



# FIRST UU NEWS

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

## Beloved Community

by Rev. Meg Barnhouse



As I write this, I am in California at a conference of senior ministers of large UU churches. After helping in the struggle for marriage equality and experiencing an exhilarating win, the issue our denomination is taking up now, as I'm sure you've noticed, is racial equity. Dismantling a system that is weighted toward benefiting certain groups over others, weighted toward holding down people of color, making sure that the power stays with people who identify as white.

I am listening to Bill Sinkford talk about his experiences since the early '60s of being a Unitarian Universalist person of color. In the Cincinnati Unitarian Universalist Church where he grew up, a solid proportion of the congregation were African American people. A solid proportion of the staff was also African American. He thought that was what Unitarian Universalism looked like, and he was very surprised when he got to Boston to find out that that was not true all over the country.

It has surprised me to learn that the Unitarians have chosen,

in the past, to be a mostly white denomination. When the fellowship movement was spreading south, the founders of fellowships were told to make a church as near the university in the town as possible, and to recruit white engineers, scientists, and professors as church members.

I think it is a blind spot for many people who are starting a new church to say, "We need to find people who are like us." If those founders are professional white folks, that means they will perpetuate a largely professional white congregation. As people grow in depth and spirit, we tend to examine over and over what our sense of "us" is, who do we mean when we say the word "we?"

It is my hope that the congregation of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin does not want to have the cultural and intellectual poverty of being a largely white congregation.

Many people of color among us and people who identify as white among us are working hard on changing things so that we

can become richer in culture and perspective.

One of the things that has to happen, I read, is that the white people among us need to develop more endurance for struggle. For myself, I have the unfounded idea that if I am struggling it means I'm doing something wrong. This is not true. Any culture change involves struggle. I become faint-hearted after a certain amount of struggle and I want to just go rest and revert to my comfort zone. As the Black Lives Matter activists say, "it is the job of the artists to make the revolution look irresistible!" I hope and pray that artist will emerge from among us to make the vision of a Beloved Community look irresistible. If you do not know what the definition of Beloved Community is, please do look it up and you will find several fine examples.

Is it attainable? Dr. King thought so. Can we attain it? If we develop our endurance for struggle, maybe we can have some movement toward it. I will enjoy moving toward it with you all. ■

**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

# It starts with our values

**by Jairy Grisaffe**

First, I'm excited the construction on our campus is underway. It's been a long time coming. I'm so proud of the patience and the faith this congregation has demonstrated as our capital campaign starts to show visual progress. I am excited about the great opportunities that our improved facilities will bring.

This past month, we held our retreat to review all of the feedback that you all gave us during the Courage and Wonder workshops during November and December. There were definitely some common themes that appeared throughout the workshops. We drafted some changes for consideration to our mission and end statements, which we're reviewing and hope to present near the end of March. Watch for announcement on this presentation.

One thing we decided not to make changes to is our core values. If you know the Nested Bowls model, you know the values are the bottom bowl. They encompass the mission, which encompasses the end statements. What we noticed is that the values that were chosen during when this was done previously were values that this congregation still embodies.

Our value of community was strongly expressed, as so many of you value your time with each other here. Spiritual growth is present when we gather for service, sing and play music, or explore our deeper selves in small group ministry. It's part of the fabric of this community and one of my favorite things about it.

We experience transformation with our yearning to grow spiritually through meaningful experiences. We engage in small groups to learn more about each other and ourselves. We meet others of different backgrounds and ages and discover new appreciations for diversity. I continue to experience this often while being a part of the Lifespan Faith Development program here.

This appreciation extends to our value of transcendence. One thing that has always stood out to me in this congregation is the deep love for music. It's one of the primary ways that I connect with wonder and awe of the unity of life. One my earliest memories of service here was a day when we sang only songs by Leonard Cohen. I knew then I was in the right place. There are many ways we all experience transcendence and it

shows in the spirit of our church.

I'm routinely in awe of our compassion towards one another. A common theme I read in the workshop feedback was a strong desire to step out beyond the church's walls and make a difference. So many people in our community have causes for which they have a profound passion. Those are all rooted in their compassion for their fellow humans.

And last but not least, I noticed a strong feeling of courage from the people of this congregation as they described their experiences and desires. This church has a great history of engaging in social justice causes. Extending sanctuary and working on immigration reform is living lives of honesty, vulnerability, and beauty put into action.

These core values helped lift up our work as a board of trustees to help better define what this congregation's mission and ends will be that will guide our work together for the next seven years. I am glad to share them with you all. ■



## Music Matters

by Music Director Brent Baldwin



### Introducing Katrina Saporsantos, First UU Assistant Director of Music

You may have already heard Katrina's powerful and expressive voice during some Sunday services (Lady Gaga, Duke Ellington), but if you haven't, there'll be other opportunities to do so. We are pleased to announce that she is our new Assistant Director of Music!

A native of the Philippines, Katrina Saporsantos is an operatic soprano who has earned recognition for her performances in the Philippines, Japan and the U.S. She is a prizewinner of several competitions, most recently the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition in the Wagner Division. A conductor and educator, Katrina has worked at the Children's Orchestra

Society of New York where she taught chorus and musicianship; the Pilgrim Congregational Church UCC in New York where she was director of music; and the Philippine-American Choral Project. Currently she sings as part of Panoramic Voices and the Texas Concert Opera Collective.

Katrina earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of the Philippines College of Music, and her master's degree and Professional Studies Certificate from the Manhattan School of Music.

### Adult Community Choir Mondays starting March 19 7:15–8:15 p.m.

This group is ideal for people who wish to brush up their choral skills, are interested in getting more involved with music at the church but haven't done much singing before, or who just want to learn more about singing and want the chance to develop their musicianship in a supportive environment. In our weekly meetings, we'll cover the basics of choral singing including music reading, following the conductor, vocal technique and support, diction, and singing in unison and in parts. No previous experience required, this group is for the total beginner up through those with experience who want a choral tune-up. ■

### "Path to Membership" class

**Saturday, April 21  
9 a.m.–12 p.m.  
Howson Hall**

Breakfast and childcare are provided for this quarterly class designed for those interested in becoming members. Learn about the responsibilities of membership; learn about UU history and the history of this church; share faith stories with other prospective members (optional); hear about ways to connect in the church; and sign the membership book and fill out new member paperwork, if you feel ready! Please RSVP to [membership@austinuu.org](mailto:membership@austinuu.org) as soon as possible or with Shannon at the visitor table, so we can get an accurate head count for food and childcare.

## LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

# Lifespan FD highlights

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



Part of me is in denial that it is already March. Part of me is amazed at how much we have accomplished at the church in 2018—and we are only starting the third month! We had an insightful LFD Visioning session in February, and Rev. Meg, Rev. Chris, and I are still discussing all the ideas that came up. I left the session excited and energized for this church community, and I think we are going to make some amazing changes that help welcome all families to this church!

We also hosted a Valentine's Day event for Alirio event on Feb. 11. We mailed out 78 valentines to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)! Many thanks to Joe Milam-Kast and Zoey for helping get the valentine station set up the day before, Amanda Ray and Erik Olson for helping with clean-up, and to Shannon Posern and Kaitlyn Young for helping me get all the valentines out in the mail!



In fellowship,  
*Laine Young*

### **Easter Festivities! Sunday, April 1**

Easter Sunday is April 1 (no foolin'!), and we'll have a great morning with games and Easter goody bags for all who participate in our annual Easter hunt!

#### **Easter Treats Potluck**

We will have a treats potluck on Easter Sunday. Please bring some treats to share to Howson Hall!

#### **Easter Egg Hunt & Field Day**

We will be having our Easter egg hunt and field day during Sunday School classes at 9:15 and 10:45 a.m. on Easter Sunday. Please bring your kiddo(s) with a basket/bag they can use for the egg hunt. (*Our annual hunt has changed, see below.*)

We will be outside for most of the Sunday School hour, so please dress your kid accordingly, and apply sunscreen and/or bug spray beforehand.

After conversations with Rev. Meg, Rev. Chris, and the kiddos at the church, we have decided to change up how to do the Easter hunt here at First UU Austin! In previous years we hid the cans on Easter and kids found them. We noticed that by doing this the cans were getting dirty, covered in sand, dinged up, and sometimes unusable. It was obvious that we were playing with people's food. When I spoke to the kiddos about this during our February One Room Sunday School we

*continued on next page*

decided that we still wanted to do a canned food drive, but we want to be more respectful of other people's food. So this year we will be hiding empty plastic Easter eggs, the kids will find them and turn them in, and get an Easter goody bag!

We will still be doing a canned food drive for the Capital Area Food Bank, so please bring canned food, other non-perishables, or monetary donations to the Capital Area Food Bank to the church all through the month of March. There will be a collection cart next to the Lifespan Faith Development table outside the sanctuary. We will display how much we collected on Easter Sunday before donating everything!

We would love to have adult volunteers to help with all the Easter festivities! Contact Laine Young ([faithdevelopment@austinuu.org](mailto:faithdevelopment@austinuu.org)) if you would like to join in the Easter fun.

### **First Sunday Seminars, March 4**

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 is provided in Howson Hall from 12–1 p.m. for \$5 (available to-go for forum attendees). 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](mailto:laine.young@austinuu.org).*

### **Faith Formation Track: “Science & Religion”**

We will be continuing to examine Far Eastern religions, primarily Buddhism and Taoism, as a source for building your own theology. For a variety of reasons, these religions are perceived as an easier fit with modern science than Western religions. We will be using the book, “The Tao of Physics” as a source for the presentation and discussion.

### **Church Matters Track: “Stewardship 2.0”**

Stewardship is how we, the members and friends of First UU Austin, support ourselves so that we can come together in community to nourish souls, transform lives, and do justice. This goes far beyond our annual canvas. Come join Rev. Meg and former Stewardship Chair Bill Edwards as we envision Stewardship 2.0! Come share your experience, cool ideas you've seen elsewhere, and ideas for improvement.

### **One Room Sunday School! March 11 & 18**

Grades Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will have One Room Sunday Schools on both March 11 and 18 to accommodate families' spring break travels. We will be meeting in Rm. 17 on these days. Interested in helping out in the classroom during a One Room Sunday School day? Contact Laine Young ([faithdevelopment@austinuu.org](mailto:faithdevelopment@austinuu.org)).

### **Racism Unlearning Circle March 17, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.**

Based on Undoing White Supremacy Austin's unlearning circles, this group will be a place for white folks to discuss the creation and meaning of whiteness, white supremacy, racism, our role in perpetuating oppressive systems (intentionally or not), and how we can take accountable action to dismantle white supremacy and show up with minoritized peoples to demand an end to dehumanization. Meetings are the third Saturday of every month. Check the First UU Facebook page events section for more event info, to see the monthly topic, and to access readings and videos to prepare for meetings. Childcare provided. Please RSVP to [childcare@austinuu.org](mailto:childcare@austinuu.org). For questions: [racismunlearning@austinuu.org](mailto:racismunlearning@austinuu.org).

### **Easter Preparation Party with Laine Young, March 18, 12 p.m.**

Join Laine Young while we get ready for all of this year's Easter festivities! We will be filling up the Easter goody bags the youth groups decorated. It will be an afternoon of fun and fellowship! Lunch and cookies provided. RSVP to Laine: [faithdevelopment@austinuu.org](mailto:faithdevelopment@austinuu.org). ■



## SERVICE SATURDAYS

**Hope and Change:  
A concert by Peter  
Blood and Annie  
Patterson****Saturday, March 24  
Friends' Meeting House  
(3701 E. MLK Jr. Blvd)  
7 p.m.**

The authors of our often-used songbooks "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again" will perform in a benefit of Interfaith Action of Central Texas. In addition, there is a participatory workshop limited to 25 people at 3 p.m. Contact Larry Vaughn ([lavest@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lavest@sbcglobal.net)), or visit: [www.interfaithtexas.org](http://www.interfaithtexas.org) or [www.riseupandsing.org/about](http://www.riseupandsing.org/about).

**Feed hungry Austin-area kids with the  
Backpack Coalition****Saturday, March 3  
9 a.m.–11 p.m.  
Palm Valley Lutheran Church  
(2500 East Palm Valley Blvd  
Round Rock 78665)**

Since March 2011, the Backpack Coalition's mission has been to "meet the needs of hungry children in the Round Rock Independent School District by providing them with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food to take home on weekends." Since they began this undertaking, they have grown from serving 17 children to more than 1,000 each week in the Round Rock and Pflugerville school districts. The work that the Backpack Coalition does is accomplished with the help of various churches, as well as civic and business organizations. Weekend food kits are built with the love and care of volunteers on a weekly basis in order to help distribute them to 21 schools.

The Spring Break Kit Build is a special annual event that brings together volunteers to sort and bag food items into reusable vinyl bags for children facing food insecurity during the week of spring break. Volunteers for this Service Saturday event will organize, prepare, and pack over 1,200 pounds of donated food to be distributed to children in our community at risk of going hungry during the break. If you have reusable cloth

or plastic grocery bags to donate, they are greatly appreciated.

The time commitment is 2 hours or less, depending on the flow of filling the grocery bags. The number of volunteer slots is unlimited for this event. Volunteers ages 5 and up are welcome to attend, as long as they are responsive to taking direction and focusing on the task at hand. The activities will take place indoors, and volunteers should wear closed-toe shoes and bring their own water bottles. Parking at the church is free and plentiful. Advanced sign-up is required through First UU Social Action. Register online at <http://bit.do/ServiceSats>, or sign up at the Social Action table in the gallery after Sunday services. The coordinator of this Service Saturday is María Milner: [maria.g.milner@gmail.com](mailto:maria.g.milner@gmail.com) or (512) 537-1646. There will also be a sign-in sheet at the entrance of the Spring Break Kit Build for the Backpack Coalition's volunteer count, which is independent of First UU Social Action.

For more information on the Backpack Coalition of Round Rock and/or to read the Partner Spotlight article by Round Rock ISD, please visit the following links:

<http://www.backpackcoalition.com>  
<http://bit.ly/2o3ZHam> ■

## INSIDE AMIGOS

## Host a political asylum seeker for three months

Along with First UU's partnership with the Austin Sanctuary Network, individuals may now help more people escape for-profit detention centers by hosting one or two immigrant friends in their homes for three months. They will have already applied for political asylum and lived at the nonprofit Casa Marianella for three months.

As the urgency and number of requests have increased, Casa Marianella has created a way for Austinites to support and welcome more immigrant friends.

"This is an amazing opportunity to build relationships with immigrants from all over the world and support someone as they establish themselves in the U.S.," said Miriam Fiorentino, Host Program Coordinator for Casa Marianella. "Hosts will not only immediately impact the lives of their guests, but they will also provide stable foundations that will aid future generations."

Individuals or families with a spare room and bed can offer to host one or two people for a maximum of three months. Residents of the hosting program will continue to receive case management and legal services through Casa's main programming. Hosts will be supported during this time by resources, training, mentorship from past hosts and check-ins with the hosting liaison, as well as monthly gatherings and meetings for hosts to get to know each other and share ideas.

"We aspire to create a culture of hospitality that inspires folks to open their homes and hearts so that no one lacks shelter, and all get the support they need," Fiorentino said.

To learn more details about the hosting program, email [host@casamarianella.org](mailto:host@casamarianella.org) or [insideamigos@austinuu.org](mailto:insideamigos@austinuu.org). For more info and to apply, go to [www.casamarianella.org/host-application](http://www.casamarianella.org/host-application).

## White Allies for Racial Equity

**Sunday, March 18**  
**12:30–2 p.m.**

We will be meeting for our quarterly potluck with the People of Color and Alphabet Soup groups. Bring food to share. Plates and utensils will be provided.

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 go out and do anti-racism work in our church and our communities.

For more info or to be added to our email list, contact Scott Butki: [sbutki@gmail.com](mailto:sbutki@gmail.com).

## Join the fun for our next garden work day!



We'll be planting tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and corn for our next work day **March 24 at 9 a.m.** All ages welcome! Contact: [info@austinuu.org](mailto:info@austinuu.org).

*Garden Club plants carrots Feb. 10. Image: Shannon Posern*

## FIRST UU AUSTIN YOUTH GROUP

**May is Silent Auction Time****May 6–27**

Our annual silent auction focuses on experiences offered by church members rather than things. Bidding on experiences not only contributes to the financial well-being of the church, but creates an opportunity to build community with other church members. With this in mind, it is time to consider what “experience” you might be able to donate to this year’s silent auction. (Very occasionally a few tangible items are included in the auction, but those are selectively chosen and usually carry a high value.)

More details to come. In the meantime, please send donations to Gillian Redfearn: [gilliankredfearn@gmail.com](mailto:gilliankredfearn@gmail.com).

**Not just another brick in the wall**

*Students amend wall drawing depicting confederate flag in youth room*

**By Abby Poirier**

As many of you know, in our not-so-quaint youth room there is writing on the walls, of which each word or picture meant something to somebody that has crossed our threshold. And while we do take special care to preserve the words of our peers and our predecessors, there was one brick in particular that posed an issue and challenged our church’s

very truth. This brick was an iteration of the confederate battle flag with the colors altered. Not only do we share this room with our many congregates, but we the youth grow and learn in there. After discussing as a group, we deemed it imperative the illustration be removed.

We decided the best way to retaliate against the hateful ideology on this brick would be to remove and replace it with “BLM,” the acronym for the Black Lives Matter movement, paired with a Standing on the Side of Love heart. When we began to remove it, we found that below the first layer of paint we were faced with a second confederate battle flag—one without the colors altered. It appeared that the altered image was an effort to cover up the original, so we felt proud that we were not the first to notice the wrongdoing and attempt to “make amends,” so to speak.

As one of the co-deans of this youth group, I report with immense happiness that the depiction has been successfully removed and replaced by an image of love, unity, and the strength which is held in each of us as the individuals that make up this community.



*The repainted brick in room 11. (Image courtesy of Jairy Grisaffe)*



**SPECIAL SANCTUARY UPDATE**

# Alirio on living in sanctuary

**Dictated by Alirio Gamez****Translated & edited by Carol Edwards**

After more than six months living in your church, I want to thank all of you for making me feel welcome and safe. Thanks to all members, staff, and the two ministers for your trust and support. Thanks also to all who donated items for my room, those who contribute to my phone bill, and all those who bring my weekly groceries. Now, I would like to tell you something about my life while living in the church.

I have had to work very hard to support myself and my family since I was a small child. So, it has been a new experience for me to have so much time alone without responsibility.

I have enjoyed my days in solitude except for the occasional periods of loneliness or depression, but I move on. I feel lonely when the church is empty, but in being alone I have learned to know myself better. And I have really enjoyed spending time with all members of the congregation.

Before entering into sanctuary in the church I had concern about how I would be treated. I had known very few “blancos” (white people) and I did not know what to expect. But, after being here just a few days I realized that you have very big hearts and great understanding and appreciation for immigrants.

For those of you who have not heard the story of why I had to enter into sanctuary, I want to tell you that I did not come to the U.S. to earn more money or get a better job. Rather, I had to flee my country to save my life. In my country

there are groups of very well-armed and violent people that take the lives of innocent people who do not do what they demand.

While in sanctuary, I have learned many new things from all of you. First, I have tried many new foods. I ate bagels and cream cheese for the first time between services in Howson Hall. And after requesting those items for several months in my weekly grocery order, I tried other new things such as Nutella and peanut butter. From attending the men's breakfast, I learned about grits which I like a lot. And I was surprised that all of you bring food for a “potluck” as nothing like that exists in my country. I enjoy your potlucks where everyone gets to try others' special foods and there are many new foods for me to experience.

Along with new foods, I have tried new activities while living in the church. For example, I have participated in meditation and made new friends there. And I have practiced yoga with the Tuesday group on several occasions. And thanks to Wayne for arranging for a man to come to my room to teach me exercises for my health.

Thanks again to all of you for giving me a safe place to live while I continue to fight my deportation. With the Trump administration's actions against immigrants, it is now much more difficult to win a case with ICE. But with the help of Austin Sanctuary Network and my attorney Tomas Medina, we continue the campaign.

**Vegetarian/Vegan Potluck****Sunday, March 18****12 p.m.**

Get ready for Earth Day by learning some new meatless recipes! We are having a potluck lunch serving ONLY meatless meals. Plan to bring your recipe so other folks can replicate your tasty vegetarian or vegan dish at home. Even if you are a meat-lover, you can probably find some yummy options for the occasional meatless weekday dinner or some tasty sides.

## HEALTHY RELATIONS MINISTRY

**Austin Presence Group****March 6 & 20****Room 17****7–8 p.m.**

We are currently discussing Michael Singer's "The Untethered Soul." 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.twcbc.com](mailto:linsalata@austin.twcbc.com).

## Advice from Covenant Corner: *Is this okay?*

Dear Covenant,

There's a person in my covenant group whose behavior makes me very uncomfortable. She keeps talking more than anyone else and raises her voice when she thinks the rest of us don't understand what she's trying to say. Although I do feel sorry for her obvious frustration, I'm also resentful for the time she takes up in our limited-time meetings. Should I be more compassionate for her difficulty expressing herself clearly? Or should I say something about sharing the time? I don't want to sound preachy or take over the facilitator's role. What do you think?

— *Confused*

Dear Confused,

Your confusion is understandable. Our covenant encourages us to communicate "in a spirit of compassion and good will." We want to be considerate of one another's struggles and to show kindness, especially when such struggles are as obvious as you describe. However, in a group setting we must recognize the limitations a group imposes upon each of us.

In our church, covenant groups create covenants regarding such limitations, like sharing the time so that everyone has the opportunity to talk. We assume your group has such a covenant, in which case it's everyone's obligation to abide by those guidelines. And everyone is encouraged to take responsibility for keeping the group in covenant. That means that any member of the group, not just the facilitator, can say, "We've agreed in our covenant to share our time together. I'd like to hear from others in the group." It's good to remember that as individuals in a group we still share with one another the same promise to "honor our commitments to ourselves and to one another..." We think facilitators would welcome your effort to keep that promise!

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



## First UU and iACT: Longtime Friends

My name is Lynn Adams, and I serve on the board of iACT (Interfaith Action of Central Texas). For the past three years I've coordinated and facilitated iACT's Red Bench, a monthly dialogue opportunity. I am deeply grateful that this congregation has again chosen to support iACT through its second Sunday monthly service offering.

I've been thinking about the decades-long friendship and connections between iACT and First UU. Many of you church members have served and participated in iACT as board members, Red Bench facilitators, Hands on Housing coordinators and workers. You've helped or attended our Thanksgiving service, special memorial services, and participated in our new Passport program. You've volunteered providing services to refugees and provided financial support. I'm just so proud.

Our UU values align closely with iACT's commitment to social justice and with the mission of iACT: to cultivate peace and respect through interfaith dialogue, service, and celebration. We serve some of Central Texas' most vulnerable populations: impoverished senior citizens, those living with disabilities, and refugees from around the world.

Here are some of the impactful programs your contributions have supported over the years:

- Many of us were moved by this year's 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Thanksgiving service. Central Texas Muslims representing eight countries came together to host a poignant testament to the beauty and power of shared commitment, the softening of ancient boundaries, the joy of sharing the deepest of human yearnings, and delicious, abundant food.
- We teach English and essential life skills to newly arrived refugees—nearly 800 last year. We offer the only welcome these families may receive upon arrival, often horrifically traumatized after surviving difficult journeys. We also offer special summer camps for children whose challenges are difficult to grasp.
- Our Hands on Housing (HoH) program engages volunteers and skilled professionals to repair and revitalize the homes of people in Austin who are living in deep poverty. Our goal is to help them safely remain in the homes they love and to provide an outlet for the compassion shared by all great faith traditions. Our HoH volunteers have repaired over 1,800 homes since 1990.
- The Red Bench, a monthly public dialogue offers space for people with different worldviews to engage in respectful and civil discourse and meaningful conversations to see and hear “the other,” and sometimes discover shared common values. As opportunities for face-to-face contact become more scarce, Red Bench offers a time and place for exploration of topics such as compassion, racial intolerance, mortality and more. People sit at small tables and talk, using tried and true processes that support speaking from the heart. This offering is now also available in Williamson County. From 90 to 400 participants attend these monthly gatherings.

Please go to the iACT website ([interfaithtexas.org](http://interfaithtexas.org)) to check out the new Passport program and learn more about our work and what your contributions make a reality. Here's to many more years of collaboration and friendship.

*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.*

## DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

### Save the Date: Upcoming UBarU events

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 and more found at [www.ubaru.org](http://www.ubaru.org), under 'Events.'

- **Heart of Texas Men's Retreat, April 6–8.** Come and enjoy fellowship in the Texas Hill Country. Rest, relax, enjoy delicious meals and use the time as a break from your normal routines and schedules. The retreat will be facilitated by Rev. Josh Snyder from First UU Church of San Antonio.

- **Women's Retreat, April 28–30.** This is a weekend to recharge your body, mind and spirit in the companionship of other Unitarian Universalist women.

- **Family Camp, May 26–29.** Cookouts, campfires, nature, swimming, worship and star parties.

### Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship Revival March 16–17, Richmond, VA

When people describe their experience of Christian identity and practice within UUism in the last twenty years, they have often told a story about a revival. And it often sounds like the story of homecoming. Of having found “my people.” This spring, you are invited to come home. To attend a revival. To connect with your people. The Healing Spirit in a Wounded World is a time for you to gather with others, to go deep, to feel held. Regular admission, \$125; students, \$65. More info and registration: [www.uuchristian.org/revival](http://www.uuchristian.org/revival).

### UU United Nations Office Intergenerational Spring Seminar: April 5–7, NYC

The intergenerational seminar is an opportunity to collaborate with others while learning how to be a global activist. Through workshops, peer and expert-led panel

discussions, community-building activities, and worship services, participants explore some of the most challenging issues facing humanity today. The topic for this year's seminar is “When Crisis Calls: Advancing Just Migration for All.” More info and registration: [www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar](http://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar).

### General Assembly Kansas City, June 20–24

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. General Assembly 2018 will take place in Kansas City, MO, and online. More details at [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga).

### Questions and Carpooling

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



## Carrie Newcomer returns to support immigrants

**Friday, April 20  
Doors at 7 p.m., show at 8  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
(14311 Wells Port Dr)**

The award-winning singer-songwriter Carrie Newcomer will return to Austin in solidarity with Austin Sanctuary Network by offering a benefit concert. Buy your tickets now at [www.grassrootsleadership.org/ASNBenefit2018](http://www.grassrootsleadership.org/ASNBenefit2018).

Austin Sanctuary Network (ASN) is a coalition of faith communities, immigrants and other Austin community members that support immigrants fleeing violence or in danger of deportation. We were a part of the success of preventing Sulma Franco's deportation, and continue to support Alirio Gamez in his ongoing campaign.

**WOMEN'S ALLIANCE****Special Legacy Potluck Dinner**

Bring your family's favorite dish to celebrate  
"Wake Now Our Vision" Legacy Challenge

**Tuesday, March 13**  
**Howson Hall**  
**6-8:30 p.m.**

Please join us at 6 p.m. for our very special potluck dinner and at 7 for our featured speaker. All are welcome. Please check the church calendar or weekly announcements if there is a room change due to construction.

**Attorney Liz Nielsen: "Creating Our UU Legacy"**

In 1953, Caroline Veatch passed away and left a legacy to her UU congregation that has not only sustained Unitarian Universalism, but has funded organizations and causes that promote our UU

principals throughout the world. While most of us do not have the good fortune to have inherited millions of dollars in mineral interests like Ms. Veatch, we can all pass on a legacy that promotes our UU values. In this presentation Liz Nielsen, a board-certified estate planning attorney, will talk about how our UU values can be passed to future generations through estate planning. She will also share information about the "Wake Now Our Vision Legacy" Challenge, funded by Ms. Veatch's legacy gift to her congregation, that aims to strengthen the future of Unitarian Universalism through planned giving.

**HANDS ON HOUSING****Our spring repair is coming up!**

**Saturday, April 7**

Hands on Housing is a program through iACT to paint, do small repairs, and beautify the home of a low-income elderly or disabled household. The agency uses other funding to do major repairs before the volunteer events, and we finish the job!

We had a great group in the fall. The UU group replaced the rotten wood, painted the exterior of the house,

and trimmed trees for a couple with disabilities in east Austin. Let's have another big group of UU volunteers and transform a house and lives! We need both skilled and unskilled volunteers for painting (unskilled) and special repair projects (skilled). Come to the Social Action table in the gallery on Sundays before the event to sign up, or contact Jill Smith & Dennis Conine: [handsonhousing@austinuu.org](mailto:handsonhousing@austinuu.org).

**Senior Luncheon**

**Wednesday, March 14**  
**Howson Hall**  
**12 p.m.**

The program will feature Wayne Key, renowned Austin Tai Chi instructor known for helping Austin seniors use Tai Chi to improve their balance, coordination and memory. Soup, salad and dessert will be served for \$5. Please RSVP to Alice Cashman: (512) 217-2615.

**"Getting to Know UU" class**

**Sunday, April 8**  
**Rm. 15A**  
**12:15-1:30 p.m.**

This informal class is a good way to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and this church. Sign up for the class at the membership/visitor's table in the foyer on any Sunday morning, or email [membership@austinuu.org](mailto:membership@austinuu.org). Childcare is provided.



**Eclectic Folk Jam****Friday, March 9****Rm. 17****7–10 p.m.**

An open jam session for singers and instrumentalists, held on the second Friday of every month. We have “Rise Up Singing” and “Rise Again” and music stands. Bring other songs if you like, as well as 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).

**St. Patrick's Day Singalong****Saturday, March 17****Rm. 17****7:30–10:30 p.m.**

Held this month only at the First UU! We will celebrate and sing Irish and Scottish songs. Bring drinks and snacks, and your favorite Celtic songs. For more info contact Mary Jane Ford at (512) 926-4122 or [singalong@austinuu.org](mailto:singalong@austinuu.org).

# SUNDAY SERVICES

S A N C T U A R Y 9 : 1 5 A M A N D 1 0 : 4 5 A M

## MARCH 4

**Faith for UUs**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

When some people use the word faith, they are talking about faith in a personal God, or faith in the trustworthiness of another person. In what things do Unitarian Universalist have faith? When someone refers to “the Unitarian Universalist faith,” what are they talking about?

## MARCH 11

**Hacking Transcendence**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Neuroscience and other research is learning more and more about what is happening in our brains and in our bodies during spiritual/transcendent/flow/peak experiences. Organizations from the Navy Seals to Google have been exploring ways to help their people reach these altered states more easily and more quickly, as such experiences can increase creativity, productivity, and team cohesion. Is this exciting, scary, or both?

## MARCH 18

**Spiritual Always**

REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON

Spirituality may be even more important to us if we are facing challenges to our quality of life, or even our own mortality. How do we face difficult decisions in ways that maximize our agency, quality of life, and our ability to maintain our spirituality?

## MARCH 25

**Earth-Based Celebrations**

REV. MEG BARNHOUSE

During this time right after the Equinox, let's talk about ancient religions and their celebration of Earth events. We will also hear about the Zoroastrian observance of the new year (Nowruz or Navroz) on the Vernal Equinox. Considered to be the first ecological religion, it teaches about stewardship of nature. This service will be intergenerational.

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

SANCTUARY AT NOON AFTER SECOND SERVICE

## MARCH 4

### Islam 101

WITH YETKIN YILDIRIM

The name “Islam” means self-surrender to the will of God. Muslims believe that Islam started with Adam, not with Muhammad. It is the way of life that all prophets throughout history have taught, from those known in the Western world such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus, to those sent to other parts of the earth like Salih, Shuayb, and Luqman the African. The last and final guide was Muhammad who lived in the sixth century. Nearly one in every five persons alive today is a Muslim. Islam calls humanity to the service of the “One, Omnipotent Creator.” It further instructs people on how they may live together in peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs. Muslims have two major sources from which they derive their religious teachings. The first is a book known as the Quran, “the direct revelation of God to His last prophet, the blessed Muhammad.” The second source is the Hadith, the collected sayings and pronouncements of the Prophet Muhammad which are complementary to the revelation.

Muslims live in every country and region on earth from Norway to Malaysia and Morocco to Mexico. Muslims form a large percentage of the population in Russia, China, India, and Eastern Europe. Arab Muslims form a small minority of the worldwide Muslim population. There are nearly six million Muslims in North America alone, more than the population of some states such as Alaska, Nevada and Rhode Island.

Yetkin Yildirim Ph.D. is the president and founding member of the Dialogue Institute of the Southwest. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests include interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, Islam, and Sufism.

## MARCH 11

### No Forum—Spring Break

## MARCH 18

### It's Hard to Be the Kind of Person Your Dog Thinks You Are

WITH DR. ROBERT PRENTICE

Dr. Robert Prentice will be discussing the ethical issues in everyday life as well as ethical issues in business. Robert Prentice teaches business law and business ethics at the University of Texas McCombs School of Business, and is faculty director of the “Ethics Unwrapped” video series and educational program in the Center for Leadership and Ethics, also in the business school.

## MARCH 25

### Green for a Reason

WITH CATHERINE O'TOOLE

After a very serious cancer diagnosis, Catherine investigated who got cancer and why. It was during that research she came across the toxic chemicals that are in the everyday products used to build, furnish and decorate our homes. Catherine's mission is to educate the public on how home furnishings and building products contribute to serious health issues such as cancer, infertility, and asthma (to name a few). Along with bringing awareness of the toxic chemicals in products, Catherine will present easy tips and alternative options to create a healthier home.

Catherine hails from Ireland and before starting Green For A Reason, she had a 10-year career in the fashion industry in New York City. She is a believer in, “do what you love, and everything else will fall into place.” In her 30s, Catherine left corporate America and backpacked around the world by herself for three years. While traveling she met a Texas “Prince Charming.” ■

**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  
**Jairy Grisaffe**

## Camp UU Hogwarts summer camp registration is now open!

**Registration opening dates:**  
***Previous Hogwarts campers, March 1***  
***New campers, March 8***

From July 23–27, 2018, we continue the annual tradition of transforming First UU into a magical castle of fun and adventure. Students will have the opportunity to play Quidditch and Wizard Chess, as well as pursue studies of Herbology, Potions, Magical Creatures, and more! Afternoon activities include social action projects and field trips to local muggle sites. Most importantly, we will relate and practice our UU values and traditions to the rich

story of bravery and loyalty and love in the Harry Potter series.

The camp is open to children ages 6–11 (the equivalent of rising 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders). Ages 12–14 may enroll as assistant prefects, while ages 15–17 will serve as full prefects and assist with running the camp. Young adults 18+ register as adult volunteers.

To register and find out more, visit our registration page on the church website (<http://bit.ly/CampUUHogwarts>). For any other questions, contact our registrar at [hogwarts.campuu@gmail.com](mailto:hogwarts.campuu@gmail.com).



**First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Austin**

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