



FIRST UU NEWS

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

I'm feeling proud of our church

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



Ordination

What a celebration we had last month for Chris Jimmerson's ordination. I was so proud of the job First UU did in hosting that event. The ordination committee worked so hard: Gillian Redfearn, Rev. Mari Caballero, Dr. Wayne Bockman, and Sherry Coombes. Wayne even donated the dinner we enjoyed after the service. Heartfelt thanks to you all, and to the many folks who helped out at the party. On the night after the party I woke up in the wee hours with an adrenaline wash about how much work that event took! I realized that the committee had done such a great job I had no anxiety about it before it happened.

Anti-Racism

It feels important that First UU is a teaching church again. It feels important that this congregation has been inspiring and growing ministers. This is the second talented minister we've ordained into

UU service within a few years.

Nichole Kirk, who preached the ordination sermon, talked about our history and our future. She described a future that includes moving into a more multi-cultural awareness, where those of us who are white grow to understand what white culture is, how it grew to be the dominant culture in our country, and what we can do to celebrate and make room for other cultures to have their rightful place. One of the things for which I'm proud of First UU is its work on anti-racism, led by Rev. Mari Caballero. She has started a group for UUs who identify as people of color, Latina/o, bicultural, or multi-cultural (non-white). It's so important to have a place where you can speak deeply, in shorthand if you need to.

For the folks who identify as white allies there will be a group starting this month, to be led by Rev. Chris Jimmerson and Julie Gillis.

Auction!

The auction is coming up! Donations of services and experiences will continue to be solicited through the end of March. Then, on each Sunday in April, the bidding sheets will be available in a silent auction format. You all have already been assigned bidding numbers. Stop by the table and Laraine Altun, the person heading the auction this year, will tell you what your number is. We have decided to cancel the online bidding and do everything in the 3D world (Howson Hall and the gallery.) We'll have a good party in April as well, thanks to the Fellowship Team. Watch the next newsletter for the details.

Consider what your RE class, Chalice Circle, covenant group or committee/ministry can create to be a good service or a experience for members of this congregation. Art lessons? Cupcakes? Calligraphy? A legal will? Dog washing? Tree trimming? Financial check-up?

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Service is joy

by Carolyn Gremminger



When the Nominating Committee first approached me to serve on the Board of Trustees back in 2012, I was honored, and also a little bit apprehensive. I had never served on a board before. My mind raced with questions: What would it involve? How much time would it take? If I decided to accept, would I later regret my decision? What if I disappointed the congregation?

I am happy to report that now in 2015, I can look back with happy memories and no regrets in regard to this journey. I have thoroughly enjoyed myself, and I feel I have grown as a person.

Thankfully, I have even experienced what Tagore promised in that saying: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy; I awoke, and saw that life was service; I acted, and behold, service was joy."

I was discussing this with a friend in the congregation recently. She appeared to be taken aback by my pronouncement. Perhaps she had unpleasant experiences on other boards in the past? Perhaps she thought being on the board meant tedium and conflict?

I can honestly say that I have found myself to be energized by

my experiences on the board. As a result of this service, I have come to feel more a part of this community. I have come to understand the bigger picture of our church and our denomination. I have come to see that my talents and unique abilities are valued and needed to carry out our mission. On an emotional level, I have decided to let my walls down a bit and risk being a little more vulnerable and trusting. I have been rewarded with deeper friendships with my peers on the board and others in the congregation.

Serving as a trustee and president has stretched me and shown me that I am capable of more than I imagined. This growth was facilitated by the fantastic support of the current and past board members and the ministers and staff.

Michael Kersey referenced an article in his March 2014 column that provides useful information on the topic of leadership. (Encyclopedia of Informal Education: <http://bit.ly/sharedleadership>.)

He encouraged everyone in our community to consider taking on a leadership role. He pointed out that all of us have "talents to share and potential to be leaders." I would like

to share some of the information from the article.

Leading a congregation can be viewed from various angles. The article discusses how leadership can be a shared process. It can be seen as a "process for a community of people to discover who they are and what they want to be." Leadership can be explored as a social process – something that happens between people. It is "not so much what leaders do, but rather something that arises out of social relationships." As such it does not depend on one person, "but on how people act together to make sense of the situations that face them."

My leadership experience on the board has been a collaborative process with the other board members. We are all urged to contribute our unique talents and abilities for the good of our congregation as a whole.

Our leadership is interdependent and conducted in a spirit of goodwill and teamwork. (We have a covenant that we read at the beginning of every board meeting that encourages this collaboration.)

Also, by seeing the bigger picture of our community, my admiration for our ministers and staff has grown

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incredibly. The talent and energy it takes to bring our community together through services, social action, and religious education may look effortless, but of course, it is not.

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. ■

"Proud of our church" from page 1

Styling? A personalized yoga session? Fabric shopping and the design of a fabulous garment? Accompaniment to a person's first drag show? A person's first kayak outing? First paddle board adventure?

It's our big fundraiser for the year, so everyone please put on your thinking caps and your creating cloaks! Many of the donations are described online at www.equinoxauction.org. Remember, this is a fun way to donate to the church, so let's make each other whoop with delight at the offerings we create.

Find out what you won on April 26 after second service. Credit cards, checks, cash and PayPal are good ways to pay.

Building Team

The Building Team is meeting every other Wednesday night. Our first order of business is to create a "Request for Qualifications" from the architects we choose to invite, to consider the job of creating our expansion and renovation. Then we will interview those who are interested and see the ideas they put forward. You will receive updates as the process moves along. ■

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

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

Join Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) President Peter Morales, the UUA Board of Trustees, voting rights movement veterans, and others. We will return to Selma, AL, to affirm our solidarity with all those engaged in the ongoing struggles for human dignity, human rights, and social justice.

Get more info at www.uulivinglegacy.org. The church has some money to help with the cost as needed, contact Rev. Meg.



"Our Sacred Springs" Southwest UU Women's (SWUW) Conference, March 6-8

Hosted in San Marcos, TX. Key-note speaker will be Dr. Rebecca Parker, retired president of Starr King School for the Ministry. Music by Terri Hendrix. Find more information at www.swuuw.org.

Delegates Needed, April 17-19

First UU Austin needs delegates to represent our congregation during the annual business meeting for our district held this year at First UU Church of New Orleans, April 17-19. If you are interested or want more information, contact Margaret Borden at denom@austinuu.org.

Save The Date!

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

May 1-3: Deep in the Heart Women's Retreat, Kerrville, TX. More info at www.ubaru.org under "Events."

May 15-17: Heart of Texas Men's Retreat, Kerrville, TX. More info at www.ubaru.org under "Events."

June 24-28: Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, Portland, OR. Early registration March 1-Apr 30. The 2015 theme is "Building a New Way."

July 19-24: Southwest UU Summer Institute (SWUUSI) 2015, Hulbert, OK

Carpool Opportunities

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

FIRST UU IN PICTURES

Congregation welcomes Chris Jimmerson into ministry

photos by Bev Larkin, Jon Montgomery, and Victoria Valadez



See Chris' note of thanks on page 11.

FIRST UU IN PICTURES

UUs represent at Capitol on Legislative Action Day

photos courtesy of Peggy Morton



More than 120 members of the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry made history with their first ever Legislative Action Day at the Capitol Tuesday, Feb. 17. Unitarian Universalist members representing 27 congregations advocated for reproductive justice, Medicaid expansion, and economic justice.

Fifteen UUs from First UU advocated their values with Austin area legislators in the 2013 session, and look forward to expanding their reach in the current session as TXUUJM has earned its 501(c)3 status and is a growing network of passionate advocates for justice. ■

Spring Into Action: A chicken comes to church!

Sunday, March 29

April 5 is Easter. In preparation, one of our congregant chickens is coming to church on Sunday, March 29 to tell people all about the different kinds of eggs they can buy for their Easter eggs. This chicken knows all about traditional commercial eggs, cage-free eggs, free range eggs, pastured eggs, and organic eggs. So come and meet our chicken and hear what she has to say about eggs.

Spring Into Action: Join us for a creek clean-up

**Saturday, April 11
9 a.m.-11 a.m.**

Location TBA

First UU will sponsor a creek clean-up in partnership with Keep Austin Beautiful. We don't know which creek we'll be cleaning, but we do know we'll have fun. This is a family friendly event and will be followed by a free volunteer lunch and party. Please let Sylvia Pope know if you are coming so we know how many T-shirts to reserve: pope.sylvia@rocketmail.com.

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan RE highlights

by **Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister**



New Church Policy for Vaccines

In light of the recent nationwide rise in preventable and possible fatal illnesses such as the measles, First UU Church of Austin will now require children enrolled in our Sunday School program to be fully vaccinated, unless there is a need for medical exemption, in accordance with Austin ISD's policy. Parents will not be required to provide proof, but we will trust the honor system. If you are a parent of an unvaccinated child and have a deep conscientious objection to this policy, please arrange a time to meet with Rev. Marisol about your concerns (marisol.caballero@austinuu.org), but note that in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the State Commissioner of Health, your child may be asked not to attend Sunday School or Youth Group activities.

Easter Canned Food Drive!

Join our fourth annual Easter canned food drive. Our Sunday School kids will carry on the tradition of huntin' for non-perishable goods for the hungry, rather than Easter eggs. They then redeem their armloads of cans for goodie bags filled with toys and treats. This year, we will also enjoy many more outdoor games and other sorts of rowdy fun! Please help us out by bringing food donations each Sunday from now until April 5 to the RE sign-in table in the church foyer. All food will be donated to the Capital Area Food Bank.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) 7-9 and 10-12 grade

We will be proudly offering OWL (Our Whole Lives), a comprehensive and progressive sex education curriculum, to children in grades 7-9 and 10-12 this semester. The classes will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., beginning March 4 and ending June 4, as well as two or three lock-ins (TBA). More information on registration and classes will be available by emailing

marisol.caballero@austinuu.org. Registration forms are on the RE table in the gallery. Registration fee is \$30, which will cover the cost of food for the lock-ins. Scholarships available.

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.

"What We Choose: Ethics for Unitarian Universalists," facilitated by Dr. Andy Gerhart Alternating Wednesdays 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? (uuu.org) Childcare provided.

Second Tuesday Enneagram Study Group Alternating Wednesdays 7-8:30 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.

Can't make it to F.R.E.D. nights on Wednesdays? Try Sunday Seminars! March 1, 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: "Self-Compassion as a Spiritual Practice," facilitated by Leena Batra

Join us for this exercise in extending self-compassion as a spiritual practice. More info to follow.

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. (uua.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 understanding of yourself and others from a very different perspective.

**Healing Waters: A Multicultural Approach to Decolonizing the Climate Change Movement
Eco-Justice Conference in New Orleans, March 13-15**

What is the connection between racism, classism, and environmental devastation? How are the environments

of poor people—and people of color in particular—affected by systemic racial oppression? What is the role of communities of faith in the face of environmental devastation? This eco-justice gathering addresses how the intersections of race, class, gender, and immigration status are shaping the growing climate change movement. Using an intentional multi-cultural approach, this conference offers opportunities for learning and networking with local NOLA community organizers, indigenous peoples, religious professionals, and environmental activists. Hosted at the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal in New Orleans, LA. Register at: <http://alliesforracialequity.wildapricot.org>.

**First UU People of Color and Latina/o Gathering
March 3 & 17, 6:15-7:45 p.m.**

If you identify as a person of color, Latina/o, bi-cultural, or multi-cultural (non-white) you are invited to join this fledgling group of UUs to support one another in a predominantly white denomination! These meetings will be for fellowship, as oftentimes it may feel like we are the only or one of the few in the room, but it will also be to brainstorm and get a sense of what the group desires our vision/purpose(s) will be. Many such groups meet in every corner of the UU map, but this is the first of its kind in Central Texas! If you are a white-identified person and would like to demonstrate your support of this group and of anti-racism and multiculturalism in general, please refrain from attending this meeting, but please do attend the White Allies meeting (see pg. 10). You may also email Rev. Chris at chris.jimmerson@austinuu.org or Rev. Mari at marisol.caballero@austinuu.org for several ideas on ways you can be an ally!

**Interfaith Worship Service for Reproductive Justice
Temple Beth Shalom (7300 Hart Ln.)
March 10, 7 p.m.**

Please join us at "Just Texas: Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice" (a project of Texas Freedom Network) for an interfaith worship service, featuring a sermon by Dr. Willie Parker, one of two brave souls who travel to Mississippi to provide abortions for women in that state. Rev. Marisol serves on the advisory board of Just Texas and has assisted in planning and conducting this worship service. It will be one not to miss! Please RSVP (required) at: www.justtx.org. ■

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC

A mother and daughter bond over service

Behind the scenes at People's Community Clinic are many interesting and talented individuals from our church who volunteer their efforts. They quietly do their jobs without rewards or fanfare. Here are two such ladies: a mother-daughter team of Louise and Rose Ann Reeser.

Louise Reeser is a very active and capable lady. She has volunteered at the clinic with her daughter Rose Ann two mornings a month for the past four or five years. Rose Ann began volunteering at the clinic by working with the Collating Committee. Hearing of another need, Rose Ann with the assistance of her mother soon volunteered to address postcard notices to families reminding them when it is time for their children's vaccinations. The clinic found over the years that the sending of postcard reminders increased the rate of children receiving their complete program of vaccinations by the age of three, from 60% to 90%. To make the card more specific to the clinic, Rose Ann and Louise redesigned it. After the clinic work, they enjoy a mother-daughter lunch.

Louise was born and raised in Peoria, IL where she met Lyle Reeser who worked at Caterpillar Corp. Lyle was sent to Honolulu and Louise flew to join him there where they were married. The following years they lived in Puerto Rico; Havana, Cuba; and Brazil. The couple had four children: Rose Ann and Sarah were born in Puerto Rico, and Pete and Carlyle were born in Peoria. When Lyle retired, he and Louise moved to the Austin area and settled

in Blanco, TX on 20 acres.

When asked which country she enjoyed the most, Louise says Brazil was great. The family lived there for six years when the children were a little older and more able to enjoy the experience. Schools in Brazil were taught in half English and half Portuguese so Rose Ann learned the language. While there Louise took four semesters of Portuguese and ended up the head of her class, winning a medal which she still can proudly display.



The mother and daughter volunteering duo

After Louise's last child left to attend college, she decided to go back to school at the age of 50 and get a nursing degree. She eventually worked in nursing homes and in abortion clinics, where she attended to the recovering young women. She remembers having to survive the taunts and demonstrations of the anti-abortion groups.

For the last 10 years Louise has lived in the Brookdale retirement community. She lost her beloved husband Lyle about six years ago, but manages to keep active and busy.

Presently she chairs the Welcoming Committee and enjoys the various activities offered by the community. Among her favorites are the musical events and the Tuesday night bingo.

When asked why she volunteers at People's Community Clinic, Louise answers simply and honestly; "The clinic does a lot of good for disadvantaged people, and I want to give back." This is a woman who has a life of experiences and history of caring, and at the age of 89, is still "giving back."

Rose Ann Reeser can often be seen around the church and is well known by many of you. Rose Ann received a Master's Degree in Latin American History which she says wasn't terribly marketable at the time. Having been married to a lawyer and having worked as a legal assistant, she decided to attend law school in Houston and became a lawyer. She initially worked for the Attorney General's Office in Houston; and when she received a job offer to work for the Attorney General's Office in Austin, she happily accepted.

That move brought her to our church in 1991. Since then she has participated in the heart of the church from almost every avenue available. Her first jump into church life was singing with the choir. As she got more involved, she twice served on the Board of Trustees, was President once, worked on various canvass committees and two Ministerial Search Committees, as well as

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the Ministerial Liaison Committee and a Strategic Planning Committee.

The highlight of her church membership was meeting her now husband of 20 years, John Payne. John was an architect for the University of Texas and had been a member of the church for a number of years before Rose Ann arrived.

Now retired, Rose Ann and John continue to volunteer at the church. John comes to the church most Thursdays and puts his "handyman" skills to good use. Rose Ann serves on the Memorial Services Committee which helps with receptions after a memorial service. Together, they serve on the clean-up committee for Freeze nights and the second Monday ARCH Sack Lunch group, which now meets in homes and has become a pot-luck social event.

When not volunteering, they enjoy traveling and birding. Recently they went to Peru, where Rose Ann attended a meeting of the Pan American Round

Table, a 100-year old organization that promotes friendship in the Americas and sponsors scholarships. After the conference, they spent three weeks touring Peru.

Outside of the church Rose Ann volunteers for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) as an advocate for children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect and are in the care of Child Protective Services. She also volunteers in the library at Rodriguez Elementary School.

A lesson we can all learn from these two ladies, is to choose an effort you believe in and keep open to all the possibilities of making it become a rewarding and enjoyable part of your life.

For those who are interested in the work of the clinic you may check out their website at www.austinpcc.org. For more information about the church's volunteer program with the clinic, contact pcc@austinuu.org. ■

Austin Presence Group

March 5 & 19
6:30-8 p.m.
Rm. 13B

Each week, we'll start with several meditations from Mark Nepo's "Book of Awakening." 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.

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.

Third Annual Talent Show Fundraiser

Sunday, March 8
Howson Hall
11:45 a.m.-1 p.m.

The High School Youth Group will be holding their annual talent show fundraiser after second service. Come see entertaining live performances and bid on unique art and services from our talented youth. A delicious lunch made by the youth will be also served. All proceeds will be used to help the youth attend regional events and this year's General Assembly.

March Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, March 11
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

The March Senior Luncheon will feature an encore reading of original stories by Tom Doyal.

Tom was born in the Texas Panhandle in the township of Lubbock. At age 6 his family moved to Devine, Texas where he went to public school. While growing up he experienced a dysfunctional home life and near poverty, but also genuine charm and a hearty

determination in the people he lived with. After graduation he served in the Army and eventually graduated from UT law school. He has always enjoyed reading and writing, and even owned one of the first gay oriented bookstores, Liberty Books, here in Austin. While living in Seattle he wrote many of the stories about life in fictional Hulsey County, Texas, mirroring some real and imagined life experiences from his youth. He will read selected stories from his book, "Mambo Panties and other Stories of Hulsey County."

Women's Spirituality Group

First and third Saturdays
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Rm. 13

If you have been curious about our group, March is a great month to come check us out. On March 7 we will listen to Starhawk's guided visualization/trance journey, called "The Water Journey." Then on March 21 we will celebrate the Spring Equinox.

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.

Contact: women@austinuu.org.

Roy Zimmerman: The Faucet's on Fire!

Sunday, March 15
Sanctuary
7-9 p.m.

What can one person do about climate change, torture, racism, gun violence, fracking, congressional ineptitude, ignorance, war and greed? Write funny songs, says Roy Zimmerman.

Zimmerman's got songs about all of the above, and he brings his new show, "The Faucet's on Fire!" to First UU. Also performing is Kiya Heartwood. Admission is \$18 or pay what you can.

White Allies group begins this month to support racial equality

Tuesday, March 3

Rm. 13

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Our church is doing great work identifying ways we can all fight against racism, and First UU is leading an amazing group of people of color who will support one another here at the church and as Unitarian Universalists. We offer another space to white allies as we hold ourselves accountable to our brothers and sisters of color in our congregation.

Inspired by the UU Allies for Racial Equity, we are building a group for white allies to meet and work together to "serve as partners in the journey of transforming our faith movement and the world." Our first meeting will be a chance to meet, talk about our call to this path of anti-racism work, and to discover what we can do together to confront racism and unlearn white supremacy.

Please contact Chris Jimmerson at (512) 452-6168, ext. 308 for more information.

Sunday ushers and greeters needed!

We need your help in making Sundays special! The Usher/Greeter program seeks new volunteers who can commit to ushering once a month. In particular, we need help at these services: first Sundays for first service; third Sundays for both services; and fifth Sundays for second service. We can also use "on-call" ushers, too.

This is a wonderful, meaningful way to give back to First UU, and an excel-

lent way to get to know our members and visitors. Usher/Greeters welcome our members and visitors, prepare the sanctuary, assist with the service, pass the plate and count the offering—and can enjoy the majority of the service, including the sermon. Please email Usher/Greeter coordinators Richard and Sarah Cleary at usher@austinuu.org for more information.

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

The Special Monthly Offering focus in March is the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Our contributions to the UUSC help people in 15 countries throughout the world to foster social justice work toward a world free from oppression.

Our donations will help the work of the courageous people working to create a more just and compassionate world, like our partners in Haiti. Five years after the devastating earthquake of January 2010, UUSC's presence there is stronger than ever. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, UUSC worked closely with its existing partners to provide emergency medical care for thousands injured in the disasters. As always in humanitarian crises, UUSC sought out vulnerable communities most likely to be overlooked by traditional relief efforts. UUSC offered trauma training and opened Camp Oasis with partner Beyond Borders to safeguard orphaned girls who were at severe risk of human trafficking in the sprawling refugee camps.

At the same time, UUSC also expanded a partnership with the Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP) and other local grassroots partners to develop a new vision for a sustainable and self-reliant Haiti.

The eco-villages that UUs have helped build in the Central Plateau have already proven a tremendously successful model for how Haiti's rural

poor can achieve food sovereignty. And the associated school, recently opened, is bringing the community access to quality education, which has been sadly lacking throughout much of Haiti.

With another local partner, the Bright Educators of Delmas, UUSC is expanding the vision of sustainable food sovereignty from the countryside to the city. Hundreds of families have been trained in how to use container gardens to grow their own food at a new Urban Food Garden Training Center that UUSC support helped develop.

Another critical component of UUSC's long-term commitment to Haiti is helping survivors move beyond the debilitating trauma the earthquake inflicted on survivors. Train-the-trainer sessions run by UUSC partner, the Trauma Resource Institute, have helped tens of thousands of survivors summon the strength to rebuild their lives by teaching trauma-coping techniques to new trainers, to pass along to those who need it most.

More information regarding these and other programs of UUSC is available at www.uusc.org or by visiting with Judy Sadegh, First UU of Austin's UUSC Coordinator at the Social Action Table on Sunday, March 8.

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.

You can still be a volunteer deputy registrar!

**Saturday, March 14
Howson Hall
10:00 a.m.**

With the sponsorship of our minister and Social Action Committee chair Peggy Morton, Travis County Voter Registrar Bruce Elfant will offer monthly volunteer deputy registrar (VDR) trainings at First UU. Only one training is required.

To register for a training class, please sign up and choose one Saturday to attend: <http://goo.gl/forms/NMZ6hNSJrP>, or send an email to maptrick@gmail.com, subject: VDR training. Sign-up is required to assure each person has a VDR packet.

Chris says thanks

A note from the new Rev. Chris Jimmerson

I want to send many, many thanks to the team who planned my special ordination evening: Gillian Redfearn, Sherry Coombes, Wayne Bockmon, Rev. Mari Caballero for the decor, and all of the folks who attended! Thanks to everyone for all the thoughtful gifts and cards as well.

GROUNDS COMMITTEE

UU Camping Trip

March 27-29

McKinney Falls State Park

Wildflower Church is planning a camping trip, and four campsites are still available. First UU-ers are always welcome, as well as non UU-ers! McKinney Falls offers hiking, biking, fishing, and swimming, and is home to Old Baldy, a 103-foot cypress tree estimated to be over 500 years old. The cost is \$40 per campsite.

Anyone interested should contact Cathy Cramer at fellowship@wildflowerchurch.org or (512) 636-8345.

Save the Dates!

Pre-congregational meeting

Sunday, April 12
Sanctuary
1:15-2:30 p.m.

Congregational meeting

Sunday, May 3
Sanctuary
1:15-2:30 p.m.

Childcare provided for each.

Grounds volunteers celebrate Valentine's Day

by Carol Edwards

Members of the Grounds Committee had a great Valentine's Day trimming shrubs and perennials, weeding, mulching, and soaking up the sun. Several men came to help us after enjoying the men's



New volunteers Carl Willman and Kitty Traylor did a great job working together on an island bed.

breakfast together. Jon Montgomery served as "official" photographer and sent us great photos.

Last spring we found and photographed a mockingbird nest with four babies begging for food. This year while cleaning the same area, we found the old nest and a pair of birds were hanging around to make sure we did not tear it down, as they will likely repair/reuse it.

Volunteers included Dale and Pat Bulla, John Dewberry, Carol Edwards, Elizabeth Gray, Joseph Hunt, Kitty Traylor, Michael West and Carl Willmann. Kitty and Carl were first-time volunteers but are experienced gardeners. All did a great job and enjoyed the early spring day!

The next work day will be March 14 at 9 a.m., weather permitting, then we will skip the month of April.

Join us at the Austin CROP Hunger Walk!

Sunday, March 1
Camp Mabry (2200 W. 35th)
2 p.m.

Join the First UU Team! This annual walk (2.2 miles) is the largest interfaith activity in Austin. Last year 1,000 walkers raised more than \$80,000 for the local and global fight against hunger and poverty. This year, First UU

team members will enjoy a pizza lunch after church services and then carpool to the walk. Bring the whole family! To sign up or make a donation, go to <http://hunger.cwsglobal.org/goto/FirstUUChurch>, visit the Social Action table in the gallery, or contact Eric Hartman at (512) 469-9894 or cropwalk@austinuu.org.

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant:

My committee started giving compliments at the end of every meeting. It feels really awkward. I don't want to admit that it seems silly to me. And there are so many rules about what constitutes a good compliment! When someone tells me I look good since I lost weight, I wonder what they thought before I lost it. I don't know how to deal with the situation.

– *Feeling Uncomfortable*

Dear Uncomfortable:

Unfortunately, we don't hear many compliments after we leave the toddler stage behind. Everyone, from parents to teachers to bosses, seems more intent on telling us what we did wrong and how to fix it. It's

no wonder that giving compliments seems awkward or silly. Learning new behaviors, especially when they aren't supported in the rest of our lives, is difficult. Our covenant seeks to help us learn such unpracticed and supportive behaviors in asking us to nurture and protect by expressing our appreciation to one another.

As to what makes a good compliment, those that focus on specific behaviors instead of someone's appearance are much more likely to be well received. For example, "I appreciated your asking me what my concerns were when I disagreed with your suggestion." Or, "When I was confused, your patient questions were helpful in getting me on the same page as everyone else."

If you believe you must comment

on someone's appearance, a compliment on the work required as opposed to the end result is more likely to be well received. If you know for a fact that a friend has lost weight (and are not just guessing), you might say, "You must have worked really hard to lose weight. When you have time, I'm interested in what changes you made that worked. Perhaps they would work for me, too."

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

A fond farewell from our Membership Coordinator, Kelsey Caudebec

Dear wonderful First UU community,

I've so enjoyed getting to know you over my year as Membership Coordinator. As some of you may know, I'm no longer staff as of March 1, as I want to explore other interests right now. However, I plan to still attend Sunday services. There are too many interesting, warm, wise people here to not stick around!

Thanks to the Membership Committee for being so helpful and supportive. Thank you to

my coworkers – I couldn't have asked for better ones! To the new members who joined while I was staff – it was a joy getting to hear your stories, and a privilege to be included in your spiritual journey.

Thank you to the membership in general for allowing me to be a part of the church that you cherish. I feel lucky to have scored such an awesome job!

Have a beautiful spring, and see you soon!

Love,
Kelsey



Eclectic Folk Jam**Friday, March 13****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. Irish songs are welcomed to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

UU/Quaker Singalong**Saturday, March 28****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.

SUNDAY WORSHIP**SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM****MARCH 1****The Red Shoes****REV. MEG BARNHOUSE**

First in a new new fairy tale sermon series, we'll talk about the things that take over our lives and compel us to do things we would rather not do, go places we meant not to go. How do we retrieve our spirits?

MARCH 8**Question Box Sermon****REV. MEG BARNHOUSE**

A tradition in many UU congregations, the minister thinks on the spur of the moment about questions submitted by the members of the congregation.

MARCH 15**Sacred Vulnerability****REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON**

We live in a culture that often values a kind of hyper-individualism and self-reliance, which can lead us to project an air of invincibility. Yet research by Brené Brown and others in the social sciences indicates that the opposite may be the key to living whole-heartedly. Being willing to embrace and express our vulnerability may be the source of authenticity, human connection, and empathy, as well as the ability to both love and accept being loved.

Musician and satirist Roy Zimmerman will provide the morning music (www.royzimmerman.com).

MARCH 22**Our UUnique Gifts****GUEST WORSHIP LEADER**

It may be trite to say that each of us has unique gifts, but what are the implications of that? Our individual differences mean that we never see the world exactly the same way. What a challenge for living together in the world! But Unitarian Universalism gives us a head start. What a resource, if we can bring ourselves to offer it.

LA's Ned and the Dirt will share their music during morning services (www.facebook.com/NedAndTheDirt).

MARCH 29**Palm Sunday****REV. MEG BARNHOUSE**

Falling on the Sunday before Easter Sunday, the story of Palm Sunday is about Rabbi Jesus traveling into Jerusalem, even though he knew he was likely to be killed there. He refused to be treated as a hero or a king, even though that's what the people wanted.

The First UU of Austin Adult Choir will be joined by instrumentalists from the Austin Symphony for some Baroque classics.

THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

MARCH 1

Repaint Me

WITH AKIRASH

Originally from Nigeria, Akirash is a local artist who has had fellowships at the University of Texas at Austin, along with many other awards and residencies. Akirash says, "Life is like a pencil; the more we live, the more we learn. I believe that every day that I wake up to see a new day, it is an opportunity to repaint myself, to correct myself, to do better than yesterday. I look in the mirror and envision myself how I want the world to see me, how I want my obituary to be written when I am in the creation of art. I have a chance to make a difference, to be able to raise a voice for the voiceless in my community."

MARCH 8

The Rising Likelihood of Nuclear War on Earth

WITH RONNIE DUGGER

Ronnie Dugger is an Austinite and Texas giant of a journalist. He was the Daily Texan editor and founding editor to the Texas Observer, and the Observer's publisher for decades. Dubbed "the godfather of progressive journalism in Texas" by Brad Buchholz, Ronnie has won many awards and a special place deep in the heart of Texas readers, thinkers, and doers. He wants to have a critical conversation with us:

"My purpose is to air out, including for my thinking, an open exchange among intelligent but likely in many cases nationalistic liberals a subject I have been closed in on with myself since 1985 or so. We are now in the midst of the first Third Millennium nuclear arms race between the U.S., Russia, China, England, and lesser principals, the U.S. and Russia leading it; it is still true that any one of the nuclear missiles in only one of our 14 Trident submarines can destroy every person and structure in any large city, no matter how large, in the world; and the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has just moved its doomsday clock foretelling nuclear war from 5 to 3." Join us for a candid conversation on moving the clock hands backward.

MARCH 15

The Tipping Point

WITH BEN SARGENT

Political journalist and cartoonist Ben Sargent will address the enormous changes in media and in political cartooning since the advent of the digital environment, for better or for worse.

Ben Sargent was born into a newspaper family and began learning the printing trade at age 12. He attended Amarillo College and then the University of Texas at Austin and received a B.A. in Journalism in 1970. He began drawing editorial cartoons for the Austin American Statesman in 1974 and went into national distribution through Universal Press Syndicate in 1985. He retired from the American Statesman in 2009 while continuing syndicated cartooning through 2014. He began a regular cartoon feature "Loon Star State" for the Texas Observer in 2009 and is now on the Observer's masthead.

Ben was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning in 1982 and was a Pulitzer finalist in 2001 and 2002, and in addition has won awards from many other associations.

MARCH 22

The Prospect for Democracy in the U.S.

WITH DAVID BUTTS

David Butts, veteran political consultant and campaign manager, will provide us with an insider's perspective on how political things get done, how people win or lose elections, and how democracy works. He will share his views on threats to democracy and his hopes for the ongoing viability of democracy in our country.

David is legendary for his political acumen, his "sixth sense" for reading the public mood, picking good candidates, and formulating winning campaign strategies. According to the Austin American-Statesman, David has helped elect at least three mayoral candidates and twelve City Council candidates in the last fifteen years.

see final forum notice on page 16

**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

(512) 452-6168

www.austinuu.org

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Assistant Minister

Rev. Marisol Caballero

Assistant Minister

Rev. Chris Jimmerson

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Kelsey Caudebec

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Victoria Valadez

Board President

Carolyn Gremminger

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Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.

Austin, TX 78756

THE FORUM, *continued*

MARCH 29

A Primer on GMOs

WITH DR. KENT STEWART

This lecture will provide a brief overview of the history of plant and animal breeding, and an overview of the science behind the use of GMO species as food materials. Emphasis will be given to the safety of foods that have GMO components.

Kent is a Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry from Virginia Tech. He was an analytical biochemist who taught at the University of Texas at Austin, Virginia Tech, the Rockefeller University, and the University of Maryland. Kent's name is listed in Who's Who in America, The International Direc-

tory of Distinguished Leadership, and American Men and Women of Science. Of particular interest to today's topic, Kent was a Member of the Ad hoc Panel on Criteria for Determining the Regulatory Status of Food and Food Ingredients Produced by New Technologies (1988). This was one of the first committees established to evaluate the safety of what are now call GMO foods. Kent was also a member of the International Food Biotechnology Council and was a contributor to the white paper entitled, "Biotechnologies and Food: Assuring the Safety of Foods Produced by Genetic Modification." Kent and his wife Peggy moved to Austin over 18 years ago. They are both members of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin. ■