



FIRST UU NEWS

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

Stress Lizards

Because we need this again.

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



This is a stressful time. Any presidential election is a time when a lot of people are wound up, disputing one another's opinions, even one another's facts. We've had a season of disturbing news, an increase in talk about resistance, and now, cedar fever!

When people are under stress, we tend to operate from the brain stem, what is loosely called "the lizard brain." They used to say this was the "fight or flight" part of the brain, but recently they thought to study women as well, and found that women don't have "fight or flight" as much as men do. Women's lizard brains to a "tend or befriend" urge: gather your children and loved ones close and protect them.

Here at the church, we have had staff changes, and we have found we need to put off our search for a new Director of Lifespan Faith Development until I return from my four-month sabbatical. Even looking at a sabbatical leave for the Senior Minister is stressful.

Changes to a church system are hard, even when they are necessary ones. Even when they are, like our building plans, exciting and good. Picture a mobile, spinning in its equilibrium. A change: the marriage, sickness, birth or leaving of one of the ministers or longtime pillars of a congregation causes the mobile to dance and shake. It longs to return to its equilibrium, its "homeostasis." Some people, sensitive to the disequilibrium, feel their stress default behaviors come to the foreground. What are your stress defaults?

For some, it's to fix whatever they can fix and work hard to move things forward. For others, it's to withdraw until the shaking settles down. We want to move to a ranch in the hill country and never watch news and let other people figure it out. Some like to stand on the sidelines and coach those in the fray. Some go from group to group building bridges, furthering harmony.

The "system" needs all of these people, all of these behaviors. The "shadow" side of these behaviors are

the deep worries we carry, the shame, the deep lack we feel. Some, under stress, feel worries that they will not be seen or heard. Some worry that they are not valuable, some worry that there is really no place for them, or that they don't matter.

When we feel our stress behaviors coming to the foreground, because of politics or changes in our jobs, families, or our church, when we feel the deep worries of the shadow side of these fixing, coaching or bridge-building behaviors, here is a way to move ourselves gently back into relaxation and happiness.

First, we sit with the stress or the broken-ness, without trying immediately to fix it. This is difficult. Another thing to do is to pay attention to beauty. In a disaster, "look for the helpers," Fred Rogers' mother told him, and he told the children who watched Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Look for the people who are doing the right thing, living with grace in the midst of struggle, treating others kindly in a bad situation. Gratitude is good medicine as well.

continued on page 3

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Directory update

It has come to our attention that there were a number of errors in the member directory issued at the congregational meeting in December. We apologize to those whose information was left out or listed incorrectly. A corrected directory is available by logging on to myFirstUU. You may also contact Shannon Posern at membership@austinuu.org to arrange to pick up your corrected copy.

Getting to Know UU

Sunday, February 12
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.

Our congregation needs you! Yes, all of you!

by Marsha Sharp



Last August I began writing a series of newsletter articles featuring our mission: We gather in community to nourish souls, transform lives and do justice. This mission was formed several years ago with congregational input and much deliberation. It has guided the ministers, the board, and members of the congregation. When we act or speak, does it reflect our mission?

This year the congregation will revisit our mission and determine if it still reflects our values and commitments. Or do we work together to change it to reflect the combined desires of those who have been members for a number of years and the new members who have recently joined?

Soon a committee will be formed to initiate and follow this very deliberate process—a process that involves input from every member of this congregation. If you are interested in making a commitment to the exploration of our mission, please speak up and let us know you would like to be a member of the committee. Committee members

will receive training for exploring the mission, working with the congregation, and, if necessary, writing a new mission. It is not a short-term commitment; it will take several months to receive input from everyone, compile the results, share the findings, and pen a new mission if needed. The congregation will vote on the committee's recommendation at a future congregational meeting.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, you may contact our president-elect Jairy Grisaffe; our ministers, Meg Barnhouse and Chris Jimmerson; me or any other member of the board of trustees.

Whether or not you are on the committee, your opinions and input are valuable to the process. Begin thinking about what your values and passions are; what is important to you and your significant others? And be ready to voice those desires when the time comes for congregational input. Everyone is important to this task. This mission will determine our congregation's wishes and desires for several years to come. ■

“Stress Lizards” continued

Thank people. Thank the Spirit of Love and Truth, thank the Universe. I sometimes take this to lengths some could consider ridiculous, but it helps me. I might thank the coffee pot for helping me make coffee, the workers who picked the beans, the roasters, I might thank the chickens for their good eggs, the rain for falling down. You make your own way to be grateful.

When the stress lizards begin darting around in your mind, heart and body, when your good sense takes a back seat to your brain stem, take a nice deep breath, notice the lizards so you’ll know what’s going on, watch them for a while,

and then find some people to thank.

I thank you all for being the people you are in this wonderful town where we live. Thank you for the service and the funding you give to this congregation. We have souls to nourish and lives to transform, we ourselves need nourishment and transformation. Justice is calling us to its service. There are asylum seekers who can use our assistance as they move through their process, as they show up for appointments and appearances. There is marching to do, and rest, and getting to know each other. Thank you to this congregation for being something large we can all be part of. ■

*Still anxious? Ready to take action?
See pg. 8–9.*

Join us for the CROP Walk

Sunday, February 26
Camp Mabry
2 p.m.

Join fellow UUs as we help to end hunger in our community and around the world with the he Austin CROP Hunger Walk. First UU participants will enjoy lunch after the second service, and then carpool to Camp Mabry for registration at 2 p.m. The Grand Step Off will be at 2:30 p.m. Register to raise money from family and friends for walking, donate to the First UU team, and/or just walk with good company and learn about hunger issues around the world along the way.

\$50 can begin a community garden for families with a hoe, shovel and seeds.
\$110 can give emergency food supplies for a family of five for one month.
\$1000 can support 10 women with small grants to jump-start their businesses.

To donate or register as a walker, go to www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx/FirstUUChurch. All are welcome on this 2.4 mile route that includes a wheelchair-friendly one-mile option, and children have a great time at this event. If you have questions or would like additional information, visit us at the Social Action table in the gallery or contact Emily Speight at cropwalk@austinuu.org or (512) 636-7005.

New Member Recognition

Sunday, Feb. 5
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).

Second Saturday Volunteer Program

Saturday, February 11
Gallery
10:30 a.m.

We gather on the second Saturday of every month to learn of possible opportunities that day, hear a brief homily from either Meg or Chris, and then go out to do good work. Contact: socialaction@austinuu.org.

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Lifespan FD highlights

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



F.RE.D. Night

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

Please note the changes to our F.R.E.D. Night programming!

Starting Feb. 1 you are welcome to join us in Howson Hall at 6 p.m. 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 will still start at 7 p.m., and childcare will still be available on F.R.E.D. Nights.

Examining Whiteness: February 1, 8, 15 & 22

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

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

Providing an anti-racism curriculum for white people allows deeper understanding of issues that are essential to furthering a white anti-racist identity. The curriculum includes sections on: The History of White Supremacy in the United States, The Emotional Lives of White

People, Racial Identity Development, Racial Identity Journey, White Power and Privilege, Developing a Positive White Identity. Studying as part of a group provides a richer experience to discuss, share, and respond to writings that may evoke complicated and strong emotions and thoughts.”

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

Harvest the Power: February 1, 8, 15 & 22

First UU is proud to offer the opportunity to explore your UU self, benefit our church, and support your favorite cause all at the same time. Harvest the Power (HtP) provides leadership skill development that goes hand-in-hand with faith development and addresses the reality that today’s leaders operate at a time of rapid cultural change, both in and outside our congregations.

Leaders need a broad range of skills, both technical and visionary. This program offers opportunities for both new and experienced leaders to enrich the skills they bring to leadership and to experience their leadership journey as a UU faith journey. With your increased leadership skills, you’ll be better able to support your favorite cause.

Harvest the Power will be presented as four independent units. Each month will focus on a different theme and will coordinate a project for our church. The “Self” theme runs during the month of February, on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. Future themes will be presented in April, September, and November. For more information about this upcoming class, contact Laine Young: laine.young@austinuu.org.

continued on next page

The Wi\$dom Path: February 1, 8, 15 & 22

The Wi\$dom Path is a 12-workshop program where participants understand how money can be a more effective force for living lives of meaning and value, and for creating positive change. There is a \$20 enrollment fee for this class, with scholarships available. Each workshop can be attended without attending any others: newcomers are welcome!

The February workshops include “Faithful Spending,” “Faithful Giving,” “Faithful Investing,” and “Spiritual Practices in a Material World.”

Great Decisions, facilitated by Helen LaFlare Feb. 15 & 22

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.

On Feb. 15 the discussion will be about continuity and change in American foreign policy, plus a look at Russia. On Feb. 22 the topic will be trade, jobs, and politics.

Classroom Helper Training, Feb. 4 9:30–11:00 a.m.

Join us for fun, fellowship, and breakfast while we go over the basics of being a classroom helper in the classrooms on Sunday mornings. This event is open to those who will be a classroom helper this year, as well as those who would like to learn more about becoming a classroom helper. RSVP to laine.young@austinuu.org. Childcare will be provided.

First Sunday Seminars: Feb. 5

First Sunday Seminars take place on the first Sunday of the month. This multi-track, adult religious education experience has options in areas such as leadership development, spiritual identity, UU identity development, and spiritual practices. No prior registration is required for any of the First Sunday Seminars, and childcare is available. A simple lunch will be provided in Howson

Hall from 12–1 p.m. for \$5 (available to-go for Forum attendees). The seminars take place from 1–2:30 p.m.

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

Leadership Development Track: SAFE Allies Workshop, with Amanda Lewis from SAFE Alliance

Join Amanda Lewis from SAFE Alliance and learn skills to support survivors of sexual assault, identify behaviors that perpetuate a culture of violence, and promote community change through action.

Faith Formation Track: Science and Religion Seminar, with Bruce Naylor

The Feb. 5 meeting of the S&R group led by Bruce Naylor will begin a multi-month exploration of religious naturalism. This is one name used for efforts to reconstitute the means of evoking the qualitative aspects of religious and spiritual experience without incorporating the super-natural. Instead, the inspirational source of “revelation” about nature is science, whose primary purpose has been to make clear the hidden structure that underlies nature. You are encouraged to visit <http://religious-naturalist-association.org> to get a sense of this worldview.

Valentine’s Day Card Crafting Party! Howson Hall, Feb. 12

During both coffee hours, come enjoy sweet treats and take advantage of our extravaganza of crafting supplies to make a Valentine’s Day card for someone you care about. Or, if you’d prefer, you can drop your card into the donate basket and it will be delivered to cheer up a patient at Westminster Retirement Community. This is an all-ages event. Get in touch with your inner crafter!

Surprise Pals Reveal Party, Feb. 26

If you are lucky enough to be participating in our Surprise Pals program this year, please remember to mark your calendars for our ever-important Reveal Party where you will meet your Surprise pal face-to-face, eat delicious goodies, and play get-to-know-you games! ■

NOTES FROM THE INTERN

Exploring Black History Month

by Susan Yarbrough



February is Black History Month, which began in 1970 at Kent State University and became a nationally recognized event in 1976.

Whenever I think of Black history, my linear mind first turns to a sequence of memorable events that have happened in my lifetime and in this country, such as the integration of Little Rock's Central High School in 1957; the march on Washington in 1963 with Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and music by Marian Anderson and Mahalia Jackson; the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965; the assassinations of Medgar Evers in 1963, Malcolm X in 1965, and Dr. King in 1968; the skill shown on the tennis courts by Althea Gibson in the late 1950s and Arthur Ashe in the 1960s and 1970s; and the rise of Black Lives Matter in 2013 in response to the deaths of so many Black men and women at the hands of law enforcement. And if I exercise my mind a bit more, I think of Nat Turner's slave rebellion in 1831, or the Emancipation Proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

But history is so much more than events. Instead, it's...everything. It's music and art and literature and religion and science and scholarship and ideas and sports and theology,

to name just a few things that make up the history of any people. And Black history is far greater than what happens in America—something I've become much more conscious of in seminary, as my Global Religions class began with a study of indigenous African religions, my Hebrew Scripture class used "The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's History from Africa and the African Diaspora," and my Liberal Theology course studied Anthony Pinn's "Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion."

One thing I decided to do during Black History Month is to deliberately become more knowledgeable about some aspect of American and diaspora Black culture. The particular one I've chosen is art. Like many white people, my education in art and art history was entirely Eurocentric, and I still carry that orientation with me. For what it's worth, the classic painters I especially like are the Dutch masters and Rembrandt, and the modern artists I enjoy are Willem de Kooning and Anselm Kiefer. All white (and male). Every one of them.

As synchronicity would have it, I was recently reading an issue of "Image," a periodical published by the Center for Religious Humanism, and came across an article entitled

"Ecstatic Dislocation: The Art of Sedrick Huckaby." I had never heard of Huckaby, a Black artist with deep roots in Texas, but I was riveted by the paintings that accompanied the article and by the author's wondering whether the cultural differences between a Black artist and a white viewer are surmountable.

I don't know the answer to that question, but I've already assembled a list of Black artists whose lives and works I initially want to explore online. Besides Sedrick Huckaby, there are Kara Walker, Simmie Knox, Faith Ringgold, Horace Pippin, and Betye Saar. Each of them is American, but I hope that learning about them will lead me to the historical influences on them and to a wider knowledge and appreciation of Black artists in other cultures.

We often talk about wanting multicultural congregations, which sometimes means something more like "multicolored." Perhaps a better goal would be to become intercultural, which requires a tenacious curiosity about someone else's culture, and a refusal to try to draw them into our own constructs. Black History Month is a good starting point for me to practice reaching for that goal. ■

WHITE ALLIES FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

At our next meeting: immigration

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

We welcome self-identified white UUs as we discuss legal and illegal immigration, the failures of the current immigration system, and how the anti-immigrant sentiment grown by this for-profit system can lead to racism. Cristina Parker from Grassroots Leadership will lead our discussion, which will also include learning what is being done to build solidarity with

immigrants and what we can do to join the work. Participants at the meeting will also have the opportunity to share their experiences at recent marches.

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

Green Sanctuary Movie Night

Friday, March 3
Howson Hall
7 p.m.

Please note the date change from our previous Feb. date.

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

Senior Luncheon

Wednesday, Feb. 8
Howson Hall
12 p.m.

The Paradox Players will preview the upcoming production of “The Taming.” This award-winning comedy includes time travel to interaction between James Madison and George Washington, while Miss Georgia competes in a contemporary Miss America pageant. Hilarious, raucous, all-female power-play inspired by Shakespeare’s “Shrew.” Soup, salad and dessert will be served for \$5. Please RSVP to Alice Cashman: (512) 837-0988.



Spring Into Action is coming in April!

Spring Into Action is a congregation-wide outreach project, encouraging as many people as possible to focus on a key social issue each spring during the month of April.

The topic of this year’s Spring Into Action is welcoming, in all of its meanings: from welcoming new church members, to making sure we are personally welcoming to individuals from different backgrounds, to working to make Austin a community that is welcoming to all. More information about all the

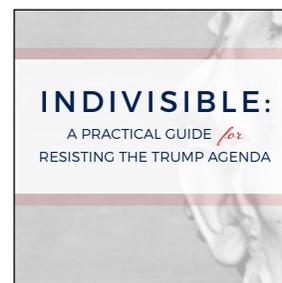
Spring into Action events will be available soon.

But for now, please consider reading the book that the UUA is promoting as its common read for 2016–17: “The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Hate,” by The Rev. Dr. William Barber. You can read more about the book at www.uua.org/re/adults/read. During the month of April, there will be several opportunities to discuss the book with fellow UUs.

How to Contact Your Representatives

by Sara G. of TX-10 Indivisible

Indivisible is a national community and movement gathered to resist the Trump agenda by making Congress listen to its constituents. The official Indivisible guide can be found at www.indivisibleguide.com, and the local Austin chapter is www.indivisibleaustin.com. The following is from a member of the Texas 10th Congressional District chapter (www.tx10indivisible.us).



Fellow Austinites, we must band together as a community to hold our members of Congress (MoC) accountable. It's their job to represent us, but instead they have acted against our interests and values. Let's stand together, indivisibly, and demand that they honor their sworn oath to represent us.

Calling members of Congress is a tactic that is proven to work and is one of the core principles of the Indivisible movement. It takes as little as 30 seconds to make a call and make a difference. Below is a step-by-step guide for making your first call.

Who should I contact?

Is the issue...

National?

In the U.S. Congress, you are represented by one Representative and two Senators. Each has an office in Washington D.C. and at least one office in Texas. Call whichever office—they all end up with the MoC.

→ Find your House Representative: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>

→ Sen. John Cornyn: <http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/contact> (use the office info on right, not the contact form)

→ Sen. Ted Cruz (<http://www.cruz.senate.gov/?p=general&cid=23>)

Statewide?

→ At the state level, you are represented by one state Representative and one state Senator. You can find your representatives here: www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx

When do I call?

→ Call on weekdays during office hours (usually 8–5) and preferably not during lunch time. During lunch time, more of us are making calls and fewer staffers are available to answer the phone. We can be most effective by spreading our calls out throughout the day. Remember that if you call a Washington office (area code 202), the office is in the Eastern Time Zone.

→ If you have to call outside of office hours, you may have the opportunity to leave a voicemail. It is not as effective, but you are still making a difference.

→ If you get a busy signal, try again straight away.

→ Call about upcoming issues. Many bills are proposed at the beginning of a legislative session, but your lawmaker cares most about your opinion during the week or two leading up to the vote for the bill.

What do I say?

You could make two types of calls depending on how much time you have. The first, the *opinion tally*, takes less than a minute and does not require discussing the details. The second, the *conversation with a staffer*, is more involved. In both cases, pick one issue that you want to address in this call. If you muddle together multiple issues, the staffer will have to make a judgement on how to tally up your opinion. Be clear and precise.

Opinion tally call (30 seconds)

→ In an opinion tally call, you give the staffer just enough information to add you to the total number of constituents who support or oppose a bill. The staffer will likely be polite and professional, making this call easy and stress-free. Ask for their name.

→ We are most effective when we all call about the same issue. See if your district group or Indivisible Austin has a current call to action script available. If so, use that script (or create your own).

→ Do not end the call without making sure that they have your name and your zip code. In some cases, they may also ask for your street address to verify that you are a constituent.

→ This basic script will work for almost all cases. You can write out exactly what you want to say before calling to make it easier:

Hello, my name is _____ and my zip code is _____. (pause to allow staffer to write this down). I am calling to ask [Senator/Rep] _____ to [support/oppose] [bill name]. This matters to me greatly because of _____. Thank you for your time.

→ Thank the staffer, using their name.



Photo by Marievel Santiago, KXAN

Thanks for taking action!

Thanks for readying yourself to take action. You can follow Indivisible Austin (www.indivisibleaustin.com) or your local district group (www.house.gov/representatives/find) to see the latest calls to action to learn where to invest your time to make the biggest difference.

Conversation with a staffer (5 minutes)

❶ Be prepared to write down the name of the person you talk to and any specific information they provide, including direct quotes.

❷ Be polite and calm through the entire interaction. Do not assume that the staffer disagrees with you or will try to argue with you. Assume good faith, and behave appropriately.

❸ Call, state your name and that you are a constituent, and ask to speak to the staffer who handles the specific issue. Write down the name for future use and share with your local Indivisible group. Here are a few examples:

Can I speak to the staffer who handles criminal justice issues?

I would like to speak to the staffer who works on health issues.

Can you confirm the name of the staffer who covers immigration?

(And a good catchall) Can I speak to the staffer who works on legislative issues?

❹ Frame your issue as a question.

I am calling to ask how Rep. ____ plans to vote on the upcoming repeal of the Affordable Care Act. My family depends on the ACA for my father's cancer treatments, so this issue is very important to me. What is the representative's stance on this issue?

→ If the staffer says their opinion matches yours:

Great. Representative ____ has my thanks for supporting this cause.

→ If the staffer says their opinion opposes yours:

That's disappointing to hear. [Share facts, statistics, or a personal story to support your opinion.] I am part of a local organized group of constituents and I shall be sharing Rep. ____'s views with them.

→ If the staffer says that they do not know or that the member of Congress has no official stance at this time:

Do you have an email address that I can use to follow up later to see if Rep ____ has changed their mind? I am part of a local group of constituents that cares greatly about this matter so we will be calling and writing to find out more about Rep ____'s stance.

❺ End the call politely, thanking the staffer for taking the time to work with you, even if you do not agree with them.

Thank you for your time, [staffer's name].



PARADOX PLAYERS

“The Taming” to take a wild trip through history

February 10–26
Fridays & Saturdays, 8 p.m.
Sundays, 3 p.m.

Written by Lauren Gunderson and directed by Stacey Glazer. In this hilariously raucous, all-female “power-play,” contestant Katherine has political aspirations to match her beauty pageant ambitions. All she needs to revolutionize the

American government is the help of an ultra-conservative senator's aide on the cusp of a career breakthrough, and a bleeding-heart liberal blogger who will do anything for her kooky cause. Well, that and a semi-historically-accurate ether trip to eavesdrop on the birth of a nation.

Featuring Mindy Rast-Keenan,

Ava L'Amoreaux and Hannah Burkhauser.

Ticket prices are as follows:
 \$20 (Feb 10, post-show reception)
 \$20 (Feb 14, with Valentine treats)
 \$15, all other performances
 \$10, students, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

Reservations: (512) 744-1495 or
www.paradoxplayers.org.

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

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

Conference in Magnolia Hotel Dallas Park Cities, Dallas, TX. Women and teens 13 and older, join us for an inspiring weekend. Speakers, music, worship, workshops. Registration \$225 from Jan 1–27. Keynote speaker Helen Bond.

More info: www.swwuuw.org or contact Mary Overton at (214) 620-1812.

UBarU Needle Arts Retreat Feb 17–19, UBarU Retreat & Conference Center

An opportunity to enjoy your passion with two nights of cozy accommodations and five delicious meals. Early bird registration \$130. Saturday only, \$75 including lunch and dinner. More info at www.ubaru.org under Events.

Heart of Texas Men's Retreat, March 31–April 2

Enjoy fellowship in the Texas Hill Country with men from across Texas March 31–April 2 at the UBarU Retreat and Conference Center, Kerrville, TX. Rest, relax, enjoy delicious meals and use the time as a break from your normal routines and schedules. Activities may include poker, music, hiking and fellowship. Rev. Mark Skrabacz will guide participants in a thematic inquiry and processes of introspection to deepen life's path and build community among fellow UU men. More information at www.ubaru.org under Events.

Deep in the Heart Women's Retreat, April 28–30

During the weekend of April 28–30 at UBarU Retreat and Conference Center near Kerrville, TX. Recharge your spirit in the fellowship of Unitarian Universalist women. No responsibilities other than to be

your own true beautiful authentic self. Deepen your relationship with old friends and build new friendships. Sing, meditate, dance, walk the labyrinth or the hill country, do what your spirit needs. Free from workshops and classes. Don't miss it! Registration and details at www.ubaru.org/home/Womens-Retreat.

Save the Date!

- **April 7–9:** Southwest UU Spring Gathering, Bay Area UU Church, Houston, TX
- **May 26–29:** Family Camp, UBarU Camp & Retreat Center, Kerrville, TX
- **June 21–25:** UUA General Assembly, New Orleans, LA

Carpool Opportunities

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

CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

Austin Playback Theatre to support nonprofits, social justice at First UU with Tuesday Night Stories

First performance: Sat. February 7 Sanctuary, \$7–15 donation at door Doors 7 p.m., show 7:30 p.m.

Austin Playback Theatre (APT) is a theatre troupe with a commitment to social justice and community building. We invite audiences to share stories of their real lives and then transform them into theatre on the spot, using a variety of improvisational techniques. Unlike traditional improv, Playback is not focused on humor but rather on connecting people through storytelling and honoring the truth of each storyteller. Our live performances conjure an ineffable magic as we enact the shared stories of everyday people on stage. We believe in the power of these stories to create and celebrate community by strengthening compassion and understanding between individuals.

APT was founded in 2009, and we've focused the last seven years on building our craft and our troupe and performing both for general audiences as well as audiences whose voices are often overlooked, such as residents at the Austin State Hospital. This year we have begun to focus our mission on building

community within Austin through supporting nonprofits.

Starting this month, Austin Playback Theatre will begin a collaboration with First UU in order to feature a different nonprofit each month, called Tuesday Night Stories. All ticket profits will go to the monthly featured nonprofit.

Our goal is to help nonprofits in Austin build community and awareness while raising money for their organization, as well as to build ties among those of us Austinites who enjoy helping others and creating strong community connections. Come share your stories!

We'll be performing at the church on the first Tuesday of each month from February–May (recess June, July, August) and September–December, and hopefully continuing the tradition into the future. Our February performance will spotlight the project itself. We are inviting one and all to help us come kick off Tuesday Night Stories with Austin Playback Theatre!

If you are part of an organization who would like to be spotlighted one month, please contact katrinabaecht@yahoo.com.

Alphabet Soup Social Club

**Sunday, Feb. 26
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.

We usually meet monthly for brunch after second service at a rotating location. In February we will meet for a potluck at First UU. For more info please contact Tomas Medina at alphabetsoup@austinuu.org or follow the Alphabet Soup Social Club on Facebook.

First UU People of Color Group

The People of Color group will not be meeting this month. Please check the March newsletter for the next meeting.

HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

Austin Presence Group

February 2 & 16
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.

February Art Exhibition

Reception: Sat. Feb. 4
Gallery
6-8 p.m.

Austin contemporary artist Diane Sandlin creates multiple layers, colors over colors. Marks are added and then covered, partially or completely. All amount to a visual poem, somewhat mysterious and yet universal for the close observer. Show runs until March 3.

Advice from Covenant Corner

Dear Covenant,

In a recent committee meeting, I felt my ideas were disregarded and dismissed by a member who serves on the committee with me. At a subsequent meeting, I addressed her directly (just as our covenant requires), and I thought I did a pretty good job of being respectful and compassionate. But other committee members acted like I had done something wrong. I got confused and backed off. Did I make a mistake?

– *Confused*

Dear Confused,

Thank you for your question. We appreciate your commitment to following the covenant and your willingness to consider whether you might have made a mistake. We also appreciate your question because it highlights a place where our covenant could be clearer. If you have a complaint with a specific person, then it is best to bring up the issue with that person in private. There is no need to draw others into a potentially difficult conversation that doesn't involve them.

If you do want to try again with this person, we recommend you contact

her/him and apologize for not addressing the issue in private. Then ask if s/he would be willing to set up a time to discuss how the two of you work together in your committee.

Whenever you want to have a difficult conversation with someone (especially if they aren't aware you are upset), it's best to give them a heads up. That way nobody is put on the spot and you can both come to the table prepared for the conversation. Although it's probably okay to make that initial contact by phone or email, we strongly recommend that, in order to minimize misunderstandings, you wait until you are face-to-face to have the conversation. If you are unable to resolve the situation, you can ask a member of the Healthy Relations Team to meet with both of you to help work things out.

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

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFERING



American Civil Liberties Union of Texas

“This is why I am going to leave my money to the ACLU. Every time someone on down the line is irreverent about authority, I’ll have my monument. Every time some kid who was born...just a plain maverick lifts up her head and dares anyone to stop her, I’ll have my monument. Every time they peaceably assemble to petition their government for redress of a grievance, I’ll be there. Whenever they worship as they please (or

not at all), I’ll be there. Whenever they speak up and speak out and raise hell, I’ll be there. And every time some blue-bellied, full-blooded nincompoop who holds elected office is called to the floor for deciding to keep us safe by rewriting the Constitution, or by suspending due process and holding a citizen indefinitely without legal representation, I’ll be there. Now that is immortality.”

– Molly Ivins

This month on February 12, the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas (ACLU-TX) will be featured as one of the nonprofit recipients of the monthly service offering. Victor Cornell, a First UU member, is their statewide advocacy manager. He will speak on the organization’s work and its mission, and how it fits in with the mission of the First UU. He’ll also be in the gallery between and after services to answer questions, sign up volunteers, and distribute “Know Your Rights” materials.

ACLU-TX is the leading civil rights organization in the Lone Star State. Since our formation in 1938, we’ve worked in the courts, the legislature, and through public education to protect civil rights and individual liberty.

We work every day to secure and protect civil rights for Texans throughout the state. We fight

for smart criminal justice reforms that treat everyone fairly. We fight for immigrants who have been unconstitutionally detained and discriminated against. We fight for all the issues protected in the First Amendment, racial equality, LGBTQ equality, students’ rights, and women’s rights. In short, we are passionate defenders of liberty, movement builders, an empowering force for civil rights, a compassionate teacher of constitutional values, and a vigilant watchdog against government abuse.

Some facts about ACLU-TX:

- Our commitment to defending the Constitution transcends partisan and ideological boundaries. Throughout our storied history, we have defended the Lovings’ right to marry, Gideon’s right to an attorney, and Rush Limbaugh’s right to privacy. We partner with groups like

Planned Parenthood, Texas Association of Business, the Christian Life Commission, the Anti-Defamation League, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, Equality Texas, the Greater Houston Partnership. In other words, we will work with anyone who fights for constitutional rights, and defend anyone whose constitutional rights are threatened.

- The ACLU defends the Constitution regardless of who sits in the White House. We’ve sued nearly every president from Warren G. Harding to Barack Obama. We’ve fought measures pushed by nearly every Texas governor from James Allred to John Connally to Ann Richards to Rick Perry. And we will continue to intervene whenever—and by whomever—our constitutional rights are put in jeopardy.

- ACLU-TX is one of 53 affiliates of the national ACLU, our nation’s guardian of liberty. For nearly a century, the ACLU has been at the forefront of virtually every major battle for civil liberties and equal justice in this country. Together, the affiliates and the national organization work to ensure that every American in every state, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or immigration status, has the full protection of the Bill of Rights. ■

Eclectic Folk Jam

Friday, February 10
Rm. 17
7–10 p.m.

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

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

UU/Quaker Singalong

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

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

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

WORSHIP SERVICES

SANCTUARY 9:15 AM AND 10:45 AM

FEBRUARY 5**Beauty Walk**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

We are surrounded by beauty, so why do we so often fail to notice it? We will examine the false dichotomies we often have between humankind and nature, the sacred and the secular.

FEBRUARY 12**Right Effort**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

In discussing this element of the Buddhist Eightfold Path, we look at what is an effective way to try to do things. How do we focus our efforts toward justice? How do we celebrate and astonish ourselves with new knowledge during Black History Month?

FEBRUARY 19**To Run and Not Be Weary**

SUSAN YARBROUGH

No question about it, each of us is committed to bending the arc of the universe toward justice. But the distance to that goal seems enormous, and we often wonder how we can find the strength to stay the course. This Sunday, as thousands of runners participate in the Austin Marathon & Half-Marathon, let's think together about what will sustain us spiritually as we train for the lifelong work of justice-making.

FEBRUARY 26**Dealing with Difficult People**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

Some people are harder to be comfortable with than others. Some people have quirks or habits that get on our nerves. How do we deal kindly with people who are difficult? Are there any answers?

PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

FEBRUARY 5

Mediation: An Alternative Dispute Resolution Process

WITH BILL FORBES, MEDIATOR

Mediation is a process in which two or more people involved in a dispute meet in a private, confidential setting, and with the help of a neutral person (the mediator) work out their own resolution to the dispute. Mediators do not make judgments, express opinions or give legal advice. Instead, they facilitate communication so the parties can find a solution of their own. A wide variety of cases can be successfully resolved through mediation such as neighborhood issues, family and friends (including pre- and post-divorce), real estate, landlord/tenant, consumer/merchant, employer/employee, business and small claims, and parent/adolescent disputes. Bill Forbes, a TMCA Credentialed Advanced Mediator, will provide an overview of how the process of mediation works, explain where mediation fits within the Alternative Dispute Resolution spectrum, and describe the services offered by the Travis County Dispute Resolution Center.

Forbes has conducted over 150 mediations at the Travis County Dispute Resolution Center (DRC), the Central Texas DRC, Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center, Williamson County Juvenile Detention Center, and the Central Texas Better Business Bureau. He is a member of the Boards of the Travis County DRC and the Austin Association of Mediators.

FEBRUARY 12

Current Trends in Texas Politics: An Insider's Perspective

WITH HARVEY KRONBERG, QUORUM REPORT

Harvey Kronberg is the owner, publisher and CEO, and a frequent writer for the Quorum Report, the "newsletter of political Texas." The Quorum Report

is a groundbreaking online, non-partisan publication covering state politics and government. Kronberg began as a contract writer for the Report and became editor in 1989. He bought the publication in 1998. He also serves as a political commentator for Spectrum News, a 24-hour news channel serving Central Texas. His commentary has been cited in a broad array of publications, including The Congressional Quarterly, The Wall Street Journal, the Dallas Morning News, the Houston Chronicle, and the Christian Science Monitor, among others. Former Lt. Governor Bob Bullock referred to Kronberg as "the Capitol's most astute observer."

The Quorum Report is essential reading for those who need to be "in the know" about Texas politics and is the most successful political newsletter in Texas. The Report features regular columnists, including Bea Moorhead, Scott Braddock, Joe Nixon, Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson and Ed Sills, as well as guest columns. Harvey's quick wit and humorous style make his publications, as well as his live commentary, entertaining as well as informative.

FEBRUARY 19

Cities Leading Climate Change

WITH MAYOR STEVE ADLER

In December, Austin's Mayor Steve Adler and Brandi Clark Burton attended the C40 Mayors Summit 2016 in Mexico City. The event, convened by the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, rallied 40 mayors from around the world and sustainability representatives of 90 cities to focus on the leadership needed by cities to hit the targets in the Paris Agreement. They also released a report which outlines the scale and scope of actions needed if we hope to avert more than a +1.5C global temperature rise. Come learn about the big picture, what Austin is doing, and what you can do to help ensure a climate-safe future.

Mexico City hosted the sixth biennial C40 Mayors Summit, November 30–December 2, 2016.

continued on page 16

**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

Finance Administrator
Katherine Patton

Board President
Marsha Sharp

**First Unitarian
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Church of Austin**

4700 Grover Ave.
Austin, TX 78756

THE FORUM, *continued*

The Summit brought together C40 mayors from all over the world and hundreds of urban and sustainability leaders to advance urban solutions to climate change and highlight the leadership role of cities in addressing climate change.

FEBRUARY 26
**Mass Incarceration and
Deportation in the Era
of Trump**

WITH BOB LIBAL

Bob Libal is Executive Director of Grassroots Leadership, a nationally recognized civil and human rights organization based in Austin. He will

discuss the current crisis in our immigration and detention policies, and what we might expect from the Trump administration.

Grassroots Leadership fights for a more just society and seeks to end prison profiteering and reduce reliance on criminalization and detention through direct action, organizing, research, and public education. Beginning as a broadly based civil rights organization in North Carolina in 1980, Grassroots Leadership now focuses on one of the most egregious civil rights issues of our times, mass incarceration of Americans.

Bob Libal has worked for more than a decade on prison privatization, immigrant detention and criminal justice reform. ■