



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## Sabbatical postponed

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



My mother loved Audrey Hepburn. I remember watching a movie with her where Hepburn was being stalked by a terrible bad guy. She was hiding underneath a stage with numbered trap doors in it. Listening to the creaks of stealthy footsteps above her, she fingered the trapdoor releases, timing it so that she could drop him to his doom.

I feel like I was walking across a stage and suddenly dropped through a trapdoor and disappeared.

First, there had to be bone graft, which we were not expecting. Then, when all of that was almost healed up, they discovered an infection in the joint. Within three hours I was in emergency surgery again, where they replaced some parts of the apparatus, put an antibiotic pack in there, and now we are hoping that takes care of the infection. We won't know probably for six months. I will be back at work way before then, but for right now I'm a little bit weak. I

have to take intravenous antibiotics three times a day, and be extraordinary careful in doing everything I can to rid myself of this infection.

The suddenness of this change in my life has been disorienting. Maybe "re-orienting" would be a better word. I have lost track of things I used to think were important. I used to wonder how a person took an entire day off! That seems just crazy to me now.

I have been re-oriented toward noticing what is most important. That is, the people around me, work that is meaningful, and love that returns to you. One of the things this has reminded me of is what a wonderful group of people surround me all across the country, but especially here. My wife Kiya, Chris Jimmerson and the church staff, my friends and my sons make all the difference as we go through this trouble together.

I am making some decisions about adjusting the timing of my sabbatical, given all of these unexpected complications in my orthopedic adventure. I'm coming to the end of my accrued sick time, and I will start using vacation time or sabbatical time over the next couple of weeks. My contract grants me one month of sabbatical per year of service, and this is the end of my sixth year. I was not going to take my full six months, but only four. I will still do that, but not this year, with the board's approval.

So I will stay here this fall, and postpone my plans until next year. This is good because I get to be together with you all as we begin and continue the building process! I'm very happy to not be missing that. We will get through this, and I hope it all works together for the best.

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers, for your cards and good wishes. ■

**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](mailto:irene.kirschenbaum@austinuu.org).

**Save the Dates!****Congregational meeting**

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

**Important things...****by Marsha Sharp****ONE:**

Your vote matters. It matters not only in local, state, and national elections, it matters in this church.

I urge you to attend congregational meetings to understand the workings of this church and to voice your opinions. Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, May 21 in the church sanctuary. Members of this church will vote on who will occupy vacancies on the board of trustees and on the nominating committee. Our bylaws state:

“Individuals who have been members of the church for 30 days or more and who have (as an individual or part of a family unit) made a recorded financial contribution during the last 12 months and at least 30 days prior to the meeting, have the right to vote at all official church meetings.”

**TWO:**

This is my soapbox: Find at least one activity that resonates with you and volunteer. This is the best way to get to know your fellow UUs while contributing to the church and following your passion. As members, you know that we do not rely on outside finances to fund our church and all its activities.

Your time and talent is so important to enhance our community and to ease the load that current staff and volunteers carry. If you're feeling “outside” the congregation, this is the cure.

**THREE:**

It has truly been a pleasure and an honor to serve as your president this past year. I have had the privilege of attending Path to Membership classes and seeing the beaming faces of those who have made the commitment to join this vibrant church. I have seen the dedication you all have for causes, not only in this church, but those in our city and world. I have learned so much about the inner workings of this church—not only by serving on the board of trustees, but also through ministries, covenant groups, and friendships that have developed. Working with our two talented and caring ministers has been a privilege beyond words.

And, I have had the honor of working with a truly collaborative board of trustees. I thank the members for their guidance, humor, and wise counsel. It may sound crazy, but I can honestly say I enjoyed the monthly board meetings. Thank you all! ■



## Changes on the horizon for Paradox Players, but first—Clarence Darrow!

**Farewell reception: Sunday, May 21  
Howson Hall, 5:30 p.m.**

The long-anticipated renovations of our church facilities are finally moving beyond the very important planning stages to actual physical changes. The planned renovations to Howson Hall mean the Bethke Stage will be removed and replaced with another type of stage. Our May performance will be the final play on Bethke Stage. (See show details below.)

This also marks our final performance with Gary Payne, our artistic director. Gary and his family are moving to Kerrville. Gary's been our artistic director for the past several years, but he's also directed many shows and acted in some of our most memorable plays. He even

wrote the script for the world premiere of "Queso Blanco," which broke all attendance records! How fitting that the last performance of this multi-talented individual on Bethke Stage is a one-man show about the career of another man of many talents.

Please join us in the gallery after the final performance of "Clarence Darrow" for a celebration of the many outstanding shows that have been produced on Bethke Stage. We'll also be thanking Gary for the inspiration and joy he's brought to our church and especially Paradox Players audiences over the years. If you plan to come to this farewell celebration, please RSVP to [info@paradoxplayers.org](mailto:info@paradoxplayers.org) so we can have enough food for everyone. ■



**"Clarence Darrow"**  
**A one-act play starring Gary Payne  
Howson Hall**

Written by David W. Rintels, directed by Laura King. Here is the famous attorney reminiscing over his long and renowned career, touching on many of his famous trials including the Scopes "Monkey" trial and other famous cases. Darrow reviews much of America's legal history with salty humor, courtroom gusto and human relish. His private life and many contemporary events, including labor conditions, are woven into this story of a man who accepted unpopular

cases and defended unpopular causes. This champion of dissenters and underdogs was also a writer and lecturer, and he conjures up many famous people of his life and times.

**Dates:** May 5–21  
Fridays & Saturdays 8 p.m.  
Sunday 3 p.m.  
Opening night gala on May 5  
**Prices:** Opening night tickets \$20,  
or \$15 seniors/\$10 students  
Other evening & matinee tickets:  
\$15, or \$10 seniors & students  
**Reservations:** (512) 744-1495  
or [www.paradoxplayers.org](http://www.paradoxplayers.org). ■

### New Member Recognition

**Sunday, May 7  
Sanctuary, during  
worship services**

Signed the membership book this year, but still haven't participated in a New Member Recognition ceremony yet? Be introduced to and received by the congregation!

Participation is simple and optional. You'll be asked to join Rev. Meg at the front of the church, briefly introduce yourselves to the congregation, and a short litany will be read. (Bring a copy of the bulletin up with you so you can read the litany.)

If you'd like to participate, just show up! Wear your "new member" ribbon (extras may be found at the visitor/membership table).

### Getting to Know UU

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

This informal class is a good way to learn more about UUism and this church.

Contact: Shannon Posern,  
[membership@austinuu.org](mailto:membership@austinuu.org).

## LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

# Lifespan FD highlights

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



In May we will be transitioning to a new check-in system for our Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade RE classes! Most families are familiar with the clipboard sign-in table just outside the sanctuary. The clipboards didn't always get filled out, we couldn't print combined classes onto one piece of paper so it was confusing to many families, and there was no check-out process.

The clipboards are being replaced with CheckPoint by ACS. There will be a kiosk where the sign-in station was. You sign in your kiddo(s) there and it will print two name tags for each kid. You put one name tag on your kid and hold onto the second one. Hand the second name tag in to your kid's teacher or classroom helper to pick up your kid. This new check-in system has some great benefits, most importantly helping ensure the safety of all of our lil' UUs!

In fellowship,  
*Laine Young*

## First Sunday Seminars: May 7

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.

*Please note that First Sunday Seminars go on summer break in June, July & August. Interested in teaching a First*

*Sunday Seminar in the fall? Please send your class proposal to [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).*

## Faith Formation Track: Science and Religion with Bruce Naylor—“Today's Politics from the Brain Science Perspective”

With politics in the U.S and Europe veering off in surprising directions, it has become critical to better understand the deeper roots that are driving these developments. Looking at the evolutionary forces that shaped our brains is the best place to begin. Both religion and science (including technology) have been dominant forces in this evolutionary process over the last 10,000 years, since the end of the Ice Age and the rise of agriculture. A major mechanism for our brain's evolution during this time period has been warfare, resulting in the genetically encoded “warrior brain” that we all share. We will explore the evolutionary development of the warrior brain and examine its manifestations in today's political environment.

## Leadership Development Track: “Living Our Covenant—Welcome and Serve”

Our UU faith is based, not on what we believe (dogma), but on covenants (promises). Our congregation promises to gather in community to nourish souls, transform lives and do justice. We also have a healthy relations covenant which is how we promise to treat each other. Join us as we explore: 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 along the way? How do we sustain ourselves along the journey?

*continued on next page*

**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. unless otherwise noted. Childcare will still be available on F.R.E.D. Nights.

**Gardening Club, May 3**

Join us as we have a planning and brainstorming session for our brand-new gardening club. We have already added a vegetable garden to the big kid playground! All ages are welcome to join. Contact Laine Young for more info: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

**National Geographic's "Gender Revolution" May 10 (6 p.m.)**

We had a screening and discussion in April, and it was so popular an encore screening was requested! National Geographic has a nearly 130-year history of bringing stories about humanity and science to the forefront. In January earlier this year they devoted the entire issue to an exploration of gender issues—in science, social systems, and civilizations—and featured a transgender person for the first time on the cover.

The film is informational, global and timely, as many cisgender people are learning more about the transgender community locally and nationally due to events like national "bathroom bills" such as SB6. How can we as UUs stay informed while sticking to the roots of our seven principles in order to contribute to a more inclusive world? Age recommendation for this movie is middle school and up.

**F.R.E.D. Night Visioning, May 17**

What kind of classes would you like to see at our church's Wednesday night programming (F.R.E.D.) in the future? Join Laine Young in a time dedicated to visioning all the possibilities of F.R.E.D. Night together! Everyone is encouraged to attend this—we want feedback from all ages!

**End of Year Movie Night: "Moana" May 24 (6 p.m.)**

Join us as we celebrate the end of the 2016-17 F.R.E.D. year! Moana is rated PG and ages 6+ by Common Sense Media. In Ancient Polynesia, when a terrible curse incurred by the demigod Maui reaches an impetuous chieftain's daughter's island, she answers the ocean's call to seek out the demigod to set things right.

**Splash Day! Sunday, June 4**

Another school year is almost over which means it's time for us to break out the pools and water balloons for our annual Splash Day, which happens during both RE hours. Fun for all ages! Bring your kid to church in their swimsuits, shorts, flip-flops, sunscreen, etc. and don't forget to pack a towel and a change of clothes for after our Splash Day fun!

Splash Day needs volunteers to make the splashy fun possible! We need assistance with things such as getting the pools cleaned up and ready for this year, people who can show up early to fill up the pools and water balloons, and people who can stay outside with the kiddos during Splash Day to help provide supervision. Contact Laine Young if you would like to help (and splash around, too!): [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

**Summer Children & Youth Programming Starts June 11!**

We like to give our amazing fall and spring lead teachers a summer break. Being a summer teacher is a wonderful way to learn along with our lil' UUs, deepen your own faith, and have fun along the way! If you are interested in this serving opportunity or would like more information, please contact Laine: [laine.young@austinuu.org](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).

**Pre-K–1<sup>st</sup> Grade: "World of Wonder," Rm. 23**

Wonder. What is it? Where do we find it? How do we keep it? Children are born with an ability to feel wonder, and our world is full of amazing plants, animals, spaces, processes, textures, and patterns that can awaken it. But to nurture and preserve a sense of wonder, children need time to explore, observe, engage, and rest in that world. This program delves deep into our Unitarian Universalist

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Alphabet Soup Social Club**

**Sunday, May 7  
12:30 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's meeting will be a two-parter:

**Lunch (12:30):** Masala Wok (in Arbor Walk; 10515 Mopac Service Rd A-155)

**Beer & Music (2 pm):** Oskar Blues Brewery (10420 Metric Blvd), where our very own Jill Csekitz will be performing with the band Fingerpistol.

**Do Not Resist...  
The First UU 2017 Silent Auction!**

*Now open through May 14!*

The annual silent auction has arrived! Bidding is happening **NOW** through Sunday, May 14. You can bid online at <http://bit.ly/FirstUUSilentAuction2017>, or in person in Howson Hall on Sundays.

Auction items include entertaining events and useful services. Fund-a-Need items benefit individuals and beloved

traditions within our community. Also available are raffle tickets for some outstanding items, including a bicycle for two and a Taylor's acoustic guitar.

This community effort not only raises money for our community, but allows us opportunities to build community with one another through joint experiences. *(continued below)*

***Some auction offerings this year include:***



Home Concert with Kiya Heartwood



Two Personal Training Sessions



One-Week Vacation Home Rental in Breckenridge, CO



Two Tickets to The Nutcracker



Up to Six Hours of Babysitting (!!)



Authentic Texas Brisket Dinner for 12

***You can even sponsor this newsletter!***

**Wrap-Up Celebration: Sun. May 14  
Church courtyard  
11:45 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**

Plan to celebrate the auction's end and our community with ResistDance, a drum-dance group for democracy, and a visit from the Good Humors ice cream

truck. This is a free event for all ages in the church courtyard. (Bringing a lawn chair and a drum/something to beat on is encouraged!) Questions can be directed to Gillian Redfearn: [gigi7844241@gmail.com](mailto:gigi7844241@gmail.com).

*LFD Highlights, continued*

seventh principle. It instills respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and appreciation of its beauty, excitement, and mystery.

**2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade: “Jedi Academy (May the Force Be with You)”**  
**Rm. 17**

Our UU Padawans will learn about our seven principles from Jedi Masters this summer! Each class introduces a new lightsaber color and one of our Unitarian Universalist principles, along with Star Wars fun along the way and lightsaber training at the end of the summer.

**Junior High Youth Group: “Middle School MythBusters!”** Rm. 13

The junior high youth group will be engaging in various science experiments this summer. Experiments will include aerodynamics, creating slime, making soda geysers, and more! The junior high youth group meets during second service only, from 10:45 a.m.–noon.

**High School Youth Group, Rm. 11**

This summer, the high school youth group will have fellowship, small group worship, and field trips with the middle school youth group. The purpose of each is to build strong fellowship and spiritual deepening within the group and a bond between the two youth groups. The high youth group meets during second service only, starting at 10:45 a.m. ■

**White Allies for Racial Equity**

**Sunday, May 21**  
**Rm. 13**

**12:30–2 p.m.**

We welcome self-identified white UUs as we focus on intersectional feminism.

This type of feminism attends to the ways in which claims made in the name of women as a class can function to silence or marginalize some women by universalizing the claims of relatively privileged women. Lynn Adams, church member and White Allies group member, will present.

The White Allies is a group of self-identified white Austin area UUs and friends. Through training and self-examination, we educate ourselves about racism and whiteness to be good allies in anti-racism work in our church & community.

**HANDS ON HOUSING**

Update from Repair Day



On April 8, volunteers from First UU joined other volunteers from Unity Church of the Hills and St. Luke's United Methodist Church in a Hands on Housing project to repair the home

of Mr. & Mrs. Ron Davis. The crew worked much of the day Saturday replacing rotten wood, painting the entire exterior of the home, and doing much-needed yard maintenance.

Hands on Housing is one of the programs of Interfaith Action of Central Texas, and First UU has participated for many years. If you missed this opportunity, don't worry. We will have another home to repair in the fall, so, join us then.

## NOTES FROM THE INTERN

## I'm no good at...

by Susan Yarbrough



Ice skating, creative cooking, embroidery, and saying goodbye. Never mind about my ineptitude with the first three. It's the last one that's important, and I can hardly believe it's almost time to do that with you.

I saw the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in Boston on March 24, received their highest possible rating, and was warmly welcomed into fellowship as a UU minister. I had just spent an hour answering questions about Christian threads that are woven into our faith, the best way to teach our sources to young children, the limits of redemption in the writings of theologians of color, congregational politics and administration, holidays in other religions that might be instructive for UU congregations, my family of origin, what I do for fun, and about eight other questions on various topics. Some of the questions surprised me, and some did not, but the time went by very quickly, and I was then escorted out so the "jury" could deliberate.

They summoned me back into the room after only five minutes, and I was afraid that I had been "poured out"—an expression that's used in the legal profession to mean "you lost that one really quickly and very decisively, Buster." But they had

only kind words for me, and as I sat there listening to them, I thought of how I would not have reached that moment without each of you—my teaching pastor Reverend Barnhouse, my ministerial colleague Reverend Jimmerson, our LDF ace Laine Young, the amazing maestro Brent Baldwin, my teaching congregation (all of you), my internship committee (Tomas Medina, Sharon Moore, Margaret Roberts, Max Stout, and Bridget Lewis), and the Heart of Texas ministers' cluster. I'm not easily choked up, but I cried tears of gratitude for your gifts to me of kindness and encouragement.

After the committee concluded their evaluative comments, they all stood up and invited me to go around their semicircle so each member of the committee could shake my hand and say words of welcome. Candidates are encouraged to bring their own chaplain with them, and Rev. Kathleen Ellis accompanied me to UUA headquarters for the big event. (Chaplains are required to wait in a nearby room and are not allowed to go into the interview with the candidate). Reverend Ellis and I have been friends for four years, and her calm presence and gentle prayer before the interview helped to steady me. After I was escorted out

following the committee's "verdict," I saw her through the glass door of the waiting room, held up my index finger to signify I had received a "1," and received a big grin and a bear hug when I reached her. How wonderful to have someone to immediately celebrate with! That afternoon, many of you sent me congratulatory emails and text messages. I've saved all of them, and I thank you for them.

So...what now? My last sermon at this congregation will be on May 14, which is Mother's Day. I'm not a parent, and I did not have a nice mother to extol, but I know what it is to have my soul nourished by you, and that's what I'll be talking about: what's needed to nourish a soul, how you've fulfilled First UU's mission in doing that for me, and how you've taught me to do that for others. I may need two boxes of tissues on the pulpit.

I'll be moving back to Houston at the end of May, unpacking (not my favorite activity), setting up a new apartment close to the church there, attending General Assembly in June, and starting to work as one of the ministers at First UU in Houston on August 1. On Saturday, October 14 at 4:30, I'll be ordained in Houston, SO PLEASE SAVE THE DATE and attend

*continued on next page*

*"No good at," continued*

if at all possible. I'll ask the office staff here at First UU Austin to post a copy of the official invitation in the September newsletter and/or in an online announcement.

I love the English language, but it is so

inadequate when it comes to expressing the fullness of the gratitude I have for all of you. So I am left with the bare simplicity of "thank you," and the hope that you can feel the complexity and depth and love which permeate those two words.

Grace and peace to all of us. ■

## SECOND SATURDAY

### Bring the whole family to volunteer for these worthy causes!

**Saturday, May 13**  
**Starts in the gallery**  
**10 a.m.**

Please join us for our volunteer program, Second Saturday, here at the church. We will hear about the various opportunities to support organizations whose missions reflect our values. You can choose where you wish to volunteer your time, be it for an hour or two or more. Current options include Top Drawer (resale shop supporting Project Transitions), Ten Thousand Villages,

Austin Assistance League's Thrift Store, Austin Child Guidance Center, and our own plot at Sunshine Garden where we will grow vegetables for the food bank at Project Transitions. There are opportunities for families with school-age children, and we offer childcare for the younger ones.

We have created a sign-up form for this program (<http://bit.ly/FirstUU2ndSaturdaySignup>), and hope you will join us! Thank you for all that you do.

### Women's Alliance: Rev. Meg Barnhouse

**Tuesday, May 9**  
**Howson Hall**  
**6-8:30 p.m.**

For years, Rev. Meg has traveled around the country not only preaching but sharing her original songs and stories. We don't often get to see this side of her ministry, which she will show us at this final meeting for the spring. The group will resume in September.

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. Childcare is available, all are welcome.

### Senior Luncheon

**Wednesday, May 10**  
**Howson Hall**  
**12 p.m.**

Peter Flagg Maxson is an art historian. He's collected a trove of obituaries from the British Daily Telegraph newspaper that are both colorful and entertaining. Peter has prepared a talk where he'll share some of them.

Soup, salad and dessert will be served for \$5. Please RSVP to Alice Cashman: (512) 837-0988.

## HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

**Austin Presence Group****May 4 & 18****Room 13B****6:30–8 p.m.**

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

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

**Advice from Covenant Corner**

Dear Covenant,

In my Chalice Circle there is a participant who can sometimes talk a LOT. She doesn't seem to notice that other people are trying to enter the conversation. So far the leader has not said anything to her. Should I? I really want to hear what others have to say. And I myself would like a chance to speak without having to interrupt.

– *Silenced*

Dear Silenced,

This is a question that comes up quite often in some form or another, so we're glad you asked. It's wonderful that you want to make space for the richness that comes from a diversity of voices. We assume your group created a covenant. Most covenants include a line or two meant to ensure that a few people don't dominate the conversation. Here are a few examples:

- We value everyone's voice
- Step up, step back
- We give each person space to express their thoughts
- We collaborate to make sure that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance.

If your covenant does not have something along these lines, we suggest you speak to the leader (outside of group) and ask if the group can revisit the covenant. If your covenant does address the issue, then you have a couple of options.

You could talk to the group leader (again, outside of group) and say something like “I notice one of our group members is not very good at allowing time for others to speak. The next time that happens, would you be willing to remind the group about our covenant?”

We encourage you, however, to say something to the group yourself. Learning to use a covenant can be challenging and it's a skill we want everyone in our church to cultivate. You could say something as simple as “I think we're out of covenant. We agreed to make sure that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance.” No need to point fingers. A good way to avoid shaming anyone is to use the pronoun “we.”

By speaking up, you will not only be honoring your group covenant, but also the church's healthy relations covenant in which we promise to speak when silence would inhibit progress. Your leader and group members will probably appreciate your courage and, after seeing your example, be more willing to speak up themselves if it happens again.

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](mailto:healthyrelations@austinuu.org).

Sincerely,  
*Healthy Relations Ministry*

## MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



## UBarU Camp and Conference Center

UBarU is a Unitarian Universalist camp and conference center located on 142 rugged acres, in what is again this year a beautifully green and wildflower strewn patch of the Texas Hill Country, near Kerrville. Since the property was passed on to us by the Quakers, we have sought to fulfill our UBarU mission “to provide a welcoming, peaceful place to gather for spiritual, educational, and recreational purposes in harmony with our Unitarian Universalist principles and the land.” Scores of members of this church have joined in spring and summer youth camps, Deep in the Heart of Texas Women’s Retreat, Heart of Texas Men’s Retreat, Texas Wine—Texas Stars Celebrations, the new Dark Sky astronomy weekends, contemplative retreats, and even personal family reunions.



Campers enjoying the swimming tank.  
Photo: Michael West/UBarU

This past year has been incredibly exciting for all. The most recent initiative was the result of receiving a grant from H-E-B Environmental in support of an expanding sustainability initiative. These funds allowed for the clearing of dense cedar (ash juniper) trees surrounding the main nine-acre campus. Trees were cleared from the Tree House to the Meeting House and all the way around the straw bale cottages and Ranch House, up to the Barn and around the water tank and windmill and newly-expanded soccer field. This new open area will provide greater fire security for all, less pressure on the water table and open up new meadows for wildflowers, butterflies, bees and birds.

The solar panels on the Rev. Dwight and Marie Brown Center continue to be in full operation, significantly reducing our overall carbon footprint. Also, UBarU now hosts the Alamo Area Astronomer Association and numerous amateur and professional astronomers each month, enjoying the benefits of our designation as an International Dark Sky park.

We’ll hold our fourth year of expanded summer youth camps in the new Rev. Dwight and Marie Brown Center, featuring its climate-

controlled four-room suites with double, queen and even extra-long bunk beds, and both gender-specific and gender-neutral bathroom facilities.

This year our calendar of events offers more camps and retreats than ever, including Meaning Makers, a life-changing year-long program for 18–24 year olds; a full summer of youth camps for all ages; and a family camp. All activities revolve around the traditional Quaker-style Meeting House and radiate to the decks, the limestone rock pool by the windmill, the Meditation Oak, the two meditative labyrinths, and the evening fire circle.

This month, UBarU is proud to have been chosen by you, the members of First UU Austin, to receive the monthly special offering. Thank you for your continuing support! For more information on UBarU or the camps and retreats hosted there, check out our website at [www.ubaru.org](http://www.ubaru.org). Or check out the many photos on the UBarU Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/UBarURetreat](https://www.facebook.com/UBarURetreat).

*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.*

## GROUNDS COMMITTEE

# These teams didn't play pranks on April 1, they worked!

by Carol Edwards, Grounds Chair

The First UU Green Sanctuary Committee wanted to do some “pulling and clipping” outdoors to celebrate Earth Day this year. So on April 1 they joined a few Grounds Committee volunteers, and we got a huge amount of work done in the north and south grounds of the church. There was no fooling around with April Fool pranks this year—we all turned the jokes into energy and accomplished a lot.

Thanks to Beki and Richard Halpin and the Green Sanctuary Committee for organizing this and getting us going again! We all worked together and celebrated with pizza, salad, cookies, cold drinks and live music afterwards.

The clipping, cutting, weeding, digging, blowing and sawing crews were Dale Bulla, Pat Bulla, Dennis Conine, Silas Dunn, Bill Edelbrock, Linda Eldredge, Luther Elmore, Richard Halpin, Felicia Konable, Keith Pflieger, and Mike Powers. The crews that gathered up and hauled the limbs, weeds, dead leaves, and cactus pads to the trash piles were Ann Edwards, Carol Edwards, Louann Sledge, and Kitty Traylor. Of course there were no clear job descriptions, so everyone pitched in and helped each other trim and clean up. And we made new friends and learned some new names in the process.



*Volunteers enjoying work on the northern side of church grounds. Photo: Dale Bulla*

Beki and Richard organized drinks for all, and Beki got pizza, made salads, set up serving tables, and set out the food in Howson Hall with Luther Elmore's help just as we finished working.

And while the clipping and cleaning was going on, staff members Shannon Posern and Laine Young were creating a container garden in the playground. They instructed MarrGwen Dickson and her three children—Mary Alison, Malone, and MarrGwen—in planting tomatoes and strawberry popcorn in new Dirt Pots for a playground garden. Shannon and Richard also brought

extra plants from their gardens to share with the volunteers.

And while we hungrily wolfed down food and drinks after the hard work, Mary Jane Ford and members of two bands she plays with serenaded us with folk songs, ballads, and protest songs. Band members in the first group were: Mary Jane, Kim Akenhead, Pete Akenhead, and Robert Akenhead. Group two consisted of Mary Jane and Jim Bayliss, Dyanne Cortez and Edward Sledge.

And speaking of getting a lot of grounds work done, in mid-March Cathy Nordstrom brought her professional landscaping team from San Souci Gardens and cleaned the all-ages playground and the big berm in the southwest part of the property and hauled away the brush. It had gotten overgrown with native grasses, weeds and some non-native saplings. So thanks to her for helping us get the grounds in shape for Earth Day and spring! More kudos are in order for Chris Carter and her Green Kingfisher Grounds Maintenance company for hauling away a huge trailer load of large limbs, piles and piles of trimming and sacks and sacks of leaves and weeds.

Go outside, remember the joys of spring and admire our beautiful grounds, and thank all these dedicated volunteers.

**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](http://www.uua.org).

**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](http://www.uua.org/ga).

**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/](http://www.uucsj.org/grow-racial-justice/)

**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](http://www.ubaru.org), under ‘Events.’

- **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](http://www.uua.org/re/youngadults/meaning-makers).

- **Summer Camps for Youth.** Week-long camps provide fun in a UU setting, and include swimming, hiking, star-gazing, team-building and learning more about our faith.

Dates	Age Category	Grade as of Sept 1, 2017
Jun 11–17	Sojourner	grades 3–5
Jun 25–Jul 1	Olympia	grades 6 & 7
July 2–8	Seeger	grades 8 & 9
July 9–15	Reeb	grade 10 through 2017 HS graduates

**Carpool Opportunities**

Want to carpool to an event outside Austin? Email Denominational Connections at [denom@austinuu.org](mailto:denom@austinuu.org) and we’ll try to put you together with someone to share the ride.

**Young Adults Group**

**Sunday, May 28  
After second service**

The Young Adults group will be meeting for our monthly brunch. If you're in town for the holiday weekend, come join us! Look for us in the hallway outside of the sanctuary and we'll walk together to a local restaurant.

**Eclectic Folk Jam****Friday, May 12****Rm. 17****7–10 p.m.**

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

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

**UU/Quaker Singalong****Saturday, May 27****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](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org).

**SUNDAY SERVICES****SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM****MAY 7****Growth****YOUTH SUNDAY**

The Senior High Youth Group will lead the service, including the music! They will provide their reflections on growth and what it means to grow up.

**MAY 14****Mission Accomplished!****SUSAN YARBROUGH**

The first part of First UU's congregational mission is to nourish souls, and as I tell you goodbye on Mother's Day, I'll be describing how you have done that for me, thanking you for teaching me how to do it for others, and reflecting how we all can be nourishers of souls, regardless of whether we are parents. The First UU Intergenerational Choir will sing with the First UU Band.

**MAY 21****The Mystery of Mindfulness****REV. MEG BARNHOUSE**

Pema Chödrön, one of the most popular Buddhist teachers of the current day, says she is not very good at meditating. She continues to do it, though. Scientists have found that regular practice of mindfulness meditation can actually create new brain matter, which makes it of great interest to people who work with Parkinson's disease and other brain illnesses. What

are some ways to get started with mindfulness meditation? What do you do if you're not any good at it?

The First UU Adult Choir will be joined by a chamber orchestra for Arvo Pärt's “Berliner Messe.” Pärt is a contemporary composer known for his tintinnabular music—a simple style that is influenced by his experiences with chant music, and is characterized by a meditative feel and minimalist approach. Pärt uses his tintinnabuli technique throughout this piece, with the movements ranging from reverent duets between vocal parts to resounding full chorus passages.

**MAY 28****The Richness of Diversity****REV. MEG BARNHOUSE**

Lack of diversity in the kinds of potatoes being grown in Ireland led to the Great Famine. Diversity means strength. People are saving heirloom varieties of beans, corn, and vegetables to build a bulwark against a global famine. Many countries have their own seed banks, which support the culture of that country.

For Flower Communion, a Unitarian tradition since World War II, each person brings some flowers to church, and we enjoy what they look like when they are all together. When we go home, we take a different flower from the one we brought. This helps us remember the beauty in our own diversity. The First UU Vocal Chamber Ensemble will sing selections from Benjamin Britten's “Flower Songs.”

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

## MAY 7

### **Evaluating the Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism**

WITH NELSON LINDER

Nelson Linder is highly visible in our Austin community as president of the Austin branch of the NAACP, as a talk radio host, and as an insurance agent with his own company. He is frequently seen at public events advocating on behalf of social and economic justice, and he helps shape social policy by advising local elected officials, members of law enforcement, human services representatives, and other community leaders on a wide range of issues affecting the African American community. In this talk, Mr. Linder will evaluate the current mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and discuss the concept of restitution and reparations as just remedies for eliminating disparities in income, education, and opportunity between the African American and the general population.

In the year 2000, Mr. Linder was elected as the President of the Austin, TX branch of the NAACP. Linder has been interviewed on CNN, BET, MSNBC, and the Washington Post, and has appeared on local television discussing issues ranging from police brutality to housing discrimination. He has also worked extensively on educational equity and economic empowerment.

## MAY 14

### **Election Fraud and the Responsibility of Elected Officials**

WITH DANA DEBEAUVOIR, TRAVIS COUNTY CLERK

Dana DeBeauvoir holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas and a Master of Public Affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.

She first worked for Travis County in the Property Tax Division. In 1986 she was elected Travis County Clerk, where she has served with distinction ever since. The County Clerk's Office conducts elections, files and preserves real property records, and manages civil, probate, and misdemeanor court documents. During her service, she has modernized the office and brought great efficiencies. She will speak on election fraud and the responsibility of elected officials.

## MAY 21

### **Issues Facing East Austin and Newspaperman's Responsibility**

WITH TOMMIE L. WYATT

Tommie Wyatt was born in Point Blank, TX and graduated from Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School in Lubbock. He graduated from Bishop College in Marshall, did graduate work at the University of Washington in Seattle, and served two years in the U.S. Army. In 1973 he founded The Villager newspaper, which he has owned and published since then. The Villager is a community paper, addressing the needs and issues of East Austin. He will discuss issues facing East Austin and the responsibility, role, and future of the community newspaper.

He has served on many boards and commissions for the City of Austin and Travis County, including the Private Industry Council, Austin Tomorrow Planning Committee, Austin Cable Commission, and the East 11<sup>th</sup> Street Village Association.

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

### MAY 28

#### **Austin Sanctuary Network Activists Work in Solidarity with Immigrants**

WITH AUSTIN SANCTUARY  
NETWORK PANELISTS

Sanctuary is a place where love and protection are living realities. The Austin Sanctuary Network (ASN) has grown as a coalition of 23 faith communities, immigrants and other members of civil society and organizations that support asylum seekers fleeing violence.

Three ASN leaders, the Rev. Babs

Miller and Ann Glenn from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and Josefina Castillo from Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera and St. Hildegard Community, will discuss what this growing group of volunteers is doing in solidarity with our Austin-area immigrant community.

ASN uses a variety of tactics, including: physical sanctuary where immigrants live within houses of worship; accompaniment where we attend court hearings with immigrants; and direct action where we take sanctuary into the streets in solidarity with immigrants to challenge Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, arrests and deportations, which are unjust. ■



**First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Austin**

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