

The Official Magazine of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio



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Inspire

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Cover photo: One of our youths showing off their face painting at our annual Halloween party, photo by Alicia Smart.

A Canuck UU in the Lone Star State: Reflections on My First Few Months in San Antonio

By Tim Versteeg, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Upon arrival in Texas in late September, the question I was probably asked most was “WHY?” And truth to tell, it was a question I was asked a lot before I left Canada. Why would I choose to move 1750 km from where I was living (that’s about 1100 miles to y’all) to serve a UU congregation in another country in a city I’d never visited?

I refer to 2023 as my Intermission Year. It was a year in which, at the tail end of covid, like many people, I found that my life had changed in numerous ways and left me in a place I had not predicted. In my mid-50s I saw this as the end of a second act which had primarily been concerned with raising three wonderful kids, all of whom were now on their way to their own adult lives. After 30+ years of marriage, my wife and I chose to part ways. In March of 2023, my father passed away after a long illness, joining my mother (who had died in the year 2000) in whatever comes next. Clearly, the universe was closing a number of doors. I needed a year to decide which doors I wanted to open next, and where.



The constant throughout all this had been my position as a Religious Educator (RE) at the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton in Ontario, Canada. A longtime member of the church, in November 2018 I was hired in a temporary capacity as the RE, when in late September our previous RE went on a sick leave. (Temporary in this case turned into almost 6 years in that 20 hour a week position!) I had a background in education, had raised 3 kids as a stay at home parent, and looked after over 20 others after school during that period, including many with special needs. Throughout my time as a congregant, I had read and taken courses and training from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) whenever possible, and in late 2023 I was accepted into the UUA Religious Educator Credentialing Program. (A program I hope to complete in April 2026.)

As I continued to grow and develop in my role, I discerned in that intermission year that I wanted two things professionally in my 3rd act: a full time position in a growing UU

congregation and a position that had a Lifespan focus. San Antonio offered both of those possibilities, with good tacos and a reasonable cost of living to boot!

One of the shared values identified at last year's General Assembly is Transformation, and being open to change and growth seems at the core of that value. We often describe ourselves as a living faith, and part of that holds the promise of learning new things and encountering new ideas and people. During 2023 I had two good friends, totally independent of each other, who told me I needed an adventure. Like the hobbits in the *Lord of the Rings*, this became a kind of mantra during the complicated and lengthy process of getting here: "I'm going on an adventure!"

I have not been disappointed. The journey getting here and the first two months adjusting to life in a different, yet familiar, country have been an adventure. The church and congregation have been incredibly welcoming and I thank you all for that. I'm thrilled with the vibrant religious education programs here. There is so much potential and opportunities for growth in our shared ministry that I don't think I'll ever get bored. Here's to sharing that adventure together in the years to come!

New Member Ceremony

By Mary Wright

First UU welcomed many new members on Sunday, September 22 at a new member ceremony held during Worship Service. After service, we gathered for a cake and punch reception to meet and get to know the new members better. We love that our church is growing and know that our newest members will be wonderful additions to the congregation.



Pagan Happenings

By Sylvia Wheeler

Celestial Celebrations Circle is the official CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalists Pagans) group with First UU Church of San Antonio. We hold 9 rituals throughout the year. In months when there are no Rituals, we sponsor a labyrinth walk with drum circle on the west side of our Sanctuary. The Labyrinth became a joint project of Celestial Celebrations Circle members. It is available to whomever wishes to walk it - whenever they wish to make the journey. Thanks to the highway lights across the access road, there is now always light for walking & the constant highway drone becomes white noise.

This Fall, Celestial Celebrations Circle has held two Rituals, one Labyrinth walk, & a booth at the annual church Halloween (Hallows-Eve) event. September's ritual was Autumn Equinox (equi = equal / nox=night) which is an astronomical event. This is a point in the Earth's movement around it's Sun where day & night are of equal length in the Autumn (as opposed to the Spring). In some Pagan circles, it is called - Mabon. Our Intention for this Ritual read "We enter the season of increasing darkness, with the sun pointed briefly at the place of equal light and dark. It is a time to give thanks for the fruits of the Earth. It is a point on the Wheel of the Year (a complete revolution of Earth around its Sun) where there is a balance between the energies of outward, physical manifestation & the inward psychic creativity." In an agricultural society, this time is used to gather in anything left in the fields & prepare for the barrenness of the coming cold weather. There were 25 participants, including 2 families with a total of 5 kids.

Our October Ritual was Samhain (Sau-win), also known as Halloween in our culture & Day of the Dead in cultures south of our border. For Pagans, this is our New Year's celebration. It is a time when we, as Pagans, seek out any being(s) which, as we say, has crossed over to the other side. Perhaps, we want to speak to whomever & ask how they are - or - we need to just chat for a while. In our Ritual, we make a symbolic journey to the river, which symbolizes the starting of "crossing over". We also, call out earthly names of any being which we want others present in the Ritual to know about. In the end, we must say "GoodBye" to whomever has come to us as we are still in the Earthly world & must continue with our mundane lives. Hopefully, we have had a constructive meeting, but that cannot always be guaranteed. There were 35 participants, including 2 families with a total of 5 kids. I am, also, happy to report that we had 3 mobility impaired participants who folded in well.

A week after this Ritual, Celestial Celebrations Circle participated in the annual First UU Halloween gathering. We had a booth in which we offered a healing knot Spell. This was, in a fashion, a mini-Ritual. There was some Ritual preparation for casting the Spell, which included setting an intention for the Spell, putting energy into the intention & starting the knotting process with the string provided. Many people participated at the booth & many of those people were pleased with the outcome of their Spell.

Finally, in November Celestial Celebrations Circle had its planned labyrinth walk. As the season is moving closer to the shortest day of the year at Winter Solstice, the Sun had set by the time the walk started. There were more participants than usual for this walk which created heightened energy for everyone especially since they were doing this in semi-darkness. There were 12 participants, including 1 kid. With the help of other participants, a mobility impaired person also walked the labyrinth.

UU Climate Justice Revival Service and Organizing Hour

By Diane Duesterhoeft

On Sunday, September 29, 2024, Carol Collins, Diane Duesterhoeft, Tracey Knouse, Paula Pebsworth, Sylvia Wheeler, Dana Clark, and Alison Hom-Crosier along with Dr. XK organized and led a UU Climate Justice Revival service, as did many UU congregations across the country that day. A UU collaborative, which included the UUA, UU College for Social Justice, Side with Love, UUs for Social Justice, UU Service Committee, UU the Vote, and UU Ministry for Earth organized many of the resources that were used in the service, as well as during the Organizing Hour that followed the service. Twenty-five folks participated in the Organizing Hour, where information and resources about voting, as well as climate action, were shared in an interactive format.



Participants at the UU Climate Justice Revival Organizing Hour in Building 5 discuss voting and climate action resources on Sunday, September 29, 2024. Photo by Paula Pebsworth.

Halloween at First UU

By Mary Wright

Our annual Halloween party was bigger and better than ever thanks to many volunteers and are fearless coordinator, Justine Hansen. In addition to our usual potluck and games, we also had a live music by Stephen Spikes and his music workshop group, a knot spell ritual by our Celestial Celebrations Circle, fortune telling, tarot card reading, and a return of the middle school haunted house. A huge thanks to everyone who volunteered and participated.



First UU hosts the San Antonio Mayor's Youth Engagement Council for Climate Initiatives

By Diane Duesterhoeft

On Saturday, November 16, 2024, our church campus served as the meeting location for the San Antonio Mayor's Youth Engagement Council for Climate Initiatives (MYECCI). MYECCI is composed of approximately 30 youth, ages 14 to 18, from across the City of San Antonio. The mission of MYECCI "is to activate San Antonio's next generation of climate champions to engage in community issues around climate change, environmental policy, and environmental justice." After the youth checked in and completed an outdoor activity, members of our Green Sanctuary Team--Alison Hom-Crosier, Linda Nash, Sylvia Wheeler, and Diane Duesterhoeft--gave the group a tour of our church campus, noting some of the history of the campus, and some of our sustainability features. Following the tour, the Green Sanctuary Team members briefly explained what the Team does and why each of us are involved.



Green Sanctuary Team members Sylvia Wheeler, Alison Hom-Crosier, and Linda Nash point out environmental elements of the Sanctuary to members of the San Antonio Mayor's Youth Engagement Council for Climate Initiatives (MYECCI) on Saturday, November 16, 2024.
Photo by Diane Duesterhoeft

Seekers' Outings

By Darcy Walker

Our Seekers Forum enjoyed several outings this fall, including hiking and going out to eat. Seekers Forum is an open group seeking fellowship and community through self-discovery and discussion of life experiences. They meet every Sunday in room #404 on the church campus. All are welcome!



Game Night Fun

By Mary Wright

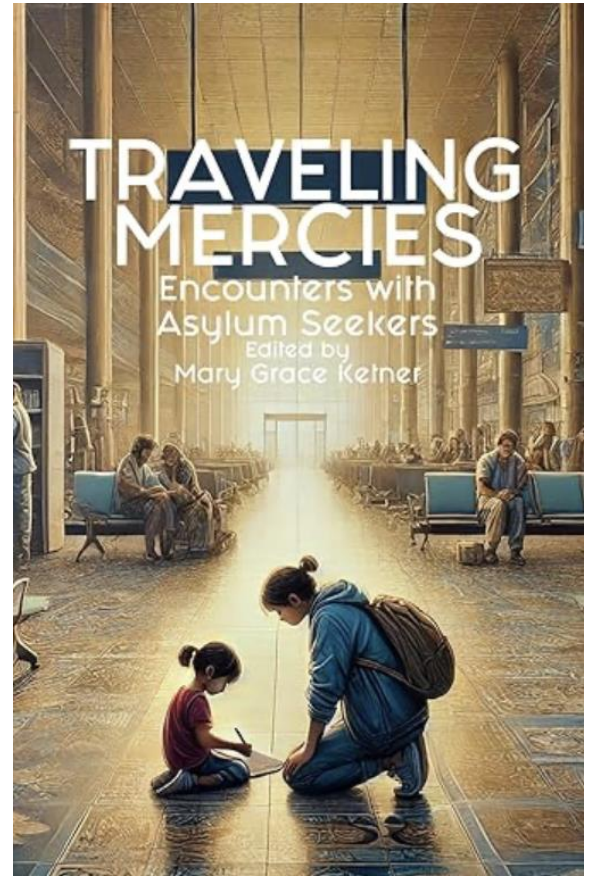
We had a lot of fun at our monthly dinner and game night events. We played many fun games including Ticket to Ride, Jackbox games on the TV, Cranium, Scrabble, and Trivial Pursuit. It's great to hang out with friends, meet new people, and enjoy a yummy meal. Game Night takes place every third Thursday of the month. We will be taking December off, but plan to resume again in January. Hope you will join us!



Ten First UU Authors Tell Their Tales

By Mary Grace Ketner

There is something special to us about Interfaith Welcome Coalition's new book of volunteer stories, *Traveling Mercies: Encounters with Asylum Seekers*. This amazing book tells the stories of the people who volunteer at the Greyhound bus station and airport and who participate in other outreach efforts to assist asylum seekers as they pass through San Antonio on their way to other cities, to join their families or seek shelter. Even more amazing is that ten of those volunteer storytellers are folks from First UU! During the surge of 2019, we had about 25 church members who volunteered in the bus station, airport, and in the overnight shelter at Travis Park Church where several hundred people stayed each night. In addition, we had a team which met every month at the church to prepare lunch bags for distribution among the immigrating families at the bus station. Later, another team "adopted" a family isolating here during Covid, as shelters could not accept people who arrived without having done so. We also hosted some families in our unused Fellowship Hall and Building 5 during Covid while Rev. Mark and others kept tabs on them. Volunteers brought cots, sheets, towels, food, and money for other needs to make the families comfortable.



So, who are those ten First UU Storytellers? Alphabetically, they are Moon Sanchez Brand, Dana Clark, Judy Godinez, Mary Grace Ketner, Linda Nash, Donna Pereira, Jan Realini, Ellen Remenchik, Vicki Tullius, and Darcy Walker. In addition, storytellers June Hartley and Ellen Jackson are from the UU Church of the Hill Country and Chili and Peggy Ornelas are from the New Braunfels UU Church. Clearly, we came out in a big way!

Traveling Mercies: Encounters with Asylum Seekers has 71 stories which show, up close and personal, just what kind of people Asylum seekers are! The popular narrative is that they are drug dealers, human traffickers, criminals, and people who have been released from insane asylums. What IWC volunteers know is that they are families, adults and teens, men, women and children who are loving, generous, funny, and tender. They make good decisions and bad ones, they've been through hard times, even deadly times, both in their homelands and en route to ours, and they know their hard times aren't over. They have a desire to work and contribute to a society where they can live in peace and safety. They do not take for granted the gifts and assistance IWC volunteers bring, and they are humbly grateful.

Here are a few of the stories someone sitting right down the pew from you contributed.

From our Sunday night team which served at Travis Park Church during the 2019 surge, **Dana Clark** writes:

Grocery Totes and Zapatitos

I heard through the grapevine that many of the migrants carried their supplies in grocery bags, which soon tore. Neighbors and friends helped me collect sturdy shopping bags, and on our church team's night at the Shelter at Travis Park Church, I waited as the migrants arrived. The line passed quickly, and since I don't speak Spanish well, I developed a silent strategy. When I saw someone struggling with a plastic bag, without a word, I'd step forward and scoop it inside a shopping bag, offering them the handle. I surprised a lot of people that way, but the look of gratitude on their faces was my reward!

Another time there were two three-year-old children without shoes. One of them was dressed in only a diaper and a shirt. The next morning they would be leaving on a bus journey that might take several days. Their needs could not be ignored! Another volunteer called her son to make a late night shopping trip to outfit the little boy, and I contacted one of my neighbors who would donate to the little girl. Soon that child was following me around with a tremendous smile exclaiming, “¡Zapatitos! Zapatitos!” (Little shoes! Little shoes!)

Concerning the team that provided food and supplies during those first months of Covid, **Darcy Walker** writes:

Swiffers to the Rescue!

It was early in the pandemic, and no one in the world really knew what to do about it! Our UU church was assisting IWC in several ways: putting together bags of travel food for families who were at the bus station, creating a team that hosted the bulging overnight shelter at Travis Park Church once a week, and, later, we even hosted a few families in our COVID-empty Fellowship Hall.

Shelters in other cities had sent word that they could not accept people who might bring the virus into their facilities, that we should somehow isolate people for two weeks before sending them on. The City of San Antonio rented a middle-aged hotel that we called “the Bungalow Shelter,” and IWC managed it. Our church formed “Team Eats” to provide for one of the Haitian families staying there.

Once when I was at HEB, I got a “Team Eats” group text saying that a family was asking about how they could mop their floors. Someone suggested a Swiffer, and I texted back that I was in HEB right then and how many Swiffers should I get? I had not been able to participate in any other efforts, so I wanted to nail this one!

I got the Swiffers, making sure to buy them on a receipt separate from my own groceries, as directed, and took a snapshot of the receipt. I took all the mops to the motel and met the person who was the intermediary, handed off the Swiffers, then emailed the receipt to the church office and was reimbursed in just a few days.

It seemed like a simple thing to do, but I feel I was able to help one ordinary family do one ordinary thing in very unordinary times!

And from Moon Sanchez Brand comes a bus station story:

Ave Maria

Once during a calm moment, my volunteer buddies Jerry and Clemencia began singing a Columbian song they knew. It was a lovely sound, and I wanted to join in, but I come from a long line of bad, proud, loud singers, so I did what I always do, I howled. “Ah-oooh!”

A few rows back, a child started to howl, “ah-oooh!” and then another. I thought, “Yes! They get me!” It was so much fun.

Then a little boy, about nine or ten years old came up and said he wanted to sing, too, and he sang “*Ave Maria*” in a very sophisticated, sweet, liquid voice. Everyone listened in awe, even the children. It was as though they were expressing their pride and honor of him. The guard even stopped mid-step to take part in that moment when time stood still in the San Antonio Greyhound bus station.

When the young man finished, I went over to his mom to tell her how incredible his singing was, “*¡Incredible!*” I told her.

She crossed her hands over her heart. She said that, in Honduras, he used to sing in the church, and he sang around home all the time, but he hadn’t sung for three months, until just now.

Enjoy the many tender tales in *Traveling Mercies: Encounters with Asylum Seekers*. It can be purchased on Amazon.com in soft cover or Kindle versions [here](#). Or search [amazon.com](#) later under the title and my name as editor, and if you accidentally get *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* by Anne LaMott, it’s okay; that’s a great book, too!

Some have asked: You can listen my Nov.18 interview on Texas Matters" with David Martin Davies on TPR [here](#). It includes several of the stories, and you will love the surprise Davies added at the end! (Our part is first and it's 21 minutes long.)

Día de los Muertos with SAGE-UU

By Mary Wright

At the end of October our First UU SAGE-UU group led us in a celebration of Día de los Muertos. SAGE-UU stands for San Antonio Gente Engaged with Unitarian Universalism. This is our local Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) group. It was inspired and formed as First UU hosted the Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) at our church in the Fall of 2018. The mission of SAGE-UU is threefold: to provide fellowship to BIPOC friends and members of First UU, to promote leadership locally and nationally from within our BIPOC communities, and to develop and lead culturally relevant worship. Since their formation, they have had members join the First UU Board of Trustees and Worship Committee. They have successfully lobbied as a group to rename our buildings to remove the honoring of slavers and have brought more BIPOC perspectives to the pulpit. This year's Día de los Muertos' service featured a beautiful ofrenda, outstanding music, and a sermon by guest minister, Rev. Marisol Caballero. The service led us in a celebration of remembrance of lost loved ones.



Planting Wildflowers for the Spring

By Mary Wright

On a lovely November Sunday after service, the Green Sanctuary Team invited congregants to make wildflower seed balls and plant them in the triangle in front of our Sanctuary. Once upon a time that triangular area was home to a beautiful field of wildflowers, but over time many of them have died off. Late fall is the perfect time to sow new seeds with the hope of having a colorful field of flowers in front of our church in the Spring.



Trust Fund for Endowment

By Arlis Olson

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



August

Birthday Matches: Howard Berger

Memoriam: Marilyn Stavinoha for Roger Kramer, Claudia Glass for Tess Bobo's father

September

Undesignated: Tess Bobo, Terri Chadwick, William Christ, Dana Clark, David Claunch, Martha Cooley, Barbara Daughterty, Patrick Greene, John Holcomb, Paul Homburg, Desiree Kannel, Jessica Latimer, Abigail Larsen, Debra Loya, Lucy Nortto, Terry Palin, Nancy Pridgen, Gary Ross, Nancy Sedarat, Cathie Severance, David Sund, Stanna Welch Jeanne Zuniga

Birthday Matches: David Sund

Memoriam: David Sund for Roger & Maryanne Kramer



October

Birthday Matches: Marianne Ross

Memoriam: Marilyn Stavinoha for Glenna Kachtik

Thanks to your generosity we increased the Trust Fund for Endowment by \$3,492 this quarter. This was largely due to a successful "Share the Plate" Sunday. Thanks to all who contributed and especially to two team members, Wendy Freidman and Emelia Westney, who did a passionate and effective presentation.

Your generous donations over the years have made it possible for the capital campaign to go ahead with plans to renovate the kitchen. Commitments from the legacy society can make it possible for other major capital improvements in the future. Add your name to the list!

LEGACY SOCIETY

We're celebrating three more additions to the Legacy Society! There is a framed certificate in the lounge of those who have made a commitment or who have promised to do so. They are Carol Bertsch, Ellen Clegg, Diane Duesterhoeft and Mike Phillips, Pat Ellis, Wendy Friedman and James Jauchem, Maggi Joseph and Lucy Norton, Tracey Knouse, Arlis Olson, Gail Reinhart, Rev. Dr. Terrance Robinson, Sylvia Wheeler, and Michelle Willhelm, These are special people! They want our church to be here after they're gone.

We had a very successful estate education workshop, hosted by Carol Bertsch. It was well attended. We hope some of the participants will add their name to the Legacy Society list in the near future. We'd especially welcome you!

The Legacy Society was established to recognize those who have included First Unitarian Universalist Church in their estate planning. We now have 15 people on that list (including spouses). That is the same number of people who have previously left funds in their estate. Their names are included on a plaque in the choir room.

There was \$285,402.14 in the Trust Fund as of the end of September. It should be at least three times that much to offer any degree of protection for a church with a yearly budget of approximately \$600,000. It was a little over \$90,000 in 2016 (which is the latest record I could find). It has tripled in size since then, mainly due to small donations as a birthday remembrance or to honor members who have died. As far as I know, there has only been one major contribution from an estate fund. That was from Bettie Ward. Help us make this fund grow! Include the Trust Fund in your estate plans!

Special Congregational Meeting

By Carol Bertsch & Polly Noel

A Special Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, November 17 to propose motions for obtaining funds, additional to our Capital Campaign funds, to renovate Building 2, which houses our Fellowship Hall, lounge, and kitchen. Thanks to everyone who helped us achieve a quorum for the meeting. The two motions recommended by the Board passed and we are able to move forward with the renovation project.

Next steps include completion of the construction documents by Derick Architects and submission of the permitting application to Balcones Heights by the December 16 deadline. We will also withdraw the funds from the Trust Fund of Endowment and obtain the line of credit from Frost, but plan to use Capital Campaign reserves before we begin to draw on the these. Our hope is for construction to begin by late January after bidding and selection of subcontractors.

Thank you, also, to everyone who has pledged to meet the additional \$25,000.00 requirement by Frost Bank! If you have any questions regarding the motions passed, the Capital Campaign, or the renovation project, you may contact our Board president at president@uusat.org



Community Responsibility Endowment Fund

By Diane Carl

The CREF Trustees hold, manage, and administer the Community Responsibility Endowment Fund (CREF) as directed by our Trust Agreement. Trustees for the 2024-2025 Church Year are: Diane Carl (Chair), Margaret Neiheisel (Vice Chair), Lana Sund (Treasurer), Tracey Knouse (Secretary), Nancy Sedarat and Tim Barr (at large).

CREF got its start in 1982 and since that time has awarded over \$192,000 to San Antonio area non-profits. The Trustees solicit nominations from First Unitarian Universalist members then review applications to award grants to organizations whose projects closely align with our Unitarian Universalist values. All of the grants in 2024 target children and young adults with a positive impact for our Next Generation.



CREF Trustees and award recipients at the November 3rd worship service.

This year, four first time nominated organizations received a total of \$12,000.

Each organization had a representative speak at the service on November 3rd to share their non-profits' mission. CREF Trustees hosted the service and representatives shared inspiring stories of their mission and the specifics of their funded project. A reception was held after the service on the patio, where visitors and members were able to meet and speak with the groups' representatives.

The grants were as follows:

Futuro San Antonio: Futuro Families Vote Program \$3000

For material, supplies, staff and facilitator compensation for workshops and administrative costs.

Big Mama's Safe House: Community Garden Project \$3000

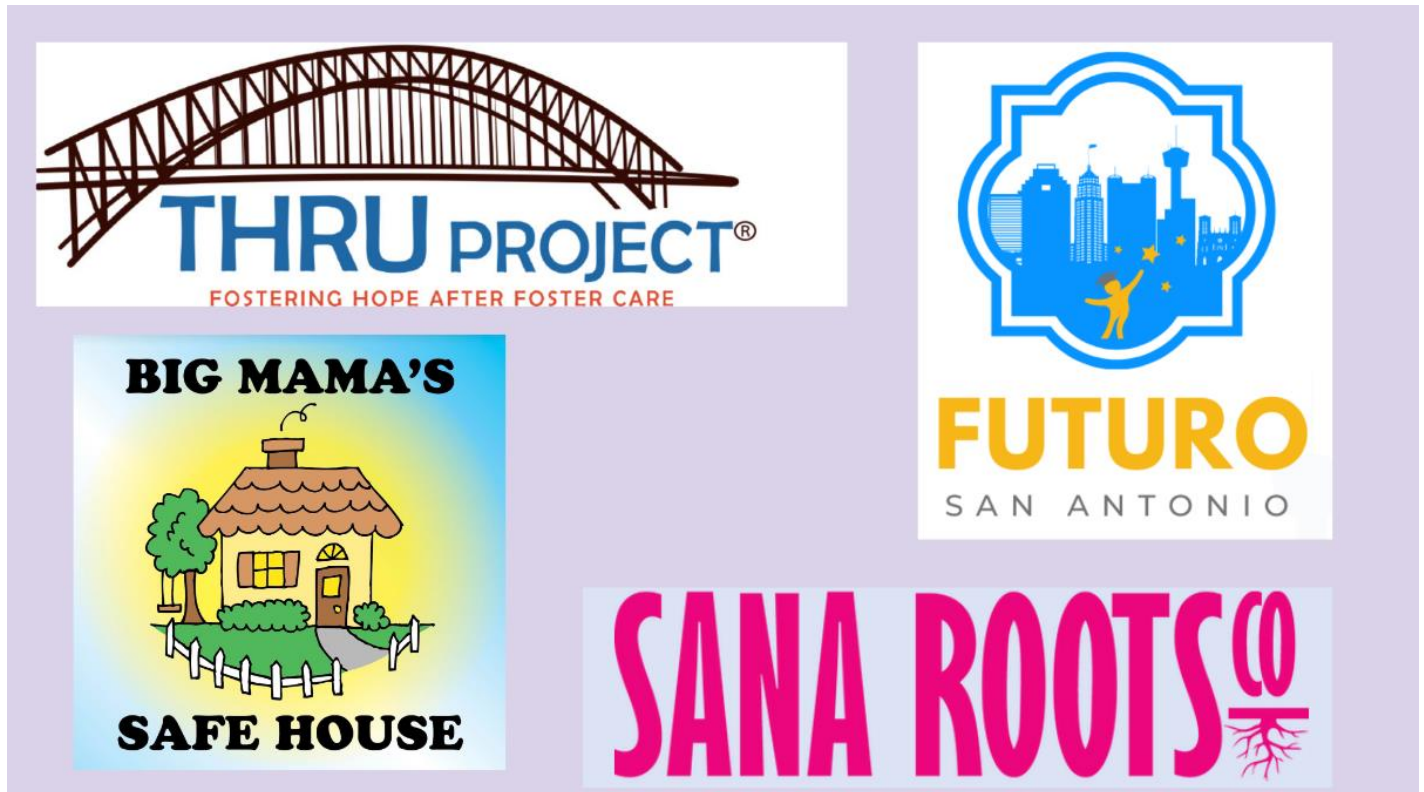
For materials, equipment, workshops, fees and compensation with outreach. The garden is planted and maintained by kids and teens, along with volunteers and some of Big Mama's staff.

Sana Roots Co: Root to Rise Program \$3000

For equipment, marketing and outreach for the Root to Rise program which offers free outdoor classes led by LGBTQIA/BIPOC instructors to nurture physical, mental and spiritual well-being for teens and young adults.

THRU Project: THRUTalk Events \$3000

For program costs for life skills education to youth who have aged out of foster care via three THRUTalk events.



More information about the nomination process, some history of awards and how to donate to CREF, please visit <https://uusat.org/cref/> Thank you to the members and friends of First UU – San Antonio who made these grants possible.

Chili Cook Off

By Mary Wright

The Stewardship Committee hosted their almost-annual Chili Cook off in October where they raised approximately \$600 for an advance stewardship event for church leaders. Thanks so much to our judges (Dr. XK & Tim Versteeg), all the Chili Cook-off contestants, and everyone else who contributed food and/or otherwise helped with the Chili Cook-off!

Congratulations to our Cook-off Winners!



Traditional Chili – John Hammer (Pedernales Chili)
Chili with Beans – Oscar Solis (Chicken White Bean Chili)
Vegan Chili – Abcde Martinez (Texas Vegan Chili)



Planned Parenthood South Texas

2024 Annual Luncheon

by Tracey Homburg

This year's event, held on November 8th at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel, opened with poet Naomi Shihab Nye reading one of her moving works entitled "Room" while accompanied by a string trio of musicians. The featured guest speaker of the day was former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, and we also heard from San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, first lady Erika Prosper, and Rochelle Garza (president of the Texas Civil Rights Project). The gathering of approximately 1300 Planned Parenthood supporters closed out an incredibly tough week (following the November 5th election results), and it was truly a welcome respite to be in the company of so many other reproductive justice allies.

Our First UU-San Antonio contingent consisted of 30 folks, completely filling three tables. We raised \$6,090 for Planned Parenthood South Texas! Six people in our group were provided with complimentary seats to the luncheon. Other First UU members were also in attendance at individually sponsored tables. A huge thank you to all in our congregation who gave of their time and treasure in this fundraising effort.

Here are a few words of wisdom Mr. Holder shared with the crowd:

...the path to progress has never been blazed through inertia. But how long am I supposed to satisfy myself with progress before we get to those end states of equality, equity, and justice? So, I think we need to be impatient, tactically smart, fueled by optimism and impatience. And with knowledge that history has shown us that that which seems insurmountable can ultimately be defeated. I'm telling you; you compare Donald Trump and his acolytes to that which other generations of Americans have had to deal with, and it might seem daunting. It was an electoral victory, unprecedented, and unexpected—all that stuff. We can do this. We can do this. Our task is not nearly as difficult as the tasks of other generations. I was kidding when I came out here, I said, "We do hard. We do difficult." We do that which seems almost impossible. And if we keep that feeling and if we stay in touch with one another, engage with one another, and support organizations like Planned Parenthood, we'll end up on the better side. It's going to be tough. There are going to be defeats. There are going to be disappointments along the way. But it's okay. It's okay. We can handle that, too. If we work together, we will be successful.



Photos from the Planned Parenthood South Texas luncheon

Cultivating New Leaders

By Mary Wright, photos by Karen Davis

Our Leadership Development Committee hosted a Committee Fair after service on Sunday, November 24th. Different committees of the church tabled on the patio to provide members with information about what their committees do and how people can get involved. Committees are the groups that develop, organize, & execute the programs of the church. They consist entirely of volunteers. Without volunteer committees, the church would have a very difficult time existing. New volunteers are needed all the time and the good news is anyone can participate.

Current committees of the church include Adult/Youth Religious Education, Denominational Connections, Green Sanctuary Team, Grounds, Maintenance & Repair, Member Care, Membership, Social Justice, and Worship. You can learn more about the mission of each committee and what the duties of a committee member are, on our website at www.uusat.org/committees



General Assembly 2025

By Paul Homburg

The 2024 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly was conducted entirely over the internet this past June, with delegates here in San Antonio and internationally debating, discussing, and deciding issues large and small for the organization. As 2024 draws to a close, plans are being made for the 2025 64th General Assembly which will be a hybrid gathering. Participants will have the opportunity to either use the internet as they did in 2024 or to attend in person in Baltimore, Maryland June 18 through 22.

The agenda for the business sessions and the various program and cohort gatherings are still taking shape and proposals for activities can be made to the organizers through the UUA. This week, organizers have sent a particular invitation for youth and emerging adults to present proposals for pre-recorded or live, in person seminars, workshops or other programs. Whether or not a proposal is directed toward younger participants, there is a deadline of Wednesday, January 15, 2025, for presenting the proposal. Anyone interested in making a proposal for General Assembly activities can find out more about the process at the General Assembly website: www.uua.org/ga/program/contribute/proposing

This year's theme is "Meet the Moment" with content intended to address the changing times and the need to build and strengthen the Unitarian Universalist Association's community of shared values and mutual support.



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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