

emerson UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST church  
**the emersonian**



10...9...8....

Get ready to BLAST OFF for Emerson's "Out of This World" Service Auction!

...7...6...5...

We'll head for Planet Fund-A-Need to improve Emerson's own "Outer Space"! — Sidewalks! Lighting! Drainage! Signage! Earth-friendly landscaping!

...4...3...

This intergalactic trip will offer travel excursions to:

Or rocket off with Rockets tickets...  
 and SO MUCH MORE!



...2...1...

But we're not taking off yet! THERES'S STILL TIME TO DONATE services large AND small, craft items, food.... The sky's the limit for donations for the MOST extraterrestrial, the MOST extra-celestial, **THE MOST OUT OF THIS WORLD**

**WE'LL HAVE A BLAST!**



**An Open Letter to Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church**

Alex and I wish to express our sincere appreciation to all of you for sharing the experience of our wedding. The outpouring of your love, joy, acceptance, labor and gifts was overwhelming. You will never know how much it meant to both of us. Alex and I had envisioned a perfect and elegant wedding. Everyone assured us that it would be, and thanks to you, it was.

Neither of us has had a pimple for nearly thirty years, until the day of the wedding. The attire we initially planned to wear didn't fit and had to be changed at the last minute. The photographer had an unexpected emergency and sent word that he would send an assistant in his place-who arrived late. The disc jockey, (who was provided a complete playlist of music on CD), didn't play a single song we requested. The music

stopped unexpectedly (three times) in the middle of our first dance. We were briefly devastated.

Then Alex and I observed something interesting. The entire crowd was dancing with wild abandon to music they appeared to enjoy. We ended up with two photographers instead of one. People commented that the first dance was the perfect metaphor for marriage (i.e. working through unanticipated hiccups). We had anticipated a perfect wedding, and you gave us one.

**What we've learned:** Alex and I have been together for over a decade. The affection we share for one another was not greatly affected by the wedding ceremony. But that isn't what the ceremony was about. It was about sharing the experience of that affection with all of you. It was about our connection to community. It was about the love that abounds between and among us within that community. Inasmuch, it **was** a perfect day. Not because of the tuxedos, or the music, or the dance – but because of you. How could it have been anything other than perfect?

With much love and appreciation to each of you,  
 Derrick & Alex

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## The Revs Are On Sabbatical!

**March 28 until August 16**

We wish them well as they pursue a study of the intersection of landscape, spirituality and environmental morality as they travel the US. The Board and they have been planning this sabbatical time for over a year and have made arrangements for church life to continue with vigor while they are away. We will miss them, but are happy for them to have this time for study, reflection, rest and renewal.

Meanwhile, there are informational flyers around at church and you can click on [Sabbatical](#) to a link with really good FAQs! Safe travels to them both!

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### From Katy—

A century ago, minister and seminary dean Lewis Fisher wrote, “Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand.... The only true answer to give to this question is that we do not stand at all, we move.”

As Unitarian Universalists, we accept that revelation is ongoing and that we continuously evolve with our changing world.



Nowhere is this more critical than in considering our next generations and how we prepare them for the realities they will inherit.

On March 5, a dynamic group of Emersonians came together to consider these challenges and how we can innovate our programs to best support children and families. Our conversations were far-ranging, and we'll put up full results on our blog. Succinctly, the challenges fell into these categories:

- How do we raise UUs in a non-UU world?
- Whole world/Small world
- Distance from nature
- Skepticism vs. Cynicism
- Economic issues: scarcity, inequity, justice
- Knowing oneself and having a strong core
- Deep need for critical thinking, especially
- around e-communications

We went on to consider what core values we want to pass on and hold up in our children and youth, both for their good and for the sake of our world of wonder, hurt, and possibility. The challenges are vast, but so is our hope--this was a meeting of joy and enthusiasm. Throughout Emerson's history, we have proudly worked to raise up intelligent and caring Unitarian Universalists. That work continues with this RE Innovation process. Join our next conversation in May.

Katy Carpman  
Director of Religious Education

## April Sunday School

April 3: Age-Graded Classes

April 10: Social Action Sunday

April 17: Age-Graded Classes

April 24: Social Action Sunday

On April 17th, middle school and up will attend our worship service.

# 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

**April 3**

### **We Don't Save Souls Around Here—Rev. Nell Newton**

Chatting with a neighbor about our jobs when he laughed and said, "But as least *you're* saving souls!" Ack! No, not really, because...oh, well. Sometimes it's hard to explain the radical bits of our Universalist tradition. People like the idea of hell—for other people. But if we're the "No Hell" church, what are we up to if we're not saving souls from eternal damnation? Not to worry, we've got our work cut out for us nonetheless!

**April 10**

### **Is Being Moral Worth It?—Dr. Michael Condit**

Morality is a subject we often avoid because of unpleasant experiences of being told by others how we should behave. The implication that we don't or can't measure up has been used as a control mechanism in some religious traditions. Yet both philosophy and religion contain very enlightening and positive examples of the meaning of morality and how it enhances our human relationships. Our Unitarian Universalist concepts of morality are very broad and inclusive, and they significantly emphasize action

**April 17**

### **Unitarian Universalist: The Next Generation**

Our high school youth group present their annual service, featuring senior speeches, music, and an emerging Unitarian Universalism.

**April 24**

### **Owning Your Religious Past—Ken McLeod**

Most UUs grew up in some other faith tradition. Like the patchwork of a quilt, we have come to where we are in faith as a result of those we have met, what we have experienced, what we have kept, what we have altered, and what we have added. We will look at this process, as an outgrowth of an Adult Religious Education course last fall on this topic.

## *Wheel of Life*



- ◇ We welcome Gavin Kent Miller, son of Ken and Stephanie (Stevie) Miller, born February 20th
- ◇ Over Spring Break, William Hammer played Carnegie Hall with his high school band. Also Noah and Asher Lee played with their orchestra as well.
- ◇ Congratulations to Alex Flores and Derrick Elliott on their joyful wedding March 12th
- ◇ David May, Leticia Anderson, Polly Delaney and Verna Bierschwale have all had health challenges recently and are on the mend. May healing continue!

## APRIL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

—Karen George

### The Women's Home



Throughout the month of April our Sunday plate offerings will benefit **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 who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness. Many of its residents suffer from addictions, mental illness, or both. The Home believes that treatment must address and heal the whole person and embraces this value at its two unique campuses in the Houston area.

In Montrose, The Home's treatment and transitional housing program has 50 beds and offers residents up to 18 months of holistic support. Residents participate in residential, case management, clinical and vocational services simultaneously to achieve self-sufficiency through mental stability, sobriety, a livable income and safe permanent housing. In Spring Branch, The Home owns and operates an 87-unit apartment community, called Jane Cizik Garden Place (JCGP), 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 need The Home is developing a unique community for women and their families which will expand The Home's existing site in Spring Branch to include an 84-unit, two-and-three-bedroom apartment complex and a WholeLife® Service Center. The new apartment complex will provide affordable housing and support services to families. The WholeLife Service Center will offer families in the surrounding community access to a variety of collaborative services including a Federally Qualified Health Clinic operated by Spring Branch Community Health Center, after-school and summer enrichment programs, behavioral health services, and workforce development.

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### Rebuilding Houston Together!

**Time to strap on your tool belts .. Emerson UU's 54th Rebuilding Together Houston project is almost here!** On the Saturdays of April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (9:00 AM - 3:00 PM) we will be renovating a house that needs a little TLC and helping an elderly or disabled Houstonian living below the poverty line. There are many ways to help and you don't have to be a master carpenter to make a big difference! You can come either Saturday and for all or part of each day. We have a lot of folks who come out both Saturdays just so they can see the finished house! Lunch, water and soft drinks will be provided. **If you would like to volunteer, please let us know which day you would like to help out. Friends, family, co-workers - they are all invited to help. I know that we have some folks who actually bring their own crews! We just need to know who is on your crew so we can plan for lunches.**

If you do have home building or home improvement skills, please let us know your specialty so our mighty crew chief, Leo Vandermeulen, knows in advance. We are also looking for someone who has had First Aid training within the last 1-2 years who can be on-hand for either Saturday. If you can act in this capacity, please let Jane Zachritz know.

**Also, if you would like to learn a new skill, there will be demonstrations throughout the day each Saturday.** Each house is a different animal so the opportunities are endless! We will receive our house assignment on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> and we will provide everyone with the address and a map upon receipt.

To learn more about Rebuilding Together Houston, please visit [www.rebuildingtogetherhouston.org](http://www.rebuildingtogetherhouston.org).

Please sign up in the Gathering Place or you can email Jane Zachritz at [jm.zachritz@gmail.com](mailto:jm.zachritz@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you!

## 10 AM ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Adult Ed Class:** On each of the four Sundays in April, Dana Ashrawi will lead discussions on the subject of Israeli-Palestinian relations. The sessions will fill gaps in the historical narratives of two peoples, widen conversations, and find more hope in the quest for a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians. Dana is a third-generation UU whose family tree includes Rev. Theodore Parker, holocaust survivors, and Palestinians. She has played a major role in the development of this curriculum. This is a very practical follow-up to previous sessions on the beliefs of Islam and Judaism.

There is a book that is recommended as an accompaniment to this course. It is *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, A Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East* by Sandra Tolan. Copies will be available in the Bookstore and can be obtained either in paperback or electronically through amazon.com

**Un-Conversation Discussions...**is on hiatus until June.

**Third Sunday Poetry Group:** A casual gathering of those who love poetry. Bring something you have written or a poem you wish you had written. April 17, Room 204

### Recurring Activities—You Are Invited!

**Choir Rehearsal:** Wednesdays, 7-9 PM in the sanctuary. All experience levels welcome, no auditions!  
Contact: Music Director, Adrian Rodriguez, [adrian.euuc@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.euuc@gmail.com).

**Emerson Intergeneration Orchestra:** Sundays, 9-10 AM in Westwood Hall. All musicians and ages welcome.  
Contact: Orchestra Director, Bill Tackett, [office@emersonhouston.org](mailto:office@emersonhouston.org).

**Stitchers:** Every Wednesday, 11 AM in Delaney Hall. Come for conversation, if not for craft!

**Women's Evening Book Group:** Wednesday, April 20, 7:30 PM in the Library. The book of the month is *Fates and Furies* by Lauren Groff. Contact: Jill Rose, [jillrose@gmail.com](mailto:jillrose@gmail.com).

**Sandwiches for SEARCH:** Thursday, April 9 at 10:30 AM in Westwood Hall. Contact: Barbara Hopkins, [bbhopkins@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bbhopkins@sbcglobal.net).

**Men's Book Group:** Wednesday, April 20, 6:30 PM at Luby's, 2730 Fondren. The book of the month is *The Shape of the New: Four Big Ideas and How They Made the Modern World* by Scott L. Montgomery and Daniel Chirot. Contact: Dave Bergt, [dbergt@comcast.net](mailto:dbergt@comcast.net).

**Daytime Book Group:** Thursday, April 21, 10 AM in the Library. This month's book is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. Contact: Dave Bergt, [dbergt@comcast.net](mailto:dbergt@comcast.net).

### The Investment Committee Honors Will Irwin



Will declared it a "capital cake!"

On Sunday, March 13, the Investment Committee celebrated Will Irwin for his **25 years** of service on that committee. His interest in and perspective on the stock market through the years has been invaluable to the committee as it has guided the investments of the church. Will has decided that it is time for him to leave the committee. He truly will be missed!

# April Upcoming Events and Activities

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## Care-Givers Group Forming

Are you caring for a parent, spouse, adult child or other family member or friend? The Lay Pastoral Ministry Team (LPMT) is trying to start a support group for folks who carry this often draining and difficult role. You are not alone. The LPMT will host an organizational gathering with light refreshments after church on Sunday, April 3. Come meet others in the congregation who are also care-givers and discuss when such a group might meet. If you can't attend April 3, or for more information, contact Kay Bergen, LPMT coordinator, at [kay\\_kenny@yahoo.com](mailto:kay_kenny@yahoo.com) or Marci Collier, LPMT member, at [marci713@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marci713@sbcglobal.net).

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## Be a LEEDER!

Volunteers are needed to keep our LEED recycling program\* going. Our recycling service ended, so once again we need volunteers to take our recyclables off-site. Job description: 1 Sunday a month, collect paper, plastic, aluminum from bins in Delaney and Westwood, and take it offsite to any recycling center. Time required is about 30 minutes to collect and about 30 minutes to take to a collection center. Please contact Ann at [abmay11@gmail.com](mailto:abmay11@gmail.com) if you will help. \*1 point for our LEED certification.

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## ESL Classes at Emerson

Saturday's, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM class assistant volunteers needed as well as set up and clean up volunteers. Call or e-mail Deborah Landis at 613-504-0819 [dlandis570@aol.com](mailto:dlandis570@aol.com). Thursday's 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM class assistant volunteers needed. Call or e-mail Deborah Landis.

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## Support Plant It Forward Farms

Exciting news! [Plant It Forward Farms](#) brings farm fresh produce to Emerson every Sunday. This is not a farmer's market, but delivery to all who have pre-purchased a share of the farm. Buying shares provides a living wage for the local refugee farmers and enables them to know how much to plant. You can sign up directly on the PIFF website by selecting Emerson as your pick up location. Interested? If so, please email Kenny at [uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com](mailto:uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com). He will walk you through the sign-up process.

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**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## News from the UUA: Register for General Assembly

[Registration](#) and [housing reservations](#) for General Assembly (GA) 2016 are now open! This year's GA will take place June 22-26 in Columbus, OH, and will include a [Ware Lecture](#) from award-winning broadcaster and bestselling author Krista Tippett. Registration rates increase on May 1. Visit the website for more [information](#).

# Emerson Players Take the Stage Again!



Neil Simon takes on Anton Chekhov's tales in *The Good Doctor*

Emerson Players proudly presents Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*--a Broadway hit first performed in 1973 that combines Simon's comedic wit with Chekhov's satiric commentary on the human condition.

**Performances are Friday, May 6, and Saturday, May 7, in the evenings and a matinee performance on Sunday, May 8.**



The Players are having fun with this and know you will too! Tickets will be on sale in early April at Church or email [emersonplayers@gmail.com](mailto:emersonplayers@gmail.com).

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc. Graphics from <http://live.intelligentlifemagazine.com/content/arts/robert-butler/chekhovs-tragi-comic-collision> and <http://www.genehaasdraws.com/scribes/>

## Welcome our New Members!



Martin and Lisa Estill both joined in February.



Delara Aubon joined in March.

## Spring is the Time for Renewal



**Renewable Energy** -- Dan Rigney, our "missionary" for renewable energy, attended an excellent T.E.J.A.S Toxic Tour with a group of Bay Area UUs featuring a trip to Manchester and points south. The talk and tour Sunday (March 13) focused on the Ship Channel

communities which are so heavily impacted by industrial proximity and pollution. Juan Parras, Founder and Director of [t.e.j.a.s. Houston \(Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services\)](#) guided the bus around the communities of Manchester and Smithville, historic communities dating to the late 1800s but lacking today in city services and pollution protections. Passengers were shocked to see a collapsing gas storage tank side by side with homes! Emerson Ministry for Earth plans to sponsor a similar tour later this year, perhaps with the First UU Climate Action Team.

Dan also established good contacts with the Climate Action Team at First UU, the Houston Peace

and Justice Center and Pax Christi (a Catholic Peace and Justice group). Dan is spreading the word on Emerson's [Renewable Congregations Campaign](#) to many religious and civic organizations around Houston and the US. For Houston homeowners, we recently added more information about how individuals can support renewable energy until you can switch your contract to renewable energy.

Emerson Ministry for Earth is energizing our community: we will host a table for an upcoming Citizens' Environmental Coalition Summit **March 24**, 9 am to 3:15 pm, and an Emerson booth for Earth Day Houston on **April 16** in Sam Houston Park. We will publicize not only the Renewable Congregations, but also Emerson and its many-splendored Ministry for Earth program. If you are interested in volunteering for a shift on either March 24 or April 16, send an email to Dan and Ann at [ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org](mailto:ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org).

## Spring is the Time for Planning

April 24, 9:45 to 10:45 AM – Join us in the library (4th Sunday) to plan our next adventure. Joining with other UUs, we have committed to respond to climate change and there's lots to do!

Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange, Co-Ministers

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## New to UU? Want to Know More?

### PR News

**Please send all submissions for the newsletter, Eblast, Order of Service, and website to [pr@emersonhouston.org](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org).**

**Our Newsletter submission deadline is Tuesday, April 19, by noon. Email submission to [pr@emersonhouston.org](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org).**

**Join Emerson Sunday** - Ready to join? The Membership Committee welcome you to a conversation about Emerson and to sign the membership book if you desire. Meet in the Library at 12:30 p.m.

**Next Class: April 12**

*Child care is provided for both events. Please RSVP with the office at [mary@emersonhouston.org](mailto:mary@emersonhouston.org) at least five days before the event.*

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Meetup: [/EmersonSeekers](https://www.meetup.com/EmersonSeekers)

