



Spotlight On... The Connection Fair

Join us Sunday, September 13, at 10:30 for our annual "Connections" membership fair!

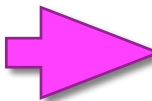
A word of warning: it's going to be crowded, loud, and almost as "UU" as theological disagreement over coffee. Where's the heart of our church? Is it in the pulpit, where a single voice has 20 minutes to find some message to resonate with all of us? In some churches, it might be the altar—but we'd never agree on what to put on the altar, where to put it, what shape it is, or even whether it belongs inside or fills a vital purpose. For a group that builds its commonality on a free and communal search for meaning, the center of the church has to be where people can find a space to talk, to find their communion in conversation.



At orientations and at the Visitor's Table, one thing we consistently try to tell people (besides where the coffee is, and where the restrooms are, in that order) is that, to really belong in this church, you must find some sort of group, study, class, committee—some circle that you can get to know on a small scale, to make the big picture more inviting. Many long-time UUs cut me off mid-sentence, they've already heard it, they already know it. The web of small circles that make the Big Conversation is a core part of our denomination. It's the *indaba* that lets a large community share wisdom and common purpose when congregational size prevents a church-wide conversation.



So again, join us at the Connection Fair—brave the crowds! 60 or more church groups will be there—you might not know all of them. September is the spring of the church year, when we plant the seeds that blossom through the winter and the summer. Is this the year that you plant yourself? We'll see you on the 13th! For more information, contact Jacob at jvw@io.com.



Inside this Issue... Janet's Column pg 4, Worship and Public Forum pg 5 Another Party!! pg 6, Music Matters! pg 8 Hogwarts Memories pg. 9 and much more!

How To Get Involved...

Meet n' Eat x 2!

Big News! Starting in September 'Meet n' Eat' will occur twice monthly on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. The Fellowship committee has now joined with Membership and will be hosting Meet n' Eat so we can have this quality event twice a month.

Meet n' Eat is a great opportunity to come and relax with family and friends and enjoy a healthy seasonal meal together. You can also enjoy interesting programs with a variety of in-house and guest speakers on a host of subjects. It's a great place to make new friends and socialize with folks. Simply working in the kitchen together and breaking bread with our friends in the community is how we create some of our best memories at church. Through these experiences we strengthen our bonds, live our day-to-day values and discover our fellowship. We really hope to see you there.



The dates in September are the 2nd and 16th at 6 p.m. in Howson Hall. The price is \$5 an adult or \$12 a family. Childcare is available free. RSVP to childcare@austinuu.org. As with all of our church events, Meet n' Eat relies primarily on volunteers to help. You are guaranteed good conversation and good company and your efforts will be most greatly appreciated. To volunteer for a Meet n' Eat please contact Cyndi Stein at cyndi@austinuu.org or 560-2839.

First UU "Gearing Up" for the annual NAMI Austin Walks for the



Mind of America.

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness. On the morning of Oct. 10, 2009 we will be meeting at Auditorium Shores at 9:00 and the walk begins at 10:00. The route is up Congress Ave. and back, about 5K. First UU, Wildflower and Live Oak will be joined together to make up the UU-Uniques super team. We hope to get a lot of supporters and walkers.

During the Sunday mornings in September Donna Pauler and Kathryn Govier, co-chairs, will be in the Gallery with more information and to sign up participants for the Walk.

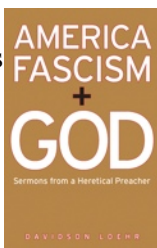
Participants are encouraged to let friends know why they are involved and to encourage donations to go toward the Austin and Central Texas goal of raising \$125,000.00 this year. Those who don't want to walk but would like to donate are also welcome. Donations in any amount are most appreciated.

New Bookstore Chair

Please welcome Melanie Walter-Mahoney, new bookstore chair. Stop by and say hello and thank you to her after most Sunday services. You can purchase books at a discount and order DVDs and CDs of Sunday services or forums.

While you are there, please browse through our selections under the following headings: Unitarian Universalism, World Religions, Christianity, Inspiration & Meditation, Children/Youth/Family, Recommended Reading, Social Justice & Contemporary Issues, Music, and By Members and Friends.

While browsing, purchase a copy of Davidson's book, *American, Fascism + God*, (\$10 signed, \$5 unsigned, discounts for multiple purchases). Give a copy to friends and relatives who did not have a chance to hear Davidson's powerful preaching first hand.



Flowers for Services

It is so nice to have flowers for our Sunday morning services. The way this happens is that members and friends of the church sign up on a calendar in the hall across from the office.

You may make an arrangement or have one made or bring a lovely plant. It is entirely up to you. There are gaps in our calendar; a way to remember, to celebrate, to connect your special event or person with the whole community



Please choose a date and sign up soon!

Questions? contact Barbara at <btdenny3@gmail.com>



September Opening Final Play of 2009 Season

On Golden Pond opens September 18 with a stunning cast directed by Chris Jimmerson. Four of the cast will be familiar to Paradox Players audiences – Kathleen Lawson (*Avow, Bus Stop, Oldest Profession, Last of the Red Hot Lovers*), Don Owen (*Trying, Rainmaker, Avow, Our Town, Bus Stop*), Annalee Langtham (*Rainmaker, Bus Stop*), and Peter Blackwell (Nov. 2008 Cabaret and *Wrong Turn at Lungfish*). We welcome two actors new to our stage – Benjamin Weaver and teenager Cody Moffitt. Together these actors bring to life the comic and touching family story that was an instant success on Broadway, and still resonates today. This sharply tender look at enduring love through stages of life and across the generations will appeal to all ages. This is a play you can bring the kids to!



- Tickets are on sale in the Gallery on Sundays, on the web (paradoxplayers.org) and by phone (744-1495).
- Performances run on weekends through October 4, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 and Sundays at 3:00.
- Free childcare is available for the matinee Sept 20, if reserved by Sept 13 (childcare@austinuu.org, or (452-6168, ext 313).

Seniors' Luncheon



Tuesday, September 8th
Howson Hall at Noon
Soup, Salad & Dessert \$5
RSVP to Alice Cashman 837-0988

Program: A scene from Paradox Player's *On Golden Pond*, a comic play which opens Sept. 18.th This scene will feature veterans from past shows, Kathleen Lawson (*Avow, Bus Stop, The Oldest Profession, Last of the Red Hot Lovers, Love Letters*) and Don Owen (*Trying, The Rainmaker, Avow, Our Town, Bus Stop*). Kathleen plays the role of Ethel; Don is her husband Norman. Director Chris Jimmerson will join us for Q and A.

Readers' Theater Resumes



Monday evening, September 14, we resume our monthly gatherings at 7:30. We welcome all who enjoy the fun of reading scripts aloud, no experience or advance preparation needed! Simply arrive eager to read whatever role appeals to you - roles to be described at the meeting. Usually we read a selection of one-act plays, and occasionally a full-length script. Unless posted otherwise, we will meet in room 13.





In the Interim

In this, my first newsletter column to you as your Interim Minister of 2009-2010, I want to tell you how glad I am that we will be together in ministry at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin this year. I'm sure it will be a fruitful time. My theme for now is: From Mo-town to Austin City Limits! Since I just moved here from serving a congregation in the Detroit suburbs, it makes for an easy-fitting theme, don't you think?

Here are several seemingly minor details to talk with you about as we begin together – but they can make a real difference in helping us understand one another.

First of all, I want to thank all of you who gave me such warm hospitality during my visit with you in June. It was gratifying to see so many of you at the meetings and gatherings during those evenings and to hear your thoughts and questions. And thanks also to you who gave me home hospitality, meals, and kind words!

Second, I will be keeping regular office hours in room 7, historically the minister's study. I imagine I'll be there between 9 and 5, with time away for meetings and visiting in hospitals and homes. So if you would like to meet with me, it is always a good idea to call me at the office and make an appointment so that we can have some uninterrupted time with each other. Or, if you wish to invite me to call on you at home, I would be glad to schedule a time to do so. There are many ways for us to get acquainted, and the time will go by all too fast!

Third, Friday is my Sabbath day, and I don't schedule myself for appointments then. If you have a true emergency, though, I am available any day. Please call the staff in the office, and they will contact me.

Fourth, The Board will soon approve the existence of the Interim Transition Team, a working group of congregants who will be the in-house resource persons on the concept and practice of Interim Ministry during this period of transition. I'll have more information about the Team soon, so watch for their names and contact info. Maybe we can get them special name-tags.

And, last, speaking of name-tags, blessings on you who wear them at congregational events! It helps me enormously when I can see your name at the same time as I hear it and look at your face. Remember the first time you were a newcomer in a room full of Unitarian Universalists who all seemed to know each other? All those faces, unfamiliar to you, and few name-tags? 'Nuff said! Best wishes,

*Janet E. Newman,
Accredited Interim Minister, now serving you at First UU in Austin*

BRIDGEBUILDER ACTION PLAN READY FOR ACTION!

The Bridgebuilder action plan is now posted on the church web site. It is a result of efforts begun under the guidance of Dr. Peter Steinke, a Lutheran pastor from Austin and national consultant to congregations. His program, "Bridgebuilder," helps congregations move toward clarity, focus on resources, and create a clear future to carry out their ministry and mission.

This action plan was first drafted on April 4 by a 15-member action planning team (members listed on attachment A to plan) guided by Dr. Peter Steinke and based on the findings in his report. It was revised based on input from people who attended six focus groups in April and May. The plan was reviewed, again guided by Dr. Steinke, on June 6 by the board of trustees and the action planning team together, in order to assign responsibilities and target dates for completion. After rearranging action items by target date and adding a time line, adjustments were made in target dates to align with a two-year interim ministry.

If you cannot access the church web site to read or print the action plan or if you have questions or comments about it, contact Margaret Borden at m.borden@sbcglobal.net or 458.4502.



Sunday Worship



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

September 6: "Ministry – A Field for Life-Long Learners" Rev. Dr. Janet E. Newman and Ron Phares:

It's Labor Day weekend – why not divide the labor? Ron Phares, an energetic congregant whose sermons you have enjoyed as he pursues his education as a UU minister, and I, whose ministerial career is longer than I care to admit, will share the pulpit. We will also share our thoughts on this calling that holds us each in its thrall.

September 13: "Hospitality as Radical Practice" by Rev. Dr. Janet E. Newman: How do we practice hospitality? A book titled *Radical Hospitality* inspires me to talk with you about the meaning and implications of what it means to be hospitable. Also, a brief ceremony of installation of the interim ministry will help us make our relationship "official."

September 20: "We Are the Promises We Make – and Keep" by Rev. Dr. Janet E. Newman: This is the day following the first of the High Holydays observed by our Jewish neighbors. Judaism is founded on promises offered and kept, promises known generically as "covenant." This sermon will explore how we UU's live in covenant with one another -- whether we know it or not!

September 27: "Transition, Transformation, and the Ministry at the Heart of Thacker Mountain Radio"

Ms. Eunice Benton has been the District Executive in Mid-South District since 1997. She and the district office live in Oxford, Mississippi, from which she serves the Mid-South congregations in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, middle Tennessee, and the panhandle of Florida. In the early nineties Eunice completed a graduate program in studies of the South, with a focus on religion, oral history, and women's work. Eunice enjoys living and working in the South and thrives off of its native foods (boiled peanuts, butter beans and fresh tomatoes in the summer!), but she also relishes occasional trips to see her son – who now lives and works in Paris, France. The Mid-South District Executive work, which she embarked on after the graduate work, has been a challenge but a real joy!

Sunday Forum

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



September 6: Rene Lara, TX AFL-CIO Legislative Director

"Solidarity Renewed: Labor's Changing Demographics and Emerging Priorities"

Our summer break ends and we begin again with a speaker and topic appropriate for this Labor Day weekend. Rene Lara, the legislative/political director of the Texas AFL-CIO, will share his perspective on the changing demographics of the labor movement and the impact of its growing diversity on labor's agenda. Lara, a graduate of the schools of public affairs and law at the University of Texas, served as a legislative aide to former state Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos and as a legislative spokesman for the Texas and Minnesota branches of the American Federation of Teachers. He traces his union roots to a grandfather who organized and led two labor unions in Mexico.

September 13: No Forum...Connection Fair

September 20: Dr. Robert Jensen, UT School of Journalism

"All My Bones Shake: Seeking a Progressive Path to the Prophetic Voice"

Is religion of any use in the struggle to deal with the multiple crises -- economic and ecological, political and cultural -- that we humans face today? Can progressive Christianity help deepen our commitment to the radical action needed to make a decent human future possible? Can the text and traditions of a conventional denomination be a source of insight and strength? After years of assuming the answer to those questions was no, Jensen decided to join a progressive congregation in Austin. In this talk he will explain why.

September 27: Brian Rodgers, Founder of ChangeAustin.org.

"The Cost of Growth and the Unfair Burden on Austin's Middle-Income Citizens"

You may know that Brian Rodgers founded "Stop Domain Subsidies," a local grassroots group that opposed the City of Austin giving \$65 million dollars of tax subsidies to the developers of the Domain Mall. But did you know that Brian is also a leader in the ChangeAustin.org movement where he's motivating thousands of Austin voters and local businesses to become more involved in city hall? Brian's most recent project is the release of an independent report titled "The Unfair Burden." This study showed how everyday/middle-income Austinites that are owners of residential properties are carrying the "unfair burden" of property taxes. Join us for this timely and relevant presentation.



Sean Hale, Executive Director

Thanks to Sean and Nell for giving up their space this month so that we can incorporate all the articles and events in this month's newsletter.



Nell Newton, Board President

Come Celebrate with us!

A Celebration in Honor of Us – Who we are, Where we came from, Where we are, Where we are going.

The time is right. The start of a new church year, the beginning of Janet Newman's interim ministry, and the new era in financial support of our church all inspire the Celebration.

First of all, we extend a special invitation to those heroes whose generosity, inspiration and effort across the past half-century have brought us to where we are today. Next we include those leaders and heroes of today who through their generosity, inspiration and roll-up-your-sleeves hard work guide us now. And finally those of us who care deeply about the life and future of this church through our generosity, time, and energy, stand ready to link hands with the other leaders and heroes of our heritage.

We are still in the process of planning and more details will follow. Sunday evening September 20, 5:30 p.m. in Howson Hall and Gallery. Child care will be provided. Food and drink will be included. The event will be limited to 100.

Split the Plate Sundays

On the first and third Sundays each month we split the non-pledge offertory plate with a nonprofit organization, chosen by the congregation, that reflects our common values.



On September 6, Assistance League of Austin, located just around the corner from our church at 4901 Burnet Road. They help to outfit needy children with school clothes. It costs about \$80 to clothe a child with a school wardrobe of two pairs of jeans, five shirts, six pairs of underwear and socks, a coat, a shoe voucher, and a grooming kit. The children served are brought to the Assistance League by counselors, support specialists, or their parents.



On September 20, Open Door Preschool, the only not-for-profit preschool in Central Texas whose mission is to provide an outstanding pre-kindergarten experience for children with special needs AND children from low-income families--alongside typically developing children and children from across the income spectrum. Open Door teaches tolerance and a love of diversity from children's earliest years. Open Door currently has 130 Austin-area students in classes with a low student-teacher ratio and enriched educational environment. It offers tuition subsidies for low-income families.

Denominational Affairs

Get connected through email lists. One such list is First UU Talk. Go directly to www.austinuu.org and click on mailing lists, discussion First UU. Get Involved. There are also UUA lists available that can perhaps connect you to new friends and unknown family. That's what happened to me. One of the posters on a UUA list was a Kaye McSpadden in West Lafayette, IN. McSpadden is a family name. I sent Kaye an email. Turned out that her husband is my sister-in-law's first cousin. Who knows, you might find family after joining some UUA list.

There are three upcoming conferences you may be interested in attending:

- Fall Leadership Conference for our SW District, November 13-15, Glen Rose, TX
- Spring Annual Meeting for our SW District, April 23-25, Plano, TX
- General Assembly, national meeting, Minneapolis, June 23-27, Minneapolis, MN

John Keohane, Chairman of Denominational Affairs. keohane@prodigy.net (512) 371-3853

Social Action Success!



During the past two years the Social Action Committee has been involved in protesting the T. Don Hutto Family Detention Center in Taylor, Texas. Individuals and the group have protested outside the facility with many other concerned Texans. We have sponsored Forums, signed petitions and held workshops. In early August the Obama administration announced changes in regard to some policies involving detention of

immigrants. No new family centers will be opened and the current detainees at Hutto will be transferred immediately to less restrictive alternatives.

A lot of questions remain. The Hutto facility may become an immigration jail for women and certain concerns may continue. However, for now we can celebrate the fact that families with young children will no longer be jailed in our backyard or anywhere in the US. And surely the efforts of many concerned citizens, including UUs influenced the decision to close down "America's Family Prison."

Caritas: What we do and What we need.

Each Sunday when the children come to the front to hear the story, they pick up nonperishable food items from the congregants and put them in a basket. What happens to this food? It is delivered to Caritas once a month. This is an easy way for us to help our community. Bring something to church for the children to gather and for us to give. Another way to participate is to pick up and deliver the food. Currently we need help with the first and fifth weeks of each month. Caritas is located at 611 Neches St. Contact Joan Forbes if you are interested at JoanGForbes@Grandecom.net



About Caritas

Vision: Caritas envisions a community where there is respect for all individuals, hope for those who are experiencing poverty and opportunities for self-reliance.

Mission: Caritas provides a service continuum for those experiencing poverty that begins with a safety net and links them to resources to achieve self-sufficiency.

New Leaders for ARCH...

Thanks



Karen & Mary!

Welcome



Betty & JH!

Karen Franks and Mary Ann Copp are pleased to announce that BETTY WOODS and J.H. WEBBER will be the new ARCH coordinators for First UU's First Sunday Supper volunteers starting in September.

Karen and I have really enjoyed serving as coordinators since September, 2006. We would like to thank all of the volunteers for their generous participation in service to the larger community. This service project was also a fun way to meet more UUs. In addition, it was the kind of project that had every volunteer saying how much they enjoyed it...really, every one.

SERVING SUPPER TO THE HOMELESS AT ARCH

Many thanks to our First UU volunteers for August: **Melanie Garnett, Wendy Kuo, Kristy Quigley, Sudie Vassef and Karen Franks.** On the first Sunday of each month, typically four UUs serve dinner, cafeteria-style, from 5:30-8:00 p.m. to 100 homeless men at ARCH (Austin Resource Center for the Homeless) in downtown Austin (500 E. 7th St.).

We are now scheduling volunteers for the fall months, Sept. 6, Oct. 4, and Nov. 1. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please contact co-ordinators: Betty Wood, 345-4637 or <johnwood@austin.rr.com> J. H. Webber, 459-9774 or <jh_webber@sbcglobal.net>



Brent Baldwin
Music Director

MUSIC MATTERS

AUSTIN CHAMBER MUSIC CENTER: ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

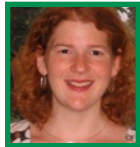
The FUUCA Music Program is VERY excited to announce a partnership with the Austin Chamber Music Center. Their entire 2009-2010 season will occur at First UU, with discounted tickets available to our church members. They will also lend their world-class musical talents to our services.

In addition to the APMC partnership, our Fall services will see the likes of award-winning musicians 1001 Nights Orchestra, Bob Livingston, and more...



CHILDREN'S CHOIR CORNER

Children's Choir rehearsals start on September 13th (10:40-11:25 a.m.) in the RE wing for grades K-3 (Primary Choir) and 4-7 (Secondary Choir). Our excellent directors



Danielle Solan

and
Kelan Latimer



ADULT CHOIR TO BEGIN FALL REHEARSALS

The FUUCA Adult Choir begins rehearsals for the fall on Wednesday, September 2nd at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The Choir sings on average 2-3 services per month, and features a wide variety of music. Open to ages 15 and up. No audition required. Not sure you want to commit? Come check out a rehearsal with no commitment to stay. For more info, email Director Brent Baldwin at brent@austinuu.org.

provide top-notch instruction – and a lot of fun! There is a nominal fee, and scholarships are available. If you're not sure, just come try out a class for free! For more info, see Children's Choir Coordinator Chris Heidel in the gallery on Sundays, or email her at chris@chrisandtoby.com

average 2-3 services per month, and features a wide variety of music. Open to ages 15 and up. No audition required. Not sure you want to commit? Come check out a rehearsal with no commitment to stay. For more info, email Director Brent Baldwin at brent@austinuu.org.

September Movie Night - Double Feature!

Rumi & Michael Bernard Beckwith Friday, September 18th at 7:00PM



Rumi: Poet of the Heart:

This documentary brings to life a man and his poetry that have been gone from this earth for over 800 years. Known for his deeply spiritual love poems, Jelaluddin Rumi was a Sufi mystic with many devoted followers when an unlikely and mysterious muse named Shams came into his life. When Shams disappeared, the grieving Rumi gave life to beautiful poetry that still lives on today. Narrated by Debra Winger with interviews with Coleman Barks, Robert Bly, Deepak Chopra.

Spiritual Liberation:

Experience a day in the life of Michael Bernard Beckwith, the founder/director of Agape International Spiritual Center and featured luminary in The Secret, and witness how he lives his own teachings. Beckwith shares inspired solutions to the challenges of our times while awakening us to our life's purpose.



Magical Correspondence from Hogwarts

During the last week of July, Camp UU Hogwarts was in full swing throughout "our" church building. Prospective students arrived at Camp UU Hogwarts on Monday morning by way of King's Cross Station (located at the back of the church's playground area). Each camper entered the building through the "solid" wall of Platform 9 3/4 (thanks to Alamo Drafthouse So. Lamar, from whom we received this wonderful prop via a posting on freecycle). The young witches and wizards first tried their hands at games such as Quiddich, Wizard Chess, and Wizard Dueling. They then enjoyed a dose of Magical Musicology, with Danielle Solan (the muggle director of the primary choir for the past two years). Then students visited Diagon Alley, where they were outfitted in cloaks and hats, decorated their wands, and created wizard money. The various sports and the Musical Musicology continued for the week.



Platform 9 3/4



Rousing Game of Quiddich

Tuesday morning, all the campers were sorted into their Houses. A key focus for camp was highlighting the positive characteristics for all four Houses. (Slytherin has suffered from a bad reputation in recent years!) We adorned the Great Hall (known to muggles as Howson Hall) with floating helium balloons in the House colors.

Every morning Professors led classes for groups of students. With titles such as Potions, Herbology, and Care of Magical Creatures, the children learned new skills and completed a variety of fun activities. Each afternoon, the campers learned about charitable organizations (ARCH, Operation School Bell, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Greyhound Pets of America) and participated in service activities (making sack lunches for the homeless, cleaning equipment at the School for the Blind, preparing hygiene packs and shirts for Operation School Bell, and creating beautiful knotted fleece blankets for animals cared for at EmancipETs and Animal Trustees of Austin). Each afternoon ended with fun muggle activities: watching movies, Brentwood Pool, Dart Bowl, Bob Bullock Museum, and a water day outdoors at the church.

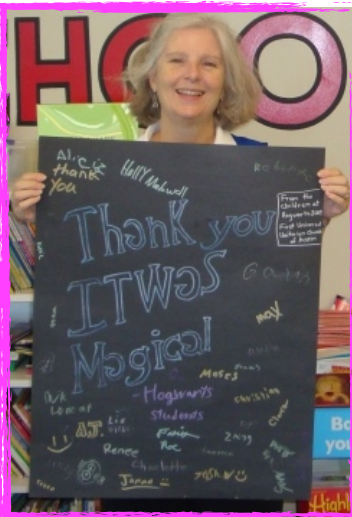


Prof Michelle Gray Herbologist



Evie Snackin'

First UU's resident story teller, George Denny, entertained with story telling on Thursday. On Friday, family and friends joined the campers for lunch inspired by the Harry Potter theme. During the Great Feast, the campers performed songs for the honored audience. The same musical selections, performed by several of the campers, prefects, professors, and volunteers, were featured as the anthem during the church services on August 2nd. July 27-31, 2009, will go down in First UU's magical history books as another amazing week for Camp UU!!





Fall Open House

The First UU Religious Education Department would like to welcome everyone to our Fall Open House on Sunday September 6th. Come and meet our teachers, staff and familiarize yourselves with the classrooms and Religious Education Wing. All of the fall curricula will be available for your review. We will also have some snacks and treats for all to enjoy. This is a great opportunity to make friends, meet other parents and get a preview of what's to come in the fall. The official semester starts the following week on September 13th. To see our curricula in detail visit our website at www.austinuu.org and click on the Religious Education link.

Open Call for Volunteers in Religious Education

In the last newsletter RE extended a very special thanks to all of the folks who volunteered over the summer. Now that fall is here and class size typically increases we need volunteers more than ever. Our First UU Church of Austin's Child Safety Policy mandates that our teachers have a volunteer in the classroom EVERY Sunday for each class they teach. That's a total of seven volunteers per Sunday. We believe this creates a safer and more enriching environment for our children. It enables an adult to be with the children at all times even if one child has to leave the classroom. It is also a great way to connect with our kids and community and really give something back. Being a volunteer in the classroom can be as passive or active as you desire. On a basic level we need another adult in the classroom. If you wish to get more involved our teachers are always happy to include you at whatever level you are comfortable with. And, rest assured, if class size is very low and classes get combined we will always have a task on hand for a volunteer to do!



So PLEASE, we currently have all Sundays open and we really need your help NOW. In addition to Sundays we also have some exciting fall events that we would love your help with. The Halloween Carnival and Christmas Pageant depend on volunteers to make it all happen.

We use an on-line system called Volunteer Spot to sign-up and coordinate our volunteers. To sign-up today, contact Cyndi Stein, Children's Programming Assistant, at cyndi@austinuu.org or 560-2839 and she will send you an e-mail invite to the system or simply take your name and sign you up.

Do your children suffer from...

Nature Deficit Disorder?

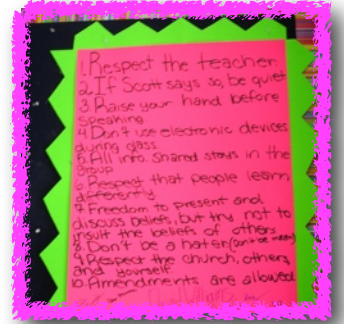
When was the last time you and your kids were lulled to sleep by the trickle of a nearby river, or woke to the sound of birds in the trees above you? If it has been too long — or if you've never had that experience — come join other church members who participate in Camp Fire USA clubs. Camp Fire USA is formally affiliated with First UU because we share the same inclusive ethic, concern for the environment, and quest to learn and experience nature. Clubs are for kids from 3 to 18 years of age and meet once a week for about an hour to learn life skills, environmentalism, citizenship, and respect for each other and our planet. We also go hiking and camping several times a year. If you don't have camping equipment or experience, not to worry! Camp Fire can provide tents and other equipment, and camping with a Camp Fire club will give you the chance to learn about low impact camping from more experienced families.

The First UU Camp Fire club is holding an information session during our regular meeting time: Saturday, Sept. 5th at 10 a.m. in rooms 11 and 17. Come find out what we're all about and make connections with other outdoor minded families here at First UU! For more information, contact Andrew Young at andrew@austinuu-campfire.org or check out our website: <http://www.austinuu-campfire.org/>. If possible, please RSVP so that we have a rough count of how many people are coming.

Middle School Covenant pulls us into the Fall

The middle school class has a new covenant and I am quite excited with how it turned out. Feel free to stop by to take a look (it's in our classroom in room 13) or look at the accompanying photo. It's on hot pink as one of the boys in the class told me, "Hot pink is the new black."

I wanted the students to create their own new covenant for a few reasons, the most important of which was that I could continue as their new teacher with the knowledge that, in good Unitarian Universalist style, they had developed their own rules and principles to follow. I did a minimal amount of suggesting of rules and was tickled, well, pink, with how good some of their suggestions were. Then as a class we went through the suggested rules, nixed a few that were redundant or unneeded, and put it on a poster where students sign it. We also recorded it on a video program. Other classes also have their own covenants, they



saw excerpts of the language of covenants from the high school group and one from a lower grade and they incorporated some of that language into the final product.

Doing this covenant, as well as with prior lessons/exercises where they self-identified their learning styles and their weakness and strengths, has helped them realize that while they may be the students, they can and should also play a role in how their classes are taught and run. For example, they confirmed something I suspected: they do not like learning the way most of us were taught; namely everyone listens while a teacher or guest speaks. They were/are more interested in discussions where they can play a more significant role. It is in that latter type of learning that, some said, they are at their best. Armed with that information, knowledge and this covenant we can proceed, better armed to tackle other topics.



At the Open House for all classes including the middle school and high school classes will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday Sept. 6 in the RE Wing. Please attend. We will start the new curriculum, Neighboring Faiths, on September 13th.

YRUU: Young Religious UUs

The YRUU covenant is not readily noticeable as you walk in to Room 17. As you walk around the room "reading" the walls you will see two other covenants of groups from times past. However, if you sit in one of the comfortable couches and gaze overhead, you will see the Covenant of 2009....



Advisors Needed The YRUU have not been meeting as actively during the summer but that does not mean they have been inactive. There has been planning taking place at recent meetings for upcoming lock-ins in late August and September and the regional rally on Oct. 23-25. Incidentally, they are looking for new advisers as well as adult volunteers to help with that rally - adults who could serve as drivers as well as people who can stay the whole time at First UU Church San Antonio.

YRUU Social Action

Summer is a time when Social Action takes the stage. It has been an issue for YRUU this summer. The youth sold at least 50 wrist bands at the July 19 service to raise awareness of the problems in Darfur. The money raised went directly to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.



Upcoming Children's Religious Education Events

September 6
September 13
September 27
October 17
October 24
December 16

RE Open House
RE Fall Semester Start
CPC Meeting
Jewish New Year
Halloween Carnival
Christmas Pageant

**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Austin
4700 Grover Avenue
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*One Church. Many Beliefs.***

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Rev. Janet Newman
Executive Director:
Sean Hale ext 308**

**Director of Religious Education:
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***Next Newsletter Deadline
15th of the month***
