

APRIL 2019

firstUU NEWS



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

Graphic Credit: When All Are Welcome (Idyll), Bear W. Qolezcua, 2019.

Racism Unlearning Circle

Saturday, April 20
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 : 1 5 A M A N D 1 0 : 4 5 A M

APRIL 7

If I Needed You

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Using the music of Townes Van Zandt, combines with the April Soul Matters theme of Wholeness, we will talk about how we need one another in order to be whole. How can we care for one another? Is there a way to be loving and challenging at the same time? How do we reach out with compassion? Is compassion always the best approach to another person? How much are we supposed to take care of ourselves and how much do we take care of others?

APRIL 14

The Power of Story

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

In advance of a church storytelling event the first weekend in May, we will talk about the power of our stories. We will talk particularly about the stresses put on us by the stories told about people with our particular identities, women, lgbtq, people of color, white men, Etc. How do those stories shape us and put pressure on our thinking?

APRIL 21

How to Grow a Seed

WITH REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

If you were planted, what would grow? What is left in a room when you leave the room? What is left in a group when the group scatters? What would be left here on Earth when you leave?

APRIL 28

Youth Sunday

WITH THE FIRST UU YOUTH

Our Senior High Youth Group will lead the service and invite the congregation on a journey in self-reflection, how we've grown, and who we've become over our lives. Second service will feature a Bridging Ceremony where we welcome our graduating seniors to the Young Adult community and our 8th grade Middle School Youth into the Senior High Youth Group.

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, April 12

Rm. 17

7-10 p.m.

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

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

UU/Quaker Singalong

Saturday, April 27

*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@austinuu.org.

Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, April 10

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

APRIL 7

Leading from the Future Backwards

WITH JANIS BOOKOUT



Janis Bookout is the Executive Director of Earth Day Austin. She has over 10 years of experience in small business development (with a focus on marketing, branding and systems), 5 years experience in elementary teaching, and 16 years of experience in personal and professional development. She entered environmental work in 2012 when she began consulting for Austin EcoNetwork (Austin's curator of all things environmental) and then became project coordinator of an EPA-funded city-wide project on food waste prevention and recovery. She is also co-founding a global citizens' climate initiative called 2020 or Bust. Join Janis as she talks about the environment, measures being worked on in Texas, and how we can help to preserve the Earth.

APRIL 28

An Update on the 86th Texas Legislature

WITH REP. VIKKI GOODWIN



State Rep. Vikki Goodwin will provide an update on the 86th session of the Texas Legislature. A great deal of progress has been made on school finance reform this session and she will give an update on House Bill 3 as well as how the House and Senate are reconciling their different visions. She will also speak on important topics such as healthcare, pensions, the environment, and safety.

Vikki Goodwin represents Texas House District 47 in western and far south Travis County. She is a small business owner and a real estate broker. After graduating from the University of Texas with a BBA, and the LBJ School of Public Affairs with a master's degree, Vikki remained in Austin and raised her children here.

A long-time resident of Shady Hollow, Vikki has been very active in her home community: serving on HOA boards, civic club boards, ABOR committees, and on an AISD task force. Through her volunteer work she was inspired to become an

advocate for public schools in the Texas Legislature. Additionally, her volunteer work with Impact Austin gave her insight into the need for various services in the community. Working with Austin Habitat for Humanity and Foundation Communities strengthened her determination to help those who slip through the cracks, so often as a result of medical issues, student loans, or low paying jobs.

As a member of the state House, Vikki continues to advocate for the people of her district, the environment, a strong economy, and a sound budget through her work on the Urban Affairs and Homeland/ Public Safety Committees.

PARADOX PLAYERS

PARADOX



All the World's a Stage

...AND ALL THE WOMEN
AND MEN, MERELY PLAYERS.

Whether you are interested in performing on stage or in film, enhancing your delivery techniques for business, church or community events, developing a more theatrical style for special occasions, or adding some dramatic pizzazz to your writing, please join us at 'All's the World's a Stage'. This ongoing workshop offers an evening of dramatic writing and performance practices utilizing games, acting, theatre, and improvisation techniques in order to enhance both vocal and physical expression as well as character development.

Leaders will include professionals in theatre, performance, writing, and movement. Participants are encouraged to bring pieces for exploration, development, and feedback. Maybe you are preparing a speech or writing a story that requires character development; this meet-up provides an environment where you can explore, experiment and expand.

Each two hour session will provide time for warm-up games, theatrical acting, writing, movement, and directing with the final hour open for the exploration and feedback

of participant presentations.

All the World's a Stage Classes will be held monthly on the third Wednesday.

June 28 has been set aside for a showcase for any one who wants to present their pieces to a live audience. June 26 will be the rehearsal.

Come to learn, come to grow, come prepared to practice, or simply to witness.



Class instruction will be provided by the following instructors:

March 20 - Kyle Mitchell & Desmond Calloway - Improvisation

April 17 - Barbara Abbate - Acting/Directing

May 15 - Kathleen Juhl - Social Justice & Play Writing

June 19 - Peggy Lamb (Movement), Kiya Heartwood (Delivering a Song)

This program is sponsored by the Paradox Players of First UU Austin

Call 518-429-0074 for more information or to sign up for presentation time

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Growing Principles

Rev. Meg Barnhouse
Senior Minister



OUR DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT, JULES JARAMILLO, HAS DIAGNOSED THAT WE NEED TO DO MORE INTERIM WORK ON OUR FAITH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD OUR NEXT TWO YEARS OF INTENSE FOCUS ON LIFESPAN EDUCATION. SHE IS CLEAR WITHIN HERSELF THAT SHE IS NOT THE PERSON TO WALK US THROUGH THIS PROCESS. PLEASE SEE HER COLUMN (PAGES 8 & 9) FOR SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE INTERIM PROCESS. WE WILL HAVE A MEETING ON APRIL 14 WITH ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AT 1:15 P.M. LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED. CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED.

We Unitarian Universalists tend to give great weight to words. Words have the power to shape us. We articulate our shared UU values in our 7 Principles. One of the Principles talks about a free and responsible search for truth as one of the mainstays of our religious activity. We believe that truth and the revelation of it is not fixed in one book, for example, or at one time in history. We believe that the revelation of truth is continuous. We are always learning through experience, science, and conversation. We believe that there is truth to be found and that no one has it whole. Does truth change as our understanding does? I don't know the answer to that.

The UU principles evolve with our knowledge. I remember back to when I was considering whether to become Unitarian Universalist. My first general assembly was in Charlotte, North Carolina, where the seventh principle was being voted on for the second time. As the votes

were counted, my spirit glowed with gratitude that I had found these people who would pledge to affirm and promote the connections between and among all beings, that there was a web of life and that we were part of it.

Now Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, a newly formed and funded organization within our denomination, focusing ministry on Black Unitarian Universalists, proposes an 8th principle.

"WE, THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, COVENANT TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE: JOURNEYING TOWARD SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS BY WORKING TO BUILD A DIVERSE MULTICULTURAL BELOVED COMMUNITY BY OUR ACTIONS THAT ACCOUNTABLY DISMANTLE RACISM AND OTHER OPPRESSIONS IN OURSELVES AND OUR INSTITUTIONS."

The board has heard from some members that there is interest in us adopting this principle as a congregation. Several other UU

congregations have endorsed this individually in advance of the lengthier process of its being passed by the denomination as a whole.

In the fall we plan to have congregational conversations on this new Principle to let the board know what you think. It goes hand in hand with First UU's 6th End that the congregation adopted last spring. We approach this with curiosity and hope, and those among us who identify as white continue to learn as a way of both creating evolution/revolution in this current culture and as a way of showing the People of Color among us that the white folks value them and crave understanding of their experience of life. We UUs need to stay alert and educated so we can be allies for our POC beloveds, our LGBTQ beloveds, our aged and differently-abled beloveds, and more. Yes, it's hard to stay curious and be a learner. Do it for love.

YOUR FIRST UU BOARD



The Ties That Bind

Maria Medina

Member

Board of Trustees

Linkage. It's a word that I had not been familiar with until I joined the Board here at First UU. At first, I thought it was a little made up, that it was a word that was maybe unique to this congregation to describe something particular to here, but no. Google defines the word as "the action or the state of being linked". Linkage in the First UU community is meant to look at the way the congregation is linked to the community we are in (Austin), the community immediately around us (the neighborhood), and the community within (the congregation).

There was a point in time that I thought I knew what linkage looked like at First UU. When I joined in July of 2017, I was sure of the ties that bound the First UU community together, but it wasn't until I began my time on the Board that I had to really ask myself, "How are we bound together?" The First UU community is made up of about 700 congregants, people who are considered to be "official members" of the

congregation. On any given Sunday, we may have a bit less than half of our congregation come through for service and fewer during the summer. We also have many "friends of the congregation", those who are members of our community but, for their own reasons, have not signed the member book. I know and love several such friends because I see them with frequency at service and events. We have dozens of congregation groups. Unfortunately, I can probably count on two hands how many of those groups' meeting dates I know. Many other organizations have come to share our space, and I tend to know this because I am more likely to come to an event hosted by such outside organizations. In fact, my exposure to First UU happened because I came through for a Voter Deputy Registrar training.

So, how is that? How is it that here, in a community where I first learned of the word "linkage", I have felt more bonded with liminal organizations and liminal bodies than

I have felt with this congregation? How are we, the congregation, bound together? And how can we reinforce those bonds when we identify them?

As a member of First UU, I have always wondered what we could achieve if we worked more in tandem with each other. I've imagined cross-collaboration between Green Sanctuary and the Cares Council to help our congregation members who may need a little extra help caring for their lawns. I've imagined what it would look like to have Paradox Players work with the People of Color and Alphabet Soup to bring to the stage works by diverse playwrights with diverse casts and crews. I've imagined our Youth Group being given a month to be in charge of inviting guests they would like to hear for Forum. I imagine, and I wonder what greater heights we could achieve if we just asked ourselves, all together, all at once, eye-to-eye, "How are we, you and I and all of us, bound together?"

Wouldn't that be something.

JULES' DESKTOP Real Interview Questions

Rev. Meg Barnhouse
Senior Minister



Jules Jaramillo
Director
Lifespan Faith Development



Rev. Meg: *Jules, you have been here at First UU for about 9 months now. Can you share some of the joys and some of the difficulties of working with us?*

Jules: When I think of joys and First UU, I think about how the congregation has learned to play with me as we are learning. You have shared your stories with me—personal stories about your own life journeys and the important pieces of history you hold. It has been a joy to work with the teaching teams and make very special connections with each of you as you share your gifts with our children and youth. It has been a joy to work with the staff team—First UU has an outstanding group of professionals serving this congregation.

The difficulties have been centered around my being in a different role than I anticipated being with you. I have spent the last nine months working in areas that would be considered areas of focus for an interim religious educator. Not having a support team in place at a church this size has been a great challenge. Not being able to form a support team has been a greater challenge. Noticing concerns about the nursery, hearing practices that have occurred in faith development,

inconsistency in programs meeting the needs of our children and youth. These developments suggested that I needed to shift my perspective of the FD program as though I was looking at it through the lens of an interim religious educator. As I began approaching the program in this manner, I heard deeper stories of what might be immobilizing volunteer efforts, of why a vision had not been created for faith development, of how the program might not be valued, or of why families might not be able to connect at First UU. These are all challenges that reinforce the recommendation there be an intentional focus on an interim process.

Rev. Meg: *Do you have an idea of where we should go from here and how we can get there?*

Jules: Some of the interim work has already begun! We have been working really hard over the last nine months to identify specific areas that need stronger interim support. For the remainder of my time with you, we will continue some of this work, meet with families, and talk more about the process ahead for First UU. Soon, recruitment will start for a new religious educator that has interim training, we have already connected

with Congregational Life staff from the region and spoken to interim consultants. These are excellent professional resources to guide you through the interim process.

Rev. Meg: *What are the kinds of things that make a program cry out for an interim process?*

Jules: I think many of us know that First UU's faith development has had struggles and have had them for quite some time. Just in my nine months here, I have discovered that four previous religious educators have been deeply loved and also hold heartache and division in the congregation. From early on, I recognized that First UU's faith development program didn't have the support it needed for an assistant or energy to form volunteer support teams. There has been no articulated vision of faith development, very little conversation around how families want to and can be supported, and little movement in how First UU includes children that need additional support in FD classes. These things combined with developing clarity around the value that is placed on faith development at First UU are all markers of the necessity for an intentional interim process.

JULES' DESKTOP

Real Interview Questions - Continued

Rev. Meg: When you say the word 'heart' in connection with this process, what are you talking about? What would that look like?

Jules: Heart connection can manifest in different ways during this process. It can surface in ways First UU learns to value faith development as a community. How this connection is integrated into the life of the community through first experiences so that children, youth, and families might feel loved and accepted or find a place of belonging. To engage in this interim process fully, intellectual understanding is essential as well as being able to have an emotional investment. Hearts have been broken, hearts have been invested, future hearts will be touched with this work as well as bodies and minds. Coming from a place of gentleness and love when doing this work is a safe space to meet and welcomes people that may have been marginalized. If heart, love, acceptance, and a place of belonging is the foundation you are building from, especially working with children, youth, and families, it is a great new beginning.

Rev. Meg: We have loved having you here with us, and I know there will be sadness about your decision not to be the one who takes us through

this process. We trust you, and we understand you're following your inner compass that tells you we need someone else to companion us in our focus on building a strong foundation underneath this program. What will the last few months of your time with us look like for you? What are your goals during these last months?

Jules: I came to First UU knowing that the church was under construction and there was going to be a fair amount of transition. I do not think anyone had any idea that there would be so many roadblocks when we got to the heart of the faith development program and these roadblocks were preventing the faith development program from moving forward. Each one pointing directly to the need for an interim process. I continued to move forward but one person alone cannot move a program without more volunteer support, heal without speaking directly to history, or be the sole creator of a vision that belongs to First UU and your future. Without hesitation, I did focus much of my time and energy on key elements of the interim process this year. I also know that it is not the journey I can continue to companion you with, for the faith development interim process is not the ministry I am called to be in as a religious educator.

My commitment is to prepare First UU to begin the next steps of the interim process. I have already begun by consulting with The Guild of Interim Religious Educators and Connie Goodbread from the UUA to be resources and support for you in the interim process. Meg is also researching other professional resources. Meg and I plan on meeting with at least one representative from each of the First UU families at 1:15 after the second service and a light sandwich lunch on April 14th (child care will be provided) and we are also hoping to have support teams in place before I leave. I am beginning to work on our summer teams and programs and hope to have full teaching teams in place for fall, so that the transition for your new religious educator will be smooth. My request is that you say "yes" if you are approached for support. This is First UU's faith development program and your interim process to finish. I am confident that it is the best pathway to open a bright and vibrant future for all of you. •



A LETTER TO THE CHURCH

DEAR PARENTS WITH THEIR YOUNG IN WORSHIP,

You are doing a very big, very important job. One that I know is anything but easy to manage each and every week. And I am grateful. I see you with your arms, hearts, and lives full and I can only imagine that sometimes you sit in the sanctuary already tired. And I am grateful you are here. All of you.

I watch when you bounce and love on your babies to soothe them as you juggle a car-seat and a diaper bag while just to find a place to sit. I see you and that slight moment of embarrassment you feel when your young child cries. I see the anxiety you emit when trying to find something within reach to help calm them and remove the perceived spotlight from your head.

I see you with your somewhat older kiddos, watching you cringe when they ask questions or speak in not quite an inside voice let alone a “church whisper”. I hear the pique in your voice as you plead with your child to just be quiet and be still as you feel so many eyes directed at you. Not so many look at you as you feel but that doesn’t change the feeling.

I know you want to just give up and ask if it’s even worth coming as a family if you so often feel more deflated by church than uplifted. But what you do, what you are doing, is so important. And for that I am grateful.

Each week we are reminded that “the noises of life and the sounds of young people” are an understood

and accepted part of the life and silence of this community but still the all too familiar daggers and strong reprimands come from others who seem to forget that they too have been there, that they too were children once and made the same exclamations that come with the early stages of life. And each week I see you here and I hold out hope that as our young people grow these pews won’t become devoid of life. I hope that the vivacity of children, and the beautiful wildness of their being part of the community, continues. I hope they aren’t driven away from this place of faith and love by those who would force them to be anything but themselves just to placate their our broken view of the goodness within the young people who come to this campus.

When you are here, First UU is filled the sound of joy and living. When you are here, the faith in which we invest ourselves is apparent and present. When you are here, we are reminded that our faithful worship has nothing to do with staunch silence and forced reverence; it is about being together in body and spirit, worshiping with our whole selves, as people who are welcome and welcoming to share in the sacredness of the interdependent web.

The young people on campus are learning how and why we worship and that it is important that we come together as one in order to support and sustain our lives of faith. I see

their learning, I hear it, I feel it wash over me with their cries and yelps and giggles and questions and attempts at whispering. I sense it in the crunch of emergency pretzels, of children pushing themselves beyond their own fears to greet others around them, of the children taking part and giving voice to the communion of souls housed in these walls. I see children who rummage through their busy bags in order to fill their time as they listen to the lesson and hear it in their own way. I hear the young ones, just learning to read, as they help find the hymn and pick out the words they can, joining in with their soft, sometimes unsure notes.

I know it is hard to be a parent of a young person in this church and I want you to know... *IT MATTERS*. It matters so much to me. It matters to the children in the pews who see others their age near and know they aren’t alone. It matters for all of us to see families engaged in our life of faith. It matters to the young people to be a part of this community and recognized as beloved participants in the heart of this place.

It matters that our young people learn that this community finds importance in gathering to worship and share. It matters that they learn they are welcome in this place no matter what, that everyone of goodwill is welcome, and that their worship matters to us as much as it does to them. When we teach our

A LETTER... CONTINUED | TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE

young people that their own practices of faith matter we are teaching them that they are enough, here and now, as full-fledged members of this community. They don't have to wait until they can "behave" or "sit still" or "be quiet" in worship.

THEY MATTER NOW.

THEY ARE ENOUGH NOW.

And you are giving us a great gift and honor by letting us worship with them.

It matters that our young people learn that they are a central part of this place or any place where they find themselves. Their questions, jokes, their songs and whispers, their perfectly timed (or sometimes just off-tempo) cries are a beautiful addition to all that is within the life of this place because it means they are present. It means we are being allowed to be present with them.

I know it's sometimes the hardest thing ever but thank you for bringing your young people here. I hope you know that your family - full of its own noise and life and joy and struggle and hope - are not just tolerated in your time here but are relished and loved as a vital part of this place and of what it means to be UUs.

With all the love I can muster

- an orphan who found out their missing family was here, all along

Bear



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@austinnuu.org to schedule a conversation.

KRISTEN RAY'S TESTIMONY

"I was ready to get more involved in the church community but wasn't quite sure how to match up my skills and interests with the needs of the congregation. Through a conversation with Susan Thomson, I was able to better understand how I could meet new people and give back. It wasn't a high-pressure situation, rather our conversation allowed me to reflect what I'd want to get out of the services I could provide. I've been involved with Wellspring for my personal spiritual development and am an usher and Sunday school Helper. Engaging with folks in the community is important in my spiritual development and I'm glad I had the opportunity to figure out the best way to do that."

ADVENTURES IN INTERNING

Maestro and Mad Scientist

Lee Legault
Ministerial Intern



Brent Baldwin drove a hard bargain for his first performance in a church sanctuary. At eight years old, he offered his mom a deal. He would do a solo in her Methodist church pageant, if she agreed to let him go to Sunday school just once a month, for a year. She took the offer.

As Brent told me this story, I expected that solo would be the start of his long and auspicious career as a vocalist, conductor, and multi-instrumentalist. Nope. Although music ran in his family, he focused his creativity on visual arts for many years. He broke into music only after he broke his leg above the femur in high school. After a month in traction, he was laid up all summer. He decided he would use that time to learn to play the guitar like Jimmy Page.

Led Zeppelin, he says, broke open his brain. That summer, he practiced guitar ten hours a day. Not realizing that Jimmy Page did overdubs, Brent worked feverishly to be able to produce music at a level that one person—even Jimmy Page—could never accomplish. I feel this anecdote encapsulates the Brent Baldwin I'm coming to know. He works feverishly to accomplish things that should be

impossible for one person.

The collage of performance posters in the music office attests to Brent's drive and energy for creating. He works three-quarter time for the church as the director of music and adult choir. He's well known outside the church as the artistic director of Panoramic Voices and as a conductor, arranger, and guitarist for numerous artists and performances. The church benefits from Brent's connection to the larger Austin music community, getting guest performers that would not otherwise do church gigs because of their respect for Brent.

Brent remains fiercely loyal to the music program he has stewarded at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin for twenty years. He calls his relationship with the church symbiotic because the congregation is as open-minded musically as it is theologically, allowing him to experiment and grow in ways that would not be possible anywhere else. Brent views the church as his laboratory. Don't like the music? Come back next week; it will be different. Homogeneity makes Brent uncomfortable. ·

2019 AUSTIN CROP HUNGER WALK



The last Sunday in February was a great day to participate in the Austin 2019 CROP Hunger Walk at Camp Mabry. In 2019, we celebrate 50 years of CROP Hunger Walks across the nation. The First UU CROP Walk team joined teams from congregations all over the Austin area in this interfaith walk that raises money to end hunger in Central Texas and around the world.

It's not too late to help the First UU team reach our fund-raising goal!

Donate online at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/>

austintx/firstuuchurch or contact Emily Speight at cropwalk@austinuu.org for other options. From combating droughts in Nicaragua to providing agricultural training in Indonesia to stocking shelves

in local food pantries, your donation will make a difference in the fight to end hunger. A portion of the funds raised 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.

Thank you for your support of the Austin CROP Hunger Walk! We look forward to seeing you on the trail in 2020!



Photo Credit: Emily Speight, 2019.

Top Left: First UU Participants

Bottom Right: ACC Student's Booth, discussing the costs of rice farming in Indonesia for the farmers

Bottom Left: Second part of the CROP walk at Camp Mabry..



MONTHLY SERVICE OFFERING

This Month's MSO:

Wendy Erisman



The proposed Unitarian Universalist 8th Principle asks us to explicitly commit to dismantling racism and other oppressions as part of our efforts to build the Beloved Community. In recognition of this work, the monthly special offering for April will go to Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU), one of the groups supporting adoption of this principle by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The BLUU Organizing Collective was founded in July 2015, following a Movement for Black Lives Convening in Cleveland, Ohio. Black UUs who attended that convening recognized that the Unitarian Universalism can be a faith within which calls for undoing racism may be heard and acted on but also that UUs have a way to go before the faith can be a comfortable home for many people of color. With financial support from the UUA, BLUU has held several gatherings for Black UUs and offered workshops, worship services, and community gatherings at recent UUA General Assemblies.

BLUU is committed to three central goals:

- Expanding the power, capacity, role, and visibility of Black UUs
- Providing support, information, and resources for Black UUs
- Justice-making and liberation through Unitarian Universalism

BLUU members work to reach these goals through activities such as monthly online worship services; support for Black religious professionals; the BLUU Ministerial Network, which provides spiritual nourishment to Black UUs across the country; and public statements and advocacy leadership on issues related to liberation and justice.

In many ways, BLUU is a new incarnation of the Black Affairs Council and the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus, both of which Rev. Meg spoke about last month when she preached about the black empowerment controversy that embroiled the UUA in the late 1960s. Supporting BLUU is one way that UUs can help move our denomination beyond the challenges of the past and into a world that truly values diversity.

More information related to BLUU's work can be found at: <http://www.blacklivesuu.com>. More information on the 8th Principle can be found at: <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>.

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

The Unitarian Universalist Association and UU Service Committee continue to speak out in support of migrants. UUSC provides action opportunities and other information on their website, at <https://www.uusc.org/initiatives/advocate-for-migrant-justice/>.

UBARU FAMILY CAMP MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND MAY 24 – 27

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. Activities will include cookouts, campfires, sing-alongs, worship, swimming, games, nature walks and a star party if the sky is clear. Registration and more information at <https://ubaru.org/home/FamilyCamp>.

UBARU SUMMER CAMPS

Fun and faith for youth in the Texas

Hill Country. Programs tailored to each age group. More information and registration at <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 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 is now open, and reduced rates are available until April 30. Information at <https://www.uua.org/ga>. If you can't go in person, it is also

possible to attend GA virtually as an off-site delegate.

THE POINT 2019 JULY 21-26

LAKE MURRAY STATE PARK, OK

Spiritual deepening, fellowship and fun in a beautiful setting. The Point offers personal growth, faith renewal, learning opportunities, spiritual practices, community worship, music, excellent cuisine, sustainable practices, social events, outdoor activities, programming for all ages and interests, and an engaging theme speaker. Information and registration at <https://www.thepointuu.org/>

Scholarships are Available. The church has a limited number of scholarships available to enable youth and adults to attend denominational events.

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



UBarU Camp & Retreat Center

Summer Family Camp - May 24 - 27.

Summer Camp (Ages 9 - 11) - Jun 9 - 15.

Summer Camp (Ages 12 - 14) - Jun 16 - 22.

Summer Camp (Ages 15 - 19) Jun 23 - 29.

UbarU Youth Science Camp - Jul 28 - Aug 3.

OWL Camp (8-9th Grade) - Aug 4 - 10.

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

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

STEWARDSHIP

FUN FINANCIAL FACTS

We appreciate any and all support of our church. As an added bonus, your financial support of our church is considered a charitable donation by the IRS. You should have already received a statement in the US postal mail. If you haven't or if you found errors, please contact our Congregational Administrator, Shannon Posern (shannon.posern@austinuu.org), who can assist you.

A FUN WAY TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH!

Our annual auction is a great opportunity to be involved in church life as you support our church. As you peruse the opportunities the auction offers, please bid with a spirit of generosity!

LEGACY LEADERS LUNCH - SAVE THE DATE!

First UU is starting a new tradition of honoring the generous individuals who include our church in their planned giving. If you took part in Wake Now Our Vision or have named our church as recipient of your generosity, thank you. And please join Reverend Meg on Sunday, June 30, for a lunch honoring you! Stay tuned for details.

LEGACY GIFT RECEIVED

We mourn the passing of every member and friend who leaves us. And we celebrate the gifts of those who chose to make our church part of their legacy. A church member who preferred to avoid public attention passed last year and left First UU as a partial beneficiary of her IRA. Her gift was unexpected and welcome as it helped fund our 2018 operating budget.

INSIDE BOOKS
PROJECT

Monthly we send your amazing re-gifted books and a note of encouragement to Texas inmates. We gather on the second Monday of every month, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., with a terrific pot luck lunch and great fellowship

Our current meeting space is Vox Veniae Church located at 3106 East 14 1/2 St., Austin (a white painted church on the NW corner of Airport and 14 1/2 St.). Our church members have been faithful and generous givers to this all volunteer non-profit tons of books as well as naming us a recipient of the Monthly Service Offering and are so pleased that the work continues! For more information, check out our website, www.insidebooksproject.org

HOUSES OF WORSHIP
COALITION

Our Houses of Worship Coalition (HOW) continues to advocate for a fair electric rate for houses of worship. Part of our thinking is worship spaces are committed to helping the community, nourish souls, transform lives and do justice.

They don't use the electricity they buy to make money but to help their community, so why not continue a rate discount to support this good work?

The case for Austin energy rates is coming up next year so we are planning on that. In the mean time we have worked with several Houses of Worship to provide input to the research/study Austin Electric is doing on "time of use" by worship spaces which will impact rate considerations.

HOW is also working on a plan for more worship places to use solar.

SPEAKING TRUTH TO
POWER

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) has purchased the water rights from under the Bastrop, Texas Boy Scouts USA property. The nearby residents, farmers, and ranchers are very concerned that LCRA has decided to pump as much water as they can from the water table under Bastrop and Lee counties to sell to the tsunami of new home owners rushing into these counties.

LCRA is not authorized to be in this kind of water business and we have testified to the Legislature Sunset committee to say this is alarming and must be investigated.

You can find testimonies and more by searching for Richard or Beki Halpin, Lower Colorado River, or LCRA Testimonies at www.sunset.texas.gov.

COVENANT CORNER

When is it gossip?

Healthy Relations Ministry

Dear Covenant

Whenever I need to know what's happening around church, I check in with my friend 'S' who has been around a long time and seems to know pretty much everyone. I appreciate knowing the kinds of things I learned from him last Sunday -- that a certain congregant just got a book contract, another is pregnant, another has a parent in hospice, and the teenage son of yet another has become addicted to opioids. But someone overheard our conversation and scolded us (albeit gently) for gossiping. Is it gossip to exchange information about other church members? Is it gossip to share the joys and difficulties of church members who are not present?

*Uncertain***Dear Uncertain,**

It's a great question and not an easy one to answer. Not knowing S's motivations for sharing makes the question even more difficult to answer. When good judgement is used, gossip can serve to keep the social wheels greased. But when used maliciously or without thoughtful consideration, gossip can tear apart relationships and communities.

Humans are social creatures with social brains. It is our nature to share information about each other. That is what has helped us survive through the ages. Natural selection favored

those of our descendants who had an intense interest in the private lives of others, who had the social skills to build friendships and alliances, and who could interpret, predict and influence the behavior of others.

When gossip comes from a genuine and caring place, it can help strengthen the bonds of community. For example, the news that someone got a book contract or is expecting a baby can provide fodder for conversation and an opportunity for a community to come together and celebrate. The news that someone has a parent in hospice could prompt much needed support from the community.

Sometimes people share information because they themselves need help holding it. Imagine, for example, that 'S' recently lost their mother. They might have been stirred up by the news of a parent in hospice and felt the need to talk about it. In another possible scenario, 'S' would like to reach out to the congregant but could use your help finding the most skillful way.

So clearly sharing information about others has its place. However, sometimes gossip is self serving and causes harm. It's possible that 'S' likes being the one in-the-know so much that they violate people's trust or confidence. Maybe they like to feel superior and enjoy sharing information that makes others look

bad. Maybe they don't like a certain person and tell you things about that person in the hopes that you will see the person the same way and be on their side.

Here are a couple of questions you or anyone should consider before sharing information about other people:

Was the original information shared in confidence? If so, you obviously shouldn't be sharing it.

Was it sensitive information that someone might not want shared even if they didn't think to say so? For example, suppose someone tells you their daughter is in a treatment center for an eating disorder. Even if you have a good reason to share that information -- say you want to tell someone who might be able to offer support -- you should get permission before doing so.

Sometimes even thoughtful people with good judgment will make mistakes. It's possible the woman who is pregnant wasn't ready for people to know or wanted to be the one to tell people. In that case, an apology is in order.

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.

READERS' THEATER

Monday, April 8
Howson Hall
7:30 p.m.

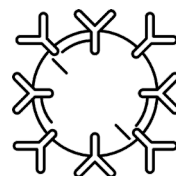


We continue to bring plays to life! This month we will be workshoping a play written by Paradox Players' co-founder, Poullette MacDougal, who will be present to hear her short script read aloud. Feedback from workshop sessions help the playwright's revision process. So whether you read or listen, your comments will be appreciated.

This will be our next-to-last meeting of the season. Final meeting is May 13, when we return to reading a collection of published one-act plays.

Newcomers are always welcome!

FIRST SUNDAY SEMINAR



SCIENCE AND RELIGION
SEMINAR
APRIL 9, 2019
LED BY BRUCE NAYLOR

Precipitated by the hurricanes and forest fires during 2017 and reenforced by the October 2018 U.N. report on Climate Change, the world is paying attention to climate change to a greater extent than ever before. Books on the topic range from the hopeful to the terrifying, all based on portrayals of the future that are as accurate as our current understanding can provide. Which will it be?

We will be exploring a slice of the available material on the subject and reviewing the role that religion might provide at this critical point in the history of the human race.

MUSICIANS FOR SUNDAY SERVICES

APRIL 7

Jordan Price is back! The First UU Adult Choir and Band join Jordan in this service featuring the music of Townes Van Zant.

APRIL 14

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

APRIL 21

The First UU of Austin Adult Choir, under the direction of Brent Baldwin, will be singing Johann Sebastian Bach's well-loved motet *Jesu, meine Freude*, BWV 227. Joining them is a string quintet and Benjamin Dia on the organ.

MUSIC NOTES

Jesu, meine Freude is one of the best loved of all Bach's choral works. This motet (from the old French word *mot*), is also the longest and most musically complex. It is the only motet that combines a complete chorale (music by Johann Crüger, words by Johann Franck) with text from the Bible (St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans), and it also has a rather harmonically rich vocal character because of an additional 2nd soprano line, which Bach does relatively rarely. The first part of the text deals with life on earth and the conclusion is eschatological in character. Bach highlights these dramatic contrasts through his vivid setting of this piece.

April 28

It's Youth Sunday. Come join our youths as they bridge from middle to senior youth and from senior youth to young adults.

MORE ADVENTURES IN INTERNING



Ready or Not, SWUUV-hoo!

Lee Legault

Ministerial Intern

I had grace and greatness thrust upon me recently at the Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women's retreat in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Well, grace, greatness, and more grace is more accurate. I'd seen announcements about the March 2019 SWUUV retreat months before in my home church's newsletter. It sounded intriguing, but also hard.

I wouldn't know anyone. It was a day's drive away. I'd have to leave my family for a weekend, guaranteeing that my house would be in shambles upon my return. All the other woman would know more about Unitarian Universalist history and theology than me. Strangers would talk to me, and I would have to say words back. I killed adventure before it could ever begin with such thoughts.

Then came Mary Overton. As a recent member of the SWUUV board, she testified to the group's warm, inclusive nature and the opportunities for spiritual growth and deepening that characterize their gatherings. She would drive me to Hot Springs. I could get some studying done in the car, or take a restorative nap while she drove. There

would be snacks. I could stay in her hotel room. She would introduce me to people. If it seemed expensive, I should know there are scholarships available. She graciously encouraged/wrangled/persuaded me into going. Good thing I did, because great things were in store for me.

The afternoon before the retreat, the seasoned UU minister from Hot Springs scheduled to preach and chaplain at the event cancelled due to parish emergencies. Guess who got a field promotion? That's right: Lee Legault, seminarian extraordinaire and First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin intern. Fortunately, I have a sermon. I dusted it off, put on my big girl boots, engaged in non-nutritive comfort eating, and took a restorative nap while Mary drove us 500 miles.

I loved the SWUUV retreat, and encountered grace in myriad forms. There are no strangers at SWUUV, just acceptance and communion. They laughed and sighed at all the right parts of my sermon. I ate, sang, danced, and learned with about a hundred new friends. Generations attend together.

Our own Chloe and Hannah LaPorte went with their mom and sister, and they've been going together for years.

Of the many workshops I could have attended, I thought the best two were by women from this church. Liz Nielsen entertained me with the fascinating world of planned giving. I don't know how she did it, but it was interactive, funny, and engrossing. Encourage her to take it on the road because every UU church needs to hear it for our faith to flourish.

Mary Overton educated me on the UU response to the refugee crisis at the global, national, and local level. She spoke to a packed room. I felt proud to be associated with our sanctuary church. Hearing about this church's work inspired participants to ask for more information on offering sanctuary in their home churches.

Mark your calendars, ladies and gentlemen. The next SWUUVCon begins February 28, 2020 in Lafayette, Louisiana. There will be grace, greatness, and more grace. I call dibs on rooming with Mary Overton. .

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT



Welcome to World Religions!

This summer we wish to introduce world religions through stories and allow children to explore the differences and similarities to their own lives. We will be using beautiful picture books to introduce our younger young people to Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism in a gentle and respectful way. These books teach about world religions by telling a story. The stories illustrate concepts

such as the value of wisdom and loyalty in Hinduism (Savitri), the importance of family in Islam (The Hundredth Name), and the practice of compassion for all living beings in Buddhism (Tenzin's Deer).

In the Unitarian Universalist faith, we list "wisdom from the world's religions..." as one of the sources of our living tradition. This is just an introduction, not a comparative religious study. In

sharing from different faiths, we help our young people begin a journey of understanding, tolerance, and celebration for the diversity of human expressions of faith.

Please join us on our Summer World Religion journey! We are looking for teachers during 1st and 2nd service in the PreK-K and 1st-5th Grade classes. Background checks are required. •

For more information, contact Jules
FAITHDEVELOPMENT@AUSTINUU.ORG
or go to bit.ly/summerworldreligions

PARADOX PLAYERS

PARADOX



LYING TO THE SEA WITCH

Get Your Tickets Now!



Paradox Players is proud to announce the spring show for the 2019 season: the Austin debut of *Lying to the Sea Witch*, with book and lyrics by Kiya Heartwood, directed by Barbara Abbate.

Lying to the Sea Witch is a rollicking operetta about taking chances, dreaming, responsibility, and understanding that your daily choices determine the person you become. This family friendly musical extravaganza will feature a stage full

of pirates, The People's Orchestra of Austin, Katrina Saptorsantos as the Sea Witch, and our own Rev. Meg Barnhouse as the evil, vainglorious Captain Midas Falwell.

Lying to the Sea Witch will be produced on the first two weekends of May, May 3-5 and 10-12, Friday & Saturdays at 8:00 PM and Sundays at 3:00 PM in the Sanctuary at First UU.

Tickets are on sale by cash or check at the Paradox Players Sunday Table through April and May or online at Paradox Players via PayPal. Reservations can be made at the Sunday Table, online, or by phone at (512-744-1495). Free childcare will be available for both Sunday matinee performances.

2019 Paradox Players Season Subscriptions are also now on sale by cash or check at the Paradox Players Sunday Table or online at Paradox Players, via PayPal.

THE BLOTTER

of goodwill and welcome

Bear W. Qolezcua

Director of Communications



Recently I have been a part of some difficult conversations reminding me that while we are very good at teaching our principles and keeping our Ends in mind, we can sometimes stop a bit short at living into them as fully as we would like. This is not to say we are bad people, we aren't by any measure, but that we have practice to do and mindfulness to make into a habit.

A few Sundays ago, I was approached by a young adult visitor who must have seen my staff nametag and asked "this is supposed to be an open-minded place, right?" I replied yes but before I could ask if there was something with which I could help, they just said "hmm" and walked out the doors. Later I found out that in conversation with another they were abruptly asked about where they were "originally from" though it was not part of the greater conversation being had. This person who lives in a brown body and carries with them an accent on their English... this person was faced with being held out as an outsider, a foreigner.

The question "where are you from" seems innocuous enough to those of us who live with the privilege of an American accent, of whiteness, of looking like we "belong" but to someone who stands in a marginalized place this question can be seen as a way of othering, of saying "You're clearly different and I need to label what that difference is." More so, with immigrants being targeted by our

government in a reckless, racist haste this question and many like it can bring up traumas in the lives of those who have come here from outside the borders, snowballing damage done outside, and associating the hurt they feel with a community that should feel nothing like pain. Thinking about this stirred fractured memories of my childhood.

When I was five, my parents decided their remaining children (many were adults) needed to learn English. While my sister and I used our native languages at home with our parents we spoke English with each other and with our educators (unless they ticked us off... then English went right out the door). It was rough for a long time... my father, more than my mother, wanted us to be Americanized, and so our accented words were seen as shameful failures. We made sure to be as immersed as possible into the culture around us so that we could pick up the peculiarities of the locals. The real issue there was.. we were surrounded by Cajuns, Creole speakers, and generally very southern Southerners who spoke with a deeply elongated twang. This went against the training we received from our tutor, a posh British woman, that taught us to spell and speak in a much different way than that of our peers.

We navigated the world torn between home speech, public speech, and what had been infused into our minds as proper speech and found ourselves in a place that made sense

to us.

Thirty years later and I have pretty much settled into a kind of quasi-Texan dialect that works for me. Sometimes, if I am nervous, in a loud room and can't hear myself, or with people who speak with a familiar patois it is not unheard of for me to slip right back into an accent I have been so diligent to cover up. In that thirty years, because I haven't had the chance to use my languages and keep them sharp, they have mostly faded into oblivion. I still understand Spanish for the most part and I can pick out and read Hebrew, my French is decent enough to get me into trouble but not back out of it... however they have all suffered and gone the way of so many childhood things.

Because of fear.

I lived with the lesson that sounding different in America is a heavy liability.

I got asked "where are you from" a lot growing up because I spoke strangely and it became a stigma to hear those words because they told me I didn't belong. Very often it was hard for the asker to believe I was born in north Texas and English just hadn't been my first language but that was the truth of it. There were more than a few times I was told to go back from where I came (while living in my hometown - twice). Even here in Austin, while at lunch with my Mom, a person at a table near us asked to be moved because they didn't want to sit

THE BLOTTER

near (insert slur against middle eastern people), because we were speaking in my mother's native tongue.

That stigma lives in so many others' lives, it's a fear that since they are labeled a foreigner they are not seen as equal, whole, intelligent, or worthy or even that they are seen as a threat.

'Where are you from', when there is no conversational context, comes with a cost to the person being asked because there is so much weight put on them to say something that is acceptable. At First UU we risk alienating someone at a time and place where they should feel nothing less than comfort and home.

The ability to be a truly open, truly affirming, supportive, diverse community is within our grasp and in the core of our covenanted beliefs to which we ascribe as an intentional family.

We at First UU value and affirm the practices of transcendence, community, compassion, courage, and transformation. We do this by connecting with wonder and awe at the unity of all life while sharing joy, sorrow, and service with those whose lives we touch. We treat ourselves and others with love, seeking to live in honesty, vulnerability, and beauty as we pursue the growth necessary to change our lives and heal our world. Our values give us an example of what it is to be human and humane, to be UUs at the heart of us.

Our Mission, as many of us are quite familiar, speaks of the tasks to which we set ourselves. We work to nourish souls, to transform lives, and do justice. All of this is done in order

for us to build, support, and sustain the Beloved Community. Through our mission we find our values distilled to their spirit of caring for others, and for self, in order to improve and unite our world.

In our Ends we find lessons that teach us we are to be open to one another, to listen and respect, respond and reason, give and receive in the air of love, goodwill, and community. Our Ends tell us that we dedicate ourselves to work with others in our communities to dismantle a culture of oppression and white supremacy, to work with our faith community as a greater whole in order to reach beyond our piece of the world, and embody the principles of our faith in order to be inviting and genuinely supportive of all people, no matter where they are from, their gender identity, sexuality, race, religious background, differences in ability, or any other factor that often mires them in the system of oppression. Our actions and words must help them know deep within themselves that this is their spiritual home and they belong as much as every other person of goodwill.

Our Covenant tells us we are to welcome and serve all people of goodwill with intention, be present through each other's life transitions, and encourage one another in our spiritual growth. We are to nurture and protect by seeking to communicate with compassion through our words and deeds, directly and honestly with one another. We are to speak up for what is right when silence would only further damage or inhibit progress. We are to step in and

interrupt hurtful interactions when we witness them and we are to express our deep gratitude and appreciation for one another. We are also to sustain and build our Beloved Community by giving generously of our time, talent, and treasure, by keeping our commitments to ourselves and to one another with integrity, and be willing to forgive ourselves and others when we do fall short of living into the heart of Beloved Community.

When we fully hold ourselves and one another up to these standards of humanity, trust, compassion, integrity, and honesty we can truly be a people for whom the privileges with which we live become a vital part of how we support those in our community who live without them. By upholding the principles and means to which we ascribe we can take these advantages and use them to the greater good of all, giving a lift to equality, a renewal of strength and self-worth, and a sustaining faith in our interactions with all who may walk through our doors and our lives.

We aren't tasked with feeling guilt, guilt does no one any good, but we are tasked with awareness. Staying aware of our words and deeds, measuring our reactions and our interactions, breaking down and questioning our judgements, and tuning our hearts to the thrumming beat of this beautiful web of all existence of which we are a part will create a community of hope, of healing, and of home throughout our life's hours and miles. Wholeness comes when the fractures are healed.

Maybe we can't fix it all, but we can still fix as much as we can... ·

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BEAR W. QOLEZCUA

BOARD PRESIDENT
SEAN RAMSEY

KITCHEN COORDINATOR/SEXTON
KAMI CORNELL

WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUITY

Sunday, April 14
Rm 13
12:30–2 p.m.

For our April meeting we will be finishing up our three-month discussion of 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. But if you haven't finished the book, don't let that stop you from attending.

We sold out of the books but more should soon be available soon 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
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