



FIRST UU NEWS

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

What do we want to build upon?

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



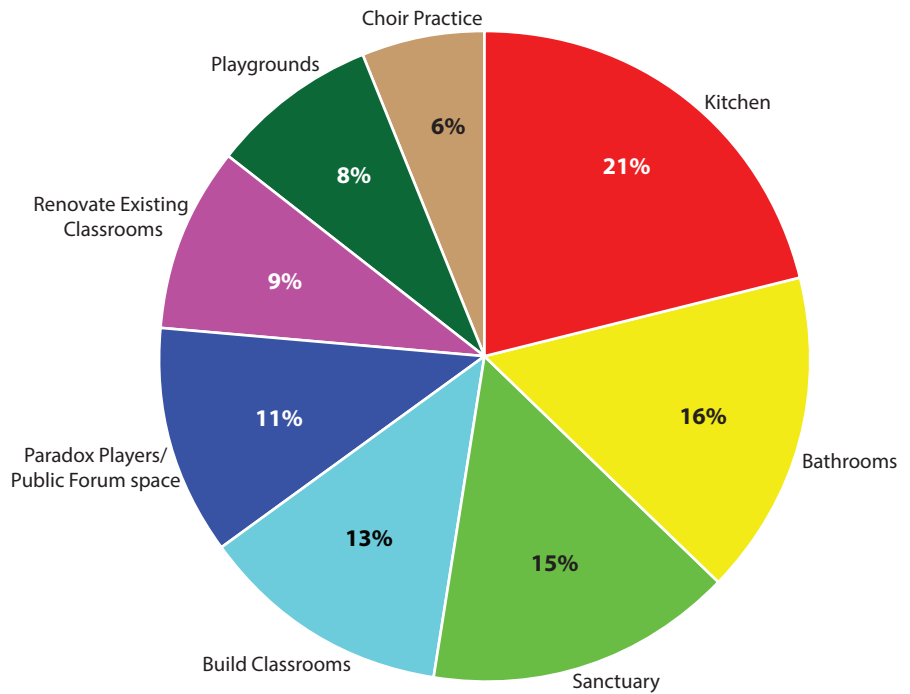
Several of you have requested that I share the results from our Town Hall Meetings on building priorities with you. Here are your results!

I'm getting a new knee for Christmas. I had my left one replaced in Princeton several years ago, and I've put the right one off as long as possible. Kiya will be taking good care of me, and we will ask for help from the many of you who have offered. The office will have her phone number if you want to give her a call.

I'm hoping everything will go smoothly, and that all the physical therapy will get me up to speed in a few weeks. I'm taking the month of January off, with a combination of sick leave and vacation, and First UU will be in the capable hands of my assistant ministers, the board president, and our capable office staff.

I will see you on February 2 at the Animal Blessing Service! ■

Building Priorities of Congregants from Town Hall Meetings
(in percentages)



Data based on total vote ranking points from Town Hall Meetings of November 14-16 and December 7.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Revisiting our values for the new year

by **Carolyn Gremminger**



Happy New Year! Here's hoping 2015 is getting off to a good start for you and yours!

On Dec. 14, the Congregational Meeting was held. We now have 621 members officially on our rolls. Thanks to the 76 members that showed up for the meeting during prime holiday party and shopping time! We voted in our budget for the coming year and also voted to ordain Chris Jimmerson. See the next page for ordination and celebration info. We also submitted ballots for the 2015 Second Sunday Special offering recipients; see page 9 for results.

At this meeting, Rev. Meg also discussed the historic year we experienced together as we mark our 60th anniversary as a congregation. It was encouraging to hear her list our accomplishments in the areas of social justice, the arts, religious education and other areas. We also enjoyed hearing a review of the capital campaign's progress.

The annual Christmas pageant that took place earlier during the worship service was better than ever! Thanks to all involved in putting this

service together.

Each year at this time, I make it a spiritual practice to engage in soul searching and reflection. It's worthwhile to be reminded of the specific end statements that our church community adopted in 2010. These statements help me to stay grounded. They serve as a guide to my actions and decisions as a church member and leader. I aspire to live up to the standard that they set. Here are our church's end statements.

First UU is an intentionally hospitable community where:

- All people are treated with respect and dignity
- All people of good will are welcomed
- People are supported in times of joy and need
- People find connection with one another in fellowship
- We are fully engaged and generous with time, treasure and talent
- We invite people of good will to find a spiritual home with us
- We engage as UUs in public life

First UU Church of Austin nourishes souls and transforms

lives by:

- Engaging and supporting one another in spiritual practice and growth
- Providing worship, programs and activities that awaken meaning and transcendence
- Providing a caring, supportive and safe place to rekindle the spirit

First UU witnesses to justice in our personal lives and beyond, by:

- Practicing liberal religious values in the public arena
- Empowering all people to access the richness of life
- Providing leadership to the greater UUA community to expand the reach of our movement
- Partnering with the interfaith community to live our shared values.

Do you have some feedback or questions for the board? You can visit with us at the F.R.E.D. dinner on the first Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. The monthly board meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month in the gallery and visitors are welcome. ■

Ordination Service and Celebration

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin invites you to the ordination of

Christopher James Jimmerson
to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry

Sunday, February 22, 2015 | 6:00 p.m.

Dinner and reception immediately following. Religious professional are invited to gather at 5:15 to robe and process.

Childcare provided. Please send an email to childcare@austinuu.org to reserve.

Please RSVP to CJJordination@gmail.com.



Music Matters

The First UU of Austin Intergenerational Choir Makes a Joyful Noise to Benefit Drive A Senior

On December 5, the First UU of Austin Intergenerational Choir and Band participated in an ecumenical holiday concert with twelve other area churches. The choir's rendition of John Lennon's "Happy Xmas (War is Over)" moved many audience members to tears. The performance was made all the more moving by the presence of our congregation's youngest singers from the Youth and Children's Choirs.

This event is the largest annual fundraiser for Drive A Senior (formerly North Central Caregivers), and it was exciting for our church to play a part!

New Year's Resolution: MORE SINGING!

The new year is upon us, and what better time to add more music to your life?

The First UU Adult Choir is a non-auditioned group that takes on a wide variety of music. Rehearsals for the new year begin on Wednesday, January 14, and run each week on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. (Childcare is available!)

The First UU Children's Choir (grades K-3) and Youth Choir (grades 4-8) rehearsals begin on January 11. These spiritually-enhancing singing sessions run 9:30 to 10:40 a.m. for families attending first service, and 10:00 to 10:40 a.m. for families attending second service. Both ensembles are led by accredited and experienced experts in music education, and they're a lot of fun, too! Come be a part of this dynamic group of young singers!

Questions about musical opportunities at First UU of Austin? Contact Director of Music Brent Baldwin at brent.baldwin@austinuu.org.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Step up to the plate of leadership!

How, exactly, do we nourish souls, transform lives, and do justice? One way is through service as church leaders on the board and various committees. Service as a board trustee or committee chair is an opportunity to lead people, and change their lives. And inevitably, the impact on the leader is also great: we get what we give. Michelle Obama said, "Service is a limitless opportunity, it is the reason why we breathe."

In February, we'll hear stories from several individuals who have served in leadership positions, and how their lives were impacted by their very own service. These stories will invite us all to consider how the

act of leading enables us to grow as individuals while making connections with fellow members.

These "Leadership Moments" during Sunday services are timed to help alert church members to the opportunity for service, and to help the Nominating Committee to identify new leaders to fill critical positions on the board and committees. This year, we are seeking candidates for four board positions that open up in May. And the Executive Team (including the minister) is charged with finding talented people to serve in church committees such as Social Action, Religious Education, and Fellowship. There are plenty of op-

portunities for everyone.

Do you feel the pull of leadership? Do you have some special talents that you'd like to offer? There are many ways to lead within our community, and it's easy to learn what that entails! You can visit the gallery leadership table after services and discover large and small opportunities to lend a hand. Talk to any member of the Nominating Committee or Executive Team to express an interest. Or shoot us an email: nomcom@austinuu.org. Someone will get back to you promptly.

Let us help you find a place within our community so you can start your own leadership story!

Have you come out to the Senior Luncheon yet?

Wednesday, January 4
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

Once a month during the academic year, First UU seniors (most are seniors, but we really don't ask your age) gather in Howson Hall to share a meal and have some sort of entertainment. The primary purpose of the group is to socialize with other people your age and to just plain have fun! The lunches are held on the second Wednesday of each month September through June, starting at noon and generally finishing by 1:15.

The light lunch includes a tasty homemade soup, made by our own

Kami Cornell, a creative tossed salad with lots of goodies in it, and fresh homemade cheese biscuits hot from the oven made by Phil Richardson. Dessert is usually homemade/store-bought cookies with coffee. The cost is \$5.00/head and reservations are encouraged, but not necessary. Contact Alice Cashman at (512) 837-0988.

Our upcoming January program will be a brief talk and demonstration featuring a form of Tai Chi that is extremely well suited for practice by seniors. The program will be facilitated by Wayne Key, who has been teaching Tai Chi to seniors for many years here in Austin. This program

concentrates on body awareness, balance, and relief of joint pain.

Several of our past programs have been musical, with a sing-along featuring our own Katherine Govier and baritone Charles Palmer. In December, a ten-piece polka band played many holidays songs and familiar old favorites we all know. We've also had poetry and short story readings, along with samples of the Paradox Players presentations.

This activity has no outreach, no community service, no boring committee meetings, just is a chance to get together, share food and conversation and have a pleasant social experience. Do join us in January.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Introduce yourself at New Member Recognition Ceremony

**Sunday, January 18
Sanctuary**

The quarterly New Member Recognition ceremony is coming up at both Sunday services on January 18. If you signed the membership book this year and haven't been able to participate in a New Member Recognition ceremony yet, this would be a nice way for you to be introduced to and received by the congregation.

Participation is simple and of course

optional. During this ceremony you will be asked to come forward and join Reverend Meg at the front of the church, where you will briefly introduce yourselves to the congregation, and a short litany is read. (Bring a copy of that day's bulletin up with you so you can read the litany).

If you would like to participate, just show up! Wear your "New Member" ribbon (extras may be found on the name-tag table).

Help new members get connected at First UU!

First UU is currently growing by about 100 members a year. To help new members get connected, First UU has a "compadre" program through which new members are matched up with more established members who can help them get connected in the church. Right now we need to grow our pool of compadres (formerly called mentors) as we prepare to welcome an expected 20-25 new members this month.

The role of a compadre is to help a new member/new family feel welcomed and integrated into the congregation. Compadres can help new members get connected in various ways, such

as visiting with them in Howson Hall after services and introducing them to other members; inviting them to church group meetings and events; calling them every other week or so to see how they're doing, if they are missed at church; or whatever is worked out between the new member(s) and compadre, according to the new member's needs and interests. We hope for roughly a three-month commitment, though that's flexible.

If you're interested in learning more, please get in touch with Kelsey at membership@austinuu.org; call her at (512) 452-6168 ext. 313; or talk to her at the visitor table on Sundays.

"Path to Membership" class

**Saturday, January 10
9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Howson Hall

Breakfast and childcare provided. This quarterly class is designed for those interested in becoming members. Learn about the responsibilities of membership and First UU covenant; 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 as soon as possible to membership@austinuu.org or with Kelsey at the visitor table, so we can get an accurate headcount for food and childcare.

"Getting to Know UU" class

**Sunday, February 1
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.

TEXAS UU JUSTICE MINISTRY

Host Texas UUs for Legislative Action Day

If you have an extra room and wouldn't mind offering a bed to a UU coming to Austin for the Texas UU Justice Ministry Legislative Action Day on Tues. Jan. 20, we want to hear from you. We could also use help with hospitality that day at the Capitol.

Those traveling here may want to stay the night before or after our action day and would come to us as active social justice leaders from a variety of UU congregations around the state. To express interest or get more info, email Peggy at socialaction@austinuu.org.

Chris Jimmerson's ordination needs your assistance!

The evening of Sunday, February 22 will be Chris Jimmerson's ordination (see pg. 3), and we are looking for volunteers to help with this event. Let Gillian Redfearn know if you are available to help. She can be reached at gigi7844241@gmail.com or (512) 784-4241. Thanks much!

Plan to advocate UU values at the Capitol

**Legislative Action Day
Tuesday, January 20
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**

Interested UUs may sign up to join us for our Texas UU Justice Ministry Legislative Action Day Tuesday, Jan. 20 to promote UU values with legislators as they kick off the 2015 session.

Those who want to attend must sign up by Saturday, Jan. 10 on the evite at <http://tinyurl.com/lhp7xwk>.

Advocacy training will be provided starting at 8:30 a.m. at the Capitol in room E2.026, then we'll visit with

legislators in their offices in pre-arranged meetings to promote our main issues: women's reproductive justice, Medicaid expansion, and economic justice. Finally we'll reconvene as a group to debrief our day and plan next steps, as we'll continue to work with legislators throughout the session.

Pre-training will also be available at the next Action for Justice meeting, Monday, Jan. 12 (see page 7). For more info, visit us at the Social Action table in the gallery after one of the Sunday worship services or email Peggy at socialaction@austinuu.org.

PARADOX



"Love Letters" from Paradox Players!

by Gary Payne, creative director

Our Valentine's Day show, running February 6 to 22, will be A. R. Gurney's delightful and touching "Love Letters." This two-person charmer is done as a staged reading on a bare stage. Three sets of actors have been cast, with a different couple performing each weekend of the run. Several in the cast are your fellow First UU members or friends of the church.

The show will open on Friday, February 6. Following each Friday performance, we will have a reception including refreshments with that week's cast in the gallery. These receptions will be in lieu of our traditional gala reception on opening night.

We hope you will make plans early to see this delightful Valentine's bouquet.

ACTION FOR JUSTICE**NARAL Pro-Choice expert to coach
UUs in reproductive justice advocacy****Monday, January 12****Rm. 13****7-8:30 p.m.**

Action for Justice is proud to host Heather Busby, executive director and attorney with NARAL Pro-Choice Texas (NPCT) at their January meeting. We will be offering training to UUs and friends interested in getting politically active for health and reproductive justice.

Busby will share what to expect with the 2015 legislative session, which starts the following day. This training will be a good opportunity to learn how to stay on top of anticipated issues, which legislators will debate during the session. She'll also update us on how to join the effort to advocate by phone or in person, either signing up in favor of or opposing bills that presented during hearings. Those who want to testify before committee hearings will also learn the ins and outs of speaking up about UU values publicly.

Heather joined NPCT in November 2012 after working as an Assistant Travis County Attorney, procuring protective orders for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. While

studying for her J.D. from South Texas College of Law in Houston, she earned the LBJ Civil Rights Award for her work helping victims of human trafficking while interning at the South Texas Civil Rights Project.

NPCT foresees a day when every person in Texas can access the full range of affordable and timely reproductive health options, and have those decisions honored and supported by their communities. Additionally, its diversity policy states it is committed to using the political process to guarantee every Texan the right to make personal reproductive health decisions and to guarantee access to the full range of options, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and accessing legal abortion.

The Monday, Jan. 12 Action for Justice meeting has been moved to the second Monday of January rather than its usual third Monday, since members will be gearing up for the first ever Texas UU Justice Ministry Legislative Action Day. (Read more about that event on page 6.)

For more info about Action for Justice, email justice@austinuu.org.

**Church Grounds
Work Day****Saturday, January 10
9 a.m.**

Start the new year off right with this opportunity to be social, do good deeds, enjoy the outdoors, and work off pounds left over from 2014. Members from the Men's Breakfast are encouraged to join us late.

We will do some weeding, trim shrubs and perennials, and perhaps mulch. Bring gloves, hat, sunscreen, water bottles, and dress in layers for the weather. Rain date is the following Sat. Jan. 17.

**Yew Grove Full
Moon Ritual****Sunday, January 4
Gallery
7-8:30 p.m.**

Join us for the first full moon ritual of 2015. We will plan to meet indoors and talk about "I Have a Dream," the place of dreaming in our lives and how we can or cannot manifest those dreams into the waking world. Bring a dream you have had or one that you wish you had, and let's honor Dr. King and his dreams for all of us.

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING

Casa Marianella: building community

Casa Marianella serves recent immigrants, refugees, and asylees in Austin. Their main shelter provides emergency transitional housing for people who have become homeless, and their second shelter, Posada Esperanza, is a place to stay for women and children who are escaping domestic violence. Each shelter is made up of three houses in East Austin, but temporary housing is only the beginning of the services that they provide.

I volunteer weekly at Posada Esperanza, and what I love most about being there is the sense of community. This is particularly notable because of how it stays strong even as residents move in and out of the shelter. Part of it is the staff, who keep up with who is home, where they are in their job search, and what sorts

of support they might offer. In just the past few months, I've seen them throw a baby shower for a new mom, recruit volunteers to drive students home from after-school tutoring, accompany residents to the farmers' market, and tell stories with students after they finish their homework. Another part of the strong community is the residents. They keep up with one another, too, and support each other through sharing stories, tips, meals, or childcare responsibilities.

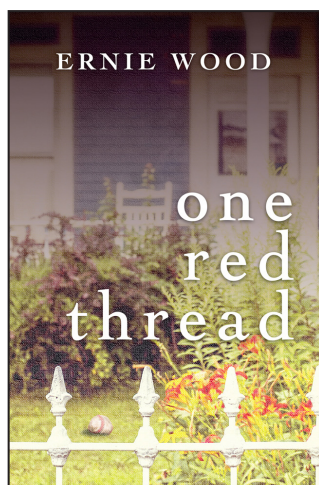
Residents typically stay at Casa Marianella and Posada Esperanza for just about three months, but former residents often refer back to just how much that time meant to them. And the final part of that community is the support from outside volunteers and organizations. This includes the volunteers who help students with

homework and residents with job applications, the professional connections to counselors, lawyers, and clinics who can offer much needed services, and the individuals and groups like First UU who help sustain the organization financially.

This congregation has supported Casa Marianella's work in the past through special offerings, as well as direct volunteer work. Please consider a donation to support their great services, and visit their website at www.casamarianella.org to find out how you can stay involved throughout the year.

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.

First UU author to have book reading in January



Monday, January 5
BookPeople (603 N. Lamar)
7 p.m.

Church member Ernie Wood will be reading and signing his new novel "One Red Thread" at BookPeople this month.

A tale of time travel and its consequences—and of coming to grips with new knowledge of old family history—"One Red Thread" is "about memory, the past, and the desire to make things right," as

described in the review by Library Journal (<http://bit.ly/1J9e6po>). The Austin American-Statesman (<http://bit.ly/1J9eGmR>) writes: "Wood has an easy style and knows how to unravel a complicated tale that keeps your interest."

Ernie will be reading and signing "One Red Thread" with another author from their publisher Tyrus Books, Tracy Manaster of Portland, OR, who will present her comic novel, "You Could Be Home By Now."

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Monthly Service Offering results are in!

Healthcare for women and families resonated with First UU church members as they voted for ten nonprofit social justice organizations to receive money from special collections in 2015. They also showed their support for the elderly, immigrants, children and prisoners.

For the second year in a row Safe Place, Planned Parenthood, and People's Community Clinic earned the most votes out to the 120 church members who cast ballots on Sunday, December 14.

Casa Marianella, which helps new immigrants transition into life in the US to learn English and find jobs and housing, placed fourth,

and Drive A Senior, which helps the elderly stay in their own homes, took fifth.

Inside Books was the lone newcomer, as voters showed a concern that Texas continues to cut prison education programs and libraries. Inside Books' mission is to send books to Texas prisoners. "The books provide an opportunity to study, read, grow and let their minds and spirits soar beyond the prison walls," nominators Beki & Richard Halpin said. The Halpins will continue collecting book donations at First UU as they have for the last two years, and the Monthly Special Offering will help the group pay for

postage, packaging, and new books.

Other groups to receive financial support from First UU include: Austin Child Guidance Center, U-Bar-U, Hands on Housing, and the UU Service Committee.

With 21 worthy groups getting nominated by church members, it was tough to choose only 10. Two social justice recipients for special collections will be named by the Spring Into Action church-wide project committee, and the Summer Religious Education Department. Those will be announced at a later date.

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC

The Collating Group meeting day has changed

Monday, January 12
2909 IH-35
9:30 a.m.

A new year is beginning and the staff and clients at People's Community Clinic send their thanks and appreciation to all our UU volunteers who have given their time and talents to assist the work of the clinic.

During the past year our "mostly-the-second-Tuesday-of-the-month" group has been moved around quite a bit due to space restrictions at the clinic's present 17,000 square-foot building. Having only one room that can be used by a group makes it difficult to schedule events. The good news is that PCC will be moving to

a new building at 1101 Camino La Costa which will be 54,000 square-feet, hopefully by the end of 2015. The new building will allow for more exam and meeting rooms, and staff offices. That will enable PCC to double its patient capacity, providing approximately 10,000 more underserved and uninsured Central Texans access to medical care.

More good news for the clinic is that they've been awarded a grant to continue offering Happy Kitchen/Cocina Alegre classes each week through 2015. Because of this, we have been asked to move our usual second-Tuesday-of-the-month work day to the second Monday of the month due to scheduling conflicts.

We know that many of our volunteers have busy schedules. Our hope is that you will be able to accommodate this change. When the clinic is in its new home we will re-work the schedule to suit most of our volunteers' needs. Until then, the collating group hopes to see any of you who can make it to the clinic in the second floor conference room at our next meeting. We will still be the same visit-while-you-work group and those who are able will go to lunch afterwards.

For more PCC information, check their website at www.austinpcc.org. For information about the church's efforts with PCC, contact us at pcc@austinuu.org.

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister

**Return Guest at Your Table Donations**

If your household participated in Guest at Your Table, the annual fundraiser of the UU Service Committee, please do return your contributions to the Lifespan Religious Education table in the gallery no

later than January 4.

Can't make it to F.R.E.D. nights on Wednesdays? Try Sunday Seminars! Jan. 4, Howson Hall, 1-2:30 p.m.

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

Spiritual Practices Track: "Transformation Through Mindful Journaling," facilitated by Leena Batra

By developing self-compassion and releasing sabotaging negative self-talk, mindful journaling can help you to live life more fully in the present. Create your personal mindful journaling practice, and celebrate your amazing self!

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

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

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

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

F.R.E.D. Nights Every Wednesday, dinner 6-7 p.m. (\$6)

Join us for F.R.E.D. (Fellowship, Religious Education, and Dinner) every Wednesday. (In observance of Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, F.R.E.D. is cancelled on Wed. December 24 and 31)

"What We Choose: Ethics for Unitarian Universalists," facilitated by Dr. Andy Gerhart Alternating Wednesdays, Nov. 12

(no class on Nov. 26)

7-9 p.m. \$15 registration fee

We are regularly faced with moral choices, big and small. How should we respond to a tricky family or relationship situation? What is the right thing to do when faced with a dilemma at work? What is the most ethical course for a community, state, or nation to follow, and how much am I prepared to invest in advocating for that course? How does morality or ethics enter my food and eating choices? How should morality or ethics enter my consumer decisions? How do we treat others? What must I do to follow the values of my Unitarian Universalist faith tradition? (uua.org) Childcare provided.

"Reclaiming Prophetic Witness" Group Book Reading Alternating Wednesdays Jan. 7, 21, and Feb. 4 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Do you believe there is a vital public role for religious

people to play in the public square? Do you believe that this role belongs exclusively to religious conservatives? How might religious liberals embrace that role? How might we use our own religious language to make prophetic witness? Or should we?

Each year since 2010 the UUA has selected a Common Read. A Common Read invites participants to read and discuss the same book in a given period of time. A committee selects the UU Common Read based on nominations from UUs across the country.

The Common Read for 2015 is “Reclaiming Prophetic Witness,” by Paul Rabor. You are invited to join in the discussion of this book on F.R.E.D. nights beginning January 7. As Texas gears up for another legislative session, this is a perfect opportunity to give us the framework for exploring together how we might embrace our mission and our end related to practicing our liberal religious values in the public arena. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at our bookstore.

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

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

Passionate About Comprehensive Sex Education?

Consider becoming a certified OWL facilitator! Our Whole Lives is a nationally renowned, comprehensive sex education curriculum that emphasizes healthy interpersonal relationships. OWL is available in levels from Kindergarten through adulthood. First UU is planning to offer OWL once again during the spring semester.

We need awesome adults to help fill in the information gaps that our schools often leave in our youth. First UU Church of Austin is proud to be hosting a junior and senior high-level facilitators’ training for the Central Texas area, Jan. 16-18. Registration is \$225 for this valuable training, and First UU will gladly subsidize that cost for anyone interested who would like to become a certified facilitator. Get more info and find a link to sign up at our website: austinuu.org/wp2013/?p=16117.

Want to be in the loop with Children and Youth Religious Education?

Stop by the Lifespan RE table in the gallery and give us your email address so that we can invite you to the First UU of Austin Parents’ Facebook group.

Chalice Circles Open Registration, Dec. 7-Jan. 11

Did you miss your opportunity to enroll in our small group ministry program everyone raves about? You have a second chance! Stop by the Lifespan RE table in the gallery to pick up a registration form. We will be adding new members to existing Chalice Circles in February. Chalice Circles meet through the end of June.

Be a 2015 Surprise Pal!

Consider becoming a Surprise Pal this year! Surprise Pals is an annual project that provides opportunities for the development of intergenerational connections.

Here’s how it works: interested adult church members submit to a background check and are paired with a child in our congregation to exchange letters and small, meaningful gifts over the course of several weeks. The adult “surprise pal” and the parents of the child are aware of the pairing, but the identity of their “surprise pal” is not revealed to the kid until a party that ends the project and allows for face-to-face conversation and laughs! This project introduces the children of our congregation to trusted adults within their church community whom they might not otherwise meet.

The project will run from Feb. 15 to March 22 this year. If you are an adult interested in being a child’s “surprise pal,” visit the Lifespan RE table in the gallery during the month of January to sign up.

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Lifespan RE news continued from page 11

New Spring Semester Curricula!

Pre-K, “Celebrating Me and My World”

By Debora Chandler Pratt

This full-year curriculum celebrates the wondrous qualities of children and the animals, objects, and people around them. Provides preschoolers with experiences and opportunities to grow in trust and caring and to develop their self-identity and sense of connectedness with all of life. (www.rec-room.org)

K-1st Grade, “Love Surrounds Us”

This program explores all the Principles in the context of Beloved Community of family/home, school, neighborhood. Children engage in activities that emphasize the love they feel in community.

2nd-3rd Grade, “Love Will Guide Us”

In this program, children learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as, “Where did we come from?” “What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?” “How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?” “What happens when you die?” Children will learn that asking questions is

valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.

4th-5th Grade, “Love Connects Us”

“Love Connects Us” celebrates important ways Unitarian Universalists live our faith in covenanted community. Moved by love and gathered in spirit, we encourage the children to embrace responsibility toward one another and the world at large. We encourage one another’s search for truth and meaning and strive to be active in peace-making and other efforts to improve our world.

Jr. Youth Group, “Popcorn Theology”

This curriculum uses clips from both recent and classic Hollywood movies to discuss theological and ethical issues with middle schoolers, while relating the material to UU identity and community involvement. Themes include: personal ethical agency, oppression, power and responsibility, and fear.

Sr. Youth Group, “Our Modern Family”

Our Modern Family uses the award-winning TV show, “Modern Family,” to discuss civil rights, family dynamics, and social justice issues. With contemporary issues of gay marriage at the forefront of our social action efforts, this workshop series allows youth to deepen their understanding of 21st century civil rights movements. ■

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

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

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

justice. Registration is now open! Sign up and get more info at www.uulivinglegacy.org. The church has some money to help with the cost as needed, contact Rev. Meg.

“Our Sacred Springs” Southwest UU Women’s (SWUW) Conference, March 6-8

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

Save The Date!

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

Carpool Opportunities

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

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant:

I like to think of myself as an open-minded UU, but spending time with my fundamentalist Christian cousins over the holidays really shook me up. There are many good things about Christianity, but my cousins believe that evolution is a story and isn't true. How can I listen to such statements and speak up without creating an unpleasant situation?

— *Concerned Family Member*

Dear Concerned:

Holidays with family can bring up touchy issues. As UUs, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. We respect the person, even if we don't respect or support their beliefs. There are many creation stories and each person believes their creation story as strongly as you believe yours.

As for practical advice, remember that you have no control over others' beliefs

or behaviors, only your own. The next time the topic comes up, you can speak your truth. Because you want to maintain pleasant relations with your cousins, you must find a way to speak your truth in a loving and respectful manner. For example, you might say, "I love you and I'm glad that we're in the same family. And I believe differently about evolution than you do. If you are ever curious, I'll be happy to discuss it with you." This phrasing reinforces the relationship, uses "I" language, and leaves the choice with them.

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

Austin Presence Group

**Jan. 8 & 22
6:30-8 p.m.
Rm. 13B**

Usually we meet the first and third Thursdays, but since the first Thursday in January is New Year's Day, we'll be meeting the second and fourth Thursday. Each week we start with 5-10 minutes of silent meditation. We're currently exploring several different spiritual paths, including Eckhart Tolle's "Uncourse," Eckhart Tolle TV, and Mark Nepo's "Book of Awakening."

A \$5 donation is requested in order to support the church. Come light another candle to illuminate your understanding along the spiritual path called life. Contact: Joe Linsalata, (512) 327-5000 or Linsalata@austin.rr.com.

GREEN SANCTUARY

Join up for Spring Into Action

The Green Sanctuary is planning the church-wide Spring Into Action event this year. The event will take place during the month of April, which also includes Easter and Earth Day. We have lots of ideas percolating already, and we are open to lots of others. We'll have a wide variety of environmental experiences for folks to enjoy, because what fun is being green if you don't enjoy it? If you would like to help with Spring Into Action this coming year or just want to give us some ideas for enjoyable environmental activities, please contact

Luther Elmore at lmore@austincc.edu. Luther is the straw boss for this rodeo.

And speaking of enjoying things, what did everyone think of the Holiday Re-Gifting event? We had very few items left to give to the Assistance League when all was said and done, and we saw lots of folks leaving with some real treasures.

We'd like to thank everyone who participated, especially Luther for his creativity, initiative, and follow-through for making this such a nice event.

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, January 9
Rm. 17
7-10 p.m.

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

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



UU/Quaker Singalong

Saturday, January 24
Friends Meeting House
3701 E. MLK Blvd.
7:30-10:30 p.m.

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

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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

JANUARY 4

Burning Bowl Service

CHRIS JIMMERSON

It is good to begin the new year by clearing out old regrets and resentments. Come toss those things into the fire and get a fresh start.

JANUARY 11

The Power of Yet

REV. MARI CABALLERO

It is so easy to wish for more for ourselves and our lives, and to become victim to frustration or despair. “Yet” holds more power than we can ever imagine. How will we wield our “yets” in 2015?

JANUARY 18

Selma and UUs

CHRIS JIMMERSON

In his new book, “The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism,” Rev. Mark Morrison Reed recounts how Unitarian Universalists have and have not lived out our religious values regarding race in America, including some who lost their lives during the movement. As we continue the struggle for racial justice, it is important that we know from whence we come.

JANUARY 25

Doing Empathy

REV. MARI CABALLERO

Most of us would like to think that we are good at demonstrating empathy, but the truth is, we all sometimes fall short. We definitely know how it feels to be cared for and to feel less than important, ourselves. How do we navigate that narrow space between showing that we truly care and risking getting it wrong?

Notice regarding annual giving statements

Thank you for your generosity over the past year. Your church office will spend the month of January closing up the books and accounts for 2014, including verifying the completeness and accuracy of the records. Once that is finished, we will mail statements to everyone of their giving during 2014 (January through December). Your giving statement will go in the mail no later than January 31.

THE FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

JANUARY 4

What Would We Drink if the Lakes Were Dry?

WITH LAUREN ROSS, PH.D.

Join us for a community dialogue about Austin's water and the creeks, aquifers, plants, animals and people that it touches.

Lauren has been passionate about Austin water issues since she moved here in 1974 to study water resources engineering at the University of Texas. Her science and technical contributions were indispensable to crafting and passing Austin's landmark Save Our Springs Ordinance referendum on August 8, 1992. Her work helped to close a hazardous waste facility contaminating the drinking water supply of an east Texas African-American community, and allowed residents to return safely to the post-Katrina environment of New Orleans. She was a designer of the first privately-permitted composting toilet in Austin, the first Austin-permitted residential greywater system in 25 years, the first pervious pavement system to stack flood management and storm runoff treatment underneath a parking lot, and the first central Texas biofilter for storm runoff.

She lives in the Zilker neighborhood with her partner, a cat, a pound of red wigglers, three composting projects, dry sanitation, and 2,850 gallons of rainwater storage.

JANUARY 11

El Niño or No? Our Winter So Far, and What's Ahead

WITH JIM SPENCER OF KXAN

How has a warmer Pacific Ocean impacted our winter so far, and what can we expect in 2015? Is it climate change leading to our seemingly endless drought, or can we look forward to area lakes filling up again?

Jim joined KXAN in 1990, becoming the first weathercaster on Austin's first hour-long morning newscast, News 36 Firstcast. In 1993 he became chief weathercaster, taking over the evening broadcasts, and is now in his 25th year of forecasting weather on KXAN. Jim grew up in Lindsay, Oklahoma in the heart of tornado alley, to which

he credits his life-long fascination with weather.

Jim has received national recognition for his work. He has a long history of involvement in community and charitable organizations. He represents KXAN in the station's longtime partnership with Family Eldercare's summer fan drive. Each year he teaches hundreds of area school children about severe weather safety.

JANUARY 18

How We Treat the Land Matters to All of Us

WITH JESSICA WILSON

Jessica Wilson from the City of Austin Watershed Protection will share some great ideas for gardens and yards to make them more eco-friendly and sustainable. Come and hear a gardening expert talk about land use, parks, protecting our open spaces and much more. Do you know what the city is doing to protect our creeks, prevent erosion, and keep our aquifers healthy while promoting educational efforts to keep our water clean?

Jessica Wilson is the Watershed Protection Department's Education Manager and oversees a diverse range of programs including: Grow Green, Scoop the Poop, Green City Challenge, Let's Can It Austin, Storm Drain Marking, Youth Education, and support for new initiatives like green infrastructure and Grow Zones.

Jessica received her B.A. in Humanities with Special Honors and a focus on Conservation Biology, Geography and Science Education from the University of Texas at Austin. She has worked with a variety of nonprofits focusing on a wide range of issues, ranging from animal welfare to affordable student housing to environmental conservation. She is best known in Austin for her seven years with Keep Austin Beautiful as the Community Programs Manager.

Jessica loves volunteering as much as she loves working with volunteers and can regularly be spotted getting her hands dirty at community improvement projects. She enjoys long distance running, gardening, exploring nature trails with her dogs, and working towards her next big challenge.

see final forum notice on page 16

**First Unitarian
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Church of Austin**

(512) 452-6168

www.austinuu.org

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Office Administrator

Andrea B. Sosa

Assistant Minister

Rev. Marisol Caballero

Assistant Minister

Chris Jimmerson

Director of Music

Brent Baldwin

Membership Coordinator

Kelsey Caudebec

Communications Coordinator

Victoria Valadez

Board President

Carolyn Gremminger

**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.

Austin, TX 78756

THE FORUM, *continued*

JANUARY 25

Texas Education Future Tense: The Good, the Bad, and What to Do About It

WITH REBECCA BELL-
METEREAU

Rebecca Bell-Metereau will look at some encouraging trends in Texas public education, some warning flags, and how citizens can have a dramatic impact on our future. She will talk about the State Board of Education and how it interacts with legislators, the Texas Education Agency, and ordinary citizens. Board members have made a few bad choices regarding science, social studies, and sex education courses in the past, but there

are ways to avoid these errors in future curriculum and textbook choices.

Rebecca Bell-Metereau's list of accomplishments include professor of English and Film Studies at Texas State University, Fulbright Scholar in Senegal, much published author, former Special Assistant to the President of Texas State University, former Peace Corps teacher in Chad, Africa, and translator for US Air Force Flights to drought-stricken areas in the Sahel, among many others. Her awards include the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service from Texas State University, Faculty Senate Distinguished Teaching Award, and Alumni Award for Teaching Excellence. She is a Texas Lutheran, the wife of Dr. Jean-Pierre Metereau, and mother of two public school graduates. ■