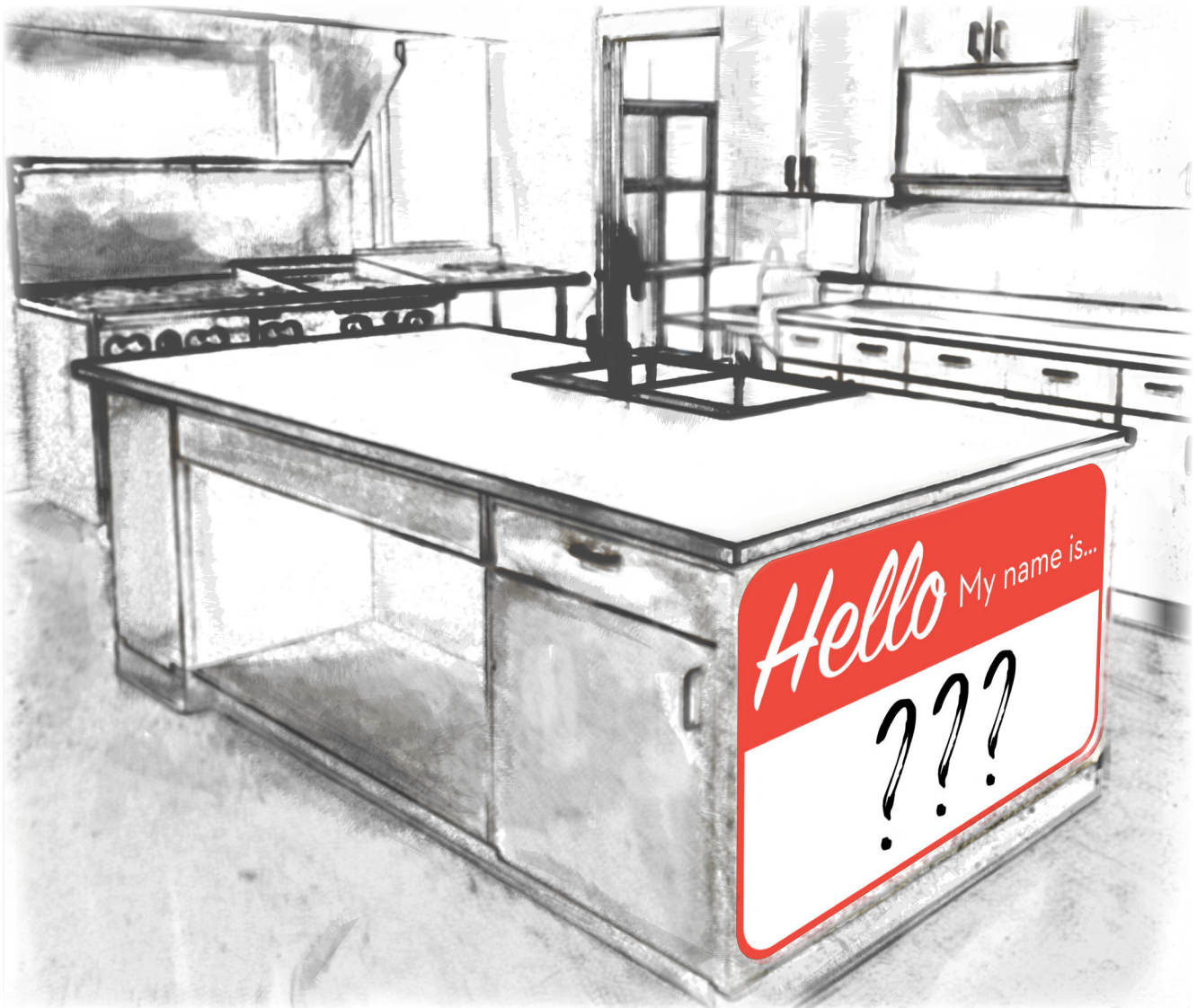


MARCH 2019

firstUU NEWS

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



Racism Unlearning Circle

Saturday, March 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.

Path to Membership

Saturday, April 13
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 membership, UU history, and the history of this church, ways to connect. You might even sign the membership book, and fill out new member paperwork, if you feel ready!

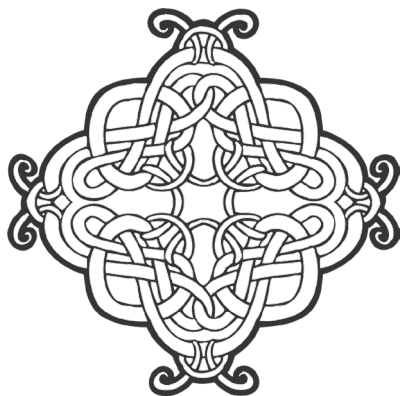
Please, be sure to RSVP at membership@austinuu.org as soon as possible or directly with Shannon at the visitor table, for a head count of food and childcare.

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SUNDAY SERVICES

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM



MARCH 3

The Promise and the Practice

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

James Baldwin said “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” On this Sunday we will be lifting up one chapter of our Unitarian Universalist history, the black empowerment controversy of 1969. What can we learn from these ancestors, if we can call them that when many of them are still lively and very much with us? What is the 6th end of this congregation? What is the 8th principle of Unitarian universalism?

The Promise and the Practice is hopeful lifting up of our commitment to live into a new chapter in the story of our congregation and our UU faith.

MARCH 10

Journey of the Spirit

WITH REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

We often talk about our spiritual path. But is that journey inward or outward or both? Sometimes to become our truest self, we also have to unbecome who we are not.

MARCH 17

Celtic Christianity

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

The Celts developed a Christianity that was intricately intertwined with the earth based faith of the land. Friendlier toward the body, toward women, and celebrating good beer, the Celts’ version of Christianity might be a delightful and refreshing insight into other possibilities than those some of us were raised with.

MARCH 24

The Kindness Connection (All Ages Service)

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Using the book *Zen Ties*, by Jon J Muth, we will tell the story of the summer when Koo, a young panda bear, came to visit his Uncle Stillwater. Uncle Stillwater encourages the neighborhood kids to help an elderly neighbor in need, and friendships blossom. This Sunday we will also be celebrating Maxine Barkin’s 100th birthday with a reception held after the second service.

MARCH 31

The Holiness of Wholeness

WITH REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

How do we nurture our whole selves, especially those parts of ourselves that we may have been taught were not acceptable? How do we create communities and a society that are more whole?

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, March 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, 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@austinnu.org.

UU/Quaker Singalong

Saturday, March 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.

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

Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, March 13

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

MARCH 3

Building Hope: Community First! Village

WITH ALAN GRAHAM,
FOUNDER & CEO, MOBILE
LOAVES & FISHES

Mobile Loaves & Fishes moved its formerly homeless residents into Community First! Village in 2015. Three years later, with more than 150 people lifted up off the streets and back into community, the Village hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to begin construction on Phase II of this vision, allowing Mobile Loaves to lift up another 300 people. As Alan continues to pursue his call to serve the homeless, he shares his wisdom from this explosive growth and calls on others to step up and bring this model to their own communities.

For Alan Graham, Founder and CEO of Mobile Loaves & Fishes, it is all about his relationships — with his God, his family, his staff members and certainly the homeless people he regularly engages on the streets of our community.

Since its founding in 1998, Mobile Loaves & Fishes volunteers have served more than 5 million meals with a side of hope to homeless people living on the streets of Austin. The organization has also spawned similar food truck ministries in other cities across the U.S. With the support of more than 19,000 volunteers, Mobile Loaves & Fishes is the largest prepared feeding program to the homeless and working poor in Austin, Texas. Graham is also the visionary behind MLF's Community First! Village — a 27-acre master planned development

that provides affordable, permanent housing and a supportive community to the chronically homeless in Central Texas.

Alan readily admits that their original paradigm of serving the homeless had some flaws but, with the help of a formerly homeless man, Houston Flake, they improved the model that MLF successfully uses today. Alan is a published author of the book *Welcome Homeless: One Man's Journey of Discovering the Meaning of Home*.

MARCH 10

A Historical Review of Racism and the Indigenous Perspective

WITH GENE RANDALL

This brief presentation begins with an explanation of directives given to European explorers which have directed the nature of conquest and subjugation of indigenous cultures and societies around the world. Inclusion within the greater American society has been a slow and arduous process and the struggle continues.

"Uncle Gene" Randall is a radio host of Indigenous Freedom Radio, an elder, and powwow gourd dancer in the central Texas indigenous community. A native of San Antonio, he grew up in an era of social upheaval and school desegregation at a time when identifying as a Mexican-American was difficult enough. As a public speaker, he has addressed issues of environmentalism, fossil fuel extraction, cultural preservation, and health.

MARCH 17

Legal Expertise for those in Need - with No Fees!

WITH BRUCE BOWER

Bruce Bower will provide an overview of the services offered by Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC). TLSC is a statewide law office that has several programs which provide basic civil legal assistance without charge to individuals of modest means. Mr. Bower will cover eligibility for the legal assistance of TLSC, and the programs of TLSC. Bruce Bower is Deputy Director of TLSC. He supervises TLSC's practice area managers for Families and Survivors; Veterans, Seniors, and People with Disabilities; and Systemic Issues.

He first practiced law in Alabama, in the late 1970's. He represented individuals of modest means in class actions involving civil commitment, Medicaid, food stamps, and public housing. He served on the speaker's bureau of the Alabama State Bar that gave presentations on the prison reform order of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama.

In the 1980's, Bruce practiced law in Illinois and Wisconsin. He was one of the counsel of record in cases that reformed the county jails of Winnebago and Rock Island Counties. He also represented individuals in class action litigation that reformed the operation of the general assistance program in Illinois. In Wisconsin, his work focused on assisting individuals in guardianship, probate, consumer law, family law, and real estate matters.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

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

Bruce worked with others to secure enactment of Texas Government Code Section 531.019, which permits state court judicial review of final administrative decisions regarding public benefits; Texas Family Code Chapter 34, which provides for the authorization agreement for children being raised by grandparents; and Texas Estates Code Chapter 114, which allows for the use of a transfer on death deed to transfer real property to beneficiaries selected by the owner.

He has been awarded "Attorney of the Year" by the Texas Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys in 1999; the State Bar of Texas' J. Chrys Dougherty Award in 2001 for legal services to the poor; the James B. Sales Boots on the Ground Award of the Texas Access to Justice Commission in 2012; Texas Civil Rights Project Justice for All Award in 2012; and the Noble Lifetime Achievement Award of the Poverty Law Section of the State Bar of Texas in 2013. Everything Mr. Bower has accomplished, he has accomplished with the help of others.

MARCH 24

Raising the Decibel: News, Change, and Journalism

WITH JUDY MAGGIO

Judy Maggio is an Emmy award winning broadcast journalist who feels fortunate that she's spent her entire career in Austin, the city she loves. She served as Managing Editor and weeknight anchor at both KVUE & KEYE. She's covered most of the big stories in our community for the past 35 years and held interviews with luminaries like Lady Bird Johnson, Willie Nelson, former Texas Governor Ann Richards, and former President George W. Bush.

She chose to leave commercial television in 2014 and is now the Editorial Director for News and Public Affairs at KLRU - Austin PBS, where she produces and anchors a monthly news magazine called Decibel.

Judy's presentation will take us on the journey of her career and experience in broadcasting, anecdotes and serious looks at the shifting landscape of journalism, and discuss the work it took to start a news department from scratch at KLRU two years ago. She will also talk about her work with the news department, what they've accomplished, and the plans for the future.

MARCH 31

Texas Responsible Retirement Act

WITH MAURA POWERS

In Texas, 7.1 million people facing retirement have no plan on how to do so. This includes 67% of

private sector employees and 89% of self-employed workers. One third of Texans over the age of 65 rely solely on Social Security. It is estimated that the average Texas private sector employee has \$32,000 in their retirement account meaning that for older Texans are heading toward crisis.

The Texas Responsible Retirement Act would create an appointed board, headed by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, that would manage and oversee a fund for Texas employees that have no access to a retirement account. Although they could choose to opt out, all employees would automatically be enrolled in the program. It would involve little cost to the state of Texas and would operate much like the TexSaver Plan. At retirement, an annuity based on the account balance of the employee would begin.

Maura Powers holds a BA from Emory University, an MA from the American Graduate School of International Management, and a JD from the UT School of Law. She has worked as an attorney in the Elections Division for the Secretary of State's Office, and in the office of the Attorney General in Tort Litigation and Financial Litigation. In 2008, she retired from state service and, for the past six years, has served as President of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Texas Retirees Union - Chapter 12. Her interaction with the Texas Legislature and her work on behalf of retired Texas state employees has led her to be increasingly concerned about the future retirement of all Texans.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

What's in a Name?

Rev. Meg Barnhouse
Senior Minister



We take pride in our names, in our family's name. We like saying the names of our children, we like telling people the names of our pets. Saying their names is a warm feeling, it brings us close to them and lets people know they are part of who we are.

We name our heroes, too. People who have taught us and influenced us, whether they are ancestors or authors, teachers or friends. We name our values sometimes too, gratitude, truth, love, and clarity are some of mine.

We are at the point in our building and renovation project where we can offer naming opportunities for the classrooms,

the kitchen, the gallery, and even the new bathrooms, if you like. Would it be fun to name the church kitchen after the font of good food and good cheer in your life? Would it satisfy your soul to have a church kitchen named "The Small Planet Kitchen," or "Gratitude Kitchen?" We could have a classroom named for your family, or a hero of our faith, like John Murray, Servetus, William Ellery Channing, Susan B Anthony, e.e.cummings, or Henry David Thoreau. You might want to name a classroom with a famous Unitarian saying, like "We do not have to think alike to love alike" (Francis David) or a famous Universalist saying like "What

would your church be like if every member were like you?" (from a 19th century Universalist tract).

Putting a beloved name or value on a part of the church building is a good way to honor someone or something. Have fun thinking about it. For a "naming donation" of fifteen thousand dollars, you can name a classroom, with of donation of thirty-five thousand you can name the new kitchen, and donating fifty thousand dollars would allow you to name the gallery. If you have other ideas about a place you'd like to name, (Faith Development supply closet, anyone?) please let me know. .

FIRST UU PAGAN ALLIANCE

**Spring Equinox Seed Planting
& Drum Circle**

*Saturday, March 23
5:00 p.m.*

Come plant the seeds and play the rhythms of Spring! Join the First UU Pagan Alliance for a Spring Equinox seed planting and drum circle to welcome the season.

All Pagan-Friendly UUs are welcome to join us. Please bring drums, camp chairs, and finger foods to share after circle if you wish. No drugs or alcohol before or during this event and please leave pets at home.



YOUR FIRST UU BOARD



Who We Are

Matt Kressin

Member

Board of Trustees

“Who are we?” is a very familiar question for those who identify as Unitarian Universalists. It has been the topic of so many magazine articles, books, sermons, and everyday conversations that I cringe a bit my decision to revisit the issue again here. It’s a stretch to suggest that I would have a profound insight on this matter after so many wiser minds have addressed it. Rather, I will address what I can prove we *are* as a congregation.

Late last year, the First UU Board asked the congregation to answer questions in the form of a survey. In those responses, we hoped that we could establish some baseline congregational demographics like community participation and what the lived values of our community are.

Several questions directly asked whether congregants believe we are making good on our commitment to the ends and mission of the church. The Board wanted to know how the moral owners of this church, the congregation, felt about the church as a whole and also examine specific aspects that we felt were critical to the health of our community. The responses will help guide the board and our ministers as we try to make this the church that we want it to be.

There are pitfalls to looking at community surveys and polls. As we have seen in elections and in social

media, data can be used in nefarious ways to manipulate emotions and create a basis for decisions that aren’t in the best interests of the community (or country!). There is an ugly pseudo-science to throwing out responses in a data set to create the appearance of a mandate for the desired action of the pollster. There is a danger in not getting enough responses from the entirety of the community, so that a vocal minority wields influence in ways that a majority of people might have disagreed with, but were not accurately counted. We hold as our Principles that: there is inherent worth and dignity of every person and there is the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large. Every person should have influence on the institutions that play a role in their lives. As UUs we value and should defend that ability to vote in elections, to be recognized in a federal census, and to communicate directly with our representatives on the rights of those seeking asylum. Without honesty and participation, the system that we value cannot work as we want it to. There are approximately 648 members in our congregation. I cherish and value the 154 completed surveys that we received. I am grateful to have these responses to work with. The time that those 24% took to share information about themselves and their very sincere feelings about

the church will give us a point of comparison for future surveys. The Board is committed to these surveys as a way of monitoring our changes as a congregation both spiritually and demographically. Comments of praise and criticism are valued as indicators of what path we are on. Every voice that speaks will be heard.

It’s a good start to the process. On a scale of 1-10, (10 being extremely likely), how likely would you be to recommend our church to a friend or relative? The respondents answered “10” about 50% of the time. Overall, the weighted average was 8.8. I interpret that as a “B+” of overall satisfaction. Room for improvement, certainly, but pretty good. Most respondents felt that we were living our ends, but could do better. Participation in aspects of our church life varied greatly, but generally those that engaged in church activities were significantly impacted by that participation. There were some very deeply felt comments expressed about the direction the church is headed, indicating how important this community is in our lives. In the future weeks, a more careful and deeper analysis of the survey will follow. Several months from now, we will all have the opportunity to revisit these same questions. I look forward to seeing who we are then, and what has changed. Be heard. ·

FIRST UU ALIVE

March of Love
 Jules Jaramillo
 Director
 Lifespan Faith Development



This month we will be exploring the theme of journey in our faith development classes. Part of our focus will be exploring the “Journey of Justice” and the practice of witness for a cause. We will be looking at how to speak out for justice and learning about walking/moving/rolling together to move justice forward.

Many adults at First UU have been on a protest or demonstration of some kind as Unitarian Universalists are known for showing up for justice in demonstrations, protests, or rallies. Our principles call us into action time and time again. Young UUs also yearn to express themselves in a way that reflects their values towards justice but often do not have early resources to nurture these practices.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if our First UU adults and children had an opportunity to demonstrate together? Wouldn't it be amazing if our children were embraced by their church community as they went on their first demonstration? Wouldn't it be fantastic if we all gathered together as a community to explore the practice of witness for the values we hold? Well, we will have a chance to do all these on Sunday, March 24, at our first annual MARCH OF LOVE!

Our MARCH OF LOVE will give us the opportunity to spend each Sunday in March creating signs that reflect the values we hold individually and as a congregation.

The focus will not be demonstrating what we are against but what we are for. We will also be gathering our church signs; Green Sanctuary, Welcoming Congregations, and any other signs we can locate. On March 24th, after each service we will be walking a short distance (area to be determined), for a 15-20 minute MARCH OF LOVE-- gentle walk, standing, or sitting in folding chair is acceptable too! We will then return to the church and enjoy birthday cake and conversation. Please look for more information in the weekly updates!

DON'T FORGET TO COME BY HOWSON HALL FOR SIGN MAKING: EVERY SUNDAY BETWEEN THE SERVICES! •



ADVENTURES IN INTERNING



Front Office Staff at the Front Line of Ministry

Lee Legault
Ministerial Intern

For the next few months, I plan to write about the people who work at this church, mirroring back what I see as I get to know this place and its people. This month, I was honored to learn more about the folks who staff the front line of ministry: the front office. It's clear that Shannon Posern and Bear W. Qolezcua weave pieces of their souls into this Beloved Community.

SHANNON POSERN

Shannon brings experience running nonprofits and seemingly limitless energy and patience to her role as Congregational Administrator. She turned to nonprofit work as soon as she got her graduate degree in government, working first for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and then the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. She began part-time at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin in spring of 2015 as membership coordinator. Now she works full-time (and then some), handling membership, coordinating volunteers, running the rental operations, fielding financial matters like deposits and pledge issues, doing data entry, keeping tabs on the construction, and setting up for service and meetings. It helps, she says, that she cannot sit still and likes to be busy. *I kinda wonder how y'all kept the wheels on the bus before she arrived.*

Her love for her job comes through right away. She was battling a headache when I started interviewing her for this article (possibly related to

the construction cacophony), but perked up as soon as she started to talk about her "wonderful" volunteers. It's the "best job she could ask for," and her goal is to do it so well that people interphase smoothly with the church and leave on Sunday having gotten what they needed. To that end, she logs six to eight thousand steps by noon on Sunday, which is why she wears sneakers to church.

Shannon is a gardener, and she cofounded the vegetable exchange in Howson Hall. She'll be pushing her parsley as soon as construction permits the exchange to restart. Got something green stuck in your teeth this spring? Blame Shannon.

BEAR W. QOLEZCUA

What struck me most about Bear is how theologically he thinks about his work, frequently referencing our principles and sources when he explains his role as Director of Communications. Probably that's because he has a master's degree in theological studies, and certainly it's been working to the church's benefit since he arrived eight months ago.

Bear sees his work as his ministry. He consciously aligns himself with the church's mission when he works behind the scenes to foster community via print and digital media. He makes the church welcoming and accessible from a visual, technological perspective.

For example, Bear thoughtfully designed this newsletter to maximize its readability. He picked the font, spaced the words, and arranged the color contrast to soothe the eye and facilitate mental processing of the content. In doing so, he draws on his lived experience as a person with low visual acuity and color blindness. He knows not all persons take in printed media easily, and he wants our community to welcome those who face challenges navigating online and print communications. I do not have enough column inches to explain his overhaul of the church's website, Facebook page, and internet access.

He glows when he talks about his passion for building a visual brand for the church that matches the church's values. If you feel inspired to do your part, know that there is a style sheet on the church's website you can consult before you submit

continued on page 10...

...continued from page 9

items to Bear. Type “style guide” into the search box. I checked it before I turned in this article! Bear would also be glad to work with church groups to help them put out welcoming, branded print materials.

I want to give a big shout out to Bear’s family, what he lovingly refers to as the “collective”. His husband, Gil, volunteers as a Support Teacher for our LFD program, an usher, and supports Bear behind the scenes, doing things like helping to translate liturgy into Spanish and troubleshooting IT issues. Another partner in Bear’s life, Frank, helps teach LFD for the 3rd – 5th grade and serves as an usher on Sundays. Gil and Frank helped me print out my kids’ name badges just last Sunday!

Shannon and Bear share an office and a deep affection and regard for one another. Shannon loves Bear’s sense of humor and his willingness to help out with things outside of his job description. Bear absolutely adores Shannon’s open mind, open heart, and deep knowledge of bakery/gardening/ecology/general homemade geekery... they indulge each other’s love for Futurama quotes and a constant supply of dark chocolate and caffeine.

Their bond transcends the office. Adorably, their families are going to start playing Dungeons and Dragons together on the weekends. Thanks for helping with my on-boarding, Shannon and Bear, and all blessings on your front-line ministry!

Dear Covenant,

There’s a lot of talk about Beloved Community and antiracism going ‘round at the church. It seems like dialogue would be good, but when I tried to ask a person of color what it’s like being a person of color in this church, she was pretty short with me. I felt like I’d done something wrong. Did I?

Surprised & Puzzled

Dear Surprised,

Thank you for asking!

People of color in our congregation are sometimes in the mood, with the right energy, to educate white people who ask questions about race. And sometimes a person of color is tired, or thinking of something else, or is disheartened at how white people feel entitled to stop them in the course of their day and ask them to pause and answer questions about race. Requests are often made without any effort to build a relationship of friendship and trust. The Black Lives of UU, a very good resource for UU people, asks those who identify as white to look to white ally groups, books, and other sources first before asking a person of color to be their educator or their resource. It might be worth a conversation with the person you approached in which you make an apology for counting on her to be your teacher on the spot.

When people of color do choose to talk to white people about their experience of racism, the reaction is often a denial of the speaker’s experience. “That’s not racism.” “The intent was...” The speaker’s daily lived experience is dismissed, and the focus moved to a defense of the white perspective. This takes an emotional toll and adds to the daily stress.

COVENANT CORNER

Antiracism 101

Healthy Relations Ministry

Nevertheless, a white person can easily find the perspective of people of color on racism. Marginalized and oppressed people have been writing about their experiences since at least the 1800s. Today, there are books, movies, blogs, podcasts and articles, by people of color and by white people. Simply googling “white culture,” “white supremacy culture,” or “white privilege” will produce a wealth of information.

Racism was created by white people, for white people, originally wealthy males. It still benefits white people over people of color. Within each “ism”—class, gender, disabilities, etc.—the burden falls most heavily on people of color. It is incumbent upon white people to take responsibility for educating themselves about how a system created by and for white people works in their lives today. In fact, many white people have an easier time learning about racism from other white people.

At First UU we offer discussion groups (White Allies for Racial Equity, Unlearning Racism) and book discussions. The White Allies group began a three-part discussion of the book *White Fragility* which continues in March and April. Both the Public Affairs Forum and the Change Team offer opportunities to learn more. For specific suggestions of where to start, simply watch the church announcements to see what various groups are offering.

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 ·

STEWARDSHIP

Your Philanthropic Garden

Many of us start our first garden on a bare piece of land. Through the days and years that ensue, it takes on an identity from the various plants we place there, how it is designed, and then cultivated to maturity.

Some of us live long enough to have a glorious garden stretching to a far horizon ... some live only to plant a few rows of flowers or cultivate a couple of trees. Some will have entire sections reflecting their interests and involvement; others have only a half dozen or so.

As you plant your life's garden through your deliberation and deeds, will there be a section devoted to philanthropy? And will it include gifts to First Unitarian Universalist Church?

Our hope is that your garden of life will include many wonderful thoughts and experiences regarding your association with our congregation and that the section on philanthropy might even include a gift in your estate plan.

Or perhaps your philanthropic

garden will have an area of rare varieties that, once you have passed, can be transplanted to bring beauty and serenity to all who will visit.

Perhaps you'll have an endowment section, where the berries produced each year hang heavy on the limbs until gathered to feed the program of your choice.

There are many possibilities for filling your garden for philanthropy.

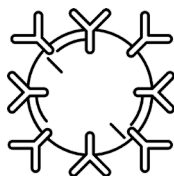
A member of our stewardship committee or one of our pastors would be glad to discuss this with you.

HANDS ON HOUSING



Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 23rd. That's the date for the spring Hands on Housing project. HoH is a program through iACT to paint, do small repairs, and beautify the home of a low-income elderly or disabled household. The agency uses other funding to do major repairs before the volunteer events, and we finish the job! We had a great group in the fall. Along with several other teams, we made minor repairs and painted the exterior of the house for a family in north Austin. Let's have another big group of UU volunteers and transform a house and lives! We need both skilled and unskilled volunteers for painting (unskilled) and special repair projects (skilled). Come to the Social Action table in the gallery on Sundays before the event to sign up or contact Jill Smith at handsonhousing@austinuu.org.

FIRST SUNDAY SEMINAR



SCIENCE AND RELIGION
SEMINAR
MARCH 3, 2019
LED BY BRUCE NAYLOR

The supposition of our seminar is that Science AND Religion together can meet humanity's fundamental psychological needs better if they are in harmony with each other, even though achieving that harmony can be very challenging. However, in this session we will take a look at the classic Science VS. Religion perspective which began with Galileo. We will view and discuss a video of a recent formal debate held at Caltech among 4 academics, two on each side of this question: "Has Science Refuted Religion?"

FIRST ARTS AT FIRST UU

SATURDAY
MARCH 2, 2019
HOWSON HALL

On the first weekend of the month, we will host "First Arts at First UU," featuring an artist to showcase several pieces and discuss their work. For the inaugural night, we are pleased to have Shirley Steele join us for a brief presentation. Church member Shirley Steele is an Austin based new media artist whose creative practice involves writing code and creating animations, as well as printing and painting. We will enjoy wine and light hors d'oeuvres during the talk, then serve a pizza dinner after. Childcare will be provided and will include an opportunity for artistic expression and crafting for the older kids (nursery care also provided.) RSVP to gallery@austinuu.org.

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE



Homes for the Homeless

Richard Halpin

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.

Homes for the homeless? How could that work? I went out to Community First! Village to take a look.

It was an absolutely mind-blowing experience. The folks at Community First! believe that homeless people have "experienced a catastrophic loss of family", and that they are part of

a dysfunctional fragmented tribe often alone, friendless, regularly without food, clothing, and shelter.

What alternative can building a community do that simply providing housing cannot?

Community First! achieves their vision through their Village by taking a relational, instead of transactional, approach for connecting with our homeless siblings.

The Community First! staff and volunteers have shown their respect for the homeless in our community by recognizing there are numerous needs. To answer these needs they have developed a respect based community with onsite services, entrepreneurial opportunities, and person-to-person loving honesty all at a fraction of the cost for more traditional housing with homeless initiatives.

Started by Mobile Loaves and Fishes (mlf.org), the staff and volunteers have built a community model based on Genesis 2:15 which teaches that humanity was placed on earth, in the biblical Eden, in order to care for it. Community First! Village did just that with 27 acres in their Phase I. Their goal was to house 200 residents in 120 micro homes, 100 RV's and 20 canvas-sided cottages and in 2018 they began phase II, adding

24 new adjoining acres and more than doubling those housing numbers.

Homes, organic gardens, art, woodworking, blacksmith studios, clinic, kitchens, laundry/restroom facilities, worship space, an outdoor theater, an operating garage and so much more have been made possible through the Community First! Village's initiative of creating a living community.

There are also mission homes that house intentional residents who live in the community to contribute to its care and momentum. The volunteers living in these missions are not homeless themselves but choose to serve the homeless community in our midst. They work to bring good into the world by supporting the mission and success of the Village and its residents.

My visit was a trip into Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of the Beloved Community being brought to life and lived 24/7.

Carolyn Gremminger, Luther Elmore, and I are looking for folks who would like to visit the village and do some hands on work. There are many practical projects we can tackle like working in the garden or collecting usable, useful tools for the residents to have at their disposal.

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE

Homes for the Homeless



MONTHLY SERVICE OFFERING

This Month's MSO:

Lynn Adams



My name is Lynn Adams, and I serve on the board of iACT (Interfaith Action of Central Texas). For the past three years I've coordinated and facilitated iACT's Red Bench, a monthly dialogue opportunity. I am deeply grateful that this congregation has again chosen to support iACT through its second Sunday monthly service offering.

I've been thinking about the decades-long friendship and connections between iACT and First UU. Many of you church members have served and participated in iACT as board members, Red Bench facilitators, Hands on Housing coordinators and workers. You've helped or attended our Thanksgiving service, special memorial services, and participated in our Passport program. You've volunteered and given financial support providing much needed services to refugees. I'm just so proud.

Our UU values align closely with iACT's commitment to social justice and with the mission of iACT: to cultivate peace and respect through interfaith dialogue, service, and celebration. We serve some of Central Texas' most vulnerable populations: impoverished senior citizens, those living with disabilities, and refugees from around the world.

Here are some of the programs your contributions have supported over the years:

- We teach English and essential life skills to newly arrived refugees—nearly 800 in 2017. We offer the only welcome these families may receive upon arrival, often deeply traumatized after difficult journeys. We also offer special summer camps for children whose challenges are not easy to grasp.
- Our Hands on Housing (HoH) program engages volunteers and skilled professionals to repair and revitalize the homes of people in Austin who are living in deep poverty. Our HoH volunteers have repaired over 1,800 homes since 1990.
- The Red Bench is a monthly public dialogue that offers space for people with different worldviews to engage in respectful and civil discourses to see and hear “the other,” and discover shared values. As opportunities for face-to-face contact become more scarce, Red Bench offers a time and place for exploration of topics such as compassion, racial intolerance, and more.

Please go to the iACT website (interfaithtexas.org) to check out the Passport program and learn more about our work. .

*This MSO Article is a re-run from March 2018
(with edits to keep content up to date)*

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS AT THE BORDER

There is a crisis at the border, and more walls will only make it worse. The Unitarian Universalist Association and UU Service Committee have issued powerful, informative statements and UUSC has set up an on-line petition. Please read the UUA statement and sign the UUSC petition (if you agree with it) – it only takes about 10 minutes.

- UUA Statement – <https://www.uua.org/>
- UUSC Petition – <https://www.uusc.org/>

UUSC also has lots of great background information on immigration on their site.

TEXAS UU JUSTICE MINISTRY LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAY MARCH 20, 2019

TXUJMJ 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. Attendance is free. Registration is at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/texas-unitarian-universalist-justice-ministry-legislative-action-day-registration-53575694344>.

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.

Men's Retreat

March 22 – 24

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>.

Summer Camps

Fun and faith for youth in the Texas Hill Country. Programs tailored to each age group. More information and registration: <http://ubaru.org/home/SummerCamp>.

- Primary camp for kids ages 9-11 or rising grades 4-6th, June 9-15
- Intermediate camp for kids age 12-14 or rising grades 7-9th June 16-22
- Senior camp/ Reeb camp for kids age 15-18 or rising grades 10th-2019 high school graduates June 23-29

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 19 – 23, 2019

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

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

THE POINT 2019 JULY 21-26

LAKE MURRAY STATE PARK
OKLAHOMA

Spiritual deepening, fellowship, and fun in a beautiful setting. Information and registration at <https://www.thepointuu.org/>

QUESTIONS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND CARPOOLING

For questions about these or any other denominational activities, to find out about available scholarships, or for carpooling to events, please email David Overton at denom@austinuu.org.

LGBTQ+ SPIRITUALITY

LGBTQ+ Heart Circle & Relating Games

Leo Collas



Everyone in America has been exposed to some kind of religion. If you are new to this country, you arrived with your religion. If you grew up here, you learned about it at home, in school, or from watching television. Maybe you accompanied your parents or grandparents to church or temple, and maybe you talked about god with your friends. Religion is everywhere. It's in politics, in the news, and around every corner. And the religious messages being sent in this country are usually those of disapproval. Religious groups often demonized other groups, and lines are drawn separating the faithful "us" from the unfaithful "them". Those on the unlucky side of that line can generally turn to members of their own community for support. Their family, friends, and religious organizations offer a reprieve from these disparaging narratives. That's not so if you're a queer kid.

Queer kids in America almost certainly don't have (or know they have) that support. Even those with an understanding family, are burdened by the enormous adolescent pressure to assimilate - to fit in with what's "normal". Although today's queer kids have access to better resources than in previous generations, coming to terms with being different is still pretty scary. Religion turns out to be a source of torment rather than of comfort - fear instead of joy. By

the time they confide anything to anyone about their nature, queer kids have heard years of disapprovals and rebukes by conservative religious voices offering comfort via a dubious, conditional form of institutional love.

LGBTQ people who make it to adulthood are often survivors of spiritual abuse or casualties of religious malpractice. Even those lucky enough to have been raised in the UU church, which offers unqualified acceptance and celebration of individuality, felt the sting of admonition wielded about elsewhere. At one time in their lives, everyone who attends First UU's monthly LGBTQ Spirituality meetings was a troubled queer kid.

Having that shared past gives LGBTQ folks a unique perspective on faith, current events, and the nature of human existence. The discussions we have at the LGBTQ Spirituality group at 2:00 on the 3rd Sunday of each month reflect that insightful world view. The group has been a part of what makes Austin weird for 10 years now, having found a home here at First UU about a year ago. As we begin our 11th year, we will start following First UU's Chalice Circle discussion format. Please join us!


After the LGBTQ Spirituality discussion, another amazing event happens. Have you ever been face to face with a stranger, asked them a probing question about their lives, and then repeat their answer back to

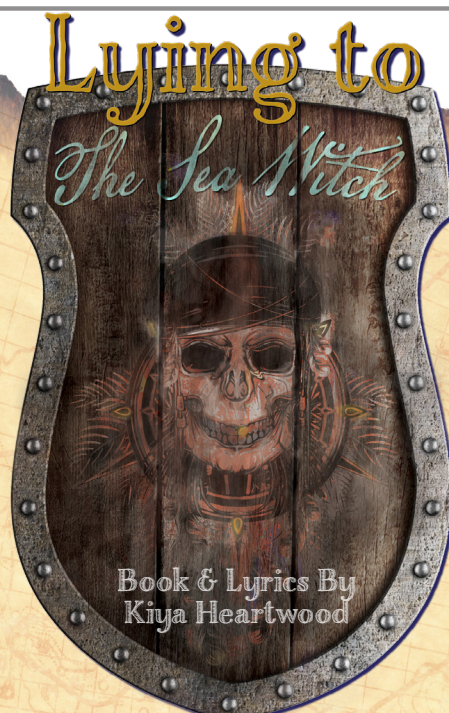
them? Have you steered a blindfolded stranger around a classroom among other people doing the same crazy thing? Have you shared a funny story about growing up "different" - with people who can relate?

If not, then you haven't yet been to the monthly LGBTQ Heart Circle & Relating Games. Those are among the activities we engage in on the 3rd Sunday of each month, from 3:30-6:30, right here at First UU! Loosely based on theatrical improv, the focus is on learning ways to better communicate with others - and to do so from the heart.

The event is advertised in the Austin Chronicle and through the Meetup app. Participants range in age from their 20s through their 60s, and it's virtually the only organized group in town that brings together lesbian women, gay men, non-binary people, trans people, and even straight allies to help one another with personal growth. And did I mention that it's fun? Yeah, you'll have fun.

Strong friendships have developed between participants, and new folks are always welcomed with open arms. There are usually between 12 to 25 people at the LGBTQ+ Heart Circle & Relating Games event, and everyone leaves feeling better than they did before they got there. The business of transforming lives can start off just like that - with a smile that turns a stranger into a friend!

PARADOX

PLAYERS **PRESENT**



MAY
2-5 &
9-12

FIRSTUU
AUSTIN

TAKE CHANCES, DREAM, BE RESPONSIBLE, AND UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR DAILY CHOICES DETERMINE THE PERSON YOU BECOME...

Auditions will be held at First UU Austin:

Friday, March 8 | Saturday, March 9 | Sunday, March 10
 7 - 9 p.m. 10 a.m. - Noon 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

SCRIPTS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE STAGE AUDITION. PLEASE BRING A SONG FOR THE VOCAL AUDITION.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Casey MacKenzie - 13 year old Youth - Sings several songs
 Mrs. MacKenzie - 30s/40s Female - One Song
 Dorothea - 13 year old girl - One Song
 Drake - 30s Male - Party Planner Type
 Marcignano (The Sea Witch) - Ageless - One Song (Operatic Range)
 Captain Midas Falwell (Think Captain Hook)
 Mr. Quill - 50s Male - Not the typical First Mate
 Micro - 12 year old Youth - A Replica of Captain Falwell

PIRATES (AGE/GENDER UNDETERMINED) - WILL SING AND DANCE

Joker - A Caribbean Style - One Solo
 Hasty - No Sense... Just Hasty
 Dodge - Bumbling, Mimics Hasty (Like Laurel & Hardy)
 Grim - A Bit Off Edge
 Tack - Very Literal

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO CONFIRM AN AUDITION:
(512) 429-0074

STORYTELLING UNDER THE STARS

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

First UU will be hosting a live storytelling event under the stars on May 5th from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

We are looking for five people to tell true stories from their own lives in front of a live audience of fellow UU's and friends. If you would like to be one of the five story tellers, please submit a one paragraph description of your story idea to stories@austinuu.org by April 7th or stop by the storytelling table in the gallery between services.

If you know someone in the congregation who has a good story, please encourage them to submit an idea. We hope to gather a group diverse in age, background, and ethnicity.

Storytellers will be required (privileged) to attend a two-hour workshop on the basics of storytelling taught by long-time storyteller and storytelling teacher Carol Ramsey. The workshop will be held at the church on Sunday, April 14th at 6:30 p.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- April 7 - Deadline to submit story ideas
- April 14 - Storytelling class
- May 5 - Storytelling Under The Stars



THE WORLD PEACE DIET

Healing Our World: A Deeper Look at Food Presented by Dr. Will Tuttle

*Sunday, March 17
7 p.m.
Howson Hall*

Dr. Will Tuttle is a zen monk, philosophy and sociology professor, and has presented widely throughout North America, Europe, and the Pacific. Author of the acclaimed Amazon #1 best-seller "The World Peace Diet: Eating for Spiritual Health and Social Harmony", which has been published in 16 languages, Dr. Tuttle is a recipient of the Courage of Conscience Award and the Empty Cages Award.

MUSIC NOTES

MUSICIANS FOR SUNDAY SERVICES

MARCH 3

Benjamin Dia, pianist, will provide music for both services.

MARCH 10

The First UU Adult Choir, under Director of Music, Brent Baldwin will be singing.

MARCH 17

A chamber group from the First UU Adult Choir will be providing music for the services.

MARCH 24

The First UU Adult Choir and, Director of Music, Brent Baldwin will join in celebrating Maxine Barkan's 100th Birthday!

MARCH 31

Kathryn Govier, pianist, and Ben Hummel, violinist, will share their gifts for music with us.

READERS' THEATER

*Monday, March 11
Gallery
7:30 p.m.*



Come join the fun of reading aloud from our evolving collection of one-act plays. No memorizing, no rehearsing!

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.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORLD CAFE

*Saturday, March 9
3:00 - 6:00 p.m.*

The Intergenerational World Cafe is a meeting for facilitated round table discussions on a range of topics centered around community purpose in the "World Cafe" style hosted by Anne Adams who is involved with both the SelfDesign Graduate Institute and the Elders' Action Network.

**Saturday, March 9th
3pm - 6pm**

Intergenerational WORLD CAFE

**Round Table Discussions
Deep Listening + Community
Purpose**

This event would be great for anyone who:

- Wants to witness the World Cafe style of conversation as a tool for community building
- Expresses leadership of all forms, youth and elders invited
- Desires to be part of the community process of pollinating ideas and sharing of what they are passionate about

The World Cafe is a powerful social technology for engaging people in conversations that matter, offering an effective antidote to the fast-paced fragmentation and lack of connection in today's world. Based on the understanding that conversation is the core process that drives personal, business, and organizational life – it's a way of thinking and being together sourced in a philosophy of conversational leadership.

LOCATION::

4700 Grover Avenue

@First Unitarian Universalist Church

RSVP/ MORE INFO: vcabrales@gmail.com

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

KITCHEN COORDINATOR/SEXTON

KAMI CORNELL

WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUITY*Sunday, March 10**Rm 13**12:30–2 p.m.*

For our March and April meetings we will be continuing 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 each month, so if you can finish the book by our March meeting, that will make for the best discussion. But if you haven't finished the book, don't let that stop you from attending.

Rev. Chris Jimmerson will be facilitating the meeting. 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.

