

emerson UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church the emersonian

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2017 ISSUE | WWW.EMERSONHOUSTON.ORG

GROWTH AND LOSS, HOPE AND FAITH AMIDST CHANGE

Workshop with Kenn Hurto



*A workshop with Kenn Hurto, Lead Executive for the Southern Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association on Saturday, **February 25**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Westwood Hall.*

Congregations, composed of people, often have shared experiences similar to an individual when facing change. Whether planned or unexpected, change provokes a mixture of reactions — shock, fear, anxiety, yearning for the good old days, a sense of being lost, anger at whoever did this to us, confusion, excitement and hope. In this workshop, we'll explore how relationship systems — a congregation — manage change. Areas of focus will be: The Rollercoaster of Change; Resistance is Good; Looking over the Horizon, and more.

If you are interested in helping chart Emerson's future as we adapt to

SERVICE OF PUBLIC WITNESS AND PRAYER MEET UP

Working Together for the Common Good



the loss of one of our co-ministers, please plan on attending this important workshop. Everyone is welcome. There will be no lunch per se, but there will be heavy snacks and breaks. Child care is available by request if notice is received in the church office by email to alejandra@emersonhouston.org or phone at (713) 782-8250 by Tuesday, February 21.

To RSVP, please click on the RSVP link provided in the weekly e-blast.

On Tuesday, January 10, the opening day of the 85th Texas Legislature, Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange spoke at the South Steps of the Capitol in Austin where prayers and wisdom from leaders of diverse religious traditions were voiced.

To view Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange's speech, fast forward to minute four on the following video link: https://youtu.be/30yJ9a_q1N4



REVELS

Have you taken the opportunity to look up at the night sky of late? During that ferocious cold snap at the beginning of the month, the night sky was absolutely dazzling! The moon close to full, Venus hanging above the western horizon for hours - sparkling with a brilliance rarely equaled in this large city with its host of electric lights. On January 12, Venus reached its greatest elongation, meaning the planet appeared farthest away from the sun from our vantage point and so was well outside of the solar glare and hence more visible than usual.

If you are a sky watcher, then you know that this January has had several noteworthy celestial events. The bright star Regulus and the planets Jupiter and Saturn have all appeared, from our perspective, to be dancing around the moon at various times in the eastern sky. The full moon itself was absolutely luminous - if at times "a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas"! (Kudos to anyone who recognizes the reference.) And as I write, there is another notable celestial event on the horizon. Perhaps - if we all get our newsletter in time and weather permits - we will all be able to see it. As darkness falls on January 31, look toward the high southwestern sky. The waxing crescent moon, Venus, and Mars will, all three together, form a stunning triangle.

To look up at the night moon, planets and stars, restores my soul. Though I am by no means proficient at naming the stars or tracing the constellations, most of my adult life, I have tried to remember to look up at the night sky, to take time to notice and to marvel at what I see. There is something about the constancy of the stars that calms and centers me. No matter the vagaries of life, no matter how the fates toss and turn, the stars still shine. And the stars remind me, as well, of the vastness and complexity of the universe - and remembering that somehow helps make my private sorrow more bearable. It's hard to explain, but it has something to do with feeling part of something immense, something so miraculous, something seemingly eternal. We are so privileged to inhabit this universe; so privileged to "be", and most especially, so privileged to know the gift of human love.

To look up at the moon, planets and stars is one of the spiritual disciplines I try to cultivate. May we all find a spiritual practice that calms and centers us and reminds us of the preciousness of life.

Blessed be. Blessed we are.

Becky Edmiston-Lange

FEBRUARY SHARE-THE-PLATE

St. Nicholas Church in Transylvania & the Baláz's Scholars Program

Please consider a generous contribution when the offering plate comes your way in February. You will support our Partner church in Transylvania—St. Nicholas. Emerson has hosted several of their ministers over the past twenty+ years. We helped them acquire and repair their "Prayer House" and have helped supplement their minister's salary. Our continued support is necessary to maintain a Unitarian presence in the land where it began 400 plus years ago.

An equal portion will go to support the Baláz's Scholars program, administered by our UU Seminary, Starr King. This program brings young UU ministers to Starr King for a year of education and exposure to UU congregations. Our member, deForest Ralph, established endowments in his wife Martha's name, to help with school expenses and spiritual training at Meadville Lombard, our UU seminary in Chicago.

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



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.

**FEB
05**

Rev. Joanna Crawford—Unitarian Universalism with a Texas Accent

The French use a term, *terroir*, to indicate that where a certain wine, coffee bean, or other product came from affects its character. That applies to religion, too -- Unitarian Universalism in Texas just isn't the same as Unitarian Universalism in Boston. Come join 7th generation Texan, Rev. Joanna Fontaine Crawford, as we examine what Texas Unitarian Universalism looks (and sounds) like. *Reverend Crawford is minister of Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Church in Austin, Texas.*

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—Are You Ready for This Thing Called Love?

The title is from a John Hiatt song, which goes on to say: "don't come from me and you, come from up above." Well, I don't know about that, but I do know that love can be heavenly. John Hiatt was one of Mark's and my favorite musicians. It sometimes seemed his music became a backdrop for our relationship. The service will feature several John Hiatt tunes and it will be a little about Mark and me and a lot about love in all its wonderful manifestations.

**FEB
12**

**FEB
19**

Earle Canfield—America Growing Up: Ozzie and Harriet, Revisited

One great thing working with young people has taught me is optimism. When you take a hungry, bare-foot kid and give him lunch, shoes, and a school uniform, a magical transformation happens that lifts his/her spirit, if not his/her soul. Updating one of my previous sermons, it is evident this past election does not spell the end, but is a throwback, an adolescent revolt, for a large number of people who must act out before they come to understand that there is no turning back. Ultimately, we all have to learn to take responsibility not just for ourselves, but for each other. I'm hopeful.

Rev. Kenn Hurto—Until the Mud Settles

The Reverend Kenneth Gordon Hurto is the Lead Executive for the Southern Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Rev. Kenn has served Unitarian Universalist congregations in Indiana and Iowa, northern Virginia, Pennsylvania, in New Zealand and Australia — and most recently in Fort Myers, Florida. Widely sought out for his work with systems theory and congregational leadership, Kenn leads a ten member field staff team who provide organizational development and leadership training for the 216 congregations that make up the Florida, Mid-South, Southeast, and Southwestern Districts. Kenn lead a workshop for Emersonians on "**Growth and Loss, Hope and Faith Amidst Change**" on Saturday, February 25. (See the front page article for more information.)

**FEB
26**

ADULT EDUCATION

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

In January we concentrated on personal spiritual practices to strengthen our souls—in February we investigate ways to build a better world!

February 5: Hunger in Houston—how you can help. Denise Atkerson of the Houston Food Bank will present.

February 12: Addicted to Plastic? With Emerson's Ministry for Earth team

February 19: ANSWER Nepal education program with Earle Canfield

February 26: Immigration and refugee justice

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

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING



At our January Social Action Sunday, I asked the children to explain Souper Bowl of Caring to our newcomers.

“We build CANstructions out of all the cans and boxes and then people put money in our cans if they like the CANstructions,” explained one volunteer.

“And it goes to the Houston Food Bank!” another piped in.

“And it’s on Super Bowl Sunday,” added another.

We backed up to consider what Houston Food Bank does with the food, and how we ask the congregation to donate thousands of cans and boxes of healthy foods. Then the group eagerly set to making signs and distributing flyers.

Children tend to concentrate on direct action. We’ll spend some time talking about hunger during our SouperBowl of Caring event on **February 5th**, but they are eager to get to the building and the money they raise to help.

Youth and adults can delve deeper--what are the systemic changes needed to truly eradicate hunger in Houston and the world?

Start with Becky’s sermon January 29th, and continue your learning by attending our Houston Food Bank Adult Religious Ed session on February 5th. You may recognize our guest speaker Denise Atkerson!

Next Steps:

- Contribute your cans and boxes (remember, no baby food or glass!)
- Know every dollar you donate becomes **three meals** for a hungry Houstonian.
- Consider volunteering at the Houston Food Bank on February 18th.
- Pay attention to how you might affect change in the system, from choices for your own family to how you can influence the wider community.

And please – let me know if you could drop off a load of cans at the Houston Food Bank (535 Portwall St, Houston, TX 77029) in the week following the event.

Katy Carpmann
Director of Religious Education

This month in Sunday School



February 5: Souper Bowl of Caring
February 12: Sunday School Classes
February 19: Children’s Chapel
February 26: Sunday School Classes

Wheel of Life



A number of our members, including Bub Joyce, Larry Huelbig, and Betty Lynne Riggins had surgery recently- may all heal swiftly and completely.

Charter Member Virginia (Jinni) McClelland died on January 10, 2017 at the age of 89 from pneumonia. Jinni and her husband Bram, who died in April 12, 2010, were founding members of Emerson and active members as long as they were able. See the obituary on page 5.

Our thoughts are with Florrie Snively and her family as they mourn the death of her sister Bitsy.

VIRGINIA MCCLELLAND

1927-2017

Virginia (Jinni) Cowan McClelland died Tuesday, January 10, 2017 in Houston, Texas at the age of 89. She was born in Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada on June 5, 1927. She is predeceased by her beloved husband of 60 years, Bramlette, and survived by her five children Darcy, Tom, Terry, Jeff, and Martha, as well as seven grandchildren. In 1945, Jinni moved from Canada to Buffalo, NY to attend nursing school, graduating with honors and becoming a Registered Nurse in 1948. Early the following year, she met the love of her life, Bram McClelland, while attending Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and they married that same year and, together, raised five children.

After learning that her toddler son Jeff had lost his hearing, Jinni became involved with the Houston Center for Hearing and Speech Auxiliary for more than 23 years. She and Bram were also founding members of the Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, and remained active with the church throughout their lives. Jinni loved traveling the world with Bram, crossword puzzles and playing Bridge, performing duets with Bram, singing with friends and family. She was elegant but also the life of the party. She loved brightly colored clothes, eclectic home décor, and toe-tapping jazz and swing, but also classical music, the opera, theology, history, literature and, in particular, the art of words. Her family says of her, "with a keen mind and wit, she was the perfect intellectual companion to her husband, and the perfect mentor, educator, and tender nurturer to her children." Jinni was much loved and admired. With her easy, positive disposition, she always had a smile and the right words to comfort or advise. The family held a private memorial. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions be made to The Center for Hearing and Speech (<http://www.centerhearingandspeech.org/>) or to the Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church (<http://emersonhouston.org/>).

Adapted from the Houston Chronicle, Jan. 18, 2017

EMERSON HELPING HANDS



In February, Emerson's Committee on Ministry will roll out Emerson's Helping Hands, a new program designed to help us help each other. The idea of Helping Hands 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 other changes and events that happen during our lives. We will need members to volunteer to make this happen.

Beginning on February 12, we will start signing up members who are willing to be contacted via email and or text message when there is a need. Some of the things that will be included will be signing up to take meals to member families, a ride somewhere, or minor repairs. Members who have chosen to receive these notifications will receive an alert when there is a need and directed to where they may sign up if it is something they can offer help with. It is our hope that, although we are all so very busy, the use of technology in this way will allow us to better reach-in toward each other in times of joy and times of need, strengthening the bonds of our Beloved Community.

If you want to know more, contact Cynthia Miller at cynthia@themillerhome.net with your e-mail address.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

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

ESL: Tuesday/Thursday classes are from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. and Saturday classes from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. here at church. For additional information about Emerson's English classes, please call (713) 782-0825.

LGBT+Allies Emersonians Potluck Lunch: Every second Sunday of the month. The next gathering will be on Sunday, February 12, in Room 209, at 12:15 p.m. For additional information, please contact euulgbtq@gmail.com.

Emerson Poetry Group: A casual gathering of those who love poetry. Bring something you have written or a poem you wish you had written. Sunday, February 19, at 9:45 a.m., Room 204.

COMING RIGHT UP!

BEGINNERS MEDITATION PRACTICE (6 SESSIONS)

Let's get together and practice. Begin a meditation practice by doing it in silence and in the presence of others. We will follow a simple plan: 20 minutes of silent sitting meditation, ...10 minute break... followed by another 20 minutes of silent sitting. Afterward, we will share tea. You are welcome to practice any form of meditation you prefer (mindfulness, focus on the breath, insight, centering prayer, etc.) You can sit on a chair, the floor, your own cushion (please bring); whatever is comfortable. The group is not affiliated with any one style of practice or meditation teacher. We welcome people from a wide variety of backgrounds and spiritual practices. To begin on your own, check out these apps: Headspace and 10% Happier.

Group facilitators: Larry Kelly, Ann May, Marci & Shawn Collier

Dates: **Wednesdays in Feb 1, 8, 15, 22 March 1, 8.** Time: 7:00 - 8:15 p.m.

TREES FOR HOUSTON VOLUNTEER DAY

February 4, from 8 a.m. to noon, at Willow Waterhole (5304 Gasmer Dr., 77035). To indicate interest, please send e-mail to ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY AT THE HOUSTON FOOD BANK

On Saturday, February 18, Emerson will volunteer at the Houston Food Bank. We have 20 spots reserved. Please sign up in The Gathering Place or contact Jane at jm.zachritz@gmail.com to sign up. If you are interested in carpooling from Emerson, please let Jane know. The carpool will leave from the church promptly at 7:00 am. All individuals must also register on-line with the Houston Food Bank or they will not be considered as a part of the group registration. Jane will provide the link for our group sign-up via email to all volunteers who sign up.

Special Note for Students: All students who would like to use this volunteer opportunity for student hours can request an official (embossed) Hours Verification Letter at the end of the shift, available at the Welcome Desk.

Following is what you will need to know:

Date: Saturday, February 18th **Time:** 7:30 am – 12:00 pm

Shift Category Name: Portwall Morning Shift

Description of Duties: Varies with the makeup of volunteers. Most of the projects at the warehouse involve inspection, sorting, and repackaging of donated food items for community distribution.

Location: 535 Portwall St., Houston, TX 77029

Directions: From Downtown, take IH-10 east and exit Gellhorn St. (exit #774). Make a U-turn at Gellhorn, stay on feeder and turn right on Portwall St.

Age Requirements: Children MUST be at least 6 years old and supervised by parent or guardian throughout the shift. All volunteers under the age of 18 also need a completed Youth Volunteer Consent Form signed by a parent or guardian. Jane will provide this upon request.

Parking: If space permits, you may park in the front parking lot, but in the event of a large volunteer turnout, you may be directed to the overflow lot located behind the building.

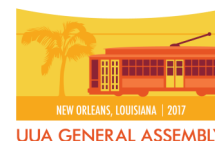
How to Dress: Closed-toe shoes REQUIRED - smashed toes are no fun, so the Houston Food Bank strongly enforces this safety precaution. Casual dress, long pants (preferred), t-shirt with sleeves.



SAVE-THE-DATE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY—JUNE 21-25, 2017, NEW ORLEANS, LA

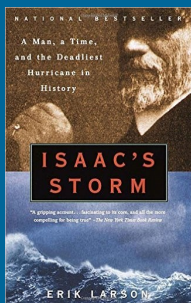
General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend. New Orleans is known as a place of re-birth following the devastation of Katrina in 2005. Many UUs have contributed time and funds in the effort to rebuild both the city and the congregations in the area. By going to New Orleans, we can both celebrate our successes and recommit to the relationships that have been forged with this community. More at: <http://www.uua.org/ga>



Guide for the frugal attendee <http://www.uua.org/ga/registration/financialaid/frugal-guide> includes this advice: **Act quickly.** The GA Housing Reservation System (<http://www.uua.org/ga/travel>) opens on March 1. Expect that inexpensive rooms, especially those close to the convention center, will sell out. **Register before May 1st** when rates are lower. **Volunteer** to work at GA and earn your registration fee. Share a ride; share a room. Learn more at our About GA Meeting February 19 after church.

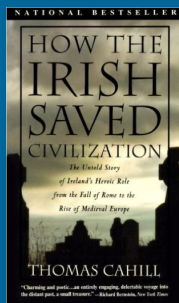
BOOK CLUBS

MEN'S



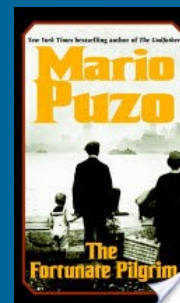
Wednesday, February 15, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine on 10001 Westheimer Rd. This month's book is *The Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History*, by Robert Harris. Contact: Dave Bergt, dbergt@comcast.net.

DAYTIME



Thursday, February 16, 10 a.m. in the Library. The book of the month is *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* by Thomas Cahill. Contact: Dave Bergt, dbergt@comcast.net.

WOMEN'S EVENING



Wednesday, February 22, 7:30 p.m. in the Library. The book of the month is *The Fortunate Pilgrim* by Mario Puzo. Contact: Jill Rose, jillo-rose@gmail.com.

HELP WANTED AT CHURCH

USHER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Ushers provide vital services in preparing the Sanctuary, welcoming the congregation and collecting the offering each Sunday. Please consider volunteering as an usher one Sunday a month or every other month. Ushering is a very easy way for you to help serve our beloved church with very little effort.

To volunteer, please see David before or after service or e-mail him at david@euucusher.org.

CALLING ALL PARTY PLANNERS!

Havana Nights--Emerson Auction Gala to be held April 29, 2017! We need interested party visionaries, food planners, decorators, organizers to help plan this party during the next few months. We need art and content help, food planner and workers, communications and PR help, data entry help, volunteers during the night of the auction, among other needs. Please contact auction@emersonhouston.org, or talk to Ruth Alkons-Wolinsky (ruthalkons@gmail.com) about getting involved. We need a lot of help to make this a fabulous event.



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 pm. **Next Class: February 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, February 21