

Inspire



FIRST UU
SAN ANTONIO

**The quarterly newsletter of
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
Winter 2022**



Inspire

Contact us at newsletter@uusat.org.

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Cover photo: The table is set for our annual Thanksgiving dinner.

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Unitarian and Universalist Emergence

By Rev. Mark Skrabacz

In this article I give a brief description of Universalism and Unitarianism. In a second article, I plan to focus more on Universalism, and in a third on Unitarianism.

The journey I have experienced into Unitarian Universalism (UU) has been long and filled with learning. When I first began visiting a UU Congregation in 1968, I was drawn to the human kindness and openness of the people I met. Yet soon I needed more information to develop a way to make practical meaning of it, and to be capable of articulating it for myself and to others when asked about it. You know, a good elevator speech is what we need to have at the ready when asked: “What do UUs believe?”

Many of you have requested a historical overview for your own journeys. As Unitarian Universalists we have sources from two faith traditions. As a movement, Universalism is the older.

Universalism refers to the idea of universal salvation for humankind. Universal salvation was a radical idea since eternal punishment for the wicked and even for mere non-believers had been so firmly asserted in official creeds and confessions of orthodox Christian churches. The most commonly held core belief of all Universalists is based on their theology that a loving God would not condemn people to hell, no matter what they did in life. The belief that ultimately all of humankind will be saved is common to all universalists.

An influential advocate of universal salvation, as well as pacifism and free will, Origen of Alexandria (185-254CE) was an early Christian scholar and church leader. His whole theological system, described in his 2000 treatises, was decisively influenced by ideas of Plato from the 5th Century BCE. These ideas taught people to understand the allegorical sense of religious and philosophical writing behind the literal sense in order to see a pattern of understanding that the world was part of a great cycle of all things emanating from God and returning to God. These ideas, more Platonic than Biblical, were the reason Origen was declared a heretic long after his death by a 543 CE Church Council. As we’ve progressed into recent times, the Christian doctrine of eternal punishment has been widely abandoned by Christian theologians and scholars. This popular movement has its roots in universalism.

The American development of Universalism as a religious sect took place in several distinct geographical locations: the Middle Atlantic, New England, across Canada and into the far west of California. The earliest preachers of the gospel of universal salvation appeared in the mid-1700s in the Middle Atlantic States. An important early Universalist evangelist was Dr. George de Benneville (1703-1793), born into a French Protestant Huguenot family. Exiled to England, he arrived in the Colonies in 1741 and spread Universalism among German immigrants in Pennsylvania. At about the same time, in the rural, interior sections of New England, a small number of itinerant preachers began to disbelieve the strict Calvinist doctrines of eternal punishment. They discovered from their biblical studies the revelation of God’s loving redemption of all. John Murray (1741-1815), an English preacher who immigrated to Massachusetts via a shipwreck in 1770, helped to found and lead the first Universalist congregation in Gloucester, MA, in 1774 and especially worked in the effort to separate church and state.

By 1781, Elhanan Winchester (1751-1797), who settled in Philadelphia, was one of the founders of the U.S. General Convention of Universalists, which later was organized into the Universalist Church of America. Among its members was Benjamin Rush (1746-1813), a famous physician, founding father of the U.S. and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

After organizing even more officially in 1793, the Universalists spread their faith across the eastern United States and Canada. Hosea Ballou (1771-1852) became the denomination's greatest leader during the nineteenth century. He preached in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. He was pastor of the Second Universalist Church in Boston from 1817 until his death. He and his followers led the way in spreading the Universalist Faith.

Other evangelist-preachers followed the advice of Universalist journalist, publisher, and U.S. Representative Horace Greeley (1811-1872) and went West. One such person was Thomas Starr King (1824-1864). He was recognized in his day by the State of California as one of its two most illustrious historical figures. A profound orator and statesman, at the dawn of the Civil War, he spoke out on behalf of the Union, African Americans, the Sanitary Commission, the magnificent California landscape and the Unitarian and Universalist Faiths. He is also credited with defining this difference between Unitarians and Universalists: "Universalists believe that God is too good to damn people, and the Unitarians believe that people are too good to be damned by God." The Universalists believe in a God who embraces everyone, and these are central principles (and ours as UUs) that lasting truth is found in all religions, and that dignity and worth is innate to all people regardless of gender, color, race, and class.

From its beginnings, Universalism challenged its members to reach out and embrace people whom society often marginalized. John Murray's Gloucester church included freed slaves among its charter members. The Universalists were among the first denominations to ordain women to the ministry, beginning in 1863 with Olympia Brown.

Other societal reformers included Universalists such as Charles Spear (1803-1863), who called for prison reform and the abolishment of the death penalty, and Clara Barton (1821-1912) who went from Civil War "angel of the battlefield" to become the founder of the American Red Cross. Unitarians such as Dorothea Dix (1802-1887) fought to "break the chains" of people incarcerated in mental hospitals, and Samuel Gridley Howe (1801-1876) an American physician and surgeon, started schools for the blind. Public education crusader John Dewey (1859-1952) was a very close ally of Unitarians and led education and social reform. Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) were women's rights activists and social reformers who practiced Unitarian principles. For the last two centuries, Unitarians and Universalists and their allies have been at the forefront of movements working to free people from the bonds that oppress them.

By the middle of the twentieth century, it became clear that Unitarians and Universalists could have a stronger liberal religious voice if they merged their efforts. They did so in 1961, forming the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA.) Today more than a thousand North American Congregations are a part of this voluntary association and are continuing to work for greater racial, cultural, religious, economic, and sexual inclusion and diversity. In 1977, a Women and Religion resolution was passed by the Association, and since then the denomination has responded to the feminist challenge to change sexist structures and language, resulting in the publication of an inclusive hymnal. The denomination has affirmed the rights of

LGBTQ+ persons, including ordaining and settling LGBTQ+ identified clergy in our congregations. In 1996, we affirmed marriage equality.

Since the Summer of 2015, a similar call has been heard from an independent organization that was initially sponsored by the UUA. Black Lives UU (BLUU) has become an ever-growing community of Black UUs and other Black people, who don't necessarily claim Unitarian Universalism but who share our values. A shift is occurring and continues to make Unitarian Universalism a more diverse, anti-oppressive and multi-cultural Living Faith. We recognize that no one culture, no one ethnicity can speak for all people at all times. UU is now clearly moving forward as a Community of Communities.

All these efforts reflect a modern understanding of universal salvation. Salvation from the Latin *salus* meaning health and wholeness. When coupled with the Platonic view that the divine spark in every person must return to its divine source, we offer an appealing alternative view to eternal salvation.

Ours is one of creating a Beloved Community in this life that empowers each person to achieve wholeness and connection. Unitarian Universalism welcomes all to an expanding circle of understanding and a choice in religious faith.

Ours is indeed a chosen faith. If you have questions on how to learn more about our Unitarian and Universalist Faith Traditions, please contact Rev. Nell (newton@uusat.org), Rev. Art (emeritus@uusat.org) (who was educated at a historically Universalist seminary) or myself (minister@uusat.org).

Our New(ish) Website & Logo

By Mary Wright

In the summer of 2021 Rev. Mark charged a group of volunteers with a daunting, but much needed task...to redesign our church's website and logo. While the old website was functional, we envisioned a new website that was colorful, exciting, and better represented our unique San Antonio culture. Most importantly it needed to be easy to navigate, especially for visitors.

Our group did a lot of research and looked at many different websites. We got ideas from several sources, but our biggest inspiration was the website of Foothills Unitarian Church in Fort Collins, Colorado. Foothills Unitarian is a church that is roughly the same size as our own, but with a robust online presence, including a full-time Creative & Communications Manager. What we liked so much about the Foothills website was its ease of use. Our group used the basic structure of Foothills to create our website but added a lot of extra touches to make our website uniquely ours.

First and foremost, we wanted our website to be easy to navigate. We wanted people to be able to find what they were looking for with a minimum of searching. This is especially important for newcomers, who are the largest segment of people who visit our website. Our old website had a number of tabs at the top of the homepage. Clicking on those tabs brought up small menus. To find the page you wanted, you would



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have to click through each different menu. This was time consuming and cumbersome. With our new menu function, you can click on the menu and see the entire website in a glance. It makes finding the information you need much easier.

We also tried to consolidate some of our pages in a way that is a bit more intuitive. The old website had different pages for all of the different groups and committees on campus. For old-timers this was not a huge problem, but for visitors this could be very confusing. We wanted a better way and we looked at our Order of Service for inspiration. You might recall seeing our list of Congregational statements. They are located on the back of every Sunday's Order of Service. These are the statements of who we are: we are a compassionate congregation, a green sanctuary congregation, a racial justice congregation, a reproductive justice congregation, a sanctuary congregation, and a welcoming congregation. Using these statements as a guide, we created a new section of the website called 'Justice Work' with pages that deal with Social Justice, Racial Justice, Environmental Justice, Gender & Sexuality Justice, Immigration Justice, and Reproductive Justice. With this new organizational structure, if someone is interested in, for example, gender & sexuality issues they can click on the Gender & Sexuality Justice page. There they will find information about our Rainbow Inclusion Committee, about our Trans & Non-Binary Group (TANG), as well as information about our community partners such as PFLAG and Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT). All of the information they need is on one page, rather than on multiple pages throughout the site.

Our second major goal was to create a website that is unique both to our church and to our roots here in San Antonio. We agreed on a color theme that included Fiesta colors - pink, teal, and orange. First UU member, Amanda White, who is also a graphic artist, took our ideas and designed a beautiful new church logo. The new logo uses the color theme and includes a modern version of the flaming chalice symbol inside a quatrefoil. The quatrefoil shape is reminiscent of the Spanish architecture found in abundance in San Antonio. The resulting logo is not only beautiful, but uniquely ours and not one you would find anywhere else.

The new website launched in late 2021 but was a bit overshadowed with the re-opening of the church after COVID. However, we are very proud of our new website and hope everyone takes a moment to visit and explore. The website address is www.uusat.org. Huge thanks to everyone who worked on the Website Work Group: Ellen Glover, Kathy McFarlane, Jim Noel, Terry Palin, Michael Stober, Rick Sutter, Amanda White, and Mary Wright.

Capital Campaign News: On the "Cusp"

By Dorothy Wallace

Happy Holidays, from your Capital Campaign Committee! We are at the verge of crossing the 1-million-dollar mark! Wonderful news, but our campaign is in its last month, and we still have a way to go to meet our goal of 3 million dollars. So, we still need quite a few people to "Say Yes" to a Capital Campaign Steward in the next 30 days. Is there something holding you back?

The Market. Most of us in the market these last few years have seen a bunch of turbulence since the end of the COVID crisis, as we try to regain our real-world footing – in the face of inflation and other economic

pressures. Good news – the market is inching back but be that as it may, there is still going to be a smidge of risk perhaps making a large Capital Campaign Commitment. *What to do?* Still make your most generous gift! Like the annual budget for Stewardship, the closure of the Capital Campaign will inform us of what we can and cannot do on our campus. A qualified Commitment is better than no Commitment! We have already taken many gifts from givers who have been cautious but positive about additional giving in the future.

Not Sure How Much I Can Really Give. Remember, Capital Campaign Commitments can be paid over time – 3 full years. *What to do?* Might there be a trade off in your budget? What might you be willing to go without to make a truly generous Commitment? Capital Campaign Commitments are not necessarily painless outlays of money – in fact it might even hurt a little. But is the future of our church and religious community worth that sacrifice? Only you can answer these questions! But at least ask yourself the questions. Then make your most generous Commitment!

I've been meaning to meet with a Capital Campaign Steward! Sundays are hectic! *What to do?* So, call us or email us capitalcampaign@uusat.org, we can set up a meeting with you (ZOOM or in-person) or send you a Commitment Form. You are not restricted to Sunday afternoons, after the service! Your Capital Campaign Team is here for you ANY TIME!

I don't understand/like what is being planned as Capital Campaign projects.

We realize that not everyone has had an opportunity to see our initial architectural work ups. *What to do?* Contact the building committee (Dorothy Wallace, Carolyn Skrabacz or Shannon Hawkins) and ask your questions or invite us to your group to talk. We are happy to do it and have already incorporated many changes based on congregant input – like including gender neutral bathrooms for the Fellowship Hall.

What are you waiting for? Christmas? Let the spirit of the holiday season move you in your giving! *Make a Commitment!*



'Tis the Season of Giving and Volunteering

By Terry Palin, President of the Board of Trustees

Hello my friends,

As I write this, it is just a few days from Thanksgiving and the beginning of the holiday season.

This is a time when we give and receive gifts, love is in the air, and we feel the promise of the new year. This is also the time when we will help organizations through our donations or our volunteering. Haven for Hope, Elf Louise, the Pride Center, and the San Antonio Food Bank are where our help is needed in San Antonio. There are countless other organizations, too. You have your favorites, as do I. It feels good to give of your time or treasure during this time of year. Helping others is at the very heart of being a Unitarian Universalist.

Volunteering throughout the year is also important. Our church had a good level of volunteering prior to the COVID outbreak and the closure of our church for many months. As we pull out of the pandemic and learn how to live with COVID, it is time to re-commit to volunteering in our congregation. Just a few weeks ago, Rev. Mark had a service on Volunteers and those who presently volunteer were celebrated. Were you in that group? If not, what is stopping you?

So, starting now, think about how you can commit to volunteering with First UU this coming year. We have many needs. For example, Grounds and Maintenance Committees can always use help. Religious Education always needs teachers or substitute teachers, playground helpers, party planners, and people willing to give Bridget a hand. Stewardship is in need of members who want to help make sure we can fund our church and its programs through our yearly pledge campaign. Membership can always use new people to help out in greeting and other ways. Other committees have openings that may fit with your ideals and interests. And you can volunteer for more than one committee! Please speak with Tess Bobo (leadership@uusat.org), the chair of the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) about becoming a member of any committee. She knows the present and future needs of our church committees. You can also speak with Rev. Mark (minister@uusat.org) or Rev. Nell (newton@uusat.org).

Committee work is not just a one-year commitment. If you like the committee you are working on, plan on staying a couple of years and then plan on moving up into the leadership of that committee. For example, being on the Board of Trustees requires you to start in an At-Large position. You are “at-large” usually for three years. After that it is hoped that you will move into one of the Leadership positions, either Treasurer, Secretary, or Vice President. This provides continuity of committee work and leadership.

In this season of giving, please consider volunteering your time and talents to our church, this place you call your faith home. We need you! We love you! Happy Holidays!

End of Year Summary from TXUUJM Director Rev. Erin Walter

Submitted by TXUUJM Board members Jan Realini and Mike Phillips

Dear family, friends, and colleagues,

This month I am celebrating one year as minister and executive director of the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM.) TXUUJM is the state action network 501(c)(3) for 40+ UU congregations and our progressive partners – in a state where our justice fight is so essential.

And today I have GREAT NEWS! TXUUJM has just received a Faithify matching grant! If we raise \$5,000 by Dec. 8, 2022, that \$5,000 will be doubled! I would so appreciate your support at this time, and every little bit helps. Your generosity will go twice as far!

To my loved ones outside of Texas: For better or worse, what happens in Texas does not stay in Texas. It gets copied by other states and affects the nation and the world. So, no matter where you live, I am asking for your support with this work. TXUUJM fights for justice for us ALL.

If you want to give and move on with your day, the link again is: <https://www.faithify.org/txuujm>. If you'd like to know more about our work . . . In 2022, after very difficult years in the pandemic, TXUUJM made huge strides in organizing, programming, and action. We:

- held weekly Action Hours on Zoom;
- fought hard for democracy, reaching more than half a million voters (!!!) in our nonpartisan UU the Vote outreach to predominantly Black Texans who suffer voter suppression here;
- secured grants to bring the Transgender Inclusion in Congregations curriculum to all Texas UU congregations;
- co-sponsored training for facilitators of our inclusive OWL sex ed curriculum and the Jubilee III anti-racism program;
- worked in coalition with Bans Off Our Bodies, Teach the Truth, Texas Wildlife Alliance, Texas Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty, and more;
- showed up again and again for our values in the public square, from letters to the editor to press conferences, testifying with trans-inclusive families at the Department of Family and Protective Services to speaking out against censorship at the State Board of Education;
- and so much more!

TXUUJM is a small organization with great potential to grow. My role is currently half-time, and I work with dynamite volunteers and a part-time intern minister, Sarah Berel-Harrop. The needs are as big as Texas, and your gift via this Faithify matching-grant campaign will help TXUUJM bring on an additional organizer and continue to grow the capacity of the organization at this crucial time.

I want to say thank you to all of you – for your support over the years, as my path has taken shape. I love you so much, and we are in this together.

Bending Texas Toward Justice,

Erin

P.S. - If you prefer to mail a donation, you may send it to: Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry Education Network, 24348 Cherry Spring Dr, San Antonio, TX 78255. You can also become a monthly Sustaining Giver at [DONATE – Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry \(txuujm.org\)](https://www.faithify.org/txuujm).



Aiding Asylum Seekers: Your Constant Efforts, Your Many Gifts!

By Mary Grace Ketner

Over the last eight years, while asylum seekers have been most fervent in seeking safety here, our congregation has responded to meeting their needs and seeking justice for them. So many of our members have joined in the effort to welcome the stranger! That's why I'm naming names even though I am sure neither my personal notes nor our Social Justice Committee minutes are complete. Leadership in this work has come both from our denomination and from local organizations such as the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) and the Interfaith Welcome Coalition (IWC.)

Attention came to the issue in the summer of 2014 when hundreds of unaccompanied minors landed in San Antonio. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and our city found a location for them at the former Lackland Air Force base. Many wanted to help the children, but ICE would not permit volunteers to enter. Rev. Kelly Allen of University Presbyterian Church learned of other child migrants who needed help: families seeking asylum being released by ICE from a detention center in Karnes County were being dumped on the curb in front of the Greyhound station. She organized her church members and other pastors and their members to greet them, feed them, and explain their bus tickets. She called the group the Interfaith Welcome Coalition.

First UU San Antonio played a small part in those first months. Federico and Brigid Peña volunteered at the bus station several evenings a week, and Brigid began a drive to collect backpacks, tote bags, toiletries, teddy bears, and snacks to give each traveler. Social Justice co-chairs Maria Bush and Vicki Tullius attended a couple of early IWC meetings.

In 2015, our participation began to accelerate. Rev. Maureen Killoran (our interim minister at the time) sent IWC \$200 from her Ministerial Discretionary Fund to "let them know we were serious about being involved." A Share-the-Plate offering for the Karnes Bond Fund raised almost \$1400. A dozen of us attended a fund-raising dinner for IWC at First Presbyterian Church. Dorothy Wallace took the lead in writing an Action Item (AI) for General Assembly 2016 about world refugees, and our Board approved it. (Ultimately, our AI was not selected.)



The Detention Centers were requesting that the rules for childcare centers be changed so that they could qualify and hold children for more than 21 days.

Rev. Marisol Caballero, Diane Duesterhoeft and Mike Phillips, Karen Emerson, Donna Harrison, Mary Grace Ketner, Rowena Rogers, Marilyn Stavinoha, Dorothy Wallace and a hundred or so others from all over town (and UUs from Austin!) came together for a rally at the ICE office where the group presented a "Stop Jailing Children" petition.

Jonathan Ryan, then Director of RAICES, had called the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) asking for help. In 2015, they put Hannah Hafner from the UU College of Social Justice on the job. She gathered up a half dozen or so volunteer lawyers and Spanish

interpreters to help RAICES for a few summer weeks. They stayed here in a home that belonged to the Mennonite Church, and several Social Justice Committee members joined them in an evening of welcome.

That summer Pam Sparr from the UU Service Committee came from Boston and joined Rev. Josh Snyder and Rev. Chuck Freeman and about a dozen of us in a rally in support of Sulma Franco, a Guatemalan LGBT activist then in sanctuary at Austin's First UU church. Karen Emerson brightened the time by leading us in song and it turned out that Franco received her papers to stay in the U.S. that very day! We celebrated afterwards at a nearby Starbucks. I wish I could remember who was sitting around that long table! (Mike, Diane, Pam, Karen, Rowena, Vicki...? C'mon! Fess up!)



Rev. Meg Barnhouse announces that Sulma Franco may remain in the US.

Maria Bush, June Kachtik, Mary Grace Ketner, and Lani Van Petten attended a forum on Family Detention held primarily to inform some of our legislators before their visit to the Karnes unit. Only Joaquin Castro and Lloyd Doggett appeared and listened.

Our Community Responsibility Endowment Fund awarded \$5000 to RAICES. Mike Phillips' Letter to the Editor, which took issue with the editorial position on SB 4 which would have required local law enforcement to fully cooperate with ICE, was published by the *San Antonio Express-News*.

In January of 2016 the National Board of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and UUA President Peter Morales made a visit to our church. We hosted a dinner and discussion by a panel of Jonathan Ryan (RAICES), Mary Grace Ketner (IWC), Chuck Freeman (TXUUJM) and Kathleen Mc Teague (UUCSJ). The UUSC Board listened attentively and asked good questions. That same month we awarded two of our Courageous Love Awards to Jonathan Ryan and Rev. Kelly Allen.

IWC gave a training in the Ketner home which attracted about a dozen people, including First UUs Margie and Bill Day, Chuck Gibbons, Margarita Lara, Brigid Peña, and Rowena Rogers.

In 2016, the Mennonite house was not available, so Hannah asked First UU to house their volunteers—and we did! For two summers, 2016 and 2017, two-week home stays were offered by Maria Bush, Terri Chadwick, April & Alan Chase, Pat Cummins, Judy Godinez, Justine & Grey Hansen, Jenny Hixon, Jeff & Mary Grace Ketner, Peter & Marguerite Meyers, Nancy Price, Gail Reinhart, Lani van Petten, Ellen Remenchik, and Mary Wright & Bill Bush. Ron and Vicki Tullius met people at the airport or bus station, and cars were offered for local travel by Dale Moore, Mike Phillips, and Sylvia Wheeler. The Chase's home was used for dinner and an orientation both summers for each of the six groups of volunteers.

At the invitation of Pam Sparr, Mike Phillips and Mary Grace Ketner gave a "pop-up" workshop on the border situation at UUSC's booth at General Assembly.

For the most part, IWC was serving 50 people on a big day, but on a cold, rainy weekend in December 2016, [ICE released busloads](#)! Ultimately almost 500 moms and children were dropped off over two days at the Mennonite Church. Pastor John Garland and the kind congregation welcomed them, and IWC, Catholic Charities, and alarmed citizens showed up to help feed and comfort them and drive them to the airport or bus station as their departures approached.

First UU's Jenny Hixon, then Director of Education and Outreach for RAICES, flew into action, pulling sheets, blankets, and a hundred air mattresses out of thin air! People brought food, diapers, blankets, clothing, and cuddly toys or ordered supplies from IWC's [amazon.com](#) list. Stymied at how unresponsive ICE was, Jenny, Mayor Ivy Taylor, City Manager Sheryl Sculley, several city council members and IWC and RAICES leaders met with the Director of the San Antonio ICE office. It was several days before all of the asylum seekers were on their way to their families and sponsors. Jenny managed the crisis tirelessly and masterfully, and that year, after much discussion and for the *only* time ever, we awarded the Courageous Love Award to a member of our own congregation! In accepting it, Jenny powerfully expressed her gratitude to this congregation for their work.

A few weeks later, the "housemother" of the overnight shelter home wished to visit her family for Christmas. Various churches supplied volunteers and meals for the week, including our church, which served dinner to the sheltered families on Christmas Day.



June Kachtik presents the Courageous Love Award to Jenny Hixon.



Advocates from all over SA gather to consider Sanctuary in our city.

In 2017, after hosting the second cadre of UUCSJ volunteers, we presented a touring art exhibit, The Power of Hope containing art created by women and teens in a nearby detention center. The curator Rev. Dr. Helen Boursier directed a volunteer art program at the facility for two years before being discharged. A collection of the heart-rending works may be viewed at <http://refugeeartblog.com>.

Then in October, Moon Brand established the *Grupo Operativo Santuario* for our church to discuss and take appropriate action. They posted "ICE may not enter" signs on the many doors of our church, and Moon, Nancy Howard and Angela Pardo trained themselves to give "Know Your Rights"

classes at our church and other area locations. The Grupo began a program of accompanying asylum seekers on their ICE appointments, ankle monitor check-ins, and court hearings—a program which is still practiced today through IWC. Some also accompanied or hosted migrants who needed to terminate a pregnancy. Regulars included Moon, Rosa Brownlee, Rico Espinoza, Linda Nash, Alison & Russell Hom-Crosier, Nancy Howard, and Vicki Tullius.

Alison Hom-Crosier met with the Balcones Heights Police Chief to let him know that our church was discussing sanctuary. We hosted a compassionate collaboration in one enormous and [newsworthy way](#) with an all faith gathering of over 100 people in our fellowship hall to confer and to hear a discussion about sanctuary in our city by a panel including Jenny Hixon and Justin Tullius. We voted to become a Sanctuary congregation, understanding that we were not set up for long-term residency, but we were prepared to lend what support we could.

In December, Rev. Kathleen McTeague of the UU College of Social Justice gave a tender sermon and commended our service. She also gave us a shout-out at GA the following summer.

In January, of 2018, we presented a Courageous Love Award to Sr. Denise LaRock, IWC's unofficial but very effective "CEO." RAICES and IWC were both selected to receive a Share the Plate offering.

The spring and summer of 2018 saw the largest surge of asylum seekers yet challenging the ability of the generous parishioners of Travis Park Church, a block from the bus station, to shelter and aid them. The city, Catholic Charities, RAICES, IWC and many others came to the rescue. Scott Emerson Price organized a team from our church to fill an opening on Sunday evenings to assist and support the many migrants, not just from Central America now, but also from Haiti and central Africa, many speaking French and other languages. Dana Clark, Lysa Hieber, Gale Morrow, Linda Nash, Vicki Tullius, Ellen Remenchik, and Stephanie Sepaugh joined Scott in the effort.

In 2019, Vicki Tullius organized a team which met monthly to pack 50 double lunches for IWC volunteers to distribute to asylum seekers at the bus station. Many members donated food or money; the assembly team included Marge and Dave Boyer, Tim and Beth Chandler, Bill and Brian Evans, Maggi Joseph, Mary Grace Ketner, Pam Kirk, Debra Loya, Megan McGeachin, Peter Meyer, Bonnie Pope, Miriam Thompson, Sylvia Wheeler, Rue Wood, and others who dropped in to help a time or two. The lunch prep work continued until the pandemic prevented volunteers from working at the bus station.



Assembling lunch bags for asylum seekers at the bus station.

That summer, Donna Pereira, Jan Realini, Moon Brand, Judy Godinez, Vicki Tullius, and Mary Grace Ketner presented a worship service telling tender and funny stories of their work with immigrants. Other members also wrote their stories used in an insert for the order of service: Sophia Heartner, Linda Nash, Ellen Remenchik and Dana Clark.

When Texas Impact offered a Court Observer Training in Kerrville, we showed up! Moon Brand, Bill and Marjie Day, Jim Funk, June Kachtik, Mary Grace Ketner, Linda Nash, Arlis Olsen, Mary Ringer, Vicki Tullius, and Darcy Walker made the pilgrimage.



Jan Realini presents our Courageous Love Award to City Manager Eric Walsh.

A rally held in Laredo, “Bold Border Action,” was attended by Moon and Paloma Brand, Judy Godinez, Mary Grace Ketner, Jan Realini, and Vicki Tullius

In 2020, our congregation awarded our city manager Eric Walsh with the Courageous Love Award for his quick action the summer before in establishing the Migrant Resource Center. He found an unused city-owned location near the bus station and staffed it with city personnel aided by volunteers.

That summer, shelters around the U.S. began to require that asylum seekers who were going to a shelter (instead of to their families) had to isolate for 14 days first. Our church, its facilities largely unused, was prepared to host a family for that period, and members had donated cots, mattresses, bedrolls, sheets, towels, pillows, and money for food and other needs. However, instead the city rented a motel-type facility where families could be sheltered, and our congregation created a “Team Eats” to provide for one Haitian family who resided at this “Bungalow Shelter.”

“Team Eats” was led by Rue Wood, and team members Tim and Beth Chandler, Alexis Duda, Claudia Glass, Justine Hansen, Asma Kahn, Tracey Knouse, Debra Loya, and Darcy Walker. Our little family even received special, difficult-to-find but beloved items such as plantains! In addition, Moon Brand spent many long days as the onsite manager at the shelter until a manager could be hired.

Between March and May of 2021, our church hosted 9 families (22 individuals) from Haiti, the Ivory Coast, and Venezuela. They occupied the Fellowship Hall and Building 5, not in use due to COVID, for a total of 44 days. We had already collected cots and bedding, and we formed “crews” to make everything flow. The Cleaning and Laundry crew was led by Debra Loya, supplies by Esperanza Garza-Danweber, “Team Eats” by Rue Wood, and Donna Pereira served as the church liaison. Volunteers included Mike and Moon Brand, Pat Beck, Beth and Tim Chandler, Sean Danweber, Rico Espinoza, Claudia Glass, Justine Hansen, Lysa Hieber, Betsy Kropp, Debra Loya, Sheri Phillabaum, Jan Realini,



Debra Loya and Rue Wood stock a “bungalow” for our Haitian family.

David Rodriguez, Tina Solis, and Darcy Walker. Rev. Mark Skrabacz visited the families regularly to be sure their needs were met.

Choir member Khadijah Jabar collected donations and supplies to go to Del Rio where there are fewer resources for immigrants. CREF awarded \$4000 to IWC for backpacks.

This year, First UU Church partnered with BLAC and Reliable Revolutionaries to help Haitian refugees and also collected food, clothing, blankets, and sundries for them. And we have just completed a drive suggested by TXUJYM for baby things to go to a shelter in Piedras Negras where families await their chance to cross the border and apply for asylum. (I loved getting to chat with you as you dropped off your bundles of goodies!)

I have probably missed a hundred names, though I caught 88 separate names! It has been a wild adventure for us doing this work! Sometimes it seems like just the “same old bunch” does it all, but, in our case, that “same old bunch” has proven to be all of us!

This is a record in progress. If you or someone you know attended an event or made some other contribution, please let me know!

The Power of Hello: Security Training

By Rev. Nell Newton

Members of our church have been engaged in ongoing talks about improving our security and reducing our risks. This type of discussion can sometimes feel like it is all about closing in, walling ourselves off, becoming mistrustful, and keeping people out. But, done well, this is actually about welcoming folks in very well. Indeed, it is about welcoming in people better than we’ve ever welcomed folks before. It’s about letting them know that we care enough about them to notice them and find ways for them to join us safely and comfortably.

This work is about setting boundaries and holding boundaries. At first, this can feel at odds with the intention of being radically hospitable. But radical hospitality does not mean welcoming folks with zero boundaries or expectations. Instead, radical hospitality depends upon respectful relationships that is at the basis of all boundaries.

We all have the right to be safe on our campus. We have the right to set and hold boundaries with one another and our visitors.

Now... as we do this work, you might really begin to worry that we are in imminent danger and more vulnerable to extreme violence. And that is a possibility. But statistically, such incidents are really rare and we as UUs are at no more risk than any other house of worship.

Yes, we will prepare for crisis moments, but are also preparing for the less extreme disruptions that we are already familiar with: vandalism, vagrancy, and visitors experiencing mental health or domestic crises. This training we have attended is teaching us how to quickly respond to these common disruptions with great care to keep our campus, our staff, our congregants and renters, and our visitors safer.

So, please, let's do this work, not out of fear, but with the intention of making our campus a truly welcoming and safe place. For a glimpse of what we have been learning, view the "Power or Hello" at [GSA training video: The power of 'hello' on Vimeo](#)

Eating as a Spiritual Practice

By Lóre Stevens

Reprinted from the UU World magazine, Fall/Winter 2022 edition

Like many folks, I lost work when the pandemic hit, and I turned to my community's food pantry. The food they delivered was surprising in both quality and quantity. But I grew up on freezer food and microwave meals, and though I am Mexican American, I had no idea what to do with a bag of dried beans. Then I found an incredible cookbook, *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican American Recipes for Health and Healing*, whose author Luz Calvo writes, "Cooking a pot of beans from scratch is a revolutionary act that honors both our ancestors and future generations."

In 2011, Unitarian Universalists adopted a Statement of Conscience entitled "Ethical Eating: Food & Environmental Justice," which explained that the current American food culture harms the environment, animals, and humanity. Fertilizers and over-farming, pesticides and factory processes, and methane and fuel emissions pollute the air, water, and soil. Cows, pigs, and chickens are subject to sickening conditions in factory farms. From migrant farmers to slaughterhouse laborers, illness and injury are more common than the healthcare needed to treat them.

For those of us who eat industrially produced food, the harm is no less real. The unhealthy Western diet disproportionately affects the poor and brown peoples to whom it is historically new. In her book, *Recovering the Sacred*, Winona LaDuke notes: "By the end of the 20th century, one in eight Native Americans had diabetes, a rate that is twice that of the non-Indian population."

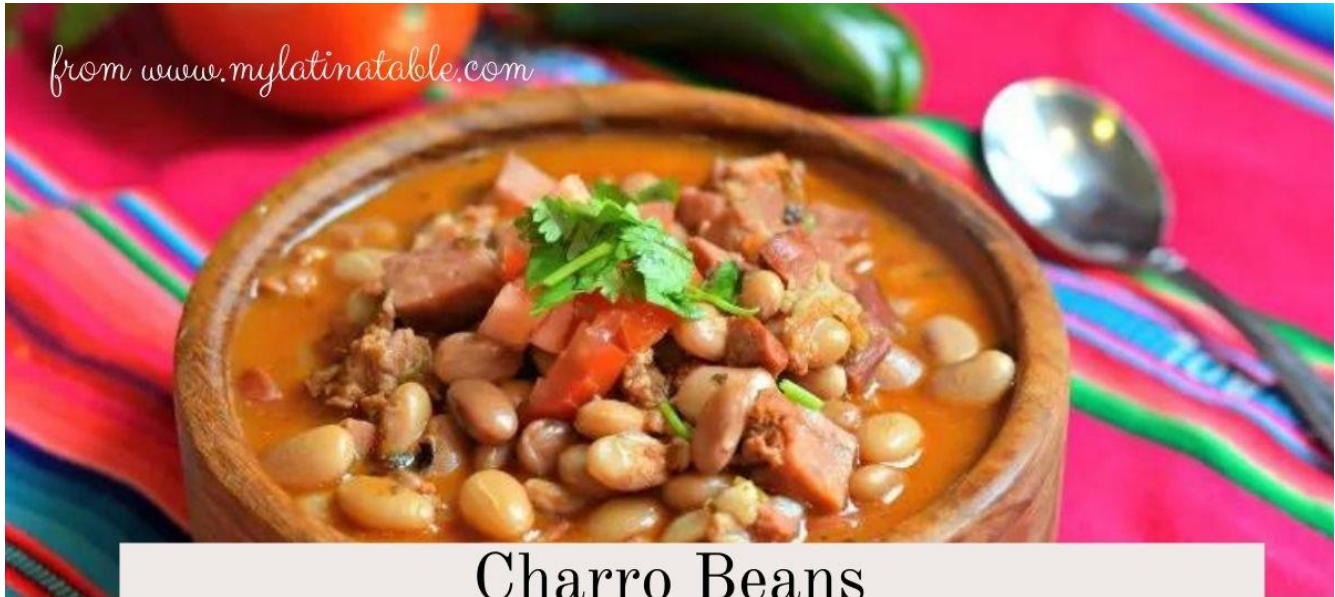
Natural disasters due to climate change—and the war in Ukraine—are creating food shortages across the globe, with a disproportionate impact on Indigenous peoples and the crops they rely on.

"We are all involved with the problem, which means each of us can affect the remedy."

Food, which should be life-giving, is killing us. We are all involved with the problem, which means each of us can affect the remedy. And lucky for us, food justice is also an incredible avenue for dismantling white supremacy, making this not just a struggle against climate change, but for climate justice. Predominantly white, well-off UUs can support our Indigenous neighbors as they fight against corporate seed patenting, overfishing, and land theft. We can support Latinx migrant worker efforts to gain adequate pay, citizenship, and industry standards that poison neither farmers nor consumers. We can follow the lead of Jewish and Muslim communities who are thoughtful about how livestock is killed, as in the Islamic practice of humane *zabiha*. In urban food deserts, or where healthy foods come from expensive stores, we can support community gardens.

When we honor and nourish the medicinal ecosystem of food, the soil will moisten and darken. The water will clear and flow. The air will dance and cleanse. If we restore what we have harmed, all will heal and flourish.

from www.mylatinatable.com



Charro Beans

Charro Beans is an authentic Mexican recipe that is mainly consumed in the northern part of Mexico and is commonly served alongside carne asada.

Ingredients

- 16 oz uncooked pinto beans
- 5 slices bacon cut into smaller pieces
- 3 beef franks cut into cubes
- 1 cup ham cut into cubes
- 1 pound Mexican chorizo
- 2 tomatoes diced
- 1/2 bunch of cilantro chopped
- 1/2 onion diced
- jalapeño if desired
- 1 more chipotle peppers depending on how spicy you want it
- 1 clove garlic chopped
- pepper oregano, paprika, cumin, and salt to taste.

Directions

To Cook the Pinto Beans - Stove top

- Add the rinsed beans to a large pot with plenty of water, salt, and a small piece of onion.
- Let boil for about 1.5 hours, checking often to make sure that there is still enough water.

To Cook the Pinto Beans - Slow Cooker

- Add the rinsed beans to a slow cooker with plenty of water, salt, and a small piece of onion.
- Turn the slow cooker on to high and heat for 3 hours.

To Make The Charro Beans

- Add the bacon to a large pot and cook for about 5 minutes.
- Add the chorizo and continue cooking until cooked through.
- After about 5 minutes, add the ham, the beef franks, and the seasonings (including the garlic).
- Next, add the tomatoes, the cilantro, the onion, the jalapeno, and the chipotle pepper and cook for 5 additional minutes.
- Finally, add the cooked pinto beans and the water that they were cooked in and let boil for about 15 minutes so that all of the flavors can combine.
- If you want to thicken your charro beans, you can combine 2 tablespoons of corn starch with 1/4 cup of cold water and mix well before adding it to the pot.
- Serve hot as a side dish or on its own.

Pagan News

By Sylvia Wheeler

Celestial Celebration Circle has been busy this past quarter. We celebrated Fall Equinox in September with an outdoor ritual. Fall Equinox is an astronomical event where, at the exact point of the Equinox, both day & night are assumedly equal in length. For our ritual, we focused on equality in many different forms. From this point on, until Winter Solstice, darkness will overtake light in the physical world. We wanted to point out that there is much darkness in today's world - worldwide climate change, which threatens everyone; the war in Ukraine which causes more food insecurity than before; the U.S. midterm elections in which this country is strongly divided on who should be in charge and how those in charge should use the power they perceive they have. From here, we put forth our statement of intent – “We work for Justice & Healing...for the earth, for the living world.”



In order to put energy into these statements, we ‘ran’ the Pentacle of the Crossroads. In order to ‘run’ this Pentacle, we started at the third eye (in the middle of the forehead) and focused on Choice. What choices do we have? From there, we moved the energy to the right foot where we focused on Liberation. How can we use this energy in constructive liberation for all? From there, we moved the energy to the left hand where we focused on Justice. What can we do to have a more just world? Next, we moved the energy to the left foot where we focused on Peace. How can we bring Peace into our world? Then, we moved the energy to the right hand where we focused on Compassion. A reminder to always act with



compassion. Last, but definitely not least, we returned to the third eye and Choice. In order to ‘seal’ this work, we encircled, in a deosil manner, all the points. For this ritual, we had about 25 participants with a mixture of congregants and others who chose to join us.

In October, we celebrated Samhain (from the Celtic language and pronounced sou-win). This is known as a cross quarter day, as it is in between Fall Equinox and Winter Solstice. I call this - Our Big Blowout Ritual. We celebrated it with a

lot of drama in which we made sure all participants had a part. This is the time in the Wheel of the Year when the 'veil between the worlds' is thinnest and we can, hopefully, communicate with our 'Beloved Dead' or those who have crossed over to the other side, 'beyond the veil'. We prepared for this with song and a ritual carrying of a representative Beloved Dead to the land of Avalon, which helped us meet with whomever might appear. We then honored all those congregants and personal beloveds who had crossed over, by calling out their names. By calling out names, participants hoped to get a message from their beloved. For this ritual, we had about 25 participants, including some from high school and smaller children with their parents.

In November, three intrepid souls plus the host braved the unseasonable cold of the pre-Thanksgiving Labyrinth Walk for 2022. Darcy Walker did a wonderful job of leading this function.

Members of Celestial Celebration Circle planning group were invited to participate in the Sunday morning Religious Education gathering of the High Schoolers, in order to familiarize them with the Samhain ritual to which they were invited. Victoria Valerga and I presented a very short outline of the ritual and then opened up to any questions which came forth.

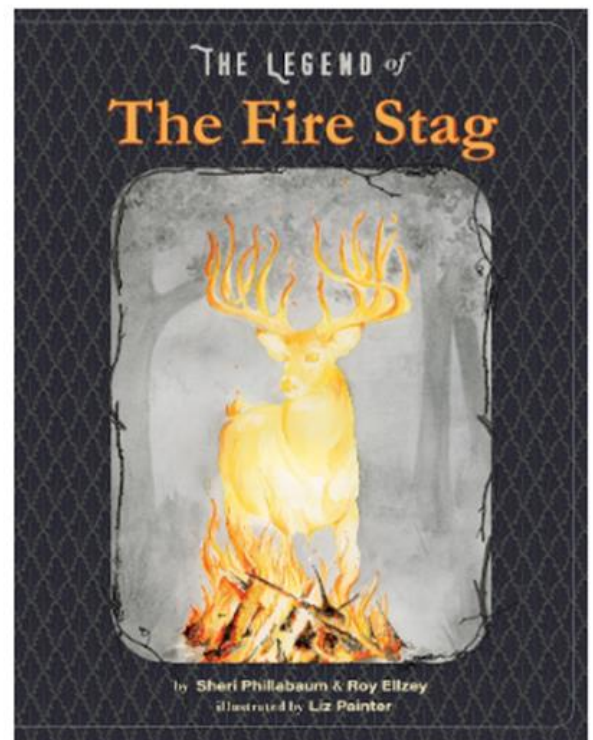
And a parting note - Celestial Celebration Circle and Religious Education both had very successful Food Bank drives where we completely filled a trash can size container at the Food Bank. Congratulations!

The Legend of Fire Stag

By Carol Collins

Sheri Phillabaum, our former Director of Lifespan Religious Education has written a second book, *The Legend of the Fire Stag*, which celebrates the deep connections that can form between the land and its inhabitants, human and nonhuman. This is the story of a magnificent stag who once guarded and cared for the creatures of the land that became Cielo Grande Ranch, and of the young boy who inherits his legacy.

The book will encourage children to establish a connection with nature, be in tune with their surroundings and use their imaginations. Copies of the book, autographed by Sheri, are available in the Emerson Bookshop Plus, located off of the Sanctuary foyer. The bookshop is open on Sundays after service. Also, available in the church bookshop are copies of Sheri's first book, *Who Loves the Dark?*



UU the Vote SA: Working to Save Democracy

By Jan Realini

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

This year our congregation stepped up and took action to live out our value of preserving democracy! First Unitarian Universalist (UU) Church of San Antonio was exceptionally active in many ways:

- Registering Voters at local events, colleges, and high schools
- Sending more than 2,400 encouraging letters and more than 500 postcards to voters
- Phone-banking and text-banking
- Strengthening our relationships with each other by sharing our concerns and fears in small-group House Meetings and at our August Congregational Assembly
- Collaborating with COPS/Metro at the September multi-congregational Delegates Assembly and the statewide Industrial Areas Foundation policy meeting
- Building capacity by training volunteers from our congregation and other COPS/Metro congregations
- Encouraging voting in neighborhoods near our church by block-walking and talking to voters
- Protecting our elections by serving as Election Judges, Election Clerks, and Poll Monitors
- Collaborating with the League of Women Voters of San Antonio to register and educate voters

Kudos to the UU the Vote SA Coordinating Team and Volunteers: Arlis Olson, Renee Wood, Mary Barad, Mary Ellen Kujawski, Desiree Kannell, John Dagger, Rev Nell Newton, Gretchen Ferris, James Chenault, Linda Nash, Marsha Meredith, Mary Wright, Terry Palin, Carol Bertsch, Tim and Beth Chandler, Cindy Daughtrey, Sharon Flicker, Bridget Laflin, Terri Chadwick, and Jan Realini. Many others—a total of 69(!) at the Congregational Assembly alone—did their part, as well.

The national UU the Vote campaign is the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA's) non-partisan campaign to mobilize UUs around the country to Get Out the Vote. UU the Vote is one part of the UUA's Side with Love approach to social justice issues in our country. Congregations all over the country have been working hard to engage their members and their communities to vote for democracy and justice.

In Texas, our Texas UU Justice Ministry (TXUUJM), has been connecting Texas congregations with each other through monthly meetings of the TXUUJM Advisory Council. We learn from each other, support each other, and amplify social justice actions—including UU the Vote efforts of the various congregations.

The 2022 midterm elections have been critical to preserving our democracy. Efforts in some states and communities have been successful in overcoming structural obstacles like extreme gerrymandering and voter suppression. For now, democracy is still with us, but it is still hanging by a thread. The dangers have not gone away. We have to keep on fighting for it.

After the midterm election, our UU the Vote SA team met and decided that our work needs to continue. We want to engage voters and others in our congregation in the work. We hope that you will join the effort to build deeper relationships and work for a stronger democracy.

First UU Members 'UU the Vote' with Citizens' Climate Lobby

By Diane Duesterhoeft

Six UUs wrote 230 nonpartisan Get Out the Vote postcards to [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) (CCL) members on Saturday, October 1st and Saturday, October 15th. I've included the script of what we wrote, the front of the postcard, and a couple photos from our postcard writing parties.

Our CCL-San Antonio chapter had a goal of writing and sending 1,000 postcards to Texas CCL members to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) for the Fall 2022 Elections.



The front of the postcard that was sent to Texas CCL members.



First UU members Cheryl Lardy, Diane Duesterhoeft, Tracey Knouse, and Mike Phillips wrote postcards at Old Town Helotes on Saturday, October 1, 2022.



Some of our CCL-SA members at the Postcard Party, including Paula Pebsworth and Mike Phillips, at Alamo Beer Company on Saturday, October 15, 2022



Mailing CCL postcards at the Leon Valley Post Office on October 20, 2022.

Thanksgiving 2022

By Dorothy Wallace

What a great event! Over 80 people attended our annual Thanksgiving Dinner, the first since COVID closed us down in 2020. The food was so varied and delicious – there were even leftovers for people to take home. Thanks to everyone who attended – the fellowship was fantastic! Looking for new hosts for next year – if you are interested, contact the church office (office@uusat.org) or Dorothy Wallace (lee20@flash.net).



New at Emerson Bookshop Plus!

By Carol Collins

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee teams up with Equal Exchange to support fair trade and small farmer cooperatives. Now available are Palestinian extra virgin olive oil, hot chocolate mix, chocolate chips, 10 varieties of chocolate bars, black, green, and herbal teas, drip and whole bean coffees from decaf to Love Buzz and French Roast.

Also available in the bookshop:

- New Side with Love shirts in all adult sizes
- Stainless steel UU chalice pendants
- Monarch butterfly wing set for children
- Sheri Phillabaum's two books for children
- *Call Us What We Carry* by Amanda Gorman
- *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference* by Cordelia Fine
- *Trans Allyship Workbook: Building Skills to Support Trans People in Our Lives* by Davey Shlasko

Books from the UUA's Beacon Press and Skinner House:

Afro-Indigenous History of the US

Asian American Histories of the United States

Behavioral Code: The Hidden Ways the Law Makes Us Better ... or Worse

Black Women's History of the US, UUA

BLUU Notes: An Anthology of Love, Justice, and Liberation

Boyz n the Void: a mixtape to my brother

Christ for Unitarian Universalists

Christians Against Christianity

Collected Poems - Sonia Sanche

Held: Showing Up for Each Other's Mental Health

In This Place Together: A Palestinian's Journey to Collective Liberation

Incantations for Rest: Poems, Meditations, and Other Magic

Kindred by Octavia E. Butler

Little Did I Know: An Anthology on Loving and Companionship Young Lives

Living While Black: Using Joy, Beauty, and Connection to Heal Racial Trauma

Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm

Not "a Nation of Immigrants": Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Erasure and Exclusion

On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World

Parenting with an Accent: How Immigrants Honor Their Heritage, Navigate Setbacks, and Chart New Paths for Their Children

Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction of James Baldwin: 1948–1985

Prisons Make Us Safer ... And 20 Other Myths about Mass Incarceration

Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa

Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality, Spiritual Renewal & Sovereignty in Native America

Simply Pray

Spirit of Our Work: Black Women Teachers (Re)member
Stubborn Grace: Faith, Mental Illness, and Demanding a Blessing
Swinging on the Garden Gate, A Memoir of Bisexuality and Spirit, Second Edition
This Day in Recovery: 365 Meditations
Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America
We Need to Build: Field Notes for Diverse Democracy
When Time is Short: Finding Our Way in the Anthropocene
White Borders: The History of Race and Immigration in the United States from Chinese Exclusion to the Border Wall
White Fragility Adapted for Youth
White Space, Black Hood: Opportunity Hoarding and Segregation in the Age of Inequality

Congratulations

By Mary Wright

Congratulations to First UU's Dr. Bill Bush who was awarded a 2023 Appreciation Award from the Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty (TCADP.) The TCADP Board of Directors voted to present Dr. Bush with this award in recognition of the tremendous support he has provided in recent years for the clemency campaigns of individuals facing execution for crimes committed when they were 18 years old. They are particularly grateful for his opinion pieces in support of Billy Joe Wardlow (2020) and Ramiro Gonzales (2022), which helped to generate awareness of the inappropriateness of sentencing individuals under age 21 to death and the false determination of "future dangerousness."



TCADP is the only statewide grassroots advocacy organization dedicated solely to ending the death penalty in Texas. As a savvy and robust organization with big ideas and a big vision for transforming justice in Texas, TCADP collaborates with local, state, and national partners to reduce use of the death penalty and advocate for change at the county and state level. Together with local, state, and national partners, TCADP is working to reduce use of the death penalty in Texas and, ultimately, end this arbitrary, irreversible, and unfair punishment.

TEXAS DEATH PENALTY FACTS (from the [TCADP website](#))

The State of Texas has executed 578 people since 1982. Of these, 279 occurred during the administration of Texas Governor Rick Perry (2001-2014), more than any other governor in U.S. history.

The State of Texas has executed five people in 2022. At this time, seven executions already have been scheduled for 2023 (as of 11/17/22).

Harris County alone accounts for 131 executions, more than any state except Texas. Dallas County accounts for 62 executions, Bexar County for 46, and Tarrant County for 45.

First UU Fellowship Dinner

By Dorothy Wallace, on behalf of the 75th Anniversary Committee

So, it might have been two years late, but our long-postponed 75th Anniversary Banquet turned Fellowship Dinner on November 5th was a great success! 170 people enjoyed a night of great entertainment provided by the teams of Brian Asher & Carlos Gonzales and Dana Clark & Tbow Gonzales. Brian and Carlos wowed with their renditions of *You Are Theist, I am Humanist* and *Green Jell-O*, while Dana sang about her favorite things and an original composition initially written for our church 75th Anniversary called *Beloved Community*. Tbow kept the drum hot and joined Dana, and the gathered, for a resounding *Building a New Way*. Thank you to our talented musicians for making the evening memorable!

Mary Grace Ketner, a long-term member of the congregation, shared some of her most memorable times at the church with the Rev Rolfe Gerhardt. While her memories were from a time well before most people gathered for the event, we could still gather the threads of the importance of our religious community and project them into our present. Thank you so much Mary Grace, for tugging at our heart strings.



We also honored our church forebears at the dinner by keeping a table set but empty, adorned with church memories and symbols. Our Founders are no longer with us, but we honored our most senior members: Doris Norton, Peggy Lippert, Maggi Joseph, Mary Potter, and Charles Bonney. We are grateful for you and your ongoing commitment to our congregation! We rounded out the evening with some dancing! YMCA and everything, y'all!

Celebrations are important, especially in our church family. They help us understand our identity as UUs (we had a video from our UUA President, the Rev Susan Frederick Gray!), garner respect and understanding among ourselves as members, and help make our community stronger! They are an extension of our weekly worship, and an import stone in building the Beloved Community!

Some final Thank Yous to all those who helped plan and set up for the banquet, it wouldn't have happened without YOU: Rev Mark (program input), Bridget Laflin (childcare coordination), Terry Palin (MC and set up), Heather Hedquist (set up), Polly Noel (gluten free cupcakes), Pat Beck (set up), Jessica Latimer (set up), Sophia Vackimes (set up), and Cindy Daughtrey (set up).

And to all members who donated money to the 75th Anniversary Fund – thank you, and I hope we did you proud!

Trust Fund for Endowments

By Arlis Olson

Our thanks to the following people who made donations since the last newsletter.

August: birthday matches - Dorothy Wallace and Lee Hampton; Howard and Diane Berger

September: birthday matches - Bill Bush and Mary Wright, Terri Chadwick, Peggy Lippert, Debra Loya, Gary and Marianne Ross

October: birthday matches – Bill Christ; Memoriam for Joycelyn Rudelof - Arlis Olson

Total collected for the quarter: \$589.00.

The First UU Endowment Fund was established in 1972 to provide financial stability and funding for special church needs, maintenance, and improvements. Sufficient funds in this account help support the long-term viability of the church. It is the fund that was used to help build our Sanctuary and interest has been used for myriad projects such as roofing air conditioning, etc.

There is some confusion between the Endowment funds. The Community Responsibility Endowment Fund supports community organizations and initiatives. It is in reasonable financial shape due to a generous donation from Community Church (the other UU church in San Antonio now closed). The Trust Fund for Endowment is used, as previously stated, for our own needs. The following is from an evaluation by the UUA in 2016 (Next Steps Visit Report):

“The Trust Endowment needs Growth, Attention, and Exposure, including a Legacy Society. The Trust Endowment is extremely small for a congregation of this size and age.

The history of this matter is well known, but it is past time to advance the program into high gear. That there is a separate endowment for community contributions is a good thing, indeed; that the community endowment is about three times the size of the church's own trust endowment should not be acceptable for those of you who care about the future of the church's congregation. This is important for the future of First UU and provides an important opportunity for members to make a long-term commitment."

The Trust fund has more than doubled in size since 2016 but is still woefully underfunded. Most of what was collected this quarter was for birthday matches. We encourage donating a dollar for each year from the date of your birth. You can also make donations in memory or in honor of someone. Lastly, we ask that you consider the church in your estate planning.

The Rusty Knight

By Roy Ellzey

While walking by myself one day
I came upon a hidden bay.
There I saw an incredible sight.
Before me stood a rusty knight!

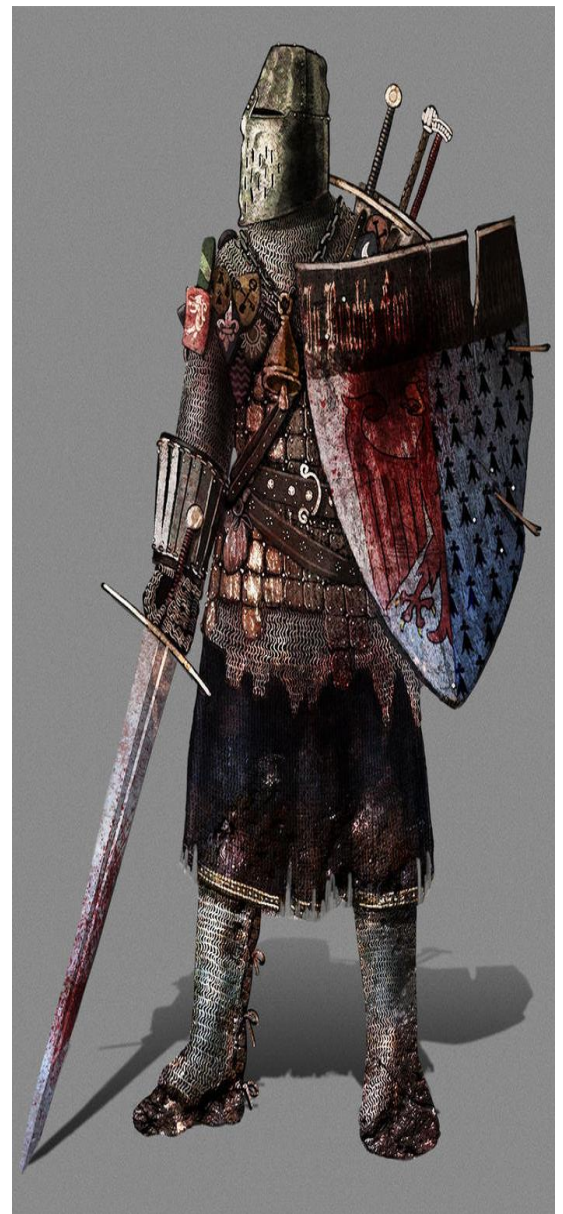
"Hello, said I." "Hello" said he
As he turned his head and looked at me.
"Why are you here?" Said I.
He paused to consider, then gave his reply.

"I'm here to do what I'm supposed to do.
Slay dragons, vanquish villains, and save fair maidens too.
These are the things I have continually sought
Since the academy of knights where I was taught."

"You mean you actually do these things?" Said I.
"Well no, but I'm well prepared." He said with a sigh.
"I have stood at the ready these many years,
But the demand for knights has waned it appears."

"There **are** no dragons! The villains have **lawyers!**" I raved.
"The fair maidens wear pants, and don't want to be saved."
"Perhaps you are right." Said he, "and there is no need for me.
But if you are wrong, then on that chance, here I'll be."

I stayed no longer, as darkness was soon to fall.
Yet as I looked back, he stood straight and tall.
The scene was still vivid as I dreamed that night,
But I stood in place of the rusty knight.



10/24/1989

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 Racial Justice Congregation.

We are a congregation committed to racial equity and justice, within ourselves, our church and the wider community.

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

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