

emerson UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST church

the emersonian

FEBRUARY 2020 — MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Persistence

"Above everything else
I've done, I've always said
I've had more guts than
I've got talent."
-Dolly Parton



FOCUS

This month we're focusing on PERSISTENCE!

- When you feel like giving up, what helps you keep going?
- What has persistence gained you in your life?

Each month our Emerson community focuses on a single idea, going deeper with one another. You can engage through:

- Sunday services—at least one Sunday each month is fully multigenerational – **February 9th**
- Age-appropriate Sunday school lessons around the themes
- Exploration Sunday—10 AM, **February 9th**—a time for contemplation and dialogue
- Social media—sharing articles, quotes, and podcasts shared via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Optional covenant group sessions

Calling All Worship Lovers! Come help shape Open Sundays at Emerson!

Sunday afternoon, **March 1, 12:30 – 3:00**, Rev. Becky will lead a worship planning session for Sundays during the summer and into the next church year, with the hope of creating a Worship Planning Group now that Ken McLeod has stepped down from the leadership of the Worship Committee. We will think together about what worship is in a Unitarian Universalist context; share ideas about what “works” and what doesn’t; brainstorm topics and approaches; and, begin planning summer services. Everyone is invited to attend – and to bring your Emerson peeps. Lunch will be served – and an interesting time will be had by all! Please contact Ale (alejandra@emersonhouston.org) in the church office to signal your intent to come and to request child care.

Souper Bowl of Caring

On Super Bowl Sunday (February 2) we raise funds for the Houston Food Bank. This year we're having a soup lunch! Give what you can!

And please let us know if you're attending through sign-up genius below. If you'd like to contribute a soup or side, please note that as well: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A4EACA62FAB9-souper>



Family Playdates!

Parents! Want to hang out together on the playground while our children burn off some energy? We'll meet **Sunday, February 16th at 9:30 AM** – feel free to bring a snack if you like! Depending on interest, we'll organize future playdates.
Rain plan is board games in Room 107.

Beckonings

Most of you have read this letter by now, but, in the spirit of the old Navy dictum for effective communication "5 times 5 ways", we repeat it here:

January 6, 2020

Dear Emersonians,

After long and prayerful contemplation, I have decided to retire from Emerson and from active UU ministry at the end of this church year. It is not a decision I came to quickly or easily. Many factors have gone into this decision, but most succinctly put - *it is time* – for me **and** for the congregation.

I will be 67 this month. At the end of this church year I will have been at Emerson for 21 years, 17 of them as Co-minister with Mark and, counting an intern ministry, in UU ministry for 35 years! Parish ministry is one of the greatest privileges on earth, but it is also a consuming profession that leaves little time for other pursuits. I've felt that especially in the last three and a half years since Mark's death, what with being the solo minister for much of that time and with the intense discernment process we have been through. I feel the preciousness of time intensely now. There are activities and interests I want to pursue that just aren't possible given the daily demands of parish ministry. And, too, I am incredibly blessed to be in love again with a wonderful man with whom to share the last chapters of my life.

Just as importantly, I increasingly have felt that Emerson needs a new ministerial perspective, someone with innovative ideas about how to "do church" in this new and challenging millennium. The next years can be exciting, productive ones for Emerson – and I fervently want that for you - but I am not the one to lead you into the future. You need someone with fresh vision to help you see the possibilities before you with fresh eyes.

I will miss ministry. I still love what I do and I love working with our excellent staff. And I will miss all of you tremendously. You are beloved to me. But, as I say, it is time.

My last Sunday at Emerson will be June 21st, after which I will take my summer leave. Six months gives us time to say our good byes, to reflect back on our time together, and for the Board to discern the next steps forward. There are time-tested recommendations as to how to proceed when a long-term minister retires. UUA best practice would be to have an interim minister before engaging in a Ministerial Search process. But that is a decision for the congregation. UUA denominational staff will be of great assistance during this time. And you can trust your own elected leaders. You have a very fine Board of Trustees!

Once I retire, I will no longer be your minister. Our UU Ministerial Code requires that I suspend contact and involvement with the congregation during the interim process and while a new called minister gets established. I know this will be hard and feel unnatural to me and, I suspect, for many of you; but the guidelines are there to ensure both the wellbeing of the congregation and the success of the next minister.

What a deep privilege and honor it has been to serve you! I hope we can continue to be present to one another over these next six months and have a "good" goodbye. I am proud of my 35 years of ministry, first at the Accotink UU Church in Burke, Va. and then 21 years here with you, 17 of those years with Mark. It will have been, I think, a good, long run - sweet and meaningful and blessed.

In abiding faith and affection,



Save the Date!

General Assembly is only a few months away... It's time to get Rooted, Inspired, & Ready! Soon, we will worship, learn, witness, and make decisions together. Whether in person in Providence or through off site participation, GA is powerful because of the ways we connect with each other and share our values. Read on for new opportunities, tips, and resources to make this your greatest GA yet.

More information in the March newsletter!

Sunday Morning Schedule

9:45 AM Professional Childcare Begins
10 AM Adult Education • 11 AM Worship • 11:15 AM Children's Programming



Please join us on Sundays for Worship.

February 2—Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On with Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange

Perhaps no other event of modern U.S. history more exemplifies this month's theme of "Persistence" than the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Keep Your Eyes on the Prize was one of the songs the black community sang over and over to keep their spirits up as they walked to work on tired feet for over a year. It was not only music, though, that held the boycott together but also the sheer grit and tenacity born of a desire to transmute a shameful past to one of glory.

February 9—Profiles in Perseverance with Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange and Katy Carpman

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee began in 1939, when Martha and Waitstill Sharp bravely risked their lives to support Jews fleeing the Holocaust. The UUSC is still at work with its partner organizations around the world advancing human rights. This year the UUSC is honoring some of the women who lead those partner organizations, carrying on the legacy of the Sharps' perseverance and bravery. A service for all ages.

February 16—Trusting the Democratic Process: Reformers, Resistance and Persistence? with Rev. Dan King, Guest Minister

This month's President's Day national holiday and the upcoming Super Tuesday primaries bring to mind the roles played by the greater and the lesser Presidents of our national history (especially those whose birthdays are in February). In this service, Rev. Dan King shares a few personal reflections about how Presidents aided or impeded the efforts of Unitarian and Universalist reformers like Theodore Parker, Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger and Clara Barton.

February 23—Failure is Impossible! with Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange

How did women win the vote? By insisting, by persisting, and by refusing to acknowledge any other possibility! One of the *grande dames* of the movement was Unitarian Susan B. Anthony. And to her, failure was impossible!

A Message from the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team

The Lay Pastoral Ministry Team would like to alert you to the fact that we plan on calling every member of the congregation sometime during 2020. The purpose of these calls is to be sure all members know that fellow Emersonians are thinking about you and that there are people around, members of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team, who are available if you need someone to talk to. We will not be asking for money and will not be asking you to volunteer for anything. We simply want you to know we care about you.

February Share-the-Plate—Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

For over eighty years, the UUSC has worked to advance human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with grassroots organizations. Our work is grounded in the belief that all people have inherent power and dignity. The UUSC concentrates especially on displacement (people forced to leave their home because of climate change, conflict, or economic hardship), migrant justice, and crisis response.

Wheel of Life



Congratulations to **Karen Van Horn** on her 15th year anniversary as Emerson's Business Administrator.

Congrats to Linda and Wayne McCullough, who celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary!



Billie Nelson died earlier this month at age 90. She and her husband Max, long time members of Emerson, were married a week shy of 71 years. A memorial service will be at **10 AM on Saturday, February 1st** in the **Sanctuary**.

Adult Religious Education (ARE)

It is with dogged persistence that we strive to learn about our UU principals and how we might apply them here and beyond to better the world. Join us with our PotpoUUri of Adult Religious Education offering each Sunday, 10 AM in Room 205-206, unless noted otherwise:

- **February 2** – UU the Vote: There is need for radical transformative change in the face of increased injustices. How do we best vote in love and vote out hate-this year and beyond?
- **February 9** – What is dogged persistence, and how does it shape our faith? Dori Wolfe will facilitate this hour of contemplative dialogue going deeper into our monthly focus of persistence.
- **February 16** – The 1619 Project brought attention to the consequences of slavery that still exists. This interactive discussion will focus on bias in healthcare, specifically against African Americans and especially AA women – presented by Lisa Rockett
- **February 23** – The Harris County Community Remembrance Project and the Equal Justice Initiative Michael Bloom will present an update on how Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church has been supporting Harris County's involvement with the Equal Justice Initiative's "Community Remembrance Project" in conjunction with the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama. For more information about the Equal Justice Initiative, see www.eji.org. For more information on the Community Remembrance Project, see <https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/news/eji-community-remembrance-project>

At the next meeting of the Adult Religious Education team **February 16 at 12:30 PM**, we'll discuss ideas for summer and fall – we'd love to hear from you.

Poetry Group meets on February 16th (9:45 AM in Room 204) and Ministry for Earth meets on February 23 (10:00 AM in Room 204)

Ministry for Earth

You are invited to the 7th annual Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) Third Coast Regional Conference on Feb. 8, 8 am-6 pm! [RSVP here](#) through citizensclimatelobby.org.

CCL builds the political will for our elected representatives to act on climate change. With the reintroduction into Congress of The Energy Innovation & Carbon Dividend Act-an effective bipartisan climate bill-that political will is more important than ever!

On Friday, February 7, Ministry for Earth will be hosting at Emerson the pre-conference gathering 6-9 pm with pizza and entertainment. It should be a wonderful evening of good camaraderie and envisioning of a brighter future. All are welcome, whether or not you are attending the conference. [RSVP here \(https://3rdcoastsocial.eventbrite.com\)](https://3rdcoastsocial.eventbrite.com)



Third Coast Regional Conference

United We Stand:

Working Together to Solve Climate Change

Houston, TX • February 8, 2020

Do you have a spare music stand?

The EIO is growing and is looking for music stands. If you have an unused music stand that you want to part with, please bring it to church and we'll take it off your hands. If you can't bring it in, contact: Andy Andrews at 713-253-0741 or by email at andy.jrandrews@gmail.com.



Emerson Activities

Beginner's Meditation - Every Monday from 7-8:15 PM in Room 208. We welcome people from all backgrounds and spiritual practices. For additional information, please contact [Ann May](#).

ELL Registration and Classes- Registration is closed! Saturday classes are from 1-4 pm and Tuesday/Thursday classes are from 6:30-8:30 pm. Interested in volunteering? [E-mail](#) the program director for more information.

Stitchers - Every Wednesday, 11 AM in Delaney Hall.

Emerson Choir - Every Wednesday from 7-9 PM. For all who are interested in sharing music with our beloved community, please attend the laid-back rehearsals. No audition needed—singers with all levels of experience are welcome! Contact [Adrian Rodriguez](#) with any questions and to get involved!

Sandwiches for SEARCH - Second Thursday of the month at 10:30 AM in Westwood Hall. Contact: [Barbara Hopkins](#)

Emerson Poetry Group - Third Sundays of the month at 9:45 AM, Room 204.

Game Nights for Teens and Families!

Every **3rd Saturday** of the month from **7 - 9 PM**. Contact Michael Bloom at mfbloom12@gmail.com

Save the Date: Spring Campus Cleanup



Saturday, March 7, from 9 to noon

Rain or shine, inside and out, there's work to be done. Come when you can, for as long as you can. Tools and equipment will be provided.

Lay Pastoral Ministry Team (LPMT)

Need someone to talk to? Members of the LPMT are available if you need a listening ear and support. Members of the LPMT include Victor Anwaar, Shannon Butler, Marci Collier, Mim Freiter, Stephen Lipp, Suzan Miles, Ian Sachs, April Smith, and Judy Taylor. They can be identified by their **YELLOW** name tags on Sunday mornings.



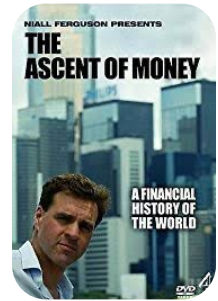
Adding eGiving to Your Giving Choices!

For those who no longer write checks or carry cash, you can now give to Emerson electronically with credit, debit or banking information:

- Online at emersonhouston.org/give
- With a mobile app
- By text

Schedule recurring donations so they arrive when you are out of town. Choose to pay on your pledge or give to Share the Plate or special funds as they arise. Instructions and assistance will be available at the Stewardship Table before and after church. If you are happy with your current method of giving, no need to change.

Book Clubs



MEN'S

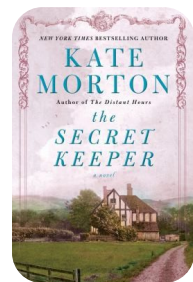
Monday, February 17

6:30 PM at La Madeleine Restaurant (10001 Westheimer Rd)

Book: *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*

by Niall Ferguson

Contact: [Cletus Lee](#)



WOMEN'S

Wednesday, February 19

7:30 PM in the Library

Book: *The Secret Keeper*

by Kate Morton

Contact: [Jill Rose](#)



DAYTIME

Thursday, February 20

10 AM in the Library

Book: *The Other Einstein*

by Marie Benedict

Contact: [David Bergt](#)

Our Next Steps Together

By Katie Scott, Board President

In January, Becky shared her plans for retirement with us and while we are happy for her, I know many of us at Emerson (myself included) jumped to the question, "What's going to happen to Emerson now?" We are going to do what we have done for over 40 years: remain a faith community dedicated to each other, social justice, and building a better world. But the reality is, change is hard and we need to allow ourselves to grieve and to process what this means for us. We need to take time to let the dust settle and truly think about who we are as a congregation. Emerson has made great strides the past two years in finding our path forward-- this work will guide us in identifying who we are and the type of minister we will need to help us down this path.

As a Board, we will focus on designing an intentional and transparent process for finding a new minister. In the meantime, Becky will be with us until June and we have time to express our gratitude and say our goodbyes. If you need a little comfort during this time, I ask that you look toward one of our Unitarian Universalist hymns:

*We are going,
Heaven knows where we are going,
But we know within.
And we will get there,
Heaven knows how we will get there,
But we know we will.
It will be hard, we know,
And the road will be muddy and rough,
But we'll get there,
Heaven knows how we will get there,
But we know we will.
Woyaya, woyaya, woyaya, woyaya.*

#1020 from
Singing the Journey

The Emerson UU Lay Pastoral Ministry Team Presents: Life After Loss

Facilitated by Kay Bergen

This program is a free program developed by the American Cancer Society. It is recommended for those who have experienced the death of a loved one within the last two years and is not limited by cause of death. Each 90-minute session is a combination of instructive and experiential material and aims to help participants:

- understand the emotional and physical dynamics of grief
- decrease a sense of isolation and increase a sense of normalcy through contact with others in similar situations
- share personal experiences within a safe, caring and understanding environment
- develop healthy coping skills and activities

The sessions are free and will take place over six consecutive weeks - Sundays beginning **February 2, 2020, at 1 PM** in Room 205/206. The last session will be March 8, 2020.

All participants are asked to commit to all six sessions and required to preregister by emailing Ian Sachs. New participants are not accepted after the second session.

*Kay Bergen is a retired Bereavement Coordinator at Houston Hospice with 20 years of hospice experience. She is a
6 Member of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church."*

Living the Change

Sunday, Feb. 9 at 2:30 PM

At Emerson or online, via simultaneous web meeting

You are invited to start living the change. What's it all about? Living the Change is an international interfaith initiative to address climate change. Learn what changes you can make in your life to make a difference on climate change and how you can educate others!

Details and registration at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/get-started-living-the-change-tickets-86287370849?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Please share with others who could have interest.

A Focus on Re-Uniting a Divided America—March 2020

Fairness, equality, and opportunity are core American values. UU's are small in number and to create a just world sometimes means strategically partnering with those we may not agree with on all things. On **March 1**, Adult RE will present "Defeating Divide and Conquer, the Strategy to Divide Us" and **March 22**, the Social Action Council will host an afternoon workshop "Constructive, Respectful Dialogue Across the Political Divide".

Religious Education

My collegial book group recently read Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods*. I did not agree with every one of the author's points, but I was intrigued by the idea of intimately getting to know the place where you are. Knowing the plants and animals and soil and waters you encounter throughout the day and in each season— when do the violets bloom? Where do the animals hunt and where do they live?



So I'm walking my own neighborhood and the trails nearby. When a busy day required a nightfall walk, I was amazed to find this tree full of nesting peafowl. Each lump in that photo is a peacock or peahen – during the day they roam my neighborhood looking for seeds and treats, the males shrieking and the females making a certain click/bonk noise.

And then there's the other place I spend much of my time-Emerson. We are fortunate to have an oasis of green space with squirrels and songbirds, hawks and lizards. If you're here at dusk, you might have seen the bats coming out, or even one of the yellow-crowned night-herons! We've got a treasure trove of trees, our pocket prairie and planted gardens, as

well as the lawn where children play and look for four-leaf clover.

How can you and your family be more in touch with nature? And how can we incorporate more outdoor time in our Sunday School program? I'd love to hear your ideas, especially as we look at options for Summer Sundays!

Katy Carpman
Director of Religious Education
katy.euuc@gmail.com

This month in Sunday School



February 2: Souper Bowl of Caring
(Westwood Hall)

February 9: All Ages Attend Worship*

February 16: Sunday School Classes

February 23: Sunday School Classes

**See ushers for special worship materials for children!*

2020 CENSUS ORIENTATION

For anyone who wants to learn more about the 2020 Census as it relates to Houstonians and Harris County and for those who will be volunteering in census education efforts with Volunteer Houston.

Register for a free, online, 30 min. orientation at

bit.ly/VHcensusorientation

Feb 11 (Tues) @ 12:30 – 1 pm
Feb 27 (Thur) @ 6:30 – 7 pm
Mar 9 (Mon) @ 6:30 – 7 pm

- Impact on Texas + Houston
- Under-counted populations
- How to take the census
- Who is counted?
- Myths + laws
- How to volunteer

Brought To You By



+



The Emerson Bookstore NEEDS YOU!!!

If spending one Sunday a month (about a half hour before and after the service) surrounded by thought-provoking books, funny bumper stickers and curious browsers sounds like your kind of volunteer gig, contact Kris Taylor at ktaylor2106@sbcglobal.net.



Save the Date: Emerson's 2020 Service Auction!

Saturday, April 25
at 5:30 PM

More information in the March newsletter!



Becky Edmiston-Lange, Senior Minister

1900 Bering Drive Houston, TX, 77057

713-782-8250

emersonhouston.org

facebook.com/emersonhouston

twitter.com/emersonhouston



Come Learn What Membership Means at Emerson.

Open House - 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 12:30 PM. **Next Class: February 9**

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

Stay Connected!



emersonhouston.org
facebook.com/emersonhouston
twitter.com/emersonhouston
meetup.com/emersonseekers

PR News

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

**Next Newsletter deadline is:
Tuesday, February 18**

Digital version of this newsletter is available on our website, emersonhouston.org, under "News & Calendar."