



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## Questions I've heard lately

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



**Q:** *Why do we have exclusive groups like the White Allies and the People of Color group? Is this the best way to do anti-racism work? Shouldn't we be doing it together? Am I supposed to just hang out with other people just like myself? When do we get to talk to one another about race? It doesn't feel good to be excluded, and it doesn't feel very UU.*

**A:** What I would like to say about exclusive church groups is that they fit into a historical context. I remember when women's spirituality was first coming to life, and women created groups within our churches to explore the feminine face of God, to talk about being a woman exploring ideas about the goddess. Some male church members chafed at being excluded from the women's spirituality groups. Their feelings were hurt because they after all were safe men, men who wanted to explore their feminine side. The women struggled for ways to explain to the men that, while it wasn't the men's fault that women might feel

intimidated or shut down by the presence of men, the fact remained that they would not have the same discussions in the presence of men that they would have in the presence of women only. Later on, when groups of LGBT folks started to be formed, many of the straight folks felt excluded unjustly. They were allies, after all, and what could the gay people talk about without them that they could not talk about with them there?

What I hear from our White Allies group is that they find they are able to admit certain prejudices, experiences, thoughts, or ideas more easily without worrying about burdening a person of color with them, or unwittingly pressuring people of color to educate them. Likewise, the people of color are able to dive into a discussion feeling safer if they do not have to worry about accommodating the feelings or the presence of white people. We do have "both/and" discussions in the "Building the World We Dream Of" work-

shop, as well as other anti-racism learning opportunities; and, when the two exclusive groups get strong enough and feel ready, perhaps they can offer opportunities to talk about race in a format where everyone is invited to participate. Meanwhile, we can all continue to mix together and mingle on Sunday mornings, in classes, at breakfast, and at all other activities of the church.

This is difficult and awkward work, and I must say how much I appreciate those of you who take the time to write me or talk to me about their concerns. Our covenant asks us to disagree with curiosity and respect, and to speak directly with the person with whom you disagree.

**Q:** *Since our bylaws don't have provision for an Associate Minister, and we're not going to vote on calling Rev. Mari, what are we going to do instead to honor her ministry here?*

**A:** We are dropping the "Assistant" from both Rev. Mari and Rev. Chris' titles. Mari will be Minister

**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

# Our place in the universe

by **Angela Smith**



My husband Charles and I have a small cabin in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northeastern New Mexico. Located at an elevation of 7,200 feet, the site makes for great stargazing. During summer nights, graced with clear skies, I look up at the Milky Way, its spectacular arc of stars spanning from the teapot of Sagittarius to the northern cross of Cygnus. Looking through the eyepiece of my telescope, I visit my old deep-sky friends who reside there – globular clusters, planetary nebulae, dazzling double stars – a feast of heavenly delights for an avid amateur astronomer on a dark, moonless night.

The stars and constellations change as the seasons change. Now the big square of Pegasus dominates the autumn sky. Using the stars of that constellation as my guide, I find Andromeda, our neighboring galaxy, just a 2.54 million year hop and a skip from our own Milky Way. Andromeda is speeding toward our galaxy at a rate of 670,000 miles per hour, and five billion years from now it's predicted our two galaxies will collide. While I find that bit of information fascinating, what amazes me even more is the fact that our Milky Way and Andromeda are just two of more than a hundred billion

other galaxies out there. How can one not feel insignificant with that knowledge? How arrogant to think the individual life of anyone could make a difference in the overall scheme of things.

But wisdom tells me such thinking is dangerous. What we do here and now does make a difference. What we do here and now does matter. While I'm awed by the vastness of the cosmos, that awareness also makes me the more determined to do whatever I can to make the world I live in today a better place. I'm reminded of that every Sunday when I recite the mission of our church: "We gather in community to nourish souls, transform lives and do justice." That's my calling not only as a member of First UU but as an Austin resident, a U.S. citizen and an inhabitant of planet earth in our solar system located on the edge of the Orion Arm of the Milky Way – my galaxy home.

I love the theme of our stewardship campaign this year: Building Justice – Building Sanctuary. It resonates with me just as Rev. Meg's words did in last month's newsletter. To quote her: "One of my privileges is to know that my life will stay sweet if I don't make any trouble and don't upset anyone... One of

my privileges is to get overwhelmed, burnt-out on compassionate activism, and withdraw with a resigned sigh when I can't make a problem go away. I may do that, but not yet." Not yet, indeed.

We must never be content with things as they are, because then our lives truly become stagnant and insignificant. We have a moral responsibility to fight complacency and apathy – to realize what we do is significant. What we do does make a difference, even if it's just putting up a banner that says BLACK LIVES MATTER, or providing sanctuary for a Guatemalan refugee, or marching in a Gay Pride parade, or even voting. We can rest later, but as long as work is to be done to build a more just and safe world – NOT YET!

I look at the light coming from Andromeda and know that what I see is how that galaxy looked more than two and a half million years ago. I'd like to think some intelligent life on a planet far, far away will eventually see the light radiating from this particular time and place on this teeny, tiny little spot we call home in the vast universe. My prayer is that what we do now will give them a light worth seeing. ■

*“Questions” continued*

of Lifespan Faith Development and Congregational Engagement, and Chris will be Minister of Program Development. Mari’s portfolio includes faith development for both children and adults, social justice work, preaching and worship leadership, and some event planning. Rev. Chris’ portfolio includes administration, finance, building and grounds, interfaith work, preaching and social justice. Rev. Meg is the Senior Minister. Honoring ministry is also reflected by salary offered. The structure remains constant. Both positions still serve at the pleasure of and

report to the Sr. Minister. The Sr. Minister is searched for and called by a congregational vote and reports to the congregation through the board and at congregational meetings.

**Q:** *If I have good, bad or worried feelings about something the church is doing, who do I talk to?*

**A:** The ministers and church leaders need your feedback! Our covenant says we speak directly to the person in charge of whatever it is. If your thoughts/feelings concern a minister’s decision, approach whichever minis-

ter in whose area that decision rests. If you don’t know, you are welcome to ask Rev. Meg. If it’s a board decision, please approach the congregational president, Angela Smith. If you’re not sure whether it’s a board matter or a ministry matter, you are welcome to ask Rev. Meg or Rev. Chris, both of whom can explain this under Policy Based Governance. If you don’t get satisfaction from your first conversation, you are welcome to approach the Healthy Relations Ministry (Ann Edwards, Margaret Borden, Sandra Reis) to discuss options. ■



## Music Matters

by **Brent Baldwin**, music director

### Introducing new music program staff members: **Chris and Kati!**

**Christopher Larsen**, Assistant Director of Music



While Chris is no stranger to First UU—he’s been singing/playing for the church since 2012—we are pleased to announce that he has

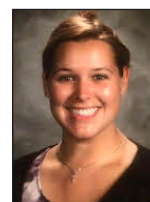
been appointed to serve as our first Assistant Director of Music!

A native of Iowa, Chris Larsen is a conductor, singer, and educator. Chris has taught high school programs in Iowa, Minnesota, and Ohio, and has nine years’ worth of great

memories and former students. As a singer, Chris has performed with Conspirare, Opera Colorado, Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati, Mount Pleasant Community Chorus, UT’s New Music Ensemble, and Texas Choral Consort. Chris holds graduate degrees in conducting from The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Arizona, as well as a degree in music education from Wartburg College. With Andrea and Julian, he is proud to call Austin his adopted home.

### **Kati Cox**, Youth Choir Director

Kati holds a Bachelors of music education from the University of Northern Iowa, a Masters in music



education from Florida State, and is currently working towards a PhD in music and human learning from UT. She spent six years

as the Centralia High School Choir and Drama Director, doubling the size of the program, and adding in music appreciation, guitar, and piano classes. She also spent five years as the Centralia First United Methodist Church chancel choir director in Illinois. Kati has a deep love of music and people, and experience as a clinician and presenter. She’s extremely excited to work with the youth of First UU! Let’s make music! ■

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

# Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister



## A Proud Thank You!

Huge thanks to all who helped make First UU's presence at the Pride Festival and Parade a success! Let's continue to applaud Bev Larkin, the primary designer, builder, and painter of the beautiful float, as well as Hannah Barfoot,

who stepped up as chair of both the Pride Committee and The Alphabet Soup Social Club! The members of the middle school youth group did a tremendous job assisting with painting, Tomas Medina brought the tunes, and so many more came together with help in construction, driving the truck, and tearing the whole thing down at the end of the night. Also, thank you to all who came out to march with us, throw swag at the crowd, dance aboard the float, and have a blast! Until next year...

## A Plea For Help With Space!

We're all out of storage space at the church, and have a gorgeous (and reusable!) parade float whose pieces need the help of someone with a garage, shed, attic, or storage unit that has a sense of emptiness and longs for companionship until next year. The pieces measure: four side pieces, 75"x16.5"x 32"; and two square pieces, 48"x17"x13". Please contact Laine at [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org) to offer your help. Thank you!

## "What Makes a Family?" Volunteers Needed! From the Jr. Youth Group

We now have so many ways that a family can be determined: blended, divorced, chosen, nuclear, two parents, single parents, same-sex parents. Our fall curriculum is called "Families." Our middle school group is

going to learn about the different types of families that are part of the congregation here at First UU. We need volunteers so we can interview you and your family, plus take portraits. Our class meets during the second service from 10:45-11:45 a.m. so we'd like to have folks to our class so we can ask you questions and learn about your families. If you willing to volunteer please come by room 13 after Sunday services so we can schedule a time and date for you to come to our class.

At the end of our semester, we'll be putting together a slideshow/photography show in the gallery. Your assistance will aid us in understanding more of our congregation and the different ways families are part of the larger whole. Thank you! Please contact Laine at [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org) to offer your family's help with this project.

## Chalice Circles Begin Mid-Oct! Register by Oct. 4

Chalice Circles, our wildly popular monthly small groups program, is closing registration on October 4 and will begin mid-month. The next chance to register for a Chalice Circle will be in January, so fill out the form on the Lifespan RE table now! Chalice Circles are lay-led groups of 6-12 adults that explore a different topic each month, practice deep listening, and carry out a service project for our church or wider community. Contact Laine for more info: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

## Teacher Happy Hour, Oct. 20, 6-8 p.m.

Have you helped out in a children's or youth religious education classroom lately? If yes, you qualify to attend the fun and mayhem that is a First UU RE Teacher Happy Hour—one of the many perks of the volunteer gig! The first one of this school year will be Oct. 20, 6-8 p.m. Childcare will be provided at First UU, and we

*continued on next page*

will meet at a happy hour spot nearby. To RSVP or offer suggestions on the TBD location (or to get in on this by volunteering in a classroom), contact Laine: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

### **Guest at Your Table Boxes are Back!**

Each year, our congregation participates in the UU Service Committee's fundraiser known as "Guest at Your Table." The UUSC is the Unitarian Universalist Association's international and domestic arm for human rights work. The idea of this campaign is that each family in the church gets a small box "piggy" bank to set at their table. You donate the approximate cost of a meal (or more!) for a guest to eat with your family each time you sit down to eat. Return the box to the church on December 13 and we will send our collective contribution to the UUSC to assist in their great work! This program is a wonderful way to teach children about generosity and gratitude, and a great way for adults to be reminded of such lessons, too. The boxes will be available at the Lifespan RE table in the gallery sometime in October.

### **F.R.E.D. Night Happenings:**

No reservation required to the hottest Wednesday night spot in town! All are welcome to join us for an always-delicious dinner at 6 p.m. (\$6/person, kids under 12 eat free), followed by mind-blowing classes and workshops! This semester, we are offering the following:

**"Living the Welcoming Congregation: Continuing the Welcoming Congregation Journey," 7-9 p.m. Alternating Wednesdays beginning Oct. 7 \$15 registration fee (scholarships available)**

This year marks the 20th anniversary of First UU Church of Austin's being recognized by the UUA as having completed the necessary steps to become an official "Welcoming Congregation" to LGBTQ identifying people of good will! To honor this wonderful milestone and to renew this commitment, we are participating in the refresher course, "Living the Welcoming Congregation," toward obtaining our certificate that says we are committed to the ongoing journey of acceptance. A lot has happened in the LGBTQ movement in the past 20 years! Come and join in this joyous struggle, meet other allies and queer members, and help First UU reach this goal!

### **"Resistance and Transformation: Unitarian Universalist Social Justice History"**

**Alternating Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m., beginning Oct. 14, \$15 registration fee (scholarships available)**

Grounded in the belief that even "failures" in our history can be instructive, this program presents the ongoing struggle of our tradition to live up to its ever-evolving ideals of social transformation. Themes include abolition, peace-making, civil rights, free speech, utopianism, counter-culture, the women's movements of both 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, sexuality education, and LGBT equality.

### **Kiya's Kids Art Mission, Wednesdays, 6:30-8 p.m.**

Kid-driven programming for K-5th. Let's explore, paint, sculpt, build, make music, make movies, make friends, and make believe. Want to help? Have questions? Contact Kiya Heartwood at [kiya@kiyaheartwood.com](mailto:kiya@kiyaheartwood.com).

### **First Sunday Seminars, Oct. 4**

First 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, UU identity development, and spiritual practices. 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!

### **Faith Formation Track: "The History of Handicrafts in Social Justice Movements"**

Knitting, crocheting, needlepoint, and sewing may traditionally seem like innocuous hobbies of "women-folk," but have a lesser-known history as instruments of resistance! Bring your current project or come ready to learn something new as we craft together while delving into the radical history of such handicrafts. All are welcome, regardless of experience or knowledge.

### **Faith Formation Track: "Exploring Immigration as a Moral Issue"**

The 2013 General Assembly of UU Congregations voted to declare "Immigration as a Moral Issue" a UU

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FIRST UU IN PICTURES

# First UU shows our colors at annual Pride

photos courtesy of Bev Larkin



## First UU youth participate in Black Lives Matter rally



From left to right: Alex Runnels, Tammy Runnels, Samuel Winget, Owen Lucas, and Scott Butki. Photo courtesy of Scott Buski.

About 15 people from our church, including four high school students and their parents, two ministers, and others joined about 200 people at the Black Lives Matter rally against police brutality, which took place at the capitol on September 19.

In the November issue you'll be able to read the thoughts of those who attended the event, most especially some of these students attending their first rally.

The event was a success both in educating and inspiring others, and in showing the students what "transforming lives and doing justice" is all about.

*“Lifespan RE” continued*

Statement of Conscience. As we consider continuing on the journey of offering sanctuary, let’s learn more about how this work fits in with the work of the larger UU movement and how it informs our faith as Unitarian Universalists.

**Science and Religion Seminar Series with Bruce Naylor, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, 1-2:30 p.m.**

Science and Religion are considered

the two great schemas for understanding existence. We will be exploring how science provides a “naturalistic” understanding of the universe, and how religion can be recast from the naturalistic perspective. We will begin with the social brain, exploring how being a social animal shaped the evolution of our brains, and how religion evolved as part of this process. ■

## HANDS ON HOUSING

# Come build with us!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 31! That’s the date for the fall Hands on Housing (HoH) project.

Through Interfaith Action of Central Texas (iACT), HoH is a program to paint, do small repairs, and beautify the home of a low-income elderly or disabled household. The agency uses other funding to do major repairs before the volunteer events.

We had a great group in the spring. The UU group replaced the siding, improved drainage, and repainted the entire exterior of a disabled woman’s house in one day! Let’s have another big group of UU volunteers and transform a house and lives!

This year, iACT has changed the age limit. Volunteers must be 16 years and older. We know this event has been a family friendly service project in the past, and are sorry this change will impact our families with younger children.

We need both skilled and unskilled volunteers, for painting (unskilled) and special repair projects (skilled). Come to the Social Action table in the gallery on Sundays in October to sign up, or contact Jill Smith or Luther Elmore at [handsonhousing@austinuu.org](mailto:handsonhousing@austinuu.org).



*Photo: Jon Montgomery*

## Alphabet Soup Social Club

**Monday, October 11  
Waterloo Ice House  
12:00 p.m.**

This group is for any and all persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, pansexual, or asexual. The goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for us to gather in community and nourish our souls. If you are a heterosexual ally we welcome your support but ask that you refrain from attending these meetings.

Our next gathering will be for brunch after second service at Waterloo Ice House (north Burnet location). For more info please contact Hannah Barfoot at [alphabetsoup@austinuu.org](mailto:alphabetsoup@austinuu.org) or follow us on Facebook.

## “Getting to Know UU” class

**Sunday, October 11  
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.

## PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC

**Heart of Texas  
Men's Retreat****November 6-8****UBarU**

Join men from more than a half dozen UU congregations in the rugged Texas Hill country for a weekend of fellowship, introspection, conversation, relaxation, stargazing, good food, and a fire circle under the dark skies. Details, registration, and contact info at <http://www.ubaru.org/home/Mens-Retreat>.

**Save the Dates!****Pre-congregational meeting**

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

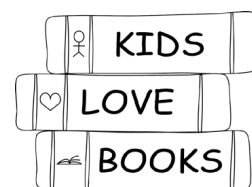
**Congregational meeting**

Sunday, December 13,  
Sanctuary  
1:15-2:30 p.m.

Individuals who have been members of the church for at least 30 days 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 congregational meeting, (between 12/13/2014 – 11/13/2015) have the right to vote at all official church meetings. Childcare provided.

# The Children's Book Drive is here!

*Children who go there are sick I am told  
And they need something special,  
like a book they can hold.  
A book is a gift that is special indeed,  
for it's one every child can take home and read.  
So look in your closet, your desk and your drawer,  
and even those boxes for toys that you store.  
Ask all of your family and every friend,  
for the clinic can use every book we can send.*



October is People's Community Clinic's Children's Book Drive. The clinic is in need of new and gently used children's books for toddlers up through grade-school age for their Storytime Program, for general use in their waiting room, and to give to a child at their pediatric visit.

A lot of books are needed! Last year, the clinic served 11,000 patients; of those, approximately 8,000 were children, and more are expected this year.

If you like to tell a story, hear a story, or read a story, then you know how important the ability to read and the love of reading are to a full and informed life. Books educate, entertain, inspire

and open one's eyes to the world. Thus, one of the goals of PCC is to encourage and instill a love of reading in the children they serve.

A box will be available in the gallery every Sunday in October to collect books for children. For more info, check out the programs of the clinic at [www.austinpcc.org](http://www.austinpcc.org), or e-mail the church's PCC volunteers at [pcc@austinuu.org](mailto:pcc@austinuu.org).

Our Collating Group meets on the first Monday of the month. The upcoming meeting dates are Oct. 5th and Nov. 2nd. We meet at 9:30 a.m. in the second-floor conference room at the clinic, 2909 N. IH 35.





## Paradox Players takes on science vs. religion!

by **Gary Payne**

**October 16 - November 1**  
**Fri. & Sat. 8 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m.**

**Tickets: \$20 opening night**  
**\$15 all other performances**  
**(\$10 seniors/students)**

Heliocentricism is the astronomical model in which the Earth and planets revolve around the Sun, as opposed to geocentrism, which placed the Earth at the center of the universe. The notion that the Earth revolves around the Sun had been proposed as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, but it was not until the 16<sup>th</sup> century that a geometric mathematical model of a heliocentric system was presented by Nicolaus Copernicus. In the following century, Johannes Kepler elaborated upon and expanded this model to include elliptical orbits, and Galileo Galilei presented supporting observations made using a telescope. Biblical text said otherwise, and, needless to

say, Galileo's work did not sit well with the Catholic Church.

Paradox Players is pleased to present the southwest premier of "Starry Messenger," written by Ira Hauptman and directed by Gary Payne. Written with insight and humor, it's the compelling story of the effects of Galileo's ordeals with the church on his family, and his family's role in his decision whether to renounce his discoveries before the Inquisition. It's the original clash of science vs. religion, more alive today than ever, and a riveting evening of theater not to be missed!

Call (512) 744-1495 or visit [www.paradoxplayers.org](http://www.paradoxplayers.org) for reservations. An opening night reception will be after the show on Oct. 16. Talk with the playwright after the matinee performance on Oct. 18. Free childcare (no reservations required) on Oct. 25.

### "Path to Membership" class

**Saturday, November 7**  
**9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

**Howson Hall**

Breakfast and childcare are provided for this quarterly class 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](mailto:membership@austinuu.org) as soon as possible or with Shannon at the visitor table, so we can get an accurate head count for food and childcare.

### Drive a Senior's Oktoberfest!

**Thursday, October 15**  
**Delaney's Ice House**  
**(7849 Shoal Creek Blvd.)**  
**4-7 p.m.**

Join us for our annual fall fundraiser. Great German food, live music, beer and other refreshments, and raffle prizes! Tickets: \$20 advance, \$25 at the door. Call (512) 453-2273.

### Special Governance Announcement

Our church governance webpage now includes a link to a virtual Dropbox folder. Here you can read all of the minister's interpretations of our ends statements and executive limitations policies,

as well as monitoring reports on each of them. Go to <http://austinuu.org/wp2013/?p=16100>, or find them under the "Governance" menu item on the church's main page.

## HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

**Thank you for your PRIDE!**

Hannah Barfoot and the Pride Committee would like to give a big thank you to the following people who were instrumental in the success of our entry into the Austin Pride Festival and Parade! A special thanks especially to our float designer Bev Larkin and sound designer Tomas Medina. Thank you Crystal Vassef, Rev. Mari, Fred Higgins, Pam and Peter Lancaster, Noel Smith, Glenn Williams, Kira Azulay, Rae Milstead, and Koda Foote.

**Austin Presence Group**

**October 1 & 15**  
**6:30-8 p.m.**

Each month we will discuss a chapter from “The Power of Now.” Then we’ll spend some time on Eckert Tolle’s “Uncourse” and also tune in to Eckhart Tolle TV. A \$5 donation is requested in order to support the church. Refer to the online calendar for meeting location. Visit us at [www.meetup.com/AustinPresence](http://www.meetup.com/AustinPresence).

Come light another candle to illuminate your understanding along the spiritual path called life. Contact: Joe Linsalata, (512) 327-5000 or [Linsalata@austin.rr.com](mailto:Linsalata@austin.rr.com).

**Advice from Covenant Corner**

Dear Covenant:

Our church is doing a lot of great social justice work. In one area, though, I think we’re going down a wrong path. I talked to the leader of that project and they didn’t listen to me! I told my friend that I was going to lower my pledge to show my displeasure, and she said that was inappropriate. Why shouldn’t I express my displeasure financially as I do with other organizations whose actions I don’t support?

– *Justly Peeved*

Dear Peeved:

Your friend has a valid point. In our church’s covenant, we promise to communicate with each other directly in a respectful manner. We also covenant to affirm our gratitude with generous gifts of time, talent and money for our beloved community. Lowering your pledge to communicate displeasure is not covenantal behavior.

Since you’ve expressed your concerns directly to those involved, could it be that they did hear you but

disagreed with you? Our church has a clear mission and values. It also promises to promote the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The activity you object to may not violate these but still be something you personally disagree with. The reality is that in any community there will never be agreement 100% of the time.

Stewardship is a high anxiety time. By lowering your pledge, you’re withholding support from a community that gives back to you in so many ways. Instead of focusing on the piece of the church you disagree with, focus on the reason you are part of this beloved community.

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](mailto:healthyrelations@austinuu.org).

Sincerely,

*Healthy Relations Covenant*

## MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



## Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry

Working to further justice, equity and compassion in human relations, the nonprofit Texas UU Justice Ministry (TXUUJM) has attracted 27 congregations in addition to First UU into its fold. They will be our Monthly Special Offering focus as on Sunday, Oct. 11.

Executive Director Chuck Freeman leads the group, and two First UU members Alexandra Neville and Peggy Morton serve on the statewide board. They're currently connecting individual congregations to work on a variety of local issues from now until our state legislature reconvenes for its regular session in Jan. 2016.

"It's inspiring to know we have a way to share resources across our huge state," board member Peggy Morton said. "On a dynamic monthly TXUUJM Advisory Committee conference call, I heard from UUs advocating our values at the local level by encouraging political leaders to endorse higher wages for city and county workers, community-based policing, immigration reform, undoing racism, healthcare for all, education and using more renewable energy."

A few of TXUUJM's accomplishments during the last legislative session include:

- Over 100 UUs from 21 congregations across Texas gathered at the Capitol for our first ever TXUUJM Legislative Action Day on Feb. 17

for a historic and empowering event.

- Twenty-four UUs from 12 congregations gathered in Austin to chart a three-year mission and financial plan for TXUUJM.

- TXUUJM members from First UU of Austin registered testimony over a dozen times against anti-abortion legislation and assaults on healthcare, immigrants and LGBTQ issues. They supported bills to increase the minimum wage, Adult Career Education (ACE) funding and health care.

- Rev. Freeman is one of the founders of Texas Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice and serves on its Advisory Board with Rev. Marisol Caballero. This is the first interfaith organization of its kind in our state.

- TXUUJM was part of the Texas Woman's Healthcare Coalition that worked for the passage of \$50 million in new funding for women's preventive healthcare.

- TXUUJM helped secure \$5 million for the Adult Career Education Fund (ACE). They worked with Texas Industrial Foundation groups for long-term job training programs that enroll low-income adults in community colleges to train for living wage jobs. The programs are in the Valley, El Paso, San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, and Austin. In Austin, it's known as Capital Idea.

Since the legislative session, TXUUJM has joined efforts:

- More than 20 TXUUJM leaders from four congregations stood with 40 interfaith allies at the San Antonio Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office demanding an end to detention of refugee children and mothers in private prisons at Dilley and Karnes City, Texas. Rev. Freeman moderated the press conference that featured UUSC Associate Director for Justice Building, Pam Sparr, who submitted a petition with 5,000 signatures to end family detention.

- Rev. Freeman joined First UU ministers Rev. Meg Barnhouse, Rev. Marisol Caballero and Rev. Chris Jimmerson in the final steps for Sulma Franco to receive her stay of removal at the San Antonio Immigration Customs Enforcement office, after she had lived in sanctuary at First UU for more than two months to avoid deportation to Guatemala, where her life was threatened.

Organizing people and advocating for justice costs money. Oct. 11 will be a great day to share your treasure during the collection. Stop by the Social Action table in the gallery after the worship services to learn how to join fellow UUs to advocate for justice. ■

*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.*

## WORSHIP SERVICES

### Women's Spirituality Group

**October 3 & 17**

**Rm. 13**

**10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Join us in October! On Oct. 3 and 17 we will continue our exploration of the book, "The Toltec Book of Transformation" by Austin author HeatherAsh Amara. This month we are focusing on the "Water" chapter.

This group is for women who are high school age and older. We are open to new members at all times, and we invite you to join us. For more info please contact: [women@austinuu.org](mailto:women@austinuu.org).

## What are our values?

We say our mission together every Sunday, but you may not be as familiar with the set of religious values our church shares, and out of which our mission originally emerged. Rev. Chris will be leading a series of worship services throughout the 2015/2016 church year examining each of our values:

- Transcendence – To connect with wonder and awe of the unity of life
- Community – To connect with joy, sorrow, and service with those whose lives we touch
- Compassion – To treat ourselves and others with love

- Courage – To live lives of honesty, vulnerability, and beauty

- Transformation – To pursue the growth that changes our lives and heals our world.

The first service will be this month, where we'll explore our religious value of transcendence (see pg. 14). Chris would love to hear from you about what this value means to you or a story of when you may have experienced it. Feel free to contact Chris at (512) 452-6168, ext. 308 or [chris.jimmerson@austinuu.org](mailto:chris.jimmerson@austinuu.org) to set up a time to do so.

### October Art Exhibition

**Reception: Sat. Oct. 3  
Gallery  
6-8 p.m.**

This month we'll be featuring award-winning collage artist Michele Hogan. Preview her work at <http://michelehoganart.blogspot.com>.

## DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

### Fall Harvest Training, Nov 13-15, Glen Lake Conference Center, Glen Rose, TX

A family-friendly opportunity for expert lay leader training with only a weekend of time commitment. Classes for children to age 14. Older youth are welcome and encouraged to join the adults! Time to enjoy the beautiful fall countryside.

Links to information and workshop descriptions at [uuasouthernregion.org/fc2015.html](http://uuasouthernregion.org/fc2015.html). Scholarship information at [denom@austinuu.org](mailto:denom@austinuu.org).

### Save the Date!

**Nov 6-8:** Heart of Texas Men's Retreat, UBarU (see pg. 8)

**Various dates:** One-day workshops (10 a.m.-3 p.m.) on topics from Dwight Brown Leadership Experience. Includes lunch:

- **Dec. 5:** Comal County UU Society, New Braunfels. "Systems Theory and Faith Development."
- **Feb. 6:** First UU of San Antonio. "Governance, Power and Authority, Growth, Change, Church Size Theory."

### Carpool Opportunities

Looking to carpool to a UU event outside Austin? Email Margaret Borden at [denom@austinuu.org](mailto:denom@austinuu.org) and she'll attempt to pair you with someone to share the ride.

## INSIDE AMIGOS

# Learn how US policies begat an uprising of Central American farmers

**Thursday, October 29**  
**Howson Hall**  
**6:45 p.m.**

Born in Guatemala during the worst intensification of the internal armed conflict in Guatemala, María Luisa Rosal and her family fled into exile to the United States. They received political asylum in the 80s because her father was “disappeared” by the Guatemalan state. This month María will discuss her current work as Field Organizer for the School of the Americas Watch national office, and show the film “Resistencia: The Fight for the Aguan Valley.”

The hour-and-a-half film follows the story of 2,000 landless farmers in Honduras, who took possession of the palm oil plantations of Miguel Facusse, the country’s largest landowner and a key player in the coup d’état of 2009. The democratically elected president had promised to help farmers get their land back, before the coup took place. “Romeo Vasquez, a general who led the military coup in Honduras against President Manuel Zelaya, received training at the US School of the Americas (SOA),” according to Democracy Now. “The SOA has trained more than 60,000 soldiers, many of whom have returned home and committed human rights abuses, torture, extrajudicial execution and massacres.” Between US involvement with the military in Honduras and

the passing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which gave big business power over farmers, problems have escalated in Honduras and throughout Central America.

The farmers’ land includes some of the most fertile land in all of Central America. The slogan of the Unified Campesino Movement of the Aguan is, “We are not fish living in the water, nor birds living in the air; we are humans living on the land.”

The film follows three key members of the farmers’ resistance over four years as they attempt to implement participatory democracy in their new communities, while trying to survive the violent reaction of the landlord and the coup regime.

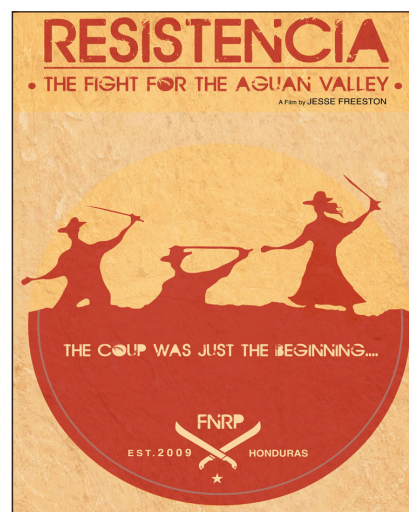
While film director Jesse Freestone will not be able to join us, María Luisa Rosal will. “SOAW is the number one organization I have worked with, and wanted to work

with on getting this film out and getting people involved post-film,” Freestone said. “María Luisa is an ideal person to handle the post-film discussion.”

Prior to joining the SOAW national office in Washington D.C. as the movement’s field organizer, María Luisa worked on issues ranging from HIV prevention programs and positive youth development programs among Latino youth, to broader issues like torture, enforced and involuntary disappearances, historical memory, and human rights in Guatemala. Now she is organizing to increase awareness of the problems created by militarizing borders. The First UU Inside Amigos group will host her presentation.

María Luisa holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and a Masters Degree in Human Rights and Democratization in Latin America and the Caribbean from the Universidad Nacional de San Martín in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Under the conviction that without truth, there is no justice, she is enthusiastically committed to contributing to the growth and mobilization of this continental movement.

Childcare will be provided for the discussion and free film screening. Contact Peggy at [insideamigos@austinuu.org](mailto:insideamigos@austinuu.org) for more info or to help with the event.



**Eclectic Folk Jam**

**Friday, October 9**  
**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](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org).

**UU/Quaker Singalong**

**Saturday, October 24**  
**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](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org).

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

**OCTOBER 4****Oh, Delilah!**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

What is the historical context of the story of Samson and Delilah? Samson is the man whose strength was in his hair, and Delilah is the one he let cut that hair off. She is one of the “bad” women of the Bible, along with Tamar (who we talked about in the sermon of Jesus’ grandmothers) and Jezebel.

**OCTOBER 11****Listening to Drag**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

For Coming Out Weekend, we’ll talk about the cultural and political statement of drag -- men dressing as women to perform as entertainers. How is it subversive to the powers that be?

**OCTOBER 17****We Gather: Another Kind of Worship**

(4:30 p.m.) The new third service is in its own format, different from Sunday mornings. Pizza and drinks will follow! Please email [childcare@austinuu.org](mailto:childcare@austinuu.org) to reserve childcare; however, children are very welcome throughout the entire service. We will have a carpeted area and coloring materials in Howson Hall.

**OCTOBER 18****Dialogue With Conservatives**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

It has become more and more difficult to have fruitful conversations with people who are different from us in their view of the world. Some members of the congregation are politically conservative while being theologically and socially liberal. Others have dear family members who are staunchly conservative in their views. How do we talk to one another?

**OCTOBER 25****Transcendence**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

To connect with wonder and awe of the unity of life. In this first of a series of sermons on the religious values that are the foundation of our religious community, we will explore the meaning and experience of transcendence.

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

## OCTOBER 4

### **The State of Criminal Justice in Texas: The Right and Left Coming Together**

WITH LEAH PINNEY

Leah Pinney will talk about the tremendous human and fiscal costs of historical criminal justice policies in Texas, and how the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) partnered with unlikely allies and created coalitions to bring about essential reforms. Moving forward, amid growing national momentum to end mass incarceration, Texas has a unique opportunity to implement meaningful changes that would build safer communities, foster stronger families, and create cost savings that could be reinvested at the local level.

Leah officially joined the TCJC team in 2007. Leah brings work experience from both corporate and non-profit sectors, including work involving project research for a national civil rights organization. Leah currently serves TCJC as an organizational and financial manager.

## OCTOBER 11

### **Shared Prosperity**

WITH DR. RAY MARSHALL

Dr. Ray Marshall will discuss his lifelong research on issues of shared economic prosperity.

Dr. Marshall is currently professor emeritus at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and holds the Audre and Bernard Rapoport Centennial Chair in Economics and Public Policy at the University of Texas at Austin. Since 1962 he has been on the faculty of the University of Texas, with the exception of his term as U.S. Secretary of Labor as a member of President Jimmy Carter's administration. As Secretary of Labor, he expanded public service and job training programs. He was a member of the Clinton administration's National Skills Standards Board and the Advisory Commission on Labor Diplomacy.

## OCTOBER 18

### **Traffic, Toll Roads, and Property Taxes**

WITH COMMISSIONER BRIGID SHEA

All Austin citizens are aware of (and frustrated by) increasingly snarled traffic and our lack of adequate public transportation. The traffic issue is an important quality-of-life issue and also adversely impacts our local economy. There's been confusion about what proposed solutions might be most practical, least disruptive, and environmentally sound. There's also public reluctance to move forward on transportation issues given worries about costs. Commissioner Shea is committed to improving local transportation and will present her ideas for making Austin a demonstration city for innovative transportation.

Brigid Shea came to Austin in 1988 to start the Texas chapter of Clean Water Action. She served on the Austin City Council from 1993 to 1996 and championed consumer, electoral, and environmental reforms. She is a cofounder of Save Our Springs (SOS), and helped achieve legal protections for Barton Springs. She was elected Travis County Commissioner in 2014.

## OCTOBER 25

### **Improving Texas School Finance**

WITH CHANDRA VILLANUEVA

Chandra Villanueva, from the Center for Public Policy Priorities, will discuss the question: what does it take to provide an adequate and equitable system of funding for the 5.2 million students in Texas public schools? That's the question posed in a lawsuit filed by hundreds of school districts against the state, alleging that the Texas school finance system fails to meet the mandate of the state constitution to provide equal educational opportunity for all students. Last year a state district judge agreed with the plaintiffs, noting

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(512) 452-6168

[www.austinuu.org](http://www.austinuu.org)

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## THE FORUM, *continued*

especially the shortcomings of state funding for economically disadvantaged pupils (60 percent of all students) and English-language learners (16 percent). The Texas Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case on September 1, and the high court's impending decision could trigger a special session of the legislature to address constitutional deficiencies.

Chandra Villanueva, policy analyst with the Austin-based Center for Public Policy Priorities, will help us sort out the competing claims in the school-finance case and outline options available to the legislature. Villanueva has written extensively on Texas school finance since joining the CPPP in 2010. ■