

December Newsletter



Ed Brock,
Interim Minister

The people of First UU can congratulate themselves on achieving a successful canvass. While the dust is yet to fully settle, it appears that First UU raised \$110,000 more in pledges this year than last, if we include the "bridge pledges." This is no small accomplishment given today's uncertain economic times.

Furthermore, it is an enormous achievement given the fact that this is the second of two interim years when the church is still making its way through the journey leading up to the calling of your new settled minister. The level of success of this year's canvass, so admirably led by Bill Edwards, boils down to the fact that the people of First UU believe in their future, are committed to the mission of the church and are determined to create a solid economic basis for your next settled minister.

The Religious Education program continues to go through a transition. We still mourn the loss of Lara Douglass from the role of Director of Religious Education. In searching for ways to express our feelings, the Children and Youth Religious Education committee has come up with an idea that will give each of us an opportunity to share our thoughts and memories with Lara. During the first three Sundays of December between and before each service, tables will be made available, staffed by the volunteers of the Religious Education Department, for the purpose of each member of the church creating a personal tribute to Lara. Any pictures you have of you and your families at home or at church would be great inclusions in addition to what you would like to write. Be creative and take this opportunity to express your loving memories of Lara, Bill and their work here. Please see the article in this newsletter written by Gillian Redfearn, long-time church member and friend of the Religious

Education program, in which she explains in more detail your opportunity to thank Lara.

As we move forward, Rev. Lena Breen will be returning in December for approximately ten days to continue her work with the Religious Education program from Saturday, December 18 through Sunday, December 26. If you wish to talk to her, she would be glad for you to contact her to schedule time to speak to her when she is here. Lena's e-mail is clenabreen@fidalgo.net

Please mark your calendar for a very important congregational meeting on December 12th. At this meeting we will be deciding on the final budget for First UU. Additionally, there will be a discussion of whether or not to move ahead with the idea of hiring a volunteer coordinator. Much thoughtful discussion and thought has gone into this issue. It is important that every member of the congregation be present for this meeting to make important decisions that will affect your future. In late spring it is hoped that the First UU will hold an Auction. This auction would involve both a live and silent auction component. We hope to make this a celebrative, memorable and fun event of historic proportions. If you feel called to be a part of this great event, and if you feel you have special expertise or knowledge in the art and science of running, managing or volunteering for Church Auction - and I know you are out there - please let me know. You may reach me at ed@austinuu.org

Congregational Meeting!

Dec. 12th after the second service (1:30)
in the Sanctuary. Listen, Participate,
Vote. Two major agenda items



A Fond Farewell to Lara Douglass

For many years, walking the hallways of the RE classrooms meant that you were guaranteed a smile and a hug from Lara Douglass, formerly the Director of Religious Education, and long-time member of this church. Lara made everyone feel welcome and cared deeply for our community, particularly the well-being of our children. Sadly, in mid-October, she resigned her position as the Director of Religious Education at First UU. Lara served as the DRE for three-and-half years and before that she was Children's Programming Assistant for five years, and a member even longer. Lara's support was instrumental in creating some of our favorite programs. To name just a few, this includes the children's choirs, Camp UU (aka Hogwarts), the Sparkle Plenty fund raisers, and the Christmas Pageant.

There are not enough words to express all that Lara was to this community, but she is most beloved for her compassion and kind heart that she showed without reservation to the many, many people in this church and the example that she set for our children with that spirit. While Lara may no longer be filling the role of DRE, we most certainly recognize that we as a community have a responsibility to continue to recognize and support the religious education programs of this church; this is perhaps the best way in which we can honor and celebrate all that Lara gave to all of us.

It would be remiss to not mention Bill Douglass, Lara's husband, who gave endless time and support to the children of this church. Bill taught many, many classes in this church, but he is probably best appreciated for teaching the Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes. (OWL is a series of sexuality education curricula for several age groups.) Bill did the best he could to teach our children some things that we aren't always so comfortable talking about ourselves. A huge thanks for that!

As a thank you to the Douglass family, we will be building a memory book throughout the month of December. You will have an opportunity to create a page between services at the Religious Education tables or you can create a page on your own. Any pictures you have of you and your families at home or at church would be great inclusions. Pages should be 11" X 14" and can be given to Gillian Redfearn, Cyndi Stein, or Vicky Miller. -Gillian Redfearn, Longtime member and friend to RE



Meet and Eat Holiday Dinner and the Annual Christmas Pageant

Meet and Eat will join forces with the Religious Education Children and Youth Program Committee to host a holiday dinner prior to the Christmas Pageant at the **third Wednesday Meet and Eat on December 15**. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. in Howson Hall and costs \$5.00 per person. Children five and under eat free. Because of space limitations and to help the cooks plan, please RSVP by Sunday, December 12 at the Religious Education table in the Gallery, the Visitors Table, or sign up on the bulletin board in the Gallery. You may also email Jeanette Swenson, jeanetteswenson@yahoo.com. Dessert will be served prior to the Pageant. Please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies to Howson Hall to share.

The December dinner is an opportunity for Meet and Eat to celebrate an important area of our church: the children are our future! We hope that many of you will join us for dinner prior to the Pageant and attend the Pageant in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. or one of the many other events that occur on Wednesday evenings.



Sunday Worship



The time for the Sunday morning Worship Services is 9:45 and 11:30

- December 5: Adult Choir singing with Rev. Brock preaching
- December 12: Children's Choir singing with Rev. Brock preaching
- December 19: Chamber Choir singing with Rev. Brock preaching
- December 24: Christmas Eve: Christmas Eve Service with Rev. Breen presiding (5:30 and 7:00)
- December 26: Soloist with Rev. Breen preaching



Sunday Forum

The time for the Sunday Forum is 11:30 in Howson Hall

December 5: "Civil Rights in the 21st Century" Jim Harrington. Where we are, and where we're going in terms of civil liberty and human rights in the 21st century. Jim Harrington is the director of the Texas Civil Rights Project.

Christmas Eve Services and Tea



December 24th we will have our traditional Christmas Eve Services at 5:30 p.m. and again at 7:00 p.m.

In between the services we will be serving tea in the Gallery. We ask that those who come bring cookies with them to share. Bring the whole family, enjoy the music, and share the stories and join the community!

**MAKE A BEQUEST.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
Include Us in Your Will
and Help Shape the Future**

Through a gift in your will, you can make a long-lasting impact on the future of Unitarian Universalism and First UU of Austin. In addition to its simplicity, a bequest to support our church will allow your assets to be available to you throughout your lifetime.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A bequest in your will or trust of a specific sum of money, a percentage of your estate or a particular asset will help to ensure a secure future for First UU of Austin.

FIND OUT MORE

We are available to provide you with more information on gifts that fit your financial and philanthropic goals. Please contact Rose Ann Reeser at 327-7951 or Rev. Ed Brock at 452-6168 x 304

The 2011 Canvass, in a nutshell:

We have made great strides in the 2011 Canvass.

A year ago, we contemplated such issues as being forced to close our doors for weeks on end in order to save money.

This year we contemplate such issues as whether it is better to defer hiring a Volunteer Coordinator until we have a cash cushion from a build-up of increased pledges, or better to hire now and finance from out of our reserve funds.

What a difference a year makes.
Congratulations to you!

Congratulations to us!

-Bill Edwards, Stewardship Committee

Justice is LOVE in Action

I'm afraid. Afraid enough to resort to scare tactics to get your attention. On Saturday, November 14, I attended a workshop given by **Texas Impact**, a liberal coalition of religious organizations. The workshop gave an overview of the upcoming legislative session. I don't have to tell you things are bad – extreme budget shortfall, redistricting, assaults on our public education system (hello vouchers!), and major environmental legislation.

But there is one issue that stands out above all the others: IMMIGRATION. Already there is a raft of Arizona-style bills. Bills that: demand school districts determine the immigration status of each of their students, require police officers to check immigration status, and punish state and local governments for failing to fully enforce federal immigration law. For alternatives to these punitive scenarios that address problems in our broken immigration system, look to the Utah Compact, an attempt to influence the debate with an eye towards, compassion, reason, and inclusion. (see <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=13237741>)

So what can we do to help shape a Texas that reflects our values? Number one we have to make sure our voice is heard, and number two, we have to engage in the process. Our own denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association, was loud and proud in Arizona, with many members and clergy arrested for peaceful protest. The UUA's **Standing on the Side of Love** Campaign is focused on immigration as a human rights issue. As a congregation in our state's capital, we should be working with them to bring their resources to bear here and now in Texas. Contact me if you are moved to help us in this effort.

And by working with **Texas Impact** we can join in with a broad of concerned people of faith to work effectively during the session, engaging with legislators on the issues. They will be visiting our church in December to explain their agenda and take your questions. Please sign up at the social action table or contact me so I can assure them at least ten folks will attend. You will learn the best ideas and approaches for Texas. Then please join me at their next training, the first day of the session, January 11. Together we can make sure our voice of compassion and love is heard!

In fellowship, *Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis Social Action Committee co-chair* corinna@austin.rr.com

Special Offering for December:



Imagine that it is midnight. You have been assaulted by someone you trusted at one time. Home no longer feels safe. The street is terrifying. Where do you go? What do you do? Ten thousand times a year, calls come into the Hotline at SafePlace with these questions.

SafePlace helps victims of domestic and sexual violence who have found themselves in these circumstances begin new lives, lives of self reliance and freedom from violence. SafePlace offers a wide range of services including a 24 hour Hotline, hospital and legal advocacy, counseling, emergency shelter and transitional housing, and life skills classes for victims and their families. Additionally, they work to prevent future violence through community education and dialogue, systems advocacy and work with APD, Travis County Sheriff's Department and Legal Aid. SafePlace exists to end sexual and domestic violence through safety, healing, prevention and social change. On Sunday, December 12, the special offering will go to SafePlace to support SafePlace in its mission, and we at First UU have an

opportunity to practice our own mission of transforming lives and doing justice.



Lynda West and Herrick are a Delta registered team which volunteers weekly for a reading program at SafePlace.

Hands On Housing Kudos

Members and friends from 1st UU, Live Oak UU, and University of Texas students worked with others on our October Hands On Housing project in East Austin. We scraped, caulked, and painted the home of Rose Lopez -- Our scraping-caulking-priming-painting brigade included 1st UU's Dwayne Windham, our morning crew leader, Wes Gandy, Vishy & Maya Iyer, Lori and Rich Sommer, Karen Franks, November Graves, Krista Miller, Richard Mauldin, Tierney Ahrold, Geoff Lorenz, Ana Gutierrez, Kim Akenhead, Carolyn Swinnea, Curtis Goolsby, Ray and Michael Easterlin,



This is a picture of our UU morning crew with Rose, her grandson, Sebastian, and her friend, Mat

Peter Schneider, and Beverly Donoghue; folks from Live Oak and UT architect students were part of the total crew. The homeowner was thrilled and very grateful for our help. We finished just in time for Rose's friends and family to put up a giant spider, monsters, and other Halloween decorations to entertain 250-300 neighborhood children on Halloween night. Bien Hecho!

Demonstrate Your Commitment to Social Action on Sundays

Are you committed to social action, but unable to participate in many activities because of your work schedule? The Social Action Committee is seeking volunteers to promote social action and be ambassadors of our projects to the congregation on Sundays. This will involve becoming familiar with the church's various Social Action projects and upcoming events so you represent these to people who stop by the Social Action table after Sunday services. It requires arriving before the end of the early service to set up a table display and breaking it down after the second service. You will share this role with a team and may determine how many Sundays per month you will serve in this role.

We know from our mission-developing process that we as a church value social action. Yet sometimes people find it difficult to learn about and connect to activities that fit into their schedules and interests. Our church's social action projects depend on our ability to help members make these connections, and your efforts on Sundays will play a vital role in helping the agencies and organizations with whom we work. If you have been looking for a way to be of service to others within your busy life, this Sunday ambassadorship may be just what you have been looking for! Please stop by the social action table in the gallery or contact Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis, co-chair, at corinna@austin.rr.com.

Time to Choose 2011's Special Offering Recipients!

One important way our congregation lives its mission to *nourish souls, transform lives, and do justice* is through our Monthly Special Offering Program. These offerings are collected during both services separately from our regular offering for the church – a separate plate is passed earlier in the service. The recipients of these special offerings are charitable, justice-seeking organizations that advocate and promote our UU values in the larger community. Do you know of a worthy organization you would like to nominate? The congregation will select by popular vote several recipients. A few slots will be reserved for the Children's Summer Social Action Project and the spring church-wide theme, UU Journey with Food. If the organization you nominate is selected, you will: Testify to the congregation about this organization when the plate is passed. Write an article for the newsletter. Invite a representative to be available in the gallery to provide further information and volunteer opportunities. Submit a notice to the following Sunday Bulletin to let the congregation know how much was given. The Social Action Committee will also support you in programming any other activities related to your organization during their offering month if you so choose! Nominations are available at the Social Action table in the Gallery. Nominations are due Sunday, December 19. Please contact Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis, co-chair Social Action Committee, at corinna@austin.rr.com with your questions.



Brent Baldwin
Music Director

MUSIC MATTERS

Nourishing Souls and Transforming Lives Through Music

December Sundays! There is Music in the Air

5th The FUUCA Adult Choir will sing several special musical offerings, including "Ubi Caritas" by Maurice Durufle and "Gloria" by Guillaume Dufay.

12th The FUUCA Children's Choirs will present a special holiday program, including Al Shlosha, Love Shine a Light and Night of Silence.



19th Ashley Gaar and Rebecca Frazier-Smith

will reprise their international holiday music program, including such works as Gesu Bambino, Pie Jesu and the French version of Angels We Have Heard on High.



26th Alto Sherrille Reed will sing a special musical offering.

North Central Caregivers

Christmas Concert

Each year, the FUUCA Adult Choir participates in a special multi-denominational concert benefiting North Central Caregivers of Austin. Featuring the music programs of 16 different area churches, the concert is a rich tapestry of carols, choral anthems, children's choirs, and handbell ringers. The concert closes with all singers joining in a mass choir for a rousing rendition of Handel's "Alleluia Chorus." The concert will be held on Friday December 3rd at St. Louis Church, 7719 Burnet Road. North Central Caregivers of Austin assists area seniors in maintaining independent living by providing transportation to necessary appointments. The freewill offering taken at this concert represents the largest annual fundraiser for the organization. We hope you will be able to attend and help our church as it strives to nourish souls, transform lives, and do justice through music.



Singalong Dec. 18th

This month's Singalong will be held on the third Saturday, Dec. 18th from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. at the Friend's Meeting House on 3701 E. MLK Blvd. Please note that the date is the third Saturday for this month only to avoid having it on Christmas night. Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing, including Christmas songs. 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. If you want to add somebody to the email list, contact Mary Jane Ford at mjaneford@grandecom.net.



Board Talk: The Path to Policy Based Governance

So much is happening at First UU these days. It seems that every week our weekly announcements refer to “another busy Sunday” or “another big weekend” or simply “lots happening.” Your Board of Trustees has been very busy as well.

By the time this newsletter is published, the board will have spent a weekend developing policies that are a very significant step in our transition to Policy Based Governance.

In September Joe Sullivan, our consultant from Unity Consulting, conducted training on Policy Based Governance for church leaders at the quarterly All Council meeting. The board provided an overview of our policy based governance transition, including key milestones such as the board decision in August to adopt a Single Executive Model that gives oversight of most committees to the minister. We had a spirited discussion that followed great questions from those present, such as “Why are we moving to a single executive model?” Will we lose spontaneity and bottom up creativity by building an executive lead model? How will all members of this system (including committee chairs) trust in the governance process and agree to be called back into covenant? One of the hardest questions to answer was “What has been our method of governance up to now?” simply because it seems as if our method of governance in the past has not been clearly defined.

At the conclusion of the meeting Sean Hale, our Executive Director, provided a beautiful analogy that addressed many of the questions. One of the greatest blessings of our church is our wonderful music program that for many years has been home to many talented musicians of all styles, instruments and voices. The beautiful music they create would not be possible without a strong conductor, our Director of Music, Brent Baldwin. Sean compared the work of our various ministries and committees to making music. In this sense, we have been without a strong conductor. Instead, we have at times had a concert hall filled with cacophony. Individuals and small groups each played their own music with little coordination or guidance. Sometimes we have had two or three groups playing simultaneously and just turning up the volume to try to drown the other out in order to be heard (not out of ill will, that's just the way it is).

Even many small groups, without clear conducting, couldn't make beautiful music together.

Now, with our clear mission, values and ends that form the essential foundation of Policy Based Governance, our church community has selected music we can all play together and feel good about. We can work together in harmony to perform a symphony. We can fill the music hall with a beautiful sound because we will know what music we should be playing. We will continue to have many instruments but one orchestra with one conductor playing one symphony.

If this peaks your interest in learning more about Policy Based Governance and deciding whether you are interested in taking a greater leadership role as we continue our transition, please make plans to attend a training on this subject provided by the board on Wednesday, January 19th, in the Gallery, immediately following the January Meet and Eat. The training will begin with a presentation by the Nominating Committee to initiate the annual nominating process for church leadership roles.

*-Susan Thomson,
Member of the Board of Trustees*





News from the Settled Minister Search Committee:

We Have Candidates!



We have received our first list of candidates for settled minister. We can't tell you their names or share any details about them, but we can tell you that they seem excited about our church and come with many different experiences and backgrounds. Ministers will be able to apply for the position through December to the UUA Transitions Office in Boston. The UUA is the central repository for all the ministers' applications but does not filter or screen our list. We are in direct contact with each candidate and are currently immersed in learning all we can about them. We are reading their online Ministerial Records and will decide carefully with whom we will exchange more extensive information. We are thrilled to have finally reached this point in our process!

By early January, we will have narrowed down the list of applicants and will select up to three as pre-candidates. We will invite the candidates to meet with us in Austin for extensive interviews, and we will have the opportunity to see them preach in a neutral pulpit.

We have compiled lots information about First UU for our candidates and would like to share it with you. Stop by our table in the Gallery following services to look through the packet. You'll be proud of the work and wide range of activities our members are undertaking at our church and in the Austin community. As always, we welcome your questions and feed back. Please email us at search@Austinuu.org.

Your Settled Minister Search Committee: *Co-Chairs Michael Kersey and Sharon Moore, Gary Bennett, John Franks, Maria Nehring, Jill Smith, Lynda West, Dale Whiteaker-Lewis, Jill Wiggins*

Holiday Shout Out for the Bookstore

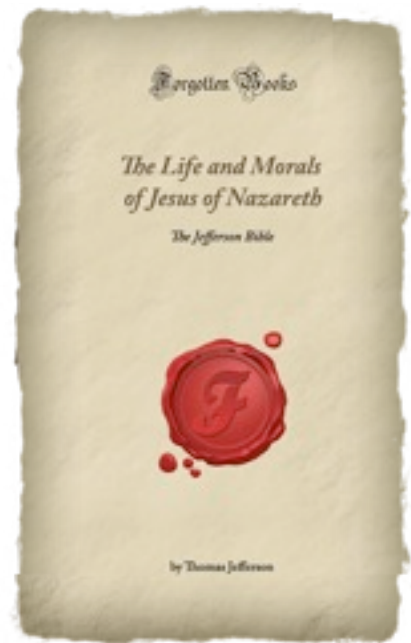
Please visit your Bookstore on Sunday mornings in the Gallery, between services and after the second

service until 1:00 p.m. We have lots of new titles, and you might just find the perfect read for yourself or for others for the holiday season, not to mention nourishing souls, transforming lives, and becoming inspired to do justice!

Nolan Wayne read *The Jefferson Bible, the Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* and wrote that it "was filling...with the feeling of good 'ole leftovers." It "stirred feelings that a Southern man like myself identifies with meatloaf and mashed potatoes. It was warm, familiar, and unpretentious. The Jefferson Bible

revolves around Thomas Jefferson staying up late at night by candle light and dissecting the Bible....literally...(razor in hand) and cutting out the portions ...he thought were the morals of Jesus of Nazareth." Former UUA President Forrest Church wrote the preface to the Jefferson Bible and his master's theses at Harvard on it. Nolan writes that the Jefferson Bible taught him to "be bold in the search for what you believe; take the opinions of others with a grain of salt. Things are not always as they appear, because even/especially belief is not exempt from perception. Love God and love your neighbor. The word deserving is not a prerequisite for the choice to love or forgiveness. Are you feeling a bit hungry yet?"Nolan Wayne

-Melanie Walter-Mahoney, Bookstore



Paradox Players' Expanded Leadership



Ever wonder about the people who provide direction for our resident theater company? During our tenth anniversary last year, we worked many, many hours with organizational consultant Lynn Adams to redesign our structure. The result is an expanded leadership that now includes the talents of a long-time UU, a couple new to the church, and an actress/PR maven outside the church. Our PP Steering Committee welcomes three new members to leadership positions.

Amy Bennett, who used to chair UU Denominational Affairs with husband Gary, has assumed the new position of Front-of-House Supervisor. She has already made her mark by revamping the reservation print-outs that we use at every performance. Her bailiwick includes box office details, attendance patterns, and all other front-of-house concerns. (Kathryn Govier and Veryan Thompson continue to recruit and train all the volunteers who welcome audience members and manage ticket and concession sales at performances.)

Jean and John Boehme joined the church last spring, and immediately offered their considerable theater expertise to PP. John has stage managed our last two plays, while Jean worked backstage and co-produced the last show. The Boehmes' contribution to the company is especially noteworthy because not only are they new to our church, but they live an hour's drive away! As a team they have graciously accepted the new position of Executive Producer, overseeing the production end of getting our shows on stage.

Ashley Edwards is known to everyone who attended Shards of Love (star of 30's and 40's vignettes) and Charlie Cox Runs with Scissors (main role of Nell), as well as many major productions around Austin. As staff at UT's Development Office, Ashley has extensive skill in strategic networking – a critical asset in theater marketing and public relations. We are grateful that she has taken charge of promoting PP to the community – a job that Ashley began last spring.

You can find other members of the PP Leadership, and Director biographies, on the Our Players page of our website, paradoxplayers.org.

We will be honoring our 2010 Season Subscribers, casts, crews, Readers' Theater and leadership at our Annual Party on January 8, 2011. Watch emails for details.

December 13 at 7:30 Readers' Theater will meet to read an assortment of one acts, in room 13. All are welcome, no experience required.



Senior's Luncheon

Tuesday, December 14th
Howson Hall at Noon

Soup, Salad & Dessert \$5
RSVP to Alice Cashman 837-0988

Program: Senior lunch is pleased to have the acclaimed THE NEW AUSTIN POLKA BAND return once more for the December entertainment. We will perform many of your favorite toe tappers. Dancing is encouraged but not mandatory. Tasteful humorous remarks may be interjected between the musical selections for your complete viewing and listening enjoyment. A tour de farce. *Dan Wilson*



Reader's Theatre
Monday, December
In Room 13 at 7: 30 p.m.

We read an assortment of one acts.
All are welcome. No experience
necessary.

Winter Solstice Ritual

Come and join
us to sow the
seeds of the
coming year!
Yew Grove
invites you to
our ritual and



potluck to contemplate the darkness and welcome the light together. Ingathering is at 5:30, the ritual begins at 6 p.m. In Howson Hall on Sunday, Dec. 19. Please bring a covered dish to share. Contact Stephanie at 512-291-3106 or YewGrove@AustinUU.org. We encourage you to bring Men's socks, hats, or gloves, as donations to the homeless our FUUCA Freeze Nights.

The South West UU Conference in Glen Rose Texas was an intense educational experience for me. I participated in the Small Group Ministry / Covenant Groups track. It appears the phrases **Small Group Ministry** and **Covenant Groups** are used interchangeably among UU Churches. However, I did learn about two different types of Covenant Groups that I had not been aware of: **Affinity Groups** and **Chalice Circles**.

Affinity Groups are covenant groups that are based on common areas of interest or affinity or a specific demographic. Some examples of these from our church are: Women's Spirituality Group, The Men's Group, The Women in Transition Group, and The Young Adults Group among others. Affinity groups tend to garner a lot of interest when they first formulate. Affinity Groups can develop a strong group identity and over time often have a core set of members who meet and stay together for many years. Affinity Groups are an important part of a Covenant Group program, but if that is all you have, your program is incomplete.

Chalice Circles follow a simple structured group process that allows you to go deeper in an intimate and safe environment with a group of 6-10 congregants who are diverse in age, gender and areas of interest. Chalice Circles are led by facilitators who are trained and supported by the minister of the church. Chalice Circles break into 2 different groups when the size of a group goes past 10. This ensures that each group provides a consistent level of intimacy, allowing for maximum depth of sharing and listening. Each Chalice Circle session has a set of questions for the group members to focus on for the meeting. How these questions are chosen depends on the church.

The Baton Rouge church in Louisiana has a very robust Chalice Circle Program. Their facilitators attend training and support meetings every month. Their Chalice Circles leaders choose questions from a book of sessions provided to the leaders or from the UU Small Group Ministry Network website, depending on the needs of the group.

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

One of the most striking elements to the Baton Rouge program is how they approach new members in their church. Potential new church members are required to attend a day long workshop, or 3 nights of classes, where among other things, they experience being in a Chalice Circle together. Being able to share and listen deeply is often what people are looking for from their church experience. While Sunday Worship can be inspiring, you can't experience the deep relationships that tend to happen quickly in a Chalice Circle. At the end of their New Member Orientation, members have a choice to join one of the existing Chalice Circles or form their own if a trained facilitator is available.

The leaders of our conference track stressed that starting and supporting a robust Covenant Group program takes substantial time, effort and commitment from a church. They recommended going through a planning and engagement process that can take more than 6 months before a church is ready to launch a program with trained facilitators and a program coordinator. However, **Chalice Circles are one of the best ways to retain members and develop a church culture of deep and respectful listening.**

A first step in supporting Covenant Groups at our church is to redesign our new member orientation process. We don't want to reinvent the wheel, so we will work with what we have and what other churches use, to create a new member orientation that represents our church at it's best. The Adult Religious Education Committee has unanimously agreed to support this effort with sponsorship from board member Eric Hepburn. **The first two meetings for working on New Member Orientation will be at Church on: Saturday, December 11th from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. and Thursday, December 17th from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. in the RE Office.** These meetings are open to anyone interested in working our New Member Orientation process- please RSVP to Lansing at lansing@austinuu.org.

The WACS (Waco, Austin, Corpus, San Antonio) 2010 rally at Live Oak was a great experience for me!

It was my first rally ever, and I think it gave me the right impression. I had no idea how many people would show up. Roughly, I think we had around 85 people. Everyone was so friendly, and everyone introduced themselves. I met so many new people from all the churches.

Being at the rally answered a ton of questions that people tried to answer before, but just didn't make sense. I found out what touch groups were. We were divided into small groups with one supervisor and a leader. We played simple games and learned each others names. Later, activities and games were organized into teams using our groups.

Because the theme of the rally was "Doctoring our Souls" the touch groups were named like areas in a hospital. I was in family practice.

There were several workshops that you could choose to go to. I really liked the photography workshop, because I learned so much in such a short time. We talked about the rule of thirds, and how you can see it being applied in so many pictures.

The rally, in general, was so much fun. We had music playing, and there was a dance. We played silent football, and relaxed the whole time. I am really looking forward to the next rally, because I know I will see familiar people and I will know when to go to bed. *Henry Newton, Member of YRUU*

Spiritual Movie For December

From its opening Talking Heads sequence through its touching look at faith in action, **Lord, Save Us From Your Followers** is a fast-paced, highly engaging documentary that explores the collision of faith and culture in America while opening up this important conversation to all of us. Featuring interviews with the Rev. Rick Warren, Bono, Ann Coulter and Stephen Colbert, among many others, this film is unpredictable, and challenging. **Lord, Save Us From Your Followers** will change the way you talk about faith!



*FREE Movie & Popcorn in Howson Hall

MATINEE: Thursday, December 16th at 1:30 pm

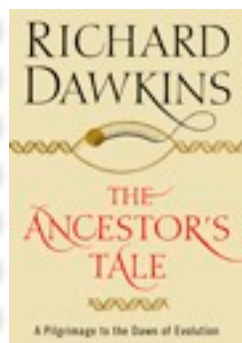
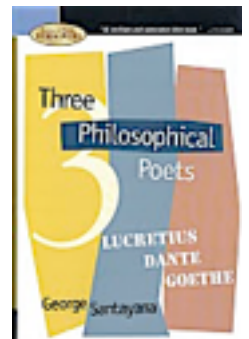
EVENING: Friday, December 17th at 7:00 pm

*Donations of \$5 or what you can contribute are encouraged.

The Sunday Book Group:

In Room 13B at 9:30 a.m. We are reading **Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, Goethe** by George Santayana .

Contact Jim Burson at 794-1086 for more information.



The Mind and Meaning Book Group:

Sundays in Room 13A at 9:30 a.m. We are reading **The Ancestor's Tale: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution** by Richard Dawkins. If interested, please come by Room 13A any Sunday between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. For information contact June Beach at junembeach@aol.com.

The Eckhart Tolle Group is taking a break for the holidays. They will restart in January 20 at 7 p.m.

You are ALL invited to the FUUCA Christmas Pageant and Holiday meal!

The annual Christmas Pageant and Holiday will be held on Wednesday, December 15th at 6:00 pm with the pageant to follow at 7:00 pm. Dinner will be hosted by the Membership and CYPC committees; there is a limit to the number of people we are able to feed, so please RSVP at the RE tables in advance AND bring your favorite Christmas cookies to share. Please know that ALL are invited the pageant.

**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Austin
4700 Grover Avenue
Austin, TX 78756**

**Interim Minister
Rev. Ed Brock ext 304
Executive Director:
Sean Hale ext 308**

Director of Music: Brent Baldwin

Board President: Eric Stimell

Church Phone: (512) 452-6168

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E-Mail: info@AustinUU.org

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Next Newsletter Deadline

15th of the month

Please submit information to

news@austinuu.org

DECEMBER IMPORTANT EVENTS

December 12...Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary at 1:30 p..m.

December 15...Eat and Meet AND Annual Christmas Pageant

December 19...Nominations for Special Offerings for 2011 are due.

December 24...Saturday...Christmas Eve Services and Tea

(5:30 service Tea 7:00 service)

December 31...Keep your eye on the Bulletins....for possible New Year's Eve Party!!!

Happy Holidays to you all