



FIRST UU NEWS

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

Easter at Honey Springs UU

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse

The Worship Planning Group at Honey Springs Unitarian Universalist Congregation—a mythical UU congregation where we are all the way we are, only more so—was seated around the table in Classroom #6 discussing the upcoming Easter intergenerational service.



Someone had put a scented candle in the chalice, and the room was beginning to list a little to the raspberry side. The Rev. Cotton Lovingood, the new minister, was having a little trouble breathing, and briefly wondered if it would be seen as sacrilegious to ask if they could put the chalice out for the rest of the meeting. Mindful of his previous two very brief settlements since seminary, and wanting to have a brightly successful ministry here at Honey Springs, he decided to endure.

“It’s in the name,” a tall woman dressed in gauzy green layers was saying. “Easter is from Eostre or Ostara, the Saxon goddess of spring. In ancient Greece she was called Astarte, in Assyria she was called Ishtar. Hear it? Easter, Ishtar, it’s the same word. Her worshippers would have egg hunts at dawn on the day of the Equinox, and the rabbits were sacred to her, too.” She looked at the minister.

“Easter is about Jesus, people!” A slender young man leaned both of his forearms on the table. “Why is it so hard just to let the church talk about Jesus once in a while? Is Honey Springs going to be like that place where the only time the name of Jesus is uttered is when the minister stubs his toe?” He looked at the minister.

“Let’s just have a Flower Communion and be done with it,” a blue-eyed man in his seventies said, spreading his open hands and smiling. “Norbert Capek invented it as a purely Unitarian ritual, so I say we use it and teach the children to be Unitarians.” He looked at the minister.

“Unitarian Universalists,” a couple of people mur-

mured, with the air of barely realizing they had spoken aloud.

Wondering if it was time for him to say something, Cotton Lovingood scrunched his toes against the cork bed of his Birkenstocks. He opened his mouth, but an elderly woman in the corner beat him to it. Her name was Phoebe Something-or-Other.

Impeccable British accent. (Cotton’s mother would have fallen upon her like a long-lost sister. A shameless Anglophile, Cotton’s mother had been.) “The Langari people didn’t have spring, but every time the river flooded they made a nice stew of rabbit with a puree of mashed fire ants for a bit of zing. When Adrian and I were living with them we used to watch them try to

Unitarian Universalism is more than our history. It’s a big tent with room enough for me to have the faith I’ve just laid out and for you to have the faiths you’ve laid out, too ...

keep the little ants in the mortars long enough to get mashed. Used to take bets in the beginning, Adrian did, on the ratio of dead ants to stings. Of course the cooks were highly skilled.” Everyone looked at her. Cotton couldn’t remember what he’d been about to say.

“Easter is about resurrection,” he began.

“Yes, new life! Green shoots! Bulbs!”

“The resurrection of Jesus. A particular resurrection,” said the young man.

“You don’t really believe in that literally, do you?” the blue-eyed man asked.

Cotton held up his hand. “Tell me what the resurrection of Jesus means to you,” he asked the young man.

“Well, he was dead and now he’s alive—in our hearts. The Christ-principle is an engine *Continued on page 2*

Easter at Honey Springs UU

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of love and compassion in the world, and love can't be destroyed. That's what it means to me."

"So, love lives on?" Cotton asked.

"How can that be true?" sighed the woman in green.

"Love ends. Everyone's been in a relationship where love ended."

"But love itself," the young man stretched his hands toward her imploringly. "Love itself can't be destroyed. It emerges like a green weed from the tiniest crack in the cement, and if there is no crack it will make one."

"We could give the children seeds, I suppose," the woman said. "Life, like love itself, unable to be destroyed.

"We're destroying life as we sit here," the man at the end of the table said. "Do you know what the carbon footprint of this building is?"

"Love itself," Cotton repeated.

"Yes," the young man said. "And that is a perfect theme for an intergenerational Easter service. You all have got to stop marginalizing the Christians."

"Isn't that what the Flower Communion is about, too?" the man at the end of the table said. "We are all different. We don't have to think alike to love alike? The strength of nature to stand up to the way it's been treated these past two hundred years. And—speaking of marginalized! The Humanists are being pushed out of this movement by Christians and astrologers."

Cotton smiled. "I would certainly say love is at the center for me."

"So you're a Humanist like I am," the man said. "I'm a Humanist UU, and Jill is a Pagan UU. Jim is a Christian UU, and Phoebe is an anthropologist."

"Oh, I don't know if I'm just pagan," said the woman in green. "I like Jesus just fine. I have felt marginalized about that. Well, about being Pagan, too," she said, with the look of wounded righteousness that can bring a whole roomful of UUs to their knees.

"I certainly could do without hearing about Jesus any more for the rest of my life," said the anthropologist emphatically. "So what are you?"

Cotton sighed. "Listen," he said, "I'm just a plain old middle-of-the-road Unitarian Universalist. I think the human spirit is magnificent, and science is a great way to think about the world. It has limitations, though, and I'm comfortable with the idea of mystery, even mystery that may never be understood. The teachings of Rabbi Jesus are fine with me, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which, if it were all the scripture a person had, would be plenty to go on for an entire life. I feel connected with

nature, and I think humans live more richly when they learn how the earth works, when they dance by bonfires at night, when they have a sense of awe at the wonders that inhabit this planet and beyond. I do not think that nature is sweet, nice, benevolent, or motherly, though. You'd have to have stayed indoors your whole life to believe that."

His voice was beginning to rise.

"I also like to practice paying attention to my breathing and detaching from outcomes, but that doesn't make me a Buddhist. I'm UU, which means I have access to all of that, and the freedom to draw on all of it. Unitarian Universalism is more than our history. It's a big tent with room enough for me to have the faith I've just laid out and for you to have the faiths you've laid out, too, and we can all just call ourselves Unitarian Universalists and imagine ourselves at the center of this big free faith and not squeezed into its corners feeling marginalized." His fingers had made sarcastic air-quotes around the word. He hated air-quotes, and here he was doing it. Wasn't that always the way? The anthropologist looked at him for the first time. The others suddenly became fascinated by the top of the table.

"So you want to do something about love's power to create new life?" he continued meekly. That would be wonderful, everyone agreed.

The members of the planning group managed to get over their surprise at the new minister's outburst, and they planned a nice mash-up of Passover, Easter, flowers, love, diversity, and new life. One of the readings and one of the hymns mentioned Jesus or the tomb. The best part was going to be a parade of all the babies who had been born that year at Honey Springs. After the meeting the young man and the woman in green got to talking about relationships that had gone wrong. The blue-eyed man gave the anthropologist a ride back to her apartment. Cotton went home and wrote PATIENCE on a sticky note and put it on the bathroom mirror. Then he thought about the kindness of the people, about their being at an evening meeting they hadn't been paid to come to, about their quickness to forgive his somewhat edgy description of his own faith, and he realized that wasn't the whole truth about the meeting. He took another sticky note and wrote GRATITUDE. (from Rev. Meg's sixth book, "Broken Buddha")

There will be a baby parade of all the babies who were born since last Easter. If you would like your baby to be in this parade even if s/he was born before last Easter, feel free to join in. This will happen at both services. You may dress your baby in spring finery or hippy chic or whatever makes your heart happy. What better way to celebrate love come to life? ■

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Be generous with your time, treasure and talent.

by Susan Thomson



My husband Tom and I recently hosted one of the monthly Sharing Suppers. Our guests were all long-term Unitarian Universalists, some of whom are fairly new to First UU/Austin but all of whom have been very active in UU congregations from coast to coast, serving on church boards, ministerial search committees, and heading various other committees.

It was quite a wonderful group with a wealth of knowledge about and love for our UU faith. One of the many things we discussed was how our UU churches govern themselves compared to the churches in which some of us were raised (we had one "native UU" in the crowd). We UU's don't have a hierarchical structure with any figure remotely resembling a pope or even a bishop who presides with any kind of authority over local congregations. Each congregation calls its own ministers. And although prospective UU ministers complete rigorous study and training to be granted fellowship into the UU ministry, ordination is actually up to local congregations.

In keeping with this, our Board has called a special congregational meeting for March 17 to vote on the ordination of one of our own, Marisol (Mari) Caballero. Her actual ordination ceremony, a grand occasion, will be later in the spring. In addition to Mari, Nell Newton, Chris Jimmerson, Ron Phares, Andrew Young, and Betty Skwarek are all currently in seminary or have completed seminary studies in recent years. These wonderful people are current or former members or staff of First UU (Nell and Chris are both recent presidents of the board) who have made a commitment to nourish souls and transform lives as UU ministers. This seems like an unusu-

ally large number of current and recent seminary students from one congregation. I think it speaks to the vitality of First UU. Ordination votes and ceremonies may become routine for us!

We often sing a hymn, "Love Will Guide Us," with a line that says "if you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot speak before thousands," referring to other ways to give and serve. In fact, in order to continue to be the vibrant church we want First UU to be, we need strong lay leaders as well

... in order to continue to be the vibrant church we want First UU to be, we need strong lay leaders as well as clergy.

as clergy. February was designated as Leadership Month as the Nominating Committee kicked into high gear to begin the process of selecting nominees for elected positions to the Board and the Nominating Committee and to assist Rev. Meg with identifying persons she might select to serve as ministry team chairs. If you have not already done so, please visit the Nominating Committee table in the Gallery on a Sunday morning this month to discuss the leadership opportunities available at First UU. And if you are interested in leadership training, the Southwest District of the UUA offers leadership training entitled the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience that is truly an "on the mountaintop" experience. If you want to know more

about this, please talk with Rev. Meg or me.

Our church has three sets of ends, or goals, that flesh out our mission, and that gives us direction in how we want to live our mission. Under the first end about Intentional Hospitality we have a statement that says "We are fully engaged and generous with time, treasure and talent." Please give some thought to how you can best be generous with your time, treasure and talent. ■

Share a supper and make a friend

Saturday, March 16

Attending a Sharing Supper is a great way to meet lots of newcomers and long-time UUs. These suppers are casual adult dinners held the third Saturday of each month. Groups of six to 10 people gather in various participants' homes, and everyone contributes to the dinner. The 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 with no long-term commitment. Participants take turns hosting and planning the meal or helping co-host in another's home. The signup deadline is March 10. Contact Jeanne Barker at sharing@austinuu.org for more information, or to join the sharing supper email list. ■

Senior luncheon

**Tuesday, March 12
12 noon**

Howson Hall

Our guest this month is Tom Doyal, a published short story writer in Austin who grew up in the Texas Panhandle and south Texas. Tom Doyal's writings capture the grit and hardship of rural living before and during World War II. They also show the warmth and human qualities of his characters that make these characters lovable, noteworthy and entertaining. You'll feel as if you are having a time warped nostalgic visit to rural Texas as he reads his stories.

Tom is a retired attorney and gay activist. He will delight us with readings from his many short stories. \$5 for lunch. RSVP to Alice Cashman at 512-837-0988 or seniorlunch@austinuu.org. ■

Fellowship Committee meeting

**Tuesday, March 26
6:30 p.m.**

Join us for a potluck followed by the committee meeting. We will meet at the home of Kathryn Govier, 1202 Newport Drive, 78753, 512-832-6379,

RSVP to either Kathryn or Sally Scott, 512-453-2289. Newcomers are welcome. ■

Revisions to the Healthy Relations Covenant

The Healthy Relations Ministry team composed of Margaret Borden, Ann Edwards, Sandra Ries and Irene Tobis, has been working hard over the past couple of months to revise First UU's Covenant of Healthy Relations. While the current covenant has served the church well over the past few years, the team believes that revisions will help First UU members incorporate the covenant more easily in our lives whether at church, at home with our

families or in the work place.

From Feb. 3 through Feb. 17, the proposed covenant has been displayed in Howson Hall next to the original covenant. During that time, First UU members wrote comments and suggested changes to the covenant. Members of the team will be considering all of these before presenting the new iteration.

Below is the proposed covenant alongside a copy of the existing covenant. ■

A Covenant of Healthy Relations

As a religious community, we promise:

To nurture the spiritual growth of people of all ages in our church;

To keep communications with one another direct, honest, and respectful in a spirit of compassion, love, and trust;

To support our church with generous gifts of time, talent, and money in gratitude for the fellowship, joy, and inspiration we receive;

To be present with others through life's inevitable transitions;

To make our church a safe place to express our deepest fears and our greatest joys;

To forgive ourselves and others when we fall short of expectations, showing good humor and the optimism required for moving forward and calling ourselves back into covenant;

To engage with the larger world to promote justice and peace;

We acknowledge and commit ourselves to the work of sustaining our beloved community, welcoming all in good faith, and ministering to each other.

Thus do we covenant with one another.

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.

Get ready to spring into action!



In April, First UU kicks off its first annual churchwide outreach project: Spring Into Action 2013. This year's project, which focuses on immigration, has many exciting activities planned.

The First UU churchwide project was established to engage the entire

First UU congregation in a series of educational and volunteer activities around a specific social justice issue. For our 2013 project, we chose the important and at times divisive issue of immigration. Supporting human rights for all people, especially those most vulnerable—including refugees, asylum-seekers, and many other immigrants—is a core Unitarian Universalist value. Can we thoughtfully explore what it would mean to expand on our sense of intentional hospitality to persons and families who are marginalized because of our immigration system?

As a nation of immigrants, and as a community whose covenant calls us to seek peace and justice in the larger world, we recognize the ethical complexities in respecting our rule of law while at the same time sincerely striving to address the grievous inequities facing many who seek to live and work in our United States. In addressing the subject of immigration, we will seek to act in ways both small and large to live our mission to nourish souls, transform lives and do justice.

Our partner organization in this project is Casa Marianella, which runs two shelters in East Austin, one for recent adult immigrants and one for immigrant women and children escaping violence. Casa also offers access to legal and medical resources, food, clothing, English classes and job support. Casa is the beneficiary of the April second Sunday special offering and will be the focus of several other activities.

In the column to the right is a calendar of several of our Spring Into Action 2013 activities. We encourage all First UU members and friends to get involved. There are all sorts of opportunities, some requiring only an hour or so of your time, others with much larger time commitments. This is also an opportunity for you to make lasting connections with organizations involved in this important issue.

To volunteer for any of these activities, or to find out how you can get involved in this project, please visit the Spring Into Action table in the Gallery before or after Sunday services, or contact Wendy Erismann, churchwideproject@austinuu.org. ■

Monday, April 1

Refugee Lunch, Central Presbyterian Church 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., limit 10 people. First UU will provide lunch for adult refugees. Contact Judy Sadegh (jsadegh@yahoo.com)

Thursday, April 4

Movie Night: "Abused—the Postville Raid," Howson Hall, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 6

Dinner at Casa Marianella, 4-7 p.m., limit eight people. Help prepare, serve and share dinner with residents of Casa Marianella. Contact Trish O'Day (today2@austin.rr.com)

Sunday, April 7

Public Affairs Forum: The Origins of Exclusionary U.S. Immigration Policy, Dr. Madeline Hsu, Sanctuary, 12-1 p.m.

Post-Forum immigration discussion, Howson Hall. Join fellow UUs for a light lunch and discussion

Friday, April 12

East Austin Food Bank, Southwest Key Programs 3:30-6 p.m. Help register participants, distribute food and carry food to cars.

Thursday, April 18

Movie night: "Crossing Arizona," Howson Hall 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Friday, April 19

Dinner and music from Pakistan, Howson Hall, 6-8 p.m. Enjoy a Pakistani meal and music by an immigrant Sufi musician, Suggested donation of \$10.

Tuesday, April 23

Dinner at Casa Marianella, 4-7 p.m. Limit eight people. Help prepare, serve and share dinner with residents. Contact Trish O'Day (today2@kaustin.rr.com)

Sunday, April 28

Public Affairs Forum: Legislative Action on Immigration, Sanctuary. 12-1 p.m.

Sunday, May 5

Information and Volunteer Opportunity Fair. Gallery and Patio, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Throughout April

Toy and book drive, First UU. Contribute new or gently-used toys and children's books.

Throughout April

Immigration book reviews, Library.

Upcoming social action events

SOCIAL ACTION

Be sure to mark your calendar for these upcoming social action events and let your voice be heard. Be sure to wear your “standing on the side of love” T-shirt or favorite rally attire.

Sunday, March 3: CROP Hunger Walk 2:30 p.m., Camp Mabry

Let's help end hunger one step at a time. Join fellow UUs to either donate money or walk. Contact Eric Hartman at socialaction@austinuu.org for more info.

Monday, March 4: Texas Freedom Network briefing and rally on contraception

The day starts at 11 a.m. with a briefing on religious freedom at the Texas State Teachers Association Sturgeon Room, followed by lunch, a walk to the Capitol rotunda and a Gathering for prayer and public witness with religious leaders who support access to contraception. The purpose of this gathering is to draw attention to the many faith leaders throughout the state who, because of their religious convictions, support access to contraception and birth control for Texas families. RSVP required at http://www.tfn.org/site/PageServer?pagename=clergy_faith_in_action

Thursday, March 7: Rally and Lobby Day with Planned Parenthood

Join hundreds of Planned Parenthood advocates in Austin for Lobby Day. We'll meet with our legislators to let them know that Texas women and families support and depend on access to vital health care services at Planned Parenthood. Never been to Lobby Day and want to know more about what to expect? Join Planned Parenthood for a Lobby Day training on one of the dates below:

Saturday, March 2: 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 3: 3-4:30 p.m.

Monday, March 4 6:30-8 p.m.

Contact brittany.yelverton@ppaustin.org to RSVP for a Lobby Day Training and RSVP for the Lobby Day.

Saturday, March 9: Living a Reverent Life 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

This interactive workshop highlights social and emotional intelligence, compassion and reverence, trans-species and ecological intelligence and multi-species relationships. It is led UU Rev., Dr. LoraKim Joyner, who is also a veterinarian. (For detailed information about the workshop, see page 7.)

Sunday, March 10: Texas March for GLBT Justice

The Texas Legislature only meets in odd numbered years for 140 days. This year there are several bills on the table that will greatly impact the lives of LGBT Texans in employment, marriage, supplemental birth certificates for adopted children, health insurance and more. Our representatives need to know that we will not disappear or remain silent as long as there is work to be done! Join us as we peacefully march to our state Capitol to demand full equality for LGBT Texans!

Monday, March 11: Lobby Day

Our friends at Equality Texas are holding this special opportunity for you to speak directly to your lawmakers about issues that are important to you. Come to our march and then stay for Lobby Day! Find out more about Lobby Day at <http://www.equalitytexas.org/> Volunteer opportunities: contact Sarah at sarahgoodfriend@equalitytexas.org

Before Lobby Day:

March 4-10 - Need volunteers throughout the week to make phone calls to supporters and/or prepare lobby day packets, Equality Texas office, 221 E. 9th St., Ste. 302

Requested time commitment: two hours

On Lobby Day:

8-10 a.m. - Register and intake of participants, First United Methodist Church, 1300 Lavaca, St.

12-4 p.m. - Direct teams to the correct offices in the labyrinth that is the Capitol complex, state Capitol Rotunda and Extension Rotunda

Requirement: Familiarity with the Capitol complex and/or willingness to preview Capitol office maps

Monday, March 18: Action for Justice Meeting at First UU, 7 p.m., Rm. 15-B

We'll meet at 7 p.m. for our regular meeting to discuss upcoming legislative activities. At 7:30 p.m., guest speaker Esther Reyes, executive director of Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, will brief us on Immigrant rights' issues at the Texas legislature. Contact Samantha at justice@austinuu.org

April 1-May 5: Spring Into Action with a Focus on Immigration

Spring Into Action is the congregation-wide project that kicks off in April and continues through the month. See the article on page 5 to find out more about this church-wide event. ■

March special offering: UU Service Committee

by Judy Sadegh

Founded in 1940, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is a nonsectarian organization that works to advance human rights and social justice around the world. By partnering with grassroots organizations, mobilizing members and supporters, and advocating for changes in public policy, UUSC helps people claim their rights—from the right to organize as workers to the right to safety and relief in the wake of disaster.

One of the newer endeavors of UUSC is the collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Association in establishing the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice (UUCSJ). With a broad range of trips and programs for current leaders and future activists of any age, UUCSJ increases the capacity of Unitarian Universalists to catalyze justice. They are currently offering service opportunities in Haiti, New Orleans, Guatemala, and along the U.S./Mexico border.

UUCSJ programs are grounded in Unitarian Universalist history and theology, contemplative practice, social-change theory and multicultural competency.

Each March the UUSC asks congregations to cel-

brate a special Justice Sunday on a selected theme. This year's topic is Choosing Compassionate Consumption, and it is hoped that congregations will spend several weeks discussing and promoting this concept. Some suggestions include:

- Pledge to choose compassionate consumption (at uusc.org), to spend wisely in alignment with your values.
- Shop conscientiously and find fair-trade and ethically sourced goods.
- Stand in solidarity with restaurant workers who are calling for basic improvements such as paid sick days and a fair minimum wage for tipped workers.
- Speak out for small farmers and food-chain workers struggling for fair compensation and safe working conditions.

Visit the Social Action table in the gallery during March for more information about UUSC and the campaign to Choose Compassionate Consumption, as well as other projects and issues. ■

Nature loving UUs to learn reverence

by Peggy Morton

All lovers of nature, animals and life will have a unique opportunity to attend a "Living with Reverence for Life" workshop with UU minister, Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner, who is also a veterinarian, as she shares her knowledge Saturday, March 9, from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Howson Hall.

The interactive workshop highlights social and emotional intelligence, compassion and reverence, trans-species and ecological intelligence, and multi-species relationships.

A plant-strong lunch will be available for participants. There is a suggested donation of \$10 (at the door) for workshop and lunch. The workshop is limited to 90 participants. To register, email Becky at reverenceforlife@yahoo.com by March 5. Childcare may be reserved by March 5 by contacting Peggy at socialaction@ustinuu.org to reserve a spot. A \$10 donation per family is suggested. More info is available at <http://new.evite.com/l/FMYG3N2N44>. The workshop is co-sponsored by the San Marcos Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and First UU Austin, and UUs from all over Texas. ■

Free screening of the environmental film "Switch"

Friday, March 22, 7-9 p.m.

The Green Sanctuary Committee is hosting a special viewing of "Switch," the film that is changing the global energy conversation. In this film, Dr. Scott Tinker of the University of Texas at Austin provides straight answers to our most controversial energy questions. He explores the world's premier sites for all energies, coal to solar, oil to biofuels. He talks to the people driving energy today, international leaders of government, industry and academia. In the end, he cuts through the confusion to discover a path to our energy future as surprising as it is practical.

Stay after the movie for a discussion with a panel of experts to discuss all the energy and cost-saving opportunities we have as a church and global community. This is part of our church's environmental justice mission. Refreshments will be served.

For information, visit <http://SwitchEnergyProject.com> or contact Dale Bulla, at dale-bulla@pobox.com, 512-345-9528. ■

First UU church's overall financial picture remains good.

by Sean Hale

Your church had a net operating income of more than \$50,000 last year. That is to say, our income exceeded our expenses for the second year in a row!

Overall, we ended the year with two months of money in the operating fund (analogous to the family checking account). This is a good cushion that should allow us to manage variations in cash flow during the year.

For 2013, the congregation approved, for the third consecutive year, a budget without a deficit! Your canvass team and the generosity of many members made this possible. More than one hundred families increased their pledge, a growing number of families has begun giving generously within their means, and more than half made multi-year pledges. Overall, pledging for 2013 grew, which compares favorably to many other non-profits (for example, United Way for Greater Austin saw its giving shrink).

Continuing improvements in your church's path to membership, and follow up with new members also impact the church's finances. One of the basic rules of fundraising is that it's much more cost-effective to keep a donor than to acquire a new one. For the decade before 2008 (not including it), an average of 15 percent of our members left every year, an unusually high number. For the past two years, we've only lost about 8 percent every year, which is a very healthy amount and quite normal (people moving, passing away, etc.).

We feel grateful to all who have contributed generously with their time, treasure, and talent.

To receive a full copy of the Fiscal Year 2012 Financial Report, or if you have any questions, please contact Director of Finance and Operations, Sean Hale (sean@austinuu.org). ■

DLRE Search Advisory Committee recommends a candidate!

More than a year ago, this church assembled a committee to find a permanent DLRE (Director of Lifespan Religious Education). The initial phase was doing research: gathering the history of the RE department, looking at UUA guidelines, asking about the DLRE hiring experiences of other UU congregations, and looking over the research done by our recent Ministerial Search Committee. We also put together a survey for the congregation in order to learn what we all valued and what we wanted from the new leader of our Religious Education department.

With many of your thoughts and comments in hand, we began assembling our priority list for our search. During this time, the situation suddenly changed when our Interim DRE, Barbara Stoddard, resigned. Marisol Cabellero, a seminary graduate who was doing hospital chaplaincy and substitute teaching in Austin, was asked to serve as the interim DRE. After being here for some months, she expressed an interest in being considered for the position of DLRE, and Rev. Meg was pleased with her energy and her work with the RE program. UUA guidelines delineate procedures to be followed when a church has an "insider candidate." This process recommended that we determine whether we would

offer the position to our "insider candidate" first. Only if we did not want to hire the "insider candidate" would we go into a wider search. This is done in order to ensure that once an outside search process begins, applicants can be confident that they are all working from an equal standing as external candidates.

After much discussion and deliberation to determine our priorities, questions, and concerns, we interviewed Marisol in late January. The DLRE Search Advisory Committee voted unanimously to recommend Marisol Cabellero for the position of director of Lifespan Religious Education for First UU. She has accepted our offer. Welcome, Mari!

The congregation will have a vote on March 17 to ordain Mari. The ordination will be a big worship service on a Friday evening toward the end of the spring, after which she will be Rev. Mari. She will then be our assistant minister, and her portfolio will be RE. The assistant minister is a position that is filled by the senior minister rather than by the whole congregation. If, in future years, First UU decides to call an associate minister (sometimes called a second minister), the whole congregation will vote to fill that as a "settled" position. ■

PARADOX**PLAYERS**

Paradox Players launches new website

You are invited to visit our website with a new design and more interaction. You can more easily find out news, learn our history and let us

know your particular interests. We hope to inspire you to explore the dramatic arts as a way to lift the spirit and to provoke thought and discussion! Auditions for the June play will be announced on

the website. You'll find us at paradox-players.org. ■

Readers' theater

Monday, March 11
Gallery

7:30 p.m.

Join us for the fun of reading aloud without memorizing or rehearsing. Newcomers are welcome. No experience required. ■

Green Tip: Trade in your old fridge

Austin Energy will pay you \$50 for each old, standard-size (between 14-27 cubic feet), working refrigerator or freezer; limit two per customer. Just call 1-800-452-8685 to arrange for a pick up. To date, more than 24,000 of these energy guzzlers have been collected. Next to heating, cooling and hot water, refrigerators and freezers use more electricity than any other home appliance. Refrigerators that are at least 15 years old use about twice the electricity of today's new energy-efficient models. ■

Art Mission program continues

Art Mission is an all-volunteer intergenerational 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.

Upcoming Workshops and Events:

The Writing Way
Tuesday, 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 needed. 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
Tuesdays, March 26 (Part 1)
and April 2 (Part 2)
Rm. 17, 6-8:30 p.m.

In this two-part series, 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. We'll then 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 percent cotton archival paper. All supplies are included. A supply fee of \$12 is suggested. No one is turned away for inability to pay. Childcare provided. The instructor is Cathy Savage. Please email Cathy at csavage@savageartist.com to reserve your spot. ■

Heritage book club

Friday, March 8, 7 p.m.

The meeting will begin with a potluck dinner followed by a discussion of "The Prince" by Machiavelli. To read ahead, the April book is "Light between Oceans" by M. Stedmans.

We will meet at the home of Kitty Clark, 4308 Ave. D, 78751. For more information, call 512-453-6246. Everyone is welcome. ■

Save the Dates

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

Congregational meeting, May 5.

Children sign-in changes

Parents, please sign your children in to Sunday School before heading into service. There will be four clipboards outside the sanctuary, one for each class. This is just another step we are taking to ensure the safety of our kids. Newcomers and 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, available at the LRE table. ■

Deadlines for Adult RE offerings

For those of you who are interested in submitting proposals for Adult Religious Education programs, the deadline is March 15 for summer programs and April 15 for fall offerings. For more information, please contact Marisol Caballero at mari@austinuu.org. ■

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan RE highlights

by Marisol Caballero

RE presents: "Standing on the Side of Love"

Austin Playback Theatre Improv Group presents "Standing on the Side of Love" March 3, 1:30-3 p.m. in the Sanctuary. A donation of \$5 is suggested.

"Interactive and spontaneous, Playback Theatre bases its material on the stories of the community. In theatres, workshops, and a wide range of educational and organizational settings, Playback Theatre draws people together and allows fresh perspectives. Performances are carried out by a team of actors, an emcee (called the conductor), and musicians. As the show begins, audience members respond to questions from the conductor, then watch as actors and musicians create brief theatre pieces on the spot. Later, volunteers from the audience come to the stage to tell longer stories, choosing actors to play the main roles. Although performances often focus on a theme of interest or concern, the performers

follow no narrative agenda, but bring their dramatic skills and their humanity to embodying on the stage the concerns and experiences of audience members..." <http://www.playbacktheatre.org>. ■



UU Passover Seder potluck March 29, 6-8 p.m.

This beloved tradition returns this year. It would be great if you could join us! We will tell the story of the exodus from Egypt and will feast, feast, feast! Please sign up to attend this family-friendly event at the LRE table in the gallery and indicate the dish you will bring. We also will have recipe ideas on hand.

If you would like to help bring this event to life, please contact mari@austinuu.org or fellowship@austinuu.org. RSVP required. ■

Children's RE Update

The weather is getting beautiful outside, so please bring your kids and join us for the Parent Playground Picnic Play Date (or, "P4" or, "Puh-Puh, Puh-Puh") March 17, 12:15-2 p.m. on the large playground out back! Breakfast tacos will be provided, but please feel free to bring additional snacks for your family or to share with others. Kids snack, then run and play, while parents can chat and get to know one another. See you there!

This year, Easter is March 31. Last year, the kids at First UU began a wonderful tradition of hunting canned goods in lieu of Easter eggs. They redeemed their armloads of non-perishables for one goodie-bag each and made spring and Easter-themed crafts while snacking on fun foods. The Junior, and Senior High Youth Groups are the pros at can-hiding on Easter day.

We encourage the whole congregation to bring in non-perishable food each Sunday in March to help in the effort. Food will be donated to the Capital Area Food Bank. ■

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 the spring we continue our great Wednesday night RE offerings:

Spirit in Practice, a Tapestry of Faith curriculum

March 6-May 22, every other Wednesday

This class, led by Marisol Caballero, First UU Director of Lifespan Religious Education, 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 to be. 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. Scholarships are available.

Compassionate Communication

March 6-May 15, every other Wednesday (closed to new registrants)

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 a \$15 fee. 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.

Evensong Returns! Wednesday nights

March 20-May 8, 7-9 p.m.

Evensong is another small group ministry that lasts for eight sessions. It is led by Kitty Traylor, a long-time member and experienced facilitator. Evensong is an evening participatory worship service that is a practice in deep listening and hymn singing. If you are less than accomplished at either, not to worry! Evensong offers you an opportunity to engage in these practices and to grow spiritually. Each week revolves around a different topic. Participants leave each session with creative “homework” to do to help them continue their reflection on the topic throughout the week. Please sign up at the LRE table in the gallery. Space is limited. ■

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

K-1st: Picture Book World Religions

2nd-3rd: A World of New Friends: Introduction to World Religions

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

Children & youth RE spring calendar

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- Intergenerational Worship, Gaia Psalms

May 19 - “Thank-an-RE-volunteer” Sunday!

May 26 - Intergenerational Worship, Flower Communion

Youth group to update high school room by Lulu Newton

The First UU Youth Group made some important decisions regarding our high school room. We decided that we are going to paint the walls, written on many times by youth past and present. Although I will miss the clever and creative writings, as I'm sure my youth friends will too, this is for the best. Three walls will be repainted, but the brick wall with writing all the way back in the 1970s is going to be painted with a clear lacquer to preserve the original writings.

On March 17, after we have photographed the walls, First UU members are invited to come and

see the walls for one last time before we begin painting.

Please come and see the high school room's colorful and creative walls. ■

Suprise pals revealed

On Sunday, Feb. 24, First UU children learned who their surprise pals were at a special reveal party. The pals gave the children gifts and everyone enjoyed lunch together. ■



New First UU member JoAnna Johnson with "pal" Kaitlyn Young at reveal party

In the spirit of love, First UU Valentine's Day party

Many UU members joined in the spirit of love in a congregational, all-ages Valentine-making party on Sunday, Feb. 10! Young and old alike used the art materials on hand to create one-of-a-kind Valentines. Some were made for a special loved one, but most were created to present to the patients at Dell Children's Medical Center.

On Feb. 12, Kaitlyn Young, daughter of Andrew and Laine Young, both First UU RE staff, presented the valentines to the children at Dell. ■



Kaitlyn Young at Dell Children's Medical Center



DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

UU-UNO: Spring Seminar 2013

The UU United Nations Office's 2013 Intergenerational Spring Seminar will focus on stopping violence and discrimination based on

sexual orientation and gender identity, and is to take place April 4-6 in New York City. Registration is now open.

Every April, youth and adults from around the United States and Canada gather for an exciting and educational Intergenerational Spring Seminar. All participants gain a deep understanding on a topic of global concern in a fun

intergenerational environment.

Past seminars have focused on poverty, HIV, human trafficking, peacekeeping, climate change, and empowerment of women. Approximately 75 youth and youth advisors stay at one of our Manhattan-based Unitarian Universalist congregations while learning, connecting with others, organizing and mobilizing. Not only do youth attend the conference, but many also hold important leadership roles in its planning and execution. Find out more about this unique annual event at <http://www.uua.org/international/un/index.shtml>, or contact uuuno@austinuu.org. ■

Little sharing suppers

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 TinaMercury@gmail.com by March 14 for the March 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!

Please join us for conversation and community, even if all you feel up for bringing is a bag of chips. ■

Calling kids 5-10 and their parents!

Do you have kids in your family aged five to 10? If so, come see what First UU's Camp Fire troop, the Mighty Platypi, is up to. We are having a lot of fun, and we'd love to have you join us!

Camp Fire kids and their parents participate in active learning activities, outdoor experiences, and community service. So what exactly does that involve? Recent activities have included Service Day at the Colorado River Wildlife Sanctuary, where kids and parents worked together to pick up all kinds of trash. We have been on two hikes so far in 2013, guided hikes at the Bright Leaf Preserve and at Westcave Preserve. One of the highlights of our fall schedule was a birding trip at Pedernales Falls State Park, led by an expert birder from the Travis Audubon group. We have also been doing creative activities such as print-making, potion-making and working with LEGOs. We have also done activities around the wonders of science, such as making an acid-base

indicator with red cabbage.

All these activities have been put together based on the interests of troop members. Parents and children together have selected and created learning and fun activities everyone enjoys.

Interested? Come try out a meeting and see if you would like to join. We meet on Saturday mornings from 10-11 a.m. at First UU, unless we go for a hike. Here are the topics for the next few meetings:

Mar. 2: "Being Creative Through Dramatics:" Camp Fire kids (and their parents) will have some fun exploring creativity and self-expression with games and skits.

Mar. 9: Outdoor exploration at the Mayfield Park and Nature Preserve: We'll meet there to enjoy the walking trails, wildlife habitat, and to see the peacocks.

Mar. 16: "Seed Balls:" We will learn about them and make them. ■

Martha's Free Breakfast*

Come join us every Sunday morning at 8:45 a.m. for Martha's Free Breakfast. We'll meet in Howson Hall before the first Sunday service for breakfast tacos, coffee and juice. What a great way to start the day—fellowship and food!

*Funded by a bequest from Martha Leipziger.

Eclectic folk jam Friday, March 8 7-10 p.m., Howson Hall

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. ■

UU/Quaker singalong March 23 7:30–10:30 p.m., Friends 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 at 512-469-0029 or Mary Jane Ford at singalong@austinuu.org. ■

SUNDAY WORSHIP

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

MARCH 3

As God Is My Witness, I'll Never Be Hungry Again

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

The second element in Buddhism's Eightfold Path is "Right Intention." Your intention is the lodestar by which you steer your life. What is it that, given your understanding of life, you intend to do and be?

Service music will feature guest artists Adler and Hearne and the First UU of Austin Intergenerational Choir.

MARCH 10

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.

Marimba virtuoso Jacob Hodges will share his music for morning services.

MARCH 17

Good Question.

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Sometimes you are halfway to a good answer when you finally formulate your question in a helpful way. What are some ways to come up with better questions?

Service music provided by guest artist Roy Zimmerman.

MARCH 24

Afri-Kin

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

This is a service with special music, drama and a sermon speaking about our common ancestor, Mitochondrial Eve.

The First UU Adult Choir will sing works by Kiya Heartwood.

MARCH 31

Easter: Baby parade!!!

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

All babies born since last Easter are welcome to parade with their families around the sanctuary as we celebrate new life. The birth dates for entry to the parade are not rigid. We will talk about how many faiths have stories of a dying and rising Divinity.

Service music will feature the First UU of Austin Intergenerational Choir and Band.

THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

MARCH 3

Saving Schools: The Faces to Tell the Stories

WITH MICHAEL BRICK

Michael Brick, the author of “Saving the School: The True Story of a Principal, a Teacher, a Coach, a Bunch of Kids and a Year in the Crosshairs of Education Reform,” discusses his use of immersion journalism to explore the complex issue of education reform by delving deep into the lives of his subjects. Brick, a former New York Times reporter, lives in East Austin with his wife and children.

MARCH 10

Creating Climate Change Solutions: Research Insights from the Pecan Street Project

WITH BREWSTER McCracken

Since 2010, individuals participating in the Pecan Street Project have helped create one of the nation’s deepest ever research understanding on how people use electricity, gas and water in their homes. The project now is expanding to include schools, small businesses, apartments and churches. Pecan Street Chief Executive Brewster McCracken will present early research findings from the Pecan Street Project.

Former Austin City Council member Brewster McCracken is executive director of Pecan Street Inc., a smart grid research and commercialization consortium headquartered at The University of Texas at Austin. He was the lead author of Pecan Street’s successful smart grid stimulus application in 2009.

MARCH 17

To Put Progress Back In “Progressive,” We Need a Populist Movement

WITH JIM HIGHTOWER

Jim Hightower will present his rationale and vision for a nationwide populist movement to counter corporate control of politics, government, and industry. National radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author, Hightower has spent three decades battling the “powers that be” on behalf of the “powers that ought to be”—consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just plain folks. Hightower has become a leading national voice for the 80 percent of the public who no longer find themselves within shouting distance of the Washington and Wall Street powers at the top.

MARCH 24

Youth, Education, and Social Change in Cambodia: The Story of the Ponheary Ly Foundation

WITH PONHEARY LY AND LORI CARLSON

Since the American bombing from 1969-1975, and the treacherous reign of the Khmer Rouge, including a genocide killing approximately two million people, Cambodia has faced massive challenges. Ly and Carlson tell the story of one organization’s attempt to foster locally situated, sustainable social change in a nation heavily ensconced in the politics of international development and foreign aid.

By focusing on access to quality education as an entry point for addressing a range of social issues, the Ponheary Ly Foundation creates comprehensive initiatives that strengthen the inherent capacity of the younger generation so they may lead their country toward a self-determined, equitable, and just future. Their interactive discussion will draw on story-telling, photography, and documentary video to share the moving, evolutionary journey of this organization and highlight the challenges, possibilities, and successes they encounter participating in the everyday work of a nation rebuilding itself. ■

**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

512.452.6168
austinuu.org

Senior Minister
Rev. Meg Barnhouse

Director of Finance
and Operations
Sean Hale

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

Music matters—music for all!

Want to get involved with music at First UU of Austin but don't know how? It's never been easier!

Music for children and youth (K-8)

Each Sunday morning will begin with a musical activities period for the first part of first service RE. At 10 a.m., this music time will switch over to our primary and youth choir session and wrap up at 10:40 a.m.

Are you a second-service family? No problem—join us a little earlier at 10 a.m., and then head to the 10:45 a.m. service or youth groups. Are you a first-service family? Also no problem—children may join us at first-service RE time, and then head to Children's Choir at 10 a.m.

Questions? Please contact Brent Baldwin, First UU Director of Music (brentb@austinuu.org)

Music for adults (Grades 9 - age 101+)

Ever wonder what those little black dots in the hymnal are all about? Let us help you figure it out! The First UU Adult Choir will sponsor informal music introductory sessions on Wednesdays from 7-7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary, just prior to Adult Choir rehearsal. No experience necessary—just a willingness to learn and have fun!

Stop in for Wednesday F.Re.D. dinner, and then expand your musical horizons! Question? Please contact Brent Baldwin, First UU Director of Music (brentb@austinuu.org). ■

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