have our work cut out for us as victories, large and small, do not fool us into believing that the struggle does not continue on. Join us as we look back in order to move forward.

## Fellowship Committee meeting

**Tuesday, Feb. 26, 7 p.m.**

Please join us for our next meeting. We welcome new members. For more information, please contact Sally Scott at fellowship@austinuu.org. ■

## Heritage Book Club meeting

**Friday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m.**

**4125 Gazley Lane,  
Austin, Texas**

Please join us for our next meeting. We are reading Amy Tan's "The Bonesetters Daughter." The meeting is at Libby Raach's home in Steiner Ranch, 4125 Gazley Lane. There will be a potluck dinner, so please bring a favorite dish. Please RSVP at eraach@ausltin.rr.com. ■

# THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

## FEB. 3

### Rainwater Harvesting

WITH DICK PETERSON

Climate change is transforming the way we look at water, its use and its conservation. Rainwater harvesting is easy and popular. This presentation spans barrels to cisterns to potable water systems and rain gardens. Texas law now allows potable rain water uses even with centralized water is available. In the hill country, tanks are being added to wells and supplemented with rainwater. Examples of available cisterns will be shown. Dick Peterson served the City of Austin for 14 years, first as the coordinator of the Xeriscape, Irrigation and Rainwater Programs with Austin Water Utility and more recently, as an Environmental Program Coordinator with the renowned Austin Energy Green Building program specializing in water conservation.

## FEB. 10

### Native Plants for Texas Landscapes

WITH ANDREA DELONG-AMAY

With increased drought and watering restrictions predicted for the foreseeable future, regionally native plants are the obvious choices for successful, beautiful, and water-wise gardens. Andrea DeLong-Amaya will suggest and describe a few native plants for specific landscape situations and how they may be used in a variety of landscape styles from naturalistic to formal designs. DeLong-Amaya has worked for the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center since 1998. She manages the Texas native plant gardens and propagation facility at the Center as the director of horticulture. She teaches classes in native plant horticulture and oversees the master plan for the gardens.

## FEB. 17

### Presidential Anthems from Austin

WITH BILL OLIVER

Austin's Bill Oliver is known for his environmental songs "Have to Have a Habitat," and "Barton Springs Eternal." He's been an "Environmental Troubadour," (TIME Magazine, 1989) locally and nationally, performing for schools, national parks and nature groups for more than 30 years. He's also penned and performed old-fashioned protest songs and political satire. He's lampooned Republican candidates since 1980, with songs such as "Impeach Cheney First," "Bridge to Nowhere Ma'am," and many more. Huffington Post reviewed his recent songs as "Oliver at his best: wacky, wicked, and on target."

## FEB. 24

### We Are All Apocalyptic Now: Moral Responsibilities in Crisis Times

WITH ROBERT JENSEN

In his talk, Jensen will discuss the need for a "calm apocalypticism" that takes seriously the social and ecological crises we face. Rather than search for magical solutions in religion or technology, he will argue for a realistic program that challenges the unjust and unsustainable systems of power that currently structure our world

Robert Jensen is a professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin and board member of the Third Coast Activist Resource Center in Austin.

## UU/Quaker Singalong

Saturday, Feb. 23

7:30-10:30 p.m.

Quaker Meeting House  
3701 E. MLK Blvd.

Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing. Copies of "Rise Up Singing" are provided. This is an alcohol-free event, round-robin format, held on the fourth Saturday of every month. Contact Larry Vaughn 512-469-0029 or Mary Jane Ford at sing-along austinuu.org. ■

## Senior Luncheon

Tuesday, Feb. 12

Howson Hill  
12 noon

Gary Payne, artistic director of Paradox Players, is our guest. He will discuss the current Paradox play, "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)." This phenomenally popular comedy premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1987, went on to nine record-breaking years on London's West End, and has been the world's most performed stage parody for the past 20 years. If actors are available, a scene from the show will be performed. ■

**First Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of Austin**

512.452.6168  
austinuu.org

Senior Minister

**Rev. Meg Barnhouse**

Director of Finance  
and Operations

**Sean Hale**

Interim Director of  
Lifespan Religious Ed.

**Marisol Caballero**

Director of Music  
**Brent Baldwin**

Director of Membership  
and Communications

**Carla Jo Schaefer**

Board President

**Susan Thomson**  
president@austinuu.org

**First Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.  
Austin, TX 78756

## Music matters

### Children's Choir—New Rehearsal Time!

We have received numerous requests for a later Children's Choir rehearsal time to enable more of our youth to participate in both choir and second service RE events and youth groups. As a result, we will be rehearsing from 10 a.m.-10:40 a.m. this season. While the new time slot no longer runs concurrently with RE, you may still sign up your child through the RE registration page.

Primary Choir (K-3) will meet in Rm. 11 and Secondary Choir (4-8) will meet in Rm. 13.

Our Children's Choir program is a great way for our youth to connect with the church and to practice UU spirituality. Our directors Danielle Solan and Brigitte Smith are amazing. Please contact Director of Music Brent Baldwin with questions (brentb@austinuu.org).

### Adult Choir—Now With Childcare!

In order to better accommodate singers with children and grandchildren, Wednesday night Adult Choir rehearsal (7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.) now features free childcare.

Drop by F.Re.D for a bite, stop on by to try out a rehearsal, and add more singing to your life!

## Save the Dates

Pre-congregational meeting, April 14 (please note new date).

Congregational meeting, May 5.