



AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Spotlight On...

Andi and Dwayne Windham...one picture, one family, two strong individuals who give a new meaning to the word volunteer in the First UU community.

Dwayne is the best thing to happen to volunteerism at First UU. He is the Lay Leader Coordinator and was previously an usher/greeter. Dwayne adds a gentle smile and an authentic welcome to Sunday service. He is also part of Toastmasters and adores public debate and discussion. Dwayne says, "I enjoy the Hands-On-Housing events and have participated in several over the past few years. (Even if just to be the early shift that does demolition/removal work)." He enjoys keeping up with politics and current events and works to help "elevate the debate," by pushing for higher standards of journalism. Dwayne is part of Dell's premier technical support group. As he phrases it, "I make problems go away." Always excited about the latest thing, what is coming around the corner - if you need something STARTED, Dwayne's your person to talk to.

Andi, as the webmaster for the last few years, has been patient, helpful, available and even tempered with all the barrage of questions, requests, a few demands, while learning all the time as she went along. (Dwayne let us know that when they met she swore that she would never own a computer) Another spotlight is Andi as the registration person for Camp UU/Hogwarts. As we discovered at the end of camp last year, she is an accomplished roller skater as well (she is part of the Texas Rollergirls Rec League Roller Derby). Andi has her own business, Andicestors - preserving memories and items that embody those memories, most often photos, but includes letters, journals, diaries, and other mementos. Her goal is to help people keep a part of the past alive to pass along to future generations, by properly preserving the artifacts in our families. If you need something FINISHED, Andi's your person to talk to.



 **Inside this Issue...** **General Assembly Report...pg.8.** **Solar Panel Performance...pg. 5** **Night at the Opera pg. 11,** **Getting Involved pg 2,3,& 4,** **and much, much more!**

How To Get Involved...

AUGUST SHARING SUPPERS

Sharing Suppers will be held on the third Saturday in August. Please mark your calendars for **August 15th** and join others for food, conversation and laughter. Groups of 6 – 10 people gather in various participants' homes. Everyone in the church, new or established, couples or singles are very welcome to attend. It's easy to sign up – just call Linda Buehlmann at 323-5334 or email her at lindabuehlmann@sbcglobal.net. You may also sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board outside Room 8A. Check your calendars and sign up today (no later than Sunday, **August 9th**).



Joan and Bill Forbes who have been attending and hosting these great gatherings for 15 years. Joan says, "It's a great way to meet new people and to get acquainted with church members in a more personal setting. The conversation is always stimulating and the food is wonderful."

"John and Karen Franks." John and I had a wonderful time at this, our second, Sharing Supper...why didn't we start years ago?! We enjoyed meeting and spending time with all of you. The entire meal and beverages were outstanding. We especially want to thank Linda and Kathryn for their warm hospitality!

This month's Sing-a-Long will be held



..on the fourth Saturday, August 22, 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. Copies of "Rise Up Singing" will be available. Please do not bring alcohol, since this is not a custom of the Quakers. 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 mjaneford@grandecom.net. Looking ahead, the next one out will be Sept. 26.



Herman Nelson & Mary Jane Ford

PCC Social Action Project

Each month, our church sends multiple teams of volunteers to the People's Community Clinic to prepare patient education materials and send out immunization reminders. The next 2nd Tuesday Collate Group meets at PCC on August 11th from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. to collate & stuff patient information packets. You don't have to participate each month, just as you can. There are usually around 6-10 of us and it is a nice opportunity to visit with each other. There are other opportunities as well, including individual volunteers to help in various departments at PCC. If you are interested in helping with any of these activities, please contact Sheri Overton at sherioverton@hotmail.com or 512-847-2685.



NORTH CENTRAL CAREGIVERS:



Faith In Action...

Another way to reach out and make a difference

North Central Caregivers of Austin is an alliance of congregations and volunteers in the north central area of Austin which offers volunteer services to older adults. The goal is to enable older neighbors to remain in their homes. It is "Faith in Action" in our own neighborhood.

First UU of Austin has been a part of this network for many years and not only has the church contributed dollars to the maintenance of this caring group but many of our members are participating in various volunteer activities. Special Thanks to **Linda Buehlmann, Michelle McFadden, Jean Wyllys, Judy Parken and Tommy Thomson** for actively giving their time and talents. The Caregiver Board meets once a month at the Crestview Methodist Church. **Marilyn Wilson and Nancy Bene** represent First UU.

North Central Caregivers is a great way to act on your faith. You, too, can personally give back to your community by volunteering to drive elders to doctor appointments, grocery shopping, doing light fix-ups and just being a friendly person who makes someone's day a little brighter. To volunteer, please call: North Central Caregivers - 453-2273 and don't forget to mention you are with First UU.



Rehearsals and Readings

August is a busy month for Paradox Players as we start preparing for the Sept main stage production and for the next ten months of Readers' Theater. Opening Sept 18, *On Golden Pond* actors are rehearsing, stage crew artists are

designing, carpenters are flexing creative muscle, and props people are gathering props. Readers' Theater leaders are reading scores of plays in order to present a stimulating selection to readers at the monthly meetings that will resume Sept 14.

August is the perfect time to reflect on how you want to participate in all of this activity – from painting sets to gathering props to learning the technical side of running a show, there is a place for anyone who loves the magic of theater. We also welcome anyone who would simply enjoy reviewing scripts for Readers' Theater. Whatever your interest, please contact Barbara (blyfordweeks@aol.com) or Ann (annann@austin.rr.com) so they can connect you to our theater family in time for the start of the September season!



REMINDER
Reader's Theater
begins again on September 14th
7:00 p.m. in Room 13.





Coffee
&
Conversation

...or The 30-minute Sacrament

During an Interfaith Workshop, the normally contained fire of an altar candle spread out of control. While waiting in the parking lot for the fire truck, the visiting rabbi's face went pale. Without regard for his safety, he ran back into the building, coming back beating some dying flames from a copy of the Torah. A few seconds later the Catholic priest returned to the parking lot with the blessed communion host. As the building burned brighter, the Unitarian Universalist minister dropped his day-planner and dashed into the inferno. With a horrifying crash, the building's support collapsed. Hours later, the fire department found the minister with his arms wrapped around the coffee pot. This may be as close to a spiritual truth as

you're likely to hear on "A Prairie Home Companion." What is sacred in a religion with no creed?

A Sacrament is a symbol and a process. It illustrates something that is both completed and ongoing—a wedding kiss symbolizes the love leading up to the big moment, and the commitment to come. A Christian baptism can potentially show that someone is ready to participate in their faith, and is the moment of a communal pledge to aid the child in their religious life. In the Unitarian Universalist church, a faith that welcomes all faiths, a congregation of questioners, a community who would walk past a sign saying "Heaven: 2 Miles" to the sign saying "Discussion about Heaven: 15 miles" (Garrison Keillor).

Dialog becomes one of our highest goals.

In the free exchange of ideas, we can refine our own paths. A seeking Agnostic, a liberal Christian, and a Wiccan can learn much by exchanging notes on ritual and practices. But a commitment to a free exchange of ideas can't happen in a silent room. No single minister can help you on every step of your spiritual path. That sort of thing comes from Socratic dialog, the give-and-take of questioning, of building and honing your own responses, talking your way through your own ideas, having your shakier conceits thoroughly shaken.

Join us this Sunday in Howson Hall for a free exchange of ideas. It's not going to happen in the sanctuary, where "one to many messages" are the rule. It is going to happen around the coffee pot. Coffee hour can be a sacrament—an outward and visible sign of one of the few things that UUs categorically hold sacred, an open mind and a commitment to conversation.

This Sunday—and every Sunday—find someone new, ask them "What brought you here," and open your ears. See where the path takes you. Listening itself can be an active expression of the Unitarian Universalist faith, if we find the time to listen.

Jacob Williams, Co Chair of Membership



Mark your Calendars: Connections fair, Sunday, Sept 13!

FUUCA's annual Connections Fair is coming soon! This year, we expect to completely fill Howson Hall and the gallery (but not, by popular demand, the stage) with groups, committees and classes, as almost every opportunity to meet, plan, study, and *DO* meets almost every member and visitor at First Unitarian.

Is YOUR committee, team, or study group going to be there? Do you want to help out or have a great door prize for visitors? Are you a part of a NEW group? Please let us know! Drop Jacob a note at jvw@io.com to keep us informed and reserve your space!

Serving Supper to the Homeless at ARCH!



Quick and Satisfying! Volunteer and Help Those Less Fortunate than Us.

Many thanks to our FUUCA volunteers for June and July: **Kristy Quigley, Melanie Garnett, and Wendy Kuo.** On the first Sunday of each month, typically four UUs serve dinner, cafeteria-style, from 5:30 to 8:00 pm to 100 homeless men at ARCH (Austin Resource Center for the Homeless) in downtown Austin (500 E. 7th St.). We are now scheduling volunteers for the fall months, Sept. 6, Oct. 4, and Nov. 1. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please contact co-coordinators: Karen Franks, kfranks46@yahoo.com or 670-2221. Mary Ann Copp, mac624@tstar.net

FUUCA Solar Electric Plant (SPV) Interim Performance Report

A job well done by Austin-based Meridian Energy Systems, Inc., our SPV plant has been online since mid-March of this year. With four months' worth of energy data we can now report on how it has been doing. But first, and FYI, the standard energy-unit used in all this is the kilowatt hour, or kWh. A kWh is the amount of energy a 100-watt light bulb would use in ten hours. For this time period:

Total UU energy Consumption:	36,160 kWh
Our total cost:	\$3,109.76
Our average cost/kWh:	\$0.0860/kWh
Solar plant production:	5,824 kWh
Our value/saving	\$500.86

This SPV energy production is 16.1% of our total kWh energy consumption (and corresponding cost) for the approximate four monthly billing periods. **Moreover, our 5,824 kWh SPV production approximates a displacement of:**

- * 6,639 pounds coal
- * 61,152 cubic feet natural gas
- * 3.8 tons CO2 emission

While I'll do another interim report in a few months, a more comprehensive annual performance and economic summary will be done after we have a full 12-month database to work with.

* Data provided by City of Austin Electric Department
 Marcus Barnes P.E. (inactive)
 Aerodyne Laboratories



Dale Bulla and Don Smith along with other interested folks the day the Solar Panels (on the roof) were turned on.

Split the Plate On the first and third Sundays each month, the First UU congregation splits the non-pledge offertory plate with a nonprofit organization that puts our values into action.



On August 2, our split-the-plate beneficiary will be the Mother's Milk Bank of Austin, which provides donated breast milk to all of the neonatal intensive-care units in the Austin area and also ships milk to other locations. Many families at FUUCA have been involved with the milk bank either as donors or as recipients. Mother's milk makes a huge difference in how well premature babies do after birth because it fights infection while providing ideal nutrition.

On August 16, we will split the plate with Therapy Pet Pals of Texas. This Austin-based nonprofit began with one woman's desire to make a real difference. Kathryn Lashmit phoned a local nursing home seeking permission to bring her small dog for a visit. Therapy Pet Pals' programs give happiness and companionship to those "most often forgotten" in today's society: the elderly, the mentally and physically challenged, and the terminally ill--many of whom had to leave their own beloved pets in order to enter a facility. Since 1984, this free ministry of love has grown to almost 200 pets and 190 trained volunteers serving approximately 84 different health-care facilities and institutions.





President's Corner

Did you know that when people are “shopping” for churches, they tend to visit during the summer? Families with children find their schedules are looser, so it’s easier for them to just try out something new. Unfortunately many UU churches traditionally reduce their services or even close over the summers. Ours is not one of them! We hold worship services all year, and while our summer services might be a bit sparsely attended, you are likely to see many new faces each Sunday. Please take the time to welcome visitors, answer their questions, point them in the right direction, or ask them about what brought them to the church.

I want to give a tremendous “Thank You” to our Worship Services Committee which has worked very hard to schedule seven months of excellent worship this year. When the committee was formed in January, it was given the intentionally vague mission to “schedule meaningful worship services”. It was understood that they would be on their own until an interim minister arrived – and no clear schedule of when that might be! They met those challenges admirably and provided us a lively range of worship leaders and lay leaders who brought us together to listen, consider, and question. Because worship is more than just a sermon, they also coordinated with our music director, Paradox Players, the RE program, and others to give us rich Sunday mornings. Such coordination involves many phone calls, many more emails, and plenty of meetings. Their hard work has allowed us to continue what *we* do so well when we come together. Thanks to each of them!

Now, it’s August, and we are still seeing some holes in the fabric of our congregation. Each one is shaped like a member who left us or who simply has not been around for a while. While the fabric of the church is not in danger of unraveling, these holes still remind us of our recent past and spur us to the work that lies ahead. Some folks have simply been staying away until our interim minister arrives. Others might wait longer. I recently learned that one former member is simply waiting to be invited back. Perhaps this is where *you* come in. If you know someone who has not been around lately, could you take a bit of time to talk with them? Maybe you can be the person to invite someone back, or at least let them know that while they were among us, our church was a better place and they are missed. See you in church!

-Nell Newton, President of the Board of Trustees

Let the Dream & Celebration begin!

The next few months will be busy for you and your Stewardship Committee. The congregation has guided the Stewardship Committee and the Board to define the Dream of the 2010 fund raising campaign. The Dream the congregation chose is: "Balance the Budget."

On the face of it, "Balance the budget" has little curb attraction: it has no shiny new coat of paint; you can't talk to it; you can't see it, or touch it, or walk on it; you can't cook on it. What you can do is to know - to embrace! - that your church - our church - is re-dedicating its promise to the future by its commitment to the present.

Congratulations to us. You could search the shelves of the "Fundraising for Charities" bookstore for hours. You would not find another example of a congregation showing the maturity to put such a fundamental concept at the core of its annual canvass.

There is more: the congregation has also guided the Stewardship Committee and the Board to a second Dream: the fundraising beyond the balanced base budget - the "Stretch Goal" - will go for the combined projects of a facelift for our building's interior and a kitchen renovation.



The Dream has begun: now let the Celebration begin!



Rev Janet Newman: Already Off to a Good Start

Rev. Janet Newman, our interim minister, arrives in Austin this month. Let me give you just a few of the reasons why I feel optimistic about her and the coming year of her ministry.

With more than 20 years of as an interim minister, Janet has more experience in this field than any other Unitarian Universalist minister. She has just about seen it all, and brings a variety of tools and skills very specific to the special job of interim ministry.

Although she was working diligently to wrap up her most recent work at the UU church in Birmingham, Michigan, she made time to visit First UU in June. Her visit allowed her to get an early start learning about us, our challenges, and dreams. It also provided staff and leadership the opportunity to learn about her style and goals. Janet's visit, which she did not have to make, has helped us all to begin building momentum to make the next twelve months successful.

Janet listens. I observed in both group and personal meetings that she wants to understand First UU, our strengths, and our challenges, before taking big steps. She seems like someone who looks *before* she leaps. Although her first official day is September 1, Janet will try to get an early start. She and her things will arrive in Austin in early August. Once she gets settled in, she wants to start coming in and rolling up her sleeves. We have very good fortune to have someone so dedicated to ministry and our success.

So, if you see me smiling this month, this might be the reason why.

Sean Hale, Executive Director

Jim Scott

If you recognize the man in this picture, you very well may realize he resigned from his position as bookkeeper of First UU a few weeks ago. Jim served in this capacity for four years, working diligently to serve our congregation and its leaders.

Jim Scott will be missed and we wish him well on his next endeavor. He is a deeply religious man and brought a strong sense of faith and calmness to those who related to him in the office. Thank you Jim for your past four years of service and for your peaceful dedication. One factor that he will not miss I am sure is his commute daily from San Marcos!



A MAGICAL SUMMER EXPERIENCE

July 27-31, 2009, the First UU building was transformed into Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft. This summer camp theme provided the basis for an amazing experience for 50 campers in grades K-6, plus about 15 prefects (camp counselors), and many adult professors and volunteers. The week included music, experiments, crafts, service activities, and field trips. The September issue of the newsletter will include a full report about the fun!

REPORT FROM UUA General Assembly, 2009

by Sharon Moore

President of the UUA for the last eight years, Bill Sinkford gave his last speech in Salt Lake City on June 24 where he outlined our denomination's accomplishments during his presidency and his hopes for our future.

Accomplishments:

- 1) He is proud of the many services our churches rendered after 9/11. He met with many Muslims afterward.
- 2) He reorganized the UU staff for more efficiency in meeting our churches' needs.
- 3) He is proud of the Life Span RE program.
- 4) We are better able to talk about our faith with a language of reverence.
- 5) We've been in the forefront of the struggle for marriage equality with our "Standing on the Side of Love" campaign.
- 6) We've embraced our neighbors in trying to end racism. We raised 3 1/2 million dollars for Katrina relief. He went to Eastern Chad and Darfur, etc. The Holdeen India Project continues to help. Our Faith Without Borders helps us engage other congregations around the world.
- 7) Our Beacon Press will be the sole publisher of Martin Luther King's writings.
- 8) We achieved our 50 million dollar goal early in our "Now Is The Time" campaign.
- 9) "O" Magazine features our own church's last class of the Adult Owl curriculum with quotes from our members who took the class.



Bill Sinkford, past
UUA President

What still needs our attention:

- 1) We need a new vision for Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry.
- 2) We need to secure more racial and cultural diversity in our clergy. We have 40 ministers of color and need to keep them.
- 3) We need to GROW. We've grown less than 7% in eight years. We need RELIGIOUS HOSPITALITY to get new members. The new TAPESTRY OF FAITH curriculum will help.
- 4) We must live out our deepest values in community. Our Knoxville church was attacked for our beliefs. There we banded together, didn't retreat, and opened our hearts and minds to deal with this tragedy.
- 5) We need a visibility campaign such as the STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE campaign. We must train our ministers to speak out, be on TV, Twitter, Facebook, go viral about who we are and what we offer to our world. This time needs our liberal religious faith. There are no solo acts in ministry. We must all "do" ministry together wherever we are.



First UU's attending
General Assembly

Amy Bennett and Rose Ann Reeser (sitting) Gary Bennett, Chris Jimmerson, Sharon Moore, Brian Moore, John Payne

Rev. Peter Morales Elected as Eighth President of Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations



**Peter Morales, new
UUA President**

Rev. Peter Morales, senior minister of Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, CO, was elected today to be the eighth president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) at the Association's General Assembly (GA) in Salt Lake City.

Morales received a total of 2061 votes, 1020 of which were cast as absentee ballots. His opponent, Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman, formerly senior minister of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas, TX, received a total of 1481 votes, 827 of which were absentee ballots. Morales' margin of victory was 580 votes.

Moderator Gini Courter and Financial Advisor Dan Brody, both incumbents running unchallenged, were re-elected to four-year terms. The congregational delegates to General Assembly also elected two Trustees-at-Large and members of several Association committees and commissions.

Speaking of his aspirations for Unitarian Universalism, Rev. Morales said, "I want to grow our faith, to reach all those people who are looking for non-dogmatic, liberal religious community. I look forward to working with partners in many other progressive and justice-seeking religious groups. There are tremendous issues that we'll be facing in the coming years and we're going to need one another."

Commenting on Rev. Hallman's campaign, Morales said, "The campaign is over. It's time to come together as we always do as a faith community. To get to where we want to go requires all of us, and we need their commitment, their enthusiasm, their passion, and their vision. I also particularly want to say that I fully appreciate Laurel's consistent emphasis on spiritual depth, on the creation of profound covenant in communities, and also her deep passion for retaining our youth and young adults." from: www.uua.org/news/newssubmissions/144235.shtml



STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE

As I was assembling the material for this newsletter I got trapped in the swirl of blogs, videos, official sites and not so official sites of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The phrase, Standing on the Side of Love, was everywhere and meant different things to different people. I became curious.

I spoke to the folks who went to General Assembly from First UU (pictures on page 8). They explained that this was the overall theme of the conference. Some said the theme was directly connected to the attack in the Knoxville, Tennessee church last year and spoke enthusiastically about the extremely conservative neighborhood church who came immediately to feed, comfort, and care for the members of the UU church. Others are quoted in videos and blogs as knowing that this stand for love makes gay marriage more possible in more places now.

According to the website standingonthesideoflove.org: "Standing on the Side of Love is a public advocacy campaign, sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association, promoting respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Standing on the Side of Love will confront exclusion, oppression and violence based on identity. Based in the aspiration to create beloved community, the campaign will pursue social change through advocacy, public witness and speaking out in solidarity with those whose lives are publicly demeaned. All people, not just Unitarian Universalists, are invited to stand, speak, worship, march, roll, and live on the side of the love."

What about First UU? Are we a church Standing on the Side of love? You might want to answer those questions. Perhaps we can include some of your answers in future newsletters or Sunday Announcements. *Linda Taylor* (taylorlinda@mac.com)



Sunday Worship



The times for the Sunday morning Worship Services are 9:45 and 11:30 a.m

August 2:

“Honest Religion” Tom Spencer. What does the phrase "honest religion" mean? Does it imply a faith that is informed by reason? Or does it simply mean being true to our own individual definitions of what religion should be? In the first of a two-part sermon on the topic, Tom Spencer, CEO of Austin Area Interreligious Ministries, explores his own reaction to the idea of being honest about the role of religion in his own life and his aspirations for a community dedicated to honest practice.

August 16:

“Holy Visions” Ron Phares. I once was blind, but now I see...

August 23:

“Honest Religion: Part 2” Tom Spencer.

August 30:

"American Roots of Unitarian Universalists: Murray and Channing" Luther Elmore. The roots of American Unitarian Universalists began in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Originally, they were distinctive groups with unique and widely divergent beliefs. Two of the earliest leaders - John Murray and William Ellery Channing - led and defined these two groups. Few of us today hold the same core beliefs of either Murray or Channing, but do they still have something to say to us about our beliefs and our lives?

Adult Religious Education Lecture Series

The time for the Lecture Series will be 11:30 a.m. in Howson Hall

Although there are no Forums in July and August, we are offering a four part series of lectures presented by the in Howson Hall on August 2nd and 23rd at 11:30. Please refer to page 11 of the newsletter for more information.

Denominational UUpdates

William Howard Taft, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and former President of the United States was 69 years old when he visited Yale Law School, where 29-year-old Robert Hutchins was dean.

"I understand", said Taft, "that here at Yale you teach your students that the judges are fools."

"No, Mr. President", said Hutchins. "We teach them to find that out for themselves."

Unitarian Universalists like to find things out for themselves. We are disinclined for others to tell us "best practices." This is a strength and a weakness. Sometimes we are inclined to reinvent the wheel on everything.

There are eight of us now on denominational affairs: **Cyndi Loudon, Sally Scott, Carol Olewin, Sharon Finley, John Franks, Mary Jane Ford, Gary Bennett, and I.** Whatever your committees, or your interests, we can help you to learn what other UUs are doing. Better yet, we can help you to discover this for yourselves. Let us help.

John Keohane, Chairman of Denominational Affairs Committee.

Adult Religious Education

Night at the Opera at First UU... black tie optional



As a gift from Adult RE to First UU, a night at the opera will be presented on Saturday, August 22, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. in the Gallery and Sanctuary.

“Carmen” the 1984 film version with Placido Domingo and Julia Migenes, has been called “one of the best.” We invite those over 21 years of age to wine and hors d’oeuvres. Come, join us for this gift of friendship, music, fun, and raffle prizes. Contact

peg@austinuu.org for more information. Note: Spiritual Movie Night for August is cancelled.

All Church Potluck and Line Dancing

The Couples Club and Singles of Friends invite ALL of First UU to a potluck on Saturday, August 29, at 6:00 pm. in Howson Hall. Not only will you need to bring a dish, but don’t forget your comfortable shoes and clothing as Nancy Groblewski will teach line dancing. These lessons will assure us all that a First UU Potluck is good for both the soul and the feet. *wink* Bring a dish, wear comfortable shoes, and away we go! RSVP to Sharon Moore at

smoore779@austin.rr.com.



David Jones: Family Systems Lectures, III and IV



David Lee Jones, ThD, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary will be presenting Parts III and IV his four-part series on family systems theory and how it manifests itself into our First UU family. Parts III and IV are scheduled for Sundays, August 2 and August 23 from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in Howson Hall. Folks who attended the first two sessions were very impressed so don’t miss this great event. Some of the topics are “Understanding the Theory,” “Applying the Theory,” and Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times. Adult Religious Education is sponsoring this series. Contact Peg Frey peg@austinuu.org for more information.

Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group: Stillness Speaks

Eckhart Tolle is a spiritual teacher and author who was born in Germany and educated at the Universities of London and Cambridge. He is the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller, *The Power of Now* and the highly acclaimed follow-up *A New Earth*. We meet every Thursday, 7:30 to 9:00 PM, in Room 13 where we discuss a chapter each week from *Stillness Speaks*. At the August 6th meeting we will show a video of Eckhart teaching at a seminar. A donation of \$5.00 per person is requested.

Should you have any questions contact Suzanne Kahn (512) 947-7588 or suzanne.kahn@sbcglobal.net



CHILDREN'S CHOIR CORNER

September is just around the corner, and the FUUCA Children's Choirs are gearing up for another fabulous year filled with the exceptional musical offerings that you have come to enjoy! Danielle Solan & Kelan Latimer have been working hard putting together some great music for the kids, and they can't wait to get started. We would LOVE for you to join us!

Who? First UU Children's Choirs

What? Primary Choir, led by Danielle Solan (grades K - 3) and Secondary Choir, led by Kelan Latimer (grades 4 - 6)

When? Rehearsals start on September 13, 2009, from 10:40 - 11:25 a.m.

Where? In the RE wing, rooms to be announced...follow the sound of the music!

Why? Because this program provides a superior musical education for our children and lifts up and celebrates their musical gifts, ministering equally to our church families and to our congregation.

How? Flag me down or email me, come by the Children's Choir table in the Gallery on Sundays in August, meet up with us at our table at the Connections Fair on September 13th, or contact Danielle (danielle.solan@gmail.com) or Kelan (so_do@hotmail.com) via email. Send a blank email to FUUCAchoir-subscribe@yahoo.com to join our email list.

Note: There is a nominal fee, and there are scholarships.

Yours in song,

Chris Heidel, Children's Choir Coordinator chris@chrisandtoby.com



EVENSONG SESSIONS BEGIN AGAIN

Join us for eight Wednesday night sessions from 7-9 P.M. on September 16, 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, and November 4 in room 13 for an opportunity to share your thoughts and get to know people on a deeper level than is ever possible in a large group. This program is for long time members, new members, and people who are checking UUism out.

Evensong is a program of discovery and sharing in a safe, small group setting. We will share what we value most, what our religious and spiritual experiences have been, and what gifts and concerns we bring to day to day living. We will explore what it is to be human, what beginnings and endings we have had in our lives and what the words, "Church" and "Community" mean.

You may expect a structured service, a time to be quiet mid-week, to listen to others, and to share. Each session includes an opening, singing, reading responsively, sitting in stillness, and communing.

Leaders: Roseanne Graham and Greg Thompson

Hope to see you! To sign up, email Sharon Moore at smoore779@austin.rr.com

Open Invitation from The Children's Programming Committee



Please join us for our annual Children's Programming Committee Retreat. In this two hour meeting we will be discussing; the upcoming calendar year with all the events and activities we have planned, fall and spring curriculum, a look back at past years' accomplishments and going forward our goals and vision for the future of Religious Education at First UU. This is a great opportunity to come and meet other parents, participate and have a voice in Religious Education and most importantly support the Children's Religious Education Department.

Our kids need us to be active and involved in order to bring an enriching environment to our religious education community. Creating a fun and meaningful community adds to the quality of all our lives both adults and children. Free child care and lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to cynidi@austinuu.org or 560-2839 if you plan to attend.

Special Thanks to our Volunteers

Religious Education wants to extend a very special thank you to all of the volunteers who have used our new on-line system to sign-up and show up to volunteer in our classrooms. Our RE teachers must have a volunteer EVERY Sunday in their classrooms in order for us to meet our child safety policy. This creates a safer and more enriching environment for our children.



A Special Thanks to:

Ted Beckett

Debbie Besch

Beth Davis

Karen Franks

Seaufy Peg Frey

Bess Green

Alice Morrow Harris

Chris & Toby Heidel

Wendy Kuo

Cathy Savage

Sally Scott

Klondike Stedman

Laura Zavalney

Upcoming Children's RE Events

August 30
 September 13
 September 27
 October 17
 October 24

Children's Programming Committee Retreat – Open to All
 Religious Education Fall Semester Start
 Children's Programming Committee Meeting
 Jewish New Year Celebration
 Halloween Carnival

Children's Religious Education!

Fall Curriculum

Summer is winding down and we are gearing up for a fun filled fall here in Religious Education. In the autumn we always study a major world religion as part of our curriculum rotation. This year we will be learning all about Christianity. The Fall Sunday School semester begins on September 13. Below is a brief description of what each class will be studying.



PRE-K

Story Time: A Literature-Based Curriculum for Preschool.

By: Mary Jerse Schwartz

Teacher: Bill Douglass

Times: Sundays at 9:45 & 11:30

Room: 23



Description: Based on contemporary children's literature, this program helps preschoolers focus on feelings, relationships, nature, and holidays. Each session has a story, a discussion, and a choice of related activities. Additional books are also suggested.

Goals for Participants: To get in touch with feelings, relationships, nature, and holidays through stories, discussion, art, and other activities.

Grades K-2

The Life and Teachings of Jesus. *By Donna Wheelock and Judith Hoehler.*

Adapted and updated by Adriana DeLaRosa

Teacher: Adriana DeLaRosa

Times: Sundays at 9:45 & 11:30

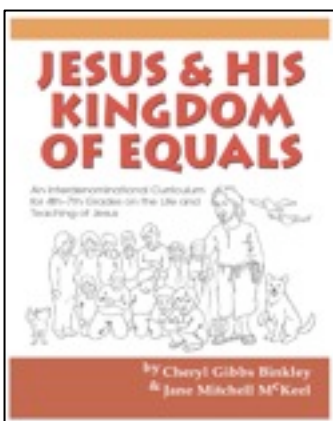
Room: 17

Theme and Description: Explores the events of Jesus' life, his teachings, and the customs of the times. Offers opportunities for discussion, activities for enrichment and celebrations.

Goals for Participants: To learn about Jesus' life and his teachings. Discover what life in Palestine was like in Jesus's day. Enable children to formulate their own understandings of the meaning of Jesus' life and teachings.



Grades 3-5



Jesus and His Kingdom of Equals.

By Cheryl Gibbs Binkley and Jane Mitchell McKeel

Teacher: Kami Cornell

Times: Sundays at 9:45 & 11:30

Room: 15

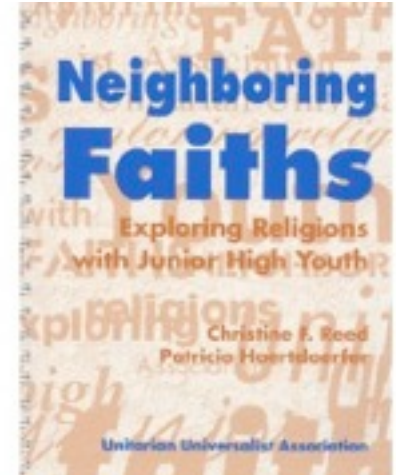
Description: This curriculum introduces students to the life and teachings of Jesus. While based on the stories as told in the Gospels, this curriculum uses insights from modern Biblical and historical criticism where appropriate. It focuses on Jesus' basic themes of love and justice, which remain true in any era.

Goals for Participants: To learn about the historical Jesus and the times in which he lived; To reflect on important life themes such as forgiveness, equality, and justice through Gospel stories (canonical and gnostic).

MIDDLE SCHOOL**Neighboring Faiths: Exploring Religion with Junior High Youth.***By Christine Reed and Patricica Hoertdoerfer***Teacher:** Scott Butki**Time:** Sunday at 11:30**Room:** 13

Description: Inspired by the UU classic, *Church Across the Street*, this year-long curriculum helps youth in grades 7-9 learn about their own faith and other faith traditions through interactive experience such as field trips and interviews. These encounters with other religions are given meaning through periods of reflection and discussion about Unitarian Universalism and personal beliefs and values.

Goals for Participants: To learn about other faith traditions. To consider the universals of religious experience. To deepen one's own faith. To strengthen one's understanding of and respect for cultural diversity.



CREATING A CLASS COVENANT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

In recent weeks in the middle school class we have had some great discussions on topics ranging from how they evaluate themselves (i.e. do they want to be more empathetic) to how they best learn (they seemed fascinated to realize that it's perfectly fine if they learn better in non-traditional ways, i.e. not just being passive listeners). This has been useful for me as their teacher planning ahead while they have enjoyed being invested in the class as we move toward the next step, creating a new class covenant.

The day I write this, Sunday July 12, we began writing a new church covenant together. We will, when we complete it, record it on video (with each student saying a line) for posterity in addition to putting it on poster board). Future lesson topics will include empathy - both how to empathize with others in class, within the church, etc. - and ways teenagers are doing social action (the curriculum topic for summer) without realizing it, such as participating in school elections, encouraging those old enough to vote to do so, and taking part in other democratic actions.

OWL for Middle School-aged Youth.

Religious Education will be sponsoring the human sexuality program "Our Whole Lives" (OWL) this Fall for Middle School-aged youth. OWL is a life-span curriculum developed by the Unitarian-Universalist denomination in partnership with the United Church of Christ. It is an inclusive, fact-based program designed to encourage discussion about many different aspects of our sexual development. Classes will meet Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4, with a snack break. A lock-in early in September will also be held. Classes are currently scheduled to run from Sept. 20 to December 20, for a total of 13 classes. Cost will be \$40 per student, with waivers provided as needed. Students must be registered and have parental support. A MANDATORY parent orientation will be held a week before classes start. For more information, contact Bill Douglass, (779-6642) bdouglass@austinisd.org

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Next Newsletter Deadline

15th of the month

Please submit information to

news@austinuu.org

Mark your Calendars: Connections Fair, Sunday, Sept 13!

FUUCA's annual Connections Fair is coming soon! This year, we expect to completely fill Howson Hall and the gallery (but not, by popular demand, the stage) with groups, committees and classes, as almost every opportunity to meet, plan, study, and *DO* meets almost every member and visitor at First Unitarian.

Is YOUR committee, team, or study group going to be there? Do you want to help out or have a great door prize for visitors? Are you a part of a NEW group? Please let us know! Drop Jacob a note at jyw@io.com to keep us informed and reserve your space!