



FIRST UU NEWS

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

We are resilient

by **Rev. Chris Jimmerson**



I have been thinking a lot about resilience lately. We are living in a time that requires us to renew our commitments and find the fortitude to hold to our values over and over again. We face ongoing challenges in our world from the rise and spread of authoritarianism, to terrorism, to global climate change, to systems of oppression that still stifle us all far too often.

Here at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, we learned last month that Meg, senior minister here at the church, had to go on sabbatical early to heal from an infection she incurred as the result of surgery on her hip implant. The unexpected absence of a beloved leader can also be very challenging and stressful for a religious community.

I am so impressed with the fortitude and resilience this congregation has exhibited. I can think of no better demonstration of the esteem in which folks hold Meg and her ministry, than the way in which this church has continued the mission

and ministries that she holds dear. Your support, expressed in so many ways, has meant a great deal to Meg and Kiya during this time.

Likewise, I am so grateful for the outpouring of support so many of you have offered to me, as well as for your expressions of concern. I feel honored to be entrusted with serving as acting senior minister during this time, and I also very much look forward to when Meg is back with us.

Meanwhile, so many of you are also demonstrating incredible resilience as you work for justice in so many areas, as well as to resist the threats to justice that seem so prevalent these days. Know that this church is a spiritual home where you may nourish and sustain that fortitude.

Please also know that efforts to sustain and nourish your church are also continuing.

Our stewardship team is already meeting and planning our next canvass to secure the resources that allow this religious community, its

mission and its ministries to thrive (see pg. 5). Your board of trustees recently held their annual retreat and charted wonderful plans for working with the congregation to discern how best to ever more fully live out our mission. Another ministry team is exploring how we will nurture and develop leadership that will carry that mission into the future.

We are still working toward creating an even larger welcoming table to the ever-growing number of folks who might wish to join us on our spiritual journey. Our building team reports that we will soon begin our renovations and expansions. We are still in the city permitting process. Currently, we anticipate work beginning in September.

There are, in fact, more efforts going on to sustain the resilience of this church and its members than I can possibly list here.

This is a vibrant, strong and resilient religious community. My imagination delights at the possibilities toward this church may reach. ■

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

New church member, or perspective one?

We have two events coming up in August that may be of interest to you!

“Getting to Know UU”

class: Sunday, Aug. 11

Informal class to learn more about UUism and First UU.

New Member Recognition: Sunday, Aug. 13

Be introduced to and received by the congregation at a Sunday service! Participation simple and optional.

See membership page on our website for more details: <http://bit.ly/FirstUUMembership>, or contact Shannon Posern, membership@austinuu.org.

White Allies: Screening of “Moonlight”

Friday, July 21

Howson Hall

6:30–9 p.m.

All are welcome for a screening of the Oscar-winning film, followed by a four-speaker panel including local community activists for civil and LGBT rights. More details under events listings on the church's Facebook page, or by email: sbutki@gmail.com.

Revisiting our values

by **Jairy Grisaffe**



One of the many wonderful things about policy-based governance, the model we use to govern our church, is that it allows us to define who we are and who we want to be. An often-used metaphor is that of nested bowls. The largest bowl is defined as our values, which are those qualities that we as community hold dear. Our values bowl sits under a bowl we call our mission, which is what defines why we're here. And the mission bowl sits under our ends bowl. Our ends statements are those statements we use to measure the difference we're making from our mission and values.

Our stated values of transcendence, community, compassion, courage, and transformation inspire our thoughts and deeds in our community. Our ends call us to make differences within our community, among each other, and outside our congregation. Each Sunday, we say our mission statement during service. It's one we all know well. I personally have always appreciated how easy it is put into practice. I often think about how I can nourish souls, transform lives, and do justice with everything I do for the communities of which I am part.

Our board policies dictate that every seven years that we revisit our values,

ends statements, and mission statement. The last time we as a church did this, we were adopting the policy-based governance model and putting it into practice. We've grown a lot as a church since that time. This coming fall and winter, the board of trustees will be leading the effort for our community to revisit these values. This will involve many discussions with the congregation this fall to gather input that will help us discern what our values are and how they have evolved. This will be used to create a set of end statements and a mission statement, which we will present in early spring.

I know that many of you like our current values, end statements, and particularly, the mission statement. I think that's wonderful. I really like them too. I believe it is healthy for a church to reexamine, and perhaps reaffirm, who we are and aspire to be from time to time. It's important that as we grow, the expressions of who we are grow as well. We the board will lead the process. Your participation and contributions are vital to its success. Together, we'll be giving a wonderful gift to ourselves and our growing community. I ask that you enter this with an open mind and be willing to share your voice. ■

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



Inside Books Project

Inside Books Project is the only books-to-prisoners program in Texas, where at last count over 141,000 people are incarcerated. This all-volunteer 501(c)3 organization has sent more than a quarter million free books to Texas prisoners since its founding in 1998.

We're so grateful to the members of First UU Church of Austin for the support you voted to provide last year, and your renewal of our participation in the monthly special offering.

Texas holds around 11 percent of all U.S. prisoners, and Inside Books Project—the only books-to-prisoners project in the state—sends around 50,000 books a year, most of which are donated by our community. Again, we must express our thanks for the book donations that keep pouring in from this church. It has made a great difference in keeping our shelves full. ■

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.

A note from Erin Walter on her ordination

Dear members of First UU,



I write today—heart full of joy and gratitude—to thank you for voting to ordain me this coming fall.

Muchisimas gracias! I cannot wait to celebrate that sacred occasion with you.

My internship congregation, Wildflower Church, will co-ordain me and host the service. The date that works for both churches' calendars, as well as my own, is Friday evening, Oct. 27. Please save the date! We will get into the planning in the early fall after everyone gets a summer breather.

This is a challenging and important time for our UU denomination and the justice movements in which we are involved. Our values, mission, and passion for community engagement are more important now than ever. I take the responsibility of ordained ministry very seriously, and I want to thank you again for your support during seminary, as well as throughout my life, and for your vote to affirm my calling through ordination. Again, thank you so much!

I will be leading worship at First UU on Sunday, Aug. 13, and I hope to see you all then.

With love and thanks,
Erin Walter

“Path to Membership” class

Saturday, July 29
9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Howson Hall

This class allows you to meet other prospective members, learn about UU history and principles, hear about the church covenant and responsibilities of membership, and learn about ways to get connected in the church. RSVP with Shannon as soon as possible at the visitor table, or via membership@austinuu.org so we can get an accurate head count for food and childcare.

White Allies for Racial Equity

Sunday, July 16
Rm. 13
12:30–2 p.m.

We welcome self-identified white UUs to join as folks share their experiences and learning around multiculturalism and anti-racism while attending General Assembly in New Orleans. Hear about the work of our allies within UUism and our national Allies for Racial Equity group.

The White Allies group educates themselves on anti-racism via trainings and discussion to be better allies in our community. Contact: sbutki@gmail.com.

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Lifespan FD highlights

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



July is going to be a magical month for First UU Church of Austin! Our Pre-K–1st grade class will continue to learn about the magic that surrounds them on Sundays during their “World of Wonder!” classes. Our 2nd–5th grade UU padawans have been doing an amazing job learning and practicing at the Jedi Academy and will be continuing their studies. (See orders of service for ongoing summer classes.) From July 24–28 the church will be transformed into Hogwarts for Camp UU, and on July 30 we will be having our second annual Harry Potter themed service. (I hear there might be cake after services that day, too!) There will be lots of preparation happening at the church before Camp UU begins, so if you happen to see one of this year’s professors at the church on Sunday, please say hello!

I hope you join us in our magically fun July!

In fellowship,
Laine Young

No First Sunday Seminars in July

We will not have First Sunday Seminars for the summer. First Sunday Seminars will resume in September.

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

Fall Children and Youth Enrollment Begins!

Parents of children and teens and choir families: keep your eyes fixed on your (snail) mailboxes! We will be sending out enrollment forms for the 2017–18 Faith Development school year soon! Please make sure that the church has your correct mailing address in our database. ■



Hogwarts Camp is coming!

During the week of July 24–28, a magical group of children, teens, and adults will be gathering at our church to enjoy summer activities! We are seeking donations to support Posada Esperanza, see the next page to see how you can help. Then watch the Aug. newsletter for a camp update, and join the July 30 intergenerational service with magical elements!

Hogwarts taking donations for Posada Esperanza

Hogwarts/Camp UU is collecting toiletries for the families of Posada Esperanza. Posada Esperanza is a part of Casa Marianella, an emergency homeless shelter in east Austin that serves recently-arrived immigrants and asylum seekers. Posada Esperanza offers a full-service transitional housing program for immigrant mothers and their children who are escaping domestic or cultural violence. The mission of this organization reflects the commitment of First UU Austin towards justice for immigrants. We will be collecting the goods at the Lifespan

Faith Development table in the gallery. Please consider donating these items by July 22.

Toiletries for mothers:	Children's brand toiletries:
Full-size shampoo & conditioner	Full-size shampoo & conditioner
Toothpaste	Toothpaste
Toothbrush	Toothbrush
Body wash	Body wash
Lotion	Sunscreen

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Welcome to the 2018 Annual Stewardship Campaign

“People pledge to their dreams,” says Bill Edwards, 2018 Stewardship Ministry chairman. And as the leader of the effort to inspire giving to the church and its ongoing mission, Edwards is dreaming big.

He describes stewardship as a process that goes on all year, and although the canvass for pledges is important, it is not the main purpose of this ministry. “One main focus of the Stewardship Ministry,” Edwards said, “is to change the giving culture of this congregation from a culture of scarcity to a culture of abundance and generosity.”

The 2017 campaign toward this purpose had a record number of canvassers—50 who successfully obtained pledges. The dream this year: raise that number to 100.

As part of the recruitment effort, Edwards said a new focus would be on signing on canvassers with ties to ready-made constituencies. Target groups might include families with kids in RE, enthusiastic new members, Adult and Children’s Choir, Men’s Fellowship, book

discussion groups, Public Affairs Forum attendees and participants, Hogwart families, Paradox Players, social action groups, Women’s Spirituality Group members, UBarU leaders and participants, young adults, long-standing non-members who pledge, and participants in every committee and ministry of the church. If you’re involved in any of these groups, the Stewardship Ministry will welcome you as a canvasser.

Edwards feels the groundwork for the stewardship ministry is a solid one, and that this year’s effort is starting from a good place. “A successful canvass requires two main elements: a dream and the personal relationship between canvasser and canvasee,” he said.

Plans will soon be underway for another all-church evening, similar to last year’s visioning/food truck event that was so successful. In addition, persons can visit the Stewardship table in the gallery until the canvass ends on Sunday, Oct. 29. For more information and to sign on as a canvasser, contact Bill Edwards, via phone or text: (210) 274-4496.

Eclectic Folk Jam**Friday, July 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, July 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****JULY 2****Sacred Mystery**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Many, if not most of the world’s religions have a sect that is mystical. We will examine why religious experience is so often to be found through mystery, awe and wonder. Pianist Kathryn Govier and violinist Ben Hummel will be playing duets together, and each will also perform a solo piece.

JULY 9**I Get By with a Little Help from My Friends**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

We all at some point will be unable to care for ourselves, or will need the help of other people in some way. Why do we struggle so much to ask for help when we need it? The First UU Band and Adult Choir will be joined by Greg Beets for Beatles music!

JULY 16**Seeing God in a Wild Old Dog**

ANDY GERHART

Many of us UUs find God language off-putting. Through a focus on Patty Griffin’s music, we’ll reflect on how both our theologies and atheologies arrest what is sacred to us. Can we cultivate an uncertain reverence? Annabeth Novitzki will be singing.

JULY 23**Pura Vida!**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Costa Ricans use the phrase “pura vida” as a sort of all-purpose greeting, exclamation, or fond farewell. It literally means “pure life.” We’ll explore its deeper meaning, and what it might be like to live pura vida. Duo Kara Bliss and Austin Haller perform original arrangements of jazz standards and musical theatre tunes at a variety of Central Texas venues. Reviewed as “a touch of old school with a modern insouciance,” their reinventions reveal fresh elements of familiar favorites, while lesser-known gems are resurrected, polished, and held up to the light.

JULY 30**Making Magic Happen**REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON &
LAINE YOUNG

For our annual service after our summer Hogwarts/Camp UU, we’ll explore the magic we make happen here at the church and beyond. Pianist Valeria Diaz and cellist Nora Karakousoglou will perform duets.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

We have completed our 2016-2017 programming of the Public Affairs Forums. We will resume the forums on September 10 later this year. The schedule of speakers will be posted at that time, stay tuned.

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

General Assembly 2017 Recap

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 was held in New Orleans, and our church had a large presence there: 13 voting delegates, and over 30 attendees. We plan to share highlights during the next few months; for a brief update, see the article on the next page.

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, perfect for stargazing. All the following events can be found at www.ubaru.org, under 'Events.'

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

Dates	Age Group	Grade (as of 10/1/17)
July 2-8	Seeger	grades 8 & 9
July 9-15	Reeb	grade 10 through 2017 HS graduates

Chalice Lighters

The UU Chalice Lighter program began in 1984 as a way for individuals to extend our UU faith by making small donations to "Chalice Calls" during the year. You can become a Chalice Lighter by joining the email list at www.uua.org/southern/chalice-lighters, and clicking on the box on the right-hand side of the page.

UBarU has just been selected as a Chalice Lighter program recipient, to support their ADA Accessibility Improvement Project. You can learn more and donate at www.ubaru.org/home/ADA_Accessibility.

UU Summer Vacation at the Point, July 23-28

Imagine five days of UU covenant and community in a resort-like setting on the shores of Fort Gibson Lake, OK. The Point offers personal growth, faith renewal, learning opportunities, spiritual practices, community worship, music, excellent cuisine, sustainable practices, social gatherings (concerts, movie night, bingo, talent show), outdoor activities, programming for all ages and interests, and an engaging theme speaker. Each day begins with worship and ends with a fun activity, but how you spend your day is completely up to you! More info and registration at www.thepointuu.org.

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.

**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

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Update on General Assembly 2017

Over 30 members of First UU Austin joined 4,000 other UUs at General Assembly (GA) in New Orleans on June 21–25. At GA, UUs from all over the country worship, sing, learn, celebrate and make decisions for our denomination. We will share more about GA later, but for now we wanted to pass on a few highlights. At GA 2017, we:

- Elected a new President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray was previously lead minister of the UU Congregation of Phoenix, and has been a leader in community organizing and working for justice. She led the UU's response to Arizona's anti-immigration laws. She is the first woman elected as president of the UUA.
- Learned about justice work occurring across the UUA, the UU Service

Committee, our United Nations Office, and many other parts of the UU world.

- Heard from fantastic speakers, including Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, AL and author of the best-selling book, "Just Mercy."
- Participated in deep discussions on race and ways to address the white supremacy culture in our denomination and society.
- Adopted a Statement of Conscience on Escalating Economic Inequality, establishing denominational policy in this area.

We also enjoyed a great time together in New Orleans, and lots of incredible music and food. GA 2018 will be June 20–24 in Kansas City. For questions about GA, email David Overton: denom@austinuu.org.



**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.
Austin, TX 78756