

JANUARY 2019

first UU NEWS

*Together we nourish souls, transform lives, and
do justice to build the Beloved Community.*



Graphic Credit: Chalice Aflame, Bear W. Qolezcua, 2018.

**Racism Unlearning
Circle****Saturday, January 19****Rm. 15****10 a.m.–12 p.m.**

This group is a place for white folks to discuss the creation and meaning of whiteness, white supremacy, racism, our role in perpetuating oppressive systems (intentionally or not), and how we can take accountable action to dismantle white supremacy and show up with minoritized peoples to demand an end to dehumanization. Meetings are third Saturday of every month. Check First UU Facebook events for more event info to prepare for meetings. Childcare RSVP: childcare@austinuu.org. Info: racismunlearning@austinuu.org.

Planned Giving

If you're interested in how planned giving can support our church, we invite you to join our Planned Giving team.

We are kicking 2019 off by watching a UUA sponsored webinar in mid-January.

Please contact Charles Smith at csmith581@gmail.com for more information.

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2:	IN THIS ISSUE	Page 10:	SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRY MSO Recipients for 2019 <i>-Maria Medina</i>
Page 3:	SUNDAY SERVICES		
Page 4:	PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM		PARADOX PLAYERS is Back... For Real This Time!
Page 5:	VOCABULARY WORKSHOP <i>-First UU Change Team</i>	Page 11:	THE COMMCOORD BLOTTER for such a time as this <i>- Bear W. Qolezcua</i>
	INSIDE AMIGOS		
Page 6:	FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK State of the Church <i>- Rev. Meg Barnhouse</i>	Page 12:	THIS MONTH'S MSO TXUUJM <i>- Wendy Erisman & Alexandra Neville</i>
Page 7:	YOUR FIRST UU BOARD The End, A Beginning <i>- Sean Ramsey, Board President</i>	Page 13:	DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS
			UBARU SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Page 8:	JULES' DESKTOP About Five Blocks <i>- Jules Jaramillo</i>	Page 14:	STEWARDSHIP
Page 9:	WELCOMING CIRCLE	Page 15:	READERS' THEATER
	FIRST SUNDAY SEMINARS		COVENANT CORNER Can't the Minister Be My Friend? <i>-Healthy Relations Ministry</i>
	WOMEN'S ALLIANCE	Page 16:	WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUITY

SUNDAY SERVICES

SANCTUARY | 9 : 1 5 A M A N D 1 0 : 4 5 A M

JANUARY 6

Burning Bowl Service

WITH REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

We begin the year by thinking about elements in our lives which are doing us a disservice, and what possibilities might become open to us if we let them go. We whisper these things into flash paper and burn them together, scattering the ashes to the wind.

JANUARY 13

Potential Ever Emergent

WITH REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Though Unitarian Universalists are a people of many theological or philosophical perspectives, the human possibility, our potential for doing good in our world has always been central to our world-view. What are the ways in which we are being called toward our full potential. What lures us toward creative, life-fulfilling possibilities?

JANUARY 20

The Holiness of Hands

WITH BEAR W. QOLEZCUA

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. marched hand in hand with many others in his lifetime, raised hands asking for an end to violence, and stood with Malcolm X whose own fists were raised in resistance. What does MLK have to teach us about the holiness of hands clasped, offered in peace, and lifted in fists of protest? Let us explore the possibility that lives within hands lifted high through works that build the Beloved Community.

JANUARY 27

Collective Liberation

WITH REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

How do we ground our social justice work, our struggles against racism, oppression and the destruction of our environment? Where do we find reliance and even joy? We will examine a theology that grounds this work in our collective interdependence or as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr put it, "We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality ... This is the inter-related structure of reality."

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, January 11

Rm. 17

7-10 p.m.

An open jam session for singers and instrumentalists, held on the second Friday of every month. We have "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again" and music stands. Bring other songs if you like, as well as 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 26

*Friends Meeting House
(3701 E. MLK Blvd.)*

7-10 p.m.

Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing. Copies of "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again" are provided, but you may bring other songs. 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.

Transformation Through Service

Service is a core component of our Unitarian Universalist faith. Through service we make valuable contributions to our church and community, enhance our own faith and spirituality, strengthen our relationships with others, and move our congregation closer to fulfilling its mission.

The First UU Transformation Through Service team helps connect congregants with the many meaningful service opportunities available. If you would like to get more involved at First UU, you can talk with our of our team who can help you get connected with service opportunities that match your interests, skills, and time availability. Contact transform@austinuu.org to schedule a conversation.

Senior Luncheon

*Wednesday, January 9
Howson Hall
12 p.m.*

Soup, salad and dessert will be served for \$5 and there is always an engaging program planned to bring community information.. Please RSVP to Joyce Wilson: (512) 482-0998.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY SUNDAYS NOON

JANUARY 6

Legislative Session Preview

WITH STATE REP. GINA HINOJOSA

State Rep. Gina Hinojosa (D-Austin) returns as Forum speaker to provide a preview of the new session of the Texas Legislature starting January 8. Rep. Hinojosa has made her mark in the Legislature as a forceful advocate for increased state funding of the public schools, capitalizing on her background as president of the Austin ISD school board. School finance is sure to be among the foremost issues addressed in the 2019 session.

Another key concern of the session will be the continuing effort by Gov. Greg Abbott and his legislative allies to trump local decision-making on a wide range of topics, including property tax rates, local sick-leave policies, and the treatment of immigrants in our community. Hinojosa will be in the thick of this preemption fight as well, challenging the stance of the governor with legislation like her bill to restore local discretion to restrict use of plastic bags by retailers.

Hinojosa brings a long history of social-justice engagement to her work in the Legislature. After completing her undergraduate degree as a Plan II Honors/Government major at the University of Texas at Austin and her law degree at George Washington School of Law, Hinojosa worked for: the AFSCME union representing state and local government employees; the Office of Immigrant Concerns with Catholic Charities; Texas Rural Legal Aid; and the Texas Equal Justice Center, where she helped secure wages wrongfully withheld from low-paid workers. Hinojosa also

volunteered over the years with Austin Interfaith and was a key leader in the group's successful efforts to require corporations that receive economic incentives from the city of Austin to pay their employees a living wage.

Rep. Hinojosa will discuss the upcoming session against the backdrop of the November 2018 election results and will highlight opportunities for grass-roots involvement.



JANUARY 13

Friendship Force: Planet Travel with a Purpose

WITH SALLY SCOTT & JOSEPH HUNT

The purpose is PEACE. Come find out how you can travel the world, inexpensively. Have a great time with great people and bring PEACE wherever you go. Sally Scott Beloved Church Member and Ditto with Joseph Hunt BCM and incoming Friendship Force Coordinator will share their amazing Friendship Force Magical Journeys and tell you how you can be a part of this ever unfolding magical mystery tour.

CHANGE TEAM

Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Vocabulary Workshop

Do you know the difference between Ethnicity and Race? Do you know how to identify Colorism? Do you know that there's a difference between Diversity, Multi-culturalism, and Inter-culturalism? Would you like to learn more about these terms and others?

Come join us on January 13 immediately following second service to learn about the vocabulary of Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This vocabulary workshop will be the first in a series intended to help First UU members get on the same page regarding this vocabulary and to spark dialogue that will move the church into setting a solid foundation for what it means to build the Beloved Community.

This workshop series is being presented by the Change Team.



INSIDE AMIGOS

Our immigrant friends went to advocate on the Hill, working to build support with U.S. Congressional representatives and senators to move ICE to use prosecutorial discretion.

Austin Sanctuary Network members visited 15 offices in DC. Jesus Salcido, Sulma Franco, Peggy Morton and Gabriela Vera followed Hilda and Alirio's lead as they shared their need to escape violence in their homeland. These asylum seekers have taken sanctuary for more than a year at St Andrews Presbyterian Church and First UU Austin, respectively, waiting for their day to come to speak on their own behalf and find safety in a country built on the belief that we are all equal and all have an inalienable

right to freedom from persecution, shelter in the face of fear, and hope for a life of opportunity.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

State of the Church

Rev. Meg Barnhouse
Senior Minister



First of all, I want to tell you something you already know; we have a great team here. Working with Chris, Brent, and Jules is a joy. To have Shannon and Bear in the office is to see things get done with style and cheer, and we are pleased to welcome our new seminary student intern, Lee Legault. She is a Unitarian Universalist student at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Lee will be completing an unpaid part-time APTS field placement for 15 hours a week. It will feel good to be a teaching church again.

We have changed from having an in-house local book keeper to working with a CPA-supervised group in NC. They are responsive and patient, and we have been working with them to take better care of our donors by having fewer mistakes on donor reports and greater ease in correcting discrepancies. We also have hired a local CPA to look over our systems and procedures to let us know how best to document those procedures and minimize risk for the congregation.

Right now our priority in the Faith Development Department is to build volunteer teams so that Jules can build a large-church FD program that doesn't just depend on her and the classroom teachers. If you would like to help build this program, please do meet with her for coffee or lunch. She is very easy to talk to.

The building project is making

progress, and we can see the differences in our church! We are back in the sanctuary, although our permit to use the new part is still pending. When it comes through by mid-January (that's the latest estimate) we will have use of it, the new kitchen, and our north parking lot once more. We have had delays and nasty surprises, but we can see things moving forward, and we like that. The plan is to have a building dedication party and picnic on the grounds on May 19th, so put that on your calendars!

Another development is that we are now live-streaming our services. You can watch, music and all, on the church's public Facebook page. Just Google-search FUUCA Facebook and you should get right to the page. If you can't "attend" in real time, the page saves all the services so you can go back and catch up. The HD cameras we will be using, the beefier broadband and money for advertising this new service come from a generous grant from long-time member Susan Barry, and from Paula Wiesner.

Our guest in sanctuary was given a brief four months of freedom, and we will continue to work with him and the Austin Sanctuary Network for his permanent stay of deportation.

It's been a good year, but a hard year. Construction has squeezed some people out of attending due to space limitations, parking difficulties, and general topsy-turvy-ness. Because of that, we are missing seeing the faces of

some of our regulars. Because of that, we are grateful to and proud of the people who struggle on in and attend in the midst of the mess! Because of that, our cash flow hit a dry spot, and we had to shout out for help, and help arrived. People paid on their pledges and we are ok for right now.

Next year is another matter. Our stewardship drive came up a little short, and so Margaret Borden had an idea. She gave 5,000 in seed money for a matching fund. 5 others stepped up to match her and now we have a 30,000 fund for matching any increases in member pledges. If you can increase your pledge a bit more, it will be doubled! We have been trying to stabilize the church's finances for the past three years or so. It's wearing to be on a roller coaster, not knowing what next year will bring. This church deserves the dignity of being well-funded, even if it's just to our bare-bones level. If you can increase your pledge some, that amount will be doubled, and you will be contributing to a church that can do more than worry about money for services and salaries. We need you! We are so grateful for the generosity of our membership. We are creating a welcome space where more members will feel welcome, and where the place will be more attractive for rentals, so we're hoping this roller coaster situation will be a thing of the past fairly soon. Thank you for being here now, being the ones who brought us through.

YOUR FIRST UU BOARD



The End, A Beginning

Sean Ramsey

President

Board of Trustees

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." -- T.S. Eliot

Greetings and Happy New Year! Feliz año nuevo! To say that 2018 has been a year of challenges might be an understatement. For me, both professionally and personally. For our country, real and imagined (but mostly real). And for our church, which has weathered changes on so many fronts. (Do I really need to name them all?)

While this year has been full of turmoil, it has been both intellectually and spiritually fulfilling to serve as your President on the Board of Trustees. Every third Tuesday of the month, eleven volunteer members of this community meet to reconnect with our moral ownership, monitor our progress towards our Ends, and think about topics that will help shape our future. I can't begin to tell how grateful I am for these people and the work they do, but mostly you should know that you are well represented. If you have been or are considering running for a position on the board, you could do no better than to have the opportunity to work with this group (ask me how!).

This board set out to continue the good work of the previous board by working with Rev. Barnhouse to define the measures by which we will evaluate our progress and reworking some of our policies to better reflect our new Ends. Along the way we also took on the question of how to define our moral ownership -- that is to say -- the group of people to whom we are beholden. In case you haven't seen it, here is what we came up with:

The moral owners of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin are the past, present and future congregation and those with whom we work to co-create the Beloved Community.

It is through this work that we decided we should reinstitute the Congregational survey, which went out in November. How better to know if we are making progress towards our Ends than by asking the current congregants how they believe we are doing with respect to meeting them? We also asked demographic questions in an effort to better understand who we are now and in the future. It is our intention to roll out this survey on an annual basis as one measure in our evaluation and one touch point in linkage with you.

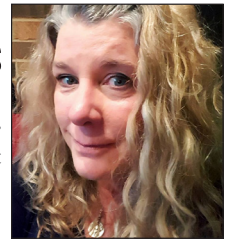
And finally, we have been focused on exploring the Beloved Community. What is the work that is being asked of us? What was the origin and context of the vision of Beloved Community? What shall we do in the coming months and years to move us towards realizing our Mission? First we took on a study of Dr. King's passage, which has been written in the order of service and posted on our walls. The passage was taken from the King Center website (<http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy>), which goes deeper into what he calls the "Triple Evils" and prescribes six principles of non-violence as a means for attacking the injustice. This work and our discussions led us into a shared reading of "White Fragility" by Dr. Robin Diangelo. We are exploring together how we have observed or realized an act of white privilege and, more importantly, our own challenges navigating the waters of conscious and unconscious biases here at church and beyond. Our collective work has to start within and among and it must be honest and must come from a place of vulnerability.

And so here we at the beginning of a new year, in a new church, and with a new mission. That is to say, we are at the end. Shall we begin?.

JULES' DESKTOP

About Five Blocks

Jules Jaramillo
Director
Lifespan Faith Development



Whenever possible and no matter where we have lived, once a week, my husband and I take a walking adventure. We figure out where we want to go, the path we are going to take to get there- I ask him how far it is we are going, and he tells me, "About five blocks." We smile at each other and head out on our way. We take in the sights, people watch, window shop if in the city, or if outside the urban area- connect with the natural world. We usually end up at our destination but sometimes get pleasantly distracted by something altogether different for the day.

Our adventures weren't always like this. Years ago, when we first started these weekly outings, our process was slightly different. We would decide where we wanted to go, the path we would take, but when I would ask how far we were going; Fernando would tell me the exact distance. Sometimes the answer would be a mile and sometimes more. We would start our adventure the way I described above; enjoying every step and every sight but then, apparently, at about five blocks into our walk - someone might have started to get a little impatient. They may have even begun to wonder exactly how far away the destination was. There may have also been a few sighs and a whine in their voice that could have been misinterpreted as complaining - just a little bit.

What changed about how I experienced our adventures together was that one day before we left, I asked my usual question about how far we were going but instead of telling me the exact distance, Fernando looked at me and asked, "What if I told you about five blocks?" With his single question, my experience of our time shifted from a focus (and sometimes impatience) of getting to our destination to embracing the textures of journeying. It changed everything about the time we spent together.

Recently, I have been asking myself what areas in my life needs the reflection of "about five blocks". Where in my life might I be getting a little cranky because I am too focused on merely getting there? Have I missed the view

in my peripheral because my vision is too hyper-focused? Is there beauty I have overlooked, dismissed opportunities of grace, and dear hearts I haven't connected with because I am three steps ahead rather than as close to this moment as possible?

Now is the time that we welcome January and a New Year. For many, it begins with great intentions, and others even some resolutions. In these hopes for good things and blessings for 2019, my prayer is that we all hold close as many "about five blocks" moments as we can. May you remember to take in the sights, people watch, window shop or connect with the natural world. May you end up at your destination and sometimes get pleasantly distracted by something altogether different. May you see in your peripheral, be graced by the beauty of others, and connect with many a Dear Heart. May your 2019 journey keep you close to every present moment as possible.

Happy New Year!

Love, love, and more love,

~jules

.



FIRST UU ALIVE



Coming Sundays in January
12:15-2:00 p.m.
Room 15

Led by:

*Jules Jaramillo, Director of Lifespan Faith Development
Lee Legault, Ministerial Intern*

Are you new to First UU Church of Austin or Unitarian Universalism?

Have you been attending First UU and want to find out more about our church or Unitarian Universalism?

Are you interested in discovering a place of connection and belonging at First UU?

If so, please join us for First UU Alive Adult Faith Development Welcoming Circle being held each Sunday in January after 2nd service.

JANUARY 6: YOU ARE WELCOME

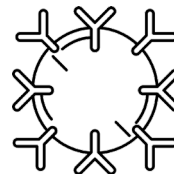
JANUARY 13: THE STORIES WE SHARE

JANUARY 20: WHAT'S HISTORY GOT TO DO WITH IT?

JANUARY 27: A PLACE OF CONNECTION AND BELONGING

RSVP at bit.ly/welcomingcircle (case sensitive address) and indicate your childcare needs and number of children in the comment section.

FIRST SUNDAY SEMINAR



SCIENCE AND RELIGION SEMINAR
JANUARY 6, 2019
LED BY BRUCE NAYLOR

"THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AND ITS
CONNECTION TO RELIGION."

We will be exploring some of the ideas articulated by Pat Bennet at our seminar in October on the influence of Religion on the human immune system. The experience of relationships and connectedness can have a strong impact, including on the most important factor: morbidity. There is good reasons to believe that the immune system plays a role in this. Indeed, the immune system is partially regulated by the Sympathetic Nervous System, and thus can be influenced by higher level cognition.

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance is taking a break until September. Thank you for your support and fellowship these past 2 years. Please, check the Newsletter for information regarding programs in the fall.

If you would like to assist in program planning, please contact Mary Overton, women@austinuu.org.

SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRY



Social Action: MSO Recipients for 2019

Maria MedinaMember
Board of Directors

On December 16, members of First UU voted on ten of our 2019 monthly special offering recipients. Eight organizations that were funded in 2018 will continue as special offering recipients in 2019. The following organizations are the 2019 recipients: ACLU of Texas, Interfaith Action of Central Texas, UBarU Retreat and Conference Center, Youth Rise Texas, Inside Books Project, Austin Sanctuary Network, People's Community Clinic, Planned Parenthood, UUSC, and SAFE (formerly SafePlace).

First UU members this year

also voted to provide funding to two organizations that did not receive funding last year: Youth Rise Texas and the Austin Sanctuary Network. Youth Rise Texas gives young people harmed by criminalization and deportation a space for community-building and transformational healing. Its programs help these youth become long-term leaders for justice who work to change public opinion about target issues and win local campaigns to make Texas a safer place for all families.

ASN has stopped deportations for six immigrants with deportation orders by moving Immigration

Customs Enforcement to grant prosecutorial discretion six times, more than any other sanctuary group in the U.S. ASN is a group of mostly volunteers that has grown to include 30 Austin area congregations and non-profits who affirm the inherent worth and dignity of everyone and the ongoing responsible pursuit of truth.

The remaining two monthly special offering slots will go to the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry and an organization selected as part of Spring into Action.

PARADOX PLAYERS

Paradox Players is Back... For Real This Time!



Sadly, Paradox Players found it necessary to cancel our scheduled performance of A Christmas Carol for 2018. The fates conspired against us! First, the completion of the Sanctuary renovations was delayed. Then the completion of the electrical updating throughout the building required closing the entire church for a period of time right in the middle of our planned run. We apologize for getting your hopes up about the imminent return of Paradox Players, but we apparently were overoptimistic about how quickly First UU's renovations would proceed.

Now that many of the renovations are complete, we are hard at work planning our 2019 Season, and intend to perform A Christmas Carol in late fall of 2019. Our first production in 2019 will be The Mountaintop, by American playwright Katori Hall, scheduled for February. It is a fictional depiction of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr.'s last night on earth set entirely in Room 306 of the Lorraine Motel on the eve of his assassination in 1968. Tickets will go on sale in January. Please join us for the return of live theater at First UU.

THE COMMCOORD BLOTTER



for such a time

Bear W. Qolezcua

Director of Communications

In seminary we explored the reason behind our “call”; what brought us there and what kept us there? A lot were so sure, knew it to their bones but me? I hadn’t a clue. I didn’t believe in divine intervention. I didn’t think I had been “called” to whatever the future could hold for me. What I did believe was that my skill sets, my morals, my values, and my experiences all translated well to becoming a chaplain.

Being a Christian seminary, we studied Hebrew Bible and New Testament books, breaking them down from their original language and figuring out what they said to us, exegesis.

My first exegesis was in the book of Esther. She wanted to know what purpose was meant for her life. She was told that perhaps she was who she was for “such a time as this”. The Jewish people were, as is usual in the Hebrew Bible, in great peril and it fell to Esther to save them all using her knowledge of two worlds. This story fed into my own questioning of why I was there and for what purpose.

And here we are, at the edge of a new year with construction still moving along and we are settling into our new home. Slowly being able to breathe relief leaving many questioning what our future holds. What are we meant to be, to do... and I think that maybe, with our Ends and Principles and Sources and Mission, just maybe we are here for such a time as this.

and who knows if you,
you,
you were brought to this dominion
for such a time
as this?

you’re asked to believe much
hold on to much
learn much
learn too much
and yet, not enough
for such a time as when
you are called
because your call
cannot wait.

and for such a time as this
you answered,
said yes to whatever
niggling voice within you
sighed your name and said
come
to the place where you can
you will
you must
because you can
will
must.

and for such a time as this
your name was plucked
from the stars themselves
your atoms,
the powerhouse of the universe,
came to this place and time
for such a time
for such a people
for such a calling
as this.

to serve,
give,
love.

and in these coming days and years
in this time
you will toil and worry,
cry and strain,
laugh and sing,
and carry with you
both burdens and delights
as you journey
through such a place as this
for such a time
and such a people
and such a church
and such a world
as this.

be blessed. welcome. remember
it’s ok to wonder why you
of all people
were chosen and brought to this
place
for such a time
as this.

MONTHLY SERVICE OFFERING

This Month's MSO: TXUUJM

Wendy Erisman & Alexandra Neville



On Sunday, January 13, TXUUJM will be the recipient of the Monthly Special Offering. Your generous donations are greatly appreciated and will help demonstrate our congregation's commitment to bend Texas towards justice.

In October 2018, in preparation for the 2019 Texas legislative session, 35 leaders from 13 UU congregations across Texas gathered at Wildflower UU Church here in Austin for the Alan Lummus TXUUJM General Assembly 2019 Legislative Training. TXUUJM hosted the training in honor of founding board member Alan Lummus, who passed away in 2017. Those present at the training (and a handful of tech-savvy UUs who joined remotely via Facebook Live!) discussed TXUUJM's key issues for 2019: reproductive justice, immigration/refugee

justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and education. Speakers included Carisa Lopez from Texas Freedom Network, Aly Tharp from UU Ministry for Earth, and Jenny Hixon from RAICES. Attendees heard about what to expect from the 2019 legislative session and discussed how to effectively represent our UU values to state legislators. If you missed out on the training or would like a recap, you can watch videos of the speakers on the TXUUJM website (txuujm.org).

Be sure to mark your calendars for TXUUJM's annual Legislative Action Day on Wednesday, March 20, 2019. TXUUJM hopes to assemble 300 Texas UUs at the Texas Capitol in Austin! Registration will open soon. For more details or to learn how to get involved with TXUUJM, visit TXUUJM's Facebook page or website.



Photo Credit: TXUUJM Fall Legislative Meeting, Alexandra Neville, 2018

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Southwest UU Women's Conference Feb. 22 – 24, 2019 Hot Springs, Arkansas

Many women from our church attended the 2018 SWUWU Conference in Austin. Please put the 2019 Conference on your calendar and join UU women from around our region for fellowship, celebration and learning. The keynote speaker is Kathy Webb, Vice-Mayor of the city of Little Rock. Registration is now open. <https://www.swuuw.org/conferences/2019>.

UBarU Event Calendar

UBarU is a UU camp and retreat center in the beautiful Hill Country, just 120 miles west of Austin, and is recognized as an International Dark Sky Park.

- Astronomy Weekend at UBarU – March 1 -3, 2019 – for star gazers of all ages and expertise

to view deep-sky objects such as the Andromeda Galaxy, the Orion Nebula and other treasures of the winter sky. Telescopes and astronomy experts will be available. More at <http://ubaru.org/home/AstronomyWeekend>.

- UBarU Women's Retreat – March 29 - 31, 2019 - This is a weekend to recharge your body, mind and spirit in the companionship of other Unitarian Universalist women. Information and registration at <http://ubaru.org/home/Womens-Retreat>.

- Men's Retreat – Spring 2019 dates will be determined soon. Information at <http://ubaru.org/home/Mens-Retreat>.

UUA General Assembly June 19 – 23, 2019 Spokane, WA

General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect,

and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Registration will open in March. Information at <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

UU Service Committee Advocacy for Migrant Justice

UUSC is actively involved with immigration justice, and provides a wealth of actions and resources on their website, at <https://www.uusc.org/initiatives/advocate-for-migrant-justice/>.

Carpool Opportunities

Want to carpool to an event outside Austin? Email David Overton at denom@austinuu.org and we will work to put you together with someone to share the ride. ·



UBarU Camp & Retreat Center

There are some fun events coming up at UBarU Camp & Retreat Center!

Astronomy Weekend - March 1-3, 2019

Women's Retreat - March 29-31, 2019

Men's Retreat - Date To Be Determined

For more details and to register please go to www.ubaru.org.

If you want to rent a cottage for a quiet weekend not during a retreat, email Robyn at director@ubaru.org.

STEWARDSHIP

Sanctuary Reopens!

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation and the hard work of volunteers and staff, our expanded and renovated sanctuary is open! Not only is a sanctuary a place dedicated to a sacred purpose, it is also a place of refuge and protection. If you've been feeling out of sorts because of our construction, because of politics, or for any reason at all, please come share our sanctuary.

Thank you for your generosity!

Thank you to everyone who gave in 2018 and/or pledged for 2019. And we want to especially acknowledge the generosity of the following folks who created a \$30,000 matching fund to help our church meet its pledge goal in order to have a fully funded budget for next year.

- Margaret Borden
- Brendan and Valerie Sterne
- Gay and Bill Phillips
- Carol Ginn
- Ed and Judy Parken
- And one family which prefers to remain anonymous

Even though the pledge drive is over and our 2019 budget has been voted on, the need for this fun to be matched remains. If you choose to increase your pledge, that amount will be doubled by this fund. We have been limping along from year to year, having to shout out to members about cash-flow shortages and asking department leaders from time to time to delay spending on their budgets. If this fund is matched, we hope we will be able to proceed with more stability and fewer emergencies. This frees up energy to actually do ministry and move the church toward its goals!

We need your help for this push, and we hope it will give us all breathing room and the ability to focus on our mission.

In the spring, we'll have our annual auction and planned giving is always appreciated. Every bit of support helps to keep First UU Austin alive and well in our community.

2019 budget approved at congregational meeting

Our congregation gathered on December 16th for our bi-annual congregational meeting. Unitarian Universalism follows congregational polity, meaning that like other UU churches, the congregation at First UU Church of Austin takes responsibility for governing our church ourselves. As a congregation, we delegate (via our bylaws) the day to day running of our church. We retain several important responsibilities, one of which is to approve our church's annual budget. Thank you to everyone who came and participated in this vital aspect of church life!

Testimonial

Like many of us I suppose, I am a convert to Unitarian Universalism. I like to think I've been a UU most of my life, I just didn't know it until my 40's!

Like many of us I'm sure, after my departure from my previous religious faith I didn't immediately convert to Unitarian Universalism. Frankly, I didn't even know about it. Mary, our two teens and I drifted for several years, trying a few things but nothing really fit. As a substitute for church we would go into the living room on Sundays, where we took turns reading. And if we had known

it, our UU roots were starting to show, because we were reading from people like Emerson and Thoreau, and from the Koran as well as the Bible.

Finally, after a few recommendations, we attended the nearby UU church and it was love at first sight. The reading that day – it was Henry David Thoreau! And a passage we had recently read at home. And it was clear that their beliefs did not interfere with their commitment to social justice – their beliefs informed their actions.

Since then, we have come to a deeper and deeper appreciation of Unitarian Universalism, and the role that this church plays in building the beloved community. UU's do that without hesitation. It was before we came to Austin, but the decision by the board to accept someone into sanctuary – that's faith in action. No committee required. And our United Nations Office was able to stand up for LGBT human rights on the global stage and that has made a huge difference – LGBT Human Rights are now included in almost every human rights discussion at the UN.

Mary and I are enthusiastic about supporting this church, because it is what it says it is, it acts on its beliefs, and it is the best way I know of to bring about the world that we would like to see for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. It does so much – from worship, to excellent music, religious education, social action, community, and much more.

(Originally presented to the congregation by David Overton on September 2, 2018. This version was edited for brevity)

READERS' THEATER

Readers' Theater is back in January! Join us on January 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Gallery (or other space as we can be accommodated during construction). Come join the fun of reading aloud from our evolving collection of one-act plays. No memorizing, no hearsing! We enjoy vocalizing different characters, taking turns reading various roles. Some in our group have stage experience, others do not. Previous experience is not required, just the pleasure of reading aloud a good play.

Readers' Theater is part of Paradox Players, our church's resident theatre company. We meet on the second Monday of the month, September through May. Location is generally in the Gallery but could be changed during building construction, so please look for posted signs. Everyone is welcome!

COVENANT CORNER

Can't the Minister Be My Friend?

Dear Covenant,

I asked the minister if we could go to the movies as I'd like to get to know her better and maybe get to be friends. She said that if we became friends, I wouldn't have a minister any more. What did she mean?

Curious

Dear Curious,

Thank you for raising the issue of how a minister relates to congregants.

There do exist ethical guidelines for ministers' relationships with their congregants. These guidelines recognize that, even with the best of intentions and communication, personal relationships are often messy and confusing. The boundaries set by these guidelines minimize the potential for problems if ministers were to treat or lean on congregants as they would a personal friend. The boundaries also recognize that any time a minister is around any congregant, they are at work.

What does this mean? Ministers call us to our best selves. They serve as both teachers and counselors regardless of the setting in which they meet us. Whether at church on Sunday morning, or at a fellowship event, or a party, or the grocery store, ministers are never "off duty" in the presence of a congregant. This is true even when they are sick, as we discovered when our own minister was recovering from repeated surgeries last year.

As a result of these realities, ministers rarely go to parties, do not send "friend" requests on Facebook, do not seek dinner engagements with individuals and families, do not discuss their own personal questions, do not accept help when sick, and, in general, do not rely on congregants for support when they need help. They rely instead on colleagues and friends outside their church family.

But, ministers are friendly. As a counselor they provide compassion, sympathy, and empathy. They accept friend requests on Facebook. They have working lunches with congregants or lunches just for getting to know a congregant. In all things church-related—worship, justice work, pastoral care—ministers want to be in right relationship with their congregants. And a good place to understand how right relationship begins is in our own Covenant of Healthy Relations, which we read before every congregational meeting and which is prominently displayed in Howson Hall. You can refresh your memory about our covenant at <http://austinuu.org/wp2013/about-us/values-mission/>.

The Healthy Relations Ministry is available to you as a resource if you need help with a difficult situation here at church. It is comprised of Margaret Borden and Elizabeth Kubala and can be reached at healthyrelations@austinuu.org.

Sincerely,

Healthy Relations Covenant

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST**CHURCH OF AUSTIN**

(512) 452-6168

WWW.AUSTINUU.ORG

FIRST UU MINISTERS

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

BRENT BALDWIN

DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

JULES JARAMILLO

CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

SHANNON POSERN

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

BEAR W. QOLEZCUA

BOARD PRESIDENT

SEAN RAMSEY

WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUITY

White Allies of Racial Equity will not be having its regular meeting for January. Instead we are encouraging group members to attend the vocabulary workshop being offered that day.

In the meantime, we encourage everyone to pick up a copy of the book 'White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism' by Robin DiAngelo.

The White Allies meetings of February, March and April will be discussions of this excellent, eye-opening book, using a new book-discussion guide put out by the UUA. The church Board of Trustees has also been reading and discussing this important text.

For more information, contact Scott Butki at sbutki@gmail.com. To be added to the email list, contact Elizabeth Kubala at elizkubala@gmail.com.

FIRST
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH of Austin



4700 Grover Ave.
Austin, TX 78756