



FIRST UU NEWS

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

Looking back at a historic year

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



Dear Friends and Family,

It's been quite an historic year for us here at First UU. It has been the year of First UU's 60th anniversary of being recognized as a church by the denomination. Decade by decade, church members gave us on Sundays a brief encapsulation of what was happening at the church during that time. We heard about hardworking volunteers, board members, DREs and ministers.

We hired a company with a reputation for working well with UUs to consult us on how to do the best job possible. Jim Collins was sent from Virginia to stay with us for the summer and keep us on track. We had a Capital Campaign and Annual Stewardship Campaign at the same time. We raised a whopping five times our annual giving, and the annual giving increased by almost 6%. This congregation rocked that campaign! We celebrated in October with a big party where each of our six decades was represented in a classroom, and our partygoers toured from room to room, playing Atari, watching Flashdance, seeing psychedelic peace

signs and being invited by hipsters in knit caps to taste kombucha. We had fabulous food and a margarita machine. We thank Ann Edwards and Brendan Sterne for co-chairing the effort, Bill Edwards, Doris Hug, Mary Jane Ford, Peter Durkin, Lisa Carrell for chairing the phases of the effort, Amanda Ray for chairing events, Michael West for holding the spiritual foundation and coordinating testimonials, Michael Kersey for adding his support and keeping minutes, and Mary Patrick for helping the bookkeeping group and for her work with the database. Chris Jimmerson, Carol Drennan, and Vickie Valadez (Communications Coordinator) provided staff support. I was there, and I saw how hard everyone worked. They're still working.

In late spring we welcomed Carol Drennan, from Greenlights, as our Interim Director of Finance and Operations. In her time with us, she suggested moving the offices around so they made more sense, and shifted the supervision of all office staff to herself, and then to Chris Jimmerson, who replaced her. She gave us a good report on our systems and

governance and began simplifying some of the ways we do our bookkeeping. We welcomed Chris Jimmerson as the new full-time director in late September, but restructured the job a bit to make him Assistant Minister of Administration. He is tasked with doing the job from a more pastoral perspective, and he will be doing other ministry in the congregation as well. First UU gets to ordain him to the UU ministry, too! Save the date: Feb. 22.

Our Social Justice Ministry has been very active this year and I will be talking in detail about the many projects when we meet at the Congregational meeting after the second service on Dec. 14. I think you'll be thrilled. Art Mission and the Gallery jointly sponsored a group of female vets who wanted to use our space to do art. They have been working at First UU, and they had a moving exhibit in the gallery in November.

Lifespan RE has been training record numbers of volunteers to work with our children. The Senior High youth group is burgeoning at about 27 folks, the Junior High youth group is thriving, and the

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Talk with your Board of Trustees

Members of the board of trustees will continue to be available on the first Wednesday of each month at F.R.E.D. Come by and enjoy a good meal and good conversation.

Save the Dates!

Pre-congregational meeting

Sunday, November 23,
Sanctuary
1:15-2:30 p.m.

Congregational meeting

Sunday, December 14,
Sanctuary
1:15-2:30 p.m.

Childcare provided for each.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Don't forget the All- Congregational meeting

by Carolyn Gremminger



During the weekend of November 14-16, Assistant Minister Chris Jimmerison facilitated a series of Town Hall meetings in Howson Hall at First UU. These get-togethers provided a forum for the discussion of ideas and concerns regarding our upcoming building expansion process. Areas discussed included setting priorities on where to start, "pain points" on our current grounds, environmental concerns, and the best ways to express our values through our physical structure. I am thankful for this democratic process that allowed all to voice their wishes and concerns.

On December 14 the All-Congregational meeting will be held. All members of the church are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Friends and visitors are also welcome to attend, but will not be allowed to vote. Our governing bylaws state: "Individuals who have been members of the church for 30 days or more and who have (as an individual or part of a family unit) made a recorded financial contribution during the last 12 months

and at least 30 days prior to the meeting, have the right to vote at all official church meetings."

At this meeting, Reverend Meg will discuss the progress of the Capital Campaign and building expansion. The 2015 budget will be voted on, and we will also be selecting our 2015 monthly special offerings recipients. In that regard, it has come to my attention that presently we're about \$3,000 behind the amount we collected at this point last year for these nonprofits. Please make sure to support these very worthy nonprofits before the end of the year.

Mark your calendars for the Fall Congregational meeting on December 14 at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Childcare will be available for both meetings.

Do you have some feedback or questions for the board? You can visit with us at the 6 p.m. F.R.E.D. dinner, on the first Wednesday of the month. The monthly board meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month in the gallery and visitors are welcome. ■

"Looking back" from page 1

Young Adult Group is lively and tight.

First UU is determined to be more culturally competent, and to learn about racism in ourselves and in our society. It is our strong hope that learning about it will help us become more aware of the racism we see every day, and to use our privilege to stand against it every time we see it. Rev. Mari Caballero has taught classes this year, and awareness is dawning more and more.

I'm concerned that I'm forgetting important things as I write to you, and I ask for your patience and understanding. I don't have room to talk about all the milestones, the adventures, the book tours, the chal-

lenges and transcendent moments along the way this year. We lost beloved members, and welcomed 100 new people we are very much looking forward to getting to know. One of our members, Norman Martin, was even awarded the French Legion of Honor! We call him "chevalier" now, and we are proud to know someone in august company of the bright stars who have received that high honor.

Now we are considering what our priorities are for constructing the home for our mission. We want beautiful space for our children, room for our Public Forum and our theater company, and a place where we can gather in one place on Sunday mornings. We are almost finished with our Town Hall meetings, and it is my intention to share the results

with you when we have our congregational meeting Dec. 14.

The board and I have had a rich time meeting once a month. They monitor all the ministries of the church, they make sure I'm staying within the "Executive Limitations" laid out for me, and they grow deep roots in the spiritual practice of service to a congregation by reading together, and considering how best to listen to the congregation and steer it into the future.

This feels like a very good time in the life of the congregation. The music is marvelous, the staff is skilled and good to work with, and the ministers are proud to serve at First UU.

May your holidays be bright, may you be blessed, and may you be a blessing in the world. ■



Music Matters

Sing in the holidays!

First UU Adult Choir presents J.S. Bach's "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland"

Ring in the holidays with this treasured seasonal work by baroque master Johann Sebastian Bach. On Sunday, Dec. 7 the Adult Choir will be joined by instrumentalists from the Austin Symphony and vocal soloists from Conspirare and Texas Choral Consort. This musical offering will be presented during both morning services.

First UU Intergenerational Choir to perform in North Central Drive a Senior Benefit Concert

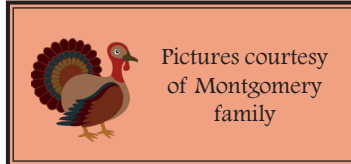
The First UU Intergenerational Choir will join forces with ten other area churches to raise funds for Drive a Senior. This annual holiday concert is in its 22nd year, and is the largest benefit concert for this treasured organization (formerly known as North Central Caregivers). See details on page 5.

Nourishing Souls and Transforming Lives Through Music



FIRST UU IN PICTURES

First UU starts holiday season with annual Thanksgiving potluck



Come out for these UU-related holiday events!





Be Our Guest

The 22nd Christmas Choral Benefit

Friday, Dec. 5th at 7:30 at
St. Louis Catholic Church
7601 Burnet Rd. Austin, Texas 78757

Benefitting Drive A Senior – North Central Austin

Free Admission

*A free will offering will be taken for the ongoing services of free transportation to our older neighbors (60+ years old)...
... that helps keep them in their own homes.*

All donations are tax deductible.

*Please come to this joyful event.
Enjoy the beautiful music from 10 choirs and bell groups from our sponsoring congregations.*



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL: 512-453-2273

Wildflower Church First Friday Film Series presents:

BECOMING SANTA



This is the story of one man entering the culture and character of Santa Claus for a single season. Along the way, he learns a lot about the history of Santa Claus and how he took on the image we know today, as well as meeting a number of other Santas and discovering the ups and downs of one of the world's most remarkable seasonal occupations. "Becoming Santa" premiered at the 2011 SXSW Film Festival. It is a charming, informative, and surprisingly hilarious film. NOTE: This film is not appropriate for those who believe in Santa Claus. After the film, there will be an audience discussion. If you have a picture of yourself with Santa, bring it to share!

Friday, December 5, 2014 | Doors open at 6:30 p.m., film at 7:00 p.m.
Wildflower Church (1314 E. Oltorf) | Free of charge

The staff at First UU wishes you a warm and joyous holiday!

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC

RSVP to "Path to Membership" class

**Saturday, January 10
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Howson Hall**

Breakfast and childcare provided. This quarterly class is designed for those interested in becoming members. Learn about the responsibilities of membership from Rev. Barnhouse; learn about UU history and the history of this church; share faith stories with other prospective members (optional); hear about ways to connect in the church; and sign the membership book and fill out New Member paperwork, if you feel ready! Please RSVP to membership@austinuu.org or Kelsey at the visitor table, so we can get an accurate headcount for food and childcare.

"Getting to Know UU" class

**Sunday, December 7
12:15-1:15 p.m.
Rm. 15**

This class is a basic introduction to Unitarian Universalist history, as well as the history of First UU of Austin. You will also have opportunities to ask questions and share faith histories with other attendees. Childcare is provided.

Thanks for all the books!

We have all heard the Unitarian joke about changing a light bulb. You know the one: "How many people does it take to change a light bulb?"

The answer is 300:

- Twelve to sit on the board, which appoints the nominating and personnel committee.
- Five to sit on the nominating and personnel committee, which appoints the house committee.
- Eight to sit on the house committee, which appoints the light bulb-changing committee.
- Four to sit on the light bulb-changing committee which chooses who will screw in the light bulb. Three of those four then give their own opinion of "screwing in methods" while the one actually does the installation.
- After completion, it takes 100 individuals to complain about the method of installation, another 177 to debate the ecological impact of using the light bulb at all, and at least one to insist that back in her day the lit chalice was quite enough.

Well, our question is, "How many people does it take to help fill People's Community Clinic's children's book inventory?" It takes ALL the wonderful people in our church who took the

time to go through their shelves and boxes and come up with 324 books! Thanks to all of you so much; and special thanks to Dale Bulla, as well as Eileen and Drew Liedeker for the large number of books they donated.

Most members of First UU are aware of the work of the clinic. Its mission is to improve the health of medically underserved and uninsured Central Texans by providing high-quality affordable health care. This is accomplished by the health, development, and behavioral programs the clinic offers. Sentiments of the clinic are shared by many of us in the church.

There is an array of opportunities for volunteers at the clinic. One ongoing effort by church members is the "Mostly Tuesday Collating Group" that meets monthly to put together various packets that are needed by the staff to impart information to the clients. In December, we'll meet on Tuesday, December 9 from 9:30 a.m. to noon in the second floor conference room at 2909 N. IH35. We encourage you to join us. Afterward many of the group go to lunch together. For more information contact pcc@austinuu.org, or to learn more about the clinic take a look at their website at www.austinpcc.org. ■

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



SafePlace

Ending Sexual and Domestic Violence

The Austin nonprofit SafePlace is the December recipient of the final Monthly Service Offering for 2014. SafePlace's mission is ending sexual and domestic violence through safety, healing, prevention and social change.

SafePlace has an array of programs to provide comprehensive support for their clients, to assist them through the recovery process at every step. This blog article from their website, "Peer Support: Survivors Helping Each Other Heal," by volunteer Lisa Pous, discusses their recently introduced Peer Support program.

"There are times when all of us need a role model to show us what we can do and where we might go. And sometimes, after months or even years of isolation, 'I've been there,' are the words survivors need to hear the most.

That's why we've started connecting people who have come through our programs with those at the very beginning of their healing process. The program, called Peer Support, began through the efforts of Lisa Pous, who has remained connected to SafePlace since spending two years in shelter and supportive housing recovering from abuse and trauma.

Even after Lisa felt like she had reached a place of peace in her own life, she kept coming back. "I thought to myself, I know how to get through crisis now, and I know

how to survive. But I want more." So Lisa engaged with SafePlace, and she helped bring the perspective of a survivor to her role as a volunteer leader and educator in the Life Skills and Survivor Voices program. "Then one day I tripped on a TEDTalk and realized that there was a name for what I'd been doing," she said, "Peer support!" It was the missing piece.

The program is in many ways a return to the roots of the domestic violence movement, which has always been survivor-led. Lisa worked with staff members to develop training and supervisory protocols, while also working toward her own Peer Support Specialist certification. The Peer Support program is trauma-informed, survivor centered, and empowerment based, with roots in the 12-step model and social justice movement. And today at SafePlace, 14 Peer Support Volunteers meet twice a month with survivors staying in the Kelly White Emergency Shelter.

Victims of abuse have often experienced months or even years of isolation from other support systems like family, friends and co-workers. Through the Peer Support Program, they are able to begin building new relationships with people who know what they are going through.

"Peer Support is the greatest instiller of hope we can provide," says Supportive Housing Advocacy

Manager Erin Goodison. "For our clients, seeing survivors who have successfully rebuilt their lives — and now dedicate their time to helping others — is both inspiration and motivation through difficult times."

Knowing that the person facilitating group has left violence and trauma and reached a place of safety, stability and peace can be more impactful for survivors than any statistic, book or brochure that we could share with them. Peer Support gives people healing from violence, abuse and trauma a person to look to and say, 'I could be like that.' ■

All groups supported by Monthly Special Offerings will receive a check at the end of the year, when the total of the 12 monthly donations will be divided equally.

Eclectic Folk Jam**Friday, December 12****Rm. 17****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. We have “Rise Up Singing” song books, and some people like to bring copies of their favorite songs to pass out. 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**Saturday, December 27****Friends Meeting House****3701 E. MLK Blvd.****7:30-10:30 p.m.**

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 (512) 926-4122 or singalong@austinuu.org.

PARADOX**PLAYERS**

Paradox Players wants YOU on stage!

by Gary Payne, creative director

Our surprise Valentine's Day show is no longer a surprise. It will be A. R. Gurney's delightful and touching “Love Letters.” This two-person charmer is done as a staged reading (no memorization required) on a bare stage. My plan is to cast three pairs of actors, each pair in the same age range, with the three pairs sharing performances.

I would like to cast primarily from First UU members and church visitors. Now's your chance to scratch that acting itch. Auditions will be Sunday, December 14 at noon in Room 13. If you can't

make it, another time can be arranged. Contact me at (512) 799-5872 or capcitemystery@swbell.net for more information.

The show will open on Friday, February 6 and close on Sunday, February 22. Performances will be on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm. Rehearsals will be on selected weeknight evenings in late January and early February.

We have been hinting for some time about doing a Texas-based parody called Queso Blanco. Never fear, it will soon be here. Look for it in May.

Austin Presence Group update

The Austin Presence Group will be meeting December 4 and 18. If you're new to our group, here are a few details about our meetings.

- Our group will be meeting the first and third Thursdays from 6:30-8 p.m. at First UU, usually in room 13B.
- Each week, we'll start with five to ten minutes of silent meditation.
- We are currently exploring several different spiritual paths including Eckhart Tolle's “Uncourse” and Mark Nepo's

“Book of Awakening,” in hopes of deciding on a course of action for 2015.

- A \$5 donation is requested in order to support the church.

We welcome input from anyone who is considering attending our meetings. Come light another candle to illuminate your understanding along the spiritual path called life.

Should you have any questions, contact Joe Linsalata: (512) 327-5000 or Linsalata@austin.rr.com.

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING

Vote on Dec. 14 for social justice nonprofits to receive special offerings

Voting local keeps us connected! First UU members are reminded to vote on Sunday, December 14 for ten favorite social justice nonprofits to receive monthly special offering donations in 2015.

Church members may vote and rank order their choices, either after worship services at the Social Action table in the gallery, or at the Congregational meeting at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary on Sunday, Dec. 14.

Before voting day, interested UUs must submit MSO 2015 nomination forms for potential recipients by midnight Sunday, Dec. 7. Nomination forms are available from the First UU community bulletin board, at the Social Action table in the gallery on Sundays, or by request at socialaction@austinuu.org.

As a nominator, members must fill out the detailed nomination form by the deadline and commit to:

- 1) Testify to the congregation about their nominee when the plate is passed
- 2) Plan to write a human interest story for the newsletter and an announcement for the weekly order of service about the organization
- 3) Invite a representative of the organization to visit congregants in the gallery on the day of the offering to provide further information about volunteer opportunities
- 4) Provide proof of 501(c)3 status.

Let's get those nominations in by December 7 and plan to get out the vote on December 14.

Caroling With the Quakers

**Monday, December 22
1-4 p.m.**

Our caroling will take place at Friends Meeting House and two East Austin nursing homes. Contact Mary Jane Ford at (512) 926-4122 or singalong@austinuu.org.

Art Mission: Wednesday Night Kids' Project!

**Every Wednesday night
6:30-8 p.m.
Rm. 15**

Plan to meet us as we make costumes for our movie of the Three Little Pigs. Additional characters are welcome. Kids of any age are welcome, and grown-ups too. Note the changed meeting time.

Don't forget about the runoff election!

The runoff election for City of Austin Council and Mayoral races is coming up. Early voting starts on Monday, December 1 and runs through Friday, December 12. Election day is Tuesday, December 16.

Still need information about candidates? Action for Justice has run-off candidate information available until Election Day. Please stop by our table in the gallery between or after services to sign up for an information packet. Email justice@austinuu.org with questions.

This is a very important City of Austin runoff election. Please vote!

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Year-End Giving

Just a reminder that the end of the year is approaching. If you plan on giving a gift of record and want it to count toward your 2014 taxes (and pledge), please be sure to have your gift in the collection on Sunday, December 28, or postmarked before midnight December 31, 2014. Gifts after those dates, even if the check is dated 2014, will not be included in your 2014 end-of-year statement as the IRS considers them 2015 gifts. The church office will not be open on Wednesday, December 31, but the USPS will be operating normally. We really appreciate your continuing support. Thank you!

Annual Giving Statements

Thank you for your generosity over the past year. Your church office will spend the month of January closing up the books and accounts for 2014, including verifying the completeness and accuracy of the records. Once that is finished, we will mail statements to everyone of their giving during 2014 (January through December). Your giving statement will go in the mail no later than January 31.

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant:

Rumors have been circulating in our church about actions on the part of our staff and leadership that seem to be uncharacteristic. More than one person has expressed to me their deep unease about what they have heard. I find it hard to believe those being accused would do anything so out of covenant. I don't know what to think. What can I do?

— *Upset & Uncomfortable*

Dear Upset:

Rumors and gossip are part of the human condition. In some organizations, they are a major source of information. Often, however, they do far more harm than good. In our church, where we covenant to be better people and make the world a better place, it is especially disturbing to suspect our leaders of out-of-covenant behavior when acting on behalf of our congregation.

Unfortunately, rumors and gossip abound where the stories are personal. Both ethically and often legally, the personal information is privileged and cannot be shared. While leaders may be able to shed some light on events, the story involved is not theirs to tell. Where

does that leave us? Under these circumstances, it seems impossible not only to speak directly to those whose actions we question, but also to do so in a spirit of compassion and good will—to question with curiosity and respect. And yet, that is exactly what we have promised to do.

If you are not comfortable speaking directly to those involved, refrain from gossip. Ask yourself, “If it were my story, would I want others telling it?” Consider that in a church community, we are called to trust our ministers and elected leaders to follow the policies approved by our board.

This is a time to remember that one of the ways we have promised to sustain our community is by honoring our commitments to ourselves and one another for the sake of our own integrity and that of our congregation.

Remember, the Healthy Relations Ministry is available to you as a resource if you need help with a difficult situation here at church. It includes Margaret Borden, Ann Edwards, and Sandra Ries and can be reached at healthyrelations@austinuu.org.

Sincerely,
Healthy Relations Covenant

Advocate values at the Capitol with UUs across Texas on Jan. 20

by **Peggy Morton**

Vans full of UUs from around Texas will travel to Austin for the Texas UU Justice Ministry Legislative Action Day on Tuesday, January 20. It's time to get organized to promote UU values with legislators as they kick off the 2015 session.

We're looking for First UU members to join us as we prepare for the big day and schedule advance appointments with legislators in our home districts. To learn more either attend the next Action for Justice meeting on Monday, Dec. 15, visit us at the Social Action table in the gallery after one of the Sunday worship services, or email Peggy at socialaction@ustinuu.org.

We'll start our day at the Capitol in room E2.026 at 8:30 a.m. Rev. Carlton Smith, a member of the UUA Southern Region Life Staff, will talk about how our Texas issues connect to the larger UUA picture. Representative Donna Howard, a fellow UU, will share an overview of what to expect from the

legislature and how we can best advocate our values.

We'll learn how to conduct advocacy meetings with our legislators by role-playing with First UU member Karen Neeley, who's worked as a lobbyist for community banks for 25 years. We'll also receive one-page, informative flyers to leave with legislators, which tell about both Unitarian Universalism and our main issues: women's reproductive justice, Medicaid expansion, and economic justice.

From 11 a.m.-3 p.m. we'll visit legislators from our districts, and from 3:30-4:30 p.m. we'll reconvene as a group to debrief our day before heading home.

Those planning to arrive Monday, January 19 will have the option of a special 7 p.m. tour of the Capitol by Karen Neeley, who will show us the shortcuts, back stairways and other secret spaces most people never discover, along with sharing a few juicy stories.

Host Texas UUs for Legislative Action Day

If you have an extra room and wouldn't mind offering a bed to a UU coming to Austin for the Texas UU Justice Ministry Legislative Action Day on Tuesday, Jan. 20, we want to hear from you.

They may want to stay the night before or after our action day and would come to us as active social justice leaders from a variety of UU congregations around the state. To express interest or get more info, email Peggy at socialaction@ustinuu.org.

"Reclaiming Prophetic Witness" Group Book Reading Jan. 7, 21 & Feb. 4 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Do you believe there is a vital public role for religious people to play in the public square? How might religious liberals embrace that role?

Each year since 2010 the UUA has selected a Common Read. The 2015 reading selection is "Reclaiming Prophetic Witness" by Paul Rasor. You are invited to join in the discussion of this book on F.R.E.D. nights beginning Jan. 7. Copies of the book is \$15 and will be available for purchase at our bookstore.

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Save The Date!

March 5-8: March in the Arc of Justice, Re-Visiting Selma, Birmingham, AL

March 6-8: Southwest UU Women's Conference, San Marcos, TX

April 17-19: Southwest UU Conference Spring Conference, First UU Church of New Orleans, LA

Carpool Opportunities

Looking to carpool to a UU event outside Austin? Email denom@ustinuu.org and Margaret Borden will attempt to pair you with someone to share the ride.

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister

**Guest at Your Table 2014!**

For a number of years, First UU has participated in the UU Service Committee (UUSC) program, **Guest at Your Table**. This educational fundraising program supports the work that UUSC does to promote human rights around the globe. In the past,

a small box was given to each participating household to set on their dinner table. With each meal, as if there were a guest to feed, the family would place a donation in the Guest at Your Table box. This year, with the theme of food sustainability, the UUSC is encouraging participants to host an actual meal that focuses its conversation and activities on human rights as a fundraising effort. Resources such as printable placemats, discussion guides, recipes, and videos are available at: uuscs.org/planning-a-guest-at-your-table-meal. Pamphlets and envelopes for donations are available at the Lifespan RE table. Please return your envelopes by Dec. 28.

Can't make it to F.R.E.D. nights on Wednesdays? Try Sunday Seminars! Jan. 4, Howson Hall, 1-2:30 p.m.

Sunday Seminars take place on the first Sunday each month. This multi-track adult Religious Ed. experience has options in areas such as Leadership Development, Spiritual Practices, and UU Identity Development. No prior registration required. A simple lunch will be available in Howson Hall from noon-1 p.m. for \$5 (available to-go for Forum attendees) and childcare will be provided. Please check each monthly newsletter for detailed information on Sunday Seminars!

Spiritual Practices Track: "Transformation Through Mindful Journaling," facilitated by Leena Batra

By developing self-compassion and releasing sabotaging negative self-talk, mindful journaling can help you to live life more fully in the present. Create your personal mindful journaling practice, and celebrate your amazing self!

UU Identity Development Track: "Long Strange Trip" film screening and discussion, facilitated by Luther Elmore

"Long Strange Trip" is a six-part video series by Ron Cordes that explores the history of Unitarian and Universalist thought and practice from the early, liberal strands in faith at the beginning of the Christian era to what we know today as Unitarian Universalism. (uuu.org)

Faith Formation Track: "Neuroscience for Your Daily Life," facilitated by Bruce Naylor

Much progress has been made in understanding how brains work thanks to a worldwide community of 100,000 neuroscience researchers. As a consequence, a major paradigm shift is underway in our understanding of human nature. This five-session course will give a very broad, accessible tour of neuroscience with a focus on improving your understand of yourself and others from a very different perspective.

F.R.E.D. Nights Every Wednesday, dinner 6-7 p.m. (\$6)

Join us for F.R.E.D. (Fellowship, Religious Education, and Dinner) every Wednesday. (In observance of Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, F.R.E.D. is cancelled on Wed. December 24 and 31)

"What We Choose: Ethics for Unitarian Universalists," facilitated by Dr. Andy Gerhart Alternating Wednesdays, Nov. 12 (no class on Nov. 26) 7-9 p.m. \$15 registration fee

We are regularly faced with moral choices, big and small. How should we respond to a tricky family or relationship situation? What is the right thing to do when faced with a dilemma at work? What is the most ethical course for a community, state, or nation to follow, and how much am I prepared to invest in advocating for that course? How does morality or ethics enter my food and eating choices? How should morality or ethics enter my consumer decisions? How do we treat others? What must

I do to follow the values of my Unitarian Universalist faith tradition? (uua.org) Childcare provided.

Second Tuesday Enneagram Study Group **Dec. 9, 7-9 p.m.**

Co-facilitated by Rob Feeney, Kathryn Ehlert, and Carolyn Gremminger, the Enneagram is a system for understanding personality types. Many have found it a useful tool for self-inquiry, relationship-building, and spiritual exploration. We meet the second Tuesday of each month to provide information about the Enneagram and to share our experiences using it to transform our lives. The study group is informal and you are welcome to attend as your schedule and inclination allow. Each session we will provide a brief overview of the Enneagram and address questions from those new to the system. Members of the group who have studied the Enneagram will share more information and experiences with it, then there will be time for more sharing and open discussion. All are invited to attend.

Passionate About Comprehensive Sex Ed?

Consider becoming a certified OWL facilitator! Our Whole Lives is a nationally renowned, comprehensive sex education curriculum that emphasizes healthy interpersonal relationships. OWL is available in levels from Kindergarten through adulthood. First UU is planning to offer OWL once again during the spring semester.

We need awesome adults to help fill in the information gaps that our schools often leave in our youth. First UU Church of Austin is proud to be hosting a junior and senior high-level facilitators' training for the Central Texas area, Jan. 16-18. Registration is \$225 for this valuable training, and First UU will gladly subsidize that cost for anyone interested who would like to become a certified facilitator. Get more info and find a link to sign up at our website: austinuu.org/wp2013/?p=16117.

Second Annual Christmas Cookie and Ornament Decorating Party! **Howson Hall, 4-5 p.m.**

Join us before the 5 p.m. Christmas Eve service to sing along with Christmas carols and sip hot cocoa, tea, and coffee while decorating cookies and ornaments!

Third Annual Christmas Potluck Feast! **Howson Hall, noon-1 p.m.**

Celebrate the season with a holiday feast after the second service Christmas Pageant in Howson Hall! Please bring a large portion of sides, desserts, salads, or a vegetarian main-dish option to share.

Annual Christmas Pageant, Dec. 14

Don your best bathrobe and come to church ready to take the journey to Bethlehem on December 14, at 9:15 and 10:45 a.m. For those who have never experienced a First UU Christmas Pageant before, you are in for a real treat with this most treasured tradition! All (especially children) are encouraged to participate with no prior rehearsal. Costumes will be laid out in the lobby to choose from, and our narrator will invite all of our nativity characters up on cue! In this half-scripted, half-improvised, but always sincere pageant, the whole congregation comes to imagine the story of Christmas. This is a worship service not to miss!

Need Help Wrapping Those Holiday Gifts?

Our Sr. High youth group will be saving you much-needed time this holiday season by wrapping your presents for you! This youth group fundraiser will take place on the Howson Hall stage during coffee hour, December 7, 14, and 21. Please bring in your gifts with labels reading "To" and "From," and your gifts will be beautifully and discreetly wrapped for \$2.50 per gift. If you would like to donate wrapping paper, gift tags, ribbon, and bows to this effort, they would be greatly appreciated as well!

Want to be in the loop with Children and Youth Religious Ed.?

Stop by the Lifespan RE table in the gallery and give us your email address so that we can invite you to the First UU of Austin Parents' Facebook group.

Chalice Circles Open Registration, Dec. 7-Jan. 11

Did you miss your opportunity to enroll in our small group ministry program everyone raves about? You have a second chance! Stop by the Lifespan RE table in the gallery to pick up a registration form. We will be adding new members to existing Chalice Circles in February. Chalice Circles meet through the end of June. ■

Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, Dec. 10
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

This month our program will consist of upbeat music from our own Dan Wilson and the New Austin Polka Band.

Soup, salad and dessert will be served for \$5. Please RSVP to Alice Cashman: (512) 837-0988.



Calling all UU member artists!

The Alternative Space Gallery here at the church welcomes all UU member artists to submit original art for our annual member show. Entries must be received as of December 1 or by arrangement. We hope to have a large collection of work to exhibit. Fifteen percent of any sale will go to the church general fund. Request additional details and send questions via gallery@ustinuu.org.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

DECEMBER 7

Dirty Water

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

The ninth of the Ten Commandments talks about lying, in particular “bearing false witness against your neighbor.” What does lying do to a culture? To a relationship? When is lying called for? The First UU of Austin Adult Choir will be joined by Austin Symphony musicians and vocalists from Conspire and Texas Choral Consort to present J. S. Bach’s “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland.”

DECEMBER 14

Intergenerational Christmas Pageant!

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE &
 REV. MARI CABALLERO

Costumes will be on tables in the foyer, or feel free to come dressed in your costumes and bathrobes. We’ll have shepherds, animals, and angels. Who do you think would have been at the manger for the birth of the Light? The First UU of Austin Intergenerational Choir and Band will accompany the pageant service.

DECEMBER 21

Christmas History

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Garlands, red, gold and green, carols, presents and celebration...when did Christmas become what it is today? What famous carol was written by a Unitarian minister? Annabeth Novitzki and Jordan Price will share their music for both morning services.

DECEMBER 24

Holiday Services

5:00 p.m. Family Service

REV. MARI CABALLERO

7:00 p.m. UU Lessons and Carols

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE &
 CHRIS JIMMERSON

Rebecca Frazier-Smith will provide musical accompaniment for our special holiday services.

DECEMBER 28

Ch-ch-ch-changes

CHRIS JIMMERSON

Each time we approach the coming of a new year, we tend to be more open to new possibilities. We are more likely to embrace change and even make resolutions about what we would like to change. What if we were to view life this way all year? What if we thought of everything as continuous change—as ever-unfolding possibilities? Service music will feature a vocal offering by Sherrille Reed.

THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

DECEMBER 7

Multicultural Texas

WITH FRANK DE LA TEJA

Historian Frank de la Teja thinks you have to get beyond traditional themes tied to a narrow segment of the population in order to understand what really makes Texas distinctive. Dr. de la Teja, professor of history at Texas State University, says the traditional focus on the Battle of the Alamo and the history of Anglo-American settlement and economic development of the state leaves out critical parts of the story of Texas. The modern-day diversity of Texas traces back centuries, before the 1800s, to the time when Texas history was the history of north-eastern Mexico. And the Texas identity of today also is a direct product of radical social, economic, and political changes the state has undergone since 1900, says de la Teja. In his words: "The story of the 19th century may be romantic and nationalistic, but it does not give students a sense of why Texas is the way it is today. The 20th century story does that."

Dr. de la Teja has spent his career studying and teaching others about the historical realities that have made Texas truly a multicultural crossroads, far removed from the monochromatic myth of the Lone Star State. He has served as the state historian of Texas. He holds a Ph.D. in Latin American History from UT Austin. De la Teja has been active in promoting the teaching of a broader vision of Texas history in our public schools, with emphasis on the state's earlier and more recent history and its strong ties to the history, culture, and demographics of Mexico.

De la Teja was born in Cuba, raised in New Jersey, and came to Texas to earn his doctorate in colonial Latin American history. He worked as a research assistant for novelist James Michener, who was writing a book on Texas at the time. De la Teja later worked as an archivist for the Texas General Land Office. Since 1991, he has taught history courses at Texas State University, including Critical Issues in Texas History, Spanish Borderlands, History of Mexico to 1848, and Introduction to American Indian History.

DECEMBER 14

Marriage Equality, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Employment Law Update

WITH SHEILA GLADSTONE

Huge legal changes providing workplace protection for the LGBTQ community have been sweeping the country, and may even come to Texas soon. In addition, last year's US Supreme Court decision holding that the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional, and the numerous courts following suit on state same-sex marriage bans, have already changed the definition of "spouse" in numerous federal workplace laws. Only one federal appeals court has (just recently) upheld state law bans, and here in Texas, same-sex marriage bans in the State Constitution and the Texas Family Code are up on appeal and will likely be decided soon. Now that there is a split in the circuits on the constitutionality of state law marriage bans, will the US Supreme Court finally take the issue up? What is the future on sexual orientation and sexual identity discrimination in the workplace, and how does it work when a city ordinance bans it but the state does not? We will discuss these timely issues and more.

Sheila Gladstone, a principal attorney with the Austin law firm of Lloyd Gosselink Rochelle & Townsend, P.C., has been practicing, speaking and training on employment law for over 26 years. She is passionate about this topic of gender issues in the workplace, and fascinated by how quickly American workplaces are changing and judges are jumping to make sure they are not on the wrong side of history. Sheila graduated with high honors from the University of Arizona College of law, where she was an editor of the Law Review, and she has served as board president at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin. Sheila is a frequent and popular speaker and writer on current workplace issues such as discrimination, harassment, disability and family leave, wage and hour law, and conducting internal investigations. For several years running, she has been among the five percent of Texas attorneys selected for the Texas Super Lawyers list, which recognizes outstanding professional achievement.

see forum notices continued on page 16

**First Unitarian
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Church of Austin**

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Kelsey Caudebec

Communications Coordinator
Victoria Valadez

Board President
Carolyn Gremminger

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THE FORUM, *continued*

**DECEMBER 21
HOLIDAY SERVICES**

**DECEMBER 28
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY ■**

We still need your building expansion input!

**Sunday, December 7
Outside Rm. 13 & 15
7-10 p.m.**

Were you not able to attend the Town Hall meetings for our building expansion? Here is another chance to provide your input on setting

our priorities! Stop by the Religious Education area on Dec. 7, in the hallway outside of rooms 13 and 15, and participate in our prioritization exercise! We will be set up where the windows overlook the courtyard, and we welcome you to stop by.