



FIRST UU NEWS

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

A time to learn patience

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



“Learn patience first;
for patience is the part
Of all whom Time
records among the great;
The only gift I know,
the only art
To strengthen up our frailties
to our fate.”

– Thomas W. Parsons (1819–1892)

It is apparently my time to learn patience, as of writing this newsletter column. I am stuck in a lift chair at home, working by phone and computer but not able to get to the office. I have had to miss two Sundays, and I am trying to be patient with Nature’s speed.

Strengthening up our frailties is something we all have to think about it some point in our lives. Even when we are able-bodied, it is temporary.

“Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.”

– May Sarton

I asked my Facebook friends and community to send me readings or

poems about patience, and they sent beautiful thoughts, thoughtful insights from all over the country. The above quotation from May Sarton got me looking out my window to our little raised bed garden where the lettuces are coming up. I watch a sunflower rising, and it feels as if, were I not to look away from it, I could even see it grow cell by cell. I often look at our congregation as if it were a garden, with many different kinds of plants, vegetables, flowers, herbs. Each of us with our own beauty, each of us with our own use. Some times are for more underground, invisible growth, strengthening of the roots. Other times are for more showy growth, other times for fruiting, for being a nourishing community. And some-times are for seeds, where we scatter our wisdom and strength into the world.

We are maintaining a double focus these days, on our mission and on our welcome. The building is the most visible part of our welcome, and I have some news about it. The architects and the construction company have let us know that, because

of permitting, they will not be able to start until June, as things now stand.

“On every level of life, from housework to heights of prayer, in all judgment and efforts to get things done, hurry and impatience are sure marks of the amateur.”

– Evelyn Underhill

Everyone knows that building things and remodeling buildings takes a long time, always longer than one would have hoped. Our members have been paying their pledges to the capital campaign, and our new members have been jumping in to help with their own pledges. The folks who have been canvassing the new members have been doing a wonderful job! We are ready to move forward, and it is my hope that we can all allow this process the time that it is going to take. I love the above quote by Evelyn Underhill, who was a very practical woman. It makes me chuckle to read that hurry and impatience are sure marks of the amateur! I nod, and recognize myself in those words.

Dear friends, I appreciate your concern and support as I learn

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

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.

Alphabet Soup Social Club

Sunday, April 16
Rm 15
12 p.m.

This group is for anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, pansexual, or asexual. The goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for us to gather in community and nourish our souls. If you're a heterosexual ally we welcome your support but ask you refrain from attending these meetings.

This month we'll meet at the church after services for a potluck. For more info contact Tomas Medina at alphabetsoup@austinuu.org, or follow us on Facebook.

I promise...

by **Marsha Sharp**



"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

– *Maya Angelou*

"People with clenched fists cannot shake hands." – *Indira Gandhi*

"So many gods, so many creeds.
So many paths that wind and wind.
While just the art of being kind,
Is all this sad world needs."

– *Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." – *Alice Walker*

"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we are not really living. Growth demands a temporary surrender of security." – *Gail Sheehy*

"The best index to a person's character is A) how he treats people who can't do him any good, and B) how he treats people who can't fight back."

– *Abigail Van Buren*

"A guru is not one who has a following. A guru is one who can show me the way. Suppose I'm in the forest and somehow I've lost my way. Then I'll ask a person, 'Is this the way home?' That person might say, 'Yes, you go this way.' I say, 'Thank you,' and I go my way. That is a guru." – *T. K. V. Desikachar*

"Take your life in your own hands, and what happens? A terrible thing: no one to blame." – *Erica Jong*

I collect quotes. Sometimes they're from well-known people; sometimes they're from people I've never met, something overheard, or something I've read. What I've discovered is that those quotes that most resonate with me deal with interpersonal relationships and issues that grab my attention and make me squirm. Sometimes I'm the Queen of Denial. "That's not me. There is no way I'm like that." But if that quote makes me feel uneasy and I'm honest with myself, I know I've found a winner and it's one I need to read and practice over and over until the "squirminess" abates or goes away. Tape it to the bathroom mirror or over the kitchen sink.

It is really easy to assign an attribute (or lack of one) to others. What I see in them, I often miss in myself. And we all have blinders. After all we live with ourselves every day and are really familiar (or are we?) with our behavior: that can't be obnoxious; that can't hurt anyone else because it's not offensive to me.

This reminds me of our First UU Church Covenant of Healthy Relations. In it we promise several things to each other: to welcome and serve; to nurture and protect; to sustain and build. If I follow the covenant at church and in my world, my unease should abate.

I promise myself—continue collecting my quotes, continue trying. Maybe just tape the covenant to the bathroom mirror and over the kitchen sink. ■

“Patience” from pg. 1

patience here in my slowly recovering human body. I am able to do this work that I love by phone and computer, but it is my heart’s desire to be back in the

building with our wonderful staff and congregants. It is also my devout hope that you do not have to learn patience anytime soon! ■

CROP WALK AUSTIN

Another successful year of preventing hunger

The 2017 Austin CROP Hunger Walk was held Sunday, February 26, 2017 at Camp Mabry. The rain held off and the partly cloudy skies provided nice walking weather. First UU’s team joined 65 other congregations and organizations for the event, which drew 715 participants and volunteers. Many of the volunteers were students from Austin Community College. Each year, ACC students run stops along the route where they use games to teach participants about hunger issues around the world. These stops are a highlight of the event for kids and adults.



CROP Walkers learn about clean water at one of the walk’s stations. *Photo courtesy of Emily Speight*

Thank you to all of the First UU members who participated in the walk and/or made donations to our walkers

and team. CROP Hunger Walks are sponsored by Church World Service (CWS). CWS uses the money raised by these annual walks to help tens of thousands of people around the world and almost 2,000 hunger-fighting organizations here in the United States. Twenty-five percent of the funds raised in Austin will stay in Austin to help local organizations like the Central Texas Food Bank, Sustainable Food Center, and Casa Marianella.

At the writing of this article, the 2017 CROP Walk has raised \$60,400. CWS is still taking donations for the 2017 CROP Walk and hopes to match or beat the 2016 Austin walk total of \$78,110. If you have not yet made a donation to the First UU team, there is still time. Go to www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx/FirstUUChurch to make a donation online, or contact Emily Speight at cropwalk@austinuu.org. Every dollar counts: \$20 provides a one-year supply of micronutrient packets, \$100 provides training for 25 farmers, and \$500 provides seeds and gardening supplies for a community garden. Donate now, and plan to join us for the 2018 Austin CROP Hunger Walk.

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.

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Lifespan FD highlights

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



Happy spring, everyone! We had an amazing session at our last One Room Sunday School on Sunday, March 12. We learned about spring and the Spring Equinox and then we installed a vegetable garden at the big kid playground, despite the chilly morning. Right now we are growing tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, patty pan squash, green beans, banana peppers, shiso, and fennel. Wow, am I looking forward to the day we can make some vegetable soup with all of our church-grown produce!



In fellowship,
Laine

We still need your canned food & help!

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!

Easter Festivities! Sunday, April 16 Easter Canned Food Hunt & Field Day

We will be having our annual canned food hunt and field day during Sunday School classes at 9:15 & 10:45 a.m. on Easter Sunday. Please bring your kiddo(s) with a grocery bag that they can use for the canned food hunt. We will be outside for most of the Sunday School hour, so please dress your kid accordingly, and apply sunscreen and/or bug spray beforehand.

Easter Treats Potluck

We will have a treats potluck on Sunday, April 16! Please bring some treats to share to Howson Hall after both services.

First Sunday Seminars: April 2

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

continued on next page

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.

Faith Formation Track: “Science and Religion—Jerome Stone’s Religious Naturalism,” with Rev. Chris Jimmerson

Jerome A. Stone is an American author, philosopher, theologian and Unitarian Universalist. We will explore Dr. Stone’s theology of religious naturalism and his concept of “horizontal transcendence.” We will even hear from Dr. Stone himself, through the magic of YouTube.

Leadership Development Track: Public Speaking with Dwayne Windham

Whether you are dealing with a company presentation, serving as a lay-leader in service, or advocating for social justice—effective public speaking is a core, valuable skill to learn. This seminar will focus on multiple aspects of public speaking and ways you can improve quickly. We will cover different approaches to be more effective at being memorable, getting and retaining attention, and going from words to action. Dwayne Windham studied communications at UT Austin, and has been part of Toastmasters for over 12 years as a speaker, trainer, and district officer. Known for his passionate speech delivery, this will be a Sunday Seminar you won’t want to miss!

Spiritual Practices Track: 101 Ways to Keep a Journal, with Rebecca Schwarz

“Take time to mess around. Get lost. Wander. You never know where it’s going to lead you.”

– *Austin Kleon*, from “Steal Like an Artist”

There are as many ways to journal as there are reasons to keep one. Since humans learned to write we’ve been pouring our hearts out onto the page, pen and ink or pixels and screen, getting our thoughts and feelings out where we can see them can help us understand, forgive, and love ourselves and others. Whether you want your journal to be utterly private or something you can develop into material you can share with the world, this seminar will explore creative ways to express yourself. We will be using “Wreck This Journal” by Keri Smith and

“Steal Like an Artist” by Austin Kleon as inspiration. A pizza lunch will be provided during this seminar.

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.

**Great Decisions, facilitated by Helen LaFlare
April 5 & 12**

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.

**Easter Preparation Party with Laine Young
April 5 at 6 p.m.**

Join Interim Director of Lifespan Faith Development Laine Young while we get ready for all of this year’s Easter festivities! We will be filling up the goody bags the middle school youth group decorated: it will be an evening of fun, fellowship, and cookies! Please note the earlier start time. You can enjoy the F.R.E.D. Night potluck and then join us or enjoy your dinner while we work.

**Spring Into Action Movie Night:
Zootopia, April 26**

Join us for a screening of Zootopia, a comedy-adventure set in the modern mammal metropolis of Zootopia. Determined to prove herself, Officer Judy Hopps, the first bunny on Zootopia’s police force, jumps at the chance to crack her first case—even if it means partnering with scam-artist fox Nick Wilde to solve the mystery. This movie is rated PG and is recommended for ages 8 and up by Common Sense Media. This movie screening is co-sponsored by the Lifespan Faith Development Dept. and the Social Action Committee. ■

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meet your upcoming board candidates

Erin Gaines



(Trustee) Erin started attending First UU in 2012 when she and her husband Andy were looking for a faith community in Austin. This was the first church they attended, and they didn't look any further. It was a great fit for a couple made

up of someone who'd grown up in a family of scientists with no religious upbringing (Erin) and someone raised Episcopalian (Andy). They've been members ever since, with a one-year hiatus when they lived in Galveston and loved attending the UU fellowship there.

In addition to the music, meditation, and sermons every Sunday, Erin has deeply enjoyed getting to know the members of First UU Austin in a smaller setting through

Chalice Circles. Last August she trained to be a K-1 and 4-6 OWL facilitator, and looks forward to seeing what questions fill the question box when First UU offers the amazing curriculum for these grade levels soon.

Erin is an attorney at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid focusing on environmental justice, civil rights, and fair housing cases with community groups along the Texas gulf coast and border. Before law school at UT, she ran a university sustainable food and gardening program in California. Erin enjoys long walks on tar-strewn beaches, and beating her husband in the NYT mini-crossword puzzle nightly.

Erin brings to the board her dedication to social justice, an eye for detail and legal jargon, and experience working with grassroots community groups across Texas. She is honored to be nominated to serve on the board.

Gay Phillips



(Trustee) Gay has been a UU since 1998 when she joined First UU of San Antonio. Electing as an adult to be a member of a different church after being baptized and confirmed in the Zion Lutheran Evangelical Church was a profound decision, but Gay knew she had

found her church home. Attending and being a part of a community of likeminded people was her goal.

In 2005, Gay and her husband Bill moved to Austin and joined Wildflower Church. Gay was the chair of the Membership Committee for several years and was head of the ushers. She was elected to the board for two terms and served on the Building Committee, and says, "it was

a real learning experience." She participated in the week-long Dwight Brown Leadership training in Sherman, TX, which provided a better understanding of how UU churches operate.

In 2012, Gay and Bill became members of First UU Austin and feel this community is a very important part of their lives and that giving their time, talent and treasure is essential. Gay has been an usher, lay leader, and member of the Care team. Bill and Gay were canvassers on the last stewardship campaign and are participating in the ongoing capital campaign.

Gay looks forward to being part of the leadership team and helping attain the goals and objectives while adhering to the mission. She says, "being part of the board would be an honor."

Matt Kressin

(Trustee) Matt first attended a UU service in Houston almost 20 years ago when he was a recent graduate of Rice University, working in a biosciences lab, and feeling as if something in life was missing. Matt grew up in Knoxville, TN, and was raised in the Episcopal faith, but

didn't feel particularly attached to it. It was clear to him that day in Houston that this was the type of church he had been looking for: one that was welcoming, engaging, and encouraging of a personal search for truth.

After moving to San Antonio in 1999 to attend dental school, he became a member of First UU of San Antonio with his wife, Megan. He participated in the Men's Group, New Parents Group, and the Grounds Maintenance Crew (i.e., non-wimpy gardening). After professional opportunities encouraged a move to Nashville, they joined First UU of Nashville in 2005 and quickly became engaged. As a member there, Matt helped

lead the Children's RE Committee, taught Children's RE, was a member of the Nominating Committee, and an active contributor to the Maintenance and Facilities team.

Another career opportunity for Megan brought the family to Austin in 2012, and they became members at First UU Austin in 2013. Currently, Matt coaches youth soccer for their two sons, aged 11 and 13, and participates as a committee member of a local Boy Scout troop. He started a small art and design business specializing in woodcrafts.

When Matt was approached by the Nominating Committee as a potential board member, he realized the timing could not have been better. Given the current state of the country, he is determined to be the change he wants to see and has reengaged with a number of organizations whose work he believes in, knowing that environmental and social justice groups need to be supported. This engagement is important to his spiritual and religious journey. He welcomes the opportunity to align his personal goals with increased service for our church and community, and he is honored to serve our church.

Sean Ramsey

(President Elect) Sean Ramsey is a lifelong UU. Raised in the Church of the River in Memphis, TN, Sean became an active member and leader of the church's YRUU youth group, as well as serving on the national YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee. In 1992,

Sean was selected as a YRUU Programs Specialist and moved from Memphis to Boston to work and serve at the UUA headquarters in the RE department. After receiving an undergraduate degree at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Sean relocated to Austin, TX, in 1996.

He has been a member of First UU Austin for over 15 years and in that time has served on the Stewardship Committee, participated in Chalice Circles, and has served on the Board of Trustees as both treasurer and secretary. It was also during this time that Sean met and

married his wife, Carol Ramsey, also an active member of the church. They have three children, two of whom can be spotted any given Sunday grabbing a few breakfast tacos and making a chai latte, or hamming it up on the dance floor during one of our church-wide events.

Sean brings a unique perspective to the church, having grown up in the Austin "startup" environment as a technical project and product manager. He has been a founder and partner in a small startup, giving him a unique background of sales, marketing, and application development experience. He is currently the director of digital solutions at the LIVESTRONG Foundation, working on building out a platform of tools and services to help people affected by cancer.

Sean is very excited about the opportunity to continue to serve the First UU community in this new capacity and looks forward to hearing from the community as we usher in a new era of the church and face new opportunities for growth.



Spring Into Action 2017

by Scott Butki

When many at First UU hear the term “welcoming,” they may think back to the process by which our and other UU churches became designated as a “welcoming congregation,” which focused on being welcoming to LGBT individuals. But there are of course many other ways our church can be more welcoming; from welcoming new members to welcoming people of other races, income levels—even, dare I say it, political parties.

For Spring Into Action this year, we decided to focus on “welcoming” in all of these various meanings, and asked groups from across the church to sponsor different events on this theme, from book discussions to public affairs forums, to sermons to a movie night. The full calendar of activities is on the next page.

The Spring Into Action month kicks off on April 1 with a volunteer activity sponsored by Green Sanctuary and Lifespan Faith Development. Come out and enjoy free food and music as we weed, pluck, and pull to help make the outside of our church more welcoming. On Sunday, April 2, Rev. Meg

Barnhouse will address the topic of welcoming in her sermon, and during the Public Affairs Forum, three local activists will tackle the question of whether or not Austin is a welcoming city, especially for communities of color.

There will be two book discussions during the month, both on books about race. All are welcome to participate in both of these discussions, and childcare will be provided for both events. White Allies for Racial Equity is hosting a discussion of William Barber’s book, “The Third Reconstruction: How A Moral Movement Is Overcoming The Politics Of Division and Fear.” The book, which is the Common Read of the Unitarian Universalist Association for the year, is about how Barber worked with a coalition of diverse allies to launch the Moral Mondays movement. The discussion is from 1–2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 23. The People of Color group will be hosting a discussion of “Tears We Cannot Stop” by Michael Eric Dyson, which argues that if we are to make real racial progress we must face some difficult truths about

our society. The discussion is from 1–2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 30. I’ve started both books and each one is excellent!

For our final weekend, Membership, Fellowship, and Spring Into Action are hosting a special edition of our new member potluck. Come to Howson Hall on Saturday, April 29, from 6–8 p.m. to eat some great food, welcome new members to our church, and spend some time discussing ways we can make First UU more welcoming to all. On Sunday, April 30, we will wrap up our month-long exploration of welcoming with both a sermon on the topic from Rev. Chris Jimmerson, and at the Public Affairs Forum, a discussion of the joys and challenges of being welcoming to those of other faiths with local interfaith leaders. And there are many other events to choose from!

I hope you take advantage of all of the special events available to you during Spring Into Action. For details, see the inserted calendar of events or pick up your own copy at the Social Action table in the gallery after Sunday services.









This year’s theme: WELCOMING

See insert for this year’s schedule!



Spring Into Action 2017

This year's theme: WELCOMING

DATE & TIME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY
Saturday, April 1 9 AM–12:30 PM	Meet in Howson Hall	 <i>Volunteer Opportunity: Church Clean-Up (outdoors).</i> Join Green Sanctuary and Lifespan Faith Development to make our grounds more welcoming. We'll give training on plucking and pruning, free music & lunch.
Sunday, April 2 12–1 PM	Sanctuary	 <i>Public Affairs Forum: "Austin—Are We a Welcoming City?"</i> This dialogue with three community representatives will critically reflect on the experiences faced by communities of color in Austin.
Saturday, April 8 10 AM–2 PM	Meet in Gallery	 <i>Volunteer Opportunity: Church Clean-Up (indoors).</i> Pitch in with Second Saturdays & FreshenUUp for some small repairs and painting to make our church's RE wing more welcoming. Free music & lunch!
Sunday, April 9 1–2 PM	Room 11	 <i>Workshop: Welcoming Our Transgender Friends.</i> Join the Sr. High School Youth Group to discuss ways to make our community more welcoming to transgendered people. There will be a presentation and Q&A.
Tuesday, April 11 6–9 PM	Howson Hall	 <i>Women's Alliance: From Courtroom to Pulpit.</i> Ministerial Intern Susan Yarbrough served 18 years as a U.S. Immigration Court judge, where she observed the value and challenges of welcoming new residents to our country.
Wednesday, April 12* 7–8:30 PM	Room 13	 <i>Workshop: Living Our Covenant—Welcome and Serve.</i> What do we mean when we promise to welcome and serve? Where are we doing well? Where do we fall short? How are we enriched, and how do we sustain ourselves along the journey?
Thursday, April 13 7–8:30 PM	Room 13	 <i>Discussion: Enneagram Study Group.</i> Learn about the Enneagram and how personality traits affect our ability to be welcoming. All are welcome at this informal group, which meets monthly to discuss how we use this tool in our lives.
Sunday, April 16 12–1 PM	Sanctuary	 <i>Public Affairs Forum: "Welcoming and Coming Out."</i> Anna Nguyen, President of PFLAG Austin, will discuss how to be welcoming to your LGBTQ friends and family during their journey of coming out.

*This workshop will be offered again Sun. May 7.

(SEE REVERSE)

(Spring Into Action 2017, continued)

DATE & TIME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY
Sunday, April 16 12:30–2 PM	Room 13	 <p><i>Discussion: White Allies For Racial Equity.</i> MLK once said that 11AM Sunday morning is “the most segregated hour in this nation.”</p> <p>What do well-intentioned white people do to alienate people of color in churches?</p>
Monday, April 17 6:30–8:30 PM	909 E 49½ St	 <p><i>Volunteer Opportunity: Clean-Up at Out Youth House.</i> Join First UU Alphabet Soup Group to clean the Out Youth House, a drop-in center for local LGBTQ youth. All welcome!</p>
Wednesday, April 19 7–8:30 PM	Room 13	 <p><i>Workshop: UU United Nations LGBT Rights.</i> Learn how the UU United Nations Office brought international LGBT human rights to the table at the UN. Sponsored by UU International Initiatives.</p>
Sunday, April 23 1–2:30 PM	Room 13	 <p><i>Book Discussion: “The Third Reconstruction.”</i> White Allies is hosting a discussion of William Barber’s book, the 2017 UUA Common Read, about how he worked with a coalition of diverse allies to launch the Moral Mondays movement. All are welcome!</p>
Wednesday, April 26 7–9 PM	Room 13	 <p><i>Movie Night: Zootopia.</i> Lifespan Faith Development is hosting a screening of this animated comedy-adventure set in a modern mammal metropolis. Can predators and prey ever get along?</p>
Saturday, April 29 6–8 PM	Howson Hall	 <p><i>Special Event: Welcoming Dinner.</i> Join Membership and Fellowship for a special edition of our quarterly new member potluck. We will welcome our new members, enjoy a great dinner, and discuss what we can do to make First UU more welcoming.</p>
Sunday, April 30 12–1 PM	Sanctuary	 <p><i>Public Affairs Forum: “Interfaith Welcoming—Joys and Challenges.”</i> Leaders from two area interfaith organizations, Interfaith Action of Central Texas and Texas Impact, will discuss the joys & challenges of bringing together different faith communities.</p>
Sunday, April 30 1–2:30 PM	Room 13A	 <p><i>Book Discussion: “Tears We Cannot Stop.”</i> People of Color will discuss Michael Eric Dyson’s book, which argues that if we are to make real racial progress we must face some difficult truths about our society. All are welcome!</p>

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS



General Assembly Q&A

General Assembly (GA) is coming up, and several people have asked questions about it. This year, GA is in New Orleans, June 21–25. GA is always an important event in the life of our faith, but this year is especially important for two reasons: this will be a “Justice GA,” with a strong focus on justice building and activism; and this year we elect the new UUA President for a six-year term.

What is General Assembly?

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. GA is held in a different city each year, and this year it is nearby in New Orleans, so it is a great year to go. GA is the best way to experience the breadth and depth of our UU faith.

How do I register for GA?

You can register on the GA website, www.uua.org/ga. It is best to register before May 1, before rates go up. There is lots of good information on the site, including the preliminary schedule of GA events.

Can I go to GA if I am not an official delegate?

Yes. Delegates are the only ones who get to vote for candidates and on policy issues, but non-delegates can do everything else at GA.

How do I become a delegate? Our church can appoint 12 delegates. The ministers will certify our delegates. If you are interested in being a delegate, please let David Overton know (email address is below).

Can I attend GA online?

Yes! Attending in person has many advantages, but if you can't be there in person, you can attend online and observe the great sermons, music, and workshops. You still have to register as an “off-site” participant.

Are there programs for youth?

Yes! Youth of all ages are an important part of GA. You can read about youth programs and register at the GA site (www.uua.org/ga).

Are there hotels being suggested?

Are there special rates for GA attendees?

Yes. The UUA has secured favorable rates with several nearby hotels. A list of hotels with descriptions and GA rates is on the GA website, at the

“Make Housing Reservations” link. It is a good idea to reserve hotels as soon as possible, because the closest ones go fast. But even if the designated hotels fill up, there are lots of hotel options in New Orleans.

If I plan to go, should I let the church know?

Yes! Please email David Overton at the email address below. He will put together a list of people going so that everyone has everyone else's contact information. Include your email address and mobile phone number.

Do I have to go for the entire GA or can I attend part of it?

Attending the full event is the best way, but you can also attend only parts of it. In fact, there is a reduced rate “one day” registration option.

Is the church going to help organize carpools and roommates for GA?

Yes. If you would like to share a ride, or if you have space for others, or if you are interested in sharing a hotel room, please let David know.

More questions about GA? Email our Denominational Connections chair, David Overton, at denom@austinnu.org.

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Austin Presence Group

April 6 & 20
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.

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.

Women’s Alliance: Susan Yarbrough

Tuesday, April 11
Howson Hall
6–8:30 p.m.

The Women’s Alliance meets on the second Tues. each month, Sept–May. A potluck dinner is enjoyed from 6–6:45 with a speaker and discussion after. Child-care is available, all are welcome.

This month’s speaker: “From Courtroom to Pulpit” by Susan Yarbrough, JD & Ministerial Intern.

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant,

Frequently at coffee hour, discussions center around one of the many issues that concern our body politic. One recent Sunday, someone began discussing climate change and got quite heated in their condemnation of not only those who did not “believe” in it, but also those who work in any energy industry that contributes significantly to it. Given that we live in Texas, I’m certain there are people in our congregation whose livelihoods depend on the oil and/or gas industries, either now or in the past. I wonder how welcome they feel when they hear this kind of talk. Perhaps I should have said something, but I can’t imagine what I could say without making things worse.

– *Uncomfortable*

Dear Uncomfortable,

The situation you describe was uncomfortable for you and probably was for others as well. Thanks for wanting to make things better and wondering if there is a positive way to do so.

Can we talk about contentious political or social issues? Yes, definitely. Unitarian Universalists are quite passionate about social and/or political issues that embody our values. The goal is to create constructive dialogue. Disparaging

talk of any kind is harmful and important to interrupt. Our covenant calls us to speak when silence would inhibit progress, and to interrupt hurtful interactions. When we fail to remind each other of our promises, it weakens the community that is the fabric of our church. Reminders to stop and think ultimately strengthen our community.

One possible way to begin the conversation might be with an observation followed by a question. “It’s clear you’re very concerned about global warming. How can we discuss it in a way that would be respectful to those of us who work in the industry?” You can remind people that the aim is for respectful conversation that focuses on issues and actions, not on people; conversation that attempts to engage and understand. Will others be uncomfortable? Most likely, but by speaking up you will raise awareness of our covenant which will ultimately strengthen our community.

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

Save the Date! The **2017 Annual Silent Auction** is coming! This year’s auction will run officially from **Sunday, April 30 to Sunday, May 14**. On May 14 we’ll close the auction and celebrate our community in participation with ResistDance, a drum-dance group for democracy. And there’ll be snacks! Plan to join us and continue to send donations to Gillian Redfearn: gigi7844241@gmail.com.

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



Spring Into Action elects Refugee Services of Texas to receive special offering

Each April, First UU's monthly special offering is designated for a nonprofit organization that reflects the theme of Spring Into Action, our annual church-wide social action project. This year, the theme of Spring Into Action is "welcoming." The Spring Into Action Planning Committee agreed that supporting an organization that welcomes refugees to our country is a perfect fit for this theme, especially given the recent action of the federal government to limit our nation's support for refugees.

The world community is now witnessing the highest level of forced migration on record with over 65 million people displaced from their homes, fleeing violence and persecution. History has shown us time and again that America is at its greatest when we have welcomed refugees to our shores and at its weakest when we have shut our doors out of fear.

Guided by the principles of human compassion and dignity, Refugee Services of Texas (RST) welcomes refugees, immigrants, and other displaced peoples

and supports them in integrating and thriving in their new communities. RST is a social service agency dedicated to providing assistance to refugees and other displaced persons fleeing persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group—as well as to the communities that welcome them. RST provides services to hundreds of clients from over 30 different countries of origin each year, 75 percent of whom are women and children.

RST needs our help to continue to provide quality care for the refugee families they serve. In addition, the Deena Jo Heide-Diesslin Foundation has offered a matching gift to assist RST in their efforts, in which every dollar donated by a faith-based institution will be matched one-to-one, so our support for RST will be doubled.

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.

White Allies for Racial Equity

We're having two events this month.

April 16: The first event is part of this year's Spring Into Action activities; see the insert and find the April 16 listing for details.

April 28: Our second event will be a movie screening of "13th," the Oscar-nominated documentary about race and the Thirteenth Amendment, by the director of Selma. The screening will be at 7 p.m. in Howson Hall. Following will be a panel discussion by four activist groups: Chas Moore, Austin Justice Coalition; Fatima Mann, Counter Balance ATX; Darwin Hamilton, Reentry Advocacy Project; and Njera Keith, Black Sovereign Nation. Free admission, childcare available.

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.

Please take note:

No one is to park in either the deposit lane or the ATM lane behind the credit union. They have graciously agreed to allow us to use their parking which saves us thousands of dollars since we won't need to add additional parking with our expansion. If we abuse this privilege, they could revoke our agreement. Thank you for your cooperation!

NOTES FROM THE INTERN

This is Your Brain on Seminary

by Susan Yarbrough



Back in April of 2014 after I had been accepted at Meadville Lombard, it was time to enroll in classes for my first semester which was to begin in September. I consulted with my faculty advisor, listened to scuttlebutt from currently and recently graduated students, and decided to front-load the really big reading classes as part of my long-range plan to ease on down the road so I would not have a lot to do during my last semester and could prepare to see the Ministerial Fellowship Committee shortly before graduation.

About a month into that first semester (which also included two other classes), I was astonished (and a bit peeved) at how many papers and piles of paper were accumulating from all four courses. Unlike many other denominations, Unitarian Universalism is so diverse in the theologies it embraces that there are really no textbooks into which key definitive writings have been gathered. Clearly, my living room floor was telling me that much of my coursework would be centered around handouts and downloads, and that I had better develop a really good system for organizing all the paperwork.

At first I tried three-ring binders, but even the largest ones were not capacious enough to hold all the materials for the big courses such as

Liberal Theology and UU History and Polity. So I decided to order two cartons of letter-size white plastic boxes and put the material for each course into its own box. One carton contained boxes that were six inches deep, and the other contained boxes three inches deep. With the help of a trusty printer, a reliable label machine, and a conscientious ophthalmologist (each of which/whom I repeatedly blessed), I have reached the end of seminary with a stack of full boxes that is almost eight feet high. I spent the first week of March hauling each box out of my study, reviewing its contents, and then stacking it in the dining area of my apartment.

As I write this, I can see the two stacks of boxes, and as I read the label on each one, I am grateful for the big tent of our faith, for academic knowledge gained, and for this congregation. All of you have made the book learning come alive for me, and I can think of so many things that you've taught me about each subject area.

Most of you have heard that I will be moving back to Houston in early June. Except for the years I practiced law in New York, Houston has been home to me since 1970 when I moved there to continue Ph.D. work at Rice University. After a year, I left the program in a justifiable feminist

snit because the all-male department would not approve a dissertation about Doris Lessing. The nicest thing anyone would say about her then was that she was "a turgid prig," although they probably revised that opinion after she won the Nobel Prize in literature in 2007 when she was almost 88 years old.

Nevertheless, I stayed in Houston because I loved what an international city it was becoming and because, unlike Dallas where I grew up, it had such muscle and such openness to newcomers. To be sure, Houston is not as clean or as pretty as Austin, nor is it as "refined" as Dallas likes to think of itself. But it is home, and it calls me strongly as the place to live out my days.

As I prepare to move, I will pack those white boxes and eventually pare the contents of each one down to what will fit in a Pendaflex file in a standard metal filing cabinet. What will not fit in any plastic or cardboard box or file cabinet, however, is my love for all of you. In one of the great and moving paradoxes of human life, our hearts often feel more full than our brains. The stack of boxes may represent my brain on seminary, but the literal and metaphorical sanctuary of this church represent my heart on Unitarian Universalism. Thank you for filling my heart. ■

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Declaration of Conscience

In a bold joint statement, UUA President Rev. Peter Morales and UUSC President Tom Andrews have committed to active engagement in the current political climate and to translate our UU values into action. Read and sign the Declaration of Conscience at www.uua.org.

UBarU Events—UBarU Camp and Retreat Center Kerrville, TX

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.'

- **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.

- **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.

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. <http://bit.ly/SRSG17>

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.uucs.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.

Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, April 12
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

When we are worn down with worry and words, sometimes music can bring solace. Even lift us to joy. This month you are invited to spend some time with Grace Lewis-McLaren, retired UU musician. RSVP by email: seniors@austinuu.org, or call Alice Cashman at (512) 837-0988.

Young Adult Group Meeting

Sunday, April 23
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!

Eclectic Folk Jam**Friday, April 14****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, April 22****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****APRIL 2****You Have to Be Carefully Taught**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

This sermon, a response to an invitation from our auction winner who picked several songs from South Pacific and asked me to make a sermon out of them, is about welcome. “Welcome” is the theme of this spring’s “Spring Into Action.” Our pianist will be Valeria Diaz.

APRIL 9**Thinking Like a Mountain**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

As humans, we are sometimes limited by perspectives born of our own experiences, and this can sometimes lead us to make faulty decisions because we lack the larger, longer-term view. How do we step back and take that larger view? Kathryn Govier, piano, and Ben Hummel, violin, will share a lovely duet.

APRIL 16**Truth, Crushed to Earth, Shall Rise Again**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

The spiral, one of the most ancient of human symbols, indicates a path which travels to the center and then back out again. Many stories talk about going down into death and coming back out again as a way of the soul. Are we seeds

which must break open in darkness in order to rise as we are meant to be?

The First UU Church of Austin Adult Choir will be singing Bach’s “Lobet den Herrn” motet. One of only two motets by Bach in which the entire text comes from the Bible, the lyrics are drawn from the first two verses of Psalm 117. The choir will be accompanied by organist Austin Haller, as well as a chamber ensemble with members from Austin Symphony and Tosca. The Children’s Choir will also be singing in the service.

APRIL 23**Gaia Psalms**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

This interactive worship service will have music composed by Kiya Heartwood, and litany composed by Heartwood and Meg Barnhouse. It will be meditative and uplifting, with a visual beauty aligning with the beauty of words and music from the choir to lift our hearts in celebration of this planet, our home.

APRIL 30**Spring Has Sprung**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

We have just spent the month exploring “welcoming,” what it looks like and why it matters. We will talk about what we learned and how it is spiritual and religious.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

APRIL 2

Austin—Are We a Welcoming City?

WITH ALEJANDRO CACERES, PRISCILLA HALE,
AND PAULA X. ROJAS

Join us for a dialogue with three community representatives to critically reflect on the experiences faced by many communities of color in Austin including the Latino immigrant community, LGBTQIA people of color, and mothers of color and their children.

Alejandro Caceres works with ICE Out of Austin, organizing immigrant communities to improve their daily lives by building collective power to challenge deportation policies. Since 2010, Caceres' focus has been on immigrant communities in Arizona and Austin. Priscilla Hale is the Executive Director of allgo, an organization that works to create and sustain queer people of color, activists, groups, organizations, and allies through artistic expression, wellness promotion, and grassroots organizing. Paula X. Rojas is a community organizer, licensed midwife, and social justice trainer. For over 20 years, she has worked on issues of gender violence, racial justice, women's reproductive health, childcare access, healthcare access, and police brutality.

APRIL 9

A Conversation with our new Travis County District Attorney

WITH MARGARET MOORE

In an unexpected upset of a well-known opponent, Margaret Moore finished strong in the last Nov. election for the office of Travis County District Attorney. Moore is an insider in Central Texas politics and has a lifetime of public sector work experience at the county and state levels. She's also the second woman to serve as Travis County DA.

Moore will discuss what she envisions as the primary responsibilities of the DA and the steps she is taking to reorganize the office to improve its efficiency and

effectiveness. She will discuss key issues facing the DA's office now: how to deal with problems associated with the Austin Police Department's DNA lab and a backlog of cases; how to best handle issues associated with the Travis County Sheriff's immigration policies and procedures; and how to best create a Civil Rights Unit to handle police officer involved shootings and other use of force cases.

APRIL 16

Welcoming and Coming Out

WITH ANNA NGUYEN

PFLAG Austin supports Central Texas parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning persons (LGBTQ) in celebrating diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Join Anna Nguyen, President of PFLAG Austin, as she discusses how you can be welcoming to your LGBTQ friends and family during their journey of coming out. You'll learn how you can help make this transformative process as positive as possible and how to offer support to help your loved one deal with the challenges they may face.

APRIL 23

Reforestation and Justice

WITH SCOTT SABIN

Environmental concern is often seen as a luxury, in opposition to the fundamental needs of human beings and their development. Learn how poverty and environmental issues are intimately connected, and hear about the exciting progress that is being made in solving issues of extreme poverty and environmental degradation in the developing world.

Plant With Purpose (www.plantwithpurpose.org) is an international Christian organization that empowers the poor in rural areas around the world where poverty and

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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

THE FORUM, *continued*

environmental degradation intersect. They partner with rural subsistence farmers living in extreme poverty on severely degraded land. Through providing training in environmental restoration, sustainable agriculture and savings-led microfinance, rural communities are sustainably growing out of poverty while restoring their environment.

APRIL 30, 2017

Interfaith Welcoming— Joys and Challenges

WITH SIMONE TALMA FLOWERS
& BEE MOORHEAD

Interfaith understanding is sometimes sorely lacking in our society.

Interfaith work encourages us to open ourselves to people from a variety of faiths and build bridges among groups whose views of the world may differ. Join leaders from two Central Texas interfaith organizations, Interfaith Action of Central Texas and Texas Impact—as they discuss the joys and challenges of bringing together different faith communities.

Simone Talma Flowers is executive director of Interfaith Action of Central Texas, which exists to build healthy relationships between the faith communities of Central Texas. Bee Moorhead is executive director at Texas Impact, a statewide religious grassroots network that works on interfaith education and community leadership development.



**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Austin**

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