

the emersonian

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | MAY 2017 ISSUE | WWW.EMERSONHOUSTON.ORG

Planned Parenthood Texas Lobby Day & Rally 2017

From left to right: Kay Bergen, Kenny Jones, Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Beryl Kaminsky, Sally Curimbaba and Christel Collins.



Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Chuck Freeman (Director of Texas UU Justice Ministries) and Wendy Davis.



In Texas, state officials are seeking to remove Planned Parenthood from Medicaid, the federal-state health insurance program for low-income people and the disabled. Planned Parenthood staff says that there are more than 50 bills that will impact women's healthcare.

On Wednesday, April 5, Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange and Emerson members and friends joined 1,500 men and women to rally in front of the Texas State Capitol in support of Planned Parenthood. Dressed in pink, they spoke out about bills that target Planned Parenthood and

aim to criminalize abortion.

Throughout the event, speakers, including former state senator Wendy Davis, talked about the potentially devastating consequences for low-income people, people of color, immigrants and the LGBT community if Planned Parenthood clinics were gone. Davis said during the rally that Planned Parenthood is necessary to help women get critical access to cancer screenings and contraceptives.

After the rally, attendees went into the capitol to educate legislators on reproductive rights and healthcare issues and to stop trying to block Planned Parenthood from offering reproductive health services.

Revels

The following Revels is adapted from my Easter sermon:

... Scholars talk of the already but not yet nature of Jesus' ministry. Of course the Kingdom of Heaven had not yet been established on earth. Jesus' followers just had to look around to know that. But, at the same time, the Kingdom was already there, happening in their midst when they treated each other with love and equality. The Kingdom became real in Jesus' presence because no one was a "nobody" to Jesus. And Jesus taught that when the entire world acted in accordance with that principle, then it would truly be heaven on earth.

We live in the already but not yet time. It is patently obvious to us how earth is not yet heaven. There are so many ways in which human society is broke; so many places where people are accorded less than full equality and dignity. To use, Jesus' language the Kingdom has not yet arrived. But at the same time transformation is occurring. It may be hard for us to see it, but the Kingdom – or whatever name you want to give to that ideal of what could be between people – is also already here, stubbornly refusing to yield. And we here in this church are hastening its coming. It is here in all our social justice efforts and outreach to the community – in our Share the Plate, ESL and Ministry for Earth programs; in our support for Interfaith Ministries and Rebuild Together Houston, for example. And it is here when we join together in solidarity with others who would treat all people with love and respect.

The kingdom was already here a week ago Wednesday when 1500 people clad in pink (including several of us from Emerson) showed up at the Texas State Capitol to say we aren't going back to the days when women were to be seen but not heard. 1500 people were there for Planned Parenthood Advocacy Day this year; in 2015 there

were about 35. The Kingdom was already here in this sanctuary a week ago yesterday when fifty people showed up for Rapid Raid Response training so that, should mass deportations start to occur, they would be ready to stand with undocumented immigrants and resist. It was already here last Sunday when progressive Faith Leaders from around Houston came together to proclaim, contrary to what conservative religious leaders would have our legislators believe, there are religious people who oppose the noxious "bathroom bill." And the Kingdom is already here when human rights groups and religious groups like our UU Voice for Justice witness in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers, as we have several times in the last few months.

And the Kingdom is already here in our midst when we are there for one another in times of illness, death and unwanted change; and, when we treat one another with compassion and kindness even when we differ. And it is here in every effort that nurtures and sustains this congregation of memory and hope as it carries forward our heritage of healing and liberation – from ushering, to setting up tables for the auction, to singing in the choir, to serving on the Board. The work to bring heaven to earth is all of a piece. We all do what we can. Just by being here – by understanding the importance that this community exists – this community which stands for the inherent worth and dignity of every person – you are bringing the Kingdom closer.

The world will be transformed – not by waiting for divine intervention but by working for liberation, nurturing communities of memory and hope, showing to one another compassion and respect, and by transforming ourselves, becoming the people who can usher that realm into being...

In that hope and faith,

Becky Edmondson-Lange



Sunday Morning Schedule

Typical Sunday Schedule

9 AM EIO Rehearsal • 9:45 AM Professional Childcare Begins
10 AM Adult Ed & Children's Activities • 11 AM Worship • 11:15 AM Children's Programming

Please join us on Sundays for Worship service.



Hear My Song

The Emerson choir will offer a variety of musical selections, inviting the listener to consider the many facets of hope that sustain us.

Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—The Perfect Mother's Day Sermon?

What words could possibly do justice to the many different ways in which we mother and have been mothered? Our individual experiences vary tremendously, but all of us have at least one thing in common – someone gave birth to us. Given that, is there something we might all celebrate on this day?



Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—Celebrating our Beloved Community

As summer approaches we pause to reflect on the year that has been and to acknowledge all that we mean to one another. There will be some special recognitions and we will officially welcome New Members of the congregation. The choir will sing its last anthem before the summer break. AND, rather than Flower communion, we will celebrate our many gifts in a new and exciting way!



Mike Condit—The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly - The Scapegoat of Dualism

In a world that seems tumultuous and threatening we often look upon things in dualistic terms. They are black or white, good or bad. This can be a defensive mechanism, one which places blame and alleviates the need for more thoughtful analysis or actions on our part. This has been a component of religion for ages, and dualistic answers have been given to the theodicy question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Unfortunately, we are increasingly applying simplistic dualistic answers to some of today's social and political problems, with potentially disturbing consequences. How can we prevent a growing component of "The Ugly" in our world?



Adult Education

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

May 7—Star Stuff, The Earth & Us, presented by David May

How did the elements of our bodies get here, how are they maintained, and where do they go?

May 14—DNA - The Secret of Life, presented by Sigsby Rusk

A look at DNA, what it is and how it acts to provide the necessities of life for all plants and animals. Videos will show how DNA is involved in the amazing factory contained in each cell of our bodies.

May 21—Science, Connections, and Biases, presented by Beth Hammer

How can our personal, cultural, and societal biases influence our examination of the world around us? How can scientists examine these biases and reduce their influence? How may these biases influence us?

May 28—What is ableism?, presented by Lydia Nunez, Disability Activist and Elder Care Ombudsman

What is it? How does it manifest itself? How does it affect the disabled? What can be done about it?

Superhero Time

I am a movie nut and I *love* superhero movies--lots of explosions and fabulous action scenes. Past the flash, the stories are about the most super of beings recognizing their weaknesses, learning to be their best selves, and working together as a team.

We mere mortals may be less flashy and explody—most of us wear less spandex. And yet we are not without power. We just need to own it and find the wisdom and courage to use it wisely!

Here at Emerson, our children will spend Summer Sundays learning from UU Heroes – Unitarians and Universalists who have taken a stand, come to a new understanding, and brought justice to their world.

Yes, let us bring our values into the world and share them with our next generations. An easy way to be a hero? Share one Sunday of your time this summer - sign up to lead one Sunday School session, or be one of our cast of characters, assisting to help the session go smoothly. We'll be out in the Gathering Place (Hall of Justice?) Sundays this month, making great plans together.



And May is a delightful month for us to come together. We start with Music Sunday on May 7th, and the following Sunday is Mother's Day, our last day of school-year Sunday School! May 21st we come together for our annual flower communion--with a twist this year!

Katy Carpman, Director of Religious Education

Wheel of Life



Congratulations to Jane and Tony Collins on the marriage of daughter Christine, April 8th!

Leticia Anderson's brother, Father Arturo Lozano, died on Sunday, April 9. We are so glad Leticia was able to visit him in Mexico the week before he died.

Barbara Crotty's brother was recently injured in a scooter accident—we hope for a speedy recovery.

Belle Johnson, charter member of Emerson, died at the age of 87 on April 11. Our deepest condolences to her daughter, Shelley Gottschalk.

We also hold Andy Andrews and his family in our thoughts following the death of his mother on April 6th.

We hold Joe Dowlen and others in our thoughts as they deal with health issues.

Please join us Sunday, May 21, after the service in The Gathering Place for a recognition reception for Henry Groppe and Bub Joyce.

FYI: Are You a Member?

At January's annual congregational meeting, we voted and approved the change to Article III of our Constitution and Bylaws regarding becoming and ceasing to be a member. It now says membership will continue "until death, voluntary withdrawal, failure to make a contribution of record to the General Fund for a period of 24 months . . ." This means that even if a member hasn't pledged, a donation of record will suffice. A donation to one of the Share the Plate causes on Sundays, though appreciated and supportive of our mission, does not help keep the staff paid and the lights on, so that is not sufficient for maintaining membership. A purchase at the services auction does not count, as goods or services are received.

What is done if 24 months have passed without a donation to the church? We reach out to the individual and ask if they still want to be members. If they do but cannot afford a donation, they are informed that a waiver is available for the asking. If we do not hear back from the individual, he or she is dropped from membership, but can be reinstated upon donation or request for waiver. If you are not sure whether you have made a donation, you may contact our Business Administrator, Karen Van Horn (karen@emersonhouston.org).

May Share-The-Plate

The Houston Pride Band is a charitable organization that provides a safe music outlet for LGBT and allied musicians. Though HPB usually has relatively small operating costs, in 2017, the band is hosting Lesbian Gay Band Association (LGBA)'s annual conference in 2017. During this conference, hundreds of musicians from across the country will come together to learn how to improve their own bands as they promote music as a medium of communication; the conference culminates in a massed band concert at Houston's Wortham Center!

As Houston's only non-audition, semi-professional music group, HPB is inclusive. The group welcomes and celebrates the worth of each and every individual that would like to join the band. Both HPB and LGBA promote understanding and collaboration with members of the Houston community and the greater LGBT community by hosting performances, conferences and outreach opportunities; both organizations act with the intention that all people are interconnected; they strive to promote understanding among all. Hosting the 2017 conference is a huge undertaking for this community group. Please consider giving to the Houston Pride Band to help fund the upcoming LGBA conference and concert in September 2017! More at <http://www.lgba2017.org> and houstonprideband.org.



New Bike Racks Installed!

Hans Coster, our Sunday Sexton, uses the bike rack in front of Westwood Hall. Another rack was installed by the front door to Delaney Hall, thanks to the Fund-a-need donors from last year's Auction.



Attend General Assembly

June 21-25, 2017 | New Orleans, LA

Here's your opportunity to get to General Assembly in our region. Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. There is still time to register!

More at <http://www.uua.org/ga>

May Events

Unitunes Coffeehouse 2017 — Saturday, May 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary
Tickets available for purchase at www.unitunes.org. The last performance of the season is Terri Hendrix and Lloyd Maines.

Help End Hunger! | Sunday, May 7 | 9:00 a.m. | Room 204

One in six children in this country is food insecure, meaning they don't always know if they're going to have food to eat. The *First Sunday 9 Covenant Group* invites you to come and hear about Bread for the World and join with congregations across the country to contact our members of Congress to address this issue with bipartisan-sponsored solutions.

Circle Dinners | Saturday, May 20 | Westwood Hall

The last Circle Dinner for this season is on May 20. For more information, please contact [Mary Ann Rusk](mailto:MaryAnn.Rusk@unitunes.org).

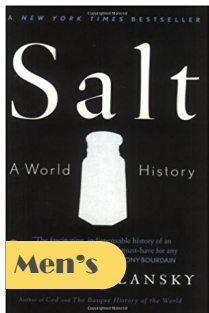
Amy Goodman—2017 Speaking Tour—Democracy Now! | Saturday, May 20 | Emerson's Sanctuary

Free speech is democracy's last line of defense. We must demand it, defend it, and most of all, use it—now. Amy Goodman is the host and executive producer of Democracy Now! a daily, global grassroots news hour, broadcasting on over 1,400 public television and radio stations around the U.S. and the world, with millions accessing it online at democracynow.org. Hosted by [KPFT](http://kpft.org).

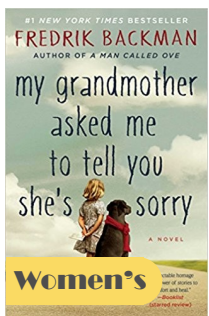
Film screening, "Before the Flood" | Tuesday, May 23 | 6:30 p.m. | The Gathering Place and Sanctuary

A look at what society can do to prevent the demise of endangered species, ecosystems and native communities across the planet. Meet leading experts on the front lines of climate change — scientists, politicians, faith leaders and visionaries all working to create a sustainable future. Refreshments/networking at 6:30 p.m., screening in the Sanctuary from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Hosted by Emerson's Ministry for Earth.

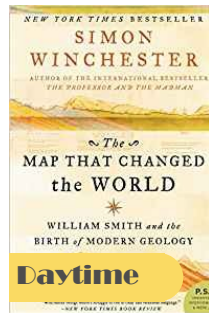
Book Clubs



Wednesday, May 17, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine on 10001 Westheimer Rd.
Contact: [Gabe Gelb](mailto:Gabe.Gelb@unitunes.org)



Wednesday, May 17, 7:30 p.m. in the Library.
Contact: [Jill Rose](mailto:Jill.Rose@unitunes.org)



Thursday, May 18, 10 a.m. in the Library.
Contact: [Dave Bergt](mailto:Dave.Bergt@unitunes.org)

Ongoing Activities

Stitchers

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

ESL

End of Semester parties on May 4 and 6 here at church. For information regarding the Fall semester, please call (713) 782-0825.

Racial Justice Book Study

meets every Sunday at 10 a.m. On May 7, the group will begin discussion of *Birth of a White Nation: the Invention of White People and Its Relevance Today*, by Jacqueweline Battalora. May 7, 14 & 28—Room 204, May 21—Room 209.

LGBT+Allies Emersonians Potluck Lunch

Sunday, May 14, in Room 209, at 12:15 p.m. [More information](http://unitunes.org/lgbt)

Emerson Poetry Group

Sunday, May 21, at 9:45 a.m., Room 204.

Ministry for Earth

Sunday, May 28, from 9:45-10:45 a.m. in the Library.

Sandwiches for SEARCH

Thursday, May 11, at 10:30 a.m. in Westwood Hall. Contact: [Barbara Hopkins](mailto:Barbara.Hopkins@unitunes.org)

Meet Our Newest Members!

Kat Jones

Kat grew up in Houston. She is a paralegal and her hobbies include anthropology/archaeology and science fiction. Fun fact: She votes on the Hugo Awards every year (equivalent to the Oscar's for Science Fiction/Fantasy).



“Rick” Jones

Rick has lived in Houston for 30 years. He is a computer systems administrator and enjoys writing and games. Fun fact: He is a published writer for role-playing games (like Dungeons & Dragons).



Yolanda Miles

Yolanda has lived in Houston for four years. She is the district manager for a dental organization and enjoys yoga and spending time with family and friends. Fun fact: She loves Pinterest and using her creativity.



R. Mark Miles

R. Mark has been living in Houston for four years. He is the director of professional development & speech communication and is currently finishing his doctorate. Fun fact: He has lived all over the U.S.



Get Ready for Summer!

Advocacy and public witness opportunities for Emerson members and friends with [Emerson Justice Advocates](#). Please contact [Kenny Jones](#), or by text or voice message to 832-654-1779

The Reproductive Justice Congregation Initiative—This is an initiative of Just Texas, a project of the Texas Freedom Network. The goal is to design and implement a campaign for an affirmative congregational vote to become an official Reproductive Justice Congregation.

Planned Parenthood Partners Team—coordinate educational, public witness, and fundraising events for Planned Parenthood – Gulf Coast

Healthcare Justice Working Group—an individual or team to create campaigns within the congregation and in the community to address this vital issue that touches us all.

Economic Justice Study Group—an individual or team to create campaigns within the congregation and in the community to address a broad array of issues involved in this complex yet vital subject.

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: May 14**

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, May 16**