



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## Hanukkah and Christmas, Siblings in a Time of Dark

by **Rev. Meg Barnhouse**



The above is the title of a wonderful article by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, written for this year when the first night of Hanukkah falls on Christmas Eve. Because Judaism is one of our UU sources as much as is Christianity, we want to celebrate Hanukkah.

Hanukkah is a fairly minor Jewish festival, but it becomes more important to Jews who live surrounded by a predominantly Christian-oriented culture. It celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 165 BCE. A group of guerillas led by the Maccabee family had defeated the Empire of Antiochus, whose troops had desecrated the Temple and even set up a statue of Antiochus in the Holy of Holies. It is said that the Holy Oil prepared by the priests had been poured out and dirtied, but that one lone bottle was found. Miraculously, the small amount of oil lit the Temple for eight days. The festival is set to occur on the new moon, the darkest night of the darkest time of the year. Into the dark, the light comes.

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. We know that the faith stories of his birth speak of shepherds being out in the fields. That sounds like a spring story, and there was no claim until several hundred years had gone by that Jesus' birth was declared to be on December 25, during the darkest time of the year. Why that day? Christianity was spreading throughout the Roman Empire, and the people already celebrated the birth of Mithras, a god associated with the Sun, which begins getting noticeably stronger in late winter. Baby sun, growing sun. Welcoming light into darkness. It's an appealing to celebrate the return of the light, and many religions have such a celebration.

We will recognize the beginning of Hannukah, not by making a mash-up of the two holidays, but by having a lit menorah up front during the services on Christmas Eve, honoring the light-return "sibling" of Christmas.

### **One Service Christmas Morning**

This year we'll have just one

Christmas service at 10:45 a.m. See pg. 10.

### **Dreaming Big**

Bill Edwards gave a wonderful testimonial at the close of our Stewardship canvass where he talked about feeling like "a kid at a birthday party," because over 50 church members agreed to work as canvassers, making phone calls, keeping appointments, having conversations about the church and people's hopes and dreams for the church. We had a food truck party, where we dreamed big with each other. We dreamt up ideas for a Campus Ministry, a Pastoral Care staff person, more opportunities to gather socially to get to know one another, a vigorous outreach to asylum-seekers, adoption of refugee families, and more.

We dream big, Bill said! He's right. This congregation is grateful to him and to the people who arranged the party, led the discussions, had the conversations about money, and to the people who looked at their finances and felt their way to a

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## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

**New Member  
Potluck**

**Saturday, December 3**  
**Howson Hall**  
**6–8 p.m.**

Come welcome new members at our biannual new member potluck dinner! It's a great way to get acquainted with new people and catch up with old friends. Please RSVP by Dec. 1 to [membership@austinuu.org](mailto:membership@austinuu.org). New members: if you feel comfortable, please wear your red "new member" ribbons!

**Support your  
favorite nonprofit**

**Sunday, December 18**

First UU members will have one day to vote for their top ten among the worthy nonprofits nominated this year. Voting will be in person only and will take place after both worship services at the Social Action table in the gallery, as well as before and after the congregational meeting that afternoon. Have your say in which social justice nonprofits receive part of our 2017 monthly special offerings! More info: Social Action Chair Wendy Erisman, [socialaction@austinuu.org](mailto:socialaction@austinuu.org).

# How am I doing?

by **Marsha Sharp**



It's almost the end of another year. Many of us stop, if only briefly, to take stock, review what we have and have not accomplished, and decide what we want the next year to look like. It's not an easy task if one is truly honest with oneself and others.

The First UU Board of Trustees constantly evaluates. Each month we evaluate the church ministries and review the budget. This November marked the halfway mark of this board. We evaluated ourselves—looked at what we were doing right and what we could improve, and discussed what we could do to improve in those areas we believed were lacking. Board members are also encouraged to evaluate themselves—look at performance as a board member and take stock. This is a personal evaluation and is shared with others voluntarily.

How is each one of us doing as a member of this congregation? How is your performance? Below are some statements to ponder regarding your relationship with First UU—and perhaps some resolutions for the New Year.

- I am an ambassador for our church's work and values in the community. I do my best to abide by the church covenant and UU principles in my daily life.

- I attend congregational meetings and exercise my right to vote on church matters.
- I support, and stay informed about church activities and events. I participate in at least one activity.
- I support the approved actions of the congregation and board once a vote is taken, even if I did not vote in favor of the action.
- I work in good faith with members of the congregation towards the achievement of our mission.
- I hold myself, and other members of the congregation, to high ethical standards, acting in an accountable and transparent manner.
- When the board provides opportunities for feedback from the congregation, I give my observations and opinions.
- I make a personal financial gift to support our church and its mission.

In what other ways did you support the furthering of First UU's mission? What would make your service more meaningful and/or rewarding?

It continues to be my privilege to serve you as president of this wonderful congregation. I wish each of you a happy holiday season and a very prosperous and happy New Year. ■

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level of commitment that was generous within their means. We did it, and we will continue to talk about our dreams all year long, and about how we build foundations under our castles in the air.

We raised over \$730,000, which will let us move into next year without emergency measures. We have right-sized the staff, with more changes in the office staff. Jamie Schroeder and Andrea Sosa are going, and we will combine their position into one. This belt-tightening should work fine, with some reduction in “customer service,” but we hope the congregation will be patient with what

we can do while keeping our budget balanced and growth-oriented.

All of you who are supporting this congregation and its mission with your hearts, your strength, your good will and your money add to the light this church brings to Central Texas in this dark time. We have to be vigilant and proactive as we stand for our values while people who stand for very different values come into power in our nation. We are needed right now. This church is needed, and you are needed. A light in the darkness. Let's shine. ■



## Music Matters

**The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin  
Adult Choir and Orchestra present:**

### Cantata 62 JS Bach

**Sunday, December 11  
(both Sunday services)**

**Special performance of Bach's  
Cantata 62; Sunday, December 11  
During Sunday services**

The First UU of Austin Adult Choir under the direction of Music Director Brent Baldwin, will be joined by organist Austin Haller and a small orchestra to present Bach's Cantata 62. Bach's Cantata 62 is a chorale cantata based on Martin Luther's hymn “Nun komm, der

Heiden Heiland.” This cantata features lively arias and fiery orchestrations juxtaposed with a softened recitative, and rich, powerful choral and organ settings, highlighting the dichotomy of the militancy and vulnerability of the Messiah.

#### **Drive a Senior Benefit Concert**

The First UU Intergenerational Choir will be performing for the holidays! Find more info on the back page, pg. 12.

### **Green Sanctuary Holiday Re-Gifting**

**Sunday, December 11  
Howson Hall  
9 a.m.–1 p.m.**

Bring old, unused, unwanted items appropriate for a holiday gift to the church on December 4 or prior to the second service on December 11. We'll put the items out in Howson Hall for anyone to select from free of charge after the first service.

Share with others those things you do not need—others might! Recycle, reuse, RE-GIFT!

### **Senior Luncheon**

**Wednesday, December 14  
Howson Hall  
12 p.m.**

This month's program will feature Dan Wilson and his Um-Pah Polka band. Dust off your dancing shoes and come and kick up your heels. Soup, salad and dessert will be served for \$5. Please RSVP to Alice Cashman: (512) 837-0988.

## LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

# Lifespan FD highlights

by **Laine Young, Interim Director of Lifespan Faith Development**



This year of 2016 has been an intense one for most of us, and Nov. 8 was an unpredictable evening for many of us. We had a “Shelter” service at the church the day after the election results came in: adults, children, and youth came and spoke during the service, families sat and colored mandalas together, high schoolers rallied together after the service and shared their fears for the present and excitement for when they will be able to vote. There is so much work to be done, and there was grief and anger that night, but there was also hope.

There are so many unknowns for the future right now. I don't know about you, but when things are uncertain for me it is easy to feel overwhelmed, hopeless, angry, or any combination thereof. I encourage each of you to look for the moments of hope in your lives. With the upcoming holidays, I would also like to take a moment to remind you that one of the most important things you can do right now is make sure you are taking care of yourself. I try to remember the airline analogy, “put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others.” From seminars to our Christmas pageant, there will be plenty of activities here at First UU Austin to help you nourish your soul this holiday season! The code word is “coexistmas.”

In fellowship,  
*Laine*

## Be a 2017 Surprise Pal

Please consider becoming a Surprise Pal this year! Surprise Pals is an annual project that provides opportunities for the development of intergenerational connections. Here's how it works: interested adult

church members submit to a background check and are paired with a child in our congregation to exchange letters and small, meaningful gifts over the course of several weeks. The adult “surprise pal” and the parents of the child are aware of the pairing, but the identity of their “surprise pal” is not revealed to the kid until an end-of-project party that allows for face-to-face conversation and laughs! This project introduces the children of our congregation to trusted adults within their church community whom they might not otherwise meet.

Registration begins Dec. 4. The project will run from Jan. 15–Feb. 26 this year. Participants must commit to attend the reveal party on Sunday, Feb. 26. To participate, contact [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org) or pick up a registration form on the Lifespan Faith Development table in the gallery.

## Annual Christmas Pageant, Dec. 18

This is a worship service not to miss! Find more details with the sermons on pg. 10.

## OWL Classes Starting January 11

We will be proudly offering OWL (Our Whole Lives), a comprehensive and progressive sex education curriculum, to 10-12<sup>th</sup> graders in the spring semester. The classes will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. beginning January 11 and continuing through May, including a lock-in February 3–4.

OWL registration forms are on the LFD table in the gallery. In order for youth to participate in the class, there is a mandatory parent orientation on Jan. 4 at 7 p.m. or Jan. 8 at 12:30 p.m. The registration fee for the OWL

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class is \$40 and scholarships are available. You can get more information on registration and classes by emailing [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

### **First Sunday Seminars**

Join us on the first Sunday of each month. This multi-track, adult religious education experience has class options in leadership development, spiritual identity, UU identity development, and spiritual practices. No registration required for any seminar, childcare is available. Simple lunch provided in Howson Hall for \$5 from 12–1 p.m. (available to-go for Forum attendees). Seminars take place from 1–2:30 p.m.

*Please note there will be no First Sunday Seminars in January for New Year's Day.*

### **UU Identity Track: “Celebrating Christmas as a UU,” facilitated by Laine Young**

Join us as we discuss ways to celebrate the winter holidays while keeping our UU values and principles in mind. You will also have the chance to create some holiday gifts to give to family, friends, and loved ones. The gift creation stations will include custom 1-inch buttons and DIY coconut oil lipgloss. All ages welcome!

### **Faith Formation Track: “Science and Religion,” facilitated by Bruce Naylor**

Science is predominantly a rational enterprise whereas religion incorporates, and is arguably more dominated by emotions. In our search for the connections between the two realms, this month we'll be exploring the neuroscience of emotions. In particular, we'll be examining neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp's model of foundational emotions of all mammals—like us! The implication is that the emotional systems are deep and shared with other critters with whom we share this planet, and that depth is why emotions can be so powerful.

### **F.RE.D. Night**

F.RE.D. (Fellowship, Religious Education and Dinner) is our all-ages Wednesday night programming running from Sept–May. We serve a simple, delicious \$6 dinner (kids eat free!) at 6 p.m. that always includes vegetarian options, followed by a variety of adult and children's programming and small group ministries from 7–9 p.m. Childcare always available.

### **“The Wi\$dom Path” with Karen Neeley, Dec. 7**

The Wi\$dom Path is a 12-workshop program where participants understand how money can be a more effective force for living lives of meaning and value, and for creating positive change. \$20 enrollment fee, scholarships available.

### **“Game Night,” with Shannon Posern, Dec. 14**

Join us for a night of fun and games! This group meets in Howson Hall after dinner. This month we'll have several games to choose from, including Forbidden Desert, New Salem, Best Treehouse Ever, and Pandemic.

If you are interested in running the monthly game night in future months, contact [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

### **“Parents as Resident Theologians” with Laine Young, Dec. 21**

“Parents as Resident Theologians” is a 6-workshop course that encourages the exploration of one's own religious pilgrimage. As we become more confident about what we believe and for what we are searching, we become more creative in our dialogues with our children and youth. Part of “The Parenting Trilogy” series.

### **Harvest the Power—new in February**

First UU is proud to offer the opportunity to explore your UU self, benefit our church, and support your favorite cause all at the same time. Harvest the Power provides leadership skill development that goes hand-in-hand with faith development and addresses the reality that today's leaders operate at a time of rapid cultural change, both in and outside our congregations. Leaders need a broad range of skills, both technical and visionary. This program offers opportunities for both new and experienced leaders to enrich the skills they bring to leadership and to experience their leadership journey as a UU faith journey. With your increased leadership skills, you'll be better able to support your favorite cause.

Harvest the Power will run Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. in February, April, September, and November. Each month will focus on a different theme and will coordinate a project for our church. For more info about this upcoming class, contact Laine Young: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org). ■

## NOTES FROM THE INTERN

# Growing in the dark

by Susan Yarbrough



When I was six years old, my parents bought a house in Dallas. The garage had a back portion that was already converted into small living quarters, and my dad claimed that as a place for his workshop. His father had been a carpenter by trade, and my dad learned those skills at an early age.

For some reason I was always interested in chemistry, and when I was ten, Dad gave me a chemistry set for my birthday. He even built a bench and a shelf in his workshop where I could keep the microscope and flasks and paraphernalia that came with the set, and he also built a tall stool so I could sit and tinker around with non-hazardous experiments. I spent some happy hours out there, took chemistry in high school and loved it, and entered college as a chemistry major. But when I realized how much calculus was involved in being a good chemist, I blanched, bailed, and switched to English and history as my primary fields of study.

I didn't think a lot about science until I graduated from law school in 1974, and I can't even remember what rekindled my interest in it—maybe a television show, or a magazine article, or an overheard conversation. But instead of getting

fired up again about chemistry, I quickly developed an almost obsessive interest in physics (about which I knew very little), and especially in the fields of optics and acoustics. I subscribed to *Scientific American*, read entries in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and tried to get a better understanding of how things worked, although I occasionally wondered if I was spending too much time reading about non-legal things.

I'm a firm believer that no knowledge we gain is ever wasted, so I was not surprised to find that my layperson's slight knowledge of physics came in handy when I was reviewing pre-trial ballistics reports as a criminal defense attorney, or when I was prosecuting a case involving the importation of fake Rolex watches and had to understand the mechanism of timepieces. What really blew me away, however, was hearing a lecture about how light is both a particle and a wave. I think about this concept quite a bit at this time of year as we witness or participate in celebrations that revolve so much around light—Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, and no doubt others I don't even know about.

According to a code of Jewish law developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the

candles of a Hanukkah menorah must be set up in a line and be set apart from each other so that their flames don't overlap visually and become like a torch. David Seidenberg, a contemporary rabbi, says that what this technical detail means is that the lights must be separated by darkness—that darkness is the matrix that makes the candles beautiful and sweet.

In our Western thinking, we all but worship light as the symbol of what is holy and good and preferred, and we use images of darkness to mean ignorance, evil, and that which should be banished and expelled. It is this binary, dualistic thinking that has caused us to lose touch with the seasons of the earth, and with the knowledge that the earth itself is a body of darkness that brings growth and sustenance to all.

As Rabbi Seidenberg notes, no one sits in front of a Hanukkah menorah thinking, "I can't wait for these candles to grow so bright that there's no more darkness." At this time of year when many religions are celebrating light, let's not forget the sacredness of the dark. Instead, let's sanctify it, savor it, find strength in it, and honor it as that which nurtures our light. ■

**MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING**



# SafePlace

Watch your thoughts, for they become words.  
 Watch your words, for they become actions.  
 Watch your actions, for they become habits.  
 Watch your habits, for they become your character.  
 Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.

We have just come from a campaign season when words, hateful words, words of aggression toward women and minorities, words we thought relegated to the dark corners of the minds of a few, have been given a prominent place in public discourse. Words hurt and words can become actions that hurt. Last year 115 women in Texas were killed in domestic violence.

For over forty years, SafePlace has offered a haven for anyone who is being abused—women, men, LGBT, deaf or disabled persons—to find shelter, counseling, medical and legal advocacy. SafePlace is a partner agency with Austin Children’s Shelter as part of the SAFE (Stop Abuse for Everyone) alliance.

I hope you will give generously to the recipient of this month’s Second Sunday Offering. Additionally, if you would like to bring any of the items on their wish list to the church on Sunday, Dec. 11, I will be glad to deliver them. Please see the list on this website: [www.safeaustin.org/get-involved/give/donate/wishlist](http://www.safeaustin.org/get-involved/give/donate/wishlist).

Please do not bring items to the church before or after that date, as there is no place to store them. ■

*Monthly Special Offerings are done every second Sunday of the month at worship services. All groups supported by MSOs receive a check at the end of the year, with the total of the 12 monthly donations divided equally.*

## Alphabet Soup Social Club update

Due to schedule changes, we will not be meeting this month. Have a happy holidays, and we’ll see you in January!

## First UU People of Color Group

Due to schedule changes, we will not be meeting this month. Have a happy holidays, and we’ll see you in January!

### Don’t Forget!

**Fall 2016 Congregational meeting**  
 Sunday, December 18 | Sanctuary, 1:30–2:30 p.m.

## WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUITY

### Austin Presence Group

**December 1 & 15**  
**Room 13B**  
**6:30–8 p.m.**

Each month we will discuss a chapter from “A New Earth.” Then we may tune in to an Eckhart Tolle video. A \$5 donation is requested in order to support the church. Visit us at [www.meetup.com/AustinPresence](http://www.meetup.com/AustinPresence).

Come light another candle to illuminate your understanding along the spiritual path called life. Contact: Joe Linsalata, (512) 327-5000 or [Linsalata@austin.rr.com](mailto:Linsalata@austin.rr.com).

## What is our group about?

We are a group of white UUs who gather to learn how to be effective allies. As white people in this country, we are like fish in water. Many of us don't understand what it means to be white because we grew up in a white world. Nor do we realize how that lack of understanding impacts our relationships with people of color, both in our personal relationships and in the relationships between communities. While learning to be effective allies during our meetings, our group members support

Undoing Racism Austin, Austin Justice Coalition, and the Austin Chapter of Black Lives Matter. Our members are encouraged to join in these and other efforts to do anti-oppression work in our church and in Austin.

Starting in January, our White Allies for Racial Equity group will meet every third Sunday at 12:30 p.m. We occasionally bring in a speaker. If we do, that presentation will be open to all and the Allies meeting will begin after the speaker.

### 2016 End of Year Gifts to the Church

Please note that in order for your 2016 gift to be considered as tax deductible for this current year, any gifts must be received and/or postmarked by December 31 to be included on your 2016 annual statement.

## DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

### Carpool Opportunities

Looking to carpool to a UU event outside Austin? Email Margaret Borden at [denom@austinuu.org](mailto:denom@austinuu.org) and she'll attempt to pair you with someone to share the ride.

### UBarU Bee-Sustainable Weekend, Dec 2–4

Explore the possibilities in sustainable living. Meet the bees up close and in person and taste a variety of local honeys. Enjoy presentations about ongoing sustainability efforts at UBarU (water catchment & solar arrays). Learn about the importance of dark sky to health and wellbeing. Enjoy gazing at the stars. Enjoy a campfire with s'mores. Find more info and register at [www.ubaru.org](http://www.ubaru.org) under Events.

### 2017 Southwest UU Women's Conference, February 10–12

Conference in Magnolia Hotel Dallas Park Cities, Dallas, TX. Women and teens 13 and older, join us for an inspiring weekend. Speakers, music, worship, workshops, vendors, fellowship and fun! Early registration \$190 before 1/01, registration \$225 from 1/1 through 1/27.

Helen Bond will be the keynote speaker: percussionist of intricate melodies and polyrhythms of West African music, teacher, storyteller, humanitarian, winner of 2015 Jack Benny Arts and Humanities Award.

For more info: [www.swwuww.org](http://www.swwuww.org) or contact Mary Overton at (214) 620-1812.



**PEOPLE’S COMMUNITY CLINIC**



**No matter how you say it, the sentiment is the same. On behalf of the young clients of People’s Community Clinic, we thank you!**

The children’s October book drive for People’s Community Clinic brought in donations of 369 books. And even more wonderful, more books are still to come! These books for young children up through young adults are presented by the clinic to their young clients at clinic visits, so that each child may go home with his or her own book. The program was started to encourage reading and language development. If cleaning out your bookcase is in the stars and you would like to donate books, contact [pcc@austinuu.org](mailto:pcc@austinuu.org).

First UU Austin supports the clinic with various volunteer efforts.

Volunteers collate material two times a month from 9:30 to approximately noon at both clinic sites—the first Monday of each month at the 2909 N. IH35 building, and the second Tuesday of each month at the new building at 1101 Camino La Costa. After work time, those who are able join together for lunch.

To learn more about the People’s Community Clinic, its services and volunteer needs, or to learn how to volunteer as an individual, go to [www.austinpcc.org](http://www.austinpcc.org). For information on First UU Austin volunteer efforts with PCC, send an email to [pcc@austinuu.org](mailto:pcc@austinuu.org).

**Path to Membership class**

**Saturday, January 28  
9 a.m.–12 p.m.  
Howson Hall**

If you’re ready to consider membership, we encourage you to attend a “Path to Membership” class. You can meet other prospective members, learn about UU history and principles, the church’s diverse programs, and the benefits and responsibilities of membership. The class is offered quarterly. Contact: Shannon Posern, [membership@austinuu.org](mailto:membership@austinuu.org).

**“Getting to Know UU” class**

**Sunday, December 11  
12–1:30 p.m.  
Rm. 15**

This class is a basic introduction to Unitarian Universalist history, as well as the history of First UU of Austin. You will also have opportunities to ask questions and share faith histories with other attendees. Childcare is provided.

**Keep us in mind while doing your Christmas shopping!**

First UU has a unique AmazonSmile link that makes it easier for you to find and support us while shopping on Amazon: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-1612515>. Use the link to find us, confirm that you want to support First UU with your purchase, and then you’ll be taken to smile.amazon.com and shop per usual. The church will receive 0.5% of the price of all eligible smile.amazon.com purchases! Thank you so much, and happy holidays!

**Eclectic Folk Jam**

**Friday, December 9**  
**Rm. 17**  
**7–10 p.m.**

The Eclectic Folk Jam, an open jam session for singers and instrumentalists, is held on the second Friday of every month. We have “Rise Up Singing” song books, and some people like to bring copies of their favorite songs to pass out. Bring drinks and snacks to share.

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

### **UU/Quaker Singalong update**

The singalong which would normally be on Dec. 24 is cancelled this month. For information on the UU/Quaker daytime caroling at East Austin nursing homes, contact Mary Jane Ford at (512) 926-4122 or [singalong@austinuu.org](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org).

# WORSHIP SERVICES

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

## DECEMBER 4

### **A Clear Mind and an Open Heart**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

The fourth element in the Buddhist Eightfold Path is “Right Action.” What did the Buddha suggest we think about as we consider our actions? What are we doing? Why are we doing it?

## DECEMBER 11

### **Star of Wonder, Star of Truth**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Our principles talk about a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. How do we seek the truth? Can we be like the wise magi, bringing our gifts to the newborn Light?

## DECEMBER 17

### **We Gather: Another Kind of Worship (4:30)**

See description in upcoming orders of service.

## DECEMBER 18

### **Christmas Pageant**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE, LAINE YOUNG & GILLIAN REDFEARN

Don your best bathrobe and come to church ready to take the journey to Bethlehem. For those who have

never experienced a First UU Christmas Pageant before, you’re in for a real treat with this most treasured tradition! All (especially children) are encouraged to participate, with no prior rehearsal. Costumes will be set out, or bring your own. Angels, shepherds, animals...we’ve even had Batman there before. Our narrator will invite nativity characters up on cue.

Stay for lunch after second service, as well as a dessert potluck—please bring your favorite holiday treats to share!

## DECEMBER 24

### **Christmas Eve Services**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE, CHRIS JIMMERSON & LAINE YOUNG

**5:30 p.m. UU Lessons and Carols (family service)**

**7 p.m. UU Lessons and Carols**

## DECEMBER 25

### **Christmas Day Service (One service only at 10:45)**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

We’ll meet less formally than our norm, and share the stories of our own families’ Christmas-time traditions. Children are more than welcome, and they may come in their pajamas if they like!

**Special note:** The first service in January, the Burning Bowl service, will be on New Year’s Day and also be one service only. We’ll remind you again in the next newsletter!

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

## DECEMBER 4

### **A Conversation with the Newly Elected Travis County Sheriff**

WITH SALLY HERNANDEZ

Sally Hernandez will share her progressive vision for the Travis County Sheriff's Office. Hernandez is committed to developing partnerships with other agencies and with the public to maintain community safety and to prevent crime whenever possible. She's keenly aware that social problems such as mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, and family breakdown are a daily challenge to local law enforcement, and that specialized programs are needed for those nonviolent offenders who can, with support and supervision, remain in the community and be productive citizens. Creating linkages with human service programs and maximizing use of available resources will be a major focus of her work.

Sally Hernandez has more than 35 years experience in law enforcement. She has been the elected constable of Precinct 3 and built a stronger, more effective constable office through a collaborative approach with other local government offices and private agencies. She became Travis County Sheriff-elect on Nov. 8, 2016. Out of 254 sheriffs in Texas, she will be one of four women. She began her law enforcement career in 1981 as a night dispatcher in order to take care of her special-needs child during the day. In 1988 she moved to Austin and began work as a deputy in the constable's office in Precinct 3. In 1992 she was hired as a sergeant investigator by former Travis County District Attorney Ronnie Earle, and held that position until she was promoted to Chief of Investigations in 2005. Hernandez remained as chief investigator until the voters in Travis County elected her as constable. In 2016 she started her bid to run for sheriff.

Hernandez holds a bachelor's degree in criminal

justice from St. Edward's University and a Master Peace Officer Certification. She won the Professional Crime Investigator Award and Investigator of the Year Award from the Texas District & County Attorneys Association.

## DECEMBER 11

### **Progress toward Equality for the LGBTQ Community**

WITH PAULA BULS, LCSW

The LGBTQ community has experienced unprecedented civil rights advances in the last 15 years. From gay marriage to trans\* visibility and protection, it has been a time of great forward movement. Paula Buls, LCSW, will discuss basic terminology and guidelines for how to be an effective ally to the LGBTQ community. She will also discuss the current political climate and upcoming legislative actions and how these might impact LGBTQ civil rights.

Buls was the first openly trans\* woman to graduate from the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin. She was a founding member of the Transgender Education Network of Texas, has served on the board of directors for the Austin Gay and Lesbian International Film Festival, and currently serves on the Human Rights Commission for the City of Austin. Aside from her work as a trans\* and queer activist, she is a licensed psychotherapist in private practice in Austin.

## DECEMBER 18

**No Forum—Christmas Break**

## DECEMBER 25

**No Forum—Christmas Break ■**

**First Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of Austin**  
(512) 452-6168  
[www.austinuu.org](http://www.austinuu.org)

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# Help us sing in the holidays!

***Drive a Senior Benefit Concert***  
***Friday, December 2, 7:30 p.m.***  
***St. Louis Catholic Church***  
***(7601 Burnet Rd.)***

Join in a memorable evening of Christmas music! This is Drive a Senior—North Central Austin’s 24<sup>th</sup> annual event. Ten church choirs and bell groups from central Austin, including the First UU Intergenerational Choir, will perform holiday classics. Admission is free, and there will be a collection to support the work of Drive a Senior, which offers travel support to seniors in our community. Bring your friends and family and have an evening to brighten your heart, while helping your less-mobile

neighbors. Find the event link at <https://christmaschoral.eventbrite.com>.



**First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.  
Austin, TX 78756