

You're Invited—

...To Help Discover the Vision of Emerson Church
Six Sessions in July & August Open to All—See Page 2

emerson UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST church

the emersonian



Banners for Santa Fe

Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston partnered with Gallery Furniture to create banners that were delivered as a message of support to the community of Santa Fe. Emerson and our neighbor the Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism (HCRJ) shared one of the fifty banners distributed for signing. Emersonians, as well as others here in our neighborhood, signed the banner as a way of showing our compassion and care for the members of our larger community who are suffering as a result of the tragic shooting. The banner was set up in The Gathering Place of Delaney Hall for two weeks starting late May. Thank you to all that participated!

Emerson has a library? Who knew?

If you are looking for a book on world religions, theology, or philosophy, come “check out” the library upstairs and check out a book. Stop in before the service sometime and see what’s available.



Covenant Group at Houston Food Bank

Members of the Sunday 12:30 p.m. Covenant Group volunteered at the Houston Food Bank on Saturday, May 19. Pictured in the photo from left to right are: Kat Jones, Michael Eckenfels, Fred Wolfe, Rick Jones and Devin Miles. Mike Hilgart also participated. Many Covenant Groups are involved in external and internal service projects in addition to their monthly meetings that foster a spiritually nurturing environment for groups of 8 to 12 people. For more information on Covenant Groups, contact Mike Hilgart at mrhilgart@outlook.com.



New Visioning Sessions Enhance Discernment Process

All Emerson church members and friends are invited to attend one of six sessions during July and August to engage a new process—

Creating a positive vision for Emerson Church

Simply plan to attend the one most convenient to you.

Why Visioning Sessions? Visioning allows us to look toward Emerson's future and what the ideal Emerson looks like. Board member Katie Scott will guide us through this process using Appreciative Inquiry. Instead of the usual problem-solving methods focused on what's not working, Appreciative Inquiry creates positive dialogue with groups to build on what works well. It is based on strengths and helps us look toward the future. Katie (assisted in two sessions by Rev. Sam Schaal), will facilitate these groups to:

- Create opportunities to engage all church members
- Dialogue about Emerson's strengths, successes, values and future
- Provide context for the church's discernment process

In these sessions each participant will be encouraged to

- Define our strengths (**discover**), and
- Imagine what we could be (**dream**)

Church members will work side by side to create visuals of Emerson now and in the future. These visuals will be categorized and displayed in the Gathering Place (with all creators having the option to remain anonymous). These visuals will remind us of the purpose of the discernment process and to assist us in defining who we are and who we want to be.

Select a Session	
Sunday July 8	12:30-2:00 p.m.*
Wednesday July 18	6:30-8:00 p.m.
Sunday July 22	9:00-10:30 a.m.*
Sunday August 19	9:00-10:30 a.m.*
Thursday August 23	6:30-8:00 p.m.
Sunday August 26	12:30-2:00 p.m.*
All sessions in Westwood Hall	
* = Child Care Provided	

What is discernment? Following the death of the Rev. Mark Edmiston-Lange in September 2016, the question arose if that position needs to be replaced by a second minister, another staff position, or no position. In the June EMERSONIAN we announced a process beginning in the fall to help the congregation discern staffing needs, understand church heritage, and improve governance to support staffing. There was interest in the congregation to move ahead earlier, so the Board is adding these vision sessions open to all.

You are invited to any session to help discern the vision of Emerson Church.

Bridge to Our Future

When	July-Aug.	Sept.-Oct.	Sept.-Nov.	Ongoing
What	Visioning Sessions with congregation	History Wall with congregation	Staff Analysis with staff & leaders	Update church governance
How	Positive dialogue on Emerson's strengths and successes to build on more successes	Timeline and discussion of Emerson history from 1960 to now to remember heritage	Task force of members interview staff and lay leaders on needs, with consultant from UUA	Governance Task Force of Board is exploring updated church governance to refine working relationships in church
Why	To create vision and context for other discernment processes	To understand how church culture has evolved	To provide strategic information on staffing needs	To empower effective leadership



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.

July 1 – Rev. Samuel Schaal—Spiritual Freedom *Second in an occasional series on the basics of Unitarian Universalism*

Deep in the DNA of our Unitarian and Universalist heritage is a love of freedom in search of truth. Is spiritual freedom enough to sustain a religious community?

July 8 – Rev. Samuel Schaal—Taking a Breath

We are human beings, but we act like human doings. In this long and hot summer, let's consider taking a breath from our often hectic lives.

July 15 – Rev. Chuck Freeman—If We Don't Do This, What Do We Do?

Executive Director, Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry

Texas is ground zero for our identity as a nation and our identity as a faith. With the Anti-Sanctuary bill now law and the DACA decision, our Hispanic neighbors are in jeopardy. How will your congregation respond?

July 22 – Rev. Samuel Schaal—Why Pray?

Are thoughts and prayers enough in a world touched by violence, hurt and hatred? Who or what are we praying to? Can an atheist pray?

July 29 – Ingrid Moeller—This Is Your Brain on Music Therapy

Ingrid is a board-certified Music Therapist with additional training as a Neurologic Music Therapist.

We'll explore and experience music therapy through congregational participation in therapeutic interventions similar to those presented in private music therapy sessions.

Adult Religious Education

The Adult Religious Education program is held in Room 205/206 on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am.

July 1 – No Adult RE on this day.

July 8 – The Unconversation - Facilitated discussion in which the participants determine the topic(s) to be discussed.

July 15 – Discovering the UU presence in the search for Migrant Justice: National, State, Local, and at Emerson!

July 22 – UU Values in Public Arena - Is it time to give our defensive posture a rest and send in the offense?

July 29 – The Unconversation - facilitated discussion in which the participants determine the topic(s) to be discussed. (A possible livecast from the Power of Pink Confernece in Detroit!)

Wheel of Life



Bob Phillips died June 15 after a long illness. We will have gathered for a service of celebration and memory at Emerson on June 30. Our heart and prayers are with his wife Joyce.

We grieve with those who have lost parents. **Greg Hunt's** father died June 16 in Michigan after a long illness. The family gathered there for a memorial service. **Sharon Hilgart's** dad passed away June 4 in Maryland. Sharon reports that it was a peaceful passing after a long illness.

Former church member **Hooker Wood** who died May 5 was remembered by friends in a service on June 23 at Emerson.

Ginger Weaver is recuperating at home following a brief hospitalization.



Revels

As I write this column I am about to leave for General Assembly (GA), the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association. This year GA is in Kansas City, MO. In addition to the multitude of worship services, programs and workshops, I look forward to seeing colleagues and friends that I don't get to see any other time than at GA. I also hope to hear some KC blues, maybe even dance a bit.

I'll be in Kansas City June 18 through June 26. After General Assembly, I will be taking my vacation and study leave time. I have a few trips with friends planned; and other friends and family are planning visits to Houston.

While I am away from the church, our Transitional Assistant Minister, Sam Schaal, will be on duty. He will be preaching many of the Sundays, advancing our transitional work and attending to Pastoral concerns in conjunction with the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team. The few Sundays that Sam isn't preaching, the Worship Committee, under the leadership of Ken McLeod, has engaging

worship services planned. While I am away, Sam and Karen Van Horn, our Business Administrator, will know where to reach me in case of emergencies.

I am grateful to have this time away from normal church responsibilities and I thank you deeply for this gift of time. I don't mind saying that this past year and nine months since Mark died have been emotionally and physically exhausting. The summer will give me time to recharge, to read and reflect, and simply to enjoy life. I look forward to coming back at the end of August refreshed and eager to start a new church year. And I am very grateful that this year, for the very first time, Emerson will have an assistant minister to rely upon during my absence. Sam has been and continues to be a blessing.

Dear people, I hope you all have some time for refreshment and renewal this summer. And I look forward to being in your midst again.

In faith and affection,

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange
Senior Minister



Outside of Emerson

Ending Our Debtor's Prison: Bail Bond Reform

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4930 W Bellfort Blvd., Houston, 77035

July 8, 4:00 p.m.

To understand how the bail bond system is stacked against the poor, join us to hear District Attorney Kim Ogg's views on the injustice of the current system and how it should change. DA Ogg will help us understand the human cost and financial cost of keeping people in jail for weeks and months who have not been judged guilty. A coffee reception will follow. Please RSVP via e-mail (office@salemhouston.org) or call 713-723-3509.



Emerson Activities

Beginner's Meditation - Every Monday from 7-8:15 p.m. in Room 208. We welcome people from all backgrounds and spiritual practices. For additional information, please contact Beth Hill.

ESL - ESL summer classes take place Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, call (713) 782-0825.

Hurricane Flood Support Group - First Sunday of the month at 12:30 p.m. in Room 204. All are welcome.

SURJ HTX (Showing Up for Racial Justice - Houston) Action Group Meeting - Every other Tuesday. Next meeting is July 3rd in Room 205 at 6:30 p.m. Sponsored by Emerson Justice Advocates.

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

Emerson Choir - Resumes in August. For more information, contact Adrian Rodriguez.

Sandwiches for SEARCH - Second Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m. in Westwood Hall. Contact: Mary Ann Rusk

LGBT+Allies Emersonians Meetup - Second Sundays of the month in Room 209, at 12:30 p.m. More information

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

Ministry for Earth - Fourth Sundays of the month from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. in the Library.



Amazon for Emerson

We received \$256.99 from Amazon during 2017 and \$99.54 so far in 2018. Emerson receives about 6% rebated when shoppers use our special hyperlink to browse Amazon.com when making purchases. Details about Amazon, Randalls and other rebates are at <http://emersonhouston.org/giving-overview/donate-while-you-shop/>

Emerson Needs Volunteers to Serve as Ushers

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

“Hello, Welcome to Emerson . . .”

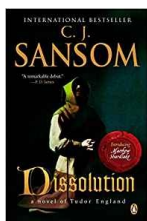
If you are comfortable saying that phrase, you have conquered step one of becoming an Emerson greeter. We have an increasing number of visitors walking through our doors each Sunday and we need your help to welcome them to our community. If you would like to share your love of Emerson with a newcomer, please become a greeter. To get started, contact Carol Trout (ctroutine@gmail.com) or Deborah Landis (dlandis570@aol.com).



Book Clubs

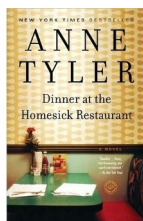
Men's

Monday, July 16, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine (10001 Westheimer)
Book: *Dissolution*, a Matthew Shardlake mystery by C.J. Sanson.
Contact: Gabe Gelb



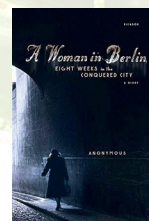
Women's

Wednesday, July 18, 7:30 p.m. in the Library.
Book: *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, by Ann Tyler
Contact: Jill Rose



Daytime

Thursday, July 19, 10 a.m. in the Library.
Book: *A Woman in Berlin* by Anonymous.
Contact: Dave Bergt



Transitional Thoughts

Let Your Life Speak

Quaker author and activist Parker Palmer reflects on the old Quaker saying “Let your life speak” in his book of the same title. In his early thirties he was exploring a deeper sense of his vocation. He wanted to live to the highest truths and values he could imagine and he imagined being like his heroes: Martin Luther King, Jr, Rosa Parks, or Dorothy Day. His goal was a life of high purpose. He said he tried, and yet his life seemed not to be his. It was a noble way to live, but he slowly realized he was imitating heroes instead of “listening to my heart.”

He says that letting his life speak now means to be faithful to the complexity of his own experience:

“Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.”

Doing so is not easy. It requires discernment. Churches, like individuals, have a vocation and need to be attentive to “letting its life speak.” Elsewhere in this issue you’ll see a new addition to our discernment process for the church announced in the last issue—a series of visioning sessions open to everyone in the church. These sessions, in addition to other experiences summarized in that article, will help Emerson Church get a deeper sense of its vocation. To do that, we’ll listen to the dreams of the congregation, how the church has done ministry over its 58-year history, how leaders envision staffing needs, as well as how we relate to each other in the governance of the church. Though it will entail many activities, it’s really all about listening to the heart of the church.



Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transitional Assistant Minister

July Share-the-Plate

Citizens’ Climate Education

Citizens’ Climate Education empowers individuals to educate elected officials, community leaders, and the general public about climate change and climate change solutions. Their non-partisan approach to climate education is designed to create a broad, sustainable foundation for climate action across all geographic regions and political inclinations. By building upon shared values rather than partisan divides, and empowering our supporters to work in keeping with the concerns of their local communities, we work towards the adoption of fair, effective, and sustainable climate change solutions.

Religious Education

Our Director of Religious Education Katy Carpmann is on sabbatical until August 1st. In lieu of her column, here's the latest news about Sunday School programs!

July Summer Sunday School Kindness Club

July 1: Holiday weekend—*no classes!*

July 8: Unbirthday Cards (Others)

July 15: Prairie Day (Earth & Animals)

July 22: Empowering Kindness (Others)

July 29: Kindness to Self

Room 108 (Schweitzer Hall)
11:15 to Noon



**Game Nights for
teens and families!
Every 3rd Saturday of
the month through
August, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Contact Michael Bloom:
mfbloom12@gmail.com**

**Kindness Club
Summer Sundays
@Emerson
through August 26
11:15 to Noon
in Schweitzer Hall
(Room 108)**

Acts of kindness ripple out to change our world for the better!

This summer, our youngest Emersonians work with volunteer teachers and assistants to practice kindness to themselves, others, animals, and the environment.

Each session features a story and a hands-on activity children can take into the world.

Congregational Vote – September 23, 2018

Reproductive Justice Congregations...

- ✦ Have public conversations about what it means to be a Reproductive Justice Congregation, discussing the principles and the congregation's values
- ✦ Formally vote to adopt the principles
- ✦ Determine the level of involvement best matching the congregation's values
- ✦ Pledge to make their sacred space safe and accepting for everyone



Principles:

- ✦ We trust and respect women
- ✦ We promise that women who attend our congregation will be free from stigma, shame or judgment for their reproductive decisions, including abortion
- ✦ We believe access to comprehensive and affordable reproductive health services is a moral and social good

Three levels of involvement:

1. Public affirmation of the principles
2. Commitment to regular education around reproductive justice issues
3. Provide public witness for reproductive justice in the political arena and the media

Once the principles are adopted, the congregation will be listed on the Just Texas: Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice website and Facebook page, and given a placard to display in the church. Survey link: <http://emersonhouston.org/rjustice>

Contact Kenny Jones, uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com, 832-654-1779

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE **REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE CONGREGATION**
PROJECT IN TEXAS, VISIT JUSTTX.ORG

JUST TEXAS
FAITH VOICES for REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

Becky Edmiston-Lange, Senior Minister
1900 Bering Drive Houston, TX, 77057
713-782-8250

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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, July 17**