



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## Building news and sanctuary town meetings

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



### New building pre-design presentation

On February 14 at 1:15 in the sanctuary, the architects will make a presentation of the first draft of the building plan. The building team has been moved and gratified by the efforts these men have made to give us as much of what we wished for, as our budget will possibly stretch to pay for. The next phase will be to design the renovations. Please plan to be there!

### Sanctuary conversations summary

Last fall the board hosted a series of four town hall meetings, where they heard from the congregation their thoughts on the idea of First UU of Austin being a sanctuary church. What being a sanctuary church means is that we are church which offers sanctuary to an asylum-seeker from time to time, and that we are aligned with a group of other churches doing the same kind of work. In the conversations, eight questions were asked of every group:

1. *How has First UU providing sanctuary affected you personally?*

People talked about being en-

riched in their spirits, feeling good about what the church was doing, and becoming better informed about issues related to immigration. They said it was gratifying, that they were glad that we stepped up and did this, that we stepped up when we were needed. They said it was spiritually rewarding. They also said they had been concerned about whether the staff were spending too many resources on just one person. One person asked, what is the goal of offering sanctuary? Would we try to help everybody? If we couldn't help a good number of people, what was this for?

The vision of what we're going to be doing if we continue to offer sanctuary to refugees is that we'd be part of a coalition of congregations: UU, Protestant, and Catholic, each congregation standing with the others, challenging the current immigration system. The purpose of that challenge is to shine a light on the brokenness of the system, and the necessity of fixing it so that it is humane and reasonable. All our church would do would be providing a place of safety for a person while they ran

a campaign for amnesty.

2. *Do you think that offering sanctuary to Sulma has been a benefit or a drawback to First UU?*

Most people felt that it had been a benefit. We can be proud to be the first church in Texas to offer sanctuary since the '80s. It raised our profile in the Austin community. People are talking about us, people are looking to First UU to see how to do sanctuary. It brought us into partnership with St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, it brought us Sulma, who taught Spanish, who spoke to our youth, who became part of our congregation while she was here. It brought people to the church. Some people worried about the safety of the ministers. Some were concerned about possible legal trouble for the congregation.

Other congregations are seeing what we have done, and they are calling and writing us to find out more about it. We know that in the '80s, the government went after some of the churches who were offering sanctuary, but then they backed away from that, as the very powerful Roman Catholic Church

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**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

# Black History Month— let's celebrate!

by **Angela Smith**



Forty-one years ago, on a Sunday morning in late November, a team of scientists digging in an isolated spot in the Afar region of Ethiopia came across a small part of elbow bone. Paleanthropologist Donald Johanson immediately recognized it as coming from a human ancestor. The skeleton that was uncovered was a momentous find because the sediments at the site were known to be 3.2 million years old. It was the most ancient early human ever found. At the campsite that night, Johanson played a Beatles cassette and the song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" came on. Because the skeleton was small, it was assumed the bones were those of a woman, so the scientists decided to name their find "Lucy."

I love Lucy because she's part of my ancient ancestry. I love the fact that every one of us has a little bit of Africa and Lucy running in our veins. Like Lucy, we all came from stardust, so while we may have evolved in different ways, our origins are the same.

As a child of the '50s, I grew up in the racist environment of the South. I went to segregated schools and didn't know much about other cultures. We were under so-called nuclear threat, so along with all

people of different skin color, Russians were also on our ethnic hit list. I remember a nine-year-old Russian girl in my third grade class. Everyone was convinced she was a Communist spy.

It's sad, but it wasn't until I went off to college that my cultural education began. Growing up in Southeast Texas, the only religion I was exposed to was Christianity. I had no knowledge of Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists, and pagan was a word associated with "Indians" as we called Native Americans then. The only thing I knew about Jews was that they owned two of the biggest stores in town. I did know something about immigrants since my parents came from Italy, and I was a first-generation American. However, I wasn't proud of that fact and did all I could to establish myself as part of the WASP mainstream.

I now realize how such narrow thinking and coming from such a background can constrain world views and understanding of humankind. No wonder institutional racism and xenophobia run rampant. How sad that some political campaigns are based on encouraging fear of those who are different rather than celebrating our commonalities.

How unfortunate that we live in a society where competition wins over cooperation, where negotiation and compromise are often seen as weakness. Instead, we are winners and losers, champs and chumps, bullies and wimps.

Change will come only when we start to question, challenge, speak up and take action against racism and xenophobia wherever we find it. I'm proud to be part of a church that is working in that direction. I am proud that First UU Austin displays a banner that proclaims **BLACK LIVES MATTER**. I am proud that we are addressing racial issues head-on with our People of Color, Latina/o, Multiracial gatherings and our White Allies groups.

As for myself, I'm determined to take a more active role in fighting racism, not just because I firmly believe Black Lives Matter, but because of an ancient woman who was given the name Lucy and all the other ancestors whose blood runs in my veins. Because of them I am part of this messy but beautiful, multi-colored family called the human race. I'm celebrating Black History Month because the truth is that history is my history—and your history, too. ■

was doing more of it than any other denomination. We don't think they will prosecute us, but there is no way to be sure. It takes courage for all of us to call attention to the cracks in the system.

*3. What are the best things that could happen if we decide to be a sanctuary church?*

The attending members thought it would be a good way of living our mission, and getting closer to our "Ends," our goals. One of those is to be welcoming. Another is to be a leader in the UU denomination. They spoke about putting together a manual for how to offer sanctuary, joining with the five or six other churches of other denominations nationwide (now with St. Andrews Presbyterian, here in Austin) to form a coalition. People talked about living the principle of encouraging spiritual growth: through our interaction with a refugee who is attempting to transform her own life, through getting to know someone from a different culture from most of us, through gathering the courage to act in a way that puts us in the footsteps of activists who have been a strong part of our Unitarian and Universalist traditions. Some noted that more of us are going to visit folks in the detention centers because of offering sanctuary to Sulma.

*4. What are your concerns? What are the worst things that could happen if we become a church that offers sanctuary?*

Some worried about negative publicity, about being in on the movement at the forefront, when the people in the forefront usually have the most to lose. Might we forfeit our property? Might we spend too much money? Might we have to have a defense fund? Does this count

as civil disobedience? What about our insurance company? What is our liability? Sulma was nice and a good organizer, but what if we get someone who just sits there and does nothing for their campaign? What if we get someone with a criminal record? What if they come to us under a false name, so their background check wouldn't turn up the bad things they may have done? What if their campaign fails and they don't win the right to stay? That will be a trauma for the church. What if it doesn't work out? What if there is an attack on the refugee as a result of the publicity? We all had a good imagination for disaster!

*5, 6, & 7. If we offered sanctuary to others, what are your thoughts about housing couples versus individuals? Families? How many people? Should we focus on LGBTQ folks, since it would be harder for them to find sanctuary in most other churches? What about criminal records? What about time limiting the stay?*

During this conversation we thought together and decided we would limit it to a family of four. We would only take people who came to us through the coalition of immigrant rights groups. In other words, no one would be able to come to the door and just ask for sanctuary. We would have a contract like the one we had with Sulma. In the contract would be stipulations about how much of the church building could be used and how it would be used, there would be language about substance abuse, physical violence, participating in church life in a positive way. We would limit the stay to two years. The normal campaign for asylum lasts three years, but someone would only need sanctuary as their time is drawing to a close and they

are in danger of being deported. We would re-visit the agreement every 90 days to make sure the arrangements were working for all involved. We wouldn't take anyone with a criminal record, except for the crime of crossing the border. We realized that being part of a coalition was crucial. We didn't want to do this alone.

*8. The final question was about people's understanding of the concept of justice as contained in our mission statement.*

Justice is when we live our values, people said. It's standing up for people who don't have as much privilege as we do, for whom the law is not working well. It's shining a light on injustice where we find it. Justice is doing our part, even if we can't fix the whole thing. Justice is learning to be allies, not taking over the refugee's life or their campaign, but offering what we can and standing by to help when asked.

We wondered how to do a project like this as a church without implying that everyone in the church was in agreement on all points of the stand we were taking. Could we be a church that offers sanctuary from time to time? UUism is coming out of a time of extreme individualism, where congregations explicitly said to the ministers, "You say whatever you like as yourself, as the minister of this congregation, just don't speak for us as a group, as if we spoke with one voice."

At the end of the conversations, the leaders felt that we hadn't heard deeply enough from a big enough number of members on this issue. The conversations need to be continued. This April, Spring into Action is all about offering sanctuary; see pg. 9 for further information. ■

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

# Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister

## First Sunday Seminars, Feb. 1



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

## Faith Formation Track: “Finding Spiritual Grounding in Immigration Advocacy” with Peggy Morton

Interested in the intersection of immigration and our church values and our UU principles? Come engage in an unstructured study as a spiritual exercise, and we welcome others to join us in an open dialog during monthly first Sunday Seminars from January through April. We will examine a variety of areas related to immigration and the sanctuary movement. Different UUs will guide us each month in discussions related to our First UU values—transcendence, community, compassion, courage, and transformation—and the topics will change from month to month. Watch the bulletin for more details, as we’ll announce a reading or a video to watch before attending each of the first Sunday Seminars. For more info, email [insideamigos@austinuu.org](mailto:insideamigos@austinuu.org).

## Spiritual Practice Track: “How to Pray When God Isn’t a Noun” with Rev. Marisol Caballero

UUs who identify more with atheism, agnosticism, and secular Humanism tend to wince at the thought of incorporating prayer as part of their spiritual practice. However, for the open-minded searching for a means to enhance their daily connection to their spiritual nature, there do exist means and methods by which we can address the Sacred without compromising our beliefs. We will learn and practice: silent prayer, corporate prayer, singing prayer, and a variation of Ignatian prayer.

## F.RE.D. Night Happenings:

Feel like having some home-cooking but not thrilled about cooking it yourself mid-week? All are welcome to join us for an always-delicious dinner at 6 p.m. (\$6/person, kids under 12 eat free), followed by mind-blowing classes and workshops! This semester we’re offering the following:

**“Resistance and Transformation: Unitarian Universalist Social Justice History,” 7–9 p.m. Alternating Wednesdays (Feb. 3 & 17) \$15 registration fee (scholarships available)**

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

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**“Living the Welcoming Congregation:  
Continuing the Welcoming Congregation  
Journey,” 7–9 p.m.**

**Alternating Wednesdays (Feb. 24: screening of  
“Pride”)**

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of First UU being recognized by the UUA as having completed the necessary steps to become an official “Welcoming Congregation” to LGBTQ-identifying people of good will! For February, “Living the Welcoming Congregation,” will be on hiatus as the course format is restructured as a multi-media, multi-approach workshop series. We will return in March to welcome former and new participants as we sincerely and joyfully decide as a community how we would like to continue the ongoing journey of acceptance. Until then, please join us Feb. 24 for a screening of “Pride,” a film based on a true story of an unlikely alliance of Welsh activists!

A lot has happened in the LGBTQ movement in the past 20 years! Please join in this joyous struggle, meet other allies and queer members, and help First UU reach this goal.

**New! Parenting Book Club  
Wednesdays, 6:30–8 p.m.**

Top Six Reasons to go to the new Parenting Book Club at First UU:

6. You get to color simple designs with crayon. This is very relaxing.
5. You get to share how your parenting week went with folks who will understand.
4. You don't have to read the book. Seriously. We have one copy of the book. Folks take turns bringing the book home and reading just one chapter. Then they report back with summary info.
3. A F.R.E.D. dinner is available right before class. It's made with love by Kami, \$6 for adults, free for kids.
2. Your kids will thank you! Why? Because kids can have fun, either going to play in the nursery or to Kiyā's super awesome art class.
1. You get to take the time to learn, reflect and commiserate with other UU parents. Parenting is hard! It helps

to share the journey with others.

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

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

**Annual Valentine's Day Card  
Crafting Party! Howson Hall, Feb. 7**

During both coffee hours, come enjoy sweet treats and take advantage of our extravaganza of crafting supplies to make a simple or elaborate Valentine's Day card for someone you care about. Or, if you'd prefer, you can drop your card into the donate basket and it will be delivered to cheer up a patient at Westminster Retirement Community. This is an all-ages event. Get in touch with your inner crafter!

**New! Child-Parent Relationship  
Therapy with Juliana Kunz  
Feb. 21, 12:30–2 p.m.**

CPRT is a 10-week class for parents of children ages 3–8 who would like to learn how to feel more in control, reduce power struggles, or just connect more deeply with their children through play. This evidence-based course teaches skills and principles based on play therapy in a supportive group context.

**Surprise Pals Reveal Party, Feb. 21**

If you are lucky enough to be participating in our Surprise Pals program, please remember to mark your calendars for our ever-important Reveal Party, where you will meet your Surprise pal face-to-face, eat delicious goodies, and play get-to-know-you games! If you missed the boat on this one, remember to sign up in December 2016! ■

*See February POC event on pg. 13.*

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### “Path to Membership” class

**Saturday, April 23**  
**9 a.m.–12 p.m.**  
**Howson Hall**

Breakfast and childcare are provided for this quarterly class designed for those interested in becoming members. Learn about the responsibilities of membership from Rev. Barnhouse; learn about UU history and the history of this church; share faith stories with other prospective members (optional); hear about ways to connect in the church; and sign the membership book and fill out new member paperwork, if you feel ready! Please RSVP to [membership@austinuu.org](mailto:membership@austinuu.org) as soon as possible or with Shannon at the visitor table, so we can get an accurate head count for food and childcare.

### “Getting to Know UU” class

**Sunday, Feb 7**  
**Rm 15**  
**12:15–1:15 p.m.**

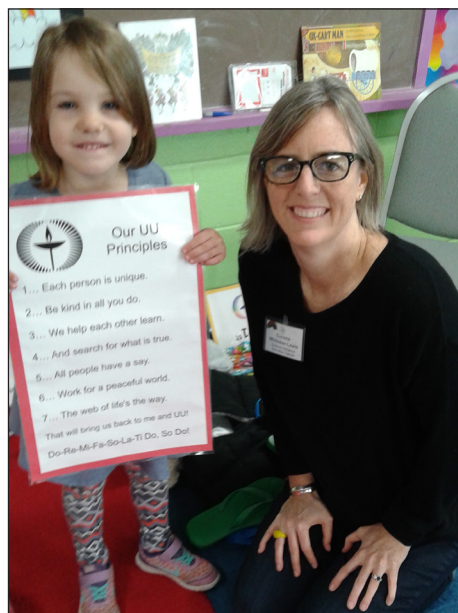
This class is a basic introduction to Unitarian Universalist history, as well as the history of First UU of Austin. You will also have opportunities to ask questions and share faith histories with other attendees. Childcare is provided.

## Answering the call to become a professional religious educator

by **Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis**

Ideally, a home is a safe place shared with loved ones. It is a place to rest, nourish your body, and dream. By that definition, this church has been a wonderful home to me for close to twenty-five years. I have felt safe and welcomed, but also challenged and inspired. As a result, I was moved to serve my church home in various ways. For the last four years, I have taught kindergartners and first graders during second service and it has been a true joy. Extending welcome to these children and their families has been a deeply meaningful and transformative experience for me, one that with each passing year occupied more of my heart and mind.

It is with much excitement that I



Corinna poses with Sunday school student Ivy, showing her learning. *Photo courtesy of Lifespan RE*

share with all of you, my church family, that I feel called to become a religious educator as a vocation. I have met with Rev. Meg, Rev. Mari, and Laine Young, Lifespan RE Program Assistant, and was warmly and enthusiastically encouraged to follow this new path. Their support, as well as that of my family, means everything to me. Thank you so much!

One measure of this support is that for the immediate future I will continue to teach the K–1 class, but will also shadow Rev. Mari and Laine, learning as much as I can while also helping as much as I can. This unpaid “internship” will keep me busy at church for about 25 hours a week. I am truly grateful for this opportunity that our church leadership has extended to me. Helping the First UU RE department like this is one way I can give back to this community that has given me so much. I will also begin the training and credentialing process offered to religious educators by the UUA.

What is difficult to say, though, is that by answering this call I will ultimately leave my church home here and serve another. I cannot at this time predict what the timeline for that will be, but it is hard to express how much I will miss being here on Sundays. It has been a privilege. Many, many, thanks to my entire church community for your support, and I look forward to sharing this next phase of my life with you.

In fellowship,  
 Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis

# Sulma, First UU members request sanctuary city status from Austin mayor

abridged Austin Monitor article by Jack Craver

Mayor Steve Adler engaged in a courteous but tense public conversation over the city's immigration policies with a group of immigrant rights activists outside of his City Hall office on Monday, Jan. 25.

ICE Out of Austin—a group pushing for local law enforcement to no longer cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain or deport undocumented immigrants—arrived outside of Adler's office shortly before 5:30 p.m. with chants in English and Spanish, and demanding a meeting with the mayor. Group leader Alejandro Caceres insisted the mayor meet them in public.

Surrounded by activists and media—and speaking even more deliberately than usual, so that an interpreter could translate his remarks into Spanish—Adler emphasized his concerns that federal immigration laws were in conflict with the United States' heritage as an immigrant nation. He also noted challenges that immigration laws present to local police because undocumented immi-

grants fear that they risk deportation by reporting crimes.

"It's important that everyone in this community feel safe and everyone here feel protected," Adler said. "Our local law enforcement people need to have confidence in the people that are living in our communities, and (people) have to feel comfortable going to law enforcement when they're not being treated well or when they're threatened or feeling in danger."

He added, "It's for that reason that I am a strong supporter of our local law enforcement prioritizing their time and spending their time on our local issues, on our local safety concerns, and not being put in the position where they are called on to enforce national immigration policies."

But Caceres told Adler that his words of support were not enough, and he urged him to put forth a resolution making Austin a sanctuary city. Anything less, he argued, amounted to complicity in deportations.

Adler responded that he was unsure whether a resolution was "the best way" to offer protections to the community.

"But we're telling you that it is the best way, actually," responded Caceres. "We're

telling you that we're tired of families getting deported, we're tired of politicians saying we have to be patient."

"We see you as an ally and a friend, Mayor Adler, but if you're telling us that you're not going to put forward a resolution, then you stand with ICE and deportations," Caceres added. "There is no gray line."

Another demonstrator, Sulma Franco, recounted taking evidence of violence against her to the police department, which she said was largely uncooperative and unresponsive because of language barriers.

Adler responded that he would like to hear of such incidents and help members of the community address them. "If you have people in our police department that are not acting properly, that are doing the wrong thing, that are putting people in jeopardy, then involve me," he said. "I am pleading with you to involve me in those situations so there's something I can do to help."

Caceres said the immigrant community needed structural changes to law enforcement rather than help from the mayor on a case-by-case basis.

The term "sanctuary city" typically refers to municipalities that have established a policy not to enforce federal immigration law, and where law enforcement generally does not inquire about or investigate a person's immigration status.

Read this article in full: <http://bit.ly/ICEOutofAustinAdler>



ICE Out of Austin in City Hall; Sulma Franco and Peggy Morton far right. Photo: Austin Monitor

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**Austin CROP  
Hunger Walk**

**Sunday, February 28**  
**Camp Mabry**  
**(2200 W. 35th St)**  
**2 p.m.**

This annual walk (2.4 miles) is the largest interfaith activity in Austin, last year drawing more than 1,000 walkers who raised more than \$77,000 for the local and global fight against hunger and poverty. Again this year, First UU team members will enjoy a pizza lunch after church services then carpool to the walk. Bring the whole family!

To sign up to walk or make a donation, go to [www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx/FirstUUChurch](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx/FirstUUChurch), visit the Social Action table in the gallery, or contact Eric Hartman at (512) 469-9894 or [cropwalk@austinuu.org](mailto:cropwalk@austinuu.org).

**“Dear White  
People” Screening  
& Discussion**

**Friday, February 19**  
**Howson Hall**  
**7 p.m.**

Join Austin Chapter of Allies for Racial Equality for a showing of “Dear White People.” Scott Butki will facilitate discussion afterwards. Free childcare provided. Facebook event: <http://on.fb.me/202miiA>.

**Save the date to PLAY!**

**Saturday, April 16**  
**Howson Hall**  
**6:30 p.m.**

Save the date for a First UU fundraiser benefitting those who like to PLAY, specifically playground equipment and the music program. Please plan to join your First UU friends and family for a night of community with the intent of supporting our church home. There will be a dinner, along with silent and live auction events with Austin auctioneer TiWanna Kenney of Astounding Auctions. Early bird tickets will go on sale in

late February. More details to come!

Please considering volunteering for this event and/or making a donation to the auction itself. We are looking for experiences and opportunities to offer at both the live and silent auctions. (An example would be providing a French picnic dinner for 10.) Additionally, a photographer is also needed for the auction/event.

Please contact Gillian Redfearn at (512) 784-4241 or [gigi7844241@gmail.com](mailto:gigi7844241@gmail.com) to volunteer, make auction contributions, or ask any questions.

**Are you ready for SWUUSI/The Point?**

*Please note this correction from last month's newsletter!* Your favorite summer retreat, SWUUSI, is now known as The Point, but will still provide the speakers and activities your family loves and enjoys! Mark your calendars for July 24–29 at the Southwest UU Summer Institute at Fort Gibson Lake, OK.

This year's theme speaker George Kimmich Beach will discuss this year's theme, “Savor and Save the World,” along with guest speaker Rev. Joanna Fontaine Crawford.

There's activities on the lake, golf course, and trails too. Come for the education, faith development, entertainment, recreation, and fun with fellow UUs from infants to octogenarians. Video at <http://bit.ly/swuusi>.

Look for more info in the April newsletter!





## SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

# Spring Into Action addressing church sanctuary status this April

### What is Spring Into Action?

Spring Into Action works to engage the whole First UU congregation in a series of educational, activist, and/or volunteer activities around a specific social justice issue.

### Why Sanctuary?

In 2015, First UU gave sanctuary to Sulma Franco, an LGBT activist from Guatemala who was in immediate danger of deportation as her case for asylum had been denied. Sulma has since been granted a stay of deportation and has left the sanctuary of the church, while the congregation has begun to discuss whether or not we should continue to be a church which offers sanctuary. To do so would make us part of an emerging interfaith movement that seeks to address injustices in our nation's treatment of those who come to America seeking freedom from danger.

Becoming a sanctuary church is a big decision and cannot be made lightly. This year's Spring Into Action will offer congregants opportunities to learn more about the emerging New Sanctuary Movement, the reasons why some individuals need sanctuary, and the possible implications of making this decision for our congregation.

### How Can I Get Involved?

We're asking for your help in imagining and implementing activities that will help all of us learn more about what it would mean to be a sanctuary church.

If you have a great idea for an activity, please let us know! No ideas come to mind? Check out this list of possibilities:

- Informal potluck lunch with one of our Forum speakers (April 3 or 10)
- "Meet and eat" with Sulma and/or others seeking asylum
- Help with Interfaith Action of Central Texas' monthly Square One lunch for refugees
- Provide dinner at Casa Marianella, a shelter for recent immigrants
- Movie or panel of speakers on topics like sanctuary, asylum, immigration law, etc.
- Civil disobedience training
- Household goods drive for Casa Marianella or similar organization
- Volunteer fair with local nonprofits that serve refugees or recent immigrants

To get involved with Spring Into Action, contact Wendy Erisman ([socialaction@austinuu.org](mailto:socialaction@austinuu.org)) by March 1, 2016. ■



### February Art Exhibit: "Creative Crossover"

**Reception: Friday, Feb. 5  
Gallery  
6-8 p.m.**

February's artist, Jill Wiggins, is a long time member of our church. Some of her works combine poems and images, and she's currently interested in collage and mixed media. In 2015 Jill joined postcard swaps and has produced more than 100 postcards in watercolor, collage, marker, photography, typography, poetry and mixed media.

Jill's writing and reflections on "Radical Retirement" can be found at [wigginswordsandimages.wordpress.com](http://wigginswordsandimages.wordpress.com). Postcards and other art are at [jillybeanswiggins.wordpress.com](http://jillybeanswiggins.wordpress.com). She can be reached at [jillybeanswiggins@gmail.com](mailto:jillybeanswiggins@gmail.com).

### Senior Luncheon

**Wednesday, Feb. 10  
Howson Hall  
12 p.m.**

Tom Doyal, a perennial favorite, will read more of his short stories from mythical Hulse County, Texas, set in the '40s & '50s.

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

## HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

# Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant,

As a white heterosexual I'm feeling more and more inhibited from giving compliments to my new friends who identify with traditionally marginalized groups. They tell me that my words are actually offensive! For example, I recently told a person of color that I thought a presentation she made was very articulate. Another time I expressed appreciation to a lecturer for publicly speaking his spouse's name (an obvious male name). In both situations I was told my comments were insulting. I feel like I'm walking through a minefield where my sincere compliments explode in my face. I want to practice honest, direct communication but I'm tempted to muzzle myself. Can you help?

– *Feeling muzzled*

Dear Muzzled,

We're so glad you don't want to muzzle yourself! It's easy to feel frustrated, even angry, when people hear your well-intentioned comments as insulting. Your good goal of honest, direct communication is actually hard work, requiring a lot of self-awareness and compas-

sion for people who live in a world different from yours. We all make assumptions when we speak, based on our experiences. A first step is to recognize the assumptions you make as a member of a dominant white, straight group. Assumptions can be blind spots. No dominant group experiences discrimination or double standards to the same extent that marginalized groups do.

Speaking from your orientation, your challenge is to understand how the person you're talking to might hear what you say in a totally different way than you intended. A person of color might be thinking, "Why don't you just assume I'm articulate? Do you mean you're surprised I'm articulate as a person of color? That sounds so patronizing!" The gay person might be thinking, "Why wouldn't I mention my spouse's name? Do you appreciate heterosexuals for naming their spouses? That sounds to me like a double standard!"

It might help if you expand your remarks to your new friends, knowing that we all tend to speak in shorthand. Be aware that tone of voice can also convey mean-

ing; a tone of appreciation can be heard as surprise! So you might say, "Compared to lots of presentations I've heard from lots of people, yours was very articulate" and "What I appreciate about your naming your spouse is that you've publicly normalized your union, and I appreciate that you modeled how to do so."

Remember that we're all learning here, and that new ways of communicating take practice. As we become more interculturally competent, we'll all make mistakes and feel clumsy at times. These are opportunities to learn, not shut down. Our congregation welcomes learners in this vital area. If you want to pursue this particular subject, consider visiting the White Allies group that meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month at church. We hope you will sustain the optimism our covenant calls us to hold for moving forward together.

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

## MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



## Planned Parenthood

On February 14, congregants will have an opportunity to support our local Planned Parenthood clinics with our monthly special offering. In 2014 alone, nearly 19,000 women, men and young people received critical healthcare including clinical breast exams, cervical cancer screenings, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, HIV testing, birth control, and wellness exams at Planned Parenthood's three Travis County health centers. Planned Parenthood also provides trusted, non-judgmental health education to more than 3,000 teens and young adults in Austin each year. Most of Planned Parenthood's patients are uninsured or underinsured, live paycheck to paycheck, and pay out of pocket for healthcare. Here is what one Planned Parenthood patient shared: "I am a single mom and this helped pay for my women's health exam today. I work really hard but it is still hard to make ends meet. My health needs are usually the last to be addressed. Thank you so very much."

Texas politics have targeted women's healthcare in recent years resulting in a shredded healthcare safety net and dismantled family planning program. Statewide, at least 76 health centers – including Planned Parenthood health centers and non-Planned Parenthood health centers—have closed or stopped providing vital preventive women's health services since the defunding efforts began. Texas' controversial abortion restrictions caused additional health clinics to close, and today many Texans

must travel hundreds of miles to access safe, legal abortion. The Texas Legislature recently eliminated federal funding for breast and cervical cancer screening and HIV testing at Planned Parenthood health centers. As one patient shared, "Planned Parenthood helped me when I could not get in anywhere else for breast cancer treatment—no one else would help me. They sent me for a mammogram, a sonogram, and biopsies and the surgeon said I needed to start chemo immediately. I was at stage three. I'm now cancer-free and going back to work part-time soon. I don't know where I'd be without Planned Parenthood."

Today, Planned Parenthood and ten Medicaid patients have filed suit against the State of Texas to protect Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood patients, including lifesaving, essential preventive care such as clinical breast exams, cervical cancer screenings and birth control.

Donations enable Planned Parenthood to continue to provide essential healthcare and education services to the Austin community, no matter what. In further support of UU values to provide healthcare without discrimination, Planned Parenthood is a trusted resource for confidential, non-judgmental healthcare within the LGBTQ community.

*Monthly Special Offerings are done every second Sunday of the month at worship services. All groups supported by MSOs receive a check at the end of the year, with the total of the 12 monthly donations divided equally.*

### Austin Presence Group

**February 4 & 18**  
**Room 13B**  
**6:30–8 p.m.**

Each month we discuss a chapter from "The Power of Now." Then we may tune in to an Eckhart Tolle video. A \$5 donation is requested in order to support the church. Visit us at [www.meetup.com/AustinPresence](http://www.meetup.com/AustinPresence).

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

### People's Community Clinic Collating Group

**Monday, February 1**  
**2909 N. IH-35**  
**9:30 a.m.**

We'll gather for our next meeting in the second floor conference room at the clinic. We are happy to welcome anyone with willing hands to join us for some work and conversation. The job is usually done by noon, and those who are able get lunch afterward. For more information, contact [pcc@austinuu.org](mailto:pcc@austinuu.org).



# *Do you love the beautiful Sunday flowers?*

The beautiful flower arrangements you enjoy in the sanctuary on Sundays are provided by member donations, and created by fellow member and florist Rebecca Frazier-Smith of Bella Fiori. If you're interested in making a donation for a Sunday service flower arrangement, signing up is easy. And did we mention you can take the arrangement home after second service?

Just stop by the flower bulletin board located near the welcome center. Review the calendar and select a date. Pick up a flower reservation form, and submit a completed form with a \$50 donation to Andrea B. Sosa. The form allows you to put down what or for whom you would like to make the donation for. Your kind donation will be mentioned in the order of service. Forms can be submitted to Andrea by mail or through the office drop box.

Can't make it by the board? No problem! Email Andrea at [flowers@austinuu.org](mailto:flowers@austinuu.org) to check for open dates, request a form, or get additional information.

*Photos courtesy of Rebecca Frazier-Smith.*







## The perfect Valentine's date!

Two performances only Valentine's weekend

**Sat, Feb. 13, 8 p.m. &  
Sun, Feb. 14, 3 p.m.**  
**Howson Hall**

Uh-oh amore! Paradox Players is presenting "Fractured Tales from Cupid's Files" for one weekend only. In this collection of short plays, we peer into the lives of several very different couples and celebrate "relationships" in all their

quirky glory! Performed in Readers' Theater style, similar to old-time radio shows with actors reading from scripts. Playwrights include Christopher Durang, Elaine Jarvik, Barbara Lindsay, Romulus Linney, Jacquelyn Reingold, Lanford Wilson and our very own Paullette MacDougal.

Tickets: \$15 general, \$10 for students and seniors. Reservations: call (512) 744-1495, or visit [www.paradoxplayers.org](http://www.paradoxplayers.org).

### Young Adults Group events

Join the young adults (ages 18–35) for upcoming meetings. Email [youngadults@austinuu.org](mailto:youngadults@austinuu.org) for more details and group info. We also organize monthly brunches after second service; email us or see orders of service for updates. Meetings are typically from 7–9 p.m. with some adjustments for outings.

**Thurs, Feb. 4:** Join the young adults for potluck, planning for spring, and game night. Check next month's newsletter for future events!

## DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

### Heart of Texas Cluster Leadership Series, Feb. 6

A one-day workshop on topics from Dwight Brown Leadership Experience. Southern Region Congregational Life Staff Natalie Briscoe will present on governance, power and authority, growth, change, church size theory. Hosted by the First UU Church of San Antonio, from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Includes lunch. Link to registration at <http://bit.ly/HoTLS>.

### Southwest UU Women's (SWUW) Conference Feb 26–28

Gather with your UU sisters in Lawton, OK, for this annual conference sponsored by SWUW. Enjoy the keynote and musical talent we've assembled, and explore your own talents through excellent quality workshops and worship experiences. More infor-

mation at [www.swuuw.org](http://www.swuuw.org).

### Save the Date!

- **April 9:** Southwest Spring Conference, "Differences that Make a Difference: Multicultural Justice Making Inside and Out;" Wildflower UU Church, Austin, TX. More info at [www.uuasouthernregion.org/swspring2016.html](http://www.uuasouthernregion.org/swspring2016.html).
- **April 29–May 1:** Deep in the Heart Women's Retreat; UBarU Camp & Retreat Center, Kerrville, TX.
- **May 6–8:** Heart of Texas Men's Retreat; UBarU Camp & Retreat Center, Kerrville, TX

### Carpool Opportunities

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

### People Of Color Brunch

We host informative discussion, exciting field trips, and perceptive social support for people that identify as POCs (person of color, Latina/o, bi-cultural, or multicultural).

**Sun, Feb. 14:** No meeting

**Sun, Feb. 28:** Angie's Mexican Restaurant (1307 E. 7<sup>th</sup>), 12:30 p.m. We'll meet in the gallery then head out. If you haven't eaten at this East Austin institution before, you're in for a treat. None of the kitschy decor makes any sense together, but this adds to the "I must be at someone's grandma's house..." feel of the place. The food also tastes like real abuelita home cooking!

**Eclectic Folk Jam***Friday, February 12**Rm. 17**7–10 p.m.*

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

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

**UU/Quaker Singalong***Saturday, February 27**Friends Meeting House  
(3701 E. MLK Blvd.)**7:30–10:30 p.m.*

Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing. Copies of “Rise Up Singing” are provided. This is an alcohol-free event, round-robin format, held on the fourth Saturday of every month.

Contact Larry Vaughn at (512) 469-0029 or Mary Jane Ford at (512) 926-4122 or [singalong@austinuu.org](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org).

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

**FEBRUARY 7****Respecting the Fire**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

We all feel anger from time to time. What good does it do? Is it always harmful? How do we handle it when it burns through us?

**FEBRUARY 14****So Many Songs About Love**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

What kinds of love are there? What makes love good? How do you know if you love someone? How can we get better at love?

**FEBRUARY 20****We Gather: Another Kind of Worship**

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

**FEBRUARY 21****What's the Difference?**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

When did the Protestants split from the Catholics and why? What are the differences now? Where does Unitarian Universalism fit into this history?

**FEBRUARY 28****Courage**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

“Courage: To live lives of honesty, vulnerability, and beauty.” In this next in a series of sermons on our church’s religious values, Rev. Chris will explore our religious value of courage. How we live courageously and why would we want to do so?

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

## FEBRUARY 7

### The Shifting Death Penalty Landscape

WITH KRISTIN HOULÉ

The death penalty landscape is shifting rapidly in Texas and nationwide, as executions and death sentences decline and as the chorus of voices raising concerns about the criminal justice system continues to grow louder. Learn what recent developments may portend for the future of the death penalty and how you can become involved in local efforts to end its use.

Kristin Houlé has served as Executive Director of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty since December 2008. As a Soros Justice Fellow from 2007–2008, she conducted research and public education around the intersection of the death penalty and severe mental illness in Texas. Kristin served for five years as the Program Associate for Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty in Washington, DC.

## FEBRUARY 14

### Gun Sense

WITH ED SCRUGGS & ANDREA BRAUER

Texas Gun Sense Executive Director Andrea Brauer and board member Ed Scruggs will speak about the organization and its role in gun violence prevention in Texas. They will discuss the new open carry and campus carry laws, and the start of the Texas Coalition to Reduce Gun Violence. They will also share some gun violence facts and information about Texas gun laws. Finally, they will suggest ways that people can get involved and make a difference with this movement.

Scruggs is 25-year Austin resident, former radio reporter, research auditor and city council candidate who currently serves on the volunteer board of Texas Gun Sense, a nonprofit that seeks to promote sensible gun violence prevention policies. He is a long-time activist

and political organizer. Shortly after the tragedy at New Town, Ed helped lead a successful, year-long effort to remove an established gun show from the Travis County Expo Center. Currently, Ed is involved with a statewide volunteer effort to educate businesses on their legal rights to restrict the open carry of handguns.

Brauer has a history working in public policy, spending six years working for the Texas Legislature, helping to improve state agency functioning and crafting bills to enhance services for children and families in Texas. She has also worked for several nonprofits, and has a background in coalition building and project management. She has a B.A. in political science from Loyola University Chicago, and a Master's in social welfare from the University of California, Los Angeles.

## FEBRUARY 21

### Workers Defense Project

WITH BRIGID HALL

The Workers Defense Project (WDP) is a membership-based organization that empowers low-income workers to achieve fair employment through education, direct services, organizing, and strategic partnerships. Since its founding in 2002, WDP has focused its organizing efforts on the construction industry in Texas and, alongside its members, has won major victories, earning the organization national recognition from the New York Times as “one of the most creative organizations for immigrant workers.” Because of its work, Workers Defense Project has improved working conditions for hundreds of thousands of low-wage workers in Texas and in other states, and it has emerged as one of few organizations able to make real, systemic change in the right-to-work states of the American South.

Brigid Hall is the Associate Director of Workers Defense Project. At WDP, Hall spearheaded the organization's first non-partisan Get Out The Vote effort and oversaw fundraising, leading to nearly 52 percent growth in budget over a three-year period. Hall has

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**First Unitarian  
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(512) 452-6168

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

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## THE FORUM, *continued*

over a decade of experience with non-profit organizations. Originally from California, Hall has been in Austin since 2011.

### **FEBRUARY 28** **Inmate Rights, Prison Grievances: A Novel Approach**

WITH TERRI LECLERCQ

Terri LeClercq, professor of legal writing, will describe her work teaching prison inmates how to assert their civil rights in prison by effective writing of their grievances. She will focus on the concept, design, and reception of her

book on this topic, which was written in the style of a graphic novel offering inmates accessible and entertaining instruction in legal writing. Her book has gained favor not only with inmates but also with enlightened prison authorities and judges interested in proper handling of grievances.

Dr. LeClercq holds a Ph.D. in American Literature from The University of Texas at Austin and spent many years on both the English faculty and the faculty of the UT Law School. LeClercq also has contributed her efforts to the Texas Civil Rights Project, which provides lawyers to advocate prisoners' civil rights. ■