

emerson UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church the emersonian

Havana Nights 2017 Emerson Auction was a Great Success!

THANKS TO ALL WHO ATTENDED OUR AUCTION!

Thanks to all who donated, volunteered, attended, contributed to the Fund a Need campaign, and won their bids at this year's Auction—we had a spectacular result. Attendance was higher than last year, we reached our goal for the general fund (\$30,000), and met our \$46,000 Fund-a-Need goal for the Sanctuary roof replacement. The fancy appetizer display by Creig Romero and David Roessler, the special Cuban vegan and omnivore dishes prepared by our food team headed by Ann May and Carol Trout, the fabulous dessert spread contributed by many members were especially memorable.



This year we tried the new “Mystery Box” idea – a chance to wrap up a cool item you don’t really need anymore

(Continued on page 7)



Thank you Kay Kamas for providing us with this wonderful picture of you and Rev. Becky!

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston | 2017 Annual Tapestry Gala

OUR REV. BECKY EDMISTON-LANGE, A DIRECTOR OF THE IM BOARD, ATTENDS THE ANNUAL INTERFAITH MINISTRY GALA TO CELEBRATE HOUSTON'S GREAT DIVERSITY IN CULTURES, ETHNICITIES AND FAITH TRADITIONS.

Guests of many different religions and backgrounds attended Interfaith Ministries' 9th Annual Tapestry Gala on May 3, 2017. Once again, Emerson had a table at the event with Board members and their guests enjoying the evening. The event was to benefit Interfaith Ministries, a non-profit organization that brings people of diverse faith traditions together for dialogue, collaboration and service. The organization provides three main services to the Houston area: Meals on

Wheels for Greater Houston, Refugee Services, and Interfaith Dialogue. The festive evening's 500 guests raised nearly \$550,000. The evening included a shared prayer from different faith leaders, as well as musical selections representing different faith traditions.

25% of our Offering Plate goes to Interfaith Ministries Meals on Wheels each Sunday, with the remaining 75% going to monthly Share-the-Plate organizations designated by Emerson's Outreach Committee.

Revels

The most common thing people say to me these days when they first see me is, “You doing okay?” Sometimes it’s just an offhand remark, but more often it feels like an expression of genuine care and concern for my wellbeing. So, I thought I’d try to tell you something about where I am in the grief process - and how this relates to Emerson.

So, how am I doing? Well, I think as well as anyone might who is eight months out from the death of her beloved husband and co-minister. In fact, I think I’m functioning at a pretty high level – even over functioning (and more about that in a bit.) And my work and other parts of my life are not without pleasure and joy. I’m aware, though, that often when I have pushed myself for many days in a row, there comes a point when I have to stop and just give into my tiredness and grief for a few hours and not do anything other than allow myself to feel the pain of loss.

Sometimes people seem to think that I should be done with grieving, say things like “So, it’s been several months now, you about getting over this?” No, I’m not over it. The pain of loss is always there underneath the surface. As I’ve said before, grief counselors say it can take two years to adequately grieve a beloved spouse. And in some ways, it is more painful now that the numbness and disbelief are wearing off.

Religious Education

Last month we celebrated our community in the worship service, with each person contributing two blocks to a sculpture—one representing a talent they share with Emerson, and one a gift they’ve received here. You can read the blocks in our Sanctuary!

On June 4th, Summer Sunday School begins on **June 4th**— each week we learn about another UU Superhero and practice developing our own powers.

This month:

June 4: Who is a Super Hero?

June 11: King John Sigismund, our only Unitarian king

June 18: Theodore Parker, Unitarian minister and abolitionist

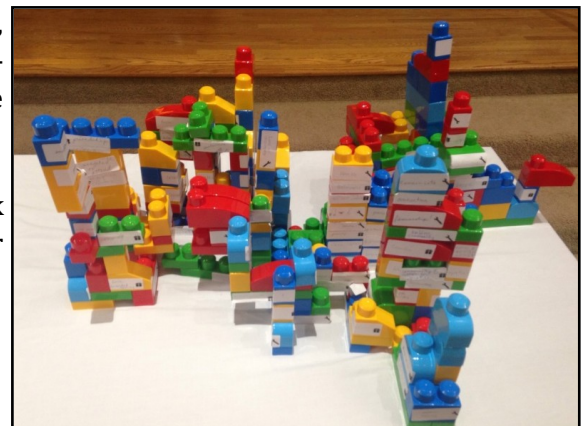
June 25: Pete Seeger, Singing for Justice

-Katy

I realized recently that during the first few months after Mark’s death, I unconsciously felt that “if I can just get through this or that Sunday (or other ministerial function)” or “if I can just cope with this or that (household repair or estate task)”, then somehow Mark would come back. I know this sounds irrational. As I say, it’s unconscious. But it’s not uncommon. In Joan Didion’s book about her husband’s death, she relates how she felt that if she could just find the shoes her husband had on when he died, he would return to her. (There’s a reason she entitled her book *The Year of Magical Thinking*.) More lately, my magical thinking has been replaced with what I call the “really real” realization that Mark isn’t ever coming back, that he’s gone, gone, gone. And that’s a very sad place to be. I wonder if this is starting to happen for some of you, too. A few of you have told me that you have realized that, at first, you were unconsciously waiting for and expecting Mark to return some Sunday as if nothing had happened, but that, as time has gone on, the reality of his death is sinking in.

So, yes, I have been pushing myself, over functioning. And some members of the Staff and volunteers have, too. Unless you are involved in the intricacies of the church’s functioning, I don’t think you could tell much of a difference in the life of the church from before Mark’s death, except perhaps for the few extra pulpit guests. On the surface, the church is still functioning at a high level. But what people don’t always see is the toll this takes. We can’t over function this way

(Continued on page 4)





Sunday Morning Schedule

Summer Sunday Schedule

9:45 AM Professional Childcare Begins

10 AM Adult Ed • 11 AM Worship • 11:15 AM Children's Programming

Please join us on Sundays for Worship service.

**JUNE
4**

Rev. Aaron Stockwell—A Quiet Pentecost

Our Christian siblings celebrate this Sunday as Pentecost, sometimes referred to as the Birthday of the Church. Pentecost is one of those holidays that rarely gets celebrated in Unitarian Universalist congregation. Guest preacher Rev. Aaron Stockwell makes the case that it might, in fact, be one of the most Universalist of holidays.

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—If We Can't Have Pizza, Maybe Nachos?

Alas, poor Pluto, we thought we knew ye. But hark, what light from yonder distant horizon breaks? Could it be a "giant distant disturber"? And what in the world - our world - might that mean for us and our understanding of what it means to be human?

**JUNE
11**

**JUNE
18**

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—And Ever the Message Comes: Be Not Discouraged

On this Father's Day, I'll share a couple of my favorite stories about fathers. And I'll invite us to think about how those stories help us claim the mantle of parenthood and affirm a world where love is not diminished.

Dr. Randy L. Partain—Trust and Democracy

The Fifth Principle of Unitarian Universalism expresses a value for democracy, and trust is the foundation of democratic relationships. How do we respond with integrity when that trust is broken? And how do we create space for every voice when some voices express very different ideals from our own?

**JUNE
25**

Adult Education

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

June 4—UU Alphabet Soup – From UUA, BLUU, UUSC, UUCSJ, UUJME, TXUUJM, and UUV4J...find out what they are and how you might get involved. Presented by Emerson's own JBI, Kenny Jones

June 11—The New Poor People's Campaign – It was almost 50 years ago when the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. launched his Poor People's campaign. Join us as we take a brief look back and a deep look forward to the New Poor People's Campaign - Economic Inequality and Justice – What does it mean for UUs and Emerson UU Church? How can we make a difference? Presented by Kenny Jones and others.

June 18—The 8th UU Principle? – Join us for an introduction to this concept as we move Emerson forward on this important racial justice question. Presented by Kenny Jones and others.

June 25—Earth Actions – Stewardship of this precious planet can begin at home. Bringing a bit of sanity and hope to an ever changing climate, we'll explore steps, both large and small, to bring sustainability back into our lives. Presented by Dori Wolfe, co-founder of groSolar and owner of Wolfe Energy whose tag line is "Working for a sustainable future".

The Caring Committee

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CHURCH—
This is an invitation to join us for your church community care. The Caring Committee was started by Gwen Essinger as a more structured way to show support and care for grieving family and friends the day of a funeral or memorial service. We provide food and sustenance and a venue where family and friends can gather to show support for the departed ones. It is a wonderful time-honored tradition. When words often fail, food is a show of love and concern. Not everyone is expected to provide (whether by food, setting up, cleaning up) every time, just when it is an agreeable time for you. Attending funerals or memorials shows respect for our congregation, whether one knew the person or not. These services are an incredible way to know our congregation – most of us always come away wishing we had known the person better.

If you would like to be added to our email list (which is how we communicate—no meetings), please email [Mary Ann Rusk](#) or [Judy Williams](#).



We received \$307.25 from Amazon during 2016. Emerson receives about 4% rebated when shoppers use our special hyperlink to browse Amazon.com.

Use the special “Amazon for Emerson” link near the bottom of every e-blast. Details about Amazon, Randalls and other rebates are at: www.emersonhouston.org/donate

(Continued from page 2—Becky's Column)

forever. And even with that over functioning, there are still aspects of the church life which are not receiving adequate attention.

As you know, the Board, after some discernment – and in conversation with me and other members of the staff - has decided that we need a temporary part time assistant minister to help address the ministerial needs of the congregation and to help us navigate this unprecedented situation. I think this is a wise course, given that there are different opinions in the congregation about what future ministerial staffing would look like. It is important to remember that we aren't trying to replace Mark and we're not making any irrevocable decisions about the direction of the church. What we are doing is helping ourselves heal and helping ourselves move forward with wisdom and grace. If you presume that some of the dynamics of individual grief are duplicated in a congregation, we all need an adequate time to grieve that Mark isn't here.

I know that sometimes people don't know what to say to me to express their caring. Well, you don't always have to say anything in particular. You can give me a hug; tell me you miss him too or tell me that I'm in your heart (I really do feel that and believe that and it helps). And don't be afraid of the lump in the throat or the tears in the eyes – either yours or mine. Sadness is real. And it's normal, healthy, to react to sadness. That's part of how we move through grief. And just because I may choke up or shed tears doesn't mean I can't do my job or that I am going to fall apart.

I think it is important to remember that we are in an unprecedented situation. I know of no other incidence of one member of a clergy couple co-ministry team dying while serving a congregation together. It certainly hasn't happened within the Unitarian Universalist world and my local colleagues in other faith traditions don't seem to know of such an occurrence either. There's no road map to follow here, folks. But I have no doubt that we can navigate this together, that if any congregation can, we can.

In faith, hope and love,

Becky Edmondson-Lange

Wheel of Life



Our deepest condolences to Kay Bergen on the death of her mother, Billie Johnson, who died peacefully on May 3 at the age of 95.

Wishing Joann Hendrick a speedy recovery from minor surgery.

April Smith's father is in our thoughts during his time of recovery.

Congratulations to all our students graduating in May and June! We look forward to hearing about your next adventures!

Longtime member, Ken Salzman, sends his greetings to his Emerson friends. He has moved to Omaha, Nebraska, and is living in an independent living center. He sings in the choir there and is learning to play the hand bells! He says although he doesn't have a car, he attends a UU church in Omaha—members of that congregation pick him up and bring him to church; he has even attended a Circle Dinner! He hopes to make a trip to Houston in the future. We are always glad to hear from members and friends! Good to hear from you, Ken!

June Share-The-Plate

Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUJMJ) is YOUR voice of 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 7 principles are reflected in public policy. In addition, your TXUJMJ 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

TXUJMJ 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 which 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 TXUJMJ. Emerson, as all ministry-affiliated UU congregations, contributes to the operating costs of TXUJMJ through a relatively small budget contribution. During the month of June, our Share-the-Plate contribution will be donated to TXUJMJ. Please contribute generously to this vital ministry and its outstanding work and achievements on your behalf. Even better, please become a sustaining

monthly sustainer - \$10 - \$25 per month provide predictable income for the ministry and are hardly a significant drain for most personal budgets. Let's make Emerson a leader in its support of this vital and much needed social justice ministry.

For more information, please contact Kenny Jones, justiceadvocateseuu@gmail.com or by text or message to 832-654-1779.



Solarize Houston Presentation

Sunday, June 18, 12:30 p.m., Room 205/206 - Solarize Houston is a grass roots, volunteer, non-profit group organizing Houstonians in a group purchase of solar panels and installation for residents and businesses in Houston. Solarize Houston's mission is to increase awareness and accelerate use of solar energy for electricity generation in Houston. Solarize Houston is modeled on similar efforts, including in [Plano](#) and elsewhere.

Solarize Houston



Summer Solstice Celebration

Tuesday, June 20, 6:30 p.m. - Potluck Picnic. 7:30 p.m.—Informal Service outside. On the first day of summer, let's celebrate the energy and fullness of the season with readings, meditations, and music. Bring your guitar or drum and we'll make some music! All ages can take part. Everyone is invited to this party!

Questions? Email [Ministry for Earth](#)

Attend General Assembly!

NOW—Register for General Assembly 2017.

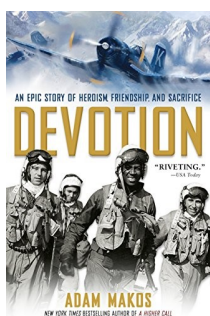
- Second ever JUSTICE GA - Special Project During GA
- Election for President of the UUA
- Congregation Study Action Issues
- Serve Emerson as a Delegate
- Music! Friends! Ceremony! Worship!
- Largest Gathering of UUs in America!



To learn more about Justice GA, visit www.uua.org/ga

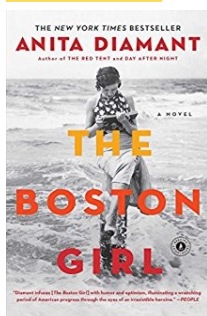
Book Clubs

Men's



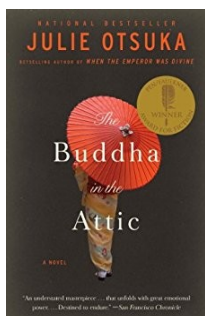
Wednesday, June 21, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine on 10001 Westheimer Rd.
Book: *Devotion*, a story of heroism by Adam Makos
Contact: [Gabe Gelb](#)

Daytime



Thursday, June 15, 10 a.m. in the Library.
Book: *The Boston Girl* by Anita Diamant
Contact: [Dave Bergt](#)

Women's



Wednesday, June 21, 7:30 p.m. in the Library.
Book: *The Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka
Contact: [Jill Rose](#)

Emerson Activities

Stitchers

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

ESL

Registration for our Fall Classes will be Saturday, September 9. For more information, please call 713-782-0825.

Racial Justice Book Study is taking a summer break. Look for updated announcements in a couple of months. In the meantime, check out all the interesting topics offered by the regular Adult Religious Education programs.

LGBT+Allies

Emersonians Potluck Lunch

Sunday, June 11, in Room 209, at 12:15 p.m. [More information](#)

Emerson Poetry Group
Sunday, June 18, at 9:45 a.m., Room 204.

Ministry for Earth

Next meeting takes place Sunday, June 25 at 9:45 a.m. in the Library.

Sandwiches for SEARCH
Thursday, June 8, at 10:30 a.m. in Westwood Hall.
Contact: [Barbara Hopkins](#)

(Continued from page 1—Auction) worth approximately \$10 to maybe \$30, and auction attendees could buy a box for \$10. We had a trade option if the surprise wasn't quite the right fit. Many prizes were worth more than \$10, and many quite fabulous! We seemed to make a few amazing connections between items and people that would really enjoy them.



Thank you to Henry Groppe and Bub Joyce

Since its beginnings in the mid-1970s, the Emerson Endowment has been an important contributor to the work of the church. Over the years, earnings from the Endowment have been used to fund outreach, building construction and maintenance, and general operations. In its forty-year life, contributions of about \$700,000 into the Endowment have generated earnings of approximately \$3,500,000, which have been used for these activities. The Endowment currently sits at just over \$900,000 and its earnings are now designated for outreach and capital expenditures & maintenance.

In May we recognized two long standing members of the Investment Committee who have helped shepherd those great results for the Endowment.

Henry Groppe and Bub Joyce have been continuous members of the Investment Committee since its early days. For almost four decades, their insights and leadership have been instrumental to the long-term success of the Endowment and its ongoing ability to support the church and its mission.

Bub modestly says, "I would give most of the credit for the success of the fund to the other long time members: Andy Delaney, Bram McClelland, Otto Glazer, Dick Mullineaux, Will Irwin, Jill Rose and of course, Henry Groppe. Our original benefactor, Henry Kemp, started the whole thing with a generous gift."

To which Henry adds, "Our wise and supportive committee members provided the most productive investment decision making environment I have ever known."

The dedicated interest that Henry and Bub have given to the Investment Committee has certainly paid dividends for Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church. We are indeed thankful for their enduring service to the congregation.





Becky Edmiston-Lange, 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.

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: June 11**

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 Eblast, Order of Service and website weekly by Tuesdays to pr@emersonhouston.org.

**Next Newsletter deadline is:
Tuesday, June 20**