



A Beacon on the Hill

Volume 72 Issue No. 9

Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder, Minister

September, 2016

Josh's Journal

September's Theme: Authenticity

Last June, shortly after school let out and summer was just beginning, my sons and I went for a little field trip. It was local – to a park a few miles away. But this just wasn't any old park. This park had hiking trails. Despite being on the edge of a large city, it did not take long before we found ourselves in the middle of nature with not a soul to be seen or heard. To them it was some crazy adventure Dad dragged them along to. An interruption of their newly found free time that they would rather spend playing video games or on the computer. "Screen time" rules are loosened a bit during summer in contrast to the school year. But I wanted to get unplugged.

I have nothing against technology (OK I have a little against technology...) for the most part. It is very helpful in many aspects of life including church and ministry. But too often I feel like it overwhelms my life and interactions with people. There is so much to see out there in the world, why put an electronic touch screen between yourself and the world if you don't have to? So we went out into this park, unplugged from the world, to just experience life-as-it-is in a Transcendentalist sort of way. At least that was what I hoped.

It wasn't a perfect afternoon. There were sunburns. There were bug bites. But we also came across some litter that people had left on the trail. Obviously they had eaten some fast food by a creek and simply left their Styrofoam and plastic to lay there in the grass. I asked the boys what they thought we should do. Matthew suggesting picking it up and throwing it in the garbage bins in the parking lot by our car. And so we did – doing but our small part.

As we were carrying the garbage of strangers back to our car, it struck me how potent our religious education and church community truly are. Authenticity, our theme for September, is about taking action and living out the values we profess to be the most important to us. But we first have to know our values before we can live them out. I don't think my kids would have been able to connect the dots on their own between valuing the earth and picking up litter. I wouldn't have had time to teach them either. It was their classes, and maybe our participation in Basura Bash last winter, that drove it home. They certainly didn't get it from their iPad! As the church year kicks off into full gear let us remember that our kids learn what they see and experience. Let us cultivate an authentic expression of our liberal faith this month, and every day if possible. May You Be Blessed

Always, *Rev. Josh*

Ministerial Matters



Rev. Josh's office hours are Monday – Thursday, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.

The church office hours are Sunday - Thursday, 8:30 am – 2:30 pm.

NEW TO FIRST UU?

Please visit our website to learn about the church, how you can meet others and get involved:

<http://uusat.org/our-church-2/new-to-first-uu/>

President's Column

"August has passed, and yet summer continues by force to grow days. They sprout secretly between the chapters of the year, covertly included between its pages." — Jonathan Safran Foer, *Tree of Codes*

I like that quote. I wasn't previously familiar with it, but it really catches how September feels for me in Texas. Come on, Summer; let it go! Now let me look back for a moment to last spring.

As you may recall, new state legislation permitting the open carry of handguns by licensed individuals prompted church members to ask the board to consider what the church's policy would be regarding this. While it did not take the board very long to agree that we believe the church campus should be a gun-free zone, we also wanted your feedback. An online survey was posted in March asking whether we should allow either the open carry or concealed carry of handguns on our campus, followed soon afterward by a town hall meeting to discuss the topic in person. We had very good participation in the survey and the meeting, with vigorous but respectful presentations of different views at the meeting. It was clear from your responses that the overwhelming opinion of those who responded was in support of our proposed resolution to declare the church a gun-free zone. The text of the resolution may be found on our website, but I reprint it here as well:

Gun Free Campus

Believing that guns on church property are inconsistent with an atmosphere of peace and spiritual growth, it is the decision of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio to declare itself a gun free campus. Approved by the Board of Trustees on April 20, 2016.

So what's next? When are we going to start seeing those "No guns" signs around campus? Well, that is in the works. Rev. Josh is working with the relevant committees to design and place the signs and to devise procedures to handle any incidents that may arise.

The board greatly appreciates everyone's interest in and feedback on this issue. Take care of yourselves this summer.

Jim Noel, President

Stewardship Corner

First UU San Antonio carries out its mission and vision through a variety of committees, including the Worship, Religious Education, Membership, Social Action, Green Team, and Member Care Committees. One particular committee, however, makes the work of all of these other committees possible.

As stated in our by-laws, the Stewardship Committee has the authority to plan for and conduct the annual stewardship campaign in consultation with the Board of Trustees. The Stewardship Campaign is a time we set aside each year to ask **all** members to renew their financial commitment to the church. About 92% of First UU's programming and operating funds come from pledges. Members' annual pledges make it possible for the church to plan responsibly and transform First UU's vision and mission into reality.

Over 10% of our member households did not respond to last year's Stewardship Campaign, but it is not too late to pledge. Our success as a church depends on the willingness of **all** members to share their time, talents, and treasure. Fostering a Culture of Stewardship is a priority for our church this year. If this is a ministry that might interest you, please contact Polly Noël at stewardship@uusat.org.

Denominational Connections: News from UUA

There is a film airing Tuesday, September 20th that you will not want to miss! The PBS documentary is *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War*, and is a UU Action Project. The Congregational Action Guide states that "the film tells how Waitstill and Martha Sharp, a Unitarian minister and spouse, helped people escape Nazi-occupied Europe at great personal sacrifice. Together, UU's can honor the Sharps' legacy by defying hatred, fear and discrimination today and take action for freedom, justice and solidarity". Tell your family and friends and invite others to watch with you. The Congregational Action Guide can be found on UUA.ORG and has suggestions for discussion. Beacon Press will release the book *Defying the Nazis* in September.



The Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) chosen by UU delegates at General Assembly 2016 is *The Corruption of Our Democracy*. Congregations are to delve deeply into the issue for 4 years of study, reflection and action, culminating in a Statement of Conscience (SOC). Previous topics have included *Immigration As A Moral Issue*, *Reproductive Justice*, and *Escalating Inequality* (2014-2018). UUA publishes a study guide and a draft SOC for each CSAI, so when available, we will can make plans accordingly.

"The Common Read" for UU congregations is The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics and the Rise of a New Justice Movement by Rev. William J. Barber II and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. Paperback released in early October, and a book discussion date to be announced in the near future.

Membership Round Up!

Word of Mouth

When I ask people how they found out about our church – many say, "so and so who I work with (or am in this or that group with) told me about the church, and I'm here to check it out." Yep, good old word of mouth brings in probably a quarter or more of our visitors! So, spread the word! You know who the people are who might like our church – don't be afraid to mention us! INVITE – it's part of mission and we need everybody to do it!

How Do I Become a Member?

Been visiting for a few. . . years? Singing in the choir? Bringing your children to Religious Education – going to Adult Religious Education yourself? Doing Circle Dinners? In the Young Adults group? For goodness sake, consider becoming a MEMBER! Lots of UU's say they aren't "joiners" -if you are doing any of the above – you've joined! So, let's do the paperwork and make it official!

First UU 101

For people new to the church, the next First UU 101 session is September 11th, after the service in the Fellowship Hall. Grab some food at the FUUnd Lunch and join us! These sessions last about an hour and just gives you a bit more info about the church and tries to answer any questions you might have about us, and how YOU might fit in with us!

Join Us!

Dorothy Wallace, Membership Coordinator, membership@uusat.org

Emerson Bookshop *Plus*

Fair trade Palestinian olive oil, organic chocolate bars and chips, coffee and tea, UU and popular shirts, jewelry and BOOKS are at our bookshop. Most UU pendants, earrings, and lapel pins on hand are now reduced to \$5.

The almost 500 titles in stock include the following.

- For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all, Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education*
- Between the World and Me / Coates*
- Gather at the Table : The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade*
- Third Reconstruction : Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement*
- How Jesus Became God : The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee / Ehrman*
- Every Time I Find the Meaning of Life, They Change It: Wisdom of the Great Philosophers on How to Live*
- God That Could Be Real : Spirituality, Science, and the Future of Our Planet*
- Broken Hallelujah : Rock and Roll, Redemption and the Life of Leonard Cohen*
- Reason for Flowers : Their History, Culture, Biology, and How They Change Our Lives*
- Tying the Knot : A Gender-Neutral Guide to Handfasting or Weddings for Pagans and Goddess Worshipers / Jade River*
- When God Was a Woman / Stone*
- What's Right with Islam - A New Vision for Muslims and the West / Abdul Rauf*
- Rise of the Robots : Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future*
- Detained and Deported : Stories of Immigrant Families Under Fire / Regan*
- People's History of the United States / Howard Zinn*
- Felicity : Poems / Mary Oliver*
- Happiness Hypothesis : Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*
- Cabin Fever*
- My Princess Boy (children's book)*
- Alone Together : Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*
- Nature Principle: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age*
- New Jim Crow : Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
- Spiral Dance / Starhawk*
- Uh-Oh / Robert Fulghum*
- When God Was a Woman / Stone*
- Evidence of the Afterlife : The Science of Near-Death Experiences / Long*
- Hamlet's BlackBerry : Building a Good Life in the Digital Age / Powers*
- Letter Q : Queer Writers' Notes to Their Younger Selves / Moon*
- Living Nonviolent Communication : Practical Tools to Connect and Communicate Skillfully in Every Situation / Rosenberg*
- On Your Mark, Get Set, Grow! : A "What's Happening to My Body?" Book for Younger Boys / Madaras*
- People's History of Christianity : The Other Side of the Story / Bass*
- Queer History of the United States / Bronski*
- Shore Lines : Life Lessons from the Sea / Lynn*
- What's Happening to My Body? Body for Girls / Madaras*
- When Women Were Birds : Fifty-four Variations on Voice / Williams*
- Broken Buddha / Meg Barnhouse*
- Nibbles' Garden : Another Green Tale (children's)*
- Wabi Sabi Love : The Ancient Art of Finding Perfect Love in Imperfect Relationships*
- How to Be Compassionate: A Handbook for Creating Inner Peace and a Happier World / The Dalai Lama*



Our September Share-the-Plate Partner

R.A.I.C.E.S.



Please consider supporting the children and women of the Karnes and Dilley family detention centers by contributing to the RAICES Family Detention Defense Fund. The purpose of this fund is to help meet the needs of families who are either still detained in the centers, or who were released and are in need of ongoing support.

This fund helps provide monetary support for transitional services such as transportation, housing, assistance with securing legal counsel and other needs as they arise. Will you help us provide a donation to help these women and children who have fled unimaginable violence and suffering in the hope of finding safety and a new life in our country? Please contribute to the Share the Plate collection on September 18. Thank you!

RAICES Family Detention Defense Fund: www.raicestexas.org/pages/fund

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION TO COMMEMORATE THE 1966 STARR COUNTY FARM WORKER STRIKE AND MARCH



On June 1, 1966, 50 years ago, Starr County farm workers led a strike against La Casita Farms because they were paid 40 cents an hour to harvest cantaloupes. It was time to take a stand to end the poverty. At the end of the melon season, they started a 400-mile march that came through San Antonio and then went on to the State Capitol, arriving on Labor Day.

This Labor Day, First UU joins with other organizations to commemorate this historic event and to tie the fight for fair wages 50 years ago to the current fight for a living wage. Join us on Monday, September 5 for the 10 a.m. Mass at [San Fernando Cathedral](#) and then on the march to [Milam Park](#) for a rally and a short program.

Schedule for Monday, Labor Day, Sept. 5, 2016:

9:30am - Gather for the 10am mass at San Fernando Cathedral

11am - March from Cathedral to Milam Park

Noon - Program at the Kiosk, Milam Park

For information about this event in Texas please go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/156701581408725/>

“Get Out the Vote” Grant

We are pleased to announce the First UU Social Action Committee received a grant of \$424.25 from the Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility Fund to initiate a “Get Out the Vote” project in San Antonio. The League of Women Voters of the San Antonio Area has agreed to co-sponsor our efforts. Our primary efforts will start the middle of September thru the 23rd of October when we expect people to get more excited about voting. Early voting and candidate information should be available then. If you are one of those people who walk your neighborhood anyhow, and would like to distribute handouts in your area, please contact us. We are currently planning on several “Get Out the Vote” parties. Possible plans are for youth to do a “walk your block” initiative near the church. There are a couple of other “Get Out the Vote” parties in the tentative stages of development. Arlis Olson will do a champagne brunch at 9:30 on September 24th. What we need is a commitment from church members to attend and help us walk these neighborhoods. We will keep the walking to under an hour. If you would be willing to walk, depending on dates, please let us know so we can be sure to keep you informed. If you can’t walk, but would like to help, we can always use someone to assist getting the food organized. Currently we are not talking to people, only leaving information at the door. We will be distributing early voting times and places. We will have Voter Registration Cards and League of Women Voters Guides available for distribution on request as well as candidate information printed by the SA Express News. To get involved contact socialaction@uusat.org or UUvoter@uusat.org

Member Care Committee

If you are willing and able to provide transportation to church on Sunday mornings to a young man who lives near Perrin Beitel & Wurzbach Pkwy, please contact member care at membcare@uusat.org.

The Member Care Committee is looking to grow. There are so many wonderful ways we can be of service to one another. We have some great ideas, but to realize our vision, we need more active volunteers. Would you be willing and able to: offer a ride from time to time? Send cards of encouragement and celebration? Bring a meal to a member in need? Would you be willing to help set up and host a baby shower or memorial? One of the most compelling and connecting aspects of this loving community is how we care for one another. If you would like to be an active part of that, and maybe even have some service ideas, please reach out to Jeanne Morey or Rowena Rogers at membcare@uusat.org. We generally meet the first Wed of the month on Committee Night.

Dedicate a Hymnal

Did you know you can buy and dedicate a hymnal to someone you care about? It's a great way to support our church and its music. You can buy our traditional hardback hymnal for \$32 or the teal paperback hymnal for \$18, and we'll attach a notification inside the cover with your name and the name of the person(s) you are honoring.

On September 25, we'll have a table set up on the patio before and after the service to provide more information and the forms to fill out for a purchase. Some of our hymnals are getting a bit worn, and we could use a number of new ones. Please lend a hand!

Adult Religious Education Ongoing Classes

- **Religious Explorations** Mark Ackerman Fellowship Hall Sun 9:30 am Fellowship Hall
Since mid April Adult Religious Explorations has been listening to a lecture series titled "Emerson, Thoreau, and the Transcendentalists" by Professor Ashton Nichols of Dickinson College.
- **Spiritual Seekers** Jeff Addington Darwin Sun 9:30 a variety of spiritual topics/concerns discussed in a respectful & caring environment
- **World Faiths Book Club** Christine Chesnut Beatrix Potter Sun 9:30 am
September – Miriam Thompson, *And The Winner Is...The coming religious peace* <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/03/and-the-winner-is/306654/>
September – TBA, Seven Principles of UUism
<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/i-dont-believe-seven-principles> <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/who-says-uu-principles-easy>
September/October – Mary Ringer – “A Short History of Myth,” Karen Armstrong
- **Western Religious Traditions** Terry Goddard Conference Room, Sun 9:30 September - 9:30-10:30 am
Class participants will discuss the three major Western Religious Traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – “The People of the Book.” Much of the information we will look at will come from a BBC religion website - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/> - and Stephen Prothero’s interesting book “God is Not One.” It is not necessary to purchase the book; however.
- **UU Parenting Group** Sophia Fahs Sun 9:30 am
This discussion group is open to all parents or guardians. The group will discuss issues surrounding parenting challenges and the UU faith.
- **UU Young Adults** Megan Janzen Beatrix Potter or Fellowship Hall 4th Sundays 12:30 noon
Ages 18-35 meet for food and fellowship
- **UU Philosophy** Bruce Beck Fellowship Hall 2nd/4th Sun 7:15 pm "Big History: The Genesis Story of Science"

Youth Religious Education News

Children’s Choir and Circle Singers begin Sept. 4, 9 am

Children’s choir, for grades k-5, meets in the sanctuary classroom. Circle Singers, grades 6 and up, meets in the sanctuary. Both groups meet every Sunday throughout the school year and are led by musical professionals with a talent for working with children. Both choirs perform occasionally in the 11 am worship service.

Parent Discussion Group begins Sept. 4 (9:30-10:30 am)

After signing your children into their classes, come to the Sophia Fahs room to share joys and concerns of being a UU parent. The group will determine its subject matter in early meetings.



Campus work day, Saturday, Sept. 10, 10-12

Let's get our playground in shape for the new church-school year! We will

- Pull weeds around the large play structure
- Spread new sand under the climbing dome
- Clean climbing structures
- Do whatever else we see that needs doing.

Kids can help!

At noon, we'll have lunch together.

Contact Sheri, 210-344-2431 with dietary or child care needs, preferably by Sept. 3.

September 16, 6 pm: Family Circle Dinner/parent meeting:

Come mingle with other families and share ideas for making our religious education program the best it can be. We will share a potluck meal from 6-7 pm, and then there will be children's activities while parents/guardians brainstorm with reverend Josh. Fellowship Hall.

UBarU Bee-Sustainable Weekend

At UBarU Camp & Retreat Center in the beautiful Texas Hill Country

Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2016

* Explore the possibilities in sustainable living and help us celebrate the dedication of our UBarU bee yard
Fina's Flowerzzz Apiary

* Meet our bees up close and in person.

* Enjoy several presentations regarding the ongoing sustainability efforts happening at UBarU including water catchment and our solar arrays.

* Learn about the importance of the dark sky to health and wellbeing.

Enjoy gazing at the stars during the new-moon at Texas' newest Dark Sky Park.

Engage in children's nature/sustainability education activities.

Become a honey connoisseur while tasting a variety of local honey. Mead tasting (for ages 21+)

Enjoy an early-Autumn campfire with s'mores!

Adults \$140; children 4-11, \$50; youth 12-19, \$75 before Sept. 15 - includes accommodations, meals Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast, and all programming.

For more information and to register, visit <http://www.ubaru.org>

Coming in September

For other activities, see the church [calendar](#).

UBARU STAR PARTY – LABOR DAY WEEKEND – SEPTEMBER 2-5 2016

UBarU will host a star party over Labor Day weekend. This will be the first such comprehensive event ever held at an IDA-certified Dark-Sky park in Texas. For more information and to register, visit UBarU.org.

CAMPUS CLEAN UP DAY – *Sat, Sept 10, 10am-12pm, Playground & RE Rooms* - Volunteers are needed for only two hours to do some cleaning and maintenance of our playground and education areas with lunch provided afterwards.

ADULT CIRCLE DINNERS – *Sat, Sept 10, 6:00pm, Off Campus* – Meet others for food and fellowship in small dinner party settings. Contact circledinners@uusat.org to participate.

FUUND LUNCH – *Sun, Sept 11, 12:00pm, Fellowship Hall* - Sponsored by the Rainbow Inclusion Committee to benefit the Thrive Youth Center for homeless LGBTQ youth living at Haven for Hope. Enjoy food and fellowship while raising funds for a worthy cause. Contact Carol Collins if you plan to bring food. Go to www.thriveyouthcenter.com has more information about the Thrive Center.at Haven for Hope.

FIRST UU 101 – *Sun, Sept 11, 12:15pm, Jefferson Bldg* - The Membership Committee presents our newcomer orientation class, perfect for anyone new to the church and considering membership. Grab some food from the FUUnd Lunch and head down.

FAMILY DINNER/PARENT MEETING – *Sat, Sept 16, 6:00pm, Fellowship Hall* - All families with children in the Religious Education program are invited to a potluck dinner hosted by the Minister and the Religious Education Director. After dinner there will be activities for the kids while the parents attend a brainstorming session. This is your chance to ask questions and give input about your child's Religious Education program.

MABON RITUAL – *Sat, Sept 17, 7:00pm, Jefferson Bldg* - Celestial Celebrations Circle invites to our Mabon Ritual to celebrate the Autumnal Equinox. We will seek to find balance on this night of equality A potluck supper will follow the ritual. Please bring a dish to share and a lawn chair (if possible).
Joan Wells 210 377-2942 celestial@uusat.org.

RAINBOW INCLUSION PLANNING SOCIAL – *Sat, Sept 17, 7:00pm, Fellowship Hall*
Rainbow Inclusion and Interweave invite LGBTQ and allies to consider ideas for the year ahead and enjoy a social/game night, We'll be in the Fellowship Hall.

HYMNAL SALE – *Sun, Sept 25, Patio, Before & After Service* - Did you know you can buy and dedicate a hymnal to someone you care about? It's a great way to support our church and its music. You can buy our traditional hardback hymnal for \$32 or the teal paperback hymnal for \$18 and we'll attach a notification inside the cover with your name and the name of the person(s) you are honoring.

BOOK BUDDIES - *Sunday, September 25, Patio, Before & After Service* – Representatives from the San Antonio Youth Literacy program (one of our Share the Plate recipients) will be on campus to sign up volunteers for their Book Buddies program.

SAVE THE DATE

Deep in the Heart: Women's Retreat at UbarU

October 14-16

Early registration \$125 / \$140 after Oct 1. One-day registration available. To register, visit UbarU.org.

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Sermon Podcasts:
<http://uusat.org/worship/sermons/>

Facebook: First Unitarian
Universalist Church of
San Antonio

Twitter: @FirstUUChurchSA

Services for September

11:00 am – In the Sanctuary

Religious Education for All Ages at 9:30 am– Various Locations

September 4: “Waiting for the Butterfly” – Rev. Josh

One of the most difficult thing for us to practice is patience. Yet we are not entirely in charge of everything that happens in our lives. While we should strive toward our vision, we must also not hurry or rush and miss what is right in front of us.

September 11: “A Clear Summer’s Day” – Rev. Josh

Fifteen years ago America changed forever. At the time we knew that was true, and yet it was impossible to know how exactly it would change. This year the anniversary falls on a Sunday. Let us reflect together on how these terrible events have shaped our lives and our nation.

Sept 18: “Sacred Democracy” – Rev. Nell Newton

Our affirmation of democracy is more than a shared value -- it's rooted in our histories and theologies. In the middle of a particularly spectacular political display, let's take time to reflect on what the democratic process becomes when all voices are heard. Rev. Nell Newton serves as a community minister through her work with an environmental non-profit. She graduated from Meadville Lombard Theological School and was ordained by the San Marcos UU Fellowship in 2015.

September 25: “To Thine Own Self Be True” – Rev. Josh

In many ways this simple statement from Shakespeare gets at the very heart of authenticity. So much so that for many years I thought Emerson penned that line, and not the Bard! Unitarian Universalism relies not so much on scripture, even less on tradition. However authentic personal experience is a huge source of our faith, and our Transcendentalist ancestors are a big part of that legacy.

A Beacon on the Hill

Monthly Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio

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