

Spotlight On...



I had been singing with the FUUCA choir for four years, and loved it, and loved the community, and loved how thought-provoking and educational the Sunday lectures were. Chris (my husband) loved it, too, for all those reasons. During the fall pledge drive (2008), we started talking about officially joining the community we had come to love so much. (This was no small thing for us, coming from Church of Christ and Baptist backgrounds. Heck, it's still hard for me to say the word "church".)



Chris Smith & Rebecca Frazier-Smith

Then the recommendation for dismissal came. After reading the whole report, we concluded that it was probably warranted. But we were appalled at the way in which the dismissal was handled. From our perspective, it was incredibly rushed, and the timing was incredibly crass and brutal. We could not understand (and still don't) why our leadership, surely knowing how painfully divisive the issue would be, could even bring it up during the holidays. If it really had been brewing for so many years, why not give us three more weeks, until after we'd had our holiday celebrations together as an intact community? (We still think there must have been some catalyst, some final straw that caused the board to snap. And we'd still love to know what that was.)

So we left, very heartbroken, very dejected, and very disillusioned. We felt like an ugly part of the community, previously unknown to us, had suddenly revealed itself, and it caught us completely by surprise. We spent the next months missing our friends, missing making music with them, missing that sense of community. It was a very sad time, and we shed so many tears about it.

In August, I was invited by a dear friend of mine, whom I had not seen in years and years, to come to Waco and sing with her at her home UU fellowship. It was a wonderful service and brought back so many bittersweet memories. We sang the "Flower Duet" together, and it was just glorious to get to sing with her again.

The choir that morning, made up of about a dozen folks with widely varying ages and musical abilities, sang a rocking little tune called "Stand with Me". It had a great energy, and a great message. The lyrics to the chorus were:

"I will stand with you; will you stand with me?
We can be the change that we want to see!
In the name of love, in the name of peace,
will you stand, will you stand with me?"

I didn't understand it then, but apparently the universe was trying to say something. The whole next day I couldn't get this chorus out of my head. It was irritating at first - you know what it's like when you get a song stuck in your head and it won't shut up! But as the afternoon wore on and these lyrics whirled around in my head, I began to experience little bits of realization, creeping in, seeping in, making sense... Be the change!!! Holy moly. Be the change. It finally dawned on me, and it was such a simple concept.

I don't know how to be the change, really, but I know I can't do anything if I'm not here. So I resolved to come back, and sign the book, and have a voting voice, and start walking the walk.

We can be the change that we want to see. It's so simple. In retrospect, I can't believe I forgot it. But I'm very grateful to my friend, Kristen Nobis, and her UU fellowship in Waco, for offering me the right message at the right time, when I was open to hearing it. Loud and clear, dear friends! And yes - I will stand with you! *written by Rebecca Frazier-Smith (and totally agreed to by Chris Smith, her husband). This was in response to a question asked of a few new members: Why did you join First UU?*



In the Interim *by Janet E. Newman*

One of the developmental tasks of the congregation during transition time is to commit to new ministerial leadership. Sometimes congregants tell me that they are not sure exactly what ministers do! Sunday mornings seem pretty clear, they say, but what about the other days of the week? How do clergy practice their profession?

Sunday, March 14, we are honored to host Rev. Kathleen Ellis as our pulpit guest. Kathleen is also our Ministerial Settlement Representative which means that she guides congregations and their Ministerial Search Committees through the search process. Her service will be a kind of kick-off event for First UU's search.

So this month is a good time to think about ministerial tasks. You hear me speak about Interim Ministers' engagement with congregations that are in transition, but what about an update on how Called/Settled Ministers engage?

The following list of ten identified ministerial functions and roles was compiled by the Center for Career Development and Ministry, an interfaith counseling and research center. I have adapted the descriptive language so that it is useful to Unitarian Universalists, and I have arranged it in alphabetical order. I hope this list is helpful as you examine your expectations of ministry and the reality that ministers cannot be all things to all people.

As you know, Interim Ministers are responsible for guiding the congregation through additional tasks as well as the following ones expected of all clergy. I'm happy to talk with you about this.

1. Administrator: Helps manage an effective organization –planning, promoting, and executing programs; assists in committee work.
2. Evangelist: Outreach activities, effective use of media, spreading word of the faith.
3. Liturgist: Plans and participates in lay-led services, leads rites of passage, designs meaningful ceremonies.
4. Pastoral Caregiver: Includes bereavement visiting and care, crisis management, visits in home, hospital, and office.
5. Pastoral Listener: Pastoral conversations with congregants, including pre-marital couples.
6. Preacher: Prepares and delivers sermons.
7. Reformer: Speaking and participating in programs of community betterment.
8. Scholar: Scholarly research and writing that reaches the larger denomination or beyond.
9. Spiritual Guide: Helps members develop and deepen their faith and learn how to use the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources in their daily lives. Includes spiritual direction.
10. Teacher: Facilitates classes in the adult religious education program.

Clearly, nobody can do all of these tasks perfectly. But I know you will trust your Ministerial Search Committee, yet to be determined, to find a good fit for First UU -- not a perfect minister!

Best regards, Janet Newman, your Interim Minister 2009-10

HAVE DINNER WITH THE MODERATOR OF THE UUA!

We are fortunate that Ms. Gini Courter, the moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association, will visit the Austin UU congregations March 7 through 14. We will host her here on Wednesday, March 10.

We plan a special Meet and Eat dinner, details to follow, but RSVP's a must. After dinner, Gini will give us a brief update on the state of liberal religion and the UUA specifically. Or she may choose another topic! There will be plenty of time for Q and A.

Gini is a remarkably witty person who seems to enjoy complexity and manages large gatherings of UU's with aplomb. All who meet her are influenced by her humor and clear thinking. Watch the weekly announcements for details! - Janet Newman, interim minister



Nell with Hamlet

Summary of February Board Meeting

The agenda for February's board meeting was jammed and we wore ourselves out! Here is a light summary of the things we covered – please remember that these are not meant to be a substitute for the actual minutes of the meeting which are being compiled by our secretary!

- We recognized five new members, and had no resignations
- We approved the minutes for both the December and January meetings.
- Dale Bulla presented a brief analysis of our electric usage and savings since the installation of the solar panels – so far a savings of some \$1,500!
- Michael West gave us an overview of the search process and timeline for calling our next interim minister, followed by the timeline for our settled minister search process. We will be appointing an interim search committee this month, and if all goes according to plan, we can look forward to welcoming our new interim in late August!
- We welcomed Walter Pearson, the UUA Ministerial Compensation Consultant for the SW District. Walter explained his role in helping our church in the search for our next settled minister and gave us some excellent insights into the process. Following UUA guidelines, a searching congregation (us) puts out a fixed dollar amount for a minister's compensation package (salary, housing, etc). As part of his work, Walter will help us determine what dollar amount is most likely to attract suitable candidates. (Doesn't this sound a lot like a marriage broker?)
- Our treasurer Luther Elmore gave us an update on how the Finance Committee has chosen to calculate our reserves. While they remain a bit wonky, the good news is that we still *have* financial reserves! (I am learning that finance is an interpretive art and following our financial policies during lean times has not been a simple matter.)

See you in Church! *Nell Newton, Board of Trustees President.*

First Game Night!!!

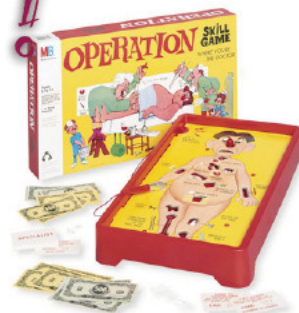


Saturday, March 6, 7 - 9 PM in Howson Hall
First All-Ages Game Night at First UU!

Visit with friends. Meet someone new.

Games you know.

Games you don't know.



Games to make you laugh at your friends!

Snacks. Drinks. Surprises. Childcare provided in the nursery, but there will also be supervised games for kids 5ish and up (in Howson Hall). RSVP for childcare: childcare@austinuu.org and for kid games:

amymcfadden@austin.rr.com. Sponsored by UU Open Minds Covenant Group. This is our gift to our community.

Come celebrate laughter and friendship.





Sunday Worship



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

March 7: "Spiritual Homelessness" by Rev. Dr. Janet E. Newman. Few of us, if any, know what physical homelessness feels like, but I believe that all of us can identify with spiritual homeless. I want to explore the idea of community – what it is, what it can be, and why UU's so often are wary of it. The Children's Choir looks forward to sharing their musical gifts with you as part of the Singing Service during both services on March 07, 2010! Don't miss this special musical offering by the youngest in our community.

March 14: "Freedom with Responsibility" by Rev. Kathleen Ellis. The freedom we enjoy as UUs extends to multiple areas of congregational life. We are free to follow our spiritual paths where they may lead, free to determine criteria for membership, free to decide whether and how to support the church with our resources of time and money, and free to call our own ministers. What are the responsibilities that accompany this freedom? What is the process and who will carry it out? Rev. Kathleen Ellis is no stranger to First UU. When she moved to Austin to live with her husband, Jon Montgomery, she started a young adult group for UU's in Austin. Now she serves as Minister of Congregational Life at Live Oak UU Church in northwest Austin. She also serves as the Ministerial Settlement Rep for this District and will be the consultant to this church in the search for a new settled minister. **After each service - a question and answer period.**

March 21 - "Reverence and Reverends" by Rev. Dr. Janet E. Newman. Now that we are talking about ministers – and how they got that way – let's look at what some "experts" in the field have said. Ralph Waldo Emerson, briefly a Unitarian minister himself, uttered some scathing words to describe a colleague. What was that about?

March 28: "Excellence in Ministry" by Rev. Don Southworth. One of the purposes of the UU Ministers Association is to "foster excellence in ministry." What does that look like, feel like? And how do congregations and ministers co-create it together? Rev. Don Southworth is the Acting Executive Director of the UU Ministers Assoc. He worked in the corporate world in marketing, sales, management, and training before heeding the call to ministry. Since graduating from Starr King School for the Ministry in 2000 he has served congregations in San Francisco, Atlanta, and Durham, North Carolina.



Sunday Forum



The time for the Sunday Forum is 11:30 a.m.

March 7: Karen Huber, Travis County Commissioner, "Top Issues Confronting Travis County"

As one of four Travis County Commissioners, Karen Huber is the elected official representing the residents of Precinct 3 in Travis County. The commissioners and the county judge are the chief policy-making and administrative branch of county government. Karen is a 6th generation Texan. She'll discuss the important issues facing Travis County, including land use (and lack thereof, which is an issue in itself), environmental issues, including our ongoing concerns about a lack of drinking water in our future, transportation issues, and others. We'll learn about these issues and engage in Q&A with the newest addition to the Travis County Commissioner's Court!

March 14: Margaret Perry, Director of Education for Austin Lyric Opera, "The Vital Role of Music in Our Daily Lives." A native Texan, she's been a music educator for 36 years. For the past 17 years, Ms. Perry has been the director of Education for Austin Lyric Opera. In April of 2000, she became the founding director of the Armstrong Community Music School, the first school in the world to be established by an opera company. In 2003, the State of TX declared a day in honor of Margaret's 30 years of advocacy and education. Join us for this fascinating and soul-enriching look into "The Vital Role of Music in Our Daily Lives!"

March 21: Paul Sullivan, Executive Director of Veterans for Common Sense, "America's Human Toll from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars" Veterans for Common Sense is a non-profit with offices in Washington, DC., and Austin. Paul has more than 15 years of experience providing advocacy for fellow veteran. He frequently testifies before Congress. Paul has appeared in hundreds of news articles and appeared on "60 Minutes" in January 2010. Join us for this significant and powerful look into "America's Toll from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars".

March 28: Gardner Selby, Austin American-Statesman PolitiFact Texas Editor, "Sorting out the Truth in Politics." Gardner Selby is a longtime Austinite who many of you know from seeing his front-page columns as the Chief Political Writer for the Austin American-Statesman in recent years. Selby has recently been promoted to Editor of "PolitiFact Texas," a partnership of the Austin American-Statesman and PolitiFact.com. PolitiFact Texas aims to expose the truth in Texas with its "Truth-O-Meter," which you've probably seen in Austin American-Statesman articles. Learn about the fascinating methodology of the Pulitzer Prize-winning PolitiFact.com and this exciting new partnership with the Austin American-Statesman in their ongoing mission to "Sort Out the Truth in Politics"!

Preparing for a Settled Minister

On Saturday, January 23rd, Stefan Jonasson, Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA's) Director for Large Congregations, gave a workshop at 1st UU on the process of preparing for a settled minister. In addition to Stefan's presentation, the workshop included small group activities, lively Q&As, and insightful comments and observations. Here are the highlights of Stefan's remarks.

Our church is in between a program church and a large church: We need more staff but lack the financial resources to hire them. We need to think about how to be "the best we can be" at our current size.

1. A congregation must establish its own purpose to have the right to exist -- more than relief for those who are disenchanting. The congregation must establish its own identity apart from any individual or minister.
2. The minister is the ceiling but not the floor. The congregation cannot grow beyond the vision, capacity, and will of the senior minister. The minister, the staff, and/or the congregation can resist needed change.
3. The minister for a congregation our size or larger should be administratively competent, even though s/he will delegate most administrative functions. We must have realistic expectations and hold the minister accountable. The most important ministerial task is "disciplining" or training leaders -- not delivering sermons or providing pastoral care.
4. It matters what we measure. We need to measure in concrete ways, based on the congregation's purpose, mission, and core values, not on how nice the minister is. What are leaders' responsibilities? What are the responsibilities of those least involved in the church? How does the congregation relate to the minister? To the larger ministry of the church? Do members behave in sync with our values? The Board should evaluate itself.
5. Our administrative structure will change as we grow. What is the right organizational structure during transition? During the first few months of settled ministry? After the settled minister is in place for two to five years? Where do we want to go and what will the congregation look like?

Observations:

- Consult with the UU congregation of Fairfax, VA -- the church closest in size to ours that has transitioned to a new minister. They did not select their minister in the first year they were looking. They have had their minister for five years and recently added their 700th member.
- Recommends 2:1 ratio of program staff to administrative staff.
- Defining a large church
 - 600 members according to UUA
 - 1st UU -- 560 members according to by-laws' definition of membership. 480 members have made a contribution of record since minister's dismissal.
 - 350-400 adults and children attending church on Sunday according to church-size literature.
- Average church spends \$1,626 per adult member. Small and large churches have higher costs per member.
- Our church's budget is lower than would be expected for our size.
- Large churches integrate groups that don't agree.
- Social action efforts in a large church will focus on three or four priority projects while allowing projects to "bubble up" from committed individuals.
- Document the wisdom of elders -- without being trapped by history.
- Don't be tyrannized by deadlines. Take the time needed to prepare for calling a minister who is a good fit for this church.
- Our governance model must lead to clarity and transparency regarding what we are looking for, what we want to avoid, and what we disagree on.

Closing Comments:

- Money could be a barrier for attracting the best candidates. We should strive for the mid-point salary and housing. For our current size and region, \$85,500 is the mid-point. \$87,900 is the mid-point, plus benefits and a substantiated professional expense account, for the church size we are growing into.
- 4 Ps to seek in a minister: priestly, prophetic, pastoral, and pragmatic. We should seek a minister who excels in one or two areas and is broadly competent in all areas.
- What we need to do:
 - Appreciate how good we are -- We already have the wisdom, devotion, support, and discernment we need. Our geographical position will be a compelling attraction for at least 20 ministerial candidates.
 - Be clear on our purpose, possibilities and potential, what we need from a minister, and what we don't want.
 - Challenge ourselves to come up with generous compensation.

Social Action: Reach Out to the World



Over \$4200 for Haiti!

In January we collected a special offering for Haitian earthquake victims and raised over \$4200 in one day. A few Sundays later, Miss Cami's RE class held a bake sale and collected another \$145. Did we send this money to Doctors Without Borders or the Red Cross? No! While those are worthy organizations, we sent our money to our own Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or UUSC. You may be asking, why? There is a **BIG** difference! UUSC partners with existing, indigenous relief organizations and is able to swiftly and efficiently distribute aid, while large-scale relief remains logistically snarled. To date, UUSC has assisted local organizations such as the Papaye Peasant Movement, the Lambi Fund of Haiti, COZPAM, and CROSE to assist rural communities receiving survivors from the city and to distribute aid to survivors in those areas. Over

\$150,000 has been distributed. UUSC currently has an assessment team in Haiti to develop mid- and long-term responses. This mission is also carrying \$35,790 worth of essential medical supplies to hospitals affiliated with our partners MPP and the Lambi Fund, at a cost of only \$1,373. As recovery efforts continue, there are things you can do. UUSC is encouraging people to urge the U.S. government to ensure debt relief for Haiti. UUSC is planning [more ways for UUs to help](#), including assisting Haitians in the United States apply for Temporary Protected Status and volunteering bereavement services. Also, UUSC is exploring the possibility of conducting a Rebuild Work Camp in Haiti, possibly as early as 2011. If you missed out on our special collection and would like to help UUSC help Haiti, you can still do so at uus.org. Thank you!



UUSC: Disasters Discriminate

Sarah Peck of UUSC writes:

Browsing the New York Times the other day, I came across this article, "Quake Ignores Class Divisions of a Poor Land." In it, Marc Lacey and Simon Romero make this basic argument: *"Earthquakes do not respect social customs. They do not coddle the rich. They know nothing about the*

invisible lines that in Haiti keep the poor masses packed together in crowded slums and the well-to-do high up in the breezy hills of places like Petionville."

I beg to differ. Here is the thing...when a disaster strikes, Lacey and Romero have a point. It can hit anywhere, at anytime, and affect anybody. But that's where a disaster's inability to discriminate ends. The truth is, disasters *do* discriminate. Disenfranchised members of society become more so, struggling to survive, let alone rebuild livelihoods. Inequalities that existed are merely magnified, forcing some people onto the edges of society. UUSC works to lessen those deep divides — work that is more complex than traditional relief efforts — but, fundamentally important in the effort to foster long-term change. (For the full article, go to: http://www.uusc.org/blog/entry/2145/when_disasters_discriminate)



CROP Walk Sunday March 7th!

Come walk with your church friends to raise awareness and money as we fight poverty and hunger, both here and around the world. CROP means "Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty" and it is one of the largest inter-

denominational events in Austin. Join our team of walkers convoying from the church to Walter Long Park at 1:30 p.m. First we will eat a lunch here at church and then go. This is a great opportunity for families and friends to do social action together - kids enjoy collecting stamps in their "passports" as they visit each "country station." Walkers can make a donation or solicit sponsorships from friends. Questions? Stop by the Social Action table in the gallery. If you can't join our main group of First UU walkers on March 7th, you also have the option of walking on Saturday morning, March 6th.

We stand on the side of love!

Thank you everyone who came to Sunday services on February 14th. For over a year now, our denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association, has been calling us to "stand on the side of love." This campaign asks us to stand up for those whose voices are least heard, the most vulnerable, the marginalized. During service we re-imagined Valentine's Day together and stood up for marriage equality for everyone! We took pictures of this expression of our commitment and they are now at: <http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/photos/> (we are on page 16).

Thank you photographer Margaret Roberts!



Save the Date: Hands on Housing April 17th!

Last October First UU sent over 50 people to help repair the homes of people in need. You know you want to join us (again!) for our spring Bluebonnet Blitz! Children are welcome! We work alongside UUs from other congregations to paint, hammer, caulk, wire, clean, rake, you name it. Many hands make light work and the difference after one day is amazing. Block out Saturday, April 17th on your calendar and look for more info from Beverly Donoghue, coordinator, and the Social Action Committee in next month's newsletter.



General Assembly in Minneapolis, June 23-27.

Gini Courter, the moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association who is visiting us on March 10 at a Meet and Eat, is committed to growing Unitarian Universalism and sees GA as an excellent venue for achieving this. In an interview she said, "I want to create a GA experience that is as spiritually rewarding as possible so that all who attend are well-equipped to return home, roll up their sleeves, and do the work of the congregation." Registration begins on March 1 and an Early bird discounts will continue until April 30.

Here's the link for registration: <http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/index.shtml>

SW District Spring Conference in Plano, Texas,

April 23-25. A quote from the first paragraph of the brochure of the host church, "Who are these people and what are they doing in my church?" This tongue-in cheek question from a longtime UU was prompted by a welcome influx of new members to our congregation. The SWUUC Spring Conference will address the serious side of this question. We will take a look at the folks who walk through our doors and sit in our pews. Who are we and what do we want from church? Our theme is "**Take a Fresh Look at Your Congregation.**" It arises out of the work of Speaker, Anthony Healy. In his publication, *The Postindustrial Promise: Vital Religious Community in the 21st Century*, he states that, far from abandoning religion, people are actively seeking to "re-root" in a religion that speaks to their needs and hopes. Check this website for details: communityuuchurch.org/pages/springconf



What Happens Next with our Building?

Anyone who's tried to reserve a meeting room lately knows that we've been out of space for a long time, so we need room to expand. However, with our recent turmoil and the general economic uncertainty it was decided that it's simply the wrong time to start a major construction project. The idea is very much alive, just not very active. Once we have a settled permanent minister expect to see a lot of renewed activity.

Meanwhile, we've tried to channel our momentum into smaller projects to help ease the problems we see. The most ambitious is exploring the possibility of a whole new commercial grade kitchen to replace our old overtaxed kitchen, but this will require a fundraising effort as a first step. Other groups have been hard at work renovating and upgrading the existing kitchen to extend its useful life. Smaller jobs like repainting the halls and classrooms will also improve our common living space. Nothing will be possible

without help, and in order to succeed we will probably need a series of community-wide barn raisings.

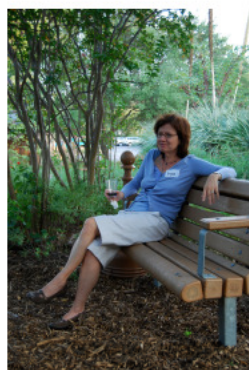
If you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to bring them to our attention. Either find us in the halls, email us at building@austinuu.org, or just leave a note in the Building Committee mailbox. If you want to create or adopt a project, help organize a task, or just volunteer to help that will be even better. Watch This Space! *The Building Committee*



Howson Hall Lighting Gift

Celebration of our Tenth Anniversary as a community theater sponsored by 1st UU Church includes a major gift to the church. Improved lighting in Howson Hall onstage and off is a project whose time is now! If you attended any events in Howson Hall during February - performances, dinners, lectures, movies, yoga – you might already know that our lighting options have expanded. New LED lights provide greater versatility AND financial savings!

It is now possible to adjust the lighting to create ambience suitable to different occasions, from bright light to soft. A small control panel is mounted by the existing light switch, with buttons that control brightness at pre-set levels. Now we can not only utilize more focused lighting on stage, we can also enjoy room lighting that can be fine-tuned to suit the different activities occurring in Howson Hall. We anticipate lower electric bills because LED lights draw less electricity! Existing florescent lights will stay in place unchanged. Permanent professional wiring has replaced dangling extension cords. This ambitious project was completed by Olden Lighting, coordinated by Tom Martin. Please ask Tom any questions about how best to use the new lighting to enhance your next activity in Howson Hall.



Clean, Green, and Native

First UU is a certified Wildlife Habitat, and we have just contracted with a green landscape service that will use electric-powered mowers and leaf blowers instead of gas. Our native-plant-improvements-on-a-shoestring-budget continue: we “rescue” native plant seedlings from properties slated for clear-cut development and plant them around the church. And we are almost done with the Sanctuary Garden! We will have a final workday on Saturday March 13 from 10 am-1 pm to complete planting. Please come join us. Children welcome. Contact Paige Hill paigeurbanpatchwork.org for more information.



The Media Team is looking for help.

Audio, video and computer skills are especially needed. We record church services and Forum and help with movie nights and other events. Whether you have technical experience or just want to learn, we need people of any age or aptitude who can offer occasional or regular help. Contact Tom Martin at tom-m@texas.net or connect with the entire group at firstuutech@yahoo.com

Spring is on the way! Time to Celebrate with... COOKIES!



Cookies! &
More
Cookies!

After a long, lawn-killingly hot summer, a bitter freeze, and two weeks of rain, the back yard has become a vast pool of mud that the dogs joyfully track in. At times like these, I have no choice but to look forward to the sun-shiny days, new flowers, and new beginnings of Spring. Otherwise, the dogs have won.

Firstly, we're looking for new faces to help First UU meet and welcome visitors on Sundays. If you have an hour a month to smile, shake hands, and help people meet a friend at coffee, we'd love to get your help in Howson Hall and the Visitor Information table. A smile really should be the first thing a new visitor sees at First UU--we like to think it sets the tone for their stay!

Secondly--cookies! Easter's just around the corner, April 4 if you're counting. This April, First UU is going to fill the tables in Howson Hall with cookies--drop cookies, bar cookies, cutouts, shortbreads, and every variety of biscuit--steal Grandma's best recipe, and bring a plate of your favorites! This will be a time of fellowship and celebration. Please plan to stay and visit after the services. Want to be a part of the Spring Cookie Potluck, or the first UU's brigade of smiles? Drop a note to Jacob on the Membership Team, at jvw@io.com!

Seniors' Luncheon

Tuesday, March 9th

Howson Hall at Noon

Soup, Salad & Dessert
\$5

RSVP to Alice Cashman 837-0988
Program: Austin UU "Young at Heart" Poets, Herman Nelson, Jane Parsons, and "Jazz" Jaeschke will entertain us with readings from their poetry. Come enjoy the show.



Paradox Players
AUDITIONS for the June comedy, CHARLIE COX RUNS WITH SCISSORS, will take place April 7, 10, and 11.

Director Lisa Foster requests that actors read the script before

auditioning (scripts available later this month). Five roles are available for men and women, acting 20 years and older.

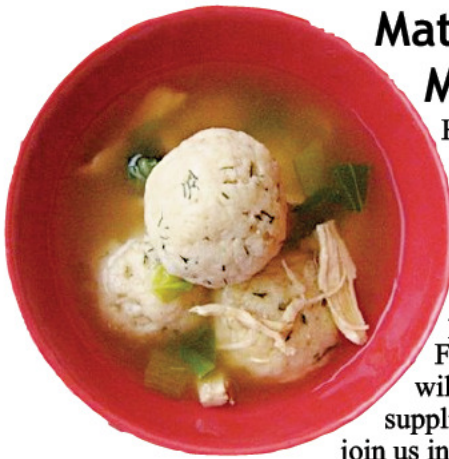


READERS' THEATER meets Monday evening, March 8, at 7:30 in room 13. Newcomers welcome.

The Year to Come

A main task of the Stewardship Committee in 2010 will be to consolidate the growing sense of community and commitment to our Church from within our Congregation – from within ourselves. In 2009, among other endeavors, the Stewardship Committee sponsored an all-church gathering to seek out the guidance of the Congregation for the focus of the Annual Canvass, a Celebration in Honor of Us to pay tribute to our strength, we involved scores of ourselves in the canvass process.

The year 2010 will do all this and more: fund raising and canvassing represent part of Stewardship but do not define Stewardship. The definition of Stewardship - in expansion upon the definition of the role of the Stewardship Committee - has to do with the bedrock of commitment of our Congregation to our Church, and the commitment of our Church to our Congregation. -Bill Edwards



Matzo Ball Making Party!

Hand-in-hand with our Passover Seder tradition we have a Matzo Ball Making Party in the kitchen the day before the Seder. This year the party will be at 2 pm on Friday, April the 2th. We will provide all the

supplies! Just drop by and join us in making Matzo Balls to

be served the next day at the Seder. This is a great excuse to take off early, relax and hang out in the kitchen in the good company of friends. We'll have plenty of laughter and aprons on hand. RSVP Lara@austinuu.org

Passover Seder 2010



This year's Passover Seder will be Saturday evening, April 3th, at 6:00 pm in Howson Hall. The Passover Seder is a ritual retelling of the Passover story. It is a time to share this story with our children and to celebrate freedom. This year we are excited to announce that our own Sheila Gladstone and Lara Douglass will be leading the ceremony. Our Seder is a fun, family friendly event and long standing tradition here at First UU

of Austin. Our Church Seder is a cooperative meal. We provide the main dish, some side dishes and the ritual foods. We ask that guests bring traditional Passover side dishes. (Passover recipes will be available in the Gallery for people to chose.) You are also welcome to bring one of your own holiday side dishes. The more variety we have the better the meal! If you do bring your own dish, please follow some simple Seder food guidelines: no pork, no shellfish, no combining meat and dairy and lastly no leavened (yeast, risen) bread.

Please RSVP if you plan to attend. Your RSVP helps us plan for the main dish and ritual foods. You can RSVP and pay in advance at our Passover table in the Gallery on Sunday or register on the church website at www.austinuu.org. Just click on the Passover Seder link to RSVP. Adults \$15 Adults who bring a dish \$10 Children 5-12 \$5 Children under 5 are free! NOTE: We request the above donations in order to help us pay for our Passover costs such as the main dishes and ritual foods. If you like, please bring your own wine this year. Grape juice will be served for ritual drinks. We always need folks to help us with these big events. We will need people to help with food preparation, setup and cleanup.



Spring has sprung and it's time for our annual Easter Egg Hunt so bring your empty Easter



Baskets! The hunt will be

on Easter Day, April 4, at church during both sessions of RE. Once the kids are sung out of service their teachers will lead the K-5th graders out to the main courtyard patio for the hunt. The nursery and PRE-K kids will have their own hunts on the playground. RE will provide age appropriate eggs for them to hunt. Please remember to bring your empty Easter Baskets

This event really depends on all parents bringing one dozen eggs per child. The eggs can be plastic and filled with candy, toys or stickers. When you arrive at church on Easter morning please drop off your eggs in the kitchen (the earlier the better, since we will need to hide the eggs in time for the hunt). We will have spare empty egg cartons for you to pick up in the RE office the week before Easter. We always need folks to help us scatter the eggs for both egg hunts. To volunteer to help out please contact Cyndi Stein at cyndi@austinuu.org or 560-2839.



Flower Communion Reminder

The Children's Religious Education Committee plan will facilitate our annual Flower Communion during the Easter Service on April 4th. Please bring one fresh flower for each of your family members to share during the ceremony.

Special Class:

Articulating Your UU Faith

Janet Newman, our interim minister, has offered to lead a group through the Articulating Your UU Faith curriculum. The curriculum can help people describe their faith to those who are not UU's. The curriculum deals with inaccuracies about Unitarian Universalism and gives participants a chance to both explain what they used to believe and then what their current beliefs are.

She will offer the five-part class on the following dates, each time at 7 p.m. March 4, 11, 18, April 1 and April 8. A sign up sheet will be at the Religious Education table in the gallery on Sundays.

For more information or question contact the Religious Education office. 452 6168 ext 305.

High School & Middle School visit, observe, question, discuss Other Austin Faith Groups

Several members of the high school and middle school religious education classes went to Promise Land, a Pentecostal church on 51th Street that can easily seat 500 people. The trip was the latest as part of the Neighboring Faith curriculum, in which UU students not only discuss other faiths but also visit services by those faiths. Prior trips were taken to a Jewish synagogue and Hindu temple.

Upon returning from these visits class discussion revolves around what we thought of the church, its service, and compare it to what we have seen at the other two places and our own church. For example, prior to the trip students were asked what roles they thought music should have in services of religions. The consensus was there should be some good music but not during the entire service (as it was at Promise Land). What about guilt? At first they were anti-guilt but when asked if a church had a responsibility to remind members that they should be contributing members of society then some agreed some guilt was appropriate.

The middle school class continues having great conversations where the students will ask questions that indicate they are clearly talking regarding subjects - such as the nature and gender of God

Similarly, when we read aloud together Jonathan Edwards famous 1741 sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," the students initially dismissed the words and sentiments as too crazy and, to quote one student, "Unnecessarily negative." Others said they could see how a sermon focused on the ramifications of sin, namely, in this case, hell, could scare people and motivate them to change their behavior.

Another Sunday question was: Could God be both angry and loving? At first most said "Of course not," but then they began to recognize their parents sometimes grew angry yet still loved them, and perhaps that is one reason for some anger. As you can see we have been having some interesting conversations lately and it's always gratifying, as a teacher, when the students get so involved in the classes.

Ron Phares, who teaches the high school class, and I plan to lead discussions on other faiths, including Islam, as part of this ongoing curriculum. -Scott Butki

Playground Fix Up

There has been a major renovation campaign going on behind the scenes to improve the appearance and safety of the playgrounds. This was spearheaded by Joseph Hunt with help from Natalie Freeburg and John Payne. The high schoolers and YRUU, decided to help as both a social action project and a way to give back to the church. Our plan is to make improvements to the car outside in the playground for older kids.

A few Sundays back the wonderful Margaret Roberts, the polite paparazzi, took this great shot and many more of some of us tackling the playground used



Raking the leaves for the little ones. Natalie, Scott, Malenko, Shannon, Aaron and Spencer.

by the littlest kids. Aaron Osmer, Shannon Mahoney, Malenko Loncar, Spencer and Bill Douglass, Natalie, Elizabeth Grey and Scott Butki worked together to move all the leaves out of that area (we put them into a mulching project Elizabeth is doing), clean the playground equipment, etc. We then had Spencer test the equipment out to ensure the slides and such were ready for maximum enjoyment.

Thanks to everyone for their help and good work!



There will be no spiritual movie night in March due to Spring Break. But mark your calendars for a great movie and discussion for the April Spiritual Movie, which will be on April 23.

First Unitarian Universalist

Church of Austin

4700 Grover Avenue

Austin, TX 78756

One Church. Many Beliefs.

Interim Minister

Rev. Dr. Janet Newman ext 304

Executive Director:

Sean Hale ext 308

Director of Religious Education:

Lara Douglass ext 305

Director of Music: Brent Baldwin

Board President: Nell Newton

Church Phone: (512) 452-6168

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E-Mail: info@AustinUU.org



Bits and Pieces

Sing-a-Long will be held on the fourth Saturday, March 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. 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 JaneFord at mjaneford@grandecom.net.

Lady Spring is here, isn't it about time to cut loose and have some fun? Yew Grove invites you to our Ostara for ritual, dancing, singing, and potluck to follow. The ritual begins at 2:00 pm in the green space in the NW corner of the church property (The Gallery inside the church is our rain location). Childcare will not be provided, but families are welcome. Questions? Please contact Heather at 512-363-0163 or hpalmer_tx@hotmail.com

Lay Leadership Development Continues! First UU is presenting the Harvest the Power curriculum after Meet & Eat every third Wednesday this year. The focus is developing lay leadership - that means you! January's topic was the Leadership Journey. February's topic was the UU Journey. March 17th topic is Power and Authority. Even if you can't participate every month, please attend when you can! Register in the gallery on Sundays. Come to Meet & Eat and then come learn with us! You can learn more about the Harvest the Power curriculum on the Nominating Committee page of the First UU website.

Children's Choir: Spring Session 2 Rehearsals Started March 28, 2010! Come on kiddos! Come sing with us. NO experience necessary. The Children's Choir program includes a **Primary Choir** for children in approximately grades K-3 and a **Youth Choir** for youth in grades 4-8. Rehearsals (between services): 3/28, 4/4, 4/11, 4/18, 4/25, 5/2.

Musical Offerings (anthem, both services): 4/4, 4/25, & 5/9. For more info, pick up a registration packet now (new 2010-2011 families only) and/or the one-page Information Sheet for Spring Session 2 starting March 14, 2010, (both available outside the DRE's office). Questions? Email Chris Heidel (chris@chrisandtoby.com). The Children's Choir welcomes your family into the CC organization, and we look forward to continued spiritual and musical growth together as a community!