



FIRST UU NEWS

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

What is your song?

by **Rev. Meg Barnhouse**



At my memorial service, we are going to start with a soulful rendition of the old song “Skylark.” At the end, we’ll hear “Blue Skies.” Those songs will communicate some of the tone I want as the service moves from beginning to end. I’m not near death, far from it, I hope, but I think about the service now, since I want to communicate through it to the people who are left behind. It feels like a loving thing to do, rather than a morbid one. So I am inviting you to think with me.

Do you want a memorial service with jazz? Classical music only? Standards from the 50s? Do you want Wendell Berry read? Joan Didion? Robert Fulghum? Are there people you would like to invite to say a few words, tell a story, or bring a memory about you? What would you like said about your legacy? These are the things I ask people when I visit them near the end of their lives, but sometimes I don’t get the chance. Life takes a crazy spin, an unexpected twist, and I’m left to guess, or pore over the few in-depth conversations we have had, to put

together a service that is meaningful. Included as an insert in this newsletter is a form entitled “Confidential Personal Wishes.” Please think about filling it out and giving it to me so I can keep it in a locked cabinet in my office.

Months ago, I helped create a memorial service for a man who had taught at UT. His elderly widow requested that we sing as our recessional song, “The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You.” She wondered whether that would be inappropriate. I asked why they wanted to sing it. “Well,” she said, “we sing that after every sporting event, whether we win or lose. I think his event is done.” We sang it, and raised our hands in the “hook ‘em horns” salute before we left the sanctuary.

Third Service

We are starting a once-a-month third service called “We Gather: Another Kind of Worship.” Read more about it on page 13, and watch for promotional posters and announcements!

Equinox Auction

The auction is open for bidding! Borrowing an idea from the Portland UU congregation, we are bidding on Sundays rather than having only one event for our auction. Every Sunday in April, there will be sheets describing useful and fun experiences and services which will increase your skills or enrich the mix of our community. The board is serving up a chocolate dessert bash for the top bidders, and I am offering a sermon where you pick two show tunes and we perform them and make a sermon based on them. There is even an offer to take the top bidder’s least-favorite hymn out of rotation for a year, so if you have one of which you are heartily tired, dust off your bidding number and pony up! www.equinoxauction.org.

Spring Into Action 2015!

Our Green Sanctuary Team has taken on the Spring Into Action project this year. See pages 10-11 and watch the announcements for info about living out our green values. ■

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

What can our community do about racism?

by **Carolyn Gremminger**



The board of trustees reads and discusses books each month to inform and enhance our leadership skills. Our current book is entitled, "Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice," by Paul Kivel. We aspire to become more effective in leading the congregation by making a difference in the struggle for racial justice. How can we fulfill our mission in this area? It is crucial that we as individuals and as a congregation become informed and speak up about issues of violence and injustice.

This work is very relevant and highly charged with emotion. I can easily get emotionally overwhelmed, so defining terms helps me to begin to grapple with the complexity of the issue. Kivel points out early on in the book that racism is more than just an individual problem. He states that it is an "institutionalized system of oppression" that is "pervasive and its effects are devastating."

As usual, there are so many more questions than answers. How do we reach out together to share the liberal religious values that transform lives in this effort? Are we putting up any sort of obstacles at First UU? Do we have institutionalized barriers in our community?

Do we expect the world to come

to us? Do we think the only way for us to make an impact is to get people of color to "come to church?"

How could we collaborate more with others? How can we venture out more, beyond our walls, into the community and partner with other churches across cultural and racial lines in Austin and Central Texas?

Kivel defines this work as learning how to "live and work to sustain community, nurture each other and create a multicultural society based on love, justice, and interdependence with all things."

In the spring edition of the UU World, Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt, President of Starr King School for Ministry, discusses an aspiration of what Unitarian Universalism could look like 20 years from now. Her article is in the form of a letter to her granddaughter of the future: "Letter from a hoped-for future." (<http://bit.ly/1DRg4ub>)

She describes a vision of how in 2034, she is happy to see UU churches full of people who "didn't used to come." She looked back at 2014 as the year we started paying serious attention to "white privilege," and its harmful effects. Instead of asking others, what does it mean to be black, Latino, Asian, we could

ask ourselves, what does it mean to be white? Instead of asking others to be different, perhaps we could start to ask what we need to be. How do our churches become more visible to people of color, and how can we inspire curiosity? How could we be more welcoming and relevant? How do we demonstrate that we really do believe in the values of inclusion?

Finally, I would like to share some ideas from Nanci Luna Jimenez, an international trainer on diversity. She has a blog that includes comments on the Kivel book. She offers some practical suggestions on how to work on personal transformation when it comes to race. She highlights Kivel's assertion that white people can have a sense of entitlement due to racism. Entitlement is defined as a "feeling that one is entitled to certain goods or services more than others are, or that one is entitled to be served by others because of one's class, race, and or gender."

It is helpful to start with ourselves. Do I feel like I am better, smarter, than people of color? Do I feel sorry for them? Do I feel guilty because it seems like I have had a lot more advantages than they have?

I do not find these attitudes to be

continued on next page

“Racism” from page 2

helpful. I have been the recipient of unwanted sympathy in the past, and it was not very empowering. What I wanted and needed was empathy, understanding and support. It is helpful to see that I am neither better nor less than anyone else.

So, what are some simple steps we can take, on an individual level? Ms. Jimenez suggests that we slow

down, be patient, pay more attention, question our assumptions, and have compassion for ourselves and others. Notice our entitlement behaviors and talk about them. Question why you feel better than others, or pity others.

What can we do as a community? You have probably heard about the group being led by Reverend Chris

Jimmerson, the Austin Area Unitarian Universalist White Allies Against Racism. The goal is for white allies to meet and work together to serve as partners in the journey of transforming our faith movement in the world. The next meeting is scheduled for April 7 at 6:30 p.m. ■

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

SWUUC Spring Conference, April 17-19

In April our Southern Region will hold its Annual Assemblies, coming together collaboratively to reflect our connections across our region. A live message and Q&A session by UUA President Rev. Peter Morales will be streamed to all four locations, as will the keynote address by Rev. Jeanne Pupke, speaking to our shared theme, “We Are Building a New Way.” The event will be hosted by the First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans. Registration deadline April 10. Information and registration at www.uuasouthernregion.org under “Events.”

Delegates Needed April 17-19

First UU of 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 informa-

tion, contact Margaret Borden at denom@austinuu.org.

Deep in the Heart Women’s Retreat, May 2-4 UBarU Retreat & Conference Center, Kerrville, TX

Recharge your spirit in the fellowship of Unitarian Universalist women. No responsibilities other than to be your own true beautiful authentic self. Deepen your relationship with old friends and build new friendships. Sing, meditate, dance, walk the labyrinth or the hill country, do what your spirit needs. Free from workshops and classes. Don’t miss it! Early registration ends April 7. Registration and details at www.ubaru.org under “Events.”

What Would A UU Vacation Look Like? July 19-24 Southwest UU Summer Institute, Fort Gibson Lake, OK

Plan now to find out! Join the fun on the lake, golf course, and trails complemented by spiritual growth with theme speaker Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh, speaking on “Just Good

Food,” and artist in residence Chef Jesse Bloom. Come for the education, faith development, entertainment, and recreation with fellow UUs from infants to octogenarians. Video at <http://bit.ly/swuusi>. More details soon.

Save The Date!

June 14-19: UBarU Family Camp, Kerrville, TX

June 24-28: UUA General Assembly, Portland, OR. Early registration March 1-Apr 30

June 28-July 4: UBarU Elementary Camp, Kerrville, TX

July 5-11: UBarU Junior Camp, Kerrville, TX

July 12-18: UBarU Senior Camp, Kerrville, TX

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.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Stand up for incarcerated women and children refugees

Saturday, May 2
South Texas Residential Center
Dilley, TX

Malnourishment and severe sickness are common among children refugees being held in for-profit family detention centers in Texas. Unitarian Universalists are joining a national effort to end this madness on Saturday, May 2 with a protest in Dilley.

Grassroots Leadership is organizing the event, with a goal of getting 1,000 people there from around the country. Visitors have said the women and children refugees are held in jail-like conditions, and they've found children who won't eat and guards who require parents to hold their babies and not allow them to crawl.

First UU member Felicia Kongable sees a contrast when visiting women and children together in the Karnes City detention facility because they have their children with them, unlike when visiting women at the Taylor detention facility where they talk about how much they miss their children.

"In Karnes City, I got to hold one of the women's babies and it felt wonderful. It felt more relaxed," Felicia said, "but then I learned they can't take their toys with them into their bedrooms because the guards say children will fight over toys."

Rachel Gore-Freed, the UU Service Committee Program Director, questions the price of freedom as she visited women incarcerated in Karnes City. She learned there they granted

one woman a bond for \$15,000. Refugees don't have that kind of money.

"Schooling appears to be sporadic. Overcrowded living conditions are the norm," Gore-Freed said. "The imprisonment of these innocent children is a violation of their basic dignity and human rights,"

Even if you can't make it by bus or car to the South Texas Residential Center in Dilley for the May 2 March and Protest, you can sign petitions, or donate money to pay for the buses, outreach, day-of logistics, communications, art, and media needs.

For more information about helping or signing up for the bus, email Social Action Chair Peggy at socialaction@austinuu.org.

PARADOX



PLAYERS

"Queso Blanco" is finally here!

Paradox Players presents
"Queso Blanco," adapted and
directed by Gary Payne

May 8-24, 2015
Howson Hall
Fri & Sat at 8 p.m.
Sun at 3 p.m.

Set in a dystopian Second Republic of Texas, Queso Blanco has danger, intrigue, romance, liberals on the run, and really cheesy jokes. Sit a spell at Rick's Bar and Cleaners and take in a wacky cautionary tale of love, loss, and Lone Star lunacy. Free childcare is available May 17, reservations for childcare not required.

Attention! Do you know someone (maybe your child) who would

like to make some extra money setting up audience chairs for Paradox shows? If so, contact John Boehme at (512) 517-7760, or joboe1@live.com.

Finally, if you have any Texas stuff that would look good on the walls or the floor in a Texas bar and you would be willing to lend out for a month, please contact Gary Payne at (512) 799-5872.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Register your political positions at the Capitol in three easy steps

If you only have an hour to take part in the Texas legislative process, here's an easy three-step process to register for or against bills during the hearing stage.

1. Drive to 12th St. and San Jacinto St. to the Capitol Parking Garage and park where it's free for your first two hours, or take four quarters and grab a metered street parking spot close to the Capitol.

2. Walk briskly and breathe fresh air before entering the Capitol, where the air can get stuffy. Find the computer screens outside the room the bill is being heard in, find your bill and register for or against it.

3. In case you're not following bills via www.texaslegislatureonline.org, you can email Peggy at socialaction@austinuu.org and she'll notify you about committee hearings on bills regarding either reproductive rights or immigra-

tion reform.

Other groups that readers can sign up with on their own to receive notifications include: Texas Impact, Texas Freedom Network, Austin Interfaith, NARAL Texas, Planned Parenthood Texas, and any other advocacy group you want. Most groups have both regular webpages and Facebook pages.

If you want to get more active, consider preparing a 2-3 minute testimonial about your position, and when you sign up for or against a bill, also sign up to testify. The session will last until Monday, June 1 and hearings are getting scheduled daily, since bills must first pass out of committee before making it to the House or Senate floor.

To get more involved, start following the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry at www.txuujm.org.

Mexico solidarity delegation sign-up extended

The deadline to sign up has been extended to April 26. Our three-day delegation from May 29-31 takes you into the homes and communities of women and men who work in the *maquiladoras* (foreign-owned factories) that make products for US consumption. Learn about the popular education and collective strategic action used by our Mexican partner organizations.

For questions and registration, email Charles at crand@austincc.edu or Evan at evan.trees@gmail.com. Partial scholarships available for those who need them. Please visit us at www.atcf.org and like us on Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/om287nw>. ¡Solidaridad pa' siempre!

Meet our new Membership Coordinator!

Shannon



Shannon Posern grew up in Houston, Texas and is a graduate of Texas Tech University. She and her husband moved to Austin eight years ago from the Dallas area. Prior to joining the staff of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, she worked at the National Center for Missing & Exploited Chil-

dren as the Program Manager for Texas. There she developed relationships with a wide variety of organizations to bring safety education and training to adults and child across the state of Texas.

Shannon is an avid vegetable gardener and member of Sunshine Community Gardens. When not playing in the dirt, she spends her time riding her bike around Austin, playing with her two labs, or camping with her husband.

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.

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister



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.

UU Passover Seder Potluck April 3, 6-8 p.m.

This beloved tradition of our community returns once again! Join us as we tell the story of the Jewish people's Exodus from Egypt. We will eat 'til we are almost too stuffed to sing, and then we will sing anyway! Please sign up for this family-friendly party at the RE table and indicate what dish you will bring. We will have traditional recipe ideas on hand, but also suggest a quick "Passover recipes" search online for tasty suggestions. If you would like to help in setup or cleanup, please contact Mari at mari@austinuu.org. RSVP required.

Can't make it to F.R.E.D. nights on Wednesdays? Try Sunday Seminars! April 5, 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: "Meditative Creative Writing" facilitated by Rev. Marisol Caballero

Take care of yourself this Sunday by enjoying the meditative practice of creative writing. Several prompts will invite participants into self-reflection. Come slow down your hectic week with some healing self-care.

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

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

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

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

First UU People of Color and Latina/o Gathering April 7 & 21, 6-7:30 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 these same nights. You may also email Rev. Chris at chris.jimmer-son@austinuu.org or Rev. Mari at marisol.caballero@austinuu.org for several ideas on ways you can be an ally!

Second Tuesday Enneagram Study Group, April 14, 7-9 p.m.

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

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.

Film screening and discussion, “Frontline: Separate and Unequal,” facilitated by Marsha Sharp, April 15

“Frontline” travels to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to examine how segregation in schools is making a comeback 60 years after the Supreme Court banned it. (netflix.com)

Film screening and discussion, “Exile Nation: The Plastic People,” facilitated by Marisol Caballero April 29

U.S. deportees in Tijuana struggle to survive a cartel war zone, living in cardboard boxes and sewer pipes, in an ever-expanding underworld of exiles. (netflix.com)

LGBTQQAI...LMNOP Ministry Forming! April 30, 7 p.m.

Join us at our first meeting of the Alphabet Soup Social Club! This new group is for any and all persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, 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. While the primary intent will be friendship and fellowship, we will also be identifying the needs of our members and creating a vision for the group. If you are a heterosexual ally we welcome your support but ask that you refrain from attending this meeting.

New Church Policy for Vaccines

In light of the recent nationwide rise in preventable and possible fatal illnesses such as the measles, First UU 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. ■

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



SEED Coalition

Our Spring Into Action team for 2015 has chosen SEED (Sustainable Energy & Economic Development) Coalition for our April monthly service offering designee. The SEED Coalition works for affordable energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions to meet our energy needs. For several years, SEED focused extensively on cleaning up mercury pollution, an important issue since

many of the nation's worst polluting coal plants are in Texas.

Karen Hadden, the executive director of SEED Coalition, will be one of our Public Affairs Forum speakers this month. She will be discussing her and SEED's work to protect our environment from radioactive hazards. Read more about Karen and the SEED Coalition's work on page 15, under the Public Forum an-

nouncement for April 26.

Learn more about SEED Coalition: www.seedcoalition.org, and please give generously to this vital cause at Sunday services on April 12.

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.

HANDS ON HOUSING

Housing repair service project returns

Saturday, May 2
Location TBA

Join fellow UUs and Interfaith Action of Central Texas (iACT) as we help a neighbor to paint, do small repairs, and beautify the home of a low-income elderly or disabled household. Mark your calendar now for the new and revived First UU Austin Hands on Housing (HoH) spring project.

HoH is a program through iACT, and the agency uses other funding to do major repairs before the volunteer events. Sign up for a 4-hour shift during the morning or

afternoon, or stay the entire day if you have the time.

"We've been working hard to get the UU groups organized and connected with iACT, and had a great meeting with the iACT staff," new First UU coordinator Jill Smith said. "They've said in the past the UU group has been one of their strongest groups, and is featured in their website video. 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.

Visit the Social Action table in the gallery on Sundays to sign up, or contact Jill Smith at (512) 627-8039 or handsonhousing@austinuu.org.



EQUINOX AUCTION 2015

Let the bidding begin!

Hello First UU members and friends! Our auction this year is a catalog full of experiences and services donated by our members, friends, board, staff and Chalice Circles. We are continuing to take donations via our website www.equinoxauction.org until March 31. Bidding will be before and after services on April 5, 12, 19, and bidding will end at the beginning of second service April 26.

There will be no online bidding this year. If you are reading this announcement, chances are that you already have a pre-assigned bidding number to use at the auction. If you aren't on the list, just stop by the auction table on April 5 and we will assign you a number. On April 26 after second service will be

the Auction Party, where the winners will be posted and food and drinks to celebrate our most successful auction ever. Payments for winning bids can be accepted at the party or dropped off at the church during regular office hours. Please make sure your check, cash or credit payment is marked auction and checks are made out to First UU Church of Austin.

The catalog so far is already available for viewing at www.equinoxauction.org. Check regularly for updates on the incredible offerings. We will also have copies of the bidding numbers and a few paper copies of the catalog at the auction table on Sundays.

Questions? Contact Kiya Heartwood directly at kiya@kiyaheartwood.com.

Austin Presence Group

April 2 & 16
Rm. 13B
6:30-8 p.m.

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.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

We Refuse to be Enemies: An evening with Daoud Nassar

Friday, April 24
Howson Hall
6 p.m.

Join us for a conversation with Daoud Nassar, Palestinian Christian farmer and director of Tent of Nations (TON), a peace and education center located on the Nassar family's 100-acre farm near Bethlehem. TON is surrounded on three sides by Israeli settlements and one side by the Palestinian village of Nahalin. With a mission to build bridges of understanding, rec-

onciliation, and peace between people and the land, TON has a sign at the entrance of the farm proclaiming, "We refuse to be enemies."

Nassar will discuss TON, the Israeli occupation and process of land confiscations, including the attempts at taking his family's farm, and the journey of his family since 1916 as they have sought to live creatively in the midst of an increasingly violent situation. For more info contact Leslie Currens: lcurrens@gmail.com.

April Seniors Luncheon

April 8
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

Have you ever wondered why you've very rarely seen women drummers in rock bands or symphony orchestras? Find out why when Angela Smith, our next board of trustees president, reviews her book, "Women Drummers: A History from Rock and Jazz to Blues and Country." Angela will also bring her steel drum to play some music for us.

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

SPRING INTO ACTION 2015

Spring Into Action for environmental justice

by Beki Halpin, Green Sanctuary Committee

Every April, First UU engages in a month-long Spring into Action campaign, where sermons, public affairs forums, and special events are all coordinated to heighten the church community's engagement and awareness on a select social justice issue. Sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee, this year's topic is environmental justice: choices, living lightly and loving it.

The earth explodes with new life each spring, and we celebrate the reappearance of fauna and flora as it creeps out of winter hibernation and decorates Austin in glorious color. We plant gardens and hit the parks with friends and family. We plan bike excursions around the lake and trips to the beach and feel our whole being expand after a long, gray winter. Spring makes us feel that all's right in the world, and we want to keep it that way!

But we humans have a huge footprint on the earth, and gradually we are changing it. Although Austin had a cool, wet winter, 2014 was the warmest year on record for the planet as a whole. California is in a devastating drought. NASA reported in March that the state has about one year's worth of water left. Many of our nation's agricultural products

come from California. The Highland Lakes which supply Austin's water are currently in the historic drought of record, and are about 36% full. Meanwhile, other parts of the US had one of the coldest, stormiest winters on record.

Scientists attribute much of this change in drought and weather patterns to climate change. And they attribute the change in climate to an increase in atmospheric greenhouse gasses largely generated by humans.

So, what are we to do? If there are over 7 billion people on earth, what difference can I make? It turns out, of course, that many people making conscientious choices will make a difference. For example, one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse warming gasses and heaviest users of water on the earth is animal agriculture. If every member of this church ate one meal each month that contained no meat or dairy products, we would keep 28,800 pounds of carbon out of the atmosphere and about 2,888,000 gallons of water from being used. Now, that's a difference!

For Spring Into Action 2015 we have planned a potpourri of environmental actions you can

take to explore making a difference. We'll have a vegetarian and a locally-sourced F.R.E.D. dinner. There's an opportunity to clean up a creek with great folks and go get some lunch together, maybe something vegetarian. The Alternative Vehicles Fair is a chance to get up close and personal with cars, trucks and scooters that burn less fossil fuel. We'll have a variety of Public Affairs Forum speakers, and a fairly controversial movie for your consideration and possible argumentation. We are Unitarians, after all!

And we are not alone. There are Unitarians all over the world making environmental justice a priority, making March 22-April 22 Climate Justice Month. This initiative is Commit2Respond and you can join personally by going to www.commit2respond.org and signing up. You'll be connected for the month to Unitarians far and wide participating as well. And we'll be doing similar things right here in Austin in our own Spring Into Action.

Let's encourage ourselves and one another to live simply so others may simply live. Let's Spring Into Action! See the table on the next page for a full list of activities.

DATE & TIME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY
Sunday, March 29 During Sunday services	First UU Church of Austin	 A Chicken Comes to Church - One of our congregant chickens will be coming to church to tell people all about the different kinds of healthy, chemical-free eggs they can buy for Easter.
Wednesday, April 8 6-7 p.m.	Howson Hall - First UU	 F.RE.D. Dinner - Vegetarian special
Saturday, April 11 9-11 a.m.	Bartholomew Park (5201 Berkman Dr)	 Bartholomew Park Creek Cleanup - This fun family-friendly creek cleanup will be followed by a free volunteer lunch and party. Please RSVP with Sylvia Pope: pope.sylvia@rocketmail.com.
Sunday, April 12 12 p.m.-2 p.m. (10 a.m.-12 p.m., exclusive church viewing)	Texas Health Credit Union & First UU	 “April Fuels Day” Alternative Vehicles Fair - See our alternatives vehicles on display! Featuring the Nissan Leaf, Ford Plug-In Hybrid, BMW i, and more! Explore your options of the present and future!
Sunday, April 12 12-1 p.m.	Sanctuary - First UU	 Public Affairs Forum: “Green Vehicles: Just a Color, or True Progress?” with Zach Baumer - See page 15
Sunday, April 19 12-1 p.m.	Sanctuary - First UU	 Public Affairs Forum: “A Solution for Climate Change, Our Greatest Challenge” with Anna Graybeal - See page 15
Sunday, April 19 After services	First UU Church of Austin	 Environmental Day at First UU - Celebrate the environment! Solar tours, children’s games and activities with solar toy cars., info about rainwater collection systems, solar energy, and more.
Wednesday, April 22 6-7 p.m.	Howson Hall - First UU	 F.RE.D. Dinner - Locally sourced meal
Saturday, April 25 6:30-9:00 p.m.	Howson Hall - First UU	 Screening of “Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret” - Uncover a profoundly destructive industry facing the planet today, and see why environmental organizations are too afraid to talk about it.
Sunday, April 26 12-1 p.m.	Sanctuary - First UU	 Public Affairs Forum: “Is High Level Radioactive Waste Coming to Texas?” with Karen Hadden - See page 15

Come on out for the Fall UU Campout next month

**May 15-17 (Fri-Sun)
Near Spicewood, TX**

Please join us for a weekend of camping at a privately held campground near Spicewood. Some people arrive around 4 p.m. on Friday night and others arrive on Saturday. No need to make a reservation, as one has already been made for the group.

Bring food for Friday and Saturday nights, plus breakfast and lunches. There's a swimming hole and a waterfall and you can hike to Lake Travis. You don't have to camp

but can just spend the day. There are restroom and shower facilities nearby.

There will be a group potluck meal at around 6 p.m. on Saturday. Afterwards we'll have a campfire (if it's allowed) and musical jam. On Sunday morning we fix a communal breakfast. Bring musical instruments, food and drinks to share, lawn chairs, flashlight, and water for cooking, washing up, and drinking. No dogs are allowed. Also bring tents, bedding, camping equipment and flashlights if you are spending the night.

Directions: Go west on Hwy 71 through Bee Caves, go five miles past

the Pedernales River, and then take a right at the Exxon station/store to Spicewood. Take the second right at the County Road 404 sign. The road into Krause Springs will be on the left after crossing a creek. Drive to the house where you pay. Entry is \$14 for adults and \$6 for children (4-11) per night, or adults \$7 and children \$5 if you're just spending the day. Tell them that you're with the Unitarians. We usually camp close by the house.

If you need additional information call Lynn Vaughan at (512) 587-8221 or Lynn@Lynnspetsitting.com or Krause Springs at (830) 693-4181.

Relax at the Men's Retreat at UBarU this May

**May 15-17 (Fri-Sun)
UBarU Retreat and Conference
Center, Kerville, TX**

Every fall and spring, men from UU churches across Texas gather for a weekend retreat at UBarU. Come and enjoy fellowship in the Texas Hill Country. Rest, relax, enjoy delicious meals and use the time as a break from your normal routines and schedules. The retreat will be facilitated by Rev. Mark Skrabacz. Mark will guide us in a thematic inquiry and processes of introspection to deepen our life's path and build community among our fellow UU men.

We will begin gathering Friday af-

ternoon to share an evening meal and end mid-morning Sunday. There are plenty of bunk-style beds, or bring a tent if you prefer. All buildings are heated and air-conditioned. The only thing you will need to bring are towels, sheets, a blanket (or sleeping bag) and pillow, as well as any special snacks and libations you would enjoy. Activities may include poker playing, volunteer projects, music, hiking around UBarU's beautiful rugged 142 acres, and fellowship. As anyone who has attended one of these retreats during the past decade will tell you, the event offers a pleasant relaxing time to unwind and just get away for a couple of days while enjoying fellowship with other UU men. If

you can't make it for two nights, you are welcome for one. We encourage participation from all UU men across Texas. Please spread the word!

Sign up now and mark your calendars. The cost is \$115 during early registration through April 30 and \$130 starting May 1. Your payment covers lodging and meals. Send a check, payable to Mark Kilpatrick, 4600 Mueller Blvd., #2079, Austin, TX 78723, or pay with PayPal after filling in your registration at the link below.

Register at www.ubaru.org. For more information, contact Mark at texanmkk17@aol.com. We look forward to seeing you!

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant:

As a person of color, I occasionally have uncomfortable interactions with well-meaning white church members. These incidents include being mistaken for another church member of a similar race, being asked if I speak English, being questioned repeatedly about where I am from when the real agenda is to find out my ethnicity, having people assume I am from a particular ethnic group and speak to me based on that assumption, challenging my self-identification, and not giving me an opportunity to speak during the conversation. How do I convey that these behaviors reveal unconscious assumptions about people of color without resulting in white people avoiding me?

– *Stumped*

Dear Stumped:

We commend you for the courage to bring up these interactions that

reflect white people's unconscious biases about race. Your desire to live the covenant directive to speak out "when silence would inhibit progress" is what being UU means to us here at church. Each of the examples you list is worthy of extended discussion, and all of them speak to the need for our historically white church to make a conscious effort, as you point out, to examine behaviors and assumptions. Unless you choose to do so, it's not your responsibility to educate the white members of our congregation. It's OK to say, "You are making a lot of assumptions," then smile and walk away. There's no guarantee that your questioner won't avoid you, but you will have offered some needed food for thought.

We encourage anyone wishing to explore this topic with folks sharing similar concerns to join one of the two groups currently meeting at our church. For white UUs, Austin Area UU White Allies is facilitated

by Rev. Chris Jimmerson and church member Julie Gillis. The purpose of this group is to help white people understand the complexity and co-vertness of racism in our culture, our town and our church. Free childcare is available on request at childcare@austinuu.org. For those identifying as people of color (Black, Latina/o, bi-cultural or multicultural), the Central Texas UU People of Color is facilitated by Rev. Marisol Caballero. This group's purpose is mutual support and creating a vision for the future. Check the calendar for upcoming meeting dates of both groups.

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

Third worship services are coming!

Starting in April, we will begin an additional worship service once a month at First UU Church of Austin. They're called "We Gather: Another Kind of Worship," and it's our chance to both try out new forms and styles of worship. Initially we will experiment with what days and times might work best;

we will begin by alternating between early evening on a Saturday and early evening on a Sunday. Over time, we may expand "We Gather" services to more than once a month.

All "We Gather" services will be held in Howson Hall. Come gather in community as we engage our creativity and explore different

ways of doing worship. Childcare is available by request to childcare@austinuu.org.

Our beginning schedule will be:

Sat. April 25 | 4:30 p.m. (Rev. Chris)
Sun. May 24 | 6:30 p.m. (Rev. Mari)
Sat. June 20 | 4:30 p.m. (Rev. Chris)
Sun. July 19 | 4:30 p.m. (Rev. Mari)

Eclectic Folk Jam**Friday, April 10****Rm. 17****7-10 p.m.**

The Eclectic Folk Jam, an open jam session for singers and instrumentalists, is held on the second Friday of every month. We have “Rise Up Singing” song books, and some people like to bring copies of their favorite songs to pass out. Bring drinks and snacks to share.

Contact Pete and Kim Akenhead at (512) 834-0188, or Mary Jane Ford at (512) 926-4122 or singalong@austinuu.org.

UU/Quaker Singalong**Saturday, April 25****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****APRIL 5****The Cellist of Sarajevo**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Vedran Smailović played his cello as mortars were falling on his street. His courage shone a light on the insanity of war. The sermon will tell his story. A choir piece inspired by his story will be performed, composed by Kiya Heartwood and featuring cellist Anna Park with guitarist Klondike Steadman.

Don't forget our annual Easter Canned Food Drive and the Baby Parade on Easter Sunday! Bring ample canned goods to the RE table in advance for the canned food hunt. For the parade, all babies a year old and under are invited to parade with their families around the sanctuary on Easter morning. We won't be extremely strict about the age limit.

APRIL 12**How Many Plagues Will it Take?**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

In our culture's story, who or what is the pharaoh who won't let the people go? Who is enslaved by this pharaoh? What can be done? The Green Sanctuary Team kicks off our annual “Spring into Action” project. Help us celebrate April Fuels Day! Touring artist Tret Fure will share her music during morning services (www.tretfure.com).

APRIL 19**Building the World We Dream About**REV. MARISOL CABALLERO,
VIC CORNELL, AND MEMBERS
OF “BUILDING THE WORLD WE
DREAM ABOUT” CLASS

Rev. Mari and Vic Cornell have been co-facilitating the anti-racism course “Building the World We Dream About” for the past two years. The culminating project of this course is a worship service planned and led by its participants, where they'll share with the congregation the knowledge gained and insights learned from the course. This will surely be an enlightening service!

APRIL 25**We Gather: Another Kind of Worship**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Read about our new third service on page 13! We will come together in Howson Hall at 4:30 p.m.

APRIL 26**The Impossible Task**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Second in our fairy tale series, Rumpelstiltskin tells the story of a girl asked to spin straw into gold. She meets a trickster who solves her problem, but at what price? UU touring artists Dragon's Head will provide the morning music (www.reverbnation.com/rpk/dragonshead2).

THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

As part of Spring Into Action 2015, all of our April speakers will be discussing issues pertaining to environmental justice.

(See page 10-11 for more details about Spring Into Action.)

APRIL 5

EASTER BREAK - NO FORUM

APRIL 12

Green Vehicles: Just a Color, or True Progress?

WITH ZACH BAUMER

Transportation in the City of Austin is one of the major contributors to climate change, and greener vehicles are arriving every year. But are we making progress reducing CO2 emissions? Zach Baumer from the City of Austin's Office of Sustainability will give an overview of city sustainability efforts and the recently finalized Austin Community Climate Plan, as well as the city's plug-in partners program and efforts to "green" the city vehicle fleet. Attendees will learn about where we are and aren't succeeding and why.

Zach manages the Austin Climate Protection Program in the City of Austin's Office of Sustainability, where he oversees the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies across the city. Prior to the City of Austin, Zach spent 10 years working in the environmental consulting industry, primarily assisting large industrial clients with environmental data management. He holds an MBA from the Presidio Graduate School and undergraduate degrees in chemistry and chemical engineering from Purdue University.

APRIL 19

A Solution for Climate Change, Our Greatest Challenge

WITH ANNA GRAYBEAL

Anna Graybeal will discuss the science of climate change, how it is driving global ecosystem changes, and

the likely impacts on humans and human civilization. She will next address what we can do about it, with a focus on the rationale for putting a price on carbon and the many benefits such a policy would provide, including economic. Finally, she will talk about the group Citizens' Climate Lobby and invite people to get involved. She will also provide materials for people to write a quick postcard or even a letter to their member of Congress if they want to take action right away.

Anna Graybeal received a bachelor's degree in biology from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in evolutionary biology from the University of California at Berkeley. She moved to Austin for a post-doc, but began to realize that she wanted to switch fields; she then earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Texas at Austin, and has been in private practice in Austin ever since. She first learned about global warming at Berkeley and has become increasingly concerned about the rapid changes we are seeing. Along with a co-leader, two years ago she started the Austin chapter of the volunteer-based organization Citizens' Climate Lobby, as a way to get involved in taking action on this challenging problem.

APRIL 26

Is High-Level Radioactive Waste Headed for Texas?

WITH KAREN HADDEN

Karen Hadden will talk about what we all need to know about radioactive waste, and how to take action to prevent "Fukushima freeways," potential radioactive accidents, and security risks. She will also dive into a local issue of whether Austin should build a new gas-fired power plant, or pursue energy efficiency and renewable energy instead.

Karen Hadden has been fighting for clean air and

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**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

(512) 452-6168

www.austinuu.org

Senior Minister

Rev. Meg Barnhouse

Assistant Minister

Rev. Marisol Caballero

Assistant Minister

Rev. Chris Jimmerson

Director of Music

Brent Baldwin

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Board President

Carolyn Gremminger

**First Unitarian
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Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.

Austin, TX 78756

THE FORUM, *continued*

clean energy since 2000. She became executive director of SEED Coalition (Sustainable Energy & Economic Development Coalition) in 2003, and led a statewide campaign to reduce toxic coal plant mercury pollution. She has been instrumental in creating public awareness about the health effects of mercury and the dangerous levels of mercury in fish. She worked with West Texas Astronomers and River Runners to address coal plant haze pollution that threatens health and destroys vistas. She was soon involved in efforts around the state to fight 19 proposed coal plants, and only three were eventually built. Karen also worked extensively in San Antonio to get a retirement commitment for two dirty old reactors and a plan for CPS Energy, San Antonio's municipally owned utility,

to increase energy efficiency and build 400 megawatts of solar power. She has organized in favor of renewables to be used instead of proposed new nuclear reactors at Comanche Peak and South Texas, and works to limit risks from radioactive waste dumping and transport in our state.

Karen also worked with a housing group to save and move 40 houses that were scheduled for demolition at Bergstrom Air Force base conversion. "This effort enabled people to have low-cost homes—it was a recycling success," Karen says.

Karen is a founding member of Solar Austin, with Public Citizen and Virtus Energy. Their work has resulted in significant solar and renewable energy commitments from the Austin City Council. ■