

# emerson UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church the emersonian

## Save the Date!

September 10—*Homecoming Sunday*, our big celebration kicking off a new church year! A chance to meet our assistant minister, Sam, AND it's a *Bring a Friend Sunday*. Who might you invite? (Conversation starters on page 2.)

## Embracing Our Beloved Community 2018 Stewardship Campaign

*Our beloved community of faith, reason, and affection welcomes all to grow in mind and spirit as we build a better world."*

When you joined the Emerson Unitarian Universalist church, you didn't sign a credo statement. You did something more. Each of us entered into a covenant with the congregation to support one another; to be present for one another. We share our truths and we celebrate our diversity. We form a beloved community.

(Continued on page 5)

## Meet Our New Temporary Assistant Minister

We are excited to introduce Reverend Samuel Schaal as Emerson's temporary assistant minister. Rev. Schaal's specialty and experience is as an intentional interim, or transitional, minister. We think he will be a great support and provide help

as the congregation decides its future.

Sam has experience on the board of the Grief and Loss Center of North Texas, where he honed skills that will help our congregation as we continue to work through a journey of grief begun with Rev. Mark Edmiston-Lange's passing. More generally, he will primarily provide pastoral support and leadership to the pastoral care and membership committees, and he has special interest in financial stewardship since he has worked in financial planning.

Reverend Schaal is a proud grandfather with four grandchildren in Tyler and one (the newest!) in Fort Worth. Being with us at Emerson in Houston will keep him close to family. In addition, he freely admits to loving Texas and Texans. He's glad to be back in Houston after enjoying his time at Bay Area UU in 2010-12.

We welcome Rev. Schaal to our church family and look forward to getting to know him better starting in September.

—Barbara Crotty, President of the Emerson Board



# Religious Education

**a**ugust, to me, feels like the summer's weekend. Can I sink in to a lazy sweet day? Shall we go on an adventure? Or should we sensibly use the time to get ready for ALL THE THINGS—back to school shopping, new work projects, belated nagging of summer reading, chore lists, and so much more? I'll admit that I still haven't found an optimal balance, even as my sons start their senior year of high school.

Sunday School continues in our laid back and fun fashion again this month, finishing up our UU Superheroes theme on Sunday mornings, and a movie night for high school youth on August 13th.

I'm preaching August 20th, and on August 27th we welcome Rev. Becky back. We'll have a special back-to-school blessing for learners of all ages.

After Labor Day, once we're back in school year routines, that's when we'll plunge into a new church year. September 10 is Homecoming Sunday, and we're also making it a Bring a Friend Sunday—a great way to invite folks to join in on a high energy day--songs, stories, and lunch afterward! See the text box on this page and we'll be sharing more hints throughout August!

Love and popsicles, *Katy*

## Summer Sundays— UU Super Heroes 11:15 to Noon, Room 108

**August 6: Lewis Latimer**, Bringing ideas to life

**August 13: Sophia Lyon Fahs**, Cherish all

**August 20: Christopher Reeve**,  
Becoming a hero

**August 27: Celebrating**  
ourselves as heroes



## Meet Our New Member!



### Betty Lynne Riffin

Betty has been in Houston for three years after 40 years away. She belonged to a UU Church in Auburn, Maine, and was relieved to find Emerson when she moved back to Houston.

Betty is a self-taught sustainable housekeeping instructor and is currently attending HCC to become a writer and teacher. Some of her hobbies include bird watching, sewing, cooking, reading and writing mostly non-fiction.

Fun Fact: She inherited her Granny's baritone ukulele and is learning to play. P.S. Pete Seeger is her #1 musical hero followed closely by Frank Zappa.

## Conversation Starters (to invite a friend to Emerson!)

- My congregation welcomes agnostics, atheists, liberal Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.
- We help kids learn the good parts of religion, like truly caring for people and the planet.
- I was raised as a (fill in the blank) but I had grave doubts about that. At Emerson I found a whole bunch of people who, just like me, questioned traditional religion and wanted something more.
- People in my church are gay, straight, transgender, married, single, and we're all dedicated to figuring out how to thrive on this planet as one people.
- Many people in my religious community say they aren't religious, but spiritual instead.
- Come learn about one of America's most enduring progressive faith communities, and what we're doing to help build a better world.



# Sunday Morning Schedule

## Summer Sunday Schedule

9:45 a.m. Professional Childcare Begins

10 a.m. Adult Ed • 11 a.m. Worship • 11:15 a.m. Children's Programming

*Please join us on Sundays for Worship service.*

**AUG  
6**

### Rev. Chuck Freeman—Fill Your Core, Toughen Your Resolve

Now is not a time to be screaming and shrieking our faith and moral values. This is a time to be grounded in the richness of our souls. Wise teachings like the Tao anchor us in the deep wells of unmovable dignity for all beings. How do we become spiritual activists, personally and collectively, that flow resolutely like a mighty river?

### Emerson Poetry Group—Ways to Explore the Unknown; In What Frame Am I?

Members of the Emerson Poetry Group explore poetry adventures and the unknown.

**AUG  
13**

**AUG  
20**

### Katy Carpmann—My Hollow Book Is Never Empty

Katy, a religious educator certified by the UUA, has been our Director of Religious Education for the past six years.

### Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—Learning to Inhabit the Unimagined Future

Our senior minister, Becky Edmiston-Lange, returns to the pulpit—Of grief and healing, rest and joy; of herons, mockingbirds and Mary Oliver's poetry—and what I did and did not do on my summer vacation.

**AUG  
27**

## Adult Education

The Adult Religious Education program is held in Room 205/205 on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am.

**August 6:** Repro Justice Session 3—Inherent Worth and Dignity - Understanding reproductive oppressions and gaining an appreciation for the intersectional approach of reproductive justice. Presented by Kenny Jones.

**August 13:** 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Teach In - A deeper look at what's involved with the 8th Principle. Presented by Racial Justice Working Group.

**August 20:** Repro Justice Session 4 - Reverence for Life - Engage with various religious perspectives on life and pregnancy; confront historic and current attempts to use abortion as population control; and reflect on sources of UU and personal theologies of reverence for life. Presented by Kenny Jones.

**August 27:** ESL Program - An overview of the program and its needs. Presented by Deborah Landis.

Wheel of Life



Emerson member, Gordon Bangs, died on June 28. Gordon was a member since 2005, but had been homebound for the last several years.

Condolences and good wishes for a speedy recovery from surgery to Barbara Hopkins who fell, seriously injuring her neck. Barbara is a longtime member of Emerson Church and currently has been lead organizer of Sandwiches for SEARCH.



# August Share-the-Plate: Emerson's English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

Please consider a generous contribution to Emerson's ESL Program when the offering plate is passed to you in August. Seventy-five percent of the money donated through the offering plate in August will be used to help fund Emerson's English classes for 2017. (The remaining 25% will go to our standing recipient, Meals on Wheels.) **Free English classes** will be provided to immigrants at the church by volunteers three days a week. Your donations will help pay for supplies, student books, and childcare workers who, along with volunteers, help take care of our students' children while they attend classes.



Emerson's English classes will begin the 14-week 2017 Fall Semester with **registration on September 9<sup>th</sup> from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday classes will begin on September 16<sup>th</sup>. The Tuesday and Thursday classes begin September 18<sup>th</sup>.** See page 7 for more information on this wonderful program or contact **Lisa Rockett** at (832) 386-5688 or [llrockett@gmail.com](mailto:llrockett@gmail.com).

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## Coordinating Council for Social Action: Planning Meeting - Service Activities

Sunday, August 13 – Room 204, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Have you ever thought, “I have this really awesome idea for a service activity that would be perfect for Emerson but I don’t know how to get the ball rolling”? Are you interested in helping to plan our “boots on the ground” social action activities? Well now is your chance!!! Past service activities have included:

- Renovating homes in connection with Rebuilding Together Houston;
- Preparing weekend food back-packs for children in connection with the Houston Food Bank;
- Making “butterfly” wraps for girls graduating from Freedom Place (a center for girls rescued from human trafficking);
- Working on an assembly line at a peanut butter factory that produces all of the peanut butter for the Houston Food Bank;
- Collecting underwear for Undies for Everyone (an organization that provides underwear to school children in Houston);
- Installing pocket gardens at Friends 4 Life (an animal shelter) and Freedom Place

A light lunch will be provided and we welcome all ideas!

Our goal is to provide service activities for multiple age groups and activity levels, both on and off campus. At this meeting, we will be planning the fall schedule for social action activities and we would also like to start mapping out the spring schedule. You will also be given the opportunity to organize and plan an activity, if desired. We will provide you with all of the necessary tools to make the activity a success!

If you have any questions, please contact Jane Zachritz at [jm.zachritz@gmail.com](mailto:jm.zachritz@gmail.com).

We look forward to meeting with you and hearing your ideas!

The theme of our stewardship campaign this year is **Embracing Our Beloved Community**. Over the next months, we'll explore that theme further. For now, consider the idea in two overlapping contexts.

First, we hug one another, sometimes literally, and always in a figurative sense. An embrace is an active show of support, of companionship, of love. Imagine reaching your arms around everyone in the Sanctuary, then expanding it to members not present that day and to extended families and loved ones. Imagine all their arms pulling you into that same embrace. Who couldn't live with greater confidence, knowing all those arms support you?

In the second sense of the phrase, we use our ideals of faith, reason and affection to help build a better world. We embrace that future by pulling the world into our arms. We support expansion of justice and compassion, especially in a time when both seem to be under assault.

We are stronger when we walk arm-in-arm. When we embrace and support one another we gain the strength to extend our support and love to the world. This is the essence of our church, and stewardship in all its forms is one of its manifestations. Support is needed from each of us to sustain our beloved community.

As part of stewardship, this year we will introduce the suggested fair-share contribution guide. Over the next few years, we hope to transition all of the congregation toward making fair-share pledges, and we start this year. The guide provides a progressive suggestion of support, based on individual circumstances. It is for each donor to use in private, not shared with the stewardship team or anyone else in the congregation.

Finally, we'd like to give some statistics on the 2017 pledges. Last year's Stewardship Campaign received commitments for increases in giving, but we still have room for improvement. Of 256 active member pledge units, 182 pledged almost \$552K. The average pledge was just over \$3,000 and the median pledge (half are greater amounts, half are less) was just under \$1,500. For 2018, our goal is to increase all these. However, 74 have not pledged for 2017, and we hope to decrease that number. We each form a part of this together, and we need everyone to participate in this aspect of congregational life.

Watch this space for more information about our campaign to Embrace Our Beloved Community. Please reach out to us with your ideas and thoughts as we work together to grow and support our community and ideals. Our email address is [stewardship@emersonhouston.org](mailto:stewardship@emersonhouston.org).

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## Circle Dinner

**H**ello to the Circle Dinners group and a big hello to new Circle Dinner want-to-be's. The Circle Dinners will begin again on **Saturday, September 16**. I am looking for four hostesses/hosts for that evening. Let me know if you could host a dinner in September. The other dates for Circle Dinners in the new church year are: November 18, 2017, January 20, 2018, March 17, 2018, and May 19, 2018.



Please put these dates on your calendar and let me know if you could host any of these dinners. It is always a great way to spend an evening to get to know your church friends.

Newcomers to Emerson, we would like very much for you to become a part of the Circle Dinner group even if you cannot come to every dinner. You can contact me at [mafrusk@comcast.net](mailto:mafrusk@comcast.net) to have your name put on the list to meet others in your church community.

Chair, *Mary Ann Rusk*

# Ministry for Earth

## *Invites you to attend these community events in August.*

### Greater Houston Environmental Summit and Environmental Education Expo by Citizens Environmental Coalition (CEC)

**When:** Friday, August 4, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Where:** United Way of Greater Houston Community Resource Center

**Location:** 50 Waugh Dr., Houston, TX 77007 (free parking onsite)

**Cost:** \$35 includes lunch because Emerson is a member of CEC.

Education Expo only (no lunch; no presentations) is Free for students and teachers.

**What:** The 2017 CEC networking and learning event for environmental organizations in the greater Houston region. Presenters include CEC Houston, Texas Children in Nature - Houston, Katy Prairie Conservancy, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Environmental Educators Exchange, and Bayou Preservation Association. Featured panel on the Hot Topic of Climate Change. To learn more and see options, [register](#) here.

### "Becoming Carbon Neutral," a presentation by Jim Blackburn

**When:** Sunday, August 6, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** The University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Blvd., Robertson Hall, as well as online, via web meeting.

**Who:** open to the public; [Please register](#) for planning purposes.

**Cost:** Free

**What:** To address our role in climate change, we all need to understand and then implement carbon neutral design. Jim Blackburn, well-known environmental lawyer and planner, and professor at Rice University, will help us understand what carbon neutral design is for our faith institutions as well as ourselves by understanding our various carbon footprints and how to avoid, minimize and then offset our carbon dioxide emissions. If you can't make it, you can get a copy of the recording later. For more information, please contact Lisa Brenskelle at [gcs.lrc@gmail.com](mailto:gcs.lrc@gmail.com). Hosted by the Interfaith Environmental Network of Houston.

### Creation Care Fest – Environmental Extravaganza

**When:** Saturday, Aug. 12, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Where:** Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Boulevard, Houston, TX 77005, at the corner of Rice Blvd. and Greenbriar. Parking is available for \$1 at the Rice University lot across the street from the church. Metro bus stops for lines 27, 41, 65, and 84 are nearby.

**Who:** Open to the public. [Please register](#) for planning purposes. This free environmental educational offering has activities for all ages. Lectures (10 to noon and 2 to 5 p.m.) by experts on issues from air to water to plants and animals. Kids can enjoy fun and educational activities all day. Nursery care for kids under 5. Exhibits by local environmental nonprofits. Contact Lisa Brenskelle at [gcs.lrc@gmail.com](mailto:gcs.lrc@gmail.com) with any questions.

## Emerson Activities

### Stitchers

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

### LGBT+Allies Emersonians Potluck Lunch

Sunday, August 13, in Room 209, at 12:15 p.m. [More information](#)

**Sandwiches for SEARCH** Thursday, August 10, at 10:30 a.m. in Westwood Hall. Contact: [Mary Ann Rusk](#)

**Emerson Poetry Group** Sunday, August 20, at 9:45 a.m., Room 204.

### Ministry for Earth

Next meeting takes place Sunday, August 27 at 9:45 a.m. in the Library.

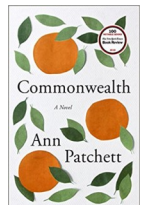
## Book Clubs

### WOMEN'S

Wednesday, August 16, 7:30 p.m. in the Library.

Book: *Commonwealth* by Ann Patchett

Contact: [Jill Rose](#)

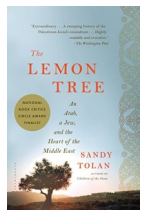


### DAYTIME

Thursday, August 17, 10 a.m. in the Library.

Book: *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, A Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East* by Sandy Tolan.

Contact: [Dave Bergt](#)

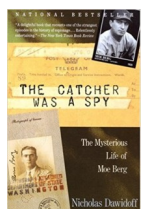


### MEN'S

Monday, August 21, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine (10001 Westheimer Rd.)

Book: *The Catcher was a Spy: The Mysterious Life of Moe Berg* by Nicholas Dawidoff.

Contact: [Gabe Gelb](#)



## English Classes (ESL for Adults)

*“Houston is the most diverse, rapidly growing major US metropolitan area, and immigration has contributed greatly to its growth and diversity. In 2013 the Houston metro area was home to 6.3 million people, of whom 1.4 million were foreign born – an increase of nearly 60 percent from 2000, which is almost twice the national growth rate.” – Migration Policy Institute Report, March 2015*

Houston has one of the largest immigrant populations with about 22% of Houston residents born in another country. In an effort to serve the needs of our immigrant community, Emerson Justice Advocates (EJA) offers English as a Second Language classes (ESL). The intent of EJA is not only to offer classes in English, a key component of upward mobility in the United States, but also to identify other needs within the immigrant community. In the process we can share our care and compassion to members of the larger Houston community and build personal relationships with people. As Global Citizens, it is our mission to make the world a better place starting in our community.

As our ESL program continues to grow, we encourage students to identify other needs for which we can provide resources and educational opportunities to assist them in bettering their lives and the lives of their children. Our classes are being offered free of charge to all who come to our doors for help.

### **2017 Program Update**

The 2017 semester started off with a record-breaking student attendance of 153 students and approximately 45 children who were cared for by our paid child care workers. Emerson’s ESL classes are the only classes in the Houston area that we know of that provide childcare for their students. Providing childcare allows our students with young children to attend classes. Our marketing efforts included flyer distribution in various communities including schools, radio ads on a Spanish radio station, and some social media.

As we enter our 4th year, our program has progressed from one Saturday afternoon class and one level the first semester to four different levels three days a week. We have 19 dedicated volunteer instructors and numerous assistants to help teachers in the classrooms or with placement testing during registration.

The [Unitarian Universalist Funding Program](#) awarded Emerson’s English Classes Project a grant to assist with the 2017 school year. Funding was also received from Emerson’s “Share the Plate” collections, “Faithify” online contributions, a major fundraising event (Chili Cook-Off), and from several generous individual donors.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Emerson’s English Classes Project is fueled by volunteers, from the Emerson congregation as well as the larger community. Consider offering your time and talents in one or more of the following roles. For those with limited time, the following opportunities are available: Registration data entry, registration greeters, placement testing, session coordinators, classroom assistant, ESL instructors, childcare volunteers and office staff. For detailed role descriptions, please visit the [Emerson website](#). If you are an experienced instructor interested in volunteering, please contact Clara Kosloff at [cakosloff@gmail.com](mailto:cakosloff@gmail.com). For all other volunteer inquiries, please contact Carol Trout at [ctroutline@gmail.com](mailto:ctroutline@gmail.com).

### **Contact Information**

New students interested in learning more about Emerson’s FREE ESL Program should call (713) 782-0825.



Becky Edmiston-Lange, Minister  
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[twitter.com/emersonhouston](https://twitter.com/emersonhouston)



## 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: August 27**

*Child care is provided. Please RSVP to the office at [alejandra@emersonhouston.org](mailto:alejandra@emersonhouston.org) at least five days before the event.*

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### 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](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org).

**Next Newsletter deadline is:  
Tuesday, August 15**