—MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
March
2019
emersonhouston.org

emerson UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church

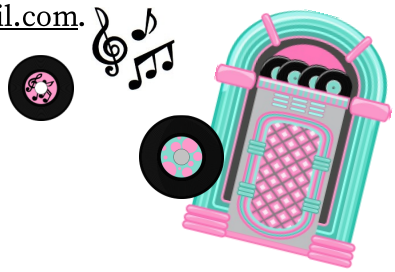
the emersonian

April | Save–the–Date

Emerson Service Auction 2019—Saturday, April 27!

Get ready to BOOGIE as Emerson celebrates the 1950's with our **Auction Sock Hop**! We need your Time, Treasure, and Talent to make this event a success!

Forms for Donations and Sponsorship are available on our website or in The Gathering Place. Questions? Contact Kent Scott at kms752@gmail.com.



Silent Auction	5:30-6:45
Food and Music on the Patio	6:45-7:30
Board Wine Pull	7:30-7:45
Live Auction	7:45-9:00

Rebuilding Together Houston—April 6 and 13!

Home repair project for elderly or disabled. Watch for more details.

Want to learn more?
Contact Jane Zachritz-Holt at jm.zachritz@gmail.com.

Coming Right Up!

Welcoming Spring, Celebrating the Vernal Equinox

Wednesday, March 20, 6:30 p.m. Potluck supper in Westwood Hall; 7:30 p.m. service. As children of the earth, we are subject to its annual cycles of light and life. And so we gather to celebrate the equinox, to acknowledge the cycles of change in the natural world, and to celebrate our place in the universe and in nature. We pause to reflect on this point of balance, embracing the coming season of hope, renewal, and fresh energy. You're invited to contribute poetry, reading, story, drumming or dancing to our informal service (outside in the courtyard). Questions? E-mail Ann May and Robin McElfresh.

Beckonings

Did you know that expressing gratitude can elevate your level of happiness? Cognitive scientists who research happiness or what they call "subjective well being", have discovered that one of the most potent ways to increase your happiness is to keep a daily log of things you are grateful for. Maybe that doesn't sound so surprising - maybe grateful people just tend toward happiness anyway - but what's really intriguing is that people who score on the lower end of the happiness scale before they start this practice benefit from practicing gratitude more than those who score higher initially. Studies also find that people who regularly record their sources of gratitude also exercised more per week and achieved more of their personal goals.

So, if you want to feel better, achieve more and get healthier, why not try this as a daily spiritual practice. Every night think of those things from your day for which you feel most grateful and make note of them in some way and as you do, let yourself savor the feeling of gratitude and the sense of well being that comes with it. Not surprisingly, this kind of exercise or something similar is recommended in several religious traditions.

Even better, though, studies show that if you go beyond recording your gratitude and tell the important people in your life - say out loud why you are grateful for them - that's like getting a super-duper booster shot of "subjective well-being." How often do we tell the people we care about how grateful we are that they are part of our life? We say it on birthdays and anniversaries, maybe. But what if we made a habit of doing that on a regular basis? Not only would we feel better, but the recipients would also.

Could we apply that to our church life, do you think? What might happen if everyone at Emerson started telling other people at Emerson why they are grateful for their presence? Maybe we would all get lifted to a new level of well being and wisdom.

In that spirit, I want to say how grateful I am for the people who contribute so much time and energy to make Emerson the religious community that it is. Nothing - absolutely nothing - happens at Emerson without volunteer effort somewhere along the way. And of course, some things that happen take gargantuan contributions from volunteers. Hardly a day goes by that I don't think with gratitude of the members of this congregation but I probably don't say it out loud enough. So let me hereby say it - oh, okay, write it - thank you, thank you, thank you! Emerson would be nothing without you.

What do you say? Who at Emerson wouldn't want a booster shot of "subjective well being"? Surely there is more gratitude to go around. Everyone can get in on the act.

In faith, reason and affection,

Becky

Senior Minister

Lunch with the Board President

Your Board of Trustees starts every meeting with a period allocated to hear member concerns. Any member wishing to attend Board meetings may do so. This requires a trip to Emerson on a Tuesday evening. Since we are likely to be present on Sunday, I want to set aside a time for real conversation and discussion of important congregational issues. Introducing "Lunch with the Board President". Meet me in The Gathering Place after the service and we'll decide where to enjoy a meal together.

Of course, please feel free to e-mail me or by text/voice at 832-654-1779. Onward! —Kenny Jones

Sunday Morning Schedule

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

Please join us on Sundays for Worship.

March 3—Rev. Samuel Schaal—Holding On (and Letting Go)
In a world of transience, what is permanent? What saves us and what does not? To what do we hold? From what do we let go?

March 10—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—I Am UU Woman
On the Sunday following International Women's Day we will lift up and celebrate the historical role Unitarian Universalism and a few Unitarian Universalist women in particular have played in the struggle for women's rights and gender parity. And we will also consider the status of women generally around the world and what we can do today to advance the cause of equality.

March 17—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—Air: The Skin of the World
We often take the air we breathe for granted. Hardly ever do we contemplate its sacred quality or the fact that it connects us to a vast communion of being that transcends space and time. On this Sunday before the Vernal Equinox, we will contemplate the spiritual dimensions of the air we breathe – and we will have some old fashioned fun, too, as we welcome the season of spring.

March 24—Rev. Samuel Schaal—Our Real Work
Sometimes, when our hopes are obstructed and our intentions impeded, our real work is unveiled.

March 31—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—The Spirituality of the Senses: Humor
So, okay, humor isn't a "sense" in the same way as vision, hearing, smell, taste or touch. BUT - I would argue that a sense of humor is as revelatory of the spiritual nature of human existence and as equally enriching to human wellbeing. How many UUs does it take to make fun of ourselves? I'll have plenty of jokes to offer and I invite you, as well, to **bring "knock-knock" jokes to share.**

Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry – 300 UUs at the State Capitol!

March 20 is the date of the trip. However, the more important date is **March 13**, the day we have to pay the total cost of the bus.

To date we are far short of reaching that goal. If we are not substantially closer to filling the 55 seats by Sunday, March 10, the bus and trip will regrettably have to be cancelled. ***Let's make this trip happen so we can make our voice heard in Austin!!***

Send your check NOW for $30 per person, noting Bus in the Memo line to Karen Van Horn OR bring your checkbook - please no cash - to church on Sunday, March 3 or March 10.

Trip Details

Wednesday, March 20, 2019
from 6:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.

- Round Trip Transportation – Emerson UU Church – State Capitol – Austin, Texas
- 55 Seat Tour Bus with onboard restroom
- Coffee & Kolache Breakfast + Road Snacks provided
- Lunch on your own – Bring a sack lunch or eat out (Capitol Grille?)
- $30.00 per person

Refunds Contingent on the Seat(s) being filled.

Please e-mail Kenny Jones or text /voice to 832-654-1779.

Wheel of Life

Our hearts and hopes are with those recovering from health challenges. **Betsey Sevy** continues her treatments and we look forward to her return to church activities. **Ann May** suffered minor injuries in a car wreck and is recovering nicely. **Mim Freiter** is recovering from a broken collarbone. **Anna Louise Bruner** sprained her ankle and is recovering. She remains busy planning the next stage production of the Brazos Players at her residence in Brazos Towers.

We also hold in our prayers and thoughts **Ken McLeod** as he seeks medical treatment for health issues.

Our hopes for continued healing are with **Fritz Rambow** who is scheduled for another round of ultrasound treatment in his brain for tremors. The ultrasound treatment team reports having more information on what part of the brain is linked to his specific tremors, causing hopes for a fuller recovery. Fritz and Marilyn are pleased at the prognosis.

Congratulations to **Bradley Smith** who celebrated officially changing his name and gender marker on February 21st!

Adult Religious Education

It's rodeo time in Houston, so y'all gather 'round the new Adult RE posse! A full cadre of volunteers are working to bring spiritual and educational opportunities to folks at Emerson, under the broad guidance of point riders Dick Cheney and Katy Carpman. There have been offers of support from wranglers Dori Wolfe and Ellen Norton to lasso the amazing group of volunteers, making sure we have a trained host for each session. Together with others in the posse (the Rusks, John Seibel, and you!), we will be reviewing, scheduling, and communicating about upcoming opportunities for furthering our knowledge and spiritual being.

10:00 a.m. Sunday Adult RE (*see the weekly E-Blast for full class descriptions*):

March 3	Spirit in Practice (Room 208)	
March 10	Spirit in Practice (Room 208)	Zsófia Sztranyiczki, Executive Director, International Women's Convocation (Room 205)
March 17	Spirit in Practice (Room 208)	A Look into Texas Justice Issues – Dori Wolfe (205)
March 24	Spirit in Practice (Room 208)	Ministry for Earth – Ann May *9:45* (205)
March 31	Spirit in Practice (Room 208)	Green Landscaping – Mark Holt (Room 205)

Many of you are working on offerings to share. Thank you! We're working on a simple application/planning process, and in the meantime, contact Dick with your ideas.

***HOSTS** wanted!* Support the Adult RE program on an occasional basis as a host, setting up the classroom, introducing the speaker/facilitator. Training provided. We are putting together a schedule for upcoming months, so let Dori know if this might be of interest to you.

Circle Dinners

Time to talk and share a meal with fellow Emersonians on **Saturday, March 16,** at the next circle dinner happening. Four families will host the March dinners and will contact you soon. Join us for an evening of great conversations and fine dining. If you are not yet on this list but would like to participate, please e-mail Mary Ann Rusk.

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 Classes- Saturday from 1-4 p.m. and Tuesday/ Thursday evening classes from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Interested in volunteering? E-mail the program director for more information.

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

Emerson Choir - Every Wednesday from 7-9 p.m. 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 10:00 a.m. in Westwood Hall. Contact: Barbara Hopkins

Social Action Council Meeting - Second Sunday of each month - 12:30 p.m. in Room 204. All are welcome!

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

Ministry for Earth

As part of our individual and collective efforts to be good stewards of the earth, learn about how joining the Houston Central Solar Co-op can make "going solar" straight forward and more affordable. Might we help our church add solar through this process? Come to an information session on **Sunday, March 10 at 2:00 p.m.**, Room 205-6. The information session will be presented by church member Dori Wolfe, in her role as Houston Manager for Solar United Neighbors.

UU Humanist Association

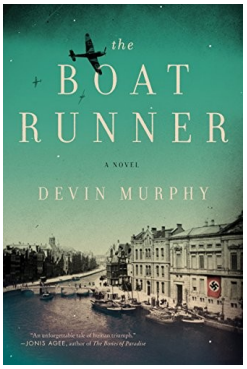
A few months back I conducted a survey one Sunday asking about current spiritual orientation. The most identified was Non-Theist that included atheists, agnostics, and humanists. The value of such a survey is anecdotal at best, but revealed there might be an interest in a UU Humanist group at Emerson. One impromptu meeting was held and the consensus was that we should give it a go!

I applied and am now a UU Humanist Association Ambassador. I interpret this to mean that we have a "Green Light" to proceed under the aegis of this UUA Approved Organization. We will explore new pathways to our spirituality and serve as a new home to those with similar beliefs in the larger community.
If you identify as any variety of non-theist or are merely interested in learning more about this approach to spirituality, please e-mail me a message or text/voice message to 832-654-1779.
Watch the E-Blasts and Orders of Service for meeting dates, times, and locations. If you know me at all...You know there is a plan to achieve AMAZING at Emerson!

Kenny Jones
President, Board of Trustees

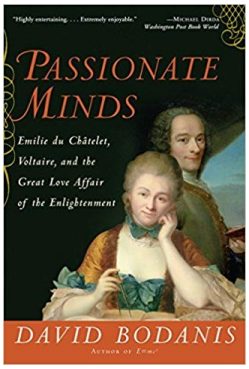
Book Clubs

MEN'S
Monday, March 18,
6:30 p.m.
At La Madeleine (10001 Westheimer)
Book: *The Boat Runner*
by Devin Murphy
Contact: Cletus Lee



WOMEN'S
Wednesday, March 20,
7:30 p.m in the Library.
Book: *Halsey Street*
by Naima Coster
Contact: Jill Rose

DAYTIME
Thursday, March 21,
10:00 a.m. in the Library.
Book: *Passionate Minds*
by David Bodanis
Contact: David Bergt



Transitional Thoughts

"(T)here is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; … there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens … There are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees."

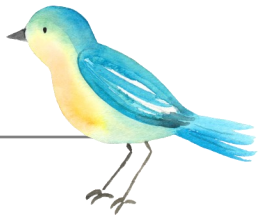
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

March is a month of transition. It is the last gasp of winter, with the spring equinox on March 20, a day with equal hours of light and dark. From then the days continue to lengthen to the long days of summer. Winter has been, yet once again, vanquished.

At Emerson Church it is also a season of transition. We will shortly have completed reports of all four programs of the discernment process—on heritage (History Wall), dreams of the future (Visioning sessions), staffing analysis (Staffing Analysis Task Force) and church governance (Governance Task Force). This is an end. And a beginning. Now we engage the work of seeing how this fits together, what questions it brings, what it suggests you do for your church's future. Stay tuned for information on Exploration sessions and perhaps other ways of engaging the work. It's a journey, to use a familiar metaphor—a long journey that requires a spirit of holy curiosity and possibility, a commitment to hear one another, and patience with the process (to quote Katy Carpman).

In the Good News of our Free Faith,

Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transitional Assistant Minister



Money and Spirit: The Seven Stages

Saturday March 30
9 to 3 p.m.
Westwood Hall

Where do our attitudes about money come from? How do they influence our lives? How can we approach financial issues with honesty and without fear? This introduction to The Seven Stages of Money Maturity is drawn from the work of George Kinder, noted author, Buddhist teacher and financial planner who pioneered the concept of Life Planning in the financial planning community. This experiential workshop guides you toward "money maturity" — an understanding and experience of the spiritual and psychological issues that surround our money lives. Exploring the intersection of money and spirit helps us attain greater peace, freedom, and security in our money lives.

This is NOT—
—a class on investing, budgeting or any technical money issues
This IS—
—a place to explore your emotions about money
—for people of all levels of income, because we all have money issues

Purchase the book for $15 in the Bookstore (waived in hardship cases). There is a $5 fee for a boxed lunch. Facilitated by Rev. Sam, who holds the Registered Life Planner© designation from the Kinder Institute of Life Planning and works with financial planners on issues of spirit and money. Enroll in The Gathering Place beginning March 3 or email Rev. Sam at sam@emersonhouston.org

Religious Education

My sons, freshmen at Texas A&M, get their first college Spring Break this month. Not exactly party animals, they'll enjoy the free room and board of home. Of course, the rest of us *will not* have the luxury of a full week off.

This month in Sunday School

March 3: Sunday School Classes
March 10: Spring Break Club
March 17: Spring Break Club
March 24: Sunday School Classes
March 31: Sunday School Classes

But perhaps Spring Break can remind us to take Sabbath.

It's good to take a break once in a while. When we're caught in the slog of obligation and overwhelm, we sometimes work through our supposed time off. Or when we finally slow down, we're so exhausted that we sleep all day.
When's the last time you did something outside the have-to? Whether or not you've got Spring Break in March, I encourage you to have some sort of adventure:

- ♥ Try one of those cheeses from the Under $5 bin at your grocery store!
- ♥ Come to teen and family game night, March 16th (7 to 9pm)
- ♥ Sing karaoke
- ♥ Search for bluebonnets
- ♥ Take your lunch at the Museum of Fine Arts on Thursday, when admission is free!

Me, I'll take a day for a Galveston Bay fishing expedition with my dad. It's been a few years, but I caught a giant (to me) red drum last time 'round – I will never forget that excitement!

We also switch things up a bit at Emerson March 10th and 17th with a Spring Break Club for children and youth. Depending on weather, we'll use one Sunday to play in the dirt and plant a herb garden around St. Fiacre in the courtyard. And the other Sunday we'll create something for our auction craft!

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

March Share thePlate—International Women's Convocation (IWC)

is a nonprofit organization inspired by the First International U*U Women's Convocation (Houston, TX, 2009), led by U*U women. IWC advances equity for women and girls worldwide through leadership development, empowerment and awareness programs, advocacy, and resources. The projects the organization has helped design, direct, co-sponsor, or raise funds for include: a business training and micro-loan program for women entrepreneurs in Mutundwe Village, near Kampala, Uganda; a leadership school and grants to local empowerment projects in Transylvania; a leadership development program in Khasi Hills, India; violence awareness and prevention programs in Philippine and Khasi UU communities; and a pilot leadership training program in Bolivia. To find out more, please visit www.IntlWomensConvo.org.

Meet one of our newest members!

Mary Evelynn Sorrell's career has been as a curator of contemporary art and executive director of non-profit art museums/galleries/universities. She currently has a retirement job as an English as a Second Language teacher.

She loves being in nature—both wild and tame including gardening veggies and other plants. Mary Evelynn admires antiques, likes making jewelry and embroidery, enjoys visiting museums and seeing good films and performances. She has two children and five grandchildren, whom she adores. Both of her grand-daughters will go to law school next year!

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Becky Edmiston-Lange, Senior Minister
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Coming Right Up!

Spring Campus Cleanup—Saturday, March 2!

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. **9 to noon.**

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 p.m. **Next Class: March 10**

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

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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, March 19

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