

emerson  UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church

# the emersonian

## SUMMER SUNDAYS AT EMERSON!



**JUNE 3**

**The Unmitigated “Yes”!\***  
Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange

**JUNE 10**

**Roadmap to Forgiveness\***  
Randy Partain

**JUNE 17**

**What Does it Mean to be a Man  
in Today's World?\***  
Rev. Becky and Emerson Members

**JUNE 24**

**Get Found!—LGBT Pride  
Weekend\***  
Rev. Samuel Schaal

**JULY 1**

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

**Why Worship?**  
Rev. Samuel Schaal  
When we gather for Sunday  
services, what do we worship? In  
our diverse tradition, what is  
worship?

**JULY 15**

**If We Don't Do This,  
What Do We Do?**  
Rev. Chuck Freeman  
*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**

**Why Pray?**  
Rev. Samuel Schaal  
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**

**This Is Your Brain on Music  
Therapy**  
Ingrid Moeller  
We'll explore and experience music  
therapy through congregational  
participation in therapeutic  
interventions similar to those  
presented in private music therapy  
sessions.

**AUGUST 5**

**Why Be Unitarian Universalist?**  
Rev. Samuel Schaal  
In all the varied ways to be religious  
in the world, why be Unitarian  
Universalist?

**AUGUST 12**

**Play and Spirituality**  
Ken McLeod  
When we free ourselves of the  
challenges of our daily lives and  
lose ourselves in our thoughts or  
some distracting process, we open  
ourselves to the possibility of a  
spiritual experience.

**AUGUST 19**

Katy Carpmann returns from  
sabbatical.

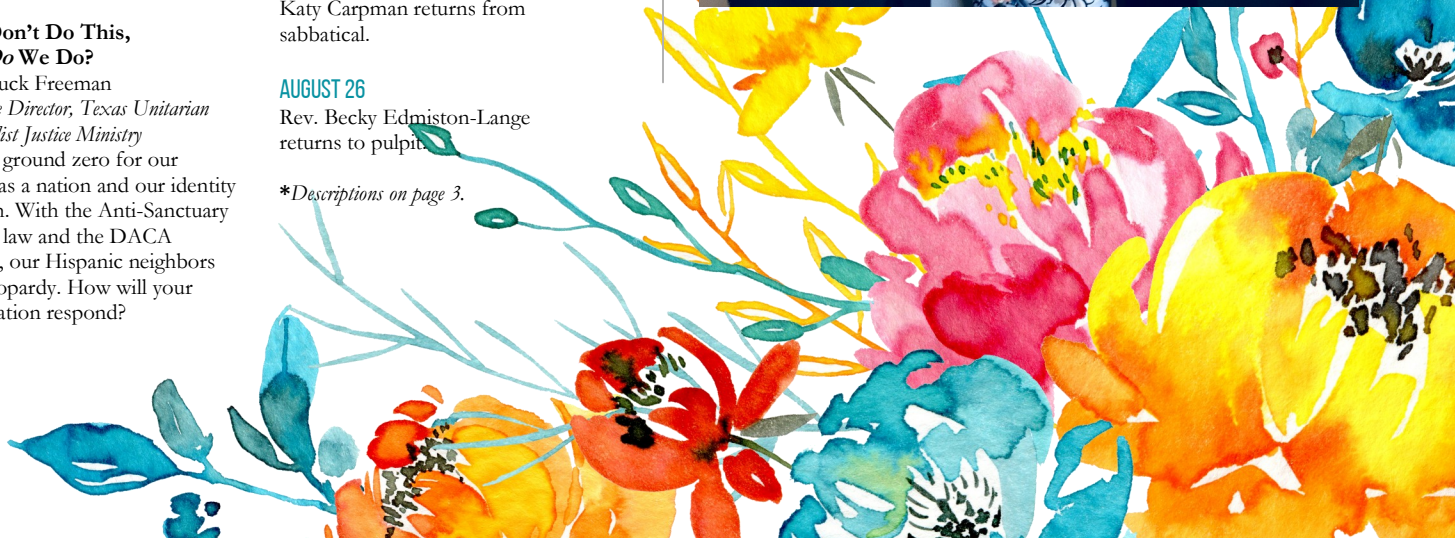
**AUGUST 26**

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange  
returns to pulpit.

\*Descriptions on page 3.

## REV. BECKY SPEAKER AT FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY'S FISH BOWL EVENT

Speakers - or “Fish” - are representative clergy from Christian and other religious traditions. Fish Bowl discussions are based on theological topics chosen by Foundation for Contemporary Theology members. May 8th's Fish Bowl topic was “What is Prayer?”. Here is Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange with the other two “Fish”: James Furr, President of the Houston Graduate School of Theology, and Father Donald Nesti, Retired from the St. Thomas University Center for Faith and Culture.



## REVELS

“So how are you – really?” The question came from someone I care about deeply and who cares equally for me, but whom I do not see all that often. We probably have the chance for a good, long face-to-face conversation, at best, about twice a year. And so when she asked the question, I knew she was asking me about where I was in my grief over Mark’s death.

It’s been a year and eight months now since Mark died. And I am indubitably in a much different place than I was last year at this time. I said to my friend that most often these days I feel gloriously alive, that life is good. I tell her how much I have been reveling in this rare and wonderful extended period of Spring we’ve been blessed with this year; how much I have enjoyed the occasions when I have been able to work in my yard and gardens. I tell her too that I am not nearly as tired as I was last year when summer approached; that I don’t feel as if I desperately need to stop and catch up with my sorrow. But --- I also tell her that I still have moments when a feeling of being bereft inexplicably just sweeps over and takes possession of me.

Those moments come much less frequently now, are shorter in duration. Are they any less intense? Will they ever be? That I do not know. What I do know is that I feel myself turning toward the new with an eagerness and an expectancy I could not have foreseen months ago. What will happen in my life? What does the future hold for me? I can’t know that either, but I am open to the possibilities.

There has been an unmistakable change in my psyche. Where before I had to correct myself from automatically saying “we” or “our”, I often now observe myself readily saying “I” or “mine”. When someone asks me when I moved to Houston, for example, without hesitancy I say “I moved here in 1999”. The house I occupy has become “my” house in my head, and so on. That doesn’t mean, of course, that any of all the life Mark and I lived together is forgotten or displaced, but simply that I have lived into a new reality without him.

And with that thought comes a different kind of sadness. Sadness that I *have* moved on. Sadness that I know it really is goodbye.

Grief is such a mysterious process. There’s no controlling it; no gainsaying it. You just have to ride the wave. And, tough as it can be, grief always, always, reminds us that we have loved.

Dear beloved congregants, hold those dear to you close. None of us really know what the future will hold. Take every chance you can to celebrate life as the precious gift it is.

In faith and affection,



Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange  
*Senior Minister*

## GERSHENSON LECTURE WITH IMAN HENDI

On April 25, Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange attended and gave the closing remarks for Interfaith Ministries’ (IM) Launch of the Gershenson Lecture Series honoring Elliot Gershenson, President Emeritus of IM. The lectures are to focus on topics of religion, ethics, and peace to provide greater understanding. The inaugural speaker was Imam Yahya Hendi, third from the left, Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, the first American university to hire a full-time Muslim Chaplain.





# 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.*

### June 3 – Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—The Unmitigated “Yes!”

If I could tell you what I most want it would be to be fully present to my life, to truly inhabit it and be mindful that it is a miracle. And yet there is so much suffering and injustice in our world. What right have I to feel joy? The poet Jack Gilbert says, “*We must have the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless furnace of this world.*” What kind of stubbornness is this?

### June 10 – Randy Partain—Roadmap to Forgiveness

We know how important forgiveness is, especially for our own well-being. Yet, forgiveness is often a journey rather than a moment or an event. How can we discover a personally meaningful roadmap for that journey? And can that journey also lead to justice and healing?

### June 17 – Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange and Emerson members—What Does it Mean to Be a Man Today?

Sometimes it seems men are in the news for all the wrong reasons: sexual assault, mass shootings, gang violence. And then there are the loving, kind, thoughtful men we all know. What does it mean to be a man in today's world? What is masculinity? Four diverse men from the Emerson congregation will join me to reflect on those questions.

### June 24 – Rev. Samuel Schaal—Get Found! *LGBT Pride Weekend*

We often hide the real part of ourselves from the world in fear. The LGBTQ coming-out experience provides wisdom for anyone playing hide-and-seek with the world, and perhaps with themselves. We all just need to *get found*.

## ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### June 3 – No Adult Religious Education

**June 10 – Voices of Reproductive Justice I** – Selected video clips on the topic in general with examples of the Oral Fixation, Swept Under the Rug testimonies.

**June 17– Voices of Reproductive Justice II** – Selected video clips on the topic in general with additional examples of the “Oral Fixation, Swept Under the Rug” testimonies.

**June 24 – To be determined** – Watch the e-blast!

## UU HOUSTON PRIDE PARADE

**Saturday, June 23rd**

This is the Houston Pride Parade's Ruby (40th) Anniversary and the theme is Ruby Slippers, as in Dorothy's from the Wizard of Oz. Come in a costume or wear your “Side with Love” t-shirts, and your ruby slippers, if you have them. This is a family friendly

event, so bring your friends and family.

The festival, which is held near City Hall, runs from **noon to 7 p.m.** and then the **parade begins at 8:30 p.m.** We will start gathering at the parade line up on Allen Parkway at **4 p.m.** for fellowship with our greater Houston Area UU congregation.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Wheel of Life



Our hearts are with those who have lost loved ones recently. **Beth Hammer's** father died May 8 in North Carolina. **Mary Ann Rusk's** brother died in Gonzales, Texas, in late April.

Former church member **Hooker Wood** died suddenly May 5 of a heart attack in Asheville, N.C.

Several Emersonians are blessed with new grandbabies. **Betsey Sevy** is again a grandmother with the April arrival of her son and wife's baby in Baton Rouge. **Barbara Crotty** and **Kevin Crotty** are new first-time grandparents upon the May birth of their grandson in Fort Worth. Dad Sean Crotty (who grew up at Emerson) and mom Nicole are settling into parental life.

**Ed Freiter** is home resting well after a brief hospitalization for acute pancreatitis. **Carole Huelbig** had rotator cuff surgery in early May. **Joann Hendricks** continues to recover at home following a previous surgery and is doing well—thank you all for the great meals, support and friendship!

Our prayers are with those who help their aging parents. **Lisa Rockett's** mother was hospitalized a few weeks ago again and is considering treatment options for cancer.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

What is meant by Reproductive Justice? It would not be surprising to find 10 different answers from 10 different people. The varying answers lie in the varying perspectives of the persons attempting to define the term's meaning. A young couple trying to start a family but experiencing problems with getting pregnant, might define it to mean having access to and the means to pay for fertility services. For the teen without means of support who finds herself in a "family way", yet desperately wanting to deliver and raise her child might declare reproductive justice to mean job opportunities with flexible hours, safe and affordable housing, employer-assisted day care, and obstetric and pediatric insurance coverage. The independent mother of four presently struggling with under-employment eking out a living

from meager paycheck to the next might define her reproductive justice to mean access to a safe and legal abortion.

Each of these scenarios represents an issue of both reproduction and fairness. Note that the first 2 are quite common and involve the desire to bear and raise a child. Yet the concept of reproductive justice seems to remain exclusively attached to the latter scenario – abortion.

What about males, the LGBTQ, and transgender communities? Do these groups have no reproductive justice concerns? What about the reproductive concerns as impacted by race, class, or immigration status? Do these factors deserve consideration? Reproductive Justice includes these concerns as well.

As Emerson moves toward a decision on becoming a Reproductive Justice Congregation (9/23/18), it is vital that we remain open to definitions of Reproductive Justice that are much broader in scope than the issue of termination of a pregnancy. While access to safe and legal abortion services must remain an important aspect of reproductive health and justice, it cannot be limited to that issue alone. Many other essential components of social justice are impacted and affected.

Equally important to know and understand, becoming a Reproductive Justice Congregation is not a referendum on the abortion issue. It is a declaration that reproductive health for all is a moral and social good and that in this particular house of worship, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, we will not stigmatize any who pass through our doors for any reproductive health choice made.

To get a little deeper into a discussion of this issue and initiative, there will be an Adult RE session on the initiative on June 10th. On June 17th there will be a Reproductive Justice Lunch & Learn in Westwood Hall after the service – Lunch will be provided! Please join the discussion of this important topic.

## 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. Snacks provided. All are welcome.

**SURJ HTX (Showing Up for Racial Justice - Houston) Action Group Meeting** - Every other Tuesday. Next meeting is June 5 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 10:30 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.

## BOOK CLUBS

### Women's

Wednesday, June 20, 7:30 p.m. in the Library.  
Book: *God Save Texas: a Journey into the Soul of the Lone Star State* by Lawrence Wright  
Contact: [Jill Rose](#)

### Daytime

Thursday, June 21, 10 a.m. in the Library.  
Book: *Conclave* by Robert Harris  
Contact: [Dave Bergt](#)

### Men's

Monday, June 18, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine (10001 Westheimer)  
Book: *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain* by David Eagleman  
Contact: [Gabe Gelb](#)

## WALK GENTLY ON EARTH

Sunday, June 10, 1:30 p.m.

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church & online

Last fall, world religious leaders presented the interfaith climate declaration, *Walk Gently on Earth*, to the UN Conference on Climate Change in Bonn. The Interfaith Environmental Network of Houston invites you to a talk about the declaration by Imaad Khan, of the Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy (TICPP), who was there. Imaad will discuss the presentation of the declaration, its message, and how houses of worship and their members can leverage this initiative. *Walk Gently on Earth* invites people of faith to lead the world in adopting a sustainable lifestyle. The focus for 2018 is in transforming three areas of our lives: energy use; food consumption; and travel. Please register for this event at <http://emersonhouston.org/gently>. Texas Interfaith Power and Light, the environmental program of TICPP, has joined this initiative. For more information on the *Walk Gently on Earth* initiative, see <http://www.txipl.org/content/walk-gently-earth>. For more information about this talk, please contact Lisa Brenskelle at [gcs.lrc@gmail.com](mailto:gcs.lrc@gmail.com).



(Continued from page 3—UU Houston Pride Parade)

Carpooling and Uber from First Church at [5200 Fannin St, Houston, TX](#) will be available, starting at noon. The Metro rail is free for Pride and close to the end of the parade route, so it will be an option for the return trip to the church.

For more info or to order a "Side with Love" t-shirt, call: 936-718-7777 or e-mail: [uuhoustonpride@gmail.com](mailto:uuhoustonpride@gmail.com).



### New Door Codes in Effect!

Your door code has always worked but now you can't get into the church building?



You will need the new code BEFORE you want to get in! Contact Karen in the Office if you need access to the building outside of office hours for the new code.

## TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

### *The Platinum Rule*

As you see elsewhere in this newsletter, in the fall we are moving into the transitional tasks of our ministry—the process to determine ongoing staffing needs, diving into the church’s history to discover new aspects of how its culture formed, and updating church governance.

All this means change. Planned change, yes, with an eye to helping Emerson Church be more vibrant as it faces the future. Any change naturally introduces the unfamiliar which can be unsettling and makes us feel anxious.

So in these times, it’s even more important to remember we are a community living in covenant with each other. You’ve heard of the Golden Rule. Let’s call this the Platinum Rule of Community:

*If you have a question or a problem with someone, talk to that person directly.*

I’ve heard that some think the staff discernment process is preordained so the Assistant Minister position will continue. And also that the Board is moving the church toward “Policy Governance,” a specific governance model some large Unitarian Universalist churches use. Neither is true—there are no predetermined outcomes. This process will be thorough, transparent and we’ll work to keep the congregation informed.

If you have any questions or concerns about these transitional tasks, ask me, Rev. Becky or any member of the Board. We’ll be happy to try to answer any of your questions.

I appreciate the ongoing opportunity to walk with you in these times!

**Please Note:** I will be on vacation from May 21 to June 17, and will be with you through July and August.



Rev. Samuel Schaal  
*Transitional Assistant Minister*

## JUNE SHARE-THE-PLATE

### *ANSWER-Nepal*

ANSWER is a nonprofit, non-partisan, non-religious organization that believes in empowering low caste children by providing quality education through college. Their stated mission is to educate children from the lowest castes and provide them with real lifelong careers so that they will become the vanguard for real change in Nepal. Read more at [answernepal.org](http://answernepal.org).



## UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA) 2018

*June 20-24, Kansas City, MO*



**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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 but congregations must certify voting delegates. **INTERESTED???**

For more information, see the [GA website](http://GA website). We are entitled to send nine delegates. If you would like to be an Emerson delegate, please contact Karen ([karen@emersonhouston.org](mailto:karen@emersonhouston.org)) in the Office.

## 2018 EMERSON AUCTION REPORT

The Emerson Auction went off well and was great fun for all who attended. We have great news that we have met our Fund-a-Need goal, which was to fix the air conditioning system in the main building. However, we ended up a few thousand dollars short on the non Fund-a-Need fundraising. That money goes to support our operating budget.

Would you like to attend one of our remaining parties and help close the gap?

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### June Summer Sunday School

#### Kindness Club



- June 3: Composting (Earth)
- June 10: Fill a Bucket! (Self & Others)
- June 17: Dealing with Bullies (Self & Others)
- June 24: Chalk Affirmations (Others)

Room 108 (Schweitzer Hall)

**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](mailto:mfbloom12@gmail.com)

**This June!**  
**Kindness Club**  
**Summer Sundays**  
**@Emerson**  
**June 3-August 26**  
**11:15 to Noon**



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.

Schweitzer Hall (Room 108)

## INTERFAITH MINISTRIES' ANNUAL TAPESTRY GALA

Nine Emersonians plus Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange attended Interfaith Ministries Tapestry Gala on May 10th.



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.



*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.*

Here's what we still have open:

Mardi Gras Dinner - March 3, 2019 - \$100 donation to the church

Tamale Making Party - December 2018 - \$50

Karaoke Night Out - August 3, 2018 - \$15

Lecture on Origins and Development of Cuban Music - \$25

The "Geography of Beer" Lecture - \$25

If you'd like to attend any of these events, please email

[auction@emersonhouston.org](mailto:auction@emersonhouston.org)



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

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

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

### Summer Solstice Celebration

Thursday, June 21, 6:30 p.m. -  
Potluck Picnic. Drinks provided. 7:30  
p.m. - Informal Service outside.  
Gratitude, vision, meditation, ritual.  
Bring your guitar or drum and let's  
make music! Bring your friends! All  
ages are invited to this party!



Questions? Email  
ministryforearth  
[@emersonhouston.org](mailto:@emersonhouston.org).



## Thank You For Embracing Our Beloved Community

To those who have pledged for 2018, thank you!

We appreciate your gift given to support the ministries and programs of our congregation.

### Stay Connected!



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

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

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

[meetup.com/emersonseekers](https://www.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, June 19**



# Bridge to Our Future

- **Discerning Staffing Needs**
- **Understanding Heritage**
- **Improving Governance**

*Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church 2018-2019*

In the fall, we will begin the transitional tasks we envisioned to discern staffing needs following the death of the Rev. Mark Edmiston-Lange in September 2016 after his 18-year service as co-minister with Rev. Becky. We envisioned this beginning shortly after hiring Rev. Sam Schaal as Transitional Assistant Minister, benefitting from his experience as a member of the Interim Ministry Guild of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Hurricane Harvey delayed this work, just as it pushed the stewardship campaign to the spring and even today has left many families' lives still not restored to normal. We are ready to move forward in September, in three key areas:

## **1. Staffing Analysis**

*To provide strategic, practical information on how the congregation perceives its staffing needs*

**September—November:** Using a staff consultant from the UUA Southern Region, we will create a task force of congregational members with experience in diverse aspects of the church, working with Rev. Sam. The consultant will train the team to conduct structured interviews with each minister, staff member and lay leader of significant ministries/programs to see what's going well, what needs better support, and how that support might be given. Using analysis tools, the task force will suggest if and where more staff support is indicated, including reviewing costs associated with various options. Their recommendation would be given to the Board for consideration, who will present the findings to the congregation in dialogue sessions. The task force will be accountable to the Board who will communicate progress and ultimate proposals to the wider congregation. There is no cost to use the UUA staff person unless she makes a personal visit and we pay travel expenses. There is a modest cost of \$100-200 for a demographic study that's part of the process.

**November—December:** If the church decides to seek a new clergy or non-clergy position, a search team will be named that will coordinate the search using the early spring national UUA search cycle for fall placement.

## **2. History Wall**

*By remembering our stories, we'll better understand how church culture has evolved over 58 years*

**September 30, October 7, 14, 21:** Over four Sundays after worship, Rev. Sam will lead a timeline and discussion of church history from 1960 to the present. Remembering the church's story will reveal trends in the heritage still influencing life in the congregation—the DNA of Emerson, if you will. We will keep an eye on staffing, organization and, especially, the hopes and challenges of the congregation through these generations.

## **3. Governance Task Force**

*Good governance supports staffing and empowers effective leadership*

**Beginning May 2018:** Church governance is the “invisible structure” of the church, since its constitution and bylaws affect working relationships and processes. The current church governance has not been significantly reimagined since 1960 and is designed for a smaller church in a time when the minister was central in church administration with scant committee/lay leadership and a small staff. We are already beginning conversations at the Board level and will apprise the congregation as progress is made. This longer-term task will extend into 2019.

*This work will involve the whole congregation at various levels. We are excited about new discoveries of who we are, what we need, and where we are going as a congregation. Stay tuned!*