

emerson UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST church

the emersonian

Spring Campus Cleanup

Saturday, March 4, 9 a.m. – 12 noon, meet on Westwood Porch. Bring your clippers, weed-diggers, rakes, brooms, etc. to help brighten up our beautiful property. Food and beverages will be provided. Free prairie plant identification lesson afterwards. Contact Ann May at ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org.



In this issue:

- Emerson Justice Advocates
- Houston Food Bank
- General Assembly

Havana Nights—Emerson Auction Gala

HOLA!

CALLING ALL INTERESTED PARTY

VISIONARIES— food planners, decorators, organizers, PR people, data enterers AND MORE to help plan this party during the next few months.

JUST WANT TO WORK THAT NIGHT? We need volunteers then too!!!

BE PART OF THE FUN! Contact auction@emersonhouston.org, or talk to Ruth Alkons-Wolinsky, ruthalkons@gmail.com, about how you can help with this year's fabulous event.

Save the Date!

**Saturday,
April 29, 2017**

HAVANA NIGHTS

**Emerson
2017
Service
Auction**



Donation and Sponsorship Forms now available in The Gathering Place!

Shaping Our Future

Thanks to all who shared their ideas and passion during our workshop with Kenn Hurto last month! We look forward to next steps as we shape Emerson's future together-



- Finding our sweet spot: Where Emerson's special gifts meet the world's need
- Focusing our mission: WHY we are here and WHOM do we serve
- Adding and recruiting additional staff and volunteers to accomplish our mission

We'll share more developments in the weeks and months to come.

Revels

My new friend, Leila, brought me a gift from Iran a few weeks ago - a beautiful table cover of Northern Iranian hand embroidery. With its varicolored wool thread intricately stitched into paisley and leaf designs, it must have taken dozens of painstaking, exacting hours. And yet the finished product exudes joy and peace. I will never know the person who created it, but I marvel at the patience involved.



Leila is a young Iranian woman who started coming last spring to the yoga classes I've been attending for ten years now. Leila's yoga mat has taken up residence beside mine. Since my knowledge of Farsi is non-existent and her understanding of English is limited, we communicate mostly with smiles, gestures and hugs. One of the employees at the rec center, also Iranian, sometimes translates for us. When I told the class that Mark had died, Leila did not at first understand, but when the meaning of what I had said became clear, tears streamed down her face. The empathy in her hug was unmistakable. She is a gentle, caring soul.

At the beginning of January, Leila and her husband went back to Iran to visit their parents. Leila was so excited to see her family. But upon returning to the U.S., because of our new president's executive order on immigrants and refugees, Leila was detained. Leila's husband is an American citizen and was allowed to reenter the country, but Leila, who is a lawful U.S. resident, was taken aside to be questioned and her green card was taken from her. She was all alone, terrified, without counsel. Her husband wasn't even allowed to be with her. Leila was held for six hours before she was allowed to go through. She was so traumatized it was days before she could return to yoga class.

Leila was detained solely because people from Iran, a predominantly Muslim country, are automatically presumed to pose a threat to U.S. security. But gentle, caring Leila is no more a threat than I.

This executive order is deeply disturbing, as are so many of the new administration's actions and appointments. It seems there is hardly a Unitarian Universalist principle or basic tenet of our U.S. democracy that has not been compromised. Yet I am heartened and uplifted by the way people across the religious and political spectrum are responding with prayer vigils, protests, petitions, marches, etc. I honestly believe that the weight of the resistance is making a difference, motivating our representatives to think twice before rubber stamping the actions of the administration or ceding defeat prematurely.

But resistance can be exhausting! Just keeping up with the news can become a major preoccupation that takes a huge emotional toll. One cannot possibly participate in every action, respond to every call to protest. And yet it is hard not to feel the desire and the need to respond. If these first few weeks of the new administration are any indication, though, I fear that we are in for a long siege. We cannot afford to burn ourselves out in the first few months. We have to find the ways to sustain our efforts over the long haul.

We must each exercise discernment about how and when we will act, choosing carefully, marshaling our time and energy. And we must remember the vital link between social action and spiritual discipline. We each need to cultivate those practices that feed our spirits and replenish our souls and thus renew the wellsprings of energy and commitment from which we can act.

What we need now is perhaps not unlike the patience required to produce a beautiful example of Northern Iranian hand embroidery, one stitch at a time. May our spiritual practices be as disciplined so that we will have the stamina to persist. May they be of such a depth that they yield acts of similar dedication in the service of joy and peace.

In faith and affection,

Becky Edmondson-Lange

Polly Delaney's Memorial Service

Polly Delaney, a charter member of Emerson, died peacefully on Friday, January 27, at the age of 96.

There will be a memorial service for Polly at Emerson on Saturday, **March 18 at 2 p.m.**



Sunday Morning Schedule

Typical Sunday Schedule

9 AM EIO Rehearsal • 9:45 AM Professional Childcare Begins
10 AM Adult Ed and Kids' Activities • 11 AM Worship • 11:15 AM Kids' Programming

Please join us on Sundays for worship service.

**MAR
5**

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—What's the Big Deal about Bathrooms?

In a way unimaginable a decade ago, the topic of gender identity has entered the political arena. While some people are obsessed about who gets to use which restroom, larger issues of acceptance and justice come into play.

Rev. Kathleen Ellis—Winds of Change

Already this Spring we have seen variable winds, from calm to 174 mph straight line winds. Life can be volatile like that, too. Combined with a range of personal traits we have an infinite number of ways to effect change. Climate change, political upheaval, spiritual growth, and intellectual challenge are a few of the ways we have been blown in multiple directions. How can each of us harness unique power to "be the change we want to see"?

**MAR
12**

**MAR
19**

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—How to Love this World

Mary Oliver says in one of her poems that "there is only one question – how to love this world." Key to that endeavor may be rediscovering our place in nature and restoring a sense of sacred balance.

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—Modern Day Pharaoh

What could this ancient Biblical story possibly have to teach us about life in the United States in 2017? It may have more to teach us than we think in this era of "otherism" and hate.

**MAR
26**

Adult Education

10:00 a.m., Room 205/206

March 5: "Barrier to Immortality - Part 1", David May—If we didn't age, we could be immortal, but we do age. *Why* does aging occur?

March 12: "Barrier to Immortality - Part 2", David May—*How* does aging occur?

March 19: Victoria Rusk, Criminal Law Mitigation Specialist—Crime touches all our lives--anyone may be accused of a crime, know the accused, or serve on jury duty. Mitigation gets to the why behind a crime, helping jurors and DAs to work for fair and appropriate punishments.

March 26: Randy Partain, "Living Your Values".

Eager to learn more? Check our e-blast each Wednesday.

Westwood Hall Re-keyed



Because so many people have had a key to Westwood Hall through the years, it has become impossible to be confident of securing that

building. On Tuesday, February 28, those doors were re-keyed; clearly, if you currently have a key to Westwood Hall, it will be worthless. Contact Karen in the office if you need access to Westwood Hall that date and in the future!

...and the main doors to Delaney Hall will be re-coded—date to be determined. With all their current use, we need to ensure that our facilities remain secure. Again, Karen will be the person to contact when the new code is changed.

Who can I count on?

A joy shared is a joy multiplied. And a sorrow shared is a sorrow divided.

Each time our Children's Chapel meets, we drop glass beads in a bowl of water, sharing the joys and sorrows of our lives. Last month we acted out the quote above, joy a balloon we puffed more air into; sorrow a hunk of playdoh, broken into more manageable chunks.

Sweet serendipity--the full congregation sang *Lean On Me* that day, as our chapel focused on the people we turn to in times of celebration and sadness, in our triumphs and our struggles.

I asked the children to use their fingers to list these support people - literally, who can they count on? They named family members, of course, and friends, people at school and at church, and their pets who listen so attentively. We took some time to consider how we thank them for their help, support them when we can (this looks different when you're five years old), and remember to share the good times, too.

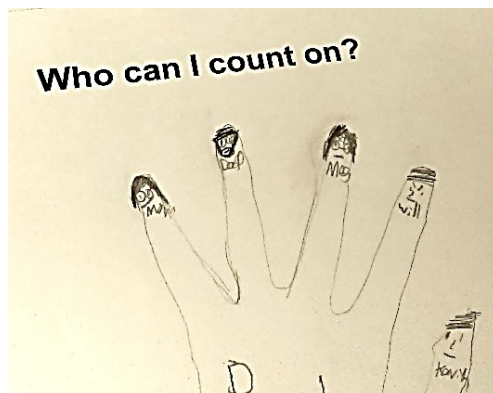
As we left the worship circle and moved to our art station, each child traced their hand and labeled each finger - one creative soul even drew portraits on each fingerprint.

A few children mentioned that they had so many people that they needed more than one hand - and they might even need to count their toes, too! One creative drawing featured a hand with twelve fingers.

As adults we might spend more time thinking about all the people who depend on us, but regardless of our age or station, we all need support networks.

I urge you to do this little exercise (hand-tracing optional) - take a few minutes to sit in silence and consider- who are your cheerleaders? Who can you call on when you need someone to listen, to help out, to remind you that you are loved? Who's in your Justice League?

Katy Carpmann
Director of Religious Education



March Sunday School

March 5: Sunday School Classes

March 12: Garden Day

March 19: Children's Chapel

March 26: Sunday School Classes

Depending on weather, we may flip garden and chapel days!

Wheel of Life



We extend heartfelt condolences to the family of Dan Rigney, whose mother died on January 29 at the age of 92, and to the family of Lester Landis whose mother died on February 9 at the age of 81.

We are thinking about Lester Landis and his family in addition because Lester is fighting a severe bone infection in his toes.

Our prayers for healing and wholeness go out to Betty Coffman who is recovering from a fall while in Mexico which resulted in broken ribs and a punctured lung; to Robin McElfresh who fell in Houston, which resulted in a severe fracture of her upper arm; and to Barbara Elmore as she recovers from dental surgery.

We also send healing thoughts to Elspeth Davis and wish her well as she recovers from surgery.

Tim Lawrence is recovering at home after back surgery.

Congratulations to Robby Nunez for being selected as Employee of the Month at the Montrose Center. Way to go Robby!

Emerson Helping Hands



is a new program designed to help us help each other. The idea is to facilitate meeting those short term physical needs that occur when a church member has surgery, a new child, experiences, a loss, or any of the myriad of events that happen during our lives.

We are signing up volunteers to make that happen. We need to sign up members who are interested in being contacted via text or email when there is a need. Some examples of the kinds of things we will be doing for each other are: bringing a meal, providing a ride somewhere, or minor home repairs. The text will contain a link that will direct you to more information on the type of need and all the details and you can decide if is something you can help with and if so sign up. Keep in mind you don't have to cook to provide a meal. Just the knowledge that someone else is bringing food and you don't have to think about dinner is a major energy saver. After surgery, reaching up to change a light bulb can be counter indicated. It is our hope that although we are all so very busy, the use of technology here will allow us to reach-in towards each other in times of joy and times of need—

Strengthening the bonds of our Beloved Community.

To sign up via text, text “emhh” to 81010.

To sign up via email, send an email from your preferred email address to emhh@mail.remind.com. The subject line can be left empty. Just put “sign me up” in the body and hit send.

You will receive an email confirming you have joined. Follow the link in that email to complete your sign up with Remind.

The Remind platform is geared towards education but free (and completely fine) for anyone to use so they will ask you what you are: teacher, student, administrator, or parent. Choosing either parent or student will be fine.

From there you just follow the directions on the screen to complete sign up.



We received \$307.25 from Amazon during 2016. Emerson receives about 4% rebated when shoppers use our special hyperlink to browse Amazon.com.

Use the special “Amazon for Emerson” link near the bottom of every e-blast.

Details about Amazon, randalls and other rebates are at: [http://](http://emersonhouston.org.giving-overview/donate-while-you-shop/)

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March Share-the-Plate—The Women's Home

The Women's Home (The Home) was established in 1957 and built around a mission to help women in crisis regain their self-esteem and dignity, and empower them to return to society as productive individuals. Its programs provide housing and support services to women and families who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness.

In Montrose, The Home's treatment and transitional housing program has 50 beds and offers residents up to 18 months of holistic support. In Spring Branch, The Home owns and operates an 87-unit apartment community which offers permanent supportive housing specializing in women-centered services. Women with children are one of the fastest growing homeless populations in the nation, and, in response to this problem, The Home has recently expanded its existing Spring Branch facility--recently opening Adele and Ber Pieper Family Place apartment complex to provide permanent, supportive housing to low-income families and to families who have experienced homelessness in the Houston area. Forty units within the complex have been allocated especially for families who have chronic histories of homelessness. On-site case workers work with all tenants to help them locate the services they need to maintain housing and increase their overall stability including educational programs, health care services, and other support service resources throughout the community. <https://www.thewomenshome.org/>

Funds gathered through this month's special collection will be used by The Women's Home to provide programming to families residing at Adele and Ber Pieper Family Place including case management, educational tutoring, basic needs assistance, and enrichment programming. Thank you for considering a generous contribution.

75% of the collection will go to these programs and the remaining 25% will go to our standing recipient, Meals on Wheels.



Emerson Justice Advocates

We did it! Over 240 UU's from around the state made it to Austin on February 15th under the Texas UU Justice Ministry banner to lobby our representatives and senators on the issues of reproductive justice, income equality, and immigrant and refugee rights. Of those 240, 63 were from the Houston area and 55 were from Emerson! Perhaps we did not alter the course of the 85th Texas Legislature, although that remains to be seen, we did lift our spirits as we pushed aside all manner of trepidation and unease and made the visits! We introduced ourselves and our UU values to 20

elected officials representing the Houston area. For next steps, please join the Emerson Justice Advocates Steering Committee to draft strategy and plan future events. Please contact Kenny Jones at justiceadvocatesuu@gmail.com or by message or text to (832) 654-1779 or find us on Facebook.

Speaking of the future, Emerson Justice Advocates has formed an **Indivisible** group whose primary focus is our Congressional Representatives and U.S Senators. We have our kickoff meeting on **Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 6:00 p.m.** in Westwood Hall. Please bring a friend and your

appetite and come on out to get ACTIVE! Save the Date! Emerson Justice Advocates has arranged a Deputy Voter Registrar Training at Emerson on **Wednesday, April 19, 2017, 6:00 p.m.** in Room 205/206. The training is painless and you'll be ready to register your fellow citizens to vote! We hope to make some considerable out reach plans to substantially increase the voter rolls in anticipation of up-coming elections - think 2018!

Start Planning Now, Attend General Assembly


NOW—Register early for General Assembly 2017, when rates are lower. Registration rates increase May 1.

- Second ever JUSTICE GA - Special Project During GA
- Election for President of the UUA
- Congregation Study Action Issues
- Serve Emerson as a Delegate
- Music! Friends! Ceremony! Worship!
- Largest Gathering of UUs in America!

To learn more about Justice GA, visit www.uua.org/ga



Save-The-Date

April 2, 12:30 p.m.—Italian Style Vegan  Lunch in Westwood Hall. Ticket sales start mid-March. For more information, e-mail: ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org

April 19, 6:00-7:30 p.m.—Harris County Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar Training, Emerson Justice Advocates, in Room 205/206.



Resistance Training livestream: ACLU People Power Action Event - March 11

Join Emerson Justice Advocates on **March 11** for a livestream viewing of the ACLU's launch of People Power. We'll watch the Resistance Training live and talk about next steps for organizing to resist Trump's attacks on our basic freedoms.

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, Sanctuary - **3:00 p.m.**, light refreshments and socializing, 3:30 p.m., join the livestream! Discussion and Next Steps Planning to follow!



Houston Food Bank: A Round of Applause for Each of You!



I would like to thank all of you for coming out last Saturday to volunteer at the Houston Food Bank! What a fun morning. Good company, good music, hard work .. who could ask for a better day! I especially want to thank all of our children and teens who got up early on a Saturday morning to volunteer and help make the world a better place!

I look forward to volunteering with all of you again and hope that you all enjoyed the day as much as I did! Peace and blessings, Jane Zachritz

March Events

March 4, 9 a.m. to 12 noon—Spring Campus Cleanup

March 4, 7:30 p.m.—UniTunes Coffeehouse presents Shake Russell, Michael Hearne & Mike Roberts.

March 11, 3-6 p.m.—Resistance Training Livestream - ACLU People Power Action Event

March 15, 6:30 p.m.—Men's Book Club meets at La Madeleine at 10001 Westheimer Rd, Ste 2123 near the Beltway. Book: *Dictator* by Robert Harris.

March 15, 7:30 p.m.—Women's Book Group meets in the Library. Book: *American Character* by Colin Woodard.

March 16, 10:00 a.m.—Daytime Book Group meets in the Library. Book: *The Art Forger* by Barbara A. Shapiro.

March 18—Circle Dinners

March 20, 6:30 p.m.—Celebrating the Vernal Equinox →

Welcoming Spring, Celebrating the Vernal Equinox

Monday, March 20, Potluck supper at 6:30 p.m.; service at 7:30 p.m., in Westwood Hall. As children of the earth, we are subject to its annual cycles of light and life. And so we gather to celebrate the equinox, to acknowledge the cycles of change in the natural world, and to celebrate our place in the universe and in nature. We pause to reflect on this point of balance, embracing the coming season of hope, renewal, and fresh energy. You're invited to contribute poetry, reading, story, drumming or dancing to our informal service (outside in the courtyard). Questions? Email Ann May and Robin McElfresh at ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org



Ongoing Activities

Stitchers: Every Wednesday, 11 a.m. in Delaney Hall.

Lunch and Learn Spanish: Every Tuesday and Thursday from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 204. For information e-mail Alisha Loftin at alishadenton@sbcglobal.net.

Emerson Poetry Group: Sunday, March 19, at 9:45 a.m., Room 204.

Ministry for Earth: Sunday, March 26, from 9:45-10:45 a.m. in the Library.

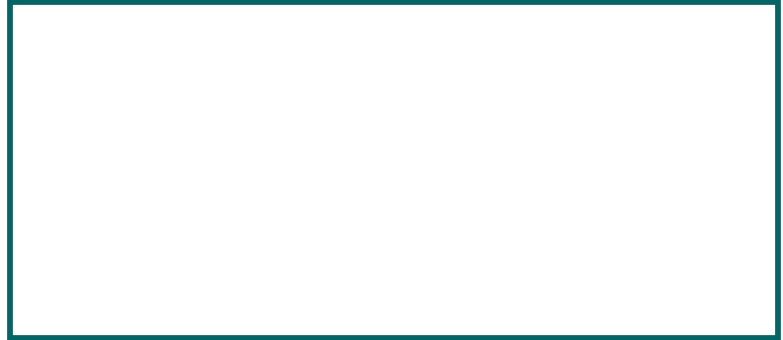
Sandwiches for SEARCH: Thursday, March 9, at 10:30 a.m. in Westwood Hall. Contact: Barbara Hopkins, bbhopkins@sbcglobal.net

ESL: Tuesday/Thursday classes, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. and Saturday classes, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. here at church. For more information, call (713) 782-0825.

LGBT+Allies Emersonians Potluck Lunch: Sunday, March 12, in Room 209, at 12:15 p.m. For additional information, please contact euulgbtq@gmail.com.



Becky Edmiston-Lange, Minister
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Come Learn What Membership Means at Emerson.

Join Emerson Sunday - The Membership Committee welcomes you to a conversation about Emerson and to sign the membership book if you are ready to join. Meet in the Library at 12:15 p.m. **Next Class: March 12**

Child care is provided. Please RSVP to the office at alejandra@emersonhouston.org at least five days before the event.

Stay Connected!



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PR News

Please send all submissions for the Eblast, Order of Service and website weekly by Tuesdays to pr@emersonhouston.org.

Next Newsletter deadline is:
Tuesday, March 21