



FIRST UU NEWS

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

Seeds of a Spirited Life

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



During my study leave this summer, I'm working on finishing a book called "Seeds of a Spirited Life." This is based on the introductory section. I'll be preaching a sermon series this year on these "seeds." I'm looking forward to your feedback being part of the writing process.

Seeds of a Spirited Life

There is no better way to get a raucous discussion going in my crowd than to ask them what they think of the word "spiritual."

"I don't even know what that means," one will say with an edge in his attitude.

"To me," another one says, "it's the deep connection one person can have with another. It's that connection we're hungry for."

"What does that have to do with spirituality? A human connection? There's nothing supernatural about that!" The first one carps.

"I think spirituality has nothing to do with 'supernatural' things... Everything is part of nature, so there is nothing 'super' above nature itself."

And they're off.

I'm not afraid of the word. One of the pluses and minuses of my upbringing is that I had to learn the Jewish and Christian scriptures very well. At Princeton Seminary I won the Bible knowledge contest. In the Christian scripture there is a list of the "fruits of the spirit." I picture these things growing, ripening, turning rich colors in my life. The list goes something like this: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." If those things are growing in me then whatever spiritual practice I'm doing is working. If those things are shriveling up, turning dull, losing life, then what I'm doing isn't working. People reading this will have their

own qualities to add to the list: wondering, engagement, passion, wisdom, clarity, and many more.

When I hear the old familiar words: prayer, spirituality, scripture, salvation, even God, I think of a parable told by Rabbi Jesus. He described a person scattering seed by hand in a field. Some of the seed fell among weeds and got choked out. Some of the seed fell on the footpath and couldn't grow because the earth was packed so hard that nothing could penetrate. Some of the seed fell on fertile loamy soil and it took root and grew well. I'm one of those people for whom the ground of Jewish and Christian teaching has been walked over so many times by such certain and earnest feet that it is packed hard and hopeless. Nothing that falls on or even close to that ground can take root. Not that the "ground" is insensitive. It's almost painful to hear

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Getting giddy for social good

by Angela Smith



I find myself prone to giddiness on certain occasions. I was definitely giddy when I walked down the aisle at my wedding 44 years ago. When I look through my telescope and see a hard-to-find deep sky object millions of light years away, I do a little giddy happy dance. I've felt that same giddiness when I've seen a spectacular meteor streak across the sky, watched snow fall in a mountain meadow, embarked on a new travel adventure, or craved a snack and discovered an unopened bag of Cheetos in the cupboard. I felt especially giddy on June 26, 2015, when I learned of the Supreme Court's decision on same sex marriage. Better yet, the announcement came while I was at General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, where we celebrated and were led by our own Meg and Kiya in "House of Love," which makes me giddy every time I hear it.

No doubt that decision is a huge victory, but justice is nowhere near the finish line. I posted something on Facebook after the Charleston shooting: "My name is America and I have a racism problem." I was surprised that some disagreed with that statement, and one even

went so far to say, "America has no racism problem. Americans have always been accepting." A Facebook friend posted this appropriate response: "When one has never had to walk alone into a school where all the faces are a different color, when one has never had to use the back doors, or worse yet not been able to use any door, when one has never been separated and called equal – big dang lie that. Well, it's so disheartening to see white privilege ignored and any inconvenience, any criticism blamed on African Americans or other races for that matter. As a white woman, I've had my challenges, true, but nothing like what African Americans have faced in this country (and many others). One of the first songs I learned was that Jesus loved the little children, red and yellow, black and white. I believe that still. Why can't so-called Christians get the message and live the message? It's too simple, I guess; too innocent, too loving."

Our mission at First UU calls us to do justice – great words, but just words until we put them in action. That requires taking risks – getting out of our comfort zones, speak-

ing out, showing up. It's what Bree Newsome did when she courageously scaled that flagpole at the South Carolina capitol and brought the Confederate flag down.

We all cheered the Supreme Court decision and taking down the Confederate flag, but those were end-game celebrations. To be truly involved, we need to do our part on the front end. That means paying attention, questioning assumptions, knowing our communities, organizing, being present, looking closer at the language we use, sharing stories, making good use of our skills and talents, and becoming stronger allies by being vigilant and visible.

My friend Nina Flores who teaches in the Social and Cultural Analysis of Education program at California State University, Long Beach, challenges us: "Stay Loud. Every single day. Stay loud for the generations who came before you and those who will come after. Stay loud and drown out the silence of indifference. Stay loud until we have justice for all, and then get louder."

I'm ready to take on the challenge. I won't let my giddiness go to waste. ■

“Seeds,” continued

its words, its sounds, to see its efforts. Lots of people I know are in the same situation. New words must be found. New pictures, new thoughts, new paradigms must be uncovered so seeds can grow and flourish on untrampled ground.

I wish I could recover from this impacted situation, but people I love keep stomping around on it. “Concerned” about my being gay, hurt when I disagree with them about religion. Why are some religious folks so fragile that they feel attacked when you don’t share their worldview? Maybe they feel protective of God, as if God were fragile? I know that as I recover from being trampled by the religious tradition of my childhood, that pain subsides. The reaction to it would be calm, open hearted. I bring to it a freer mind and a more open heart.

Some people seem to think that “being spiritual” means that

you talk slowly, in soft tones, you wear flowy pajama clothes and you don’t blink much. Some seem to think that if you are spiritual enough, you will remain unaffected by life’s comedies and tragedies. If you only had enough faith or enough therapy you could go through an awful divorce with peace in your heart, floating above the sharp blades of the threshing machine, radiating a genial sweetness and love for all beings. I disagree. Sometimes agony is an appropriate response to awfulness. Sometimes, and this is just my opinion, anger is helpful. Sometimes a person’s soul needs to be stirred up. Sometimes life hurts and sometimes it’s funny and sometimes both can be true at the same time. Maybe the soft-spoken unblinking people are right and I’m wrong. I’ve been wrong a lot, and I will be again. It’s just that I would rather be around people who shout and laugh and growl

and cry. And blink.

I like the word “spirited” instead. It’s a new word, a seed falling on ground that is loamy and receptive. It describes a lively being, with his own ideas, with energy to enjoy her life, with backbone enough to take a stand, spark enough to avoid despair. The root of the word is the same, “spiritus” (Latin), meaning “breath.” A spirited life has room to breathe; a spirited person brings a breath of fresh air into any situation. I’d like to be that person, spirited, bringing air into stale rooms, opening windows that have been painted shut for years, calling out, “Look over here! Look at it from this angle, doesn’t it look different to you? Can you see it this way?” It is my hope that this will open some windows for you, turn over some new soil, invite fresh air and rich light so whichever of these seeds might take root can grow strong. ■

Susan Yarbrough arrives this month

Our ministerial intern, Susan Yarbrough, will be working here at the church for the next two years. This church has a tradition of being a teaching church, and we’re glad we are back to it. Last year she worked with the Lifeworks Street Outreach Clinic, part of People’s Community Clinic.

This summer she is doing

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Seton Hospital system. Susan is a student at Meadville-Lombard in Chicago. She comes to the UU ministry as a next-career seminarian, having spent years as an attorney, a professor at the University of Massachusetts, and an immigration judge. Her experiences on the bench are chronicled in her

book “Bench-Pressed,” which the members of the board are reading this fall.

Come meet Susan on August 9 when she will be in the First UU pulpit (see page 14). We will look forward to getting to know her better as she studies ministry at First UU.

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister



First Sunday Seminars continue during summer months!

August 2, Howson Hall, 1-2:30 p.m.

Wednesday night F.R.E.D. is on summer hiatus, but First Sunday Seminars will continue, taking 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!

Wisdom for Well-being Track: “The Five Wishes Advanced Directive Seminar” by Jay Cusker, LMFT-A, Bereavement Counselor and Volunteer Coordinator of Robinson Creek Home Health & Hospice

Includes a DVD presentation and a copy of your own ‘Five Wishes’ to fill out to share with your loved ones how you would like your final transition to be handled.

Faith Formation Track: “Exploring Immigration as a Moral Issue”

The 2013 General Assembly of UU congregations voted to declare “Immigration as a Moral Issue,” a UU Statement of Conscience. As we embark on the journey of offering sanctuary, let’s learn more about how this work fits in with the work of the larger UU movement and how it informs our faith as Unitarian Universalists.

Spiritual Practice Track: Yoga practice led by Mary Jane Ford

This is “slow flow” Hatha yoga. At the end is a ten-minute guided meditation and relaxation period. We achieve a calm and peaceful mental state and a relaxed body, and leave feeling good.

People of Color, Latina/o, Multiracial Gathering at First UU!

Tuesday, Aug. 4 at 6:15 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 16 at 12:30 p.m.

Please note the change in meeting times. 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! 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 online calendar). 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!

Fall RE Registration begins

Parents of children and teens: keep your eyes fixed on your (snail) mailboxes! We will be sending out registration forms for the 2015-16 Religious Education school year during the month of August. Please make sure that the church has your correct mailing address in our database. We will soon have the fall curricula descriptions out on the RE table in the gallery for you to check out what the kiddos and teens will be learning!

See new RE staff Laine Young’s bio on page 7.

Teacher training and orientation August 15, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Do you have a shortage of awe and wonder in your life? Has it been a long time since you've witnessed the joy of discovery and the thrill of curiosity? Would you like to deepen your UU identity in a way that will enable you to explain our faith tradition so that your friends and family won't leave the conversation still confused? Do you want to help ensure that our Unitarian Universalism remains vibrant and relevant for generations to come? If you answer "yes!" to any of these, please consider becoming a volunteer with our Sunday school or youth groups! No previous teaching or work with children and teens required (though a plus). RSVP for Teacher Training and Orientation: laine.young@austinuu.org.

Ever thought about facilitating a Chalice Circle?

The Chalice Circles program is seeking those interested in facilitating one of these small, deep listening, theme-led groups. Chalice Circles meet monthly and run early fall through late spring. There are 6-12 members per group and a training of facilitators is provided. Past facilitators have noted how the experience has brought them a deeper connection to the congregation as a whole, and to the members of their Chalice Circle in particular. If you would like to give it a go for the first or fifth time, please email Rev. Marisol at: marisol.caballero@austinuu.org.

Pride Festival and Parade! August 29

First UU will once again be participating in the Austin Pride Festival & Parade and we want you to join us! We need volunteers to man the booth at the festival as well as to march with us in the parade. If you plan on marching, our float's theme is a "Back to the Future" theme called Pride For Our Future. You can either dress up in costume or wear your Standing on the Side of Love t-shirts. Suggestions for costumes would be an LGBTQ icon, a look from your favorite decade ('60s-Present), or your own idea for LGBTQ Pride in the future. Get creative! If you would like to help at the festival booth please contact Hannah Barfoot at alphabetsoup@austinuu.org.

Do you have a truck or generator?

The First UU Pride Committee is planning our entry into the Austin Pride Parade and is looking for help with a few things. Most importantly, we need a truck to pull the float, and we would also like to find a generator to power up some lights and/or music. Please contact Hannah Barfoot at alphabetsoup@austinuu.org.

Lifespan RE Summer Curricula

Pre-K (3 and 4 year olds)

"Chalice Children" delves deep into our Unitarian Universalist faith. It strives not just to teach about our faith, but also to provide experiences around the strength of community, the wonder and awe that transcend everyday understanding, and life issues we all share. Early childhood (the years between ages 2 and 5) is filled with curiosity and wonder. In a group setting with loving adult guides, young children can engage in spiritual seeking, develop their openness to sharing, and experience the benefit of a supportive community. Their time in Chalice Children can set a pattern for the rest of their lives and bring lasting benefits. (uuu.org)

K-5th

This summer, beginning June 14, K-5 will be doing "The Awesome Stuff Summer Institute!," based on the book "The Kids Book of Awesome Stuff!" by Charlene Brotman. We used this curriculum in 2012, and I believe the kids really took to it. It is all about evolution, ecology, and the earth sciences. The storybooks that go along with it are seriously stellar (pun intended)! If you are interested in helping out this summer, please contact Laine at: laine.young@austinuu.org. This will be very friendly to the rough and tumble, hands-on kind of kid, as there are as many of those activities as there are of stories and crafts! All registered participants will receive an "Awesome Stuff First UU of Austin" t-shirt.

Jr. and Sr. High Youth Groups

Youth groups will continue to meet each Sunday during the 10:45 a.m. service. They will plan the upcoming school year's activities, hold youth worship services and discussions of current events and topics of interest to our young UUs, engage in social justice projects and team building activities. ■

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

“Getting to Know UU” class

**Sunday, August 9
12:15-1:15 p.m.
Rm. 15**

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

Connections Fair

**Sunday, September 20
After worship services**

Save the date! The annual Connections Fair is a great opportunity to learn more about First UU groups and ministries. More details will be posted closer to the event date. Please email Shannon Posern at membership@austinuu.org to learn more about this event.

Can you operate a camera?

We need someone who'd be interested in operating the camera for the Public Affairs Forum at least two Sundays a month, and maybe every Sunday beginning in September. This could be a wonderful learning experience for someone who is interested in film. Tom Martin and Jim Letchworth, both skilled cameramen, will be there to train and supervise the new person.

This is a chance to develop new skills and participate in producing an exciting and informative Forum on

Sundays from 12-1 p.m. We estimate that the total time involved would be about one and a half hour on Sundays. Any experienced camera hands are also welcome! This is a volunteer position, but by filming the forum the camera operator would have his or her name credited when the forum is shown on public access TV. This could be a real resume builder! And the forum committee is a welcoming group!

Interested persons should contact Tom Martin at (512) 415-9205 or by email: tom.martin.ipad@gmail.com.

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Save the Date!

Aug 9-14: Dwight Brown Leadership Experience, Denton, TX

Astronomy Weekend at UBarU! Aug. 14-16

Stargazers of all ages can enjoy the beautiful dark skies at UBarU. A new moon will set the stage for brilliant views of Saturn, deep-sky objects, and the late-night display of the Perseid meteor shower, one of the best meteor showers each year.

UBarU will provide and operate telescopes and binoculars for the star parties. Attendees are welcome to bring their own scopes to use (and share) if they wish. Cost, details and registration at www.ubaru.org under “Events.”

Carpool Opportunities

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



Open call audition notice

by Gary Payne

**Sunday, Aug. 9, 1 p.m. &
Monday, Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m.
Rm. 13**

Our next production will be “Starry Messenger,” directed by Gary Payne. We are casting for three men, between ages 50-70; two men, between ages 20-30; and two women, between ages 20-30. Rehearsals will begin in early September. The show opens on October 16 and runs through November 1. Showing are on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at

8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

“Starry Messenger” is the compelling story of the effects of Galileo’s ordeals with the church on his family, and his family’s role in his decision whether to renounce his discoveries and beliefs before the Inquisition. We will be doing cold readings from the script; there will be nothing to prepare. A small stipend will be paid.

Contact Gary Payne at (512) 799-5872 or capcitymystery@swbell.net for an appointment audition.

Learn to use church facilities and equipment

**Thursday, August 13
Howson Hall
5:30-7 p.m.**

First UU Office Administrator Andrea Sosa will be offering a church use training class. The goal is to provide volunteers/committee chairs who have meetings and events at the church with guidelines for using church facilities and equipment.

Topics will include: reservations, mailroom and copier, kitchen, Howson Hall equipment and more. Andrea will also have a Q&A to answer any specific questions that you may have. Seasoned volunteers are encouraged to attend, since many changes have occurred over the last year.

Please RSVP (including any specific questions/topics that you would like to have covered) to Andrea at andrea.sosa@austinuu.org by Wed. Aug. 5. If childcare is needed, please RSVP with a childcare request by Wed. July 29.

Say hello to Laine Young!



First UU’s Lifespan RE program welcomes back Laine Young as our new Program Assistant.

Laine Young was the K-2 teacher at First UU of Austin in 2010, and then

became the Pre-K - 5th grade teacher coordinator. In 2013 her family moved to Berkeley, CA and while there Laine was the Director of Religious Education at Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fremont. Laine loves being back in her hometown of Austin and is overjoyed to be returning to First UU!

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Sulma speaks out to First UU

**guest article by Alonzo Mendoza & Deborah Alemu,
University Leadership Initiative
special assistance from Chloe Sikes, Action for Justice**

On July 5, First UU hosted a potluck and panel in which the congregation listened to the story of Sulma Franco, a woman who is currently taking sanctuary at the church. Dozens of attendees gathered together to break bread with the church's guest, to hear about her journey of coming to the U.S. from Guatemala, and how she continues to work on her campaign for freedom and sanctuary from deportation, which would might well be a death sentence.

Sulma was born and raised in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Six years ago she began her journey to the United States and away from her abusive stepfather. While it was difficult to leave her family, she knew that survival meant leaving her home country and seeking refuge elsewhere, as her work as an LGBTQ activist put her in danger.

Sulma did everything right when she arrived in Austin six years ago. She began the process of applying for asylum, learned English and applied for work authorization. After a few years of saving and working, she opened up her own food truck business with her partner and applied for all the necessary permits. They had just paid two months rent on a space

to park the truck when Sulma went in for a routine Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) appointment, something she had been doing every three months for years.

But this time, rather than signing her name and leaving, ICE told her that her lawyer had not filed some paperwork correctly. With her car still parked outside, and her partner and business waiting for her, she was detained by ICE and sent to the Hutto Detention Center in Taylor,

“We fight for public support against ICE’s detention order for Sulma. We fight for legal representation to obtain asylum in the United States. We fight for funds to sustain this work, and we fight for her liberation, free from fear.”

TX. Although she had proven she was at risk in her home country and was released from Hutto as an asylee, she was eventually detained again and transferred to the notorious Eloy Detention Center in Arizona, where she spent eight horrific



Photo by Austin American-Statesman.

months. The officials there questioned her sexuality and then separated her because of her LGBTQ identity. Thanks to the community pressure and a \$15,000 bond, Sulma was released back to her family in Austin—but the nightmare is not over, as ICE has released an order for her deportation.

Sulma's story reminds us that our shared objective of doing justice does not come cheaply or easily. Alejandro Caceres, an immigrant rights organizer, and immigrant rights student group University Leadership Initiative (ULI), based out of UT Austin, have worked with the church ministers and Sulma to

“Sulma speaks out,” continued

launch her campaign for freedom. Even now that she has fought for sanctuary, she is still living *encerrada*, enclosed within four walls. Currently we at ULI are working toward getting her a U-Visa, as she was a victim of a crime and should qualify for relief.

We fight for public support against ICE’s detention order for Sulma. We fight for legal representation to obtain asylum in the United States. We fight for funds to sustain this work, and we fight for her liberation, free from fear, with her partner and their dreams of establishing their food truck business here.

Several groups at First UU provide education and opportunities to get involved in immigration-related issues. The Action for Justice committee is assisting with Sulma’s and related campaigns. Another ministry, Inside Amigos, makes visits to the women released by ICE at Casa Marianella, and to those residing at the Karnes and Hutto detention facilities, the latter at which Sulma spent four long months. Other groups meet regularly to discuss how racism and immigration are inte-



Photo by online publication Vice.

grally linked as moral issues.

We need your help to keep Sulma well and at home. Let ICE know you oppose Sulma’s deportation by signing her petition in the gallery on Sundays or here: <http://bit.ly/Sulmapetition>.

Sanctuary cases take time to win, and as ULI and the church continue to fight alongside Sulma to win her justice, we must not neglect her daily needs. Currently she has expressed a need for food, specifically a consistent delivery of groceries. In an effort to coordinate all of the deliveries, we at ULI are hoping that individuals and organizations can commit to one day of the week (Mon-Sun) where they can bring groceries for every week of the month. (For example, ULI will bring lunch and dinner groceries every Monday for July.) Your prompt commitment is crucial, as Sulma and her partner are not currently employed. Sign up for a time slot here: <http://bit.ly/foodforSulma>. (Note that Sulma is allergic to honey and prefers healthy options).

If you can’t commit to providing food regularly, ULI has also started a GoFundMe campaign to help with her legal case’s many associated expenses. Any amount of money you can donate is greatly appreciated: <http://bit.ly/Sulmafund>.

To get involved with immigration issues at the church, contact Chloe Sikes: justice@austinuu.org, or Peggy Morton: insideamigos@austinuu.org. Direct questions for Sulma to Rev. Marisol: marisol.caballero@austinuu.org. ■

Dance the night away, #LetSulmaStay

**Friday, August 14
Howson Hall
7 p.m.**

Come have fun with Sulma, donate to her cause, and have an awesome time!

Sulma has been living 24 hours a day, seven days a week within our church walls. Though it has been a welcoming and safe place for her, it’s not home. She is not currently working and needs help to pay off the bond from her forced detention in Arizona, as well as the many legal and court fees ahead. We greatly appreciate your assistance!

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Second quarter giving statements

To be mailed out July 31

If you haven't started to make a gift of record toward your annual pledge, now's a great time to start. The support and generosity of our members is one of the most important components of our foundation. It allows us to grow as a church, and enables us to reach out and support both our members and our surrounding community.

If you are writing one check for your gifts to both the annual fund and the capital campaign, please note the amount you would like to go toward each on the memo line. Thank you very much!

Stock donation update

If you are considering a donation of stocks to the church, please note that the procedure for doing so has changed. Please contact Jamie Schroeder at jamie.schroeder@austinuu.org or (512) 452-6168 ext. 302.

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant:

I feel both inadequate and a little embarrassed to ask about this situation. I'm wondering what I should do, if anything, when I hear about a fellow church member who's suffered a significant loss like death, divorce, illness, or unemployment. Many Sundays I notice Caring Cards on the credenza outside the sanctuary, often addressed to members who are facing hard times. Usually I do not know these people but even when I do, I don't know what to say and whether I should write, email, phone or visit them. I feel tongue-tied and afraid of saying the wrong thing, so usually I do nothing and figure our trained volunteers and staff will take care of it. Isn't this the best approach?

– *Tongue-Tied*

Dear Tongue-Tied:

You've raised a couple of important issues. First of all, we are a covenantal community, which means that we make promises to one another to behave in certain ways. Our covenant calls us "To welcome and serve by being present with one another through life's transitions." This means that when you know a fellow member is hurting, it is your responsibility as part of our community to respond in the best way that you can, no matter

what your training might be.

As to saying the "right" thing, there is no magic formula here! When people are hurting, it's often true that the simple gesture of reaching out is a comfort to them, regardless of the actual words written or spoken. If you do not know the person well, we recommend writing an email or snail mail note first. You can always ask if a phone call or visit would be welcome. Remember that all transitions take time, so correspondence at a later date would also be appropriate and appreciated.

A personal note from Ann Edwards, member of Healthy Relations Team, whose daughter-in-law died unexpectedly: "I took comfort from all the cards and emails people sent after Claudia's death, no matter how loosely connected they were to our family. Their very act of reaching out made me feel part of a caring community, and that itself was comforting."

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

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



Drive a Senior North Central Austin

What would you do if you could no longer drive your car? How would you get to the doctor's office? How would you get to the grocery store or the bank? For hundreds of seniors living in our community, this is a real concern. They want to continue to live independently in their own homes, but they need transportation to access critical services. And for many, there are several obstacles to reliable transportation:

- Many seniors have no family members living in the area, or if they do, these family members may not always be available.
- Public transportation can be difficult to access for older adults who often don't have the stamina to deal with mass-transit options, such as waiting outside, transferring from one bus to the other, and so forth.
- Taxi service can be costly for people on fixed incomes.

That's where Drive a Senior North Central Austin comes in. This volunteer-driven organization has been providing free transportation services to older adults since 1989. During that time, hundreds of seniors have received these services from Drive a Senior volunteers. In 2014 alone, Drive a Senior North Central Austin provided 3,610 rides for 153 seniors.

One such senior is Juan Francisco Castro, age 63. Mr. Castro has been a client of Drive a Senior for a few

years, first in Williamson County and most recently with Drive a Senior North Central Austin. A long-time Austinite, Mr. Castro not only appreciates the regular rides to the doctor's office, but also enjoys the camaraderie that he has developed with the volunteers. "All of the volunteers are super friendly people," he says. "I love conversing with them, and because so many of them are my contemporaries, we have a lot of commonality of experience. Not only do I get a ride, but I also get to have good conversations."

Because Drive a Senior North Central Austin depends on volunteer drivers, the organization's ability to drive and visit with seniors is limited to how many volunteers it has. These volunteers come from churches, civic organizations, early retirees who are paying it forward, parents who are teaching their children to respect elderly citizens, and anyone who has a bit of time to help a senior neighbor. Volunteers can give as much time as they are able; several rides a week or just one ride every couple of weeks, whatever fits into the volunteer's schedule. And, for most of the volunteers such as First UU member Suzanne Colwell, they get as much as they give.

"A lot of the folks that I give rides to don't have any family at all. I become their friend, a friend that they can count on. I can't begin to tell you the happiness that I get

when they say, 'I don't know what I would have done without you.' I also learn a great deal from our clients. They are bravely going through things that I have never experienced, but that I may someday."

It is easy to become a volunteer driver. You only need to:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Complete an online application
- Attend a brief orientation and training
- Pass background and driver record checks; provide a driver's license and proof of insurance

First UU is a long-time supporter of Drive a Senior North Central Austin. Many First UU members volunteer as drivers, in the office and at fundraising events. And, the church contributes financially through the monthly service offering.

Please make a generous donation on August 9 to the special offering, and make sure that this vital support is available for older adults today and into the future. Help ensure that seniors in our community continue living independently in their own homes.

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.

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC

Women's Spirituality Group

August 1 & 15

Rm. 13

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

Come join us in August! On August 1 we will celebrate Lamas, a celebration of the first harvest and the first loaves of bread. Then on August 15 we will continue with our exploration of the book "The Toltec Book of Transformation" by Austin author HeatherAsh Amara. We are beginning the chapter on Fire!

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

August Art Exhibition

Reception: Sat. Aug. 8

Gallery

6-8 p.m.

The art and photography of Kali, David, and Jane Parsons will be featured for the month of August. Nature scenes and painted figures range from the idyllic, dreamlike, and haunting.

Help our neighbors beat the summertime blues

Though Ella Fitzgerald's lyrics "Summertime and the livin' is easy" may be true for some, it is not true for many of our neighbors. This time of year brings needs for school-ready physicals and vaccinations, health issues exasperated by the heat, and summer injuries, illnesses and allergies. These issues are just some of the many areas that People's Community Clinic tries to attend to. Giving assistance to the physical, mental, emotional and legal problems of our friends and neighbors is the calling of the clinic. There is no time for stepping back a bit in the "easy" months of summer.

In September, PCC will be the monthly service offering beneficiary as chosen by our congregation. This is a great Social Action program and all of the organizations honored are worthy

of your support. On September 13, you will hear from Dr. Celia Neavel why PCC is so important to our community.

The month of October will be our yearly book drive and we will be collecting gently used children's books for all ages up through young teenage. So if you are cleaning out the book shelves and getting ready for the new school semester, put your old books aside for PCC.

The PCC Collating Group meets on the first Monday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the clinic at 2900 N. IH-35 in the second floor conference room. Come join us for good work, good conversation, and lunch afterwards. For more information contact pcc@austinuu.org.

Young adult summer events

Join the young adults (ages 18-35) for the following summer meetings. Email youngadults@austinuu.org for more details or information on the group. We'll also be organizing monthly brunches after the second service, so email us or watch the orders of service! Meetings are typically from 7-9 pm with some adjust-

ments based on event time for outings.

Thurs, Aug. 6 from 7-9 pm: Trivia at ingredients

Wed, Aug. 19: Swimming at Barton Springs

See the September events in the next newsletter!

FIRST UU CARES COUNCIL

New umbrella organization created for church caring committees

by Susan Thomson

Everything we do at First UU should be a reflection of our church's adopted values, but perhaps in no ways more overtly than through our caring ministries, now referred to as First UU Cares Council. Rev. Meg recently referred to our various caring ministries as branches. I love this analogy because it suggests a caring tree whose branches provide comfort and support.



Each branch of First UU Cares has a coordinator in charge of arranging for the direct care needed:

Pastoral Care Associates (PCAs): Lynda West. Lynda arranges for trained volunteers to provide a listening ear to those who need this short-term ministry. PCAs also reach out to all members of the church several times a year through phone calls or email.

Meals: Wendy Kuo. Wendy arranges for volunteers to deliver meals to congregants who are ill, who are bereaved or who have welcomed a newborn into their home.

Cards: Dottie Roark. Dottie oversees the Welcome Desk Volunteers who send cards to church members at times of illness, loss, and celebration of significant life events.

Memorial Service Receptions: Rose Ann Reeser and Pat Walters. Rose Ann and Pat arrange for receptions following memorial services for church members or their immediate families. Volunteers provide food and assistance as needed.

Rides to church: Joseph Hunt. Joseph is organizing a new branch of First UU Cares that will match persons needing rides to church with volunteers in their neighborhoods who can provide transportation.

Visits: We are recruiting a coordinator to arrange for volunteers to provide hospital visits and assistance to persons recuperating from hospitalizations or otherwise in need of short-term help.

Our board has established and monitors a set of Ends. These are the things we should be doing to help us live our mission and express our values. The Ends most applicable to First UU Cares are as follows: "First UU Church of Austin is an intentionally hospitable community where: all people are treated with respect and dignity; all people of goodwill are welcomed; people are supported in times of joy and need."

All of us should be support-

ing each other in times of joy and need. Our goal is for everyone in the congregation to be aware of the various ministries included in First UU Cares, and to understand how to request care for someone in our church family, and/or to ensure we let people know of fellow congregants' joys and sorrows. Just let us know when you or someone else in the congregation has a need, or if you are aware of a joy to be shared, and we'll take it from there (see contact info below).

Rev. Meg established the First UU Cares Council to improve communication and efficiencies. Ron Buford, Joseph Hunt and I serve on the council. We will be channeling the emails and phone messages to the appropriate branches. Another duty of the council is to develop a robust system for recruiting and supporting the many volunteers who provide the direct care in our congregation. You'll be hearing more about this soon. In the meantime, if you are interested in volunteering, please email caring@austinuu.org to tell us more about your interest. And thank you for helping us make First UU Cares a reality.

Reach First UU Cares via email at caring@austinuu.org. Or call (512) 452-6168, ext. 315 to leave a voice message.

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, August 14
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, August 22
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.

WORSHIP SERVICES

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

AUGUST 2**Spiritual Ambivalence**

REV. NELL NEWTON

We'll sing that we need to “Do when the Spirit says Do,” but what about all those other moments in life when spirit or Spirit is not a big factor in our decision making or dinner making? We'll take a short tour of the history of our concept of “spirit,” and examine the ambivalent ways that spirit might move or remain inert in our daily living.

AUGUST 9**Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Harmed**

SUSAN YARBROUGH

People who come to the U.S. seeking asylum and refuge have their faces pressed up against the glass of something they want with every cell of their being. When we remember the times of alienation and longing in our own lives, we begin to have compassion to understand the heartfelt joy of listening to and welcoming strangers, wherever we may find them. Read about Susan on page 3.

AUGUST 15**We Gather: Another Kind of Worship**

(4:30 p.m.) The new third service is in its own format, different than on Sunday mornings. Pizza and drinks will follow! Please email childcare@austinuu.org to reserve childcare; however, children are very welcome

throughout the entire service. We will have a carpeted area and coloring materials in Howson Hall.

AUGUST 16**Which God Don't You Believe In?**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

There are so many pictures of God that don't make any sense. Are there any that do?

AUGUST 23**The First One to Try**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

What do people do when someone starts acting differently? How did it feel to be the first person to eat a tomato, knowing everyone was waiting to watch you gurgle your last breath, poisoned by the fruit? Who first thought of cooking and eating an artichoke? How do we treat people who try something new?

AUGUST 30**Choose to Enjoy Your Life**

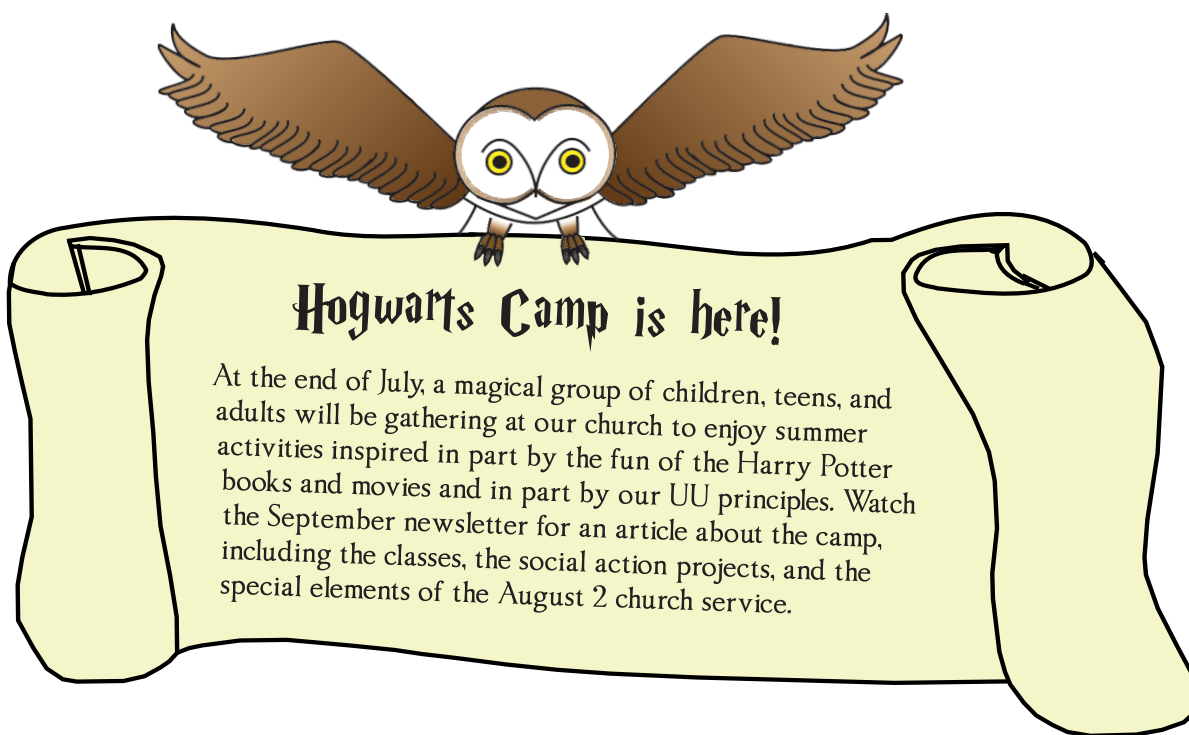
REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

There are many things we do to shape our lives that we don't realize are choices. How can we make better ones?

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

Correction from last month's issue: The Public Affairs Forum is off for the summer and will resume in September.



And speaking of RE activities...

We cannot make our wonderful RE program work without wonderful *you!* Make a difference in the spiritual upbringing of a young UU, and volunteer for the upcoming fall session! See page 5 for details.

**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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**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.

Austin, TX 78756



UBarU is going green!

Our Unitarian Universalist Camp and Retreat Center, UBarU, located near Kerrville, is undertaking a new project to move towards living our UU values by reducing its carbon footprint. Contributions are being accepted to support the installation of an in-grid solar-power system. Thanks to generous, upfront contributions of six spirited donors, we are already more than halfway to our goal! This project will happen, but the amount of contributions will determine the size of the system and its positive environmental impact. Design plans are on the UBarU

website and installation is scheduled for early August.

Will you join us in these efforts to turn UBarU even more green? Details of the proposal and ways for you to make a contribution are on the UBarU website: www.ubaru.org/home/SolarPanelsProject.

All contributions are tax deductible. Thanking you in advance for helping turn a dream into reality. Gratefully, your First UU Austin Members of the UBarU Board of Trustees: Derek Howard, Melanie Walter-Mahoney, Mark Kilpatrick, and Michael West.