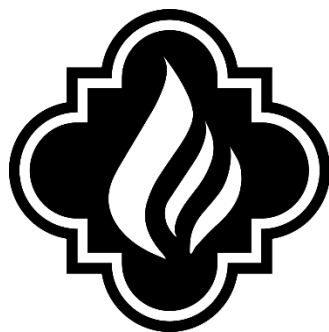


Fall 2023

INSPIRE

The official magazine of
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio



FIRST UU
SAN ANTONIO

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Inspire

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Cover photo:

Co-chairs of First UU's Rainbow Inclusion Committee, Leslie Hinson and Pam Illar, at this year's "Pride Bigger than Texas" festival.

A Gift for You

By Rev. Mark Skrabacz

When a minister leaves a church congregation on good terms at the end of a ministry, it is a harmonious conclusion to a significant chapter in both the minister's and the congregation's lives. It's a time for gratitude, reflection, growth, and the hopeful anticipation of new beginnings.

My foremost goal for this final year of my ministry with you is to leave well. I anticipate for you a healthier and more complete closure than you had with previous ministers, and that my leaving well will help us avoid feelings of disruption or lingering questions about the accomplishments of our ministry together. My retirement presents the opportunity to look into the near and distant future and ask ourselves who we wish to be, and how we plan on growing into that promise?

A harmonious departure can also strengthen the trust and respect within the congregation. This healthy atmosphere can lead to positive future relationships with new leaders and ministers. When a minister leaves on good terms, it can facilitate a smoother transition to the next phase of the congregation's life. The congregation can more readily embrace change and welcome a new minister or leaders or a new phase with an open heart.

During the four+ years I will have spent with you, I will have served in relationship with 5 distinct Boards of Trustees and will conclude my service on July 31, 2024. Throughout this time, these Boards and I have had many conversations that have developed our governance. Governance means the way we organize ourselves around the mission or purpose we gather together to accomplish. Everything we do should further our mission. Our mission statement tells us and the world who we are, what we are concerned about and, even more significantly, what we are doing about these concerns.

Many of you may be familiar with this idea of a mission and other statements that describe a congregation's vision, values, and ends. It has been 10 years since our church has engaged these areas together in conversation. During these years we have become a different congregation. Now in 2023 seems a good time to re-engage with each other regarding them. Hence, in order for us to leave each other well, I am providing a gift for you to become a more renewed and revitalized congregation than the one I found when I arrived for my initial visits in 2019. This gift consists of my encouragement and financial support to our Board to contract with Unity Consulting to assist us in refocusing on these significant areas.

The Board will soon invite us as a congregation to participate in a series of facilitated meetings to converse and develop our answers to a powerful question to be announced soon. I look forward to participating with you in the processes of

listening and speaking to each other as we consider who we are and who we are becoming. Please watch for announcements from our Board and direct your questions to them. They will be happy to share more with you. Blessed be!

Lay-Led Summer Service Success!

By Rev. Nell Newton

Summer can be a lumpy time for worship. Weary ministers wander off to General Assembly, study leave, and/or vacation, leaving the Worship Committee scrambling to fill the vacant pulpit. Here at First UU, you have the coverage of two ministers, but there are still gaps in the calendar.

Mindful of the looming gaps, this past spring I offered a series of classes on Sermon Writing with the goal of preparing people to lead summer services. In the classes, students learned ways to structure a sermon and integrate their words with music and story. They learned to edit their sermons, guided by questions of inclusion and respect. We also covered the technical details of how to use a microphone and how to keep a service to 60 minutes.

The classes were a great success! Jennifer Courtwright, Debu Dasgupta, and Kam Davison used what they learned to create three beautiful and wise services in July and August. Each one spoke from their lived experiences and gave voice to their highest commitments. They wove together music, stories, readings, and ritual to illustrate their ideas. And they made it look easy!

Buoyed by this success, in early April, I will offer the Sermon Writing classes again. If you have a sermon seed germinating, or you are just curious about how to articulate your theological perspectives, mark your calendar and consider adding your voice to the richness of our shared worship!

Finding Hope in Dry and Uncertain Times: Wisdom from Intermittent Streams

By Jennifer Courtwright

At the July 9th service, 74 congregants wrote down one thing that makes them hopeful and one thing that makes them anxious with the intent of sharing these responses in a work of art similar to Candy Chang and James Reeves's artwork in the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City entitled "*A Monument to the Anxious and Hopeful*". The word clouds below are the compilation of all those responses. The larger the word the more individuals that included that word in their response. The word clouds include 100 words from the responses that occurred most frequently

and were not extraneous words such as “the” and “and”. Common themes emerged between what we are hopeful and what we are anxious about, and you will notice many words appear in both clouds showing the complexity of the human condition. The ministers and church leadership will be reflecting on these themes and individual responses in the coming months but here is a brief summary.

We find **hope** in community, belonging, and shared experiences. We are particularly hopeful because of the next generation, our youth, children, and grandchildren. Some of us are innately optimistic, while others are hopeful because of changes that they see happening or are simply fully living in the present moment. Lastly, we are hopeful because of forces and things larger than ourselves: God/Goddess, our spirituality, the earth, the transient nature of all things, and creativity, renewal, and growth.

We are **anxious** because we are afraid for the people we love and those most vulnerable. We are particularly anxious because of climate change and divisions and polarization of our democracy. We feel that there are many out there that do not share our values, that refuse to listen, and that spread hatred and fear. At an individual level, we are anxious because of change, the unknown, and loss, which are particularly felt as we age and face death. Lastly, we are afraid of failing and the sheer number of things that we are facing.

I am hopeful because:



I am anxious because:



CREF FUUnd Lunch

By Tracey Knouse

On August 13th, First UU held its first FUUND Lunch in quite some time. The lunch featured a Mediterranean theme and was hosted by the Community Responsibility Endowment Fund (CREF) Board.

CREF provides grant awards to deserving non-profits in the San Antonio metro area for projects that align with UU principles. The CREF Board wants to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers that helped with food donations and set up and clean up for the meal. A huge thank you to all the folks that attended the lunch and generously donated as the proceeds totaled \$600 for CREF.

Please plan to attend the October 15th church service when CREF will present the 2023 community grants and host a reception afterwards on the patio.



Pride Festival

By Pam Illar

“Pride Bigger than Texas” was a wonderful event for First UU this year. When looking out upon the park there was a constant flow of all colors under the rainbow. The colors this year represented the inclusion of all our brothers and sisters under the sun. There was a confidence that seemed to beam from all who came out to join the festivities. This year there seems to have been a swell of hate in the world, but for twos and threes and so on, gathering the hope of love will always win out. We showed pride in who we are, who we love, how we love, and where we love. We had pride in our belief in humanity and the world’s people. The simple act of showing up gave our numbers much more power. All of the colors spoke to us in a simple message of hope, dignity, and belief in the greater good.

First UUs showed up in great numbers this year. We had both known and some very welcomed new faces. Acting together with a common purpose, we greeted those that approached the booth with the welcome of our community. We spoke freely and proudly of the good works we get into, painted with the broad brush of our social justice causes and beliefs.

Hearing that a church community is welcoming is far different from the actions it takes to support the effort. We spoke about our involvement in the community from a social justice perspective and our newly dedicated 8th principle committing to accountability among our racial justice efforts. The modest swag we had to give away, including lovely fans with our church information, was perfect for a hot summer day.

We especially appreciated seeing so many of our people engaging with those who came up to the booth. Thank you for all of our vounteers!





Democracy is Messy: Reflections on the UUA General Assembly

By Jennifer Courtwright

This June at the UUA General Assembly there was a vote on whether we should continue Article II revision discussions for another year. Article II is a section of the UUA bylaws that defines what it means to be a UU and contains our current 7 principles and 6 sources among other important things. A large majority of delegates voted to move forward with the current revisions which completely overhaul the current 7 principles and 6 sources, and a final vote will be held at next year's General Assembly as to whether or not we should adopt the proposed revisions. More details about the vote are below along with my personal reflections from participating in the democratic process of proposing amendments to the revisions.

The Numbers

86% of delegates voted in favor and 14% were opposed to continuing Article II revision discussions for the next year.

~2700 delegates participated in GA which is approximately double what participated last year.

70-80% of credentialed delegates voted.

15 amendments out of 87 were selected by the UUA board and study commission to be voted on.

[The inspirations amendment proposed by First UU San Antonio](#) was not one of those selected and likely <1% of delegates read our amendment.

The 5 amendments below were approved and a tentative look at what the proposed revision to Article II looks like with these amendments can be found [here](#).

- (2.1 Purpose) adds spiritual development (93% in favor)
- (2.1 Purpose) adds creation of new UU communities (88% in favor)
- (2.3 Inspirations) adds language on mystery and wonder (72% in favor)
- (2.2 Values) revises value of Interdependence (78% in favor)
- (2.2 Values) revises justice/democracy value (73% in favor)

The other 10 amendments below were not approved

- (2.2. Values) revises equity value (72% opposed)
- (2.2 Values) adds current Seven Principles as historic context (74% opposed)
- (2.2 Values) changes language of love and covenant/accountability (80% opposed)
- (2.2. Values) adds gratitude as a value (82% opposed)
- (2.3 Inspirations) adds a revised version of the current Six Sources (79% opposed)
- (2.3 Inspirations) adds current Six Sources (89% opposed)
- (2.5 Freedom of Belief) emphasizes individual conscience (78% opposed)
- (2.4 Inclusion) replaces “share our values” with “own search for truth” (80% opposed)

The Process

Over the course of its work from 2020-2023, the Article II Study Commission engaged in 45 feedback sessions, with 4,611 total participants. Their videos reached 7,765 viewers, and their 29 surveys generated a total of 10,925 responses. The Commission published their report and final proposed revisions January 20th, 2023. Any individual UU could submit a proposed amendment to these revisions via an online chat forum starting in April and over 400 proposed amendments were submitted and discussed on this public chat forum. In May, three zoom sessions were held to attempt to consolidate those 400 amendments and find common ground but these were open to the public regardless of whether or not you had submitted an amendment. Over 200 individuals attended each of those zoom sessions. In early June, 87 amendments were submitted by official congregation delegates. The UUA board and Article II Study Commission then prioritized as many amendments as possible from that 87 to be officially voted on given the time and discussion constraints of the bylaws. Criteria for prioritization were subject to the board’s discretion but included being discussed on the online platform prior to GA and amount of perceived interest gauged via the comments on the public chat platform.

Reflections

- A statement of who we are as UUs should not be in the bylaws and legal documents. Having our principles/sources etc. in a legal document prevents creative expressions of these statements of who we are.
- Revising Article II prior to revising rules of procedure and other sections of the bylaws was putting the cart before the horse, and the UUA board iterated repeatedly that they could not make the process more democratic due to red tape currently in the bylaws. For example, all official voting on the amendments had to occur during the time allotted in GA, and there was no

flexibility to increase allotted time for discussion or have primaries to vote on amendments prior to GA.

- The UUA was completely unprepared for the increased participation this year, and simple things that could have made the process more democratic were neglected. For example, amendments were not listed with descriptive titles or categorized by section making it highly unlikely a delegate would click on and read all 87 amendments. Additionally, initial amendment discussions that were started in May were not properly advertised or organized such that discussions could be productive.
- There was not adequate opportunity to engage with the UUA board and study commission January-June of 2023. They did not participate on the online chat forums, and no feedback was provided in terms of why certain amendments were prioritized and others were not. Their feedback on the amendments that were prioritized was only given during the ~ 5 minutes allotted for discussion during GA and there was not adequate time to respond.
- Some amendments that were prioritized for discussion were misrepresented during the discussion, and moderators never addressed these misrepresentations making it unlikely delegates understood true differences among prioritized amendments.
- Despite repeated statements by the UUA board stressing that a vote in favor of the revisions this year was a vote to continue discussions, it is unclear how/if discussions will continue at a national level this year. The online chat forum has been decommissioned because the UUA did not have the staff to support moderating it. Article II revisions will likely pass by the 2/3 majority vote needed next year given the large margin by which it passed this year and the large margin by which amendments to reinstate the 7 principles and 6 sources failed. The large majority of delegates trust the UUA board and study commission's opinions and simply voted in accordance with the board and study commission regarding proposed amendments.

Next Steps

Personally, I am still undecided about these revisions. I think the amendments that passed improve on the commission's proposal, but in my opinion, they don't go far enough. [Our inspirations amendment](#) sought to add specificity to the inspirations and put inspirations back on a level playing field with our values. Focus only on values and action leads to burnout and ineffective and hypocritical movements. I do not come to church to be a part of a liberal political movement. There are plenty of other ways to do that. Instead, I come to church to be inspired and filled up. Frankly both the proposed revisions to Article II and the old Article II don't do that for me. I expected to have our amendment torn apart by wordsmithing but instead was disappointed that it received very little feedback at all on the national chat forums. As a movement, we lack creativity and inspiration needed for these difficult times. Amendments that preserved the status quo were prioritized for discussion over

amendments that had novel directions, and our amendment was by far the most creative of all amendments proposed.

Thanks to y'all's wonderful support, we were able to create an amendment that is truly beautiful and inspiring. Even though it may not belong in the UUA bylaws, my hope is that we can use the work we did to inform our religious education programs and continue discussions about what inspires you and where you find hope. For some examples of these conversations, see the "Finding Hope in Dry and Uncertain Times: Wisdom from Intermittent Streams" article in this magazine.

Eco-Connection

By Kathy McFarlane

GOOD NEWS! Our efforts to reduce landfill waste was a great success at the CREF FUUnd Lunch on July 9th! Thanks to bringing reusable tableware and other efforts, we collected 2 large bags of compost, 1 large bag of recyclables and only ½ bag of garbage (after sorting through it).

Sylvia Wheeler and I are the primary composters and garbage pickers, but we need more volunteers who are willing to help. The city of San Antonio does not currently have a community compost site therefore Sylvia has been taking the compost to the green bin at her house.



Do you have a green bin at your house? Would you be willing to help us with the composting? In fact, you can help us even if you are not coming to church! Just give us your address and we will bring the composting to you and drop it in your bin!

Did you know that the recycling rules have changed in the past ten years? Click on this link to the Environmental Protection Agency website:

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle> to learn what's new and stay up-to-date.

If you would like to help us "GO GREEN" please email greenteam@uusat.org or office@uusat.org Thank you!

Trust Fund for Endowment

By Arlis Olson

Our thanks to the following people who made donations since the last edition of Inspire:

May: Undesignated: Tess Bobo, Rebecca and Blake Harrington, Shannon Hawkins, Maggi Joseph & Lucy Norton, Salvador and Tina Lopez, Debra Loya, Oscar and Tina Solis, David and Lana Sund, Sophia Vackimes, Carol Collins & Elke Walten Birthday: Marsha Meredith, Arlis Olson In honorarium: Donna Pereira for Tess Bobo to thank her for her generosity and friendship.

June: In Memoriam for Don Hymel: Diane Duesterhoeft & Mike Phillips, Janet Realini, Gary and Marianne Ross In memoriam for Jennie Dietz: Diane Duesterhoeft & Mike Phillips Birthday: Pat and Bruce Beck

July: In memoriam for Don Hymel: Arlis Olson Birthday: Christine Chesnut

Thanks to your generosity we increased the Trust Fund for Endowment by \$1,895.00 this quarter. We're looking forward to your joining the Legacy Society: individuals who have made a bequest to First UU Church-San Antonio in their estate planning. They care about our faith and our church and wish it to be a compassionate voice for justice and religious freedom long after they are gone.

Legacy Society

By Arlis Olson

Something new for Trust Fund giving! Will you be the first to join? We are looking for people who have made a bequest to First UU Church-San Antonio in their estate planning. We will post the names on a framed certificate in the lounge.

We realize other church funding, such as your pledge and Capital Campaign need to be prioritized at this time, but the beauty of making a pledge to the endowment is that it doesn't cost a cent during your lifetime, yet it ensures the long-term viability of the church.

If you have included a bequest in your estate planning, regardless of the amount, we'd like to acknowledge that as a means of encouraging others to do so. If you have not done this but would like to consider doing so, there are several options available. Some of the most common are specific dollar amounts or percentages of your estate designated in your will. You can also designate a specific item, such as real estate. If you already have a will, there's no need to go to the trouble and

expense of drawing up a new one --you can simply designate the church as a beneficiary on your mutual funds or other investments. Donating appreciated securities, such as publicly traded stocks or mutual funds, enables you to avoid paying tax on any gains while deducting the full value of the donated assets. There are also life income gifts and charitable trusts and annuities. See your estate planning attorney or financial adviser to determine what is right for you.

Need more help? We are hosting an Estate Planning Seminar on September 10th. We will have a lawyer to explain estate planning, a doctor to explain the medical necessity and a tax professional to explain how your giving can avoid taxes and reduce your taxable income. For more information about the Legacy Society or estate planning, email trustfund@uusat.org.

Celestial Celebrations Circle Happenings

By Sylvia Wheeler

Celestial Celebrations Circle is the official Covenant of Unitarian Universalists PaganS (CUUPS) group associated with First UU Church of San Antonio. We hold Rituals for all the Sabbats, the Pagan holy days. In months where there is not a Ritual, we sponsor Labyrinth walks at the church labyrinth site, originally laid out by Celestial Celebrations Circle. Over the summer we hosted two Rituals and one Labyrinth walk.

Our first Ritual was Summer Solstice. This is an astronomical event where the earth's tilt toward the sun is at its highest point. In ancient times, people noticed this strength of the sun on their land and used the extended daylight to their advantage. Today modern Pagans often want to just mitigate the sun, as it is so strong, and instead concentrate the energy outward for all those projects which require such enormous energy. We have this Ritual almost always outside and often in a playful mood, such as having a sun pinata from which to collect candy. This year, with our nation in unprecedented turmoil, we decided to focus on relationships, starting with interpersonal, moving through to our community, and ending with the very strained relationships with our world at large. The heat of this year's San Antonio summer took its toll on participation with only three people braving the outside location.

Our next Ritual was on the halfway point between the two astronomical events of Summer Solstice & Fall (or Vernal) Equinox (more about that event in the next issue of *Inspire*). This Sabat is called Lammas or Lughnasadh (from the god Lugh) which focuses on first harvest. Obviously, it is not first harvest in the southern United States, but this tradition is from northern Europe where this is the case. The energy around this ritual has to do with gathering in, whether it be crops to feed the community or to store for the lean winter months - or - gathering in people to work

together to prepare for the coming colder times. This year, Celestial Celebrations Circle, taking a clue from the lack of participants at the last gathering, altered its schedule and planned an inside Ritual. We were rewarded with a much larger group of celebrants. We focused on how we perceive the energy of the season. We can worry about the scarcity that may befall us in the months to come - or - we can work together to have an aura of abundance which we hope will carry us thru the possible lean times.

Our last offering this summer was a Labyrinth walk. This gathering attracts different people from the Rituals. These are ones who, perhaps, want a different structure in their spiritual practice. It is always outside at the labyrinth which is laid out between the Sanctuary and the access road. At this walk, there were two drummers and five participants in the unremitting heat of August.

A Reflection on Language and White Supremacy Culture

by Michelle Venegas-Matula (she/ella)

[TXUUJM](#) Congregational & Justice Organizer (reprinted with permission)

On Tuesday night, we gathered as a TXUUJM community with 8th Principle leader Paula Cole Jones, to reflect on our history and what we are choosing, and working toward, for our collective future. As we continue to seek truth, knowledge, and growth, I feel called to take a moment to discuss the term 'white supremacy culture' and its application in the dialogue about our institutions.

One important distinction to make is that 'white supremacy culture' isn't solely about extremist movements like Nazis or the KKK. While these groups are indeed explicit and violent embodiments of white supremacy, focusing solely on them can create a shallow and misleading understanding of what the term encompasses.

The broader concept of 'white supremacy culture' reflects the often unspoken, ingrained systems that privilege white experiences and norms, sometimes at the detriment or exclusion of us BIPOC/POGM -- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color / People of the Global Majority -- and other marginalized individuals.

It's not about pointing fingers at overtly racist individuals, but rather about recognizing how our institutions and societal structures can perpetuate disparities and inequalities, even in progressive spaces, even when the individuals within them may not intend to do so.

Just as UUs use the [Our Whole Lives \(OWL\)](#) program to teach children accurate terminology for their bodies, sex, and what is appropriate, using precise language like 'white supremacy culture' helps us name, identify, and address systemic

issues. The OWL program emphasizes the importance of respectful communication and consent, providing our youth with the knowledge and language to navigate complex issues.

This allows them to recognize when something is not appropriate, to speak up, and to seek help. In OWL, we don't shy away from naming body parts accurately and talking about sex, even when it is uncomfortable, because we know this knowledge provides them protection and empowerment.

Likewise, 'white supremacy culture' provides us with the framework, a precise language, to identify and challenge systemic biases and injustices, to name it when something does go wrong. It's a vital tool in our collective fight against systemic racism and social inequality.

Even within our own Unitarian Universalist faith and other faith-based institutions, we are not immune from the impacts of white supremacy culture. There is a reason why many BIPOC/POGM have had a challenging time continuing to call our often majority white congregations our spiritual home.

Recognizing this impact isn't an accusation or a sign of complete failure, but rather a move towards creating a more inclusive and equitable community. By using accurate language, even when it is uncomfortable, we are better equipped to challenge the status quo and align our actions with our principles of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

As we strive to create a world that respects the inherent worth and dignity of every person, to build Beloved Community accountably, let's commit to using language that accurately reflects our reality. By broadening our understanding of 'white supremacy culture' beyond extremist ideologies, we can better recognize and confront systemic racism in its many forms.

If you read this far, thank you for taking the time to consider this with me. My prayer is that each of us continue learning, questioning, and growing together, listening to the experiences of those of us that are BIPOC/POGM and other marginalized identities, and believe us rather than dismiss us.

Together, we can create a culture of inclusivity and respect.

To learn more about the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM) read their [newsletter](#) and visit their [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page.

Big Win in Ohio! Thanks to Vote Forward Letter Writers

By Jan Realini

Citizens of Ohio went to the polls on Tuesday and overwhelmingly voted No on Issue 1, which would have made it much harder to pass a statewide ballot measure to amend the Ohio Constitution. Now a November ballot measure to ensure abortion rights in the Ohio Constitution will need a simple majority of votes to pass--not a supermajority of 60%.

This is a win for democracy, and members of our congregation helped make it happen! Our UU the Vote/Saving Democracy team and volunteers, including several youth, wrote letters to low-income Ohio voters to help get out the vote.



There is much more to do in the next year and a half to help save our democracy and get out the vote. We have lots planned, including increasing our team of Volunteer Deputy Registrars (VDRs) to register voters, especially those in low-income parts of the city, high school seniors, and college students. As we get closer to elections, we will be working on getting out the vote by writing letters, phone-banking, text-banking, knocking on doors, and

writing letters to the editor. We also have access to trainings to learn how to more effectively talk with others to overcome differences.

Please consider joining our UU the Vote team or volunteering with us. For more information contact firstuuthevote@uusat.org.

The Problem with Perfectionism

By Kathy McFarlane

My father was a perfectionist and he always expected perfection from me. My mother was not-- she just always encouraged me to do my best. I used to dread being around my father because he was so hyper-critical of me. I would always find a way to escape being in his presence and I would even find hiding places like in the closet or up on the roof of our apartment building so he couldn't find me.

When I brought home my report card, I wouldn't tell my father unless it was straight A's, I would just get my mother to sign it. My father would even get upset with me for being sick and having to miss school-- he expected perfect attendance.

The hardest thing about that was I felt like he didn't love me because I wasn't perfect. It didn't matter how hard I tried, he would always find something to criticize me for even if it was just because I wasn't a boy or because I had brown eyes and brown hair.

I guess that's why I loved watching Mr. Rogers and Sesame Street. That is one thing I am thankful for—my father always insisted that I watch PBS. Mr. Rogers was the kind of person I wished I had as a father. Someone who was kind and gentle and who told me that I was fine just the way I was. Mr. Rogers saved my life—literally. Sesame Street made me laugh and not take life so seriously. We have all heard that laughter is the best medicine -- it helped to sooth and heal my troubled soul and broken heart.

It is so sad to say that my heart was broken as a young child because I felt my father did not love me. This is the problem with perfectionism. Being a perfectionist makes you a very anxious person and that anxiety is then projected and displaced onto those around you. Perfectionists are constantly looking for and creating scapegoats—others they can blame for anything that goes wrong rather than admit their own responsibility for it.

Melody Wilding, LMSW wrote an article in *Psychology Today* posted September 14, 2021 entitled "[Three Types of Perfectionism to Watch Out for -- Identify your type of perfectionism and learn how to cope](#)". The three types of perfectionism are socially prescribed perfectionists, other-oriented perfectionists, and self-oriented perfectionists.

1. Socially Prescribed Perfectionists - Socially prescribed perfectionists are very self-critical. They feel immense pressure to be the best and worry others will reject them. Perceived external standards (which can come from family, workplace culture, society, etc.) can lead to anxiety and low confidence.

2. Other-Oriented Perfectionists - Perfectionists who are other-oriented—as in, they hold others to high standards and can be critical and judgmental—can leave destruction in their wake. It's hard to build working relationships under these conditions, which is one reason this variety is so detrimental.

3. Self-Oriented Perfectionists - Self-oriented perfectionists are organized and conscientious. They set high standards for themselves in their lives and careers but are able to go after their goals. High self-oriented perfectionism is generally associated with the most “adaptive” traits correlated with greater productivity and success, including resourcefulness and assertiveness. They show higher rates of positive emotion and motivation.

Perfectionism and Fault-Finding

I noticed as a child who was struggling with low self-esteem and constant feelings of inferiority, that I would look for and find fault in others to assuage my feelings. I would think to myself “see, other people are not perfect either.” I would especially look to find fault in my father and, as I got older, I would push back on his criticism of me with criticism of him. Needless to say, I had to leave home at 18.

The truth is the easiest thing to do is find fault in others. It's like arm-chair quarter backing when you are watching a sporting event on your TV at home. You have an entirely different perspective than the athletes on the field. It is easy to take the Birds Eye View and see the errors others on the field are making but you are not down on the field actually playing the game and taking the hits.

I have never been able to fully shed myself of my father's influence upon my life. so I would say that I personally identify more with the third type of perfectionist, the self-oriented type. The main difference is that I actually have learned to love myself. I certainly know that I am not perfect, but I also recognize that the areas of imperfection are areas for growth, areas I can work on to improve. I have the ability to accept myself as I am and even laugh at myself when appropriate. I hope the same is true for you.



Five Practices of Welcome Renewal

By Carol Collins

Back in 2002 our church voted to become a “Welcoming Congregation”. Following the vote, we worked very hard to complete all of the requirements to become an officially recognized “Welcoming Congregation” within the Unitarian Universalist Association. Last year we completed the hard work of renewing our “Welcoming Congregation” status. The renewal program is a promise to honor our original pledge, to ensure that new people in the congregation (as well as people who were originally involved in the program) understand our congregation’s commitment to this work and to learn about the current needs and concerns of LGBTQ+ people.

The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal are Unitarian Universalist Association’s five benchmarks that congregations need to integrate into congregational life in order to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary, and the like feel fully welcomed, centered, and embraced in our Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Earlier this year, First UU Church of San Antonio successfully completed the five practices of Welcome Renewal. In recent years we have hosted welcoming worship services in June for Pride month and in November for the Transgender Day of Remembrance. We observed the International Transgender Day of Visibility, the Pulse Night of Remembrance, Stonewall Riots Anniversary, and National Coming Out Day. For Welcoming Religious Education our church offered the class “Transgender Inclusion in Congregations”. And a Welcoming Project was our share the plate donation to Pride Center of San Antonio.

Congratulations to everyone involved in these efforts, but especially to the leaders and members of our Rainbow Inclusion Committee.



Grand Re-Opening of the Mauk Lending Library

By Terri Chadwick

History:

The Mauk Library was founded in January 2008 by First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio member Helen Mauk as a memorial to her late husband, Bryant Mauk. Helen donated bookcases and Bryant's extensive collection of books about science, philosophy, theology, and world religions.

Borrowing/Hours:

The Mauk Library is located in Building 6, Room 602. Books may be borrowed and returned on the honor system. Materials are to be returned to the shelf from which they were borrowed or left in the RETURNS space. The Library is open after Sunday church and by appointment.

Acquisitions/Donations/Add a sticky:

The Mauk Lending Library collection exists because of items generously donated by First UU members and friends. Please follow these guidelines in choosing books to donate. If you wish, add a sticky note of your impressions/thoughts/enjoyment with your name to books that you donate and to books you read and return. Children's books should be left in the little library bookcase outside Building 5. Fiction should be left in the little library bookcase on the patio just outside this Mauk Lending Library. Since this is a lending library, not an archive, we collect items of current interest in good enough condition for circulation. Archival materials are NOT appropriate. Space is limited. Contributions should be left in the library of lots of 10 items or fewer. If we cannot add donated items to the collection, they will be donated to other organizations. Items left for consideration will not be returned.

We welcome donations in the following categories:

Unitarian Universalism: Theology,
Transcendentalism, History,
Biographies, etc.
Church Matters: Governance,
Stewardship, New Members, etc.
Inspiration/Spirituality/Prayer/Meditation/Dealing with Grief (no Self-Help books please)
Ecology/Environmental Issues
Philosophy
Sacred Texts
Social Justice Issues (no political books)

Banned Books
World Religions: Christianity,
Hinduism, Judaism, Others
Comparative Religion/Religious Studies
Earth Centered Spirituality,
Contemporary Paganism, Natural Religion
Women's Spirituality
Spanish Language
Books authored by Members and Friends

Prayer for the First Day of School

By Rev. Erin Walter
Minister & Executive Director
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry

Spirit of Life and Love,
who speaks the language of the earth
and knows no human borders,
please hear my prayers.

May our children and their teachers be safe today,
from gun violence and overdoses, from bullying and fear.

May our children feel the joy
of seeing old friends and making new ones.
Of being seen and celebrated for who they are.
Of finding that spark of purpose that brings us ever more to life.

May parents and grandparents and guardians get
a moment
Maybe even two
or three

...
...
...

to breathe.

May our children hear history taught truthfully,
May they see themselves, their culture, their skin, their queerness, their genders
reflected in the lessons, the books, and the beloveds who teach them.

May they have food to eat, water to drink, a safe place to sleep, and a love that
nourishes them to thrive.

May all kids feel safe and loved for who they are, at school today
and everywhere they go,
May we be the ones to make it so.

Music Lessons with Dana Clark

I have taught private music lessons for 36 years, and have also taught music classes at Circle School, Winston School, and Center for Refugee Services. I currently teach piano, guitar, ukulele, music theory, and flute. Adults and children welcome! Lessons are tailored to each student's learning style and goals.



I am located just south of downtown near the Fair Ave exit of 281 & the New Braunfels Ave exit of I10. Lessons are \$20 for a half hour and \$40 for an hour. My website is www.DanaClarkMusic.com
Email me at DanaPiano1@gmail.com



Margaret DePiere Neiheisel, MD
Office 210-614-4499

We are a pediatric office serving the San Antonio Community for over 30 years.

We have two offices: One in Stone Oak and the other in the medical center.

We are unique in that we have extended hours.

M-Th 9 am to 9 pm
Fri 9-5 pm
Sat 9-noon

Emerson Bookshop Plus

Open 1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays after Worship Service. Located in the classroom just off the Sanctuary entrance.

Featuring organic fair trade coffees, teas and olive oil from Equal Exchange. Drip coffees include Hazelnut Love Buzz, Columbian & Breakfast Blend.

Equal Exchange's mission is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers and to demonstrate, through our success, the contribution of worker co-operatives and Fair Trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world.



- Couples Counseling
- Individual Therapy
- Parenting Facilitation

Victoria McCord Valerga
LMSW, MDiv, JD

Victoria was born in Louisiana, but has spent most of her life in San Antonio and Chicago. She has a B.A. from Trinity Univ., a J.D. from St Mary's Univ., and dual Masters degrees in Theology and Social Work from the University of Chicago. At Victoria4Therapy, she provides psychotherapy under the supervision of Emily Perez, LCSW-S, with a special interest in couples counseling. She is also very motivated to provide individual counseling to people dealing with problem drinking, trauma survivors, LGBTQ+ individuals, and persons with strong ties to countries other than the US. She is a trained interfaith/interreligious chaplain who enjoys working within a spiritual framework in support of individual and couple client goals for greater emotional health and equilibrium. Victoria is comfortable exploring issues of aging, loss and grief. For fun, she travels, talks her friends into playing board games, rides her bicycle on the city Greenways and fosters orphaned neonate kittens for animal rescues around the city.



Victoria Valerga, LMSW, MDiv, JD
couples counseling/individual therapy/parenting facilitation

(210) 460-0434 victoria4therapy@gmail.com
1202 W. Bitters Road #3, San Antonio, Texas 78218



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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