



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## The times they are a-changin’

**by Marsha Sharp, Board President**



I even remember the dress I was wearing. I was thirteen, it was Christmas Day, and I was sitting on the sofa with my maternal grandmother, Mammaw. I was showing her my biggest surprise of the day: a brand new transistor radio. It could play using batteries or could be plugged in. I remember the look on her face as I turned it on and handed it to her. No plug. What?!?

My Mammaw was one of the wisest and smartest people I have ever known. What she lacked in formal education, she more than compensated with practical, life lessons and common sense. She grew up using horses and wagons, kerosene lamps, and canning and preserving everything that grew in her incredible garden and orchard. She lived to see men walk on the moon. I marvel at all the change she experienced in her lifetime!

She didn’t stay “stuck” with horses and buggies; she seemed to easily adapt to new ideas and change. She wasn’t afraid of change and always

seemed curious about what was coming next. What new thing was on the horizon? If she wasn’t in the kitchen baking or canning, she was quilting or reading; she always had something current to read.

This next year, a lot of change will be coming our way at First UU Austin. Change can be exciting and promising, as well as frustrating and nerve-racking. We will be adapting to major construction, which will be very disruptive to our usual routines. We may need to have services at different hours or perhaps in a different setting. We won’t be able to use the kitchen to prepare for dinners and lunches the way we do now. There may be lines at the restrooms; some of our parking area may be taken up by construction materials and equipment. Religious education classes may need to meet in other areas of the church. The weather may not cooperate and cause deadlines to be missed.

As a congregation, we’ve had numerous discussions about becoming

a sanctuary church and that dialogue will need to continue. What shape will sanctuary take? How involved will I be? What resources will the church need to provide support to those seeking sanctuary? What changes will we need to make in order for this to succeed?

How will each of us react to all of this disruption and change? Will we accept it with grace and humor? Will we expect things to remain the same while everything around us is changing? Or will we “go with the flow” and take things in stride without becoming anxious or blaming?

There are many questions and not all of them have answers right now; some questions will have many “right” answers. Two things we can do are support each other and talk with each other. When we listen and discuss without blaming, anxiety drops and people feel supported and heard. We’re in this together. This is not change for the sake of change; it is about dreams coming true and new possibilities on the horizon. ■

*Meg’s column is on hiatus this month, as she is on break, learning how to cook and how to speak a little Spanish. Follow her on Facebook if you’d like.*

## MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



## Drive a Senior— North Central Austin

Seniors who are able to live independently at home tend to live longer and healthier lives. But in taking care of daily responsibilities, transportation to get to doctors' appointments, to the dentist, to the grocery store, to the bank, etc. can sometimes present a challenge.

That's where Drive a Senior—North Central Austin comes in. This volunteer-driven organization has been providing free transportation services to older adults living in north central Austin since 1989. During that time, hundreds of seniors have received these services from Drive a Senior volunteers. In 2015 alone, the organization and 114 volunteers provided a total of 3,829 point-to-point rides for 307 clients.

Drive A Senior volunteers come from churches, such as First UU Austin, and civic organizations. Many are early retirees who are paying it forward, others are parents who are teaching their children to respect elderly citizens—anyone who has a bit of time. One such volunteer is Lloyd Langsdorf. Lloyd does double duty; he is president of the Drive A Senior—North Central Board of Directors and also a volunteer driver, who has been driving for nine years.

“After joining the board, I quickly

saw how much we needed drivers, so also I started driving once a week. Now I drive about three times a week. People really need our service as most have no one to fall back on to get them to the doctor or dentist or even the grocery store. Even if they do have family in the area, often those family members cannot take time off during the workweek.”

Langsdorf says the organization needs more drivers. “While we have around 108 volunteers, only 45 of those are drivers, and of those 45, 20 have not driven in the past six months. If we had 45 drivers who were driving every other week, we would not have to cancel any rides.”

Volunteers can give as much time as they are able: several rides a week or just one ride every couple of weeks, whatever fits into the volunteer's schedule.

To become a volunteer driver, one needs to:

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

Drive A Senior has several volunteer orientations scheduled during June, July and August. They will

be held the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. until noon. Check our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/DriveASeniorNorthCentralAustin/](http://www.facebook.com/DriveASeniorNorthCentralAustin/)) for more information about volunteer orientation, or contact the office at [ncccaregivers@gmail.com](mailto:ncccaregivers@gmail.com).

Drive A Senior needs office volunteers for mornings to help answer the phone and schedule rides. We also need special event volunteers for two upcoming fundraisers: Oktoberfest, which will be held here at First UU Austin on Oct. 13, and the Christmas Choral Concert on Dec. 2.

First UU is a long-time supporter of Drive a Senior—North Central Austin. Many First UU members volunteer as drivers, in the office, and at fundraising events. Members have an opportunity to financially support this organization through this month's second service offering. Please give generously what you can on Sunday, July 10 to help ensure this vital support is available for older adults today and into the future.

*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.*

**DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS**

**UBarU 2016 Summer Camps**

Registration is open for summer camps at UBarU, near Kerrville, TX. Week-long camps provide fun in a UU setting and include swimming, hiking, team-building, making new friends, and learning more about our faith. Find more information and register at [www.ubaru.org](http://www.ubaru.org) under Events.

- **July 3–9:** Seeger (rising grades 8–9)
- **July 10–11:** Reeb (rising grade 10 through 2016 high school graduate)
- **July 26–Aug 1:** UBarU Bridgers Young Adult (adults 19–25)

**The Point: A UU Retreat for All Ages, July 24–29**

The Point (formerly SWUUSI) is five days of UU covenant and community in a resort-like setting on the shores of Fort Gibson Lake in Oklahoma. The Point offers personal growth, faith renewal, learning opportuni-

ties, spiritual practices, community worship, music, excellent cuisine, sustainable practices, social gatherings, outdoor activities, programming for all ages and interests, and an engaging theme speaker, Rev. George Kimmich Beach. More info at [www.thepointuu.org](http://www.thepointuu.org).

**Save the Date!**

- **Sep 2–5 (Labor Day weekend):** UBarU Star Party: This is the first such comprehensive event ever held at an IDA-certified Dark-Sky Park in Texas. In order to maintain our IDA requirements and to reasonably accommodate those who participate, registration will be limited; first priority given to those choosing event packages by July 29. See [www.ubaru.org](http://www.ubaru.org) under Events.

**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.

**New Member Recognition**

**Sunday, Aug. 7  
Sanctuary, during  
worship services**

Signed the membership book this year, but still haven't participated in a New Member Recognition ceremony yet? Be introduced to and received by the congregation!

Participation is simple and optional. You'll be asked to join Rev. Meg at the front of the church, briefly introduce yourselves to the congregation, and a short litany will be read. (Bring a copy of the bulletin up with you so you can read the litany.)

If you'd like to participate, just show up! Wear your "new member" ribbon (extras may be found at the visitor/membership table).

**"Getting to Know UU" class**

**Sunday, Aug. 14  
Rm. 15  
12–1:30 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.

*A special thanks from Rev. Chris Fimmerson  
& Wayne Bockmon*

Rev. Chris and Wayne want to thank all who made their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary vows renewal/formal wedding such a wonderful event. The wedding and reception were beautiful, and we raised about \$5,000 that was split between the church and the Austin PrEP Access Project! Both Chris and Wayne are extremely grateful.

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

# Lifespan RE highlights

by Rev. Marisol Caballero, Assistant Minister



## First Sunday Seminars in July

First 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, 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!

## Discovering Our Sources Track: “Understanding Hidden Forces,” with James Myers

Join us in accomplishing a series of hand-crafted projects which are a form of spiritual alchemy. Each project is chosen to help transmute what is leaden or dross in our spiritual existence into something golden, something sublime. Some projects use techniques that are probably five thousand years old and are drawn from many different religions and cultures. Each project is designed to fine tune some part of ourselves and to be tested so that each person can use that most sophisticated instrument, the body, and its attributes to draw conclusions based on fact.

## 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.

## Fall RE Enrollment Begins!

Parents of children and teens: keep your eyes fixed on your (snail) mailboxes! We will be sending out enrollment forms for the 2016–17 Religious Education school year soon! Please make sure that the church has your correct mailing address in our database.

## Sunday Summer School Continues! (Pre-K–1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup>)

This year, we’re excited to announce our summer Sunday school program will be “Dr. Seuss Changed My Life.” The curriculum is developed by Cathy Cartwright, Director of Children’s RE at First Unitarian Church in Portland, Oregon. From the course introduction: “Dr. Seuss’ stories are more than just catchy poems; they often wrestle with serious philosophical and moral dilemmas, whether it is Horton discovering the very essence of life or the Lorax teaching us about morality, thoughtful issues concerning the environment and anti-consumerism in *The Lorax*...” We’ll have tons of fun, and awesome t-shirts that your kids are encouraged to wear to classes all summer long. Email Laine Young about volunteering or the curriculum: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

## Save the Date! Supply Spruce-up! Saturday, Aug. 13; 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Join us for fun, food, and fellowship while we spruce up the classroom supplies and get ready for the fall semester! Breakfast will be provided. Contact Laine Young to RSVP: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org). ■

## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

# Do you have what it takes?

by Angela Smith

Bill Edwards, the head of this year's stewardship ministry, is not afraid to take on a challenge. Proof of that is his intent to sign up at least 100 canvassers to share in the fun of raising needed funds for First UU Austin. He calls it "the canvass within the canvass."

"The more people you can get involved, the better," he says. He also hopes that involvement will spur the enthusiasm of others, as well as the commitment needed to make the campaign a success.

"Yes, it's a challenge," he admits, but "it shouldn't be easy. Otherwise we could just write a check and have it done in one day."

Edwards believes that getting involved at this level may bespeak a commitment many might not be aware they had.

He promises all those who volunteer that they won't be overwhelmed or overworked. "We don't expect to assign more than three prospects to each canvasser." Of course, he adds, if one wants to take on more, there will be no opposition.

Edwards is now mailing cards to solicit help with the campaign. There will also be a table in the gallery each Sunday where persons can add their names to the already-growing list.

For those who might be hesitant or who might even cringe at the thought of asking others for money, Edwards has this to say: "We have all done things we thought would be uncomfortable, but we did them anyway and maybe even

discovered what we feared wasn't so bad after all." And if mistakes are made, people are forgiving, he is quick to remind.

"Try it out," Edwards says. He says those who do and find out it isn't their cup of tea can always quit.

He also adds canvassing doesn't take a special talent like singing in the choir, but the personal reward of involvement is equal. "Canvassing just requires two skills: talking and listening."

He also wants canvassers who are willing to generously give themselves. "If you're asking for money and you're not committed yourself, you might as well stay in bed."

Edwards says there's two major reasons for being a canvass volunteer. One, the church needs their stewardship campaign to be successful; and two, the great secondary gains, for example, meeting new people and the personal satisfaction that comes from doing this work.

This is going to be fun, Edwards said. He adds that much of the fun for him will be seeing others "catch on" to why this is important. Being involved as a canvasser raises the awareness of what we need to be doing as a church as well as the enthusiasm for what can be accomplished.

He's glad he's part of a church where asking for financial support doesn't mean threatening people or condemning them to hell forever if they don't give a certain amount. "Our job," he said, "is just to appeal to their better angels."

### "Path to Membership" class

**Saturday, July 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; 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.

### Young Adults Group events

Young Adult brunches will continue on third Sundays through the summer (ages 18–35). Email [youngadults@austinuu.org](mailto:youngadults@austinuu.org) for info on monthly brunches or other meetings.

**Sun, July 17:** Meet at the south-facing doors closest to the sanctuary to walk or car-pool to a nearby restaurant.

**Eclectic Folk Jam***Friday, July 8**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 & 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, July 23**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

**JULY 3****Who’s Calling, Please?**

SUSAN YARBROUGH

These are the words I always use when I don’t recognize the caller ID number or the name of the person on the other end of the line. Let’s think together about what we have been called to do as individuals and as a congregation, who or what is calling us, and the fact—yes, the fact—that we are all called and are all ministers.

**JULY 10****Making Sense of the Senseless**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

When senseless violence happens like what we’ve seen so much in the news recently, when the unexpected and unwelcome occurs in our personal lives, how do we continue our search for meaning and beauty? What do we do with our grief and anger?

**JULY 16****We Gather: Another Kind of Worship**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

(4:30) A service commemorating the lives lost in Orlando. Interspersed with music and moments of silence, meditation and prayer, we will hear a few of their stories and remember them all.

**JULY 17****Sacred Promises**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

As a religion without creed, one of the cornerstones of UU spirituality arises from the covenantal nature of how we gather our religious communities. The covenant, a set of promises we make with one another about how we will be together, comes out of an ancient tradition.

**JULY 24****Paving the Road to Hell?**

ANDY GERHART

We know that knowledge is power, and in our UU faith we emphasize the free search for truth. But what does it mean when answers lead to new questions and new forms of ignorance? How do we cope with our ignorance and simultaneously act in good faith? We’ll discuss our current climate crisis as we explore how uncertainty might ground our theology to inspire us and offer a basis for moral action.

**JULY 31****Intergenerational Hogwarts Service**

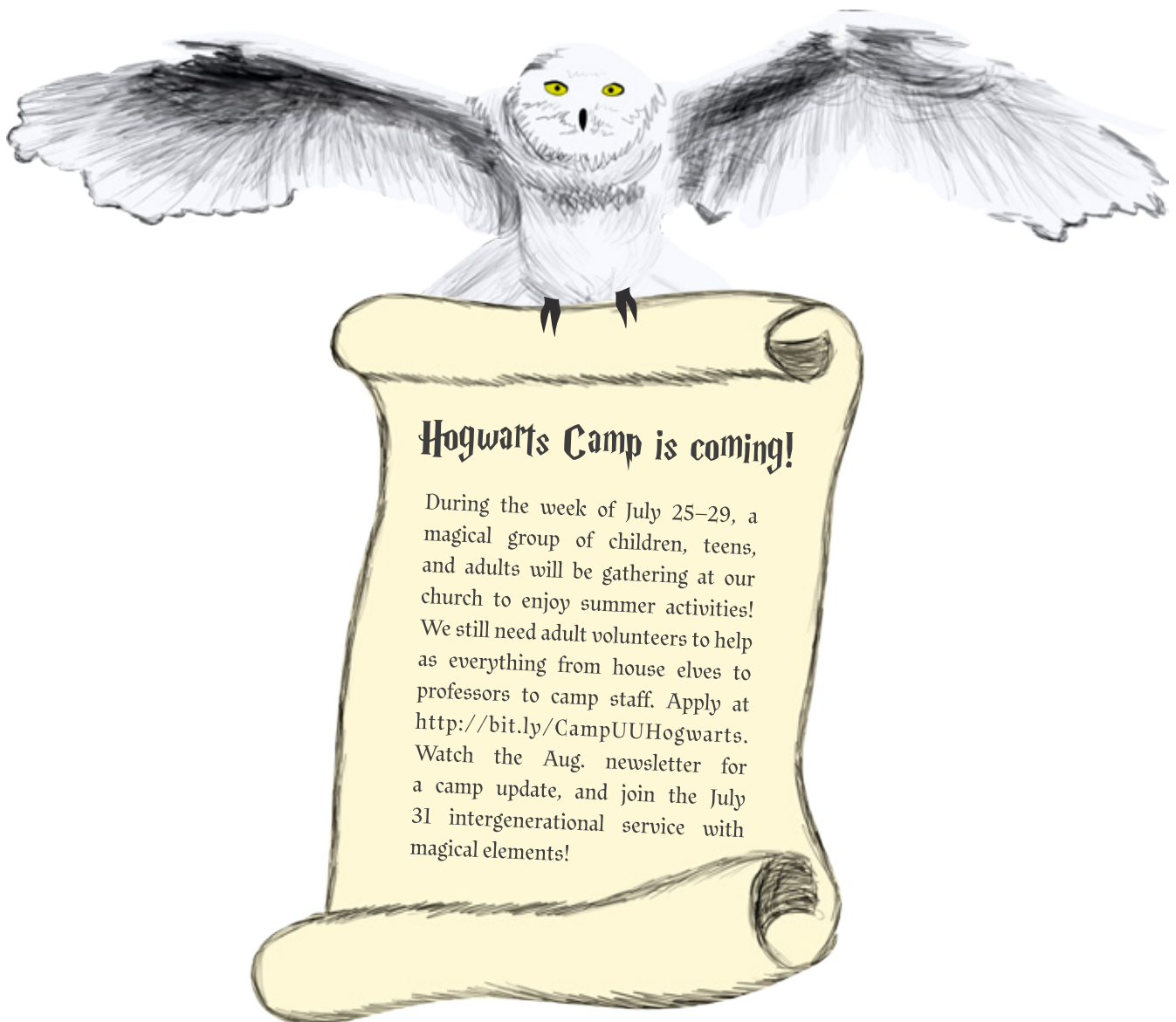
REV. MARISOL CABALLERO

Join us as we celebrate the closing of another Camp UU year by looking to Harry Potter and the lot from Hogwarts to teach us life lessons.

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

The Public Affairs Forum is off for the summer and will resume in September.



**First Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of Austin**

(512) 452-6168

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

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**First Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.  
Austin, TX 78756

***A Message from Green Sanctuary Co-Chairs  
Beki & Richard Halpin***

***Please consider a quick action that could help keep house of worship electric rates in place.***

Four years ago, Austin Energy shifted house of worship customers from the residential category to the commercial category. As a result, many houses of worship faced potential electric bill increases of up to 80%. To prevent this, Austin Energy put a cap on the amount charged per kilowatt hour. In addition, since houses of worship often see peak use on the weekends rather than when the overall system peaks during the week, Austin Energy did not count houses of worship peak energy use on the weekends for figuring the peak use multiplier. Now Austin Energy

wants to eliminate these two house of worship rate pieces. This will mean that houses of worship cumulatively will pay an additional million dollars each year to Austin Energy. While this would cost First UU about \$2,500 a year or more, it will really hit small houses of worship very hard because many of them mostly use their facilities on the weekends, and their budgets are not as robust as ours is.

Please contact your city council member and the mayor and ask them to continue the house of worship rate cap and weekday measure of demand. Follow the URL to contact all of them at once: [www.austintexas.gov/email/all-council-members](http://www.austintexas.gov/email/all-council-members). Thanks for your help!