

December
2008

The VISION of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin: As an inclusive religious and spiritual community, we support each individual's search for meaning and purpose, and join together to help create a world filled with compassion and love.



Christmas Pageant on December 17th!

The Christmas Pageant will be Wednesday, December 17th at 6:30 PM in the Sanctuary. Rev. Davidson Loehr will narrate the pageant. The UU Christmas Pageant re-tells the Nativity story, the story of a special baby called Jesus. This story is part of Christian history and culture.

Through this story, we can discover spiritual truths that have meaning for all of us today. The pageant is an interactive program. All the children are invited to don angel wings, donkey ears, shepherd's tunics and headpieces and come to the front of the church to be in the pageant at the appropriate moments in the story. All are welcome to attend this lovely holiday event. It has been a great tradition here at First UU for many years. A Holiday Meal will be served at 6:00 pm in Howson Hall featuring some favorite holiday foods. If you plan to join us for the meal, please RSVP to Cyndi Stein, Children's Programming Assistant, cyndi@austinuu.org. Check Help Wanted to volunteer.

FIRST UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF
AUSTIN

Attention! Two Congregational Meetings!

All Church Members are encouraged to attend, listen, comment and VOTE at these important meetings!

Saturday, December 13th,
Sanctuary (time to be determined)

The Board of Trustees has recommended the dismissal of Rev. Davidson Loehr. The congregation has the sole authority for dismissing the Senior Minister. This matter will be decided by a majority vote at this Special Congregation Meeting.

Sunday December 14th,

Howson Hall at 1:30 p.m.

This is the regular Fall Congregational meeting to vote on our 2009 budget. (Please note, this had been scheduled for Dec. 7th, but will now take place on Dec. 14th.)



The Website Update!

If you haven't seen our sermon pages at www.austinuu.org/sermon lately, we have some great content on there. We have sermons in text and audio form from 2000 to the present. Videos for the services from September, October and more are available as well. Streaming sermons are now available soon after the services on Sundays. To see the latest sermon video, you can visit www.austinuu.org/video. If you use Facebook, you can now become a fan of First UU and connect with other fans of the church through our Facebook Fan Page located at www.austinuu.org/facebook. Take a look. This is one more way to be connected to other like minded folks.

In This Issue

Davidson Loehr	Page 2
Brian Ferguson	Page 3
Split the Plate, Angel Wings, Senior Lunch	3
Sean Hale	Page 4
Paradox Players, Sharing Suppers	4
Care Connection, A Story of UUs	Page 5
Denominational Affairs, Sing Along	5
Help Wanted -Volunteers,	Page 6
Thanks UUs Birthdays, Nominating Committee,	
Spotlight Copy Team PCC	Page 7
Sermons and Forums	Page 8
Calendar of December Events	Page 9
Lara Douglass	Page 10
Religious Education	Pages 10 & 11
New Member Introductions	Page 12



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Davidson's Lore

If we're really writing the December newsletter and planning Christmas services, something must be wrong! Can time have moved this fast? It was just September when both our new Executive Director and our new ministerial intern arrived, just October when taxpayers bailed out greedy and inept bankers at a cost of about \$9,000 per family and counting. Then on November 4th US history took a dramatic turn virtually no one expected it would take in our lifetimes. As I write this on November 10th, some economists are predicting that we're going beyond a recession into a mini-depression – which should certainly put a damper on spending during the holiday season! By the time you read this, some other dramatic thing will probably have happened. Penguins will start flying in flocks and migrating south, presenting a new and absurd kind of threat to cities, or Austin's bats will return early – and maybe run into the penguins.

At least it feels like things are that fluid. As I read through the sensationalist media about how Obama may change a whole slew of Bush's executive orders – orders that have systematically and progressively eroded our rights and freedoms since 9-11 and its immediate exploitation by our government ... it just feels surreal. Can the structures that define our daily realities be that easily interchanged? Then what made them "real" – or what does "real" even mean today?

I think I was prepared for this business of big unmovable things changing capriciously back as a college undergraduate at the University of Michigan. At a fairly busy intersection of streets at odd angles (as I remember it), there was a little triangular island. On the island sat a huge rock – memory exaggerates, but it seems that it must have been at least seven feet in diameter. A big rock: it weights 25 tons. But the local fraternities had worked out a continuing duty roster to have their pledges paint it – the whole rock – almost daily. So yesterday you drove by this huge multi-ton landmark blue rock. But today, the thing is yellow. You never see them actually painting it – so it has to be done in the middle of night. It just changes. At some point driving by it, it occurred to me that if even something that big can be changed so capriciously, almost anything is possible. (The rock is at the corner of Washtenaw and Hill streets. To see photos, go to <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/7533171> or to <http://www.hr.umich.edu/um/um-isms.html>.)

Ann Arbor was, at the time, one of the most violently anti-war campuses in the country. They thought that could be changed. And, in the drug culture of the late 60s and 70s, they must have been one of the most pro-marijuana (and innumerable other drugs) campuses. That spirit of believing that even immobile things can be changed overnight gave them an idea – I think it's still in effect – that perhaps only a really creative, nery and alive college campus would produce. They began flooding the city council with university students, until the students constituted a voting majority on the council. Then they passed the instantly famous (or infamous) law making the possession of marijuana just a \$5 fine. That makes it barely worth enforcing. Once passed, they instituted the even more famous (or infamous) Annual Ann Arbor Hash Bash, when thousands of students would gather on all the grassy spots on campus and smoke marijuana on a nice spring day. It was very ... mellow. I don't remember ever hearing stories of anybody getting out of control or getting hurt.

I never got into that – the only drug in my life was nicotine, which you used to be able to smoke everywhere: restaurants, buses, cabs, airplanes, everywhere. Who could ever think of changing that? Why, that would be like trying to tell someone in 1955 that they had to put seat belts around them whenever they drove their car – and nobody would put up with that!

Maybe it's possible to change really big things, even now.

See you in church!

Davidson



The Greatest Gift

As we enter the holiday season it is easy to get swept up in the frenzy of activities with festivities to attend, travel plans to make, and presents to buy. It is hard for many of us to remember that this is also a very difficult time for many people who have recently lost loved ones, have financial worries, or are facing other uncertainties. Remember this is a good time to reach out in the spirit of generosity to those we know or suspect may be having difficulties. Taking the time for that caring word, helping with chores, or extending an invitation to have meals together can make a profound difference to people. Knowing that others care about us and understand our hardship is a great gift during difficult times.

For those of us feeling worried or unsettled then we should remember that we can also reach out and ask for help. This is not easy for many of us who have been taught to be independent and self-reliant. Our religious values remind us that we are interdependent and should be compassionate with ourselves and others. Asking and allowing others to help us can be a gift empowering them to serve with compassion and kindness. Serving others with kindness and compassion is amongst the highest of religious ideals. Helping and being helped are among the greatest gifts we can give each other and there is no better time to do this than during this time of uncertainty and amongst bustle of the holiday season.

Take care of yourself and each other,

Brian

Angel Wings Exercise Class

Angels Wings is a class for women, that involves gentle, slow moving exercise, breathing and an open relationship with angels. The class is designed to help you strengthen your wings, so you can fly free with grace and ease.

Classes are Monday at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. in Room 17. The cost is \$10.00. Please call or email Anne Kanno anne@angeltreeconsulting.com or 512 293 7732.



Seniors' Luncheon



Tues. Dec. 9th

Howson Hall at Noon



Soup, Salad & Dessert \$5

RSVP Alice Cashman 837-0988

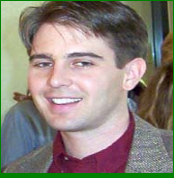
PROGRAM: New Austin Polka Band!

Dan Wilson and the New Austin Polka Band will perform lively Polka melodies for our holiday enjoyment.

Split the Plate for December

On December 7, we will share the offertory plate with North Central Caregivers. Our church was one of 17 in our neighborhood that started this service to residents over 65 who are living independently. Members of our church are volunteers in this organization, and our church members are eligible for services from NCC. Services include transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other destinations.

On December 21, our split-the-plate beneficiary will be ANSWER (American-Nepali Student and Women's Educational Relief). ANSWER seeks to develop educated leaders from low castes and tribes long suppressed in Nepal. ANSWER has almost no overhead, using virtually all contributions to fund the education of low-caste, needy children not only in the lower grades but through the two-year college preparation classes (11th and 12th grades) and onward to technical college or university. Split-the-plate funds would be used to support a young woman pursuing a three-year post-high school course of study to become a staff nurse. Nepal has a huge need for more nursing staff, particularly from lower-caste communities, because often higher-caste providers simply will not serve low-caste women or do so grudgingly. If funds raised do not suffice to support one nursing student (\$1,500 required annually), the donation would be used to educate youngsters in the lower grades.



Is Imagination More Important than Knowledge?

Since I've now accumulated three months of service to First UU, it seems high time to question the wisdom of one of the great minds of the 20th century and his aphorism which graces many a coffee mug and poster. In the process, I'd like to explore how imagination and knowledge interact. Should we put one on a higher pedestal than the other? What does this mean for us in our lives and work?

Einstein's famous quote reads "I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

At their best, it seems that imagination and knowledge feed each other. Could Georgia O'Keeffe become a great artistic innovator (imagination) without first mastering traditional painting technique (knowledge)? Could Marie Curie have become the only person to win the Nobel Prize in two different sciences without first a firm foundation in those fields (knowledge) then applying imagination to innovate and discover in the new field of radioactivity? This complementary relationship results in imagination giving birth to new knowledge and in knowledge providing the foundation for new levels of innovation through imagination. In this light, it becomes difficult to visualize one without the other. Greatness requires both.

If one cannot flourish without the other, can we value imagination more than knowledge (or vice versa)? Einstein surely knew and appreciated that he stood on the shoulders of giants who preceded him. However, because our 21st century culture reduces so much wisdom to sound bites, we run the risk, in these sorts of comparisons, of one concept trouncing the other. A farmer cannot tell us that water is more important than sunlight for a growing plant. A parent cannot tell us that food is more important than safety for young children. Likewise, a dynamic, growing community needs both imagination and knowledge to prosper.

What does this mean? In my private and professional life, I seek to balance the two. When raising children (our first one is due in December), we won't just use imagination and make things up as we go along. Instead, Diana and I will first read, listen to professionals, and consult with our families and then use creativity and imagination when applying their advice. Likewise, rather than implementing Doctor Spock's entire book verbatim, we will adapt that sort of wisdom to our circumstances and with a vision of the kind of family we want to be.

Professionally, I seek to begin with knowledge and experience. Lessons learned in this church and others can help us make better decisions. We have the good fortune of having many good people and writings to draw on so that for many things we do not need to reinvent the wheel. Then imagination comes into play, fine tuning a concept for our particular circumstances and, often, discovering ways to make a good idea even better. Imagination is as important as knowledge. Only by drawing deeply on both can we maximize our potential.

Sean Hale, Executive Director



AUDITIONS and 2009 SEASON

Paradox Players will hold auditions for *Social Security*, a romantic comedy, on December 3 and 4 at 7:30 at the church. This play, directed by Charles R. Hill, will open the 2009 season on Feb 13. Roles available for audition are one male and one female aged 65 plus, and one male and two females aged 40's. Auditions are open, with no preparation necessary, although reading scripts can be checked out from the Paradox Players mailbox in the church office. Call Dr. Hill at 834-0298 for any questions.

The season will continue with *Trying*, a drama directed by Gary Payne, to open June 12. *On Golden Pond*, directed by Chris Jimmerson, concludes the season in Sept. The entire season highlights issues of aging, family, and life-affirming relationships sprinkled with humor and affection.

Season tickets will go on sale in December for the same price as previous years – no increase! Consider giving PP 2009 Season tickets as gifts for the holidays. Visit the Paradox Players table in the Gallery on Sundays or paradoxplayers.org for more detailed information.

Sharing Suppers

Sharing Suppers take place on Saturday, December 20th. Pick up information at the Visitors Table any Sunday. By December 14th sign up on the sheet posted outside the minister's office or call or email Grace Amborski **391-2393** (graceamborski@sbcglobal.net). To be put on an email list for Sharing Suppers, you will be notified and reminded each month, just send an email to <sharingsuppers-subscribe@yahoo.com>. Sharing Suppers are open to anyone in the church, new or established, couples or singles and you do not need to be a member to participate.

FUUCA Care Connection



It is the time, it seems, for more hospitality in our world. The Helping Hands Committee is starting a Joys and Concerns email list which will help in getting the word out when some of us are in need. Being a Caring Community is a key value in our church, and the Joys and Concerns email list will support the loving connections between us. Isn't the bond between people what gives life meaning? So join the list, and spend a few minutes each week learning about other members of our community, focusing on someone other than ourselves or our family. Be inspired by the courage of others in the face of illness or other challenges. And yes, the paradoxical nature of giving is that the one who offers help is often the greater beneficiary in the end. Our caring concern is what makes the difference--in our lives, and the lives of others. Send an email to Joys-Concerns@yahogroups.com, and ask to be signed up or send your joys and concerns. It is our hope that we will have a Joys and Concerns column in future emails share the weddings, celebrations, births, as well as the sad times with the whole community. To do so, email news@austinuu.org.

Denominational UUpdates

A recent opportunity to help our denomination grow was our October 12 Association Sunday offering, which last year funded many projects to grow our liberal faith. Another opportunity which is always with us is the **Chalice Lighters Program**. This is a district level program in which individuals or families make a nominal contribution (\$10/ individual, \$25/family) to the SWUUC Chalice Lighters three times a year. This money is then distributed to SWUUC congregations in the form of grants for initiatives such as building or renovating a church, or increasing staff or staff salaries, or any "innovative program for growth." Information and enrollment forms can be found at <http://www.swuuc.org/programs/chalicalighters/index.html>.

Stuck for last minute holiday gifts? Try the UUA Bookstore Holiday Gift Guide:
http://www.uuabookstore.org/client/client_pages/Holiday_Gifts.cfm

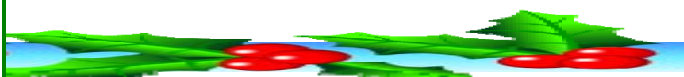
Everything's Connected A Story of UUs



Remember that phrase in the 7th UU principle about the "Web of life"? And ain't it the truth...listen to this FUUCA story of connections: **Don Smith** and the **Green Sanctuary Committee** spearhead purchase of solar panels. Many members of the congregation pitch in, and Facilities Chair **John Payne** consults--the RE wing roof is a better place to put them than the Sanctuary roof. But now we have to cut down a tree because the shade will block the solar panels. Bad, but it appears the tree isn't really in such good health after all, so maybe it was good. **Sean Hale** coordinates with **Elizabeth Gray** on what to do with the huge amount of mulch generated from chipping the tree. It turns out to be a blessing because we can use it to arrest erosion in a parking area that has generated lots of muddy runoff and dust in the past few years. Solar panel project coordinator **Stefan Windsor** takes on the tiring job of spreading it. But--still more connections!--the City tree removal permit requires that we replace the tree. **Ann and Bill Edwards** have generously agreed to replace a memorial tree that sadly didn't make it through the dry summer we just finished. We confirm that the possumhaw they've purchased will satisfy the permit. **Cathy Nordstrom** selects the tree and supervises installation. Then **Mary Ann Stafford** and **Rose Ann Graham** coordinate a group of people to ensure the tree is watered for the coming year. Our church has its own wonderful "web of life"--a community of caring, involved people.

Sing A Long

The Sing-a-long is happening this month on Saturday, Dec. 27, from 7:30 to 10:30 at the Friend's Meeting House on 3701 E. MLK Blvd. Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing with the group. For more information contact Larry Vaughn 469-0029 or email lavest@sbcglobal.net. To be added to the email list, contact Mary Jane Ford at mjane-ford@grandecom.net. The fourth Saturday is the regular default date. We use Rise up Singing as our standard songbook and copies of this are available. Solos, original songs, and your personal favorites are welcomed.





Big Big ThankUUs!

Donna Pauler and Katherine Govier thank all of you who were part of the NAMI Walk for the Mind of America on Oct. 4th. We walkers had a beautiful day to display our solidarity that morning on Congress Avenue, and those of you who also donated monetarily helped us reach our \$100,000.00 goal. Your participation in the much needed cause is so appreciated.



Christmas Pageant Volunteers

We really need volunteers for the Christmas Pageant to help with both coordinating the children in the Pageant and the Holiday Meal in the kitchen. Our community needs volunteers to make these events so successful. If you are inspired to volunteer please contact Cyndi Stein, at cyndi@austinuu.org.

Help Wanted at First UU!

This will be the space available for those groups who need assistance. A new way to volunteer and get connected! Send your request to news@austinuu.org



Can you carry a tune in a bucket?



Play an instrument?



Know some songs of the Season?



We want music, music, music for the Winter Solstice! Please contact Stephanie at Info@YewGrove.org.

The Web Committee Help needed

The Web Committee needs more people to help with the website in the following areas:

- page editing and creation /need basic knowledge of HTML graphic design to add more images to the site
- recording and editing sermon files
- CSS knowledge to edit the look of the sermon blog.

If you are interested in assisting the web committee, please contact us at webmaster@austinuu.org.



Happy Birthday

Please join us in wishing the following folks Happy Birthday in December: Marj Adams, Virginia McMillion, Phyllis Read, Emilia Martin, Paul Fisher, Maria Wait, Edmund Nichols, Mary Sather, Alice Cashman, Joyce Wilson, Betty Bowie, Carol Reed, Ruth Marie, Jack Walters, Emily Hartshorn Schwartz, Nancy Bene, Joe Rey-

John Payne, Nola McKey, Claudia Tracy, Matt Ellsworth, Michael Chitty, Marilyn Doyle, Dyanne Cortez, Gretchen Paulig, Peter Langlois, Karen Langsley, Denise Rumann, Rob Quarles, Gary Harlow, Thomas Doughtie, Kathleen Moore, Cathy Savage, Cyndi Stein, Mickey Moore, Jill Brady, Jessican Standley Cairns, David Tietz, Melita Noel Cantu, Angela Graveline, Tierney Ahrold, Elan Koro, Jaes Freeman, Kathie Norwood, and Thomas McLaren.



Hands on Housing Thanks UUs

A hearty thank you to everyone who painted, re-paired, landscaped, and spruced up the two homes for the all-UU Hands On Housing project on Saturday, October 18th: **Jennifer Loehlin; Veryan Thompson; Angel Sanchez; Jen Tenney; Emily Perchlik; Erik, Allegra, Kira, and Shastia Azulay; Staci Livesay; Michael West; James and Tanner DeLeon; Henry and Monty Newton; Conner Blake; Joe and Alisha Linsalata; Kristy and Erin Quigley; Shrinkhala Rai; Jill Wiggins; Richard Mauldin; Gretchen Paulig; Pam Quakenbush; Seth Wittenbrook; Mike Bicknell; Tierney Ahrold; and Geoff Lorenz.**



Ushers Greeters and Lay Leaders



Thanks to our volunteer ushers, greeters, and lay leaders who make our Sunday morning services run smoothly.
Lay Leaders: **Ron Phares, Linda Taylor, Gary Beach.**
Ushers and Greeters: **Russel Eskew, Michael LeBurkien, Ruth Marie, Gwen Carroll, Jenny Loehlin, Alice Cashman, Katie Eisenhart, Dana Copp, Mary Ann Copp, Cyndi Louden, Linda Buehlman, Joe Linsalat, Viv Harris Bonhamj, Doug Ginn, Kitty Traylor, Luther Elmore, Sandra Ries, Betty and Jim Bowie, Grace Amborski, Martha Northington, Bill Reid, and Joyce Wilson.**

FUUCA Nominating Committee We're Reaching Out to You!

The Nominating Committee is tasked with making recommendations to the congregation at the Spring meeting for rotating board positions and leadership positions of standing committees, for example, Denominational Affairs and Stewardship, as well as leadership recommendations for some groups.

The Nominating Committee is chaired by Elizabeth Gray and consists of Don Smith, former board chair, Jean Davison and Sally Scott. We are getting into gear for the 2009 year and encourage FUUCA members who know of someone who might have the skills and commitment to assume a leadership position of a particular committee or group to contact us by early January, 2009. As the church grows ever larger, we need broad input from a variety of people to fulfill our task. The FUUCA Leadership list is available in the Office. We look forward to hearing from you! Our contact emails are: Elizabeth Gary, egray88@hotmail.com; Jean Davison, jdavison3@earthlink.net; Don Smith, smith78751@austin.rr.com; Sally Scott, sallylscott@sbcglobal.net

PCC Project: Meet the Copy Team Every first and third Wednesday of the month, our FUUCA "copy team" meets at the People's Community Clinic. Each session is held in the evening when the copier is more available, the team churns out hundreds of pages about pre-natal care and such for the Health Educators' work with patients. **Nora Hughes, Heather Palmer, Megan Seaholm, and Lori Sommer** function like self-choreographed dancers, collaborating to determine their schedule and covering when they have a conflict. Here's a look at the team.
Nora is a long time UU, and her husband and 18 year old son are occasional visitors. An RN professionally, Nora volunteers with Anderson High Lacrosse and the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition as well as PCC. She considers the copy job an oasis in her hectic schedule.

Heather is an administrative assistant for a Property Management company in North Austin. She enjoys needlework, music, sci-fi fantasy and historical fiction, and a good Texas sunset. As a member of Austin's Crafty Pagans, she donates hand-made items to local non-profits, such as the Ronald McDonald House.

Megan has watched and admired PCC's service to Austin since the 70s. She is a lecturer in the UT History Department where she has taught US History and Women's History since 1990. She lives with her two dogs and visits her grown daughter in Chicago. She reads detective fiction in her spare time.

Lori is relatively new to Texas. She and her husband, Rich, were bee keepers/honey packers in a rural area of western Nebraska for 20+ years. Lori earned a BSN degree 2 years ago and currently works as a clinical nurse at the VA Outpatient Clinic. Favorite activities include bicycling, canoeing and traveling. If you would like to know more about our Social Action Committees activities with the People's Community Clinic, contact Sheri Overton at sheri-overton@hotmail.com or 512-847-2685.



Sunday Worship Services 9:45 and 11:30

7 December: A Short History of Courage and Fear Davidson Loehr

This is the second time I've wanted to reflect on Anais Nin's saying that Life shrinks and expands in proportion to one's courage." Grand sayings like this always sound good, but are seldom as factual or down-to-earth enough to feel convincing in a real-life way. But there are some very clear examples in support of her nine words, lying very close at hand.

14 December: Imagination Davidson Loehr

This is December's Theme sermon. One of the fundamental differences between literal and liberal religion in all times can be put very simply. Literalistic religions think we're saved by facts – only their facts. Liberal religions believe we're saved by imagination, and the purpose of religious stories and teachings isn't to give us facts, but to help us develop more nuanced imaginations, focused on the things that matter most in life. So now we're approaching Christmas, Hanukka, and the annual winter solstice, each rich with highly imaginative stories. They all have so much in common.

Wednesday 17 December: Annual Christmas Pageant A cast of many

The annual Christmas Pageant featuring the children and narrated by Davidson, on the Wednesday before Christmas (unless that Wednesday would fall on December 24th). The math is complex, but the service will be lovely.

21 December: Christmas 2008 Davidson Loehr and Brian Ferguson

Brian and Davidson will each do a Christmas homily.

Wednesday 24 December: Christmas Eve Services Davidson Loehr and Brian Ferguson

At 5:00 and 6:30, join us for our annual Christmas Eve service. We retell the traditional Christian story.

28 December: Time to change – Again! Brian Ferguson

As we approach the beginning of another New Year many of us see this as a time for personal change and growth – or at least talking about them. While the idea of New Year resolutions is a much-ridiculed subject, there does seem to be a perpetual human desire for self-improvement. Unlike the changes thrust upon us from external forces our own desire for change is often an expression of our deepest personal desires and hopes. This sermon explores the source of these inner yearnings, the disappointments they often result in, and the religious significance of this ever-present struggle.



Music for the Holidays

A Ceremony of Carols – December 7th

The First UU Adult Choir will ring in Advent with Benjamin Britten's timeless holiday classic, *A Ceremony of Carols*. They will be joined by ASO harpist Elaine Barber and members of the Texas Choral Consort.

Children's Choir Holiday Spectacular – December 14th The First UU Children's Choirs will share their music during both morning services, featuring a diverse selection of songs celebrating Christmas and Hanukah.



Public Affairs Forum: Sundays—11:30 a.m. Howson Hall

14 December: "Philanthropy, the Art of Giving, and Volunteerism" David Porter

David Porter, Executive Director of "A Glimmer of Hope Austin", is committed to improving lives by supporting initiatives that address imbalances in the areas of health care, education, life skills, fine arts, safety, and basic needs. There are over 75 compassionate projects that "A Glimmer of Hope" is presently working on in the Central TX area. During his presentation, David will help us celebrate these themes, sharing best practices in "the Art of Giving" and "the power of volunteerism" as we enter the holiday season.

Events Happening Every Week During the Month of December

Every Sun. 9:30 Mind & Meaning Book Gr., Rm 13-A
 9:30 Sunday Morning Book Gr., Rm 13-B
 9:30 Philosophical Discussion, Rm 7
 6:30 YRUU, Rm 11

Every Mon. 6:30 Sack Lunch Program, Kitchen

Every Tue 10:00 Art Studio, Rm 13

Every Wed. 1:00 Philosophical Discussion, Rm 13
 7:30 Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
 7:00 Tai Chi, Rm 15
 7:30 Angel Wing

Every Thu. 7:15 Scandinavian Dance, HH
 5:30 Yoga, HH

Every Sat. 10:00 Mighty Platypi Campfire USA, Rm. 11& 15



Church Events Through the Month of December

Dec. 1 Mon 7:00 Village Country Dancing, HH
 7:00 Green Sanctuary Committee. Rm 13

Dec. 2 Tue 7:00 Intern Committee Meeting, Rm 11

Dec. 3 Wed 7:00 Building Committee Meeting, G
 7:00 Children's Planning Meeting, Rm 9
 7:00 FUUCYaa Meeting, Rm 13
 7:30 Paradox Players Auditions, HH

Dec. 4 Thu 7:00 Choir Rehearsal, S
 7:00 Yew Grove Rehearsal, Rm 17
 7:30 Paradox Players Auditions, Rm 13

Dec. 6 Sat 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group, Rm 13
 10:00 Choir Rehearsal, S
 2:00 Paradox Players call backs. HH

Dec. 7 Sun 1:00 Media Tech Committee, HH

Dec. 8 Mon 6:00 Choir Rehearsal, S
 7:00 Paradox Rehearsal, Rm 17
 7:30 Reader's Theater, Rm 13

Dec. 9 Tue 6:00 Choir Rehearsal, Rm 17

Dec.10 Wed 6:45 Forum Committee,
 7:00 Paradox Players Rehearsal, Rm 17

Dec. 11 Thu 6:00 Choir Rehearsal, S
 7:00 Adult Religious Education, Rm 9
 7:00 Yew Grove Rehearsal, G
 7:00 Paradox Players Rehearsal, Rm 17

Dec. 12 Fri 6:00 Choir Rehearsal, S
 7:00 English Country Dance, HH

Dec. 13 Sat 8:00 Men's Breakfast, G
 TBA Special Congregation Meeting, S
 6:00 Choir Rehearsal, S

Dec. 14 Sun 1:00 Congregational Meeting, HH
 1:00 Yew Grove Spiral Scouts, 15 & 17
 2:00 Choir Rehearsal, S

Dec. 15 Mon 7:00 Village International Country Dance, HH

Dec. 16 Tue 6:30 Board Meeting, G

Dec. 17 Wed. 6:00 Eat and Meet, HH
 6:30 Christmas Pageant, S
 7:00 Building Committee G
 7:00 Facilities Committee O
 7:00 Orientation with Dr. Loehr, Rm 17

Dec. 18 Thu 7:00 FUUCYaa Meeting, Rm 13

Dec. 19 Fri 7:00 Spiritual Movies, HH

Dec. 20 Sat 10:00 Women's Spirituality. Rm 13
 6:00 Yule/Winter Solstice Ritual, HH, K Rm 19&21

Dec. 21 Sun 1:00 Social Action Meeting, Rm 13

Dec. 22 Mon 7:00 Finance Meeting, Rm 13

Dec. 24 Wed 5 and 6:30 Christmas Eve Service, S

Dec. 27 Sat Yew Grove Transition Meeting, Rm 13

Key for Abbreviations:

S	Sanctuary
HH	Howson Hall
K	Kitchen
G	Gallery
O	Administration Office
FUUCyaa	First Unitarian Universalist Church Young

Reflections from the Director of Religious Education

November was a very exciting month for the church and RE in particular. This year's Halloween Día de los Muertos Party was a wonderful intergenerational success. Please read Cyndi Stein's note of appreciation in this newsletter.

Events like the Halloween Día de los Muertos Party make us all aware that the church and all of us in it are the TRUE children's RE curriculum. They children learn about world religions, social action, UU values, but they SEE our faith in action through all of you.

The Adult OWL class is going well. Barb Tuttle and Michael West continue their amazing commitment to presenting this program. Luther Elmore and I hosted a "New UU" class on November 8. We had 14 people who are either new to the church or considering church membership. The class was dynamic, information, and FUN...

I attended a Liberal Religious Educators Conference in Albuquerque, NM at the end of October. I was able to meet and talk with people from the UUA who write the children's curricula, was inspired by Rev. Rebecca Parker, and challenged by Rev. Robert Latham. I have lots of new contacts, new books and am very excited about the curricula in development.

December is shaping up to be a very busy, but inspiring time. The Children's Nativity Story and Pageant will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 17. Please refer to the Christmas Pageant article for further important details about the event.

Don't forget Guest at Your Table is ongoing throughout the month. In each household, we suggest that your Guest at Your Table box or envelope is placed in a prominent spot, often at the family meal table. When family and friends gather to enjoy their blessings, they can reflect on the contributions and share generously. If you have not picked up your collection box yet please stop by the RE Office, we will have plenty on hand. The deadline to return your boxes and envelopes to the church is on Sunday, January 4, 2009.

I will be on vacation from Dec. 18 until Dec. 23. If you need assistance during that time, please contact one of your able RE Assistants.

Thank you all for another wonderful, inspiring year of working with our children and adults in our amazingly wonderful Religious Education programs.

Please see the RE Save the Dates in this newsletter!

See you in church,

Lara



Save the Date

Upcoming Children's Religious Education

December

- 12/10 Christmas Pageant Practice 6:30 pm
12/17 Christmas Pageant and Holiday
Feast: 6—8 pm

January

- 1/4 Return Guest at Your Table boxes
and envelopes to Church Office

February

- 2/8 Valentine's Day Party & Surprise
Pals Kick- Off

Thank UUs from Religious Education

The RE Department would like to thank everyone involved in making this year's Halloween Dia de los Muertos Party such a great success. The kids and adults both had a great time. So much so, we have decided to keep the Dia de los Muertos portion of the party going forward in years to come. We extend a very special thanks to Heather Fulkerson, who really put her heart and soul into making the Dia de los Muertos piece authentic and deeply meaningful.

We also wish thank Brian Ferguson for his wonderful and heartfelt sermon "What the dead can tell us about coming alive" the following Sunday and for working with us to incorporate the Ofrenda elements from the party. This allowed for a high level of interaction between the pulpit, music and RE and allowed for special participation from the congregation itself. It really does take a large group of volunteers who are willing to give their time, creativity and passion to make these events so special and memorable for our kids and the entire congregation.

Tai Chi. Classic form of safe exercise practiced slowly for increased balance strength and flexibility taught by Jim Williams Wed. at 7 pm in Rm 15. Fee is \$10 a class. The first class is free, come try it!



Art Studio

Aspiring artists and crafters work, share ideas, techniques, and learn from each other. Tuesday at 10 am in Room 13



Hatha Yoga: Breathing, flexibility, posture and energy uniting mind & body. Becky Ballou, the instructor says the class is about "Practicing and teaching a gentle form of Yoga." Thursdays at 5:30 in Howson Hall. First class free, then \$10 a session.



Scandinavian Dance. No partners necessary, experienced dancers welcome and beginners too. Meets Thursdays 7:30 in Howson Hall. Formal teaching on 1st and 3rd Thursday. Suggested donation \$3.



English Country Dance.

We welcome newcomers and old timers alike. Join us the 2nd Friday 7:30 pm in Howson Hall. Classes held Sept. through June. Suggested Donation: \$6



International Village Dancing

Blended dance of village life from many countries. Bring your dancing shoes and join in. You do not need experience or a partner to come. The program focuses on the beginner and intermediate dancer. Suggested donation is \$2. 1st and 3rd Mon. in Howson



Adult RE for 2009!

Greetings to all Adult RE connoisseurs and would-be connoisseurs ! Mark your calendars for these very special 2009 dates:

- Great Decisions – Sundays, February 9 - March 20
- Read In Again – Sunday, February 22
- Additionally, and back by popular demand, offerings of New UU and Seven Principles will also be held in 2009. Look for those dates in upcoming newsletters.
- Ongoing Adult RE offerings include Tai Chi, Art Studio Workshops, Dancing, and Yoga for Seniors. As always, feel free to drop by the RE Office for more information or simply consult the FUUCA website at www.austinuu.org.

Keep warm -

Peg Frey

Adult RE Associate

Adult Programming peg@austinuu.org

Yew Grove Events for December!

Tuesday, December 2nd

Tuesday, December 2:
Yew Grove Monthly Meeting
"Transitions for 2009"
Room 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 4:

Yew Grove Winter Solstice Rehearsal. Room 17 at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 11.

Yew Grove Winter Solstice Rehearsal. Gallery at 7:00 p.m.

We will **not** hold a Full Moon Ritual

This month, in order to rehearse for Winter Solstice Celebration.

Friday, December 12th.

The Metaphysical Salon has been a staple for Yew Grove (and for its founders, the Live Oak Council of the Covenant of the Goddess) for many years. But the wheel turns and it's time to let it go. Thank you all for participating and attending! But until further notice, The Metaphysical Salon has been cancelled.

Sunday, December 14th

SpiralScouts: Event: Holiday Party! Rooms 15 & 17

Saturday, December 20th

Winter Solstice Celebration! Big plans are in the works, call 512-291-3106. Event will be held in Howson Hall at 7:30 p.m.



Father Yule (Bill Gill)

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF AUSTIN
4700 Grover Avenue
Austin, TX 78756
One Church. Many Beliefs.

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Next Newsletter Deadline

December 15th

Please submit information to
news@austinuu.org

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Please Welcome Some of Our Newest Members!

Where do they live?? Who knows what great people might live down the block from you? In an effort to help neighbors become aware of each other, we list the zip codes of new members.

Sandra and David Parker (zip code 78727) are new to Austin as of this summer. Both are engineering professors retired from the University of Arkansas. Sandra likes making jewelry, knitting, and reading, while David enjoys reading, biking, and hiking.

Colin Cairns and Jessica Standly Cairns (78613) moved here recently from Ojai, CA. Jessica, a freelance writer/musician, writes that they are looking for a spiritual community that shares their progressive, socially liberal, and humanitarian values.

Annette Stachowitz (78759) "I am originally from Germany, but after all these years, I feel very much at home in Austin—I love the hills, UT (affordable education for my children), and now, too, the UU church. (I was a member in the 1960's and let my membership slip for a short 40 years.)"

Joanne and Kelly Carpenter (78729). Kelly hails from the Bay Area of California, works for IBM, and likes scuba diving and politics. Joanne works at the Nature Center and writes "I am a grandmother, mother, daughter of the Spirit. I enjoy my grandchildren and the children I serve at the Austin Nature and Science Center as an instructor of informal science. I enjoy sharing stories, flute, and drums to children of all ages." Joanne is also into jewelry making and gardening.

Madelyn Morey (78734). A retired counselor, Madelyn keeps busy at CASA and does elementary tutoring. She also enjoys exercise, golf, and the great outdoors.

Misha and Mark Rangel (78723). Mark (an Austin native) works for Texas Solar Power and enjoys building, soccer, biking, and running in his spare time. Misha, who hails from Atlanta, is employed by Hoovers Online and likes to run, swim, bike, play piano, and play with their dogs.