



FIRST UU NEWS

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

Things I love about this church

by **Rev. Meg Barnhouse**



One thing I love about this church is that the people do as much or more social action as the ministers. Taking to the streets, the offices of elected officials, to the phones, taking the actions dictated by your concern. Others support those in the streets, following their own consciences, their own ways of bringing justice. In the sermon Susan preached in February, she spoke of endurance, of getting the right spiritual nutrition, the right helpers, and to take to the race with the right understanding. She quoted Judy Sorum Brown, who said we must not think of working for human rights as a marathon, but as a relay race. It is a relief, in a way, to know that justice is a long game, that we must move to the “front lines” for a while and then fall back and rest. Sometimes we feel particularly urgent, and we become unusually active. This is good as long as we remember to take care of each other.

Another thing I love about this church is that sometimes, when people feel the need for a group, they talk to the ministers about starting

something: a People of Color group or a White Allies group. Sometimes church members start something themselves. Better Together ATX is a group for political action combined with socializing and taking care of ourselves and one another as we work in relays for human rights.

These are intense times for the immigrant community. This church stepped up to keep Sulma Franco from being deported, and there may come a time when we open our church’s doors again. Mostly we hope to keep people from having to leave their families and go into sanctuary by accompanying them to their government appointments. I’m so proud of you all for taking action to protect Sulma nearly two years ago, for talking together thoughtfully about it, expressing hopes and fears about being on the forefront of the sanctuary movement. First UU Church and St. Andrews Presbyterian were the first two churches in the Austin Sanctuary Network, which now involves over fifteen other churches of all denominations, along with five nonprofit

organizations. Chris, Mari and I have spoken about you at General Assembly and at Meadville Lombard in Chicago.

This church has gathered its strength to make a leap forward into the future by making expansions and improvements to the building. The architects plan to start bringing materials in April and beginning in May. We will have a “retirement” party for our wonderful stage in Howson Hall after the May Paradox Players production. Come say goodbye to it as we remember the many mainstage productions it has seen. Paradox Players will continue into the future, don’t worry! The stage is a tool for doing art, but art continues, using new tools, inviting new changes.

You have been asking about my sabbatical. As I wrote in previous columns, I’ll be taking four of the six months my contract stipulates, because four will work better for all of us. I’ll be gone from July 1–Nov 1.

We’ll see each other at Susan Yarbrough’s ordination in Houston, though! We are so enjoying having

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**Senior Luncheon**

Wednesday, March 8
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

Do people mumble when they speak to you? Do you have to ask people to repeat what they just said? Has your spouse said you need hearing aids?

If the answer to any of these is yes, plan on coming to the next Senior Lunch! The program will be about the latest hearing aid technology, especially the T-coil (or tele-coil) system. We've installed in our sanctuary this technology that sends crystal clear words directly to your hearing aids without additional headphones, wires or devices. RSVP by email: seniors@austinuu.org, or call Alice Cashman at (512) 837-0988.

Save the Dates!**Pre-congregational meeting**

Sunday, April 23
 Sanctuary
 1:15–2:15 p.m.

Congregational meeting

Sunday, May 21
 Sanctuary
 1:15–2:15 p.m.

What matters...

by Marsha Sharp



A few weeks ago, I happened to have dinner with a small group of “youngsters.” (I call them that because I am at least 30 or 40 years older than they.) Over a period of several hours we talked about everything—values, politics, beliefs. They seemed surprised that someone my age could agree with their points of view and values. One of them asked me who shaped my belief system. I had to think about it for a few seconds and gave a response.

Since that dinner, that question has entered my thoughts several times making me really think about whom and what has influenced me. I've come to a few conclusions, but the thought still rattles around every once in a while.

My response to the question asked was that my Mother most influenced me. But then I began to think about all the other people and occasions that have helped make me “me.” Of course, my father and brothers did a lot; my grandmother and great grandmother were both big influences. But that leaves out all those people who never knew how much they touched me and how much I learned from them.

There were the students I taught: special needs students I had in my classroom who forced me to look at the world from other perspectives; the

student who couldn't read simple directions; the migrant students who were in school for only a few weeks or months before they had to move on to the next crop to be picked; the blind student who could perform complex mathematical problems in his head.

There were all those students who were angry because their schools were closed and only they were forced to be bussed for desegregation; the trans third grader who wore his mother's jewelry and scarves to school; the gay high school student who was looking for a home because his parents kicked him out of the house; the Muslim middle school girl who was teased because she wore a scarf.

There are the friends: those who always knew they were important to me and I to them, but many will never know about all those small things that were never mentioned, were taken for granted; those who gave help whether or not I asked for it; those who gave me a listening ear when I needed it. There are the strangers who give me a smile when it's unexpected and my day is totally transformed.

I am so thankful for that question posed to me at that dinner. It has sparked a wealth of gratitude that I had not realized I carried. ■

“Things I love” continued

her working here as our Student Intern Minister. I think we are all feeling lucky and blessed. Let’s pray/cross fingers/burn incense/send good vibes and whatever else we do as spiritual support as she

meets with the UU credentialing body, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, at the end of March (see pg. 8). Good luck, Susan! We believe in you. ■

CAMP UU/HOGWARTS

Hogwarts summer camp registration is open!



From July 24–28, we continue the annual tradition of transforming First UU Church of Austin into a magical castle of fun and adventure. Students will have the opportunity to play quidditch and wizard chess, as well as pursue studies of herbology, potions, magical creatures, and more! Afternoon activities include social action projects and field trips to local muggle sites. Registration for previous Hogwarts campers opens Tuesday, February 28; new camper registration opens Tuesday, March 7.

The camp is open to children ages 6–11 (the equivalent of rising 1st through 6th graders). Ages 12–14 may enroll as assistant prefects, while ages 15 and older (including college) will serve as full prefects and assist with running the camp.

To register and find out more visit our registration page on the church website (www.austinuu.org/wp2013/?p=18129). If you have any other questions, contact our registrar at hogwarts.campuu@gmail.com.

We need your voice!

The First UU Church of Austin Choirs—Adult, Youth and Children’s—are always welcoming new singers! For more information or to coordinate a time to drop in to a rehearsal, please contact Irene, Executive Assistant for the music program: irene.kirschenbaum@austinuu.org.

Green Sanctuary Movie Night

**Friday, March 3
Howson Hall
7 p.m.**

Our next Green Movie Night will feature “Sand Wars.” Join us for this surprising investigation into one of the most consumed natural resources on the planet. Due to the high demand for sand, the planet’s reserves are being threatened. Admission is free, donations accepted.

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Lifespan FD highlights

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



What Do You Want to Learn this Year?

Earlier this year I was in a group discussion about upcoming teacher trainings on a professional religious educators Facebook group. One DRE said that at every training they ask the teachers, “What do you want to learn this year?” The teachers are given index cards and asked to write down five things they would like to learn in the next year. I thought this was a wonderful idea, so I tried it at the classroom helper training in February and I got some amazing responses! So I’m taking the idea a little bit further: every Sunday in March, there will be a station at the LFD table in the gallery where you can share what you are interested in learning this year. Please take a moment to let me know!

As a reminder to families: we’ll be having a Pre-K through 5th grade “One Room Sunday School” during both services on Sunday, March 12 to accommodate spring break travel plans and SXSW. We will be learning about the spring equinox, and getting our hands dirty with a garden project! March 12 is also the beginning of daylight saving time, so don’t forget to “spring forward!”

In fellowship,

Laine

Easter Canned Food Drive

Easter Sunday is April 16, and we’ll have a great morning with games and Easter goodie bags for all who participate in our annual can hunt.

That’s right—we don’t hunt eggs at First UU. The problem is the real ones don’t all get eaten, and the candy ones do! So to solve this dilemma we have decided to

choose neither and to help others instead. Please bring canned food and other non-perishables to the church all through the month of March: there will be a collection cart next to the Lifespan Faith Development table in the gallery. We’ll hide the cans on Easter, the kids find them, and then we give it to the Capital Area Food Bank once we’ve played with our food.

We would love to have adult volunteers to help with all the Easter festivities! Contact laine.young@austinuu.org if you would like to join in the Easter fun!

First Sunday Seminars: March 5

First Sunday Seminars take place on the first Sunday of the month. This multi-track, adult religious education experience has options in areas such as leadership development, spiritual identity, UU identity development, and spiritual practices. No prior registration is required for any of the seminars, and childcare is available. A simple lunch will be provided in Howson Hall from 12–1 p.m. for \$5 (available to-go for Forum attendees). The seminars take place from 1–2:30 p.m.

Interested in teaching a First Sunday Seminar? Please send your class proposal to laine.young@austinuu.org.

Spiritual Practice Track: “Art As Meditation” with Laine Young

Is 2017 stressing you out? Need some time to draw, color, and reflect? Join interim Director of Lifespan Faith Development Laine Young for a time dedicated to calm, centering creativity. All ages are welcome to attend, but please note that this seminar is a time for quiet reflection while we create.

continued on next page

Faith Formation Track: “Science and Religion” with Dr. Peter Roll

The March 5 meeting of the Science & Religion seminar will be the second in a series of three devoted to religious naturalism. It will feature a presentation by Dr. Peter Roll on the subject of “poetic naturalism,” based on a recent book by Caltech theoretical physicist Prof. Sean Carroll, “The Big Picture—On the Origins of Life, Meaning, and the Universe Itself.” (Find the title or author on Amazon for further information.) Dr. Roll, a member of First UU, spent the early part of his career as a physics faculty member at Princeton University and the University of Minnesota.

F.R.E.D. Nights, Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

F.R.E.D. (Fellowship, Religious Education, and Dinner) is our all-ages Wednesday night programming that runs from September through May.

You are welcome to join us in Howson Hall for fellowship and a potluck-style dinner. If you join us for dinner, please bring a dish to share. Classes, choir, and small group ministries still start at 7 p.m. and childcare will still be available at F.R.E.D. Nights.

Please note: there will be no F.R.E.D. Night programming on Wednesday, March 15 for spring break.

Examining Whiteness: March 1 & 8

This weekly class for white folks is based on the UUA program, “Examining Whiteness: An Anti-racism Curriculum.”

Per the website for the class: “One of the ways that racism affects us is by shaping our identity (and this is true for whites and People of Color). These materials, prepared by the Rev. Doctor William Gardiner, are made available to UUs, particularly white people interested in transforming their whiteness through understanding the complex history of white supremacy of over four hundred years in the US, and the impact it has on us as individuals and the society as a whole.

Providing an anti-racism curriculum for white people allows deeper understanding of issues that are essential to furthering a white anti-racist identity. The curriculum includes sections on: the history of white supremacy in the US, the emotional lives of white people, racial identity development, racial identity journey, white power and privilege, and developing a positive white identity. Studying as part of a group provides a richer experience to discuss, share, and respond to writings that may evoke complicated and strong emotions and thoughts.”

For more information about this class, visit: www.uua.org/multiculturalism/curricula/whiteness.

Great Decisions, facilitated by Helen LaFlare March 1, 22 & 29

Group discussion program to investigate current U.S. foreign policy challenges, guided by topics from the Great Decisions 2017 briefing book from the Foreign Policy Association. Books may be purchased, individually or shared, for \$25. Seven class meetings will include readings and video presentations. Topics will include Eastern Europe, China/S. China Sea, and energy/petroleum geopolitics. ■

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Time for review, and an invitation to new members

by Ann Edwards

We're getting closer and closer to transforming our dreams into reality! Since we began our capital campaign in 2014, our Building Committee has been meeting diligently to align architects' drawings with financial pledges in order to create the best possible building for our growing church family. Later this month they will send final plans to the construction manager for subcontractor bidding and to the City of Austin for building permit review. We anticipate a groundbreaking ceremony as early as mid to late May 2017.

From the very start of this six-year capital campaign, we agreed that periodically we'd canvass new members who joined the church since the last

time we canvassed. In spring 2015 we did a mini-canvass of those families, and now it's time to do it again. This month we're canvassing families who've joined from May 2015 to August 2016. These new pledges will span four years, 2017–2020. We expect to complete this phase by mid-April, and we'll continue to canvass periodically through 2020.

Canvass visits can be transformative for both the visitor and the person visited. Conversations about what the church means in our lives can deepen appreciation for one another as we share our concerns and our hopes. So please welcome your canvasser when he or she calls and requests a visit to talk with you. You

can meet wherever you're comfortable—in a home, a coffee shop or at church. Canvassers will bring you the latest campaign brochure with background material and updated financial and building plans.

We want to invite everyone to participate in this opportunity to build our future. If you were not in a position to contribute earlier but your circumstances have changed, we welcome your gifts! If you want to make an additional pledge, we welcome your gifts! Please contact Brendan Sterne (bsterne@mail.com) or Ann Edwards (annann1148@gmail.com) so they can arrange for a canvasser to visit you.

HANDS ON HOUSING

It's time again to help our neighbors!

Saturday, April 8

Mark your calendars! April 8 is the date for the spring Hands on Housing (HoH) project. HoH is a program through iACT (see pg. 11) to paint, do small repairs, and beautify the home of a low-income elderly or disabled household. The agency uses other funding to do major repairs before the volunteer events, and we finish the job! We had a great group in the fall. The UU group replaced the rotten wood,

and painted the exterior of the house, and trimmed trees for a couple with disabilities in east Austin. Let's have another big group of UU volunteers and transform a house and lives! Volunteers must be 14 years and older. We need both skilled and unskilled volunteers for painting (unskilled) and special repair projects (skilled). Visit the Social Action table in the gallery on Sundays to sign up, or contact Jill Smith & Luther Elmore: handsonhousing@austinuu.org.



Hands on Housing volunteers pitching in at the fall event. Photo: Jill Smith

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS



A message from the UUA and UUSC Presidents

Calling all friends of faith & conscience:

Like many UUs, UUA President Rev. Peter Morales and UUSC President Tom Andrews are deeply concerned about the results of the presidential election and the results that will follow. They have concluded that UUs and others concerned with justice must be united in our efforts to protect our principles and vulnerable people at risk.



As a step toward this objective they have prepared a “Declaration of Conscience” stating clearly their commitment to these values. You can read the declaration and indicate your support by signing it at www.uua.org. In a joint statement, Morales and Andrews said the following:

“This is not about partisan politics. It is a principled response to the potential targeting of people not for what they have done, but for who they are. It is a commitment to speak out and to act in support of basic human rights. We will keep you informed of the progress of this effort and of further opportunities to advance our cause together in the coming weeks and months.

We cannot predict what the future will bring, and we do not pretend to have all the answers, but we can and will be ready for the struggle ahead of us. If you feel the same, please join us. Join us in transforming faith into action, sign the Declaration of Conscience today, share it with your own networks, and please encourage others to sign as well.

Thank you for your concern, vigilance, and willingness to act.”

Alphabet Soup & People of Color meetings

**Sunday, March 26
Dart Bowl (5700 Grover)
12 p.m.**

This month the Alphabet Soup Social Club and the People of Color group will have a joint social event! We'll meet at Dart Bowl for bowling, socializing, and lunch.

Young Adult Group Meeting

**Sunday, March 26
12 p.m.**

We will have our monthly brunch after second service. Meet outside of the sanctuary and walk to a local restaurant for some fun and fellowship!

NOTES FROM THE INTERN

Wish me luck!

by Susan Yarbrough



Um...what happened to January and February? This year is already flying by, as is my last semester of seminary. If all goes well, I'll graduate in Chicago on Sunday, May 21, 2017. May it be so!

What does that phrase "if all goes well" mean, and where did it come from? I wasn't able to find out much about this from the McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Words, but I did take note of the example given: "Good luck on your operation tomorrow. I hope all goes well." Not exactly what I needed to read, in contemplation of meeting with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) in Boston on March 24 for a one-hour oral exam that is somewhat like exploratory surgery, and where I'm expected to show competence in sixteen areas of Unitarian Universalist ministry.

You won't be seeing a lot of me this month, as I'm taking time off from most congregational activities in order to prepare for this culminating event. I spent many hours

in January and February assembling a giant 3-ring notebook of study materials, lists of questions asked of other candidates (including Rev. Jimmerson) over the past three years, copious reading journals and class notes from my twenty courses and three internships during seminary, and all the evaluations done of me by psychologists, chaplaincy supervisors, Rev. Barnhouse, and my internship committee here at First UU (Tomas Medina, Sharon Moore, Margaret Roberts, Max Stout, and Bridget Lewis).

My official MFC "packet" is about 125 pages in length, and the advice that all candidates receive is "Know thy packet." Each person on the MFC will have read mine before I ever step into that room at 24 Farnsworth, and I expect that after I do a chalice lighting and preach a 10-minute sermon, they will ask me some general questions about world religions, pastoral care, and UU history and polity, as well as a number of Susan-specific questions such as how I've made a transition from

courtroom to pulpit, and why I left Judaism and became part of Unitarian Universalism.

Confession: Notwithstanding years of jury summations, appellate arguments, and grillings by state and federal judges, I am a bit (and properly) nervous about seeing the MFC. A lot is at stake, and I want to do well so I can be ordained and serve this dynamic and activist denomination during my remaining years.

So I have this request: on or about or before March 24 at 9:45 a.m. CST, please cover me in prayers and/or good wishes and/or good vibes and/or positive thoughts and/or whatever you do to signify your hope that all goes well as I meet with the MFC. And if you're so inclined, please light a candle for me in church on March 19 (the Sunday before I travel to the interview).

As always, I need all the help I can get—the kind of soulful, encouraging help you've given me during these past two years of internship. Thank you for carrying me this far. ■

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

UBarU Events—UBarU Camp and Retreat Center Kerrville, Texas

UBarU is a UU camp and retreat center in the beautiful Hill Country, just 120 miles west of Austin. In 2015, UBarU was designated an International Dark Sky Park. All the following events can be found at www.ubaru.org, under 'Events.'

- **Heart of Texas Men's Retreat, March 31–April 2.** Men from UU churches across Texas gather for relaxation, fellowship and meditation. This year's retreat will be facilitated by Rev. Mark Skrabacz.
- **Women's Retreat, April 28–30.** A weekend of relaxing, having fun and Sharing Our Stories. A weekend to recharge your mind, body and spirit in the companionship of other UU Women.
- **Family Camp, May 26–29.** Cook-outs, campfires, nature, swimming, worship and star parties.

Southern Region Spring Gathering: Houston, April 8–9

Our vital faith: "At this very moment in time the values of UUism, hope, love, justice, courage and joy are desperately needed. The world needs us and we need one another more than ever before." Join with UUs from across our region to celebrate, share, learn and plan for making a difference in our world. www.uua.org/southern/calendar/region?month=2017-04

Meaning Makers, June 7–11

Meaning Makers is a year-long spiritual development program for UU young adults (ages 18–24). Through in-person retreats, virtual small group ministry and mentorship, emerging adults will explore the central questions "Who am I and how can I live my UU faith in the world?" www.uua.org/re/youngadults/meaning-makers

UUA College of Social Justice: "Grow Racial Justice" Workshop, June 17–20

Grow Racial Justice 2017 will be held in New Orleans, immediately before General Assembly. It will equip UU young adults with the skills, spiritual grounding, and community to engage in racial justice work within and beyond our UU faith. www.uucsj.org/grow-racial-justice/

General Assembly New Orleans, June 21–25

General Assembly is the big annual event for our Unitarian Universalist Association. Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect and make policy for our association. This year General Assembly is right next door in New Orleans, and has been designated a "Justice GA." Registration is now open: www.uua.org/ga.

Carpool Opportunities

Want to carpool to an event outside Austin? Email Denominational Connections at denom@austinuu.org and we'll try to put you together with someone to share the ride.

Path to Membership

Saturday, April 22
Howson Hall
9 a.m.–12 p.m.

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.

Getting to Know UU

Sunday, April 9
Rm. 15A
12:15–1:30 p.m.

This informal class is a good way to learn more about UUism and this church. Childcare is provided. Contact: Shannon Posern,
membership@austinuu.org.

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant,

I'm new to this church and was initially impressed with all the friendly people who greeted me. I felt truly welcomed. Now that I've heard several sermons and even attended a class on white identity, I feel especially uncomfortable and self-conscious about "white privilege." I consider myself to be a person of good will, so how can you claim to be welcoming to all people of good will when you preach and teach things that make some of us feel distinctly uncomfortable? Now I definitely feel less welcomed than when I first visited.

– *Uncomfortable*

Dear Uncomfortable,

We're very glad you raise this question so that we can clarify what welcoming does and does not mean. Our covenant calls us to be "intentionally hospitable to all people of good will." As you experienced, that means we make a deliberate effort to be friendly. Hearing your own "good will" being questioned from the pulpit and in a class is indeed an uncomfortable experience, but you are not alone! "Welcome" in any community can include challenge.

Welcoming at First UU includes supporting one another through challenging and uncomfortable times, but it does not mean avoiding

those times. Spiritual growth, like social change, can feel very uncomfortable for all of us. If you would like to talk to someone about your discomfort, the minister, the class leaders or trained pastoral care associates would be glad to listen. We try our best to be a supportive congregation as well as a welcoming one!

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

Sincerely,
Healthy Relations Ministry

THIS MONTH IN UU HISTORY

Sometimes when outer circumstances and events seem troubling or threatening, it can help to remember where we as UUs came from. Here are some of the highlights of our history during the month of March, as recounted by Frank Schulman in his resourceful book, "This Day In Unitarian Universalist History: A Treasury of Anniversaries and Milestones from 600 Years of Religious Tradition" (2004).

- On March 7, 1844, the Dissenters' Chapels Act was introduced

in the English Parliament, was eventually passed by an overwhelming vote, and was given the royal seal by Queen Victoria in July of that year. The act gave Unitarians legal rights to their church property and was an important step in religious freedom in England.

- On March 14, 1571, Prince John Sigismund of Transylvania, who was a champion of UUism and religious toleration, died at age 30 from injuries in a horse-riding accident.

- On March 14, 1945, the

American Unitarian Association voted to establish lay-led groups known as fellowships. From 1948 to 1958, the number of people joining fellowships accounted for one third of the denomination's increase in membership.

- And on March 21, 1965, more than 125 UU ministers—and many UU congregants—were part of the more than three thousand marchers who left Selma, Alabama for Montgomery to urge passage of the Voting Rights Act.

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



First UU & iAct: keeping our community great together

Dearest First UU members & friends,
 My name is Lynn Adams. In the spirit of full disclosure, I am on the board of iACT (Interfaith Action of Central Texas). I am writing a thank you note instead of an article, because I am so grateful for your selecting iACT as one of this year’s recipient of the monthly special offerings, and for the support our First UU community has demonstrated to iACT for many years.

Several of you have shown up time and time again donating your love and muscle to iACT’s Hands on Housing program repairing and improving the homes of seniors and people who need help (see pg. 6). You make a tangible, visible difference in the lives of these home owners and sometimes the difference in someone being about remain living in their homes. Together we helped 913 folks last year. Thank you!

Many of you have also helped with the iACT ESL programs over the years. Together we helped over 1,000 refugees transition into their new lives last year. I don’t have to tell you how much more difficult these transitions have become for our new friends or about the threat to funding for this and other refugee

programs. Again, First UU and iACT make an incalculable difference in people’s lives. The hope and gratitude I see in our participants’ faces cannot be expressed in any language. Many thanks!

Lastly, the program most dear to me, the Red Bench, has grown to 18 gatherings this past year with hundreds of people attending our spring session on racial and religious intolerance. Demand keeps growing for these facilitated conversations. If you think you might be spending too much time in your bubble, check out iACT’s Red Bench. The time to connect with people from different cultural and faith backgrounds is more important than ever. Again, many of you have participated over the years, and I look forward to seeing many more First UU folks join us in these conversations in the future!

With gratitude and love,
 Lynn

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.

Austin Presence Group

**November 2 & 16
 Rm. 13B
 6:30–8 p.m.**

Each month we 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.

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.

SPRING INTO ACTION



Grounds and Garden Day

**Saturday, April 1
9–11:30 p.m.**

No fooling—come help us in the garden! Our days of grounds work will be followed by lunch on us from 11:30 to noon. Our home-grown gardening experts will direct us as we get our flowerbeds and grounds glowing with tidy spring energy. We'll have music to set your toes tapping while you work.

This is a family-friendly event, all are welcome. Bring your trimming tools, gloves, hats, sunscreen and fun to share. It will be a terrific time! For more info or to sign up, contact Beki and Richard Halpin: green@austinuu.org or (512) 288-4080.

How welcoming is First UU?

First UU of Austin strives to be an intentionally hospitable community where all people of good will are welcomed. Last November, the board's linkage committee asked members and visitors about whether or not First UU is welcoming and what we might do to be more welcoming.

Most of the individuals who spoke with board members said they found First UU to be welcoming, both when they first came here and now. Participants commented that the congregation is a friendly and open group. People smile, greet one another, introduce themselves, and offer help. Participants also mentioned specific ways First UU welcomes new people, including the membership table, name tags that identify visitors and new members, and the new members' potluck. Many participants said that they felt particularly welcomed as they built interpersonal connections by joining church groups and activities.

When asked how First UU could be more welcoming, participants pointed to the challenges of our church building, including the sometimes crowded sanctuary, problems with the flow of

people between spaces, and the “institutional” feel of the RE wing. Others indicated the many groups and activities the church offers can be confusing and overwhelming to new people, and that there is a need for more opportunities for people to get connected. Finally, several participants noted the importance of promoting a culture of welcoming among the congregation. Such a culture, they suggested, would encourage us to reach out to new people, invite them to sit with us, and ask them about their interests and reasons for coming to First UU before overloading them with too many details about the church.

Welcoming is a spiritual practice that requires ongoing action and reflection. For us as individuals, as a congregation, and as a society, welcoming is a way to promote inclusivity, learn to better understand people from different backgrounds, build our skills at interacting with diverse groups of people, and advocate for justice. In April, Spring into Action will offer many opportunities for us to consider and act on ways to become more welcoming. Look for an article and a calendar of events in next month's newsletter, and join us as we spring into action!

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Announcing our upcoming speakers

**Next meeting: Tuesday, March 14
Howson Hall
6–8:30 p.m.**

The Women's Alliance meets on the second Tuesday each month, September through May. A potluck dinner is enjoyed from 6–6:45 p.m. with a speaker and discussion after. Childcare is available. All are welcome. Here are our upcoming events:

March 14, 2017: "Midwifing the Muse" by Ann Edwards

Ever wonder how somebody who's known for doing a certain job ever got started? How she got here from there? It can be a puzzling mystery, even to the person herself! Come hear Ann follow

various threads of her life that eventually led her into Paradox Players, what we know today as the church's resident theatre company. But it didn't start out that way, not at all...

April 11, 2017: "From Courtroom to Pulpit" by Susan Yarbrough, JD, Ministerial Intern

Susan practiced law in New York and Texas before being appointed to a judgeship on the United States Immigration Court, where she served for 18 years. After retiring from the bench, she decided to enter the ministry.

May 9, 2017: "Mixing Music and Ministry" by Reverend Meg Barnhouse.

White Allies for Racial Equity

**Sunday, March 19
Rm. 13
12:30–2 p.m.**

We welcome self-identified white UUs as we discuss racial disparities in our criminal justice system. Bob Libal from Grassroots Leadership will lead our discussion. Participants will also have the opportunity to share their experiences at recent marches.

The UU White Allies for Racial Equity is a group of self-identified white Austin area UUs and friends. Through training and self-examination, we educate ourselves about racism and whiteness in order to be good allies in anti-racism work in our church and our communities. Meetings are third Sunday of the month.



Double your support to Drive a Senior on March 2!



Amplify Austin is our city's annual community-wide day of online giving. The 24-hour period provides an easy and fun way for our entire community to give together while helping local nonprofits.

This is great opportunity for nonprofits like Drive a Senior (DaS)—North Central Austin to raise funds for another year of services. The first \$1,000 will be matched dollar-for-dollar by St. David's Foundation. The more we raise

during Amplify, the more North Central Austin DaS will receive from matched dollars.

DaS North Central Austin takes pride in providing exceptional, free transportation for seniors in our community. It is this assistance that many seniors need to feel free and independent. Isn't this what you would want?

Find our fundraiser page at <http://bit.ly/AmplifyDAS2017>. There you can learn more about us and donate! Thank you for your support.

Eclectic Folk Jam**Friday, March 10****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.

UU/Quaker Singalong

Saturday, March 25
Friends Meeting House
(3701 E. MLK Blvd.)
7:30–10:30 p.m.

Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing. Copies of “Rise Up Singing” are provided. This is an alcohol-free event, round-robin format, held on the fourth Saturday of every month.

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

SUNDAY SERVICES**SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM****MARCH 5****Get it to the Size of an Oreo**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

The sixth of our UU principles urges us to promote peace, liberty and justice. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights describes the rights the nations of the UN agreed should be held by all men, women and children. Let's get grounded in this basic document articulating our values. The First UU Adult Choir will be singing in the services, and we are thrilled to welcome Austin Haller, piano and organ player extraordinaire, as our guest pianist.

MARCH 12**Joy Like a Fountain**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

How often do you allow yourself to stop and bask in a joyful moment? Why is it that as religiously liberal people we so often see what is wrong in our world but as spiritual progressives fail to recognize when actual progress has been made? Let's get our joyfulness on! Kathryn Govier and Ben Hummel will be sharing a lovely piano and violin duet.

MARCH 19**Show Up, Pay Attention. Breathe.**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Right Mindfulness is the element of the Buddhist Eightfold Path that teaches about meditation. What are some good ways to meditate? What can it do for us? What does it do for the world?

MARCH 26**Radiant Dawn, Dread Commander, Born of Light, Armed Warrior**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

What are some human views of the Divine? The First UU Adult Choir soprano and alto vocalists, joined by Elaine Barber on harp, will be performing Gustav Holst's “Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda.” We will look at this ancient text's descriptions of God.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

MARCH 5

The Politics of Patriarchy and the Corrosive Culture of Male Dominance

WITH ROBERT JENSEN, PH.D.

University of Texas professor Robert Jensen will analyze the long history of institutionalized male dominance in US politics and culture. Similar themes have increasingly been part of public discourse since the run-up to the November 2017 U.S. election and are being highlighted in public demonstrations around the country. In his new book, "The End of Patriarchy: Radical Feminism for Men," Jensen asks one key question: What do we need to create and maintain stable, decent, human communities that can remain sustainable in relationship with the larger living world? His answer: radical feminism that critiques institutionalized male dominance, rejects men's assertion of a right to control women's sexuality and reproduction, and demands an end to men's violence.

Dr. Jensen teaches in the UT School of Journalism and is the author of several books. He has written extensively on such topics as institutionalized racism and white privilege, pornography, the risks of unfettered capitalism, and radical activism.

MARCH 12

Final Exit: Lessons for End of Life

WITH JULIA HANWAY

Final Exit Network is a registered nonprofit organization that operates throughout the US. They believe in death with dignity and an individual's right to self determination. It is the only organization that publicly provides education on all end-of-life choices as well as a compassionate presence to those who are suffering from incurable diseases and have chosen to end their

suffering. The organization has been instrumental in the changing laws in the death with dignity movement and works nationwide to affect change in state laws.

Julia Hanway was in charge of the 2014 World Federation of Right to Die Societies in Chicago that brought together over 25 countries. She has worked with Final Exit Network as a volunteer since 2010 and is the special projects coordinator, currently working on a North American conference focusing on dying in the Americas.

MARCH 19

How to Keep From Becoming that Against Which I Rage: The Interpersonal/Intrapersonal Part of Ongoing Activism

WITH LISA ROGERS

Longtime Lone Star lesbian folk singer and social worker Lisa Rogers seeks nasty women and bad hombres to help ponder the interpersonal and intrapersonal part of trying to get and "stay woke" in these turbulent times. Lisa will facilitate a discussion panel with three movers and shakers in the Austin area.

Rogers believes: "Strategy is the art of deciding what you will NOT do, in order to do what you MUST do. I know we are made for these times. I know we must persist in resistance. I know we're 'Stronger Together' and I must 'Be The Change' and 'One Day at a Time.' I know the antidote to despair is movement. But sometimes I fear the light at the end of the tunnel is a train and not a birth canal. At those times, I wonder if I'll ever stop yelling when I finally find my voice. I wonder how to make sure my passion includes compassion and I don't become that against which I protest. I realize that if these are labor pains, I need a doula. I need someone to remind me to keep breathing and pushing and resting without fear that resting means I

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**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Austin**
(512) 452-6168
www.austinuu.org

First UU Ministers
Rev. Meg Barnhouse
Rev. Chris Jimmerson

Director of Music
Brent Baldwin

Interim Director of Lifespan
Faith Development
Laine Young

Congregational Administrator
Shannon Posern

Communications Coordinator
Victoria M. Valadez

Financial Administrator
Katherine Patton

Board President
Marsha Sharp

**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.
Austin, TX 78756

THE FORUM, *continued*

quit. How do we be each other's labor coaches? Hopefully we're also 'Smarter Together.'"

MARCH 26 Williamson County— Where it's Been, Where it's Going

WITH JOHN BUCY

Williamson County's Democratic Party is growing by leaps and bounds, including electing a Precinct 1 Commissioner, Terry Cook, in November. Join us as we welcome John Bucy, Williamson County Democratic Party

Chair, as he discusses where Williamson County has been and where it's headed.

Bucy is a graduate of Austin College and a proud son of Central Texas. His grandparents have lived in District 136 for over 30 years. He is the founder and president of the Texas Charter School Academic & Athletic League, an organized competitive league serving over 130 of Texas' charter schools. Bucy is seasoned to politics, having served as an assistant director of canvassing for Texas during the 2006 elections, a precinct captain, a volunteer on numerous campaigns, and a delegate to the 2012 State Party Convention. He is a proud husband to Molly, a Texas public school teacher.