

Inspire



The quarterly newsletter of
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
Spring 2020



Inspire

newsletter@uusat.org

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Editor

Mary Wright

Contributors

Diane Carl

Terri Chadwick

Carol Collins

Jennifer Courtwright

Diane Duesterhoeft

John Faultersack

Cathy Marston

Arlis Olson

Terry Palin

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker

Donna Pereira

Sheri Phillabaum

David Rodriguez

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

Dorothy Wallace

Sylvia Wheeler

Mary Wright

Inspire is a publication of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio. We welcome submissions of original articles, short stories, or poetry that encompass a UU theme. All submissions become the property of First UU. Publication of submissions is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of the editor. Send submissions to newsletter@uusat.org.

Cover photo

First UU member, Gina Del Castillo, braved the slick roads to visit our campus and take this beautiful picture of our snow covered courtyard. To view more pictures, visit

https://mcusercontent.com/bd8aa527a6adf066819e082e2/files/1d1cdf2d-0cea-4f73-a066-fff26b1c0880/snow_pictures.pdf

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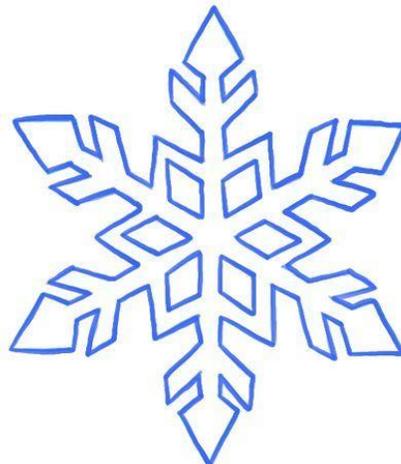
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We Are Connected

by Rev. Mark Skrabacz

Our Unitarian Universalist living tradition supports and encourages exploration, flexibility and adaptive change. The fact that one of our beliefs is that revelation is not sealed and is continuous, helps fuel our imagination about the possibilities of life, especially in our current world-wide and exceedingly difficult situation.

John Lennon's iconic song *Imagine* begins with the words:

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people living for today

Imagine the picture he creates. Will you take a moment and picture a world without heaven and hell? What does it look like? What does it feel like? Envision it in your mind and stay with it a moment...living for today. Maybe this isn't a real challenge for most of us who have been imagining no heaven or hell for some time. But what if instead we imagined a whole world connected?

Did you know that the word religion comes from the Latin root *ligare* meaning to bind or connect? Think *ligament*, the connective tissue from the same root word. The Latin *religio*, means to re-connect. That's one reason that I like to consider us at First UU Church as a religious community. A whole world connected begins with smaller groups of people who are connected.

At our best, our First UU San Antonio community is not merely an activist organization. We are not a social club. We are a religious community in the greatest sense of the word—a connected community. And a connected community knows something about bonding together. It knows something about what to do when our world has been turned completely upside down. And this kind of community that we call “Beloved” shows us how to take our heartaches and transform them into a sacred passion for connection and change. We need to be able to transform our struggles, uncertainty and fear into a fearless passion—an enthusiasm for living. One mistake we often make is trying to lead only from our strengths rather than from our vulnerabilities.

And though we often try to connect to others by showing off our accomplishments and strengths, it's actually the stuff behind these attributes that more deeply connects us with one another—our doubts, hard work and pain—and the courage it takes to share these openly. We're all bonded at this deep level of our common human experience of uncertainty and vulnerability. It's all right—together as people in touch with our wounds, we can build Beloved Community, bear our challenges in love and with courage, and get through the Pandemic and temporary distancing from each other. As your Minister, I'll keep encouraging us and reminding us that we are stronger together. Please keep in touch and let me hear from you.

Respectfully and gratefully,

Rev. Mark

Trust Fund for Endowments

By Arlis Olson

Thanks to the following people for contributions to the Trust Fund since the last newsletter article:

November - Brian Asher & Carlos Gonzales, Pat Ellis, Bill & Katy Evans, Gale Morrow & Dexter Katzman, Nancy Taylor Shivers

December - Diane Duesterhoeft & Mike Phillips, Bill & Katy Evans, Heather Hedquist, Mary Potter, Gary & Marianne Ross

January – Bill & Katy Evans, Peter & Marguerite Myers

We received a total of \$845 this quarter. The preponderance of the donations were a birthday gift. Our program encourages you to donate a dollar for each year of your birth. These small donations really do make a difference. We also received donations in memory of Dick Searles, Bryan Lyttle, and a family member of Arlis Olson and Louis Viggiano. These donations are appreciated by the church as well as the family of the departed.

Everyone's priority for the next quarter should be on the operating budget of the church and your pledge to support it; however, if you can afford an additional small donation to this Trust Fund, it is always appreciated.

Greetings from the Membership Committee

By David Rodriguez

We have a new effort sponsored by our team to put together short biographies of our members to be published in the Friday Connections email that Rev. Mark Skrabacz sends out every Friday. Once we get your responses, we will publish several in each Friday Connections Email. So please answer any of the questions below that speak to you:

- Where were you born? Where are you from?
- How did you learn about Unitarian Universalism?
- How long have you been a member of First UU San Antonio?
- What prompted you to join our church?
- What classes, committees or other activities have you participated in at church?
- What do you like the most about First UU San Antonio?
- What have you done to cope with the current quarantine situation we are in?
- What are your interests and hobbies? What do you like to do in San Antonio?
- What do you miss doing since we have been in quarantine?
- I am the one you see on during the Sunday morning service who _____
- Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Send your responses by email to David.Rodriguez@yahoo.com. We hope to start publishing your responses in March. We look forward to learning more about each other!

Are You on a Path of Faith Formation?

By Sheri Phillabaum

Path of Faith Formation at First UU San Antonio



The *Path of Faith Formation* (<https://uusat.org/path-to-faith-formation/>) at First UU San Antonio offers participants a path towards deepening their Unitarian Universalist identity, knowledge, spirituality, and leadership potential. Since its introduction in fall of 2019, nearly 150 people have taken one or more *Path of Faith Formation* classes. One class this year was opened up to participants beyond our home church and the response was amazing. See the full article on “Spirit in Practice” elsewhere in this issue.

While all classes at First UU San Antonio contribute to faith formation. *Path...* classes are specifically designed to take a person from the First UU 101 class through a process of expanding their knowledge base, articulating their faith stance, and possibly assuming leadership in the church and the denomination.

The next *Path of Faith Formation* class will be **The Five Smooth Stones of Religious Liberalism** with Rev. Mark Skrabacz. Rev. Mark will lead us in a discovery of the meaning and practice of these guiding principles that support us in being human religiously. This class will be offered twice - April 12 and April 15, 7-8:30 pm Contact Sheri, dlre@uusat.org, for Zoom link

Snowpocalypse 2021

By Mary Wright

The evening of Valentine’s Day 2021 brought record setting cold temperatures and snowfall throughout Texas. What started as a winter miracle soon turned into tragedy as millions of people lost power for days on end and dealt with no power and frozen pipes. People had to get creative to survive both physically and mentally during this challenging time.



Steven Feinstein and family had no power for most of Monday. It came on (and off, and on) over the course of the late afternoon, and it was back fully on Tuesday. They had a water line break on Wednesday so were without running water until they were lucky enough to get a plumber on Saturday. Steven called 20 plumbers and got on a few lists until, finally one called them back. When the lights were on, they passed the time doing a jigsaw puzzle. They cooked dinner in the fireplace...chicken wrapped in banana leaves and some rice.



Carol Collins and Elke Walten enjoyed the beautiful icicles hanging from their home.



Terri Chadwick hung old paint tarps over her backdoor to help keep the cold out. Terri's daughter Tess Bobo and grandchildren, Ben and Syd, took showers and did laundry at Terri's house, as Tess had no water.

A funny incident reported by Terri: "When Tess and I were watching our Sunday am church service and our lovely guest speaker suggested holding hands, we did it, and then realized what we were doing. Surprised looks on our faces, but we kept holding hands. We carefully washed our hands after church. We'd been keeping socially distant due to pandemic."



Tess also spent her time doing some adult coloring.

While Dana Clark, creative as always, spent her time writing a new song. I can't wait to hear it, Dana!

Living in a Picture on a Christmas Card

By Dana Clark

CHORUS: I am living in a picture on a Christmas card
I've got ice on the roof. I've got snow in the yard
The cactus in my xeriscape is frozen hard
'Cause I am living in a picture on a Christmas card

Kids are asking what's that white stuff out there in the street
They're begging to go play like this is some kinda treat
Right away they're complaining 'cause they've got frozen feet
Then they're racing through the door yelling, "Turn up the heat!"

CHORUS

All the snow out in the yard is really pretty and white
But the ink in my pen has gotten too cold to write
I left all my faucets dripping. Now they're frozen up tight
You think it's cold today? It will be colder tonight!

CHORUS

Now I'm piling all my cats and all my quilts on my bed
I'll take the peanut butter with me and a big loaf of bread
It's gonna be an easy summer 'cause my plants are all dead
It's time to swap my dune buggy for some kinda dogsled

CHORUS

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Dana Clark

www.danaclarkmusic.com

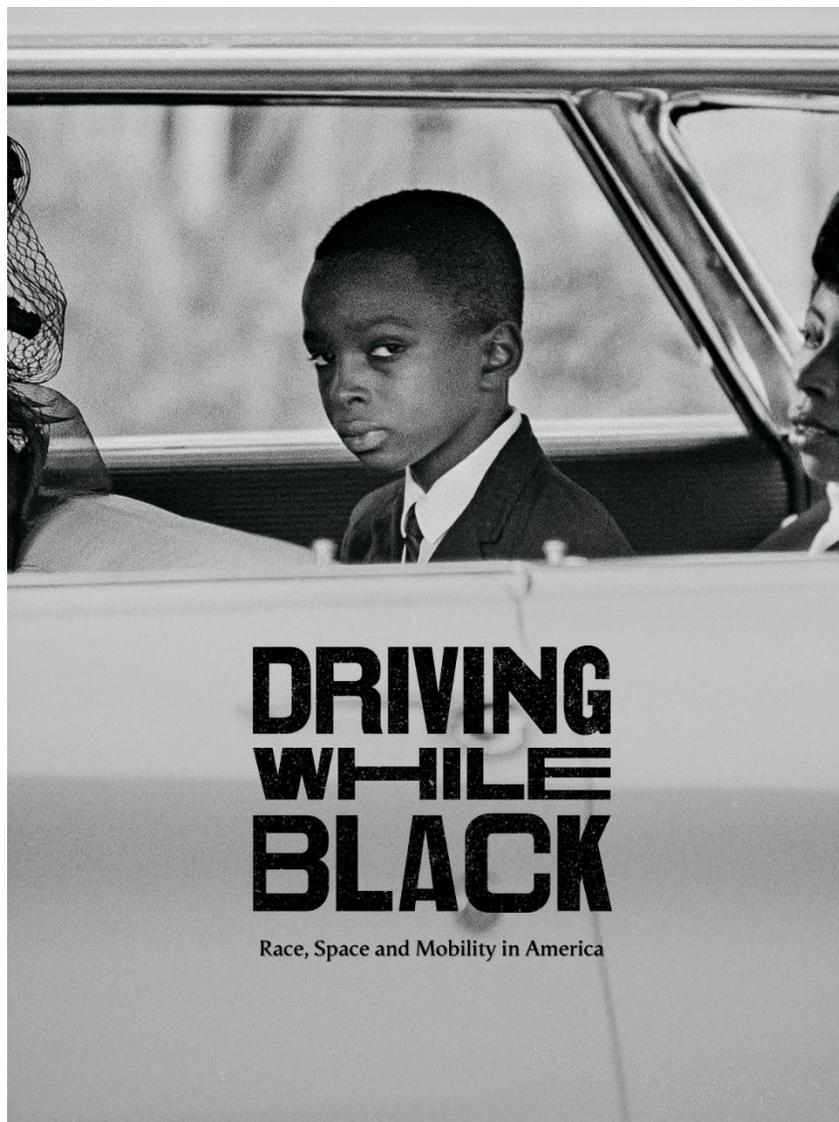
danapiano@rocketmail.com

Driving While Black: Race, Space & Mobility in America

By Terri Chadwick and John Faultersack

On January 21, 2021, the Black Lives Matter Working Group of the Social Justice Committee of our church presented a Zoom showing of *Driving while Black: Race, Space and Mobility in America*, a PBS video. Eighteen people attended and most stayed for the short discussion afterwards. The purpose was to further racial justice by educating church and community members about issues that face Black Americans since the invention of the automobile up to the current time. We learned that “driving while Black” can be quite dangerous and challenging.

The event was accepted by San Antonio DreamWeek, held to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. Members John Faultersack and Terri Chadwick prepared the DreamWeek application, obtained permission to show the video free, set up the event on Eventbrite and managed Zoom for the event. Special thanks to members David Rodriguez and Dorothy Wallace who taught John and Terri how to use Eventbrite and Zoom for the event. Dorothy also helped with the application to DreamWeek.



“Come and Get Your Love” Senior Event

By Dorothy Wallace, photos by Terry Palin



We had to postpone our Senior Valentine’s Day Event by a week due to the weather, but certainly had a prettier day February 21st than February 14th! Over 50 seniors came out for our first (and hopefully only) Valentine’s Drive-Thru. David Rodriguez organized box lunches from Jason’s Deli on behalf of the Membership Committee. Betty Burgner, on behalf of Member Care Committee, provided a ride for the Bowdens. And Stewardship Committee, which included Caitie Skaggs, Jim and Polly Noel, Terry Palin, Dorothy Wallace and Lee Hampton, handed out sweet treats, beads and candies, as well as valentines. Rev Mark and his spouse, Carolyn, greeted every car and handed out more valentines. Good to see them both in person!

It was a wonderful afternoon of COVID friendly fellowship. Many seniors pulled their cars into the parking lot to eat their lunches, then moved among cars to say hello “in person” to friends they have not seen, in some cases, in over a year. Martha Cooley said “The food was great and the company very welcome after months of isolation. Couldn’t have had a better Valentine!” Wendy Friedman said “Yummy lunch, face-to-face visits, favors and fellowship in the sunshine.” Jim and Carol Westermeier, who drove down from Boerne, said “The best gift was being able to see and be with everyone. Our first UU event for over a year was a great success for us. We drove home happy.”

We had three *nonagenarians* come through the line, Doris Norton, Rowena Rogers and Jim Westermeier (almost). It was also nice to see Mary Grace Ketner, and her daughter Kate, visiting from Germany. Everyone enjoyed themselves, even during the time of COVID. Continue to stay safe everyone and get those vaccinations!



Dorothy & Lee handing out treats.



Jim & David handing out lunches.



Rev. Mark & Carolyn greeting seniors.

Spirit In Practice

By Jennifer Courtwright

As Unitarian Universalists we are free to search for truth and meaning wherever we find them. This search is more effective if we have resources for inspiration and a community to serve as a sounding board and help us practice. A group of approximately 25 of us have been practicing this search by meeting weekly for 10 weeks to discuss our spirits and sources of inspiration. We have focused on all areas of our life: individual (including mind, body, and soul), communal (groups and one-on-one friendships), how we spend our time each day, and what larger causes and values we believe in. This was our first adult RE class that was opened up to other churches and we had a total of 6 churches participate from 5 states! We have learned so much from one another and deepened our understanding of ourselves.

During this class we practiced being spiritual by doing anything that makes us feel alive and fills us up. The word spirit comes from the Latin “spirare” which means breath. To be spiritual is to breathe. To breathe is to be spiritual. Spirit is a sign of life. Let us each be more conscious of breathing and practice taking a breath so that the world might become more fully alive. Consider starting by taking a few breaths and enjoying this snippet of wisdom from the individuals that participated in this class:

We draw wisdom from and are fascinated by:

- The natural world
 - Light
 - Clouds
 - Development of seeds
 - Flowers
 - Birds
 - Minds of dogs
 - Monarch butterflies
 - Sea turtles
 - Laws of physics and chemistry
 - Diseases
- Human society
 - Beethoven’s 5th symphony
 - Basque language
 - Creating things particularly with clay
 - Childhood development
 - Social cosmologies
 - Astrology
 - Reincarnation and communicating with those who have passed on
 - The diversity of conditions that each of our congregations face (e.g. folks in Northern Wisconsin still had power, internet, and water when it was 40 below while us Texan’s clearly had a challenging few weeks!)

We value and promote:

- **Wonder** - Admiration and reverence for the mystery of beauty and creativity within and around us
- **Creativity** and **intellect** which are manifested in curiosity, vision, and intelligence. They include an openness to new experience and a rigor in thinking.

- **Truth** - Truth means taking away the blinders and the barriers, the fears, and being authentic and clear-minded. Requires understanding and accountability. Fairness is essential if we want to truly arrive at what is truthful and real.
- **Craft** - Through the creative process we learn patience, develop wisdom, create a sense of belonging - all while having fun. Craft can also include accountability and means doing things in an accurate, quality but simple fashion, in a positive way.
- **Compassion/Care** - When peace and love are connected to family and humanity, growth and wisdom ensue. Friends and family are the recipients of service and giving. Always striving for fairness and peace in your dealings with people.
- **Welcoming** - Welcoming can have many facets: How is one being welcoming? Who are you welcoming and why? Creating community and cooperation yet being curious about and appreciating the uniqueness of others.
- **Belonging** - Choosing to enter into relationship with someone or someplace because shared experiences of wonder satisfy a longing to be understood and accepted.
- **Community** - Valuing people, which calls for boundaries, respect, helping, empathy, belonging, family, connections, leadership and following, openness, and compassion.
- **Joy** - Joy is essential. Beyond laughter or a smile, joy can mean experiencing something new, be it wonderful or challenging, with open arms, and learning something.
- **Health** - Balance in one's life leads to clear mindedness, fitness and fairness. Authentic love, spirituality, and community lead to true joy and happiness.
- **Personal Growth** - lifelong learning, wonder, openness to new experiences, failure, and adventure
- **Awareness** - Insightfulness, thankfulness, and unity help form a personal vision and create wisdom in the long-term.

Celestial Celebrations Circle

By Sylvia Wheeler

CCC continues to hold Zoom Rituals for the Sabats. In December we celebrated Yule. We were pleased to have many participants - both as leaders & as guests. Even though we are still on zoom, our goal is to continue our traditions as the Wheel of the Year turns. We were unable to have a Yule fire this year, but we did continue with our readings by participants and our celebration of the new born sun. We opted this year to draw people in with Yule stories from participants. In addition to this offering, Celestial Celebrations Circle was invited to be a part of the Sunday service in the week before Christmas which had a theme of Winter Solstice. As is our usual format, we offered parts which highlighted members of the congregation. Recently, we also offered a Ritual for the Sabat which falls between Yule Ostara which is called Imbolc. We were pleased to have new guests participate in this offering. It was a small, intimate gathering.



&

*Yule table set up at the home of
Joan Wells and Dale Moore.*

Welcoming Immigrant Families

By Donna Pereira

Last July members Mary Grace Ketner and Moon Brand, active Interfaith Welcome Coalition (IWC) members, reached out to the Minister and the Board to approve the use of our Fellowship Hall as a quarantine location for immigrant families. The Board approved the request but because the City of San Antonio graciously provided housing for the families, the use of our campus was not needed. Now, however, because of the increase in border releases under the Biden administration, once again the IWC has asked for our help. Under the leadership of Moon Brand, a small task force has been formed, the Fellowship Hall and Building 6 have been thoroughly cleaned and supplied and we are prepared to offer short term housing for two families.

Our campus is still closed except for limited use and both volunteers and the families will be expected to follow Covid guidelines. We ask that members and friend refrain from visiting the campus without checking with the office first as we want to provide as much security and privacy as possible for our guests. Many thanks to the volunteers who have worked so hard on this project. This offering of sanctuary by First UU is yet another example of how our wonderful, welcoming congregation is working for social justice.

Update: as of the publishing date of this newsletter the church has helped welcome two families so far. The first family, from Haiti, will be traveling on to meet their host family in Boston.



Rue Wood, hard at work cleaning the kitchen.



Linda and Ray Nash moving in a crib for families with babies.



Ricardo Espinoza and Sean Danweber move in a refrigerator, loaned to the church temporarily to help the families staying in Building #6.

Religious Education for Children & Youth

By Sheri Phillabaum

In the winter holidays and into the New Year, faith development continued for children and youth in the areas of learning, service, and celebration!

Learning - On-line learning has continued every Sunday. Topics have included *Emily Dickinson and UU* with poetry enthusiast and middle-school teacher Nancy Pridgen, *BTS and UU* with music director Dr. Susan Dill, *Feral Cats and the Seventh Principle* with Gina Humble, and *Wildlife Conservation and UU* with Dr. Paula Pebsworth. The on-line venue has allowed us to bring in guests with special knowledge and areas of interest from whom we might not otherwise hear, such as our Kwanzaa and *Last-Airbender* class facilitators

Celebration - Thanks to UPS and USPS, youth were able to enjoy some mutual activities in cyberspace, such as an every-flavor jelly bean eating contest and s'mores made with mini-marshmallows roasted over a tea light. We also got on-site one family at a time for scavenger hunts, art projects, and a Christmas ornament gift exchange.

Service - We had to take our winter gift drive off-campus this year, but we collected as many gifts as ever and brightened the lives of just as many recipients as in other years. Volunteers of all ages wrapped the gifts and delivered them to the Family Service Association collection location. Children and families, as well as members of covenant groups made caring cards for members and valentines for the senior Valentines event.





First UU Helps Put Police Accountability on the Ballot

By Dorothy Wallace

Thanks to the efforts of everyone from our church who signed the petitions, or supported the two Petition Drive-Thru events at our church! After months of petitioning across the city, the San Antonio City Clerk's office in February verified that our ally [Fix SAPD](#) gathered the petition signatures needed to get the repeal of Texas Local Government Code Chapter 174 on the ballot for this May's municipal election!

Because of the longtime existence of Texas Local Government Code Chapters 174 and 143, it's nearly impossible to hold bad police officers, and the institutions that enable them, accountable for their actions. That's why the Black Lives Mater Working Group (BLMWG) and Black Lives and Allies in Community (BLAC) is supporting Fix SAPD in this effort. To make true public safety a reality in our communities, we need to get rid of barriers that shield problematic police officers and their misconduct.

San Antonio has a bad record with Police Accountability: 70% of fired officers are rehired. That's the worst rate in the country. The Chief should have the power to fire bad officers and keep them off the force to keep our community safe. Learn more at fixsapd.org/resources and vote **YES** on Proposition B this May! You can also donate to Fix SAPD's hard work at their website [FIX SAPD – Donate via ActBlue](#)

A big shout out to all members of the Fix SAPD Board - Oji Martin, EJ Pinnock, James Dykman and Ananda Tomas, for a monumentally successful reform campaign! And thank you to the members of First UU San Antonio - Rico Espinoza, event coordinator and video maker, Mary Wright, notary, Dorothy Wallace, petitioner and John Faultersack who coordinated the BLMWG in support of Fix SAPD's work. A great team effort!



FixSAPD board members, James Dykman, Oji Martin, and Ananda Tomas delivering petitions to the City Clerk's office.

Nominations Requested

By Diane Carl

CREF - Our Community Responsibility Endowment Fund - is now accepting nominations for the 2021 award season. Each year the CREF Trustees allocate funds to worthy non-profit organizations. The activities and/or projects awarded must reflect the values of the current membership of the church.

Nominations must be from church members. If qualified, the non-profit will receive notification in June of their opportunity to apply for a fund award for a forth-coming project or activity.

While the awards are limited to charitable, religious, educational or scientific purposes, in 2020, we specifically took into consideration hardships and needs non-profit organizations are experiencing as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 world pandemic. Most likely, the CREF Trustees will continue the Covid-19 impact need again in 2021.

When making a nomination, the church member should indicate a possible project, but does not need to have a specific project obligation stated. That will come with the application by the organization in the summer.

To nominate, please complete the online form on the CREF page of our website: <https://uusat.org/how-we-serve/community-responsibility-endowment-fund/>

Scroll down to the nomination form, or click here:

<https://uusat.org/first-unitarian-universalist-church-san-antonio/2016-cref-nomination-page/>

See how exciting and meaningful the CREF award program is for the organizations and for our membership! You may view the 2020 awardee video on our webpage and this link:

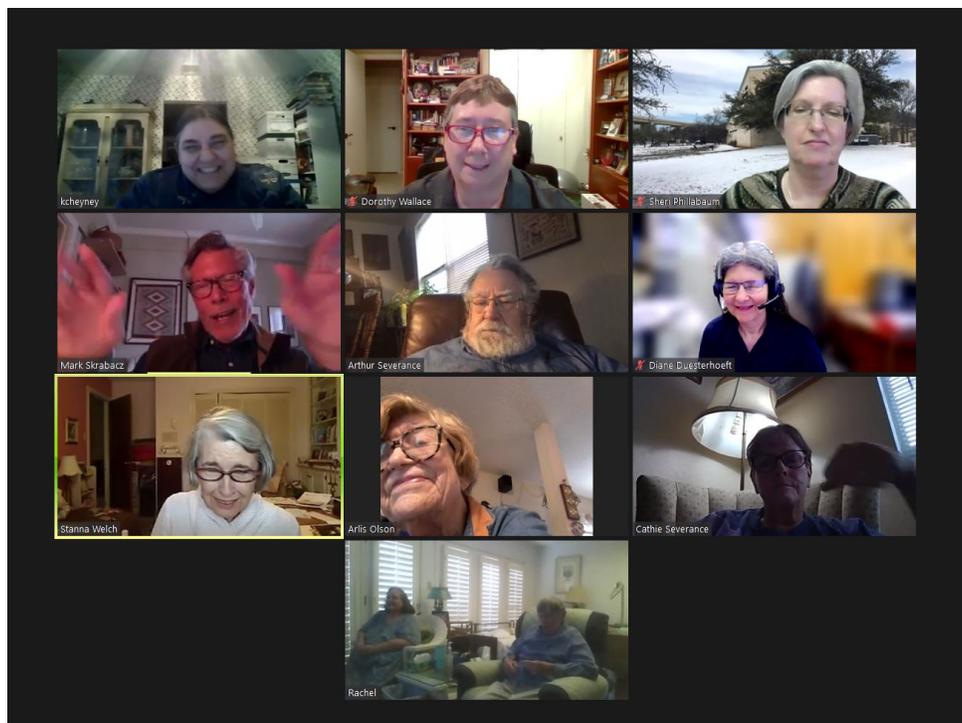
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHkB1bN4rh0>



Celebrating Trent Cheyney's Birthday

By Dorothy Wallace

Trent Cheyney is the longest tenured member of our congregation. Trent joined the church as a teenager in 1946...just one year after the church was founded. Trent has been active at the church in so many ways over the years, including serving as our Board President. On February 26th we premiered a tribute to Trent in honor of his 92nd birthday on our Youtube channel. A reception was held on Zoom afterwards. We honored his many contributions to our church, to our city and our state. Visit our Youtube channel to watch the tribute at <https://youtu.be/kMi2O6wYZlw>



Building a Culture of Inclusion Workshop

By Dorothy Wallace

On February 20, 2021, 23 people participated in a workshop on building a culture of inclusion in churches. The workshop was led by Paula Cole Jones, the co-author of the 8th Principle. There was an hour of presentation which focused on churches moving from a family model to a model of “Community of Communities,” a reflection period, then a smaller group interactive period.

Family model churches (also described as dominate culture churches) have a tendency to focus on the individual, whereas the “Community of Communities” model focuses more on the many groups within larger churches like ours, with each individual finding a home in one or more groups. The 8th Principle was designed, according to Paula, to bridge the gap in the transition from one model to another.

“Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions,” is what we Unitarian Universalists have been doing for the past couple hundred years! Where and how does this statement fit into the life of our church? Are we as inclusive as we think we are? Where or how can we grow? Let’s keep the conversation going! Check your What’s Happening for our next in house workshop in March. Please plan to attend and lend your voice.



Free Battered Texas Women - Spring 2021 Update

By Cathy Marston

Free Texas Battered Women (FTBW) morphed during the 2020 pandemic, with us trying to figure out the best way to maintain sustainability. Fortunately, community partners stepped up as we faced a \$2000 shortfall from our 2019 donations.

First UU has hosted our holiday card party since 2018 to sign and address greetings for our incarcerated and released sisters.

The Social Justice Committee donated \$300 to go towards design of the newsletter: our designer this year was Mad Women Marketing of New Braunfels. The printshop at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) covered printing the newsletter. Our volunteers could not gather to meet, so we figured out how to distribute the newsletter as we socially distanced. If you did not receive a hard copy, please contact me for that or a digital copy. We are so grateful for the help this year with our newsletter! It gives our incarcerated sisters hope and lets them know we care about them and are advocating for them!

The Rev. Chuck Freeman of the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM) has given us usage of TXUUJM's phone conferencing line and Zoom account for our monthly board meetings.

This January, I moved our correspondence files to Dr. Doshie Piper's office at UIW. She is one of our board members and longtime collaborators. This is the third spring in a row that we have had students from her classes perform their service hours with us. These files are more accessible in a socially distanced environment in her office, then in my home office.

Victoria Martinez, a student in Probation and Community Corrections, and Charlyann Silva, a student in Restorative Justice, are helping us get caught up on a two-year backlog of correspondence and updating our criminalized abuse survivor database and ally database. This help is crucial to an all-volunteer organization, especially now that I work as a grant coordinator at a nonprofit in the region and have less time.

The photo accompanying this article shows our February 22 work session: Charlyann, myself, Victoria, and Doshie.

Dr. Piper and I have co-authored a research grant and are planning on applying for grants for operating funds to hire our first paid staff – as we continue to debate the best structure for our organization.

On February 26, our statewide clemency coalition – the Survivors Project – met for the first time in nine months to discuss where we're at. We are a year into our new clemency process for survivors of domestic violence and sex trafficking. They asked those of us who were formerly incarcerated survivors for input: they are scrapping their pro bono legal assistance application and, instead, will just require a name and contact information given to the Lone Star Justice Alliance (LSJA), the legal nonprofit that heads the process. The second step will be to refer an applicant to a peer support group staffed by those of us who were formerly incarcerated survivors: this is to gain applicants' trust through the emotionally and otherwise grueling process. Some of us will be presenting with lawyers and victim advocates to the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) about the difficulty of the BPP's application itself, in an attempt to

persuade them to simplify it. Right now, only 3% of the applications were approved for pardons. I will be getting my own pro bono assistance request submitted to LSJA by the time you read this.

I am slated as the speaker on March 17 for the Hays County Women's Political Caucus. Dr. Piper and I are planning to co-present to the Tarrant County Sexual Abuse Advisory Council in April or May: these events will be on Zoom.

We'd like to thank all of our partners, especially the Social Justice committee at First UU and those who have donated \$195 so far this year. While we are grant writing, we certainly need individual donations that will be used to support our work. For example: \$81 pays our PO Box for six months; half that amount helps cover our cell phone bill or landline bill; and \$11 pays for a book of stamps. Please feel free to contact me or send donations to our PO Box!

Blessed be,
Cathy Marston, PhD
PO Box 47
Schertz, TX 78154
210/776-7586
Cmarston.fbtw@gmail.com



First UU Church Endorses National Climate Legislation, Energy Innovation Act

by Diane Duesterhoeft

Energy Innovation AND Carbon Dividend Act

THE BIPARTISAN CLIMATE SOLUTION

H.R. 763

This bill will drive down America's carbon pollution and bring climate change under control. It is:

EFFECTIVE



GOOD FOR PEOPLE



GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY



REVENUE NEUTRAL



On Sunday, December 13, 2020, First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio endorsed a major piece of national climate legislation under consideration in Congress: the [Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act](#) (H.R. 763 or the EICDA). First Unitarian Universalist was the first organization in San Antonio to officially endorse this legislation. First UU-San Antonio joined at least 38 other UU congregations across the nation that have endorsed the Energy Innovation Act. UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray has publicly stated support for this legislation, while other UU ministers, including Rev. Mark Skrabacz and Rev. Arthur Severance, have publicly endorsed it.

“We believe this legislation has a really good chance of succeeding, due to its bipartisan support, and adoption of the Act will make our communities and world a much cleaner place,” said Cheryl Lardy, Co-Chair of our Green Sanctuary Team and a member of Citizens’ Climate Lobby.

The Energy Innovation Act will drive down America’s carbon pollution at least 40% in the first 12 years, and 90% by 2050. As it does so, it will also improve health and save lives by reducing the pollution that Americans breathe, and it will boost the economy thanks to a monthly dividend going into Americans’ pockets. So far, 87 members of Congress have signed on in support of this legislation. While the 116th Congress concluded on January 3, 2021, Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL-22) plans to again introduce the EICDA in the 117th Congress.

Our congregation joined more than 1,500 other organizations and prominent individuals throughout the United States who support this major climate legislation. Organizations such as the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [World Resources Institute](#), [Alliance for Market Solutions](#) and [more](#) have weighed in with endorsements or supportive comments.

Members of the [San Antonio chapter](#) of [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) (CCL) helped educate our congregants about the bill, in part through the [En-ROADS Climate Change Solutions Simulator](#), and encouraged congregants to support it. Citizens' Climate Lobby is a grassroots nonprofit organization with local chapters across the country. The endorsement resolution was passed nearly unanimously by a congregational vote on December 13, 2020.

"I would like to thank the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio for their forward thinking and commitment to addressing the climate crisis that imperils all life on the planet," said Stuart Birnbaum, a co-leader of the San Antonio CCL chapter. "We hope this support will encourage Representatives Castro, Roy, Gonzales, Cuellar, and Doggett to formally support the legislation in Congress."

"Here in South Texas, we're already feeling the impact of climate change. My family has personally experienced several sudden, more intense storms driven by climate change that bring damaging straight-line winds. We also are suffering longer and deeper droughts and more hot days without cooling at night," said Julie Smith, co-leader of the San Antonio CCL chapter. "We're ready for Congress to put a price on carbon pollution, and so are the members of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio."

Rev. Mark Skrabacz stated, "First Unitarian Universalist Church has become the first San Antonio organization to officially endorse this major climate legislation. May it continue to generate broad support with its promise to improve health and the economy."



Rainbow Inclusion Updates

By Carol Collins

San Antonio's Pride Center and the Strengthening Colors of PRIDE project are providing eight weeks of FREE virtual group therapy for young, queer, and bilingual persons of color! Therapist Nelson Hernández, LMFT-Associate, will run two, FREE, eight-week therapy groups: One group for LGBTQ+ YOUTH OF COLOR (18-26+) and another group held in Español/Spanglish/TexMex for bilingual LGBTQ+ ADULTS (18+). Each group will meet virtually, once a week for eight weeks. Visit pridecentersa.org/group-therapy to apply and for more information, including eligibility criteria.

On January 20th President Joe Biden [issued the most substantive, wide-ranging LGBTQ executive order in U.S. history](#) that implements the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*. The Executive Order will have a real and practical impact on the day-to-day lives of the approximately 11 million LGBTQ adults and millions more LGBTQ youth in the United States. The Human Rights Campaign requested that the Biden administration issue an order to implement the Bostock decision after the Trump administration failed to properly enforce it across federal agencies, instead arguing LGBTQ people were not protected under federal civil rights laws. The Equality Act passed the House in May, 2019.

Nov. 10, 2020, the U. S. Supreme Court heard a Philadelphia same-sex foster parents case. A Supreme Court decision on the matter is expected in June. The justices will consider whether a city may exclude a Catholic adoption agency from its foster care system because it refuses to work with gay couples. Philadelphia has protective custody of about 5,000 children who have been abused or neglected. It would help if we talk about this with others. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/us/supreme-court-gay-rights-foster-care.html>

The National LGBTQ Task Force had its annual 4-day Creating Change conference virtually the last week of January. Carol especially enjoyed "Faith in a Virtual World," "Turning You Sermon into a sound-bite", aging in the LGBTQ community and the interfaith service hosted by Rev. Crumpler, the Unitarian Universalist Association's LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director.



A Winter Blessing

By Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker

In the shadowed quiet of winter's light
earth speaks softly
of her longing.
Because the wild places are in tears.

Come, she cries to us.
Kneel down here
on the frosty grass,
and feel the prayer buried in the ground.

Bend your ear to my heart
and listen hard.

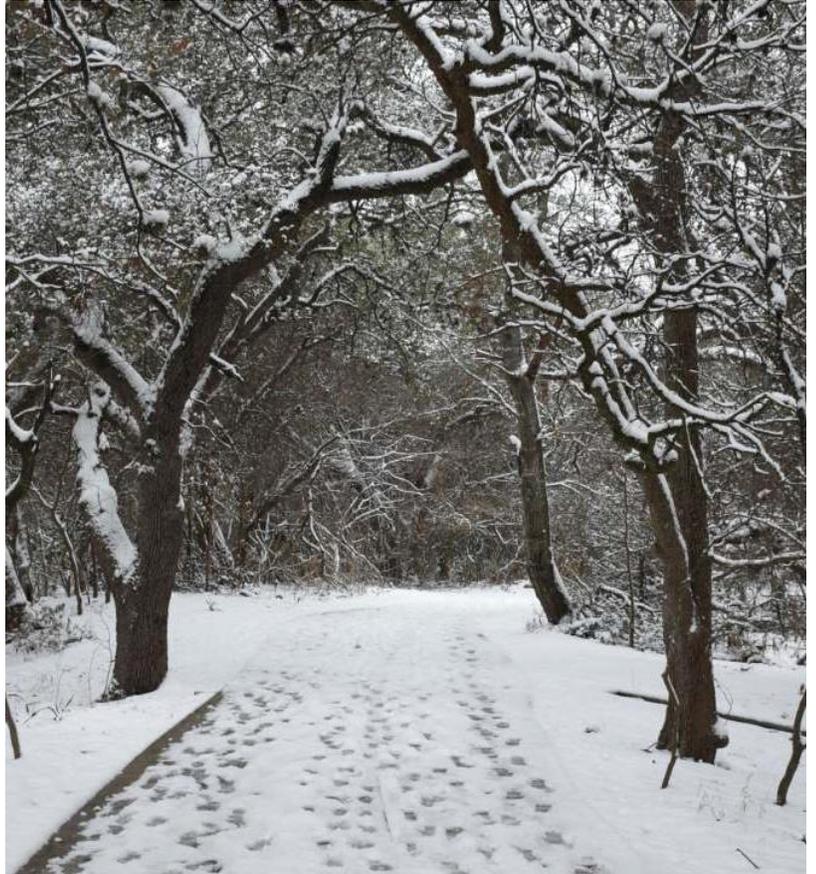
Love this world, she whispers.
Distill peace from the snow
and water the cities
with mercy.

Weave wonder from the forest
and clothe grief
with beauty.

Rest in the rhythm of the turning year,
Trace the bending arc
Rounding the curve toward justice.
And vow anew to do no harm.

The winter trees stand watch
haloed in the last gleams of the slanting sun.
Glory sings here.
Heaven echoes the call:
Repeat the sounding joy.

Make your life an answer:
Bow.
Praise.
Rise.



We are a Compassionate Congregation

We encourage San Antonio to be a more compassionate city.

We are a Green Sanctuary Congregation.

We develop our congregation's environmental ethic through worship, education, sustainability, and environmental justice.

We are a Reproductive Justice Congregation.

We stand for the right to make one's own reproductive decisions.

We are a Sanctuary Congregation.

We protect and defend refugees, asylum seekers, and at-risk immigrants.

We are a Welcoming Congregation.

Families and individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities contribute to the joyful life of this church.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio

7150 W. Interstate 10, San Antonio, TX 78213-3465

(210) 344-4695

www.uusat.org