

FEBRUARY 2019

first UU NEWS

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



GRAPHIC CREDIT: COMMUNITY WITH A BURGER ON THE SIDE, PHOTO COMPOSITE, BWQ, 2019

Racism Unlearning Circle

Saturday, February 16
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.

Readers' Theater

Monday, February 11
Gallery
7:30 p.m.

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.

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SUNDAY SERVICES

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

FEBRUARY 3

Animal Blessing Service

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE
AND JULES JARAMILLO, DLFD

Join us for an All Ages service to bless the beloved animal companions in your lives. All friendly, well-behaved creatures young, old, great and small, furry and scaly are invited to this cherished annual tradition.

If your pet is not able to come join us in the sanctuary or has passed away, you are invited to bring a photograph of them. We will have treats and cleanup supplies for owners of the “still-learning-what-not-to-do-in-church” critters!

FEBRUARY 10

Blues Theology

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Wynton Marsalis, in his book “to a young jazz musician: letters from the road,” talks about the philosophy of the Blues, how it both expressed and healed the lives of black people as they lived in a society which was structured to marginalize them. How do we learn from the Blues to express suffering, to face it, and to build and celebrate resilience?

FEBRUARY 17

The Magic of Music

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Music can change the way your brain behaves, it can change moods, it can bring people together, Inspire and comfort us. Tyrants often fear the songwriters more than the rebel soldiers, as songs have toppled unjust regimes.

FEBRUARY 24

Trustful and Trustworthy

WITH REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Unitarian Universalism has historically been a faith that questions and can even be skeptical. Yet, we call ourselves a faith, which implies a trust that we are a part of something larger than ourselves. What does it mean to trust and to be trustworthy? How do we rebuild trust when it gets broken and is it healthy sometimes to withhold trust that has been badly violated?

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, February 8

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 -love songs for Valentine’s Day? Also, 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, February 23

*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.

Path to Membership*Saturday, February 9**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, sign the membership book, and fill out new member paperwork, if you feel ready!

Please, be sure to RSVP at membership@austinuu.org as soon as possible or directly with Shannon at the visitor table, so we can get an accurate head count for food and childcare.

Senior Luncheon*Cancelled for February*

The February Senior Luncheon has been cancelled. Please, keep an eye out for future dates and speakers.

For more information, contact Joyce Wilson: (512) 482-0998.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

S A N C T U A R Y | S U N D A Y S | N O O N

FEBRUARY 3**The Environment and Modern Agriculture**

WITH CAROL WHITAKER

In this presentation, participants will explore how raising farmed animals and growing their feed crops affect ecosystems and our health through global warming, the depletion of natural resources, the pollution of soil, water and air, the use of pesticides, hormones and antibiotics, soil erosion, deforestation and world hunger. Participants will also discuss alternative choices that can help protect our environment. Finally, the latest meat and plant-based food science technologies will be introduced.

Carol has an MBA from the University of Dallas, an MS in MIS from NOVA Southeastern University and has been an IT Program Management Professional for 35 years. Her love of the natural world, years of community service to help environmental causes, and her personal health struggles (and subsequent transformation) led her to uncover the connection between human health, the environment and animal ethics. She has since earned her Certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from eCornell and dedicates herself to passionately helping others understand that what they put on their plates really matters.

FEBRUARY 10**Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America**WITH NICOLE GOLDEN
AND DIANA EARL

Nicole Golden is a founding member of the Texas Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. She stepped up as Leader of the Austin group in 2013, shortly after the Sandy Hook shooting, which rocked her to the core and pushed her to get off the sidelines and fight to protect our children and communities from America's gun violence epidemic. Nicole led and grew the Austin group of Moms Demand Action until the summer of 2018. She continues to act as a local spokesperson for the organization while raising her 8 and 10 year old sons. Nicole will present stats on gun violence in the U.S., go over current and proposed gun laws nationally and statewide, share successes within the gun violence prevention community, and discuss where we go from here.

Diana Earl is a Survivor Engagement Lead with the Texas Chapter of Moms Demand Action and an Everytown Survivor Fellow. She became an advocate for gun violence prevention shortly after her son Dedrick was shot and killed in November 2016. Since then, Diana has shared her story across the country and engaged other survivors. Diana has also been active in elections and was involved in many events with the Beto for Texas Campaign. Diana shares her story in the hope that she can prevent other parents from experiencing the pain of losing a child to gun violence.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY | SUNDAYS | NOON

FEBRUARY 17

Transforming Unconscious Racism: Acts of Faith, Freedom, and Love

WITH DR. STEPHANIE HAWLEY

Unconscious racism and anti-blackness are globally pervasive and some argue more lethal than overt racism. During this session we will explore the colonization of religion as a tool for racial domination and how that history plays out in current everyday interactions in faith communities and beyond. Participants will discuss the roles of forgiveness and grace for inclusive living and loving in order to transcend and transform unconscious racism.

Dr. Stephanie Hawley, holding a doctorate in Higher Education Administration/Community College Leadership from the University of Texas at Austin, leads efforts in expanding institutional capacity to achieve racial equity for historically underserved students at Austin Community College (ACC). As associate vice president for the Office of Equity and Inclusion, she promotes collaborative systemic change to support the success and inclusion of historically marginalized students.

Believing “education is a civil right and the community college is the nexus for transforming institutional racism,” she fosters collaboration among marginalized communities, college staff, faculty, and administrators by building relationships and leveraging resources to eliminate systemic barriers to student success.



Dr. Hawley is also a licensed Baptist minister and preaches a social justice gospel of forgiveness as key to racial healing and inclusion. She also volunteers with the Inside Books Prison Project, an organization which provides books for incarcerated Texans.

Dr. Hawley served on the mayor’s 2016-17 Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities Task Force’s education subcommittee, promoting ongoing anti-racist education and development for leaders in education and various industries. She also represented ACC on the Community Advancement Network’s (CAN) board of directors and the CAN Dashboard Steering Committee from 2014-2018 to help support a community-wide focus on addressing racial disparities in outcomes across sectors.

Recent accolades: City of Austin 2018 Equity Champion Award; NAACP 2018 Outstanding Leadership Award; Austin Area Urban League’s 2018 Whitney M. Young, Jr. Legacy Award; the 2018 AFTV 5 Equity & Inclusion Champion Award; Counter Balance: ATX Community Mother Award; YWCA of Austin’s 2017 Legacy Award for racial equity work in higher education.

FEBRUARY 24

There is No “Away”: The Urgent Politics of Trash in Texas

WITH ANDREW DOBBS

Most people never think twice about their trash; they just throw it “away.” But there is no “away,” and across Texas—and right here in Austin—communities being dumped on or exploited by the waste industry are rising up to demand changes to a system rigged in favor of multinational garbage corporations. Trash is choking our oceans and our land but there is real hope and action available to us. Hear more about what you can do to support the fight for a Zero Waste future!



Andrew Dobbs is the Legislative Director and Program Director for Texas Campaign for the Environment, where he’s worked for over 8 years.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Ministerial Intern FAQ

Lee Legault
Ministerial Intern



Who is our new ministerial intern?

I'm Lee Legault, and I feel like the luckiest seminarian alive to be your ministerial intern! I'm a Unitarian Universalist ministerial aspirant in my third year of a four-year, dual masters program. Fingers crossed, I'll get a Masters in Divinity in May 2020 from [Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary](#) and a Masters in Social Work in August 2020 from the University of Texas.

Before I started back to school full time, I practiced law for fifteen years, specializing in complex commercial litigation and appeals (i.e., representing big companies who had been sued). Yes, I did some pro bono work! I represented lots of big companies.

Specifically, I did legal research and briefing. I enjoy spending hours in a windowless, dim space surrounded by books and computer monitors. I miss that. Mostly, I miss the people I worked with.

My home church is Live Oak Unitarian Universalist in Cedar Park. Kiya Heartwood and I did a switcheroo for our internships. My home church is a lot smaller than here, and it feels like my living room to me. I grew up without religion, and adopted Unitarian Universalism as my family's faith in 2012.

Why did you leave the law to become a minister?

I directly experienced that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create

and uphold life. I call it a mystical experience, and I call myself a UU mystic. After one such experience, I found it difficult to return to life as I knew it.

Where do you come from?

I've been in Austin for twenty years. I graduated from the University of Texas School of Law in 2000. I lived in the northeast for high school (Newtown, Pennsylvania) and college (Potsdam, New York). I spent the majority of my childhood in Duncanville, a suburb of Dallas.

What is your family situation?

I'm married to my high school sweetheart. My beloved mate does not come to church, but you will see my three kids here: Casper (7th grade), Dara (2d grade), and Gareth (preK). They perpetually misplace their walking feet and inside voices, and they make me laugh and push me to be my best self. Also, they're seriously good snugglers.

If you are UU, why do you go to a Presbyterian seminary?

It is local, and they give scholarships. Also, I have several UU friends at my seminary from this very congregation: Andy Gerhart and Gus Lott. The students and staff at APTS welcomed me warmly. I remember all too vividly how I stumbled into the admissions office, blurting out that I am not Christian, and have never read the Bible, but think I'm supposed to be a minister. They welcomed the stranger.

How long are you going to be here?

Looong. I'm working part time through summer of 2020. My hours will change semester to semester, depending on my class times. I'll only be around for Sunday service this summer because I will be working full time in the Seton system as a chaplain intern.

How is it going, ministerial intern?

It's humbling. Everybody I've met here knocks my socks off. Also, I don't know much. By the time I graduate, I will have had five internship experiences: Hospice Austin bereavement department, Christopher House social work department, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, Seton chaplaincy department, and an as-yet-to-be-determined counseling internship. They are all humbling, wondrous, and discomfiting experiences. When I was a lawyer, I prided myself on competence. Neither pride nor competence has any place in an internship.

How can I help the ministerial intern?

Tell me about your spiritual history. Let me be part of your joys and sorrows. Allow me to visit your open meetings. Forgive me if I don't visit your meetings. Tell me if a ministerial-ish thing I did or said sat poorly, and let me try again.

How can we contact you?

Eventually, I'll be in room 6 (the Room of Requirements, as I call it). For now, it is a mystery. Email works best: lee.legault@austinuu.org.

YOUR FIRST UU BOARD



Nothing Happens ‘til Something Moves

Sean Ramsey

President
Board of Trustees

This month, Rev. Chris did a sermon called “Potential Ever Emergent” and in which he shared a video about how movements start.

In it, an individual sitting at an outdoor music festival gets up and begins to dance. He is by himself and his dance is, well, slightly out of the ordinary. He’s on a grassy area, arms flailing, head moving about in all directions. He’s intoxicated -- perhaps not only by the music -- and he’s oblivious to the people around him. In this moment and, for whatever reason, he is moved to dance.

At some point, another person in the crowd notices him and decides to join in. He begins to dance but apparently isn’t doing it exactly right. The first person begins to instruct him, as if his own madness has some method. The two are locked in and dancing only to eventually be joined by a third and a fourth person, and soon a small group of onlookers -- who more than double the momentum of the group. Ultimately, the small group doubles and so on

until almost everyone at the show is dancing, and doing so in the same or similar style as the original, lone man on the hill.

In his sermon, Rev. Chris used this video as a way to talk about how movements start and the importance of the first follower. While “nothing happens until something moves”, so sayeth Albert Einstein, it is the first follower -- not the leader -- who legitimizes the movement. By taking one bold step forward, the first follower is the one who brings the vision of the leader to the people. And it is the people following -- the early adopters -- who add more energy and momentum until everyone around who is still the onlooker are in the minority.

While I do not think of myself as the lone guy on the hill, I do believe that the “vibe” of this congregation has inspired me to want to join in and take the chance. This congregation has all the ingredients for making this not only a “good” church, but a “great” church. We have

an unbelievable staff in Rev. Meg, Rev. Chris, Jules, Brent, Katrina and all the supporting crew including Kami, Ellie, Shannon, and Bear. We have an incredible location in Central Austin -- accessible to most areas of town within minutes. And when the dust finally settles, we will have the space and the upgraded building to become a home to more families. Why in the world wouldn’t you want to dance?

This month and next are your opportunity. The Nominating Committee, a group of congregants tasked with finding new Board members, is seeking some good folks to fill the opening positions on the Board. They interview candidates and decide on a few each spring to bring to the congregation to vote on during the congregational meeting. Find a trustee or member of the Nominating Committee and have a conversation about how board service works and learn more about it. Remember, “Nothing happens until someone moves”. Let’s dance.

JULES' DESKTOP

A Taste of Community with a Burger on the Side

Jules Jaramillo

Director
Lifespan Faith Development



Some of you that are on Facebook may have noticed that I have a new mode of transportation in my life - a 2015 Triumph Scrambler motorcycle. It has been a long time since our family has owned motorcycles and it has added a new dimension to our adventures in Austin. What I never imagined would happen was that riding motorcycles would also be included as one of my spiritual practices. This realization happened quite on accident when one of my adventures took me on a more challenging road than expected - full of twists and curves and, although it was unnerving, when I had made it to my destination I realized that the only thing I thought about was exactly what was happening at that moment. Anything that can connect me to the now - to a single breath, to what is right in front of me, to the feelings in my body and quiet my mind - belongs on my list of spiritual practices.

The more I am able to connect to practices of my heart or spirit the more I find myself paying attention to the wonders around me. Maybe that is why I was in tune to the beauty of community unfolding in front of me when my family rode our motorcycles out to [Dan's Hamburgers](#) in East Austin. There we sat, chatting and eating our burgers when I noticed an older woman trying to get up from her booth. In her attempts, she dropped her cane and as soon as that cane hit the floor, a woman that works at Dan's came to her rescue and not only picked up her cane but offered her arm as support. There was a tenderness in her touch that was reassuring and loving. She waited with her until her friends made their way to her. They stood talking together and then a younger man joined them. He looked to be a manager and, at first, I thought the employee might get in trouble for socializing but he was interested in knowing which of the women was asking after his mother. One of the women identified herself and he began telling her that his mother was at home and that she was not doing well. These women were distraught to hear this news and offered an abundance of love and support for the manager's mom. They told him they were her friends, hadn't seen her for some time, shared more about how they knew her, scheduled a time to go by and see her, gave him their phone numbers, and everyone hugged him when they left. It was a beautiful

display of caring and widening of a community circle.

While there, we learned that we were at the original Dan's that has been open for over 45 years and that some of their employees had been there for 25+ years.

This showed up as we watched interactions with the employees and customers. The manager and employees came up to tables, calling people by their names, asking each other about their families, their jobs, illnesses, vacations, sharing good news and bad. It wasn't simply "How's the weather?" kind of conversations - it was were deep community lived.

This experience has had me thinking about church and specifically the 20 plus people that attended our new adult faith development Welcoming Circle in January. This class was for individuals who are new, newish to First UU or Unitarian Universalism or simply interested in finding a place of connection or belonging at First UU Church of Austin. I imagine there are many others in our congregation that are looking for that same kind of connection and may not know how to find it. Maybe that connection begins with you? In February, let's work on widening our circles by reaching out to someone that you do not know and I am not just referring to visitors. You might even introduce someone to one of your friends. If you are a family, find a family you do not know yet and say hello. You might intentionally sit next to someone you don't know at church. You can share the things you love about First UU, where you connect, find something you have in common, talk about an amazing group, social justice cause or service project that speaks to you, or how amazing singing in the choir is. Share what inspires you about Unitarian Universalism or why are you a member at First UU.

In February, open your circle wider, invite people in to create a stronger sense of belonging and community. And if you get hungry, you can always grab a burger at Dan's together.

love, love and more love

~jules

COVENANT CORNER

Watch Your Language

Healthy Relations Covenant

Dear Covenant,

The other day in conversation, my friend was beating around the bush and I suggested we “call a spade a spade.” The person I was talking with got uncomfortable and mumbled something about that being a racist expression. All I meant was that we should be truthful and call it like it is. I checked the dictionary and Wikipedia and they both corroborated my definition and understanding of the phrase. What am I missing? What is she talking about?

- Confused

Dear Confused

We understand your confusion. English (and all languages) are complex and constantly evolving. It's impossible to know the history and the many associations of every word and phrase you use. For about 500 years, calling a spade a spade has meant “to call it like it is.” But in the 1920's “spade” became a derogatory code word for black people. Once that happened, the phrase became racialized, meaning some people intentionally used it to reinforce racist ideas.

Another word that has suffered the same fate is “niggardly.” The word means to be stingy or cheap and it comes from a different root than the word Negro (or its derogatory derivative), but because of the similarities, people through the years have been hurt or offended by its use. Worse, some people have intentionally used the word as a racial slur. Because of the hurt and confusion caused by such words and phrases, many people (including the Healthy Relations Team) suggest that they be retired permanently. Find another way to say what you want.

Here are a few other words and phrases you should consider dropping from your vocabulary:

- **Lame** - This word has come to mean inept, naive, or easily fooled and insinuates that these characteristics are associated with a physical disability.
- **Gypped** - It means cheated and is a slur against Romani people. The word gypsy has been used (often in a derogatory way) to refer to Romani people.
- **Peanut gallery** - We often use it to mean hecklers, but historically it refers to a section in the theater where black people were relegated to sit.
- **Indian Giver** - This is an obvious negative stereotype of Native Americans.

There are plenty more examples. As a builder of the Beloved Community, you have a responsibility to be attentive to the impact your words have on others and to listen to and learn from the people who have been oppressed by them.

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,

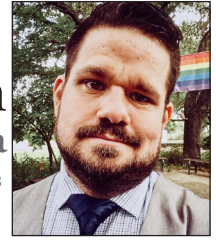
Healthy Relations Covenant

THE COMMCOORD BLOTTER

I grew up in Louisiana among a mixed family. My mother's people were from, northern Europe, northern Africa and southwest Asia. My father's were from Spain, Morocco, the Caucasus mountains of Georgia, Turkey, and Norway. During the years we spent in Louisiana, when not stationed somewhere else in the world, I learned the hard lesson that I couldn't fit in. I was mixed, but not the right way. I wasn't light enough, dark enough, or Christian enough to be accepted into any social group. My parents tried to raise us as culturally American (i.e. Anglo-American) as possible so that we would have a chance. Our heritage, our languages, and our practices served more as hinderances, though. Eventually I learned to embrace my mixed heritage and celebrate my many cultures. They are every part of me, equal shares of my soul, and I enjoy getting to taste the riches within when the chances arise. Appreciation, not appropriation.

This month I would like to share a piece I wrote as I learned to come to terms with my own racial and ethnic past. It is titled 'mixed; in' in homage to my blood and my parents' work to help my siblings and myself in finding our footing in this country where otherwise we stuck out like so many sore thumbs. ·

mixed; in
Bear W. Qolezcua
 Director of Communications



I wanted to be like the others.
 be *like* them, be liked *by* them.

I was born different, though,
 with mitmita in my left hand,
 sumac and lemon in the right,
 tortilla de patatas wrapped in paper
 hiding safely in my pocket.

my outward signs of "looosiana"
 worked well to hide my jewishness
 secreting away the spaniard, the catholic,
 the "mixed blood" "mud-puppy". curses
 hurled at me because my mixtures were a sin
 that I had to reckon to *their* god of purity.
 assuage *their* comfort for clarity, non-ambiguity.

I *thought* I was brown
 but then I wasn't dark enough,
 called white but never light enough,
 stuck in the in between.
 my papers said world traveler
 my accent said foreigner
 and my family said conform.

conform but don't assimilate.

rough tough reality for a kid
 who wanted nothing but normalcy.
 a lesson that I should be like them
 but I still had to find out how to be like me.

where I could, I gained my share of the people.
 learned english, spoke french, ate cajun,
 lived barefoot, lauded creole, loved Louisiana.
 the more of them I became the more I showed
 my differentness. my banners raised loudly.
 the sumac still in my hand, tortilla still pocketed
 but... the secret of my self was not so hidden.

my Spain danced when I would spree loose
 my Palestine rang prayers as I read poetry
 my Ethiopia laughed as I wove tales like cloth

I had conformed but
 I hadn't disguised
 all the pieces of my makeup.

What I feared so was to be found out,
 to be seen as the stranger.

then my strangeness became my strength.
 for the melting pot of the bayou south
 my vital parts lent new seasoning,
 my cinnamon fired with their chickory.

I learned I am not like the others
 and those others were not like me
 nor anyone else.
 and that is what made us strong.

I dipped myself into the community gumbo
 baptized in the bayou,
 made new with the many ancients of me,
 my bones, the broth, all one, all my life.
 still mixed but, now, mixed in.

MONTHLY SERVICE OFFERING

This Month's MSO:

Victor Cornell

ACLU Texas, Statewide Advocacy Manager



"This is why I am going to leave my money to the ACLU. Every time someone on down the line is irreverent about authority, I'll have my monument. Every time some kid who was born...just a plain maverick lifts up her head and dares anyone to stop her, I'll have my monument. Every time they peaceably assemble to petition their government for redress of a grievance, I'll be there. Whenever they worship as they please (or not at all), I'll be there. Whenever they speak up and speak out and raise hell, I'll be there. And every time some blue-bellied, full-blooded nincompoop who holds elected office is called to the floor for deciding to keep us safe by rewriting the Constitution, or by suspending due process and holding a citizen indefinitely without legal representation, I'll be there. Now that is immortality."

-Molly Ivins

The ACLU of Texas is the leading civil rights organization in the Lone Star State. Since our formation in 1938, we have worked in the courts, the legislature, and communities to protect civil rights and individual liberty.

We work every day to secure and protect civil rights for Texans throughout the state. We fight for smart criminal justice reforms that treat everyone fairly. We fight for immigrants who have been unconstitutionally detained and discriminated against. We fight for all the issues protected in the First Amendment, racial equality, LGBTQ equality, students' rights, and women's rights.

In short, we are passionate defenders of liberty, movement builders, an empowering force for civil rights, a compassionate teacher of constitutional values, and a vigilant watchdog against government abuse.

Some facts about the ACLU of Texas:

- Our commitment to defending the Constitution transcends partisan and ideological boundaries. Throughout our storied history, we have defended the

Lovings' right to marry, Gideon's right to an attorney, and Rush Limbaugh's right to privacy. We partner with groups like Planned Parenthood, Texas Association of Business, the Christian Life Commission, the Anti-Defamation League, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, Equality Texas, the Greater Houston Partnership. In other words, we will work with anyone who fights for constitutional rights, and defend anyone whose constitutional rights are threatened.

- The ACLU defends the Constitution regardless of who sits in the White House. We've sued nearly every president from Warren G. Harding to Barack Obama. We've fought measures pushed by nearly every Texas Governor from James Allred to John Connally to Ann Richards to Rick Perry. And we will continue to intervene whenever – and by whomever – our constitutional rights are put in jeopardy.

- The ACLU of Texas is one of 53 affiliates of the national ACLU, our nation's guardian of liberty. For nearly a century, the ACLU has been at the forefront of virtually every major battle for civil liberties and equal justice in this country. Together, the affiliates and the national organization work to ensure that every American in every state, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or immigration status, has the full protection of the Bill of Rights.

On Sunday, February 10, ACLU-TX will be featured as one of the nonprofit recipients of the Monthly Service Offering. Victor Cornell, a member of the church, is the Statewide Advocacy Manager for the organization, based in the Austin office. He will speak on the organization's work and its mission, and how it fits in with the mission of the First UU Church of Austin. He will also be tabling in the gallery between and after services to answer questions, sign up volunteers, and distribute Know Your Rights materials. ·

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

**SOUTHWEST UU
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
FEB. 22 – 24, 2019
HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS**

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.swuuv.org/conferences/2019>.

UBARU EVENTS

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**

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>.

• **Men's Retreat – March 22 – 24**

Come and enjoy fellowship in the Texas Hill Country. Rest, relax, enjoy delicious meals and use the time as a break from your normal routines and schedules. Information and registration at <http://ubaru.org/home/Mens-Retreat>.

• **UbarU Women's Retreat – March 29 - 31**

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>.

**TEXAS UU JUSTICE MINISTRY
LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAY
MARCH 20, 2019**

TXUUJM will gather UU's from across the state at the Texas State Capitol in Austin, for advocacy training and small group meetings with state legislators to talk about our key issues – Reproductive Justice, Immigration, Inequality and Environment. Attendance is free.

Registration is at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/texas-unitarian-universalist-justice-ministry-legislative-action-day-registration-53575694344>.

**UU-UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
SPRING SEMINAR
APRIL 11 – 13
NEW YORK, NY**

This intergenerational event brings together high schoolers and adults of all ages to learn about international justice, the work of the UN, and effective activism. Information and registration at <https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar>.

**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>.

Questions, Suggestions and Carpooling

Questions about UU Denominational events? Suggestions about things to include in future newsletters? Want to carpool to an event outside Austin? Email David Overton at denom@austinuua.org.



CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY WRAP UP & DOUGHNUT WINNER



Thanks to everyone who participated in the first annual First UU congregational survey. We got almost 170 responses, which is a great response rate. The Board is busy analyzing the survey results, including the tons of comments that respondents entered, and will use this year's results as a baseline to measure how we are progressing toward achieving our mission. Also, the Board congratulates, First UU member and survey respondent, Carol Edwards, who is the lucky randomly selected winner of 2 dozen home made donuts, made by our very own, Maria Medina! Be nice to Carol, *maybe* she'll share!

STEWARDSHIP

THE AUCTION IS COMING!

Our church's annual auction is a great way to be involved in church life and express your generosity at the same time! In the past, we've offered bonding opportunities such as BBQ dinners, chocolate dessert parties, weekend getaways, and brewery tours as well as many wonderful items and opportunities.

If you're interested in donating to or assisting with the auction, please reach out to MarrGwen Dickson, marrgwen@hotmail.com or Kirsten Anderson, kirsten.anderson1@utexas.edu. As soon as the date is set, we'll let you know!

FUN FINANCE FACTS

If you are over age 70 1/2 and have a traditional IRA, it's not too early to begin planning for your required minimum distribution. You might be able to take advantage of the charitable rollover provision to make a gift to First UU (and other charitable organizations) directly from your IRA without recognizing those distributions as income. This is a powerful provision that helps generous people be more generous! Contact your IRA custodian and/or your financial advisor for details.

VIDEO TESTIMONIAL

Meet friend and fellow congregant, Tuyền Thái. He is a coordinator of First UU's monthly LGBTQ Heart Circle & Relating Games as well as being a tireless voter registration activist.

See the video interview on First UU's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fuuca>.

STEWARDSHIP

Beyond Tomorrow

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY

Our church doesn't just happen, it depends on the time of generous volunteers, including stewardship volunteers! Whether you helped out for an hour on Celebration Sunday; staffed our table in the gallery; reached out to our fellow members and friends during the stewardship drive or Transformation Through Service interviews; and/or gave your time as part of the Stewardship Council, our church thanks you!

The Fellowship Committee is hosting our church's Volunteer Appreciation Party on Saturday, February 2, at 6:30pm in Howson Hall. We hope to see all of our stewardship volunteers there so we can thank you in style with champagne, desserts, and good conversation!

2019 PLEDGE DRIVE WRAPS UP

Our church members and friends significantly reduced the gap in our pledge goal. A great big thank you to the six families who created the \$30K matching fund and to our congregation for pledging an additional \$20K. We came close our goal and these additional pledge contributions will help make sure our church is fiscally sound in 2019.

WAKE NOW OUR VISION

This Legacy Challenge recognizes the need to strengthen the institutions that amplify the values of our shared faith, both within our congregations and within our communities. It is designed to strengthen the future of Unitarian Universalism through planned giving.

Our members and friends took up the challenge! We haven't yet received exact numbers, so our current estimate is that more than 15 families are giving more \$2 million in planned gifts resulting in over \$100,000 from the matching grant to be distributed over the next two years. These numbers don't include gifts from our members who chose to give anonymously. A great big thank you to everyone who has included First UU in their planned giving!

If you're wondering how our church is going to use these matching funds when they arrive, they are currently earmarked for our operating budget.

The UU Congregation at Shelter Rock generously offered a \$5 million grant to incentivize new planned gifts benefitting UU organizations. These legacy gifts were eligible for a 10% matching cash gift, up to \$10,000. The matching funds were completely allocated in August 2018. It's not too late to give a planned gift to our church! Talk to your financial advisor and Rev. Meg so that our church may honor your wishes.



PARADOX PLAYERS

Tickets Go On Sale This March

Susan Thomson

For those of you who are relatively new to our First UU community, Paradox Players is a community theater ministry that has been producing plays in Howson Hall for a number of years, normally 3 shows a year. Our mission is to produce plays in keeping with our church mission that lift the spirit and provoke thought. We have been on hiatus during the church renovations. Now that the renovations are almost complete we are back in action.

Paradox Players will be presenting a full schedule of plays in 2019, beginning with *Lying To the Sea Witch*, a rollicking musical about taking chances, dreaming and responsibility, understanding that your daily choices determine the person you become. With book and lyrics by our own very talented Kiya Heartwood, *Lying to the Sea Witch* will feature a stage full of pirates, The People's Orchestra of Austin and Rev. Meg as the evil, vain Captain Midas Falwell. It will have its Austin debut on the first two weekends in May in our newly expanded church sanctuary. Don't miss it!

Our September show will be a set of one-act plays with the theme "Saints, Sinners and Thieves." Our final show of the season will be *A Christmas Carol*, beginning the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This is the performance we had planned for 2018 until building renovation delays forced us to reschedule.

Ticket sales for *Lying To the Sea Witch* as well as season subscriptions begin in March.

It is also our good fortune to announce that Barbara Abbate is our new Artistic Director. Barbara brings a wealth of community theater experience beginning with performances in shows while studying at St. John's

University, Brooklyn College, and Northwestern University. She taught and directed for the American Conservatory Theatre's Young Conservatory in San Francisco. Barbara taught Theatre and Broadcasting at several magnet schools in New York City and was an Adjunct Professor of Educational Video at Columbia Teacher's College. Before moving to Austin, she was the Artistic Director of the Schoharie Creek Players in the Northern Catskills of New York where she produced, directed, and performed in several classics of World Theatre. She is also a member of First UU. Greet her when you see her and welcome her to this new position.

Finally, I want to give a shout out to our Paradox Players Leadership Team, Laura King who served as our Interim Artistic Director during our hiatus, Amy Bennett, Managing Director, Leslie Ashton, Treasurer, John Boehme, Executive Producer, Jean Boehme, in charge of our children's theater, Phil Richardson, costumes and Barbara Weeks, props. This group is dedicated to providing the highest quality community theater for our church community. They have persevered during our "time out" due to building renovations, using the time to creatively plan for producing plays in a "stageless" Howson Hall.

We have many types of volunteer opportunities for those of you who want to support community theater at our church. Just ask anyone on our leadership team or look for service opportunities on myFirstUU. See you at the theater!

- Susan Thomson

Chair, Leadership Team, Paradox Players

Sunday, February 10
Rm 13
12:30-2 p.m.

For our February, March, and April meetings, we will be discussing the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo using a discussion guide put out by the UUA. The guide is designed to discuss different aspects of the entire book

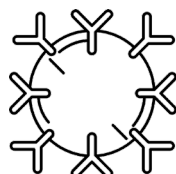
WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUITY

each month, so if you can finish the book by our February meeting, that will make for the best discussion (but if you haven't finished the book, don't let that stop you from attending).

The book is available for purchase at the UU Social Action Table.

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 SUNDAY SEMINAR



SCIENCE AND RELIGION SEMINAR
FEB. 3, 2019
LED BY BRUCE NAYLOR

For this month's seminar we will be joined by Ted Laurensen, the President of the Institute for Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS), via a remote video link from Berkeley, CA. Ted will be discussing the mission being pursued by IRAS, including the importance and relevance of synthesizing a new world view that is Science compatible while still incorporating crucial aspects of religion at the deeper spiritual level.



We will be proudly offering OWL (Our Whole Lives) in spring 2019. Our Whole Lives is a comprehensive and progressive sex education curriculum that supports participants in making informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, Our Whole Lives not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

In order for young people to participate in the class, there is a mandatory parent orientation. OWL has a suggested contribution of \$50 to offset administrative and material costs – please pay what you are able to help sustain this life changing program for our children and youth.

For more information, contact Jules Jaramillo, Director of Lifespan Faith Development at jules.jaramillor@austinuu.org or call (512) 452-6168

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.

"At First UU, I signed up for Chalice Circles and 4x4 dinners, but it wasn't easy to make the leap to the next level of involvement. I was delighted when I had the opportunity to meet with Susan Thomson from the Transformation Through Service committee. Rather than presenting a list of committees and activities, we had a conversation about what's important to me and the ways I'd like to contribute. The combination of Susan's knowledge and listening was uplifting and helped me come up with several service options through the church. I've followed up on a couple of them, including the Memorial Services Reception Committee. Getting involved in this way has been transforming!"

-Toni Wegner

**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

Austin 2019 CROP Hunger Walk **Helping End Hunger One Step at a Time**

Sunday, February 24, 2019

2p.m. – Registration

2:30p.m. – Grand Step Off

Camp Mabry, 2210 W. 35th St

Register to walk with the First UU Team or donate to the team at

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx/firstuuchurch>



2019 marks the 50th Anniversary of CROP Hunger Walks across the nation. Looking to make a difference in our local community and in communities worldwide, the Austin 2019 CROP Hunger Walk has set a goal of 600 walkers and hopes to raise \$85,000 to help end hunger and poverty through long-term sustainable approaches to significantly reduce or eliminate hunger. A portion of the funds raised here in Austin will go to the Central Texas Food Bank, as well as Casa Marianella, Urban Roots, iACT for Refugees, Micah 6, Bethany Faith Food Pantry and SAFE Food Pantry.

From combating droughts in Nicaragua to providing agricultural training in Indonesia to stocking shelves in hundreds of food pantries across the United States, CROP Hunger Walks are fighting hunger. Join the First UU CROP Walk Team today by registering and/or donating at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx/firstuuchurch>. To learn more, visit the Social Action table on Sundays in February or contact Emily Speight at cropwalk@austinuu.org or 512-636-7005. .

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