

MARCH NEWSLETTER

News from the Settled Minister Search Committee

Your search committee is just a few weeks away from choosing one candidate to propose as FUUCA's next settled minister. We expect to announce the candidate this month and will provide you with as much information about that individual as possible. You will have a chance to learn more about him or her in preparation for the congregation's vote to call the minister on Sunday, May 22.

In presenting one candidate to the congregation, we are following the ministerial search process sanctioned by the Unitarian Universalist Association. One reason search committees present only one candidate to their congregations is to protect the confidentiality of the ministers. A minister who is known to be in search may unintentionally jeopardize relations with the church he or she is currently serving. Second, having one candidate limits conflict within a congregation and lays the groundwork for a successful settled ministry. If a congregation is asked to choose between two or more candidates, the potential for disagreement and divisiveness increases. Upon calling a new minister, members might compare the called minister to the "one who got away," distracting the congregation from focusing on the work of the church and supporting the settled minister.

We are fortunate to have two excellent candidates whose talents, skills and experience fit the needs and aspirations of our community. They are both strong contenders, which will make our choice difficult. The ministers, too, will be weighing offers from other churches and deciding which community is the best fit for them and where they want to live.

Although highly unlikely, please be aware that something could happen at this stage in the process that would mean that our church will not have a new minister in the pulpit this fall. Our candidates could pick another church or withdraw for some reason; contract negotiations between the candidate and the board may not be resolved satisfactorily; or the congregation may not muster the required two-thirds majority vote* on May 22 to call the minister. These "what ifs" are improbable but have occurred at other churches and everyone should be aware of them. If the congregation does not call a minister in May, the search process will begin again with a new committee.

Your search committee is going full steam ahead with confidence that we WILL call a new minister on May 22! Throughout this yearlong process, each of us has held close the wishes and needs of the congregation in every decision we have made. We have carefully reviewed applications from 30 ministers to be able to present to you the best candidate to help us realize the enormous potential of our First UU Church of Austin community.

As we enter this final phase, we welcome your questions and comments. You can find us at church on Sundays or contact us by email 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



*** Our church bylaws require a two-thirds majority to call a settled minister; however, the UUA discourages ministers from accepting an approval vote of less than 90 percent, and most ministers seek a 95 percent majority.**

We get to do what we do because of you...



ED



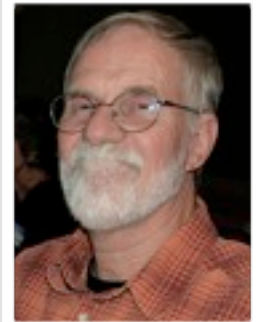
VINCE



CHLOE

We couldn't have **Freeze Night** without Ed and Vince staying overnight with the men. The volunteers who bring the food and prepare it all are applauded. Our youngest volunteer, Chloe, 13 years old, helped with food preparation. She chose Freeze Night as her service work for school. Chloe said, "I am really happy to "have the opportunity to help feed people with out homes because they do not get a meal everyday. It's good to make things better."

"Tom vigilantly ensures that the audio and text versions of each sermons get posted to the website each week. He has worked countless hours converting audiocassettes of older sermons into mp3 format for the web. In the past year, he has also made the sermons available through iTunes. We greatly appreciate his unheralded reliability!" *Andi Windham, Webmaster*



TOM



JOHN



EMILY



MELANIE

John Keohane and Emily Wethington are pitching in at the bookstore. Putting in time and helping with the chores of the store is great for Melanie Walter-Mahoney who has been flying solo for quite some time.

The Joy of Freshly Painted Bathrooms!



Susan B.



Karen



Susan T.



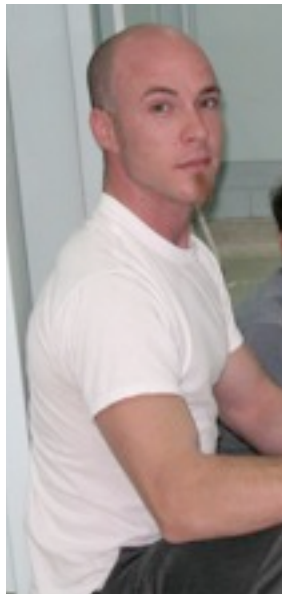
Sharon



Carol

Sean asked if the Women In Transition Covenant Group would take on the job of painting the women's room in the Religious Education wing before our ministerial pre-candidate arrives in early March. The work is scheduled to be completed in early March. Susan Bethke, Karen Franks, Susan Thomson, Carol Ginn and I are, so far, buying in to this project as our service project for 2011. So ladies keep your eyes open for a cheerier bathroom! -*Sharon Moore*

The Men's Room Painting Volunteers...



Lots of guys jumped in to help freshen the men's room with a new coat of paint.



Financial Update

Your church's income and expenses for January to December 2010 both came in at 99% of budget. This balanced outcome, a good one in ordinary times, merits special note as challenging circumstances last year could have pushed expenses

significantly beyond budget.

The 2010 budgeted deficit left the operating fund (analogous to the family checking account) with roughly 1 ½ months of expenses. Last year's budgeted deficit, together with congregation approved deficits from previous years, have left the operating fund at a still manageable size, but less than optimal. It will be difficult to run deficits in the future.

(Please note, a deficit is not a debt and does not necessarily signal a crisis, mismanagement, or cause for alarm. "Deficit" simply means that expenses exceeded income. For example, if you began last year with \$10,000 in the family checking account – which you use for all household income and expenses – and

ended the year with \$9,000, you had a \$1,000 deficit. While it is both unwise and impossible to run a deficit perpetually, one should examine any deficit in context to determine its implications and seriousness.)

Fortunately, the 2011 budget is the first budget in 5 years without a deficit. We owe a great debt (figuratively, not literally) to a strong canvass by your Stewardship Committee and a strong outpouring of financial commitment from many members. Some families have even made pledges that go beyond generous to sacrificial. We feel grateful to all who have contributed generously with their time, treasure, and talent.

First UU church's overall financial picture remains fairly good, as reported at the January Congregational Meeting. The initiation of a Bequest Society, with leadership from Rose Ann Reeser, promises to grow your church's endowment significantly in the years to come, increasing long-term financial stability and health.

To receive a full copy of the Fiscal Year 2010 Financial Report or if you have any questions, please contact Executive Director Sean Hale (sean@austinuu.org).

Southwest District Spring Conference The Way We Do The Things We Do

The spring conference of the SW District is in Oklahoma City this year from April 29th to May 1st. From Friday evening through Sunday morning, an action-packed weekend is in store for you. A special dinner is planned on the Oklahoma River, and the timing of the conference coincides with the Oklahoma Memorial Marathon and the Oklahoma Arts Festival, one of the top art festivals in the country. A Story Swap is planned for Friday evening, right after dinner and worship. Plenty of time is available to enjoy Oklahoma City's wonderful attractions.

The Keynote Speaker is Dan Hotchkiss, a Senior Consultant with the Alban Institute. His recent book *Governance and Ministry - Rethinking Board Leadership*, will be the focus of the conference. Program time will focus around leadership and organizational models. Other leaders from a variety of faith traditions will also be at the workshop since the Alban Institute serves many faith traditions. Because policy governance is so timely for us, for the leadership and future of our church, I think that to this may be a very worthwhile conference for our church at this critical time. If I can answer any questions please contact me at denom@austinuu.org

John Keohane, Chairman of Denominational Affairs



First Unitarian Church of Oklahoma City

Sunday Worship

The time for Sunday Worship is 9:45 and 11:30 a.m.

Rev. Ed Brock will be speaking at the Worship Services in March

Capital Area Food Bank

On Sunday, March 13, our Monthly Special Offering

The Capital Area Food Bank for more than 30 years has served as the nutritional lifeline for tens of thousands of hungry children and others in need in 21 counties of Central Texas. Through 370 partner agencies, the food bank distributes more than 20 million pounds of food and grocery products each year to upwards of 35,000 individuals, 41 percent of them children. Ninety-five percent of the food bank's agency partners say they could no longer serve their clients if the food bank didn't exist. Hunger should be unacceptable in a wealthy society like ours, yet it is commonplace. Some 49 percent of the food bank's recipients are experiencing outright hunger, not merely the threat of hunger. More than one-third of the food bank's older clients report they have gone for extended periods without food. By supporting the food bank, we at First UU have the opportunity to put our social-justice values into action.

Two more opportunities to support the food bank are in the offing. On April 2, a First UU all-ages volunteer group will help sort donated food at the Capital Area Food Bank as part of our congregation's Journey With Food project. Even sooner, on March 5/6, you can contribute to the food bank via the annual Austin CROP Hunger Walk, which earmarks one-sixth of all funds donated to the Capital Area Food Bank. For more information, contact Social Action Co-Chair Eric Hartman, socialaction@austinuu.org or 469-9894.



Sunday Forum

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

March 6: Peter Bay - Austin Symphony Centennial Honoring the Past Embracing the Future.

Founded in 1911, the Austin Symphony Orchestra is Austin's oldest performing arts group.

March 13: Richard Troxell - Looking Up at the Bottom Line. Author and national/local homeless advocate Richard R. Troxell will discuss his new Book: Looking Up at the Bottom Line. He will discuss his thirty year struggle to end homelessness and his vision to end and prevent homelessness in general. Go to www.HouseTheHomeless.org and www.UniversalLivingWage.org to see what is being said about his new book.

March 20: Karen Banks, Food Not Fuel: Issues of Farming and Food Access in Central Texas

Fast growth is affecting the livelihood of the region's foodshed. The cost of living and land fragmentation significantly impact both food production and access. The Central Texas Foodshed Assessment seeks to better understand our community's relationship with food. This project uses a mixture of methods, from surveys of grocery stores to mapping of farmland, to define the food system in Central Texas.

March 27: Dr. Ray Marshall - Sensible Immigration Reform He holds the Audre and Bernard Rapoport Centennial Chair in Economics and Public Affairs at the University of Texas-Austin. He co-chairs the National Center on Education and the Economy, is a trustee and founder of the Economic Policy Institute, and a member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy. His former positions include U.S. Secretary of Labor (1977-81), and member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on Labor Diplomacy (1994-2005). He is the author of "Immigration for Shared Prosperity" (2009).



*Brent Baldwin
Music Director*

MUSIC MATTERS

Spotlight on Music Volunteers: Pianists Wendy Kuo and Kathryn Govier

FUUCA members may recognize **Wendy Kuo** from one of her many volunteer positions around the church. When she is not tending the Visitor's Table or working with the Membership Committee, Wendy may be found sharing



Kathryn and Wendy

her formidable pianistic talents in our worship services. Wendy holds a Masters degree in Piano Performance from the University of Houston, and owns and operates Orpheus Music Academy with her husband Klondike Steadman (also a regular featured musician for Sunday morning services). Many thanks to Wendy for all she adds to our worship.

While Wendy and Kathryn's solo piano contributions would be enough of a treat, they often get together as a piano duo -- literally doubling the musical



enrichment of our worship services:

In addition to serving the Paradox Players board, coordinating the NAMI walk, volunteering in the office, and maintaining a highly active role on the Membership Committee, **Kathryn Govier** may often be heard accompanying the choir, playing congregational hymns and performing musical offerings.

She brings years of professional experience as a worship pianist and organist. Kathryn is an incredible part of our church family, and a terrific gift to our music program.

Danielle Solan Selected to Give Presentation at International Music Conference

Danielle Solan will be taking a week off of her role as FUUCA Primary Children's Choir Director in order to travel to Portland, OR to give a presentation at the 2011 MusicEdventures Conference. MusicEdventures is an international association of music educators who search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. The title of her presentation *Al Tambor de Alegria: Music Mapping*, and she will use the opportunity to explain her classroom practices of using "song maps" to facilitate teaching foreign language songs to children. Danielle was honored to receive a travel grant in order to attend this conference in the role of presenter, and she is excited to share the lessons she has learned teaching music to diverse student populations and communities in the Austin area.





WELCOME TO THE First UU-CAFÉ

Sponsored by the Board at our March Meet and Eat

One of the new Ends created by our congregation has to do with radical hospitality. This is an End that has further captured the interest of many of us after hearing a very inspiring sermon preached by Rev. Peter Morales at a recent UUA General Assembly. More recently our minister, Rev. Brock, preached a wonderful sermon on this topic as well.

The Board is inviting you to attend the March Meet&Eat from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Wednesday, March 16th in Howson Hall for

an in depth conversation about radical hospitality at First UU of Austin. This will be a structured conversation based on a World Café model that is a process for holding conversations about questions that matter.



Please RSVP for the meal by Monday, March 14 to

meeteat@austinuu.org or sign up on the bulletin board on the Gallery wall next to the library or at the Visitors table in the foyer. Childcare is available at childcare@austinuu.org. Then plan on joining the Board at the conclusion of the meal to explore the meaning of radical hospitality at First UU.



Lisa Carrel, Chairperson something.

Silent and Live Auction Benefiting First UU April 16, 2011, 6:00-9:30pm Volunteers and Donations Needed!!

Make plans to attend First UU Church of Austin's live and silent auction on the evening of Saturday, April 16, 2011.

There will be entertainment, food, drink and lots of wonderful items available for purchase. Every church member is requested to attend and to donate

something.
Not sure what you have to donate? In addition to goods like artwork, jewelry or furniture, services like home repair or babysitting or offering your vacation home for a weekend or week are popular auction items. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks. Donation solicitation, selling tickets to the auction, helping set-up and clean up the day of the auction are just a few of the areas where you can help out. Invite friends and show off your church home.

Childcare will be available with planned activities for the children. Contact Lisa Carrell at auction@austinuu.org or call her at 512-698-2831 with donations, questions or offers to volunteer.



Sat March 5 Sunshine Community Gardens Plant Sale

Sun March 6 First Meeting of UU Kids Gardening Club *

Sun March 6 CROP Walk* (pg 9)

Fri March 18 Spiritual Movie Night: "Ingredients" (pg 15)

Sat March 19 Sharing Suppers: Italian Pasta and Salad*

Sun March 20 Service: Welcome to the UU Journey with Food

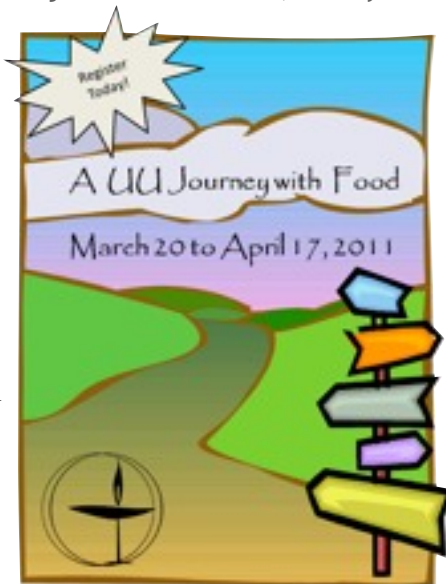
Public Affairs Forum: Food or Fuel

Fieldtrip to Sunshine Garden*

Sat March 26 Share Your Values Dinner* (pg 9)

Sun March 27 Children's Worship Service on the 7th Principle

Tue March 29 Cooking Class: La Cocina Alegre/The Happy Kitchen "Healthy Local Cooking"*



*Registration required.

Please stop by the Journey table in the Gallery after services.

Sat April 2 Trip to Sort Food at the Capital Area Food Bank*

Wed April 6 Field trip to the Farmer's Market at the Triangle*

Sat April 9 Sharing Suppers: Taco and Salad Bar*

Sun April 10 Monthly Special Offering: Sustainable Food Center

Compost Challenge

Fri April 15 Spiritual Movie Night: Babe

Sun April 17 Service: Our UU Journey with Food Ends

Public Affairs Forum: Tecolote Farm

Urban Patchwork Workday*

Wed April 20 Meet N Eat with Local Food and Journey Reflection*

People's Community Clinic Sings the Praise of First UU Volunteers

Excerpts from The Voice Newsletter from People's Community Clinic

People's Community Clinic relies on volunteers to help keep the clinic running on a daily basis. Since 2006, PCC has partnered with the [First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin](#) (First UU), which has adopted the clinic as an ongoing church-wide social action project. First UU has sent volunteers to PCC to help with numerous projects and

The educational materials compiled by the volunteers include teaching materials for parents about child development, nutrition, and safety issues. Everything comes in an English version and a Spanish version, and the materials are tailored to suit the needs of every age level in pediatrics and adolescent health. Starting at 9 years of age, these educational packets are also designed to be gender-specific. In addition to the pediatric educational materials, the Health Education volunteers put together family planning packets, which include condoms and information about contraception in English and Spanish. The First UU volunteers manage all of these materials, which enables staff to devote more time to patient care.

First UU volunteers have made a positive impact throughout the clinic. A First UU volunteer works in Medical Records, ensuring that patient records are correctly organized and available to Clinic providers. A mother-daughter team from First UU works in Immunizations, sending out reminder cards to patients about their appointments. Groups from First UU have volunteered at PCC's annual fundraising luncheon setting up, cleaning up, and counting donations. First UU members have collected in-kind donations for PCC, shopped for PCC's Cooking Classes, and led training sessions for PCC's Reach Out and Read Storytime program. People's Community Clinic is fortunate to have such dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers from the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin. Thank you!

Share Your Values Supper:



How do you express yourself through food? Is it with a certain diet, traditional family dishes, or pleasurable tastes that send you to the moon? Please join your hosts from the FUUCA Young Adults Group and Fellowship Committee on **Saturday March 26, 6pm in Howson Hall** and bring that special dish. You will share it and your values with the eight people at your table. Stop at the Journey table after services to register. We will be serving the food family style. People will need to sign up in advance, as there will necessarily be a limited number in attendance.

There will be childcare available (sign up in advance) and a small charge of \$5.00 per adult to cover the costs of wine and coffee. Also for future calendar reference, the Unitarian Seder will be held the night of April 22 (good Friday). Another dinner activity that children are welcome to attend. More information coming on that next month. Sally Scott, fellowship chair, 453-2289

Our 2011 Monthly Special Offerings!

I would like to thank everyone for their patience and for voting twice (!) for their favorite organizations to receive a Monthly Special Offering in 2011. We received a total of 138 ballots. Our winners are:

American Gateways
Austin Child Guidance Center
Austin Groups for the Elderly
Capitol Area Food Bank
Caritas

North Central Caregivers
People's Community Clinic
Planned Parenthood
Safe Place
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Two months, April and July, were reserved for the upcoming UU Journey with Food and the Summer Children's Social Action Project. As you may remember, we went from splitting our collection plate 24 times in 2009 to passing a second plate 11 times in 2010 (the program started in February after being cancelled entirely). The 2010 program was proposed as an experiment. Given that we will not call our settled minister until later this year, I decided to keep the program as is for 2011, but hope to review it with our new minister after her or his arrival. Please forward to me any concerns or questions you would like considered during this review. Thanks again, Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis, co-chair, Social Action Committee, corinna@austin.rr.com

Austin CROP Hunger Walk, March 5/6:

This year First UU members will join again in the annual interfaith Austin CROP Hunger Walk, slated for Saturday-Sunday, March 5/6. (CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty, affiliated with the ecumenical Church World Service aid agency.) This fundraising event raised \$102,000 last year, including \$1,500-plus raised by more than 50 First UU participants. Three-fourths of the proceeds support international hunger relief, refugee services, disaster aid, and community self-development; one-fourth supports the Capital Area Food Bank and other local assistance providers in the Austin area. For more information, visit the Social Action table in the Gallery on Sundays through March 6, or contact Social Action Co-Chair Eric Hartman at hartoftex@aol.com or 512-469-9894.



Children's Valentine's Party was absolutely delightful this year!



Children of all ages enjoyed making the creative and fun valentines. The party treats were especially healthy and tasty filled with all natural and or vegan ingredients. Special appreciation to wonderful friends that provided the cookies, brownies and cupcakes: Jeannie Martin, Brian Miller, Stephanie Mayoral, Sally Scott, Kitty Traylor and Jacob Williams.

We recognize the coordinating efforts of our own Children and Youth Programming Committee members and especially thank Vicki Almstrum for her tremendous organizational skills. We value all of the parent volunteers, teachers and friends for making such a nice party for our children to enjoy.



Board Meeting Summary for March 2011

Questions the board had regarding the executive director's (ED) report resulted in a lively discussion as the board continues to struggle with clearly understanding its responsibility in terms of policy-based governance. The board reviewed the timeline for governance activities over the coming months. These activities all result from the action plan developed from Peter Steinke's report on our church's needs. The ED reported that both church income and expenses for 2010 came in very close to budget. Pledges were 99.5% of plan and rental income 10% over budget. The 2011 budget is the first balanced budget in 2011, an extraordinary accomplishment in itself, and done while also fully funding the search committee, restoring staff benefits, plus additional significant items.

The minister and ED reported on efforts to hire an interim DRE and to be prepared to hire a "member coordinator" should that position be approved at the May congregational meeting. The ED will talk with his counterparts at the March UUA Large Church Conference to help determine a normative job description for the latter. Timelines for these efforts will allow a new settled minister to participate in both efforts.

The treasurer was unable to attend but will be asked to send an email report to board members on progress toward an internal audit. As part of its education process, the board was presented information

on the characteristics of UU churches by size (family, pastoral, program, campus). We compared our own characteristics to those presented. We also learned of the four types of growth (maturational, incarnational, organic, numerical) and the need to focus on all four. Board members agreed the information would be useful to all members. How we could best provide the information to a wider audience is as yet unknown.

Two board members reported on our Feb 13 Brown Bag where members were asked what differences we would see if we were "witnessing to justice" by "practicing liberal religious values in the public arena." Our next event, at Meet n Eat on Mar 16, will discuss what would result from being a radically hospitable community.

All approved meeting minutes will be available this week in the mailroom and on the web site with attached documents. The board accepted the final subcommittee reports on policies for executive limitations. The board accepted the draft by-laws from the governance task force and authorized the task force to resolve a few minor outstanding issues and edits. The proposed by-laws will be presented at the April pre-congregational meeting for discussion and at the May congregational meeting with a board recommendation for approval.

-Margaret Borden, Board Trustee



What do the Pagans do?

Just as the term “Christian” covers a wide variance of faith practices, from Catholic to Protestant, from liberal to fundamentalist, so too does the term “Pagan” provide an umbrella beneath

which many differing approaches to spirituality are gathered. Any indigenous faith practice worldwide can be considered Pagan, alongside many Reconstructionist traditions, which seek to revive and repair ancient religions and restore them as closely as can be done in the modern world. The more common approach in Pagans who are also UU’s is to draw from whatever pantheon or faith tradition which most fully resonates in the heart of the seeker, and to build from this patchwork a faith practice which best reflects this point in their faith journey.

Atheists have come to Paganism to honor the way that Nature and her seasons reflect the cycles of human life. Women have come to Paganism to honor the Sacred Feminine. Many have come to Paganism when the rituals of the faith of their childhood have lost their meaning or become stale, in order to fulfill the need for ritual in a way which better suits them as an individual, and to explore the freedom of changing that ritual and their spiritual practice as they grow and change over the course of their lives. The deistic Pagans honor Gods of faiths set aside when Christianity came to the fore, the non-deistic Pagans see myths and hero/ine tales as a way to exhort them toward greater acts of courage and integrity within their own lives.

Yew Grove provides opportunities for people of all faiths to attend and (if desired) participate in Pagan practices, to promote acceptance and understanding between people of many faith preferences. Within the First UU and the Austin Pagan community, we help with networking and personal growth. Paganism is an experiential faith, the true core of it is understood ultimately through participation. We welcome everyone to experience how ritual can speak to the heart in a way beyond rote, in a safe and supportive environment without any intent of becoming Pagan from the participant. All our rituals, events, and classes are open to anyone. We welcome your questions!

Senior's Luncheon

Tuesday, March 8th (2nd Tues.)
Howson Hall at Noon

Soup, Salad & Dessert \$5

RSVP to Alice Cashman 837-0988

Program: Peter Roll and Andi Windham, webmasters of austinuu.org, will speak about the exciting new website for the church. The



web has gone through an amazing facelift. Come enjoy and learn! They will answer your questions and listen to your suggestions.



Yew Grove Animal Blessing

Please come to our Animal Blessings Ritual from 2-4 pm on March 19th. This is a cooperative event between Yew Grove Pagan Interfaith, the Live Oak Local Council, and Trinity United Methodist Church. A family fun benefit for Emancipet. Donations are appreciated, or see their wishlist at: <http://www.emancipet.org/involve/wishlist/>. See the Yew Grove webpage at www.austinuu.org/yewgrove for details.





Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women's Conference

It is not too late to register for the 25th annual SWUU Women's Conference to be held in Dallas on March 4 through 6! The Keynote Speaker is Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, OK. From Friday afternoon to Sunday morning, the conference promises to be **a time of wonderful music, dance, workshops, creativity, shopping!, spirituality, fellowship and bonding for women of all ages.** Don't delay! See www.swuuw.org for more information and to register. If you don't have access to a, call the Registrar, Paula, at **214-349-7221 for information.**

“A non-profit organization that supports women through worship, learning, leadership, community and social justice, SWUUW discusses women's issues, explores feminist theology, promotes friendships and celebrates the diversities that make us unique women on our individual spiritual paths. SWUUW is a district-wide organization open to all UU Women's Groups and women in the Southwest

Famous Characters from the Bible and the Qu'ran-Final Session

Samer Ali is Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at University of Texas at Austin. He presented a course on the Koran at First UU previously. He will be relating the series to the Koran in this final session of the course. He has received five Fulbright Awards for his work. He has published articles on medieval Arabo-Islamic literature and culture and his most recent book is Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages.

Come join in for the last session Sunday, March 6th from 7-9pm. Let us take this time to thank Stefan Windsor and Jimmy Stanley for offering this study to the church.



The spring Men's Retreat will be Friday to Sunday, March 25-27th at U Bar U Ranch.

All area UU men and friends are invited to attend this weekend of fellowship, volunteer service work, reflection and relaxation. Now is the time to register to attend this retreat. Details follow: This will be an area wide for UU men and guests (we typically have men from five or more congregations. It begins at 5:30 p.m. friday, March 25th and ends on Sunday March 27th. The retreat will be held as usual at UBarU Retreat and Conference Center (Ranch) in Mountain HOme, Texas (<http://www.ubaru.org>) There will be lots of activities: fellowship, fire circles, poker, stargazing, labyrinth walking, yoga, great food, volunteer opportunities, Sunday worship and healthy r and r. The cost is \$100 and includes lodging, all means and activities (bring your own beverages and snacks).

You are welcome to come even if for one day or one night though the cost is the same. There are plenty of beds but you should bring your own bedding and towel. Some work activities may need some tools but we will announce that closer to the date of the retreat.

Any questions can be answered by Brian Miller, Organizer, John Phelps, CoOrganizer, Rev. Mark Skrabacz, Facilitator or Ken Pfluger, Treasurer. You are welcome to come even if for one day or one night though the cost is the same. There are plenty of beds but you should bring your own bedding and towel. Some work activities may need some tools but we will announce that closer to the date of the retreat. Anyone who has come before has found this to be a great weekend. Join us.



Standing on the Side of Love Sunday!

A different look at love

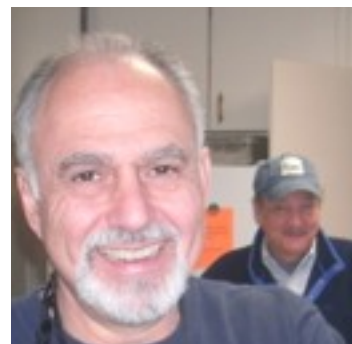
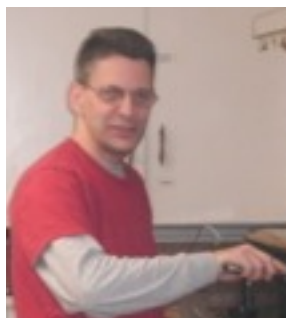
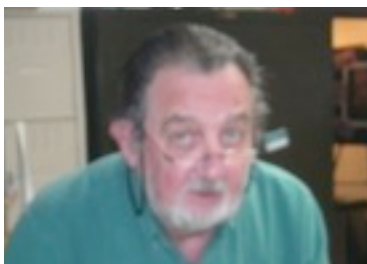
The February 13th service was well received by those in attendance. Peter Langlois, the leader of First UU Interweave invited retired Brigadier General Virgil Richard and Paul Scott, to speak. This was in recognition of the 2nd annual National Standing on the Side of Love project, the days around February 14th where Unitarian Universalists and others reimagine Valentine's Day as a day of love and acceptance for everyone. Virgil Richard spoke of his efforts to repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell after retiring from the military. He gave a personal version of the victories and setbacks that he and others who worked for the cause experienced over the past ten years. Paul Scott is currently the Director of AIDS services of Austin and was for several years the Executive Director of Equality Texas (the LGBT, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender political and advocacy organization of Texas). He told his story of how he grew from being a closeted member of a law firm to being one of the most notable LGBT activists in Texas. He stated at the beginning and ending of his talk that he would, as the words in his mother's kitchen said, not liked to have lived without disturbing anyone.



Who are these guys?
What are they waiting for?

Scrambled Eggs!!

One Saturday morning recently, I wandered into the Kitchen at the church and was met with a few hesitant hellos and "What are you doing here?" I had stumbled into the Men's Breakfast. Eric was scrambling eggs, Henry was fastidiously cutting fruit for the table. Mark was making coffee and Joe was making sure it all was just great. A woman had invaded the men's breakfast. What a treat. Before they sat down to eat I took a few pictures and then was graciously ushered out of the Gallery as the door was shut. I cannot report what goes on at Men's Breakfast but I do know the food smelled scrumptious and they were laughing and chatting away. Join them.....every second Saturday at 8 a.m.. (If you are a guy!) -Linda Taylor, Newsletter Editor



We gather in community
to nourish souls,

Religious Education



Chalice Circle Facilitator Training a hit!

On Saturday, April 12th Mary Jane Ford, Joseph Hunt, Gregg Thomson, Sharon & Brian Moore, Karen & John Franks, Natalie Freeburg, Lynn Adams, Peter Schneider, Richard & Beki Halpin, Carol Ginn, Rob Feeney, Kitty Traylor and Luther Elmore gathered together with Rev. Ed Brock and me to discover what it would take to become a Chalice Circle Facilitator. Rev. Brock explained the dynamic that happens in a congregation when a robust Small Group Ministry Program doesn't exist, and how the need for deeper connection with others is often unmet by typical church committees and programs.

We reviewed the recommendations from the Small Group Ministry Network (SGMN) regarding how best to support a program by:

-Having facilitators and group leaders meet monthly to support each other and get further training and development.

-Following the basic elements of a Chalice Circle session:

- Opening Reading/Chalice lighting
- Quick Check-in
- Session Topic-Contemplate, share & listen
- Check out
- Closing Reading/Extinguish the Chalice

Before lunch, they divided into 3 groups and received their homework: Get to know each other better,- choose the opening and closing readings for the Chalice Circle session on "Love" (it was valentine's day weekend after

all) they were going to have when lunch was over. The questions for their session on "Love" were:

Where would you like to see more love in your life? In our church? In the world?

What has been the biggest celebration of love in your life and why?

There is a saying "Love Conquers All". What example (s) can you share from your personal experience that demonstrates that?

When you look into the future, where do you see the biggest opportunities to express your love?

After meeting for an hour and sharing with each other their thoughts and feelings from the questions on "Love", I can safely say most people were truly surprised at how deep the conversation went in their group. At this point, no one in the training had committed to anything other than attending the day. We needed to address the question- "What's Next?"

To have a room full of 16 UU's divide into 3 groups, commit to meet 3-4 times over the next 2 months, then schedule the meetings, to deepen their relationship with each other on what matters in life- **in less than 10 minutes-** was nothing short of miraculous. I think it's a testament to the bonding that happens when we spend time sharing and listening deeply with each other. We now have 3 active Chalice Circle Groups who each have had their first meeting. We will continue to slowly build our program over the next few months and keep you posted on our progress. If you have any questions or want more information contact Lansing 512 452-6168 ext 312 or lansing@austinguu.org.





Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group meets twice a month on the first and third Saturday mornings, 10:30 a.m.-12 noon in Room 13. The group is for women high school age and older. We are open to new members at all times. For the next few months, we'll be focusing on Goddesses from around the world, as

well as celebrating the Spring Equinox, Beltane, and the Summer Solstice. Our interest in Goddesses has been nurtured by two Unitarian Universalist Women in Religion curricula: *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* and *Rise Up and Call Her Name*. We hope that you'll join us in our circle. For more information contact Linda Webster at women@austinuu.org.



UU's: A Short History

The course will cover the separate and distinct origins of Unitarians and Universalists from their European roots to the formation of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The course will be led by Luther Elmore, history teacher and member of the Adult Religious Education committee at First UU Church of Austin.

The course will be held on three consecutive Sundays from 1:30-3:30pm at First UU Church of Austin on April 3rd, April 10th, and April 17th.

For more information or to RSVP for the class please contact Lansing at lansing@austinuu.org

March Spiritual Movie

For the first time in history, our children's generation is expected to have a shorter lifespan than our own. The quality, taste and nutritional value of the food we eat has dropped sharply over the last fifty years. Shipped from ever-greater distances, we have literally lost sight of where our food comes from and in the process we've lost a vital connection to our local community and to our health. A feature-length documentary, INGREDIENTS illustrates how people around the country are working to revitalize that connection. Narrated by Bebe Neuwirth, the film takes us across the U.S. from the diversified farms of the Hudson River and Willamette Valleys to the urban food deserts of Harlem and to the kitchens of celebrated chefs Alice Waters, Peter Hoffman and Greg Higgins. INGREDIENTS is a journey that reveals the people behind the movement to bring good food back to the table and health back to our communities. **"Thank you for this tremendous film. You tackle some of the most critical issues we face. INGREDIENTS could not have come at a better time."** - Sam Kass, chef to Barack and Michele Obama

"Local food is the most interesting trend of our time—towards the real, away from the fake; towards work, away from convenience. Towards satisfaction, away from gratification. This film captures the intrigue." -Bill McKibben, author of Deep Economy



*FREE Movie & Popcorn in Howson Hall

MATINEE: Friday, March 18th at 1:30 pm &

EVENING: Friday, March 18th at 7:00 pm

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

Call 512 452 6168 ext 312 more information.

First Unitarian Universalist

Church of Austin

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Executive Director:

Sean Hale ext 308

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Next Newsletter Deadline

15th of the month

Please submit information to

news@austinuu.org



Bits and Pieces of News



First UU Church of Austin Young Adults Group (FUUCAYA) is a fellowship group for people in their 20s and 30s; guests and new members are always welcome. Meetings are on the first Weds and third Thurs of each month. In March, our meetings are: **Weds, March 2nd, 6:30 - 8:30pm:** Meet at Dart Bowl (<http://www.dartbowl.com/>). Bring some cash and your A-game! Led by Adam. **Thurs, March 17th 6:30 - 8:30pm:** We will be cooking dinner together at the First UU kitchen. Led by Dana.

For more information about the group, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FuucYaa/> or talk to the Young Adults coordinator, Tierney Lorenz.

Readers' Theater Monday evening, March 14, at 7:30 in Room 13. No preparation needed, newcomers welcome.

Singalong This month's Singalong will be held on the fourth Saturday, March. 26th, 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. 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. If you want to add somebody to the email list, contact Mary Jane Ford at mjaneford@grandecom.net.