

# emerson UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church the emersonian

JANUARY 2020 — MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## FOCUS

We begin 2020 with a focus on Freedom.

In your life, when have you felt the freest? What helped you feel that way? If everyone was free, how would you know? What would you notice?

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 multigenerational
- Age-appropriate Sunday school lessons around the themes
- Exploration Sunday—10 AM, Second Sundays—a time for contemplation and dialogue
- Social media—sharing articles, quotes, and podcasts shared via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Optional covenant group sessions



## ELL Announces Two Volunteer Information Sessions

English Language Learners (ELL) Program is preparing for its Spring 2020 Semester, which begins January 25. The success of our program depends upon Emersonians who volunteer to welcome, teach, or assist students in our classrooms three days a week.

Learn how you can put your time and talents to work to benefit Houston's diverse immigrant community by becoming an ELL volunteer. Join us for a pizza and information lunch at 12:30 on Sunday, January 5 in Room 205/206.

Since 2014 Emerson has assisted nearly 1,000 English Language Learners. This past semester we hosted students from 33 different countries and 17 native languages. Emerson does indeed welcome the world and we welcome you to join us!

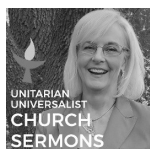
## Give the gift of “Justice Vegetables” to your family!—



It's easy to bring justice vegetables from Plant It Forward to your kitchen. For folks on the run, you can change your order on-line, pick up at Emerson on Sundays after church, either every week, or every other week. Heading out of town? Simple – just go online and hold your order. You will be eating locally grown produce while helping refugees settle into their new life. Start your order here! (<https://plant-it-forward.org/>)

## Emerson Podcast Launched!

Rev. Becky's sermons are now available on Stitcher, Google Podcasts, TuneIn, iTunes and Spotify! Subscribe and listen to our podcasts! <http://emersonhouston.org/podcast>



# Ringling In The New Year

By Katie Scott, Board President

January is associated with new beginnings and fresh starts. For me, January is also a time for reflection. I reflect upon the past year, its ups, its downs, its twists and turns. As I reflect on Emerson's past year, I feel gratitude. Gratitude for the staff who in the midst of significant changes continued to keep the church afloat. Gratitude for all of our volunteers, committee and board members for always looking for opportunities to make Emerson better. Gratitude for all Emerson members and friends who fill the church with the love and kindness needed to create a better world.

I am grateful for every single person at Emerson and look forward to our new year together, creating Emerson's next chapter. In New Year's tradition, I make a toast to you:

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day." -Edith Pierce

## January Share-the-Plate— Texas UU Justice Ministry

Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM) is YOUR voice for UU values in the public arena. Your statewide ministry, representing 49 UU congregations, works to educate, organize, and be a bold advocate to ensure that our seven principles are reflected in public policy. In addition, your TXUUJM works to:

- Engage the sustaining power of worship, community building, and friendship in the work of social justice
- Foster collaborative and civic engagement among Texas UUs and encourage close partnerships with our interfaith allies and community partners
- Put our faith into practice to directly address systematic injustice and create lasting, positive social change
- Provide UUs with information, education, training and opportunities for dialogue on pressing issues of public policy, legislation, and ballot initiatives

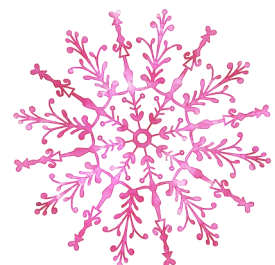
TXUUJM has been on the front lines of advocacy and public witness in the areas of economic justice, reproductive justice, and immigration/refugee justice. The work of YOUR statewide ministry is overseen by an Advisory Board and Congregational Liaisons who all serve on a voluntary basis. YOUR statewide ministry is managed by its Executive Director, Rev. Chuck Freeman. Emerson UU Church was instrumental in creating TXUUJM. Emerson, as all ministry-affiliated UU congregations, contributes to the operating costs of TXUUJM through a relatively small budget contribution. During the month of June, our Share-the-Plate contribution will be donated to TXUUJM. Please contribute generously to this vital ministry and its outstanding work and achievements on your behalf. You can also become a sustaining monthly sustainer—\$10 - \$25 per month provide predictable income for the ministry and is hardly a significant drain on most personal budgets.

Let's make Emerson a leader in its support of this vital social justice ministry.

## New Members! Prospective Members! Interested Visitors!

Did you not know that Louisa May Alcott was a Unitarian? Did you not know that Paul Newman was a UU? And Elliot Richardson? Who the heck was he? If you're surprised, maybe your friends will be also. Learn the basics of Unitarian Universalism and navigating Emerson in just two hours! Plus food! Meet other new UUs! Meet potential UUs! And get one (or more) freebies, if you pass the class! Don't miss this once in a some-time opportunity, presented by long-time UUs Beryl Kaminsky and Pat Smith. To reserve your place at the table and some food (with name and dietary restrictions):

**RSVP to [astat00@aol.com](mailto:astat00@aol.com) (00 is two zeros). Westwood Hall, 12:30 - 2:30 PM, Sunday, January 12, 2020.**



# 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.*

## **January 5—Turnings with Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange**

Join us for this annual service, which marks the births, deaths, and other significant "turnings" in the lives of the Emerson community during the year past.

## **January 12—Freedom From What and Freedom To What? with Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange**

Our theme for the month of January is Freedom. Freedom takes many different forms. Freedom means different things to different people depending upon one's situation and perhaps also one's stage in life. Freedom also comes with certain obligations.

## **January 19—Crossing Thresholds: Coping with Change? with Rev. Dan King, Guest Minister**

The issues we all encounter as we experience significant life transitions for ourselves and for those we love can sometimes seem overwhelming. In this service, our guest minister Rev. Dan King reflects with us on how our Universalist theological heritage can help us deal with the transitory nature of our human existence.

## **January 26—Not by Creed but by Covenant with Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange**

We UUs are famous for our freedom of belief, the fact that we do not have a creed of beliefs to which we must all subscribe. In UU congregations atheists rub shoulders with theists, neo-pagans with humanists, liberal Christians with naturalistic mystics - and some of us have a little of each of those in us. Theological diversity is part of who we are - but it might not have been so. We'll take a historical journey to discover how this all came to be.

## **Congregational Meeting— Save-the-Date!**

Annual Meeting is on January 26, 2020, in the Sanctuary at 12:30 PM. Childcare provided. Anyone who has been a member for at least ninety days has a vote.

**\*\*\*Annual Reports are due January 7, 2020 by e-mail to [alejandra@emersonhouston.org](mailto:alejandra@emersonhouston.org).\*\*\***

**Please note: As you make your Year-End Contributions, the rule is that a contribution is effective when delivered. This means a check received in the church offering in January 2020 cannot be deducted for tax purposes in 2019, even if it is backdated to 2019. However, checks that are mailed and postmarked in 2019 are deductible in 2019, even if not received until 2020.**

## **Emerson's 2020 Nominee Biographies for the Board of Trustees, Nominations Committee and Outreach Committee**

Emerson's Nominations Committee (Marci Knight, Wade Greiner, Kay Kamas, Janet Meininger, Craig Miller, Dave Schwager, Carol Trout) is pleased to announce the 2020 slate of nominees for elected positions. Visit the member's area of the website to view the nominee biographies.

Board of Trustees (BOT) (three-year term): Michael Bloom, Martin Estill and Marilyn Rambow

Board of Trustees (one-year term to complete term of a resigned trustee): Larry Huelbig

Nominations Committee (two-year term): Shannon Butler, Ben Withers and Ruth Wolinsky

Outreach Committee (three-year term): Ellen Norton and Lorry Wolfe

Outreach Committee (two-year term to serve the unfinished term of a vacant position): Dom Nelson



## Wheel of Life



We wish **Robin Sickles** a speedy recovery from knee surgery and rehabilitation. **Kenny Jones** reports that he is recovering nicely after a successful cataract surgery. We also wish a speedy recovery to **Brent Adams**.

Congratulations to **Bill Hammons** who is now officially retired!

We would also like to congratulate **Joe Coolidge** for becoming an Eagle Scout!

## Save-the-date!—7th Annual Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL) Third Coast Regional Conference

You are invited to the CCL's 7th annual Third Coast Regional Conference on **February 8!** [RSVP HERE](#).

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 comradery and envisioning of a brighter future.



## Adult Religious Education (ARE)

A great new year's resolution – learn something new each month! Join us with our PotpoUUri of Adult Religious Education offering each Sunday, 10 AM in Room 205-206, unless noted otherwise:

- January 5 and 19 – **Who Were the Stoics?** Stoicism is a philosophy that developed after 300 BCE in the Hellenistic world and became the major philosophy of the Roman Empire. Even though today we often think of “stoics” as those who do not complain about pain or misfortune, Stoicism as a philosophy and way of life emphasized cosmic and natural law, materiality, rationality, and control of emotions and passions. There are distinct similarities to Unitarian Universalist approaches to life. Presented by Michael Condit
- January 12 – What are you free to do, not just free from? Our director of religious education Katy Carpman will facilitate this hour of contemplative dialogue going deeper into our monthly focus of freedom. Room 205  
**Ministry for Earth information session** about Energy Innovation and Climate Dividend Act (HR763) – come learn about this bill and how we might vote to support it as a congregation. Room 204
- January 26 – **Pathways to Authoritarianism** - In the past century a number of countries have gone from electoral democracies to authoritarian regimes that are now democracies in name only. What common elements led to the loss of freedoms in these featured countries? Which patterns are currently occurring here in the United States? Attorney and long-time Emersonian Larry Huelbig shares his insights.

**Poetry Group** meets January 19th (9:45 AM in Room 204) and **Ministry for Earth** meets January 26 (10 AM in the Library) – final chance to learn about the about Energy Innovation and Climate Dividend Act (HR763) prior to our congregational vote!

## 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 will be on Saturday, January 11 from 1-3:30 PM. The first Saturday class begins on Saturday, January 25 and the first Tuesday/Thursday evening classes begin January 28th. 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](mailto:mfbloom12@gmail.com)

## Plan Ahead!—Planned Parenthood Roe V. Wade Luncheon

**January 31, 2020**

Marriott Marquis Hotel

Please join us to celebrate the 47th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision. We hope to have a large presence of Emerson members in attendance. Last year we had two tables. Let's make it three this year! Tickets are \$150. If interested, please contact Shelley Gottschalk at [shelleyjg@gmail.com](mailto:shelleyjg@gmail.com) or call 713-899-2349.

## 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](http://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



### WOMEN'S

**Wednesday, January 15**

7:30 PM in the Library

Book: *The Dutch House*

by Ann Patchett

Contact: [Jill Rose](#)



### DAYTIME

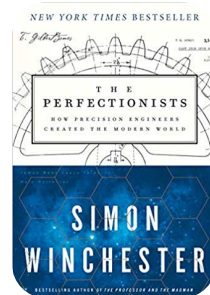
**Thursday, January 16**

10 AM in the Library

Book: *Bluebird, Bluebird*

by Attica Locke

Contact: [David Bergt](#)



### MEN'S

**Monday, January 20**

6:30 PM at La Madeleine

Restaurant (10001 Westheimer Rd)

Book: *The Perfectionists: How Precision Engineers Created the Modern World*

by Simon Winchester

Contact: [Cletus Lee](#)

## Ecology Tour - Huge Note of Thanks!

To all that made our Sunday ecology tour a success - THANK YOU!!

And to those that couldn't attend, please know you are welcome to the Wolfe home anytime - we love to give tours. And the amazing aspect of the other homes on the tour - their native and pollinator friendly gardens are in their front yards, so you can drive by at your leisure!

Specifically, many thanks to:

- Ann May for chairing Ministry for Earth and providing cookies
- Robin McElfresh - for being Ministry for Earth's second in command and supporting the good work MfE does (we missed you both!)
- Carole Huelbig - ditto on the support of MfE and for the delicious salads
- Beatrice Bomba - the master gardener in our midst, providing tips on Emerson's pocket prairie and more
- Michael Bloom - for sharing about the amazing sustainability work being done at HARC (Houston Advanced Research Center) and for offers of help on the Sunnyside solar project
- Ruth Wolinski - for offers of expertise on resiliency on the Sunnyside solar project
- Elena Wolinski - for bringing joy to the experience of witnessing butterflies dance
- David and Nancy Rilling - for sharing your joy of gardening and eating fresh from the earth
- Suzan Miles - for seeing the beauty in everything



- For Patti, Pippa, Gina and Lauren - for creating front yards of beauty and purpose, and then for sharing and teaching others about the art of pollinator friendly gardens.

We have been truly blessed!

Peace,

Dori

## How to Support Energy Innovation

At the Annual Meeting in January, you can vote in favor of Emerson UU Church endorsing the **Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019, H.R. 763**, a bipartisan solution to climate change. This legislation has received a groundswell of support during the last year, including from communities of faith including the national bodies and leadership of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, U.S. Catholics, Quakers, the UCC, and others. This bipartisan legislation will drive down America's carbon pollution and bring climate change under control. Watch for educational sessions and materials provided by Emerson's Ministry for Earth. (See page 4)

## Annual UU Network Luncheon

**Spreading Our UU Voice  
January 18, 2020**

**10 AM to 2 PM at Emerson/  
Westwood Hall**

The Unitarian Universalist Network will be holding the 2020 Network Luncheon. It is open to congregational ministers, officers and board members, congregational administrators and UU members in general. Please mark your calendars and RSVP at [UUhouston.org/registration](http://UUhouston.org/registration).



## Religious Education

I don't know about you, but I love the coming of the new year - the possibilities are delicious.

Yet those same possibilities can be overwhelming—we want to do ALL the things, which, even if it were feasible, would be exhausting and likely contradictory. So we're going to need to make choices.

The agency to make the choices that work for us and our families is an example of personal freedom – and freedom is our focus for January. In services and classes we'll share stories of people through history who've fought for what they needed, to make the world more possible and more fair for themselves and for all of us.

Thanks to all who contributed sleeping bags and winter gear to Montrose Grace Place! We'll be delivering all our Mitten Tree offerings around January 10<sup>th</sup>.

You've helped make the winter a little warmer for a homeless teen. And yes, they can use your help any time of year – learn more at

<https://www.montrosegaceplace.org/>

## Sunday School This Month

January 5: Turnings Service (or Children's Chapel for our youngest Emersonians)

January 12: Sunday School Classes

January 19: Sunday School Classes

January 26: Sunday School Classes

FEBRUARY 2nd– Souper Bowl of Caring – we will NOT be collecting canned goods this year, but will have a soup lunch fundraiser to raise funds for the Houston Food Bank. Stay tuned for further details!

*Katy Carpman*

Director of Religious Education  
[katy.euuc@gmail.com](mailto:katy.euuc@gmail.com)

## Emerson Community Feasts on Holiday Treats To Support English Language Learners



Visions of sugar plums, tamales and flan danced through their head as Emersonians rallied to support the church's English Language Learners (ELL) Program. Dozens of church members and program students shared their seasonal favorites during the Holiday Bake Sale Sunday, December 15.

Mary Evelyn Sorrell and a team of volunteers, including Tina Obut, Terry Rooney, Pat Whitten-Lege, Nancy Lipp, Robin McElfresh, Jon Whitten-Lege and Carol Trout, ensured the event's success. Thanks to the generous contributions of time and treasure, ELL will start the Spring Semester with an additional \$1900 to cover classroom expenses!

Registration for the new semester is Saturday, January 11 from 1-4 PM. And classes get underway Saturday, January 25. This past semester Emerson welcomed students from 33 countries of origin speaking 17 native languages. (Information about how to become an ELL volunteer is on Page 1!)



Becky Edmiston-Lange, Senior Minister

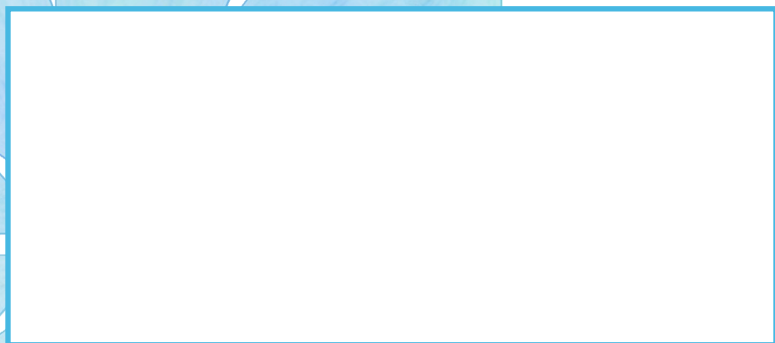
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[twitter.com/emersonhouston](https://twitter.com/emersonhouston)



## 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: January 12**

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

### Stay Connected!



[emersonhouston.org](http://emersonhouston.org)

[facebook.com/emersonhouston](https://facebook.com/emersonhouston)

[twitter.com/emersonhouston](https://twitter.com/emersonhouston)

[meetup.com/emersonseekers](https://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](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org).

**Next Newsletter deadline is:  
Tuesday, January 21**

*Digital version of this newsletter is available on our website, [emersonhouston.org](http://emersonhouston.org), under "News & Calendar."*

