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—MONTHLY NEWSLETTER—
November
—2018—
emersonhouston.org

emerson UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST church

the emersonian

From the Stewardship Committee

What a blessing to be part of this wonderful community. Initial response to the 2019 “Gather the Spirit, Harvest the Power” stewardship drive is heartening. Over 90 member-families have already turned in their pledges. The Stewardship Committee encourages you to join them if you have not already and submit your form today. This year’s campaign ends on November 4th. Think of all we can both continue to do and initiate anew when we gather our spirit and harvest our communal power, when we work together to make a difference in people’s lives and the world around us.

Help us celebrate this generous harvest with a *Mini Apple Festival* after church on Sunday, November 11th.



An Environmental Celebrity

Wednesday, November 14 at 7:30 p.m.



It arrives here only every two years and you won’t want to miss it.

It’s the Kilgore Lecture, sponsored by Emerson Church to shed light on an important topic relevant to all of us, Emersonians and others in the community attracted by a well-known speaker and important topic.

This year that topic is Environment Justice and the speaker, Dr. Robert Bullard, a distinguished professor at Texas Southern University, is often called “the father of environmental justice.” He’s written/co-authored 18 books, has lectured at universities across North America, and was named one of 22 individuals worldwide

(Continued on page 4)

Calling All Cooks and Lovers of Great Food!

Please join your fellow Emersonians for our annual Harvest Lunch. Enjoy seasonal plant-based dishes and hanging with some of your favorite people after the service on **November 11th** in Westwood Hall. There is a small charge for the tickets (children 10 and under eat free) which will go to support the crucial work of TEJAS (Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services).

A signup sheet for tickets, cooks and volunteers is available in The Gathering Place.



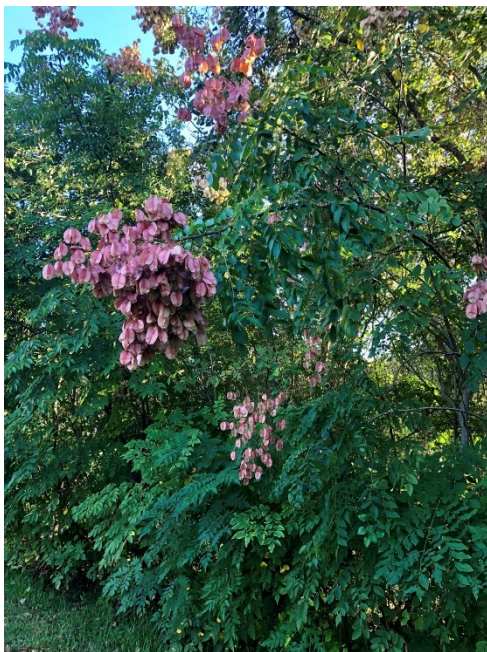
Beckonings

As I write this column on Monday, October 15, 2018, heavy rain is falling and there are occasional lightning bursts and thunder claps. The trees are whipping around in the wind, leaves are being shaken from the limbs and blown about. The temperature is falling and the sky is quite gray. At mid-morning it is in the low sixties. Our first real cold front of the season is moving through.

Just yesterday evening I walked in Terry Hershey Park along Buffalo Bayou in the company of glorious sunshine, brilliant blue sky and fluffy white clouds. The humidity was low, but even so I perspired a lot as the temperature, even at 5 p.m., was still in the nineties. Yesterday it was still “summer” even if the calendar and the resplendent coral seedpods of the rain tree belied it. Today, autumn is here.

Oh, I know that all we have to do is blink and the weather will change again, that there will still be occasional days of high temperatures and golden light. But the local meteorologists are predicting a week of more of the same rain and clouds and lower than normal temperatures. And for now, at least on a spiritual level, it seems important to acknowledge that the year is proceeding to its end and, as Mary Oliver writes in her “Fall Song”, that *the particular island of this summer, this NOW, that now is nowhere.*

Today is the kind of day that lends itself to thoughts of home and hearth and harvest. A day to make a pot of soup or to bake a loaf of bread and stock the freezer, because even though provisions are, in our modern and urban landscape, only a short drive or walk away, the feel of the day suggests the need to lay up stores for harsher weather to come.



But today is also the kind of day that turns the heart to musings about the passage of time and of what wisdom one has reaped by its passage. As Diane Di Prima says in her poem “The Belltower”, *the weighing is done in autumn and the sifting; what is to be threshed is threshed in autumn; what is to be gathered is taken.* Because it is not only food for the body that one needs for the shorter days to come, but food for the psyche too - so that when *time’s measure painfully chafes* (Mary Oliver again) at the too early waning of the light, there will be that necessary sustenance laid up as well.

I wish for you all sustaining autumnal activities and nourishing meditations.

In faith and affection,

Becky
Senior Minister

Honor your loved ones with memorial roses At All Souls / Day of the Dead Service November 4th

Our special November 4 service also provides an opportunity for you to honor your loved ones. You may purchase memorial rose(s) for those whom you have loved and lost, either recently or long ago. A suggested love offering of \$3 per stem is suggested. This might be family, friends, colleagues or anyone who remains in your heart. The roses will be on the chancel during the service, a powerful reminder of our love for those deceased, and you may take it with you after the service. We will list the name of your loved ones, the relationship (i.e., parent, grandparent, sibling, friend, etc.) and your name. (You may also remember someone anonymously.) You may order as many roses as you want.

Please see the display in The Gathering Place through Oct. 31. Or, you may call the office at 713/782-8250 or email alejandra@emersonhouston.org. Please tell us your loved one’s name, relationship and your name.

Sunday Morning Schedule



Sunday 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.

November 4—Rev. Samuel Schaal—Life, Death and Immortality (*All Souls / Day of the Dead*)

In this special service honoring the memory of all those we have loved and lost, we contemplate the mystery of being born and having to die. What in our life is immortal?

You are invited to honor deceased loved ones with the purchase of a rose for a modest love offering. Please see page 2.

November 11—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—Letters Home

A Veteran's Day service in recognition of members of our Armed Forces, current and past, featuring excerpts from letters and journals of service men and women from World War II to the present. Five Emerson members who are either veterans themselves or have connections with the military will be participating as readers.

November 18—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange—The Spirituality of the Senses: Taste

The sensation of taste is a great gift of human anatomy. So much of the food we eat tastes so much better than it would if sustenance were the only consideration. And yet, to taste, to eat, is to confess dependence upon the bounty of the earth. On this Sunday we will contemplate the spiritual lessons our sense of taste might yield and we will ritually break bread together. Our children will be key participants.

November 25—Rev. Johnny Peden—Gratitude

Let us take an opportunity to dig a little deeper in our thinking to give thanks for people, events, and circumstances in our lives to which we have perhaps not really given much thought.

Rev. Johnny Peden is a former Southern Baptist who earned BA and Masters degrees from Southern Baptist schools. He is a member of the Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church. For the past several years, Johnny has been officiating 130-150 weddings throughout the greater Galveston-Houston area.

Adult Religious Education

The Adult Religious Education (ARE) program meets in Room 205/206 on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

November 4 - Michael Condit—*The Dead Sea Scrolls*

The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their subsequent academic analysis revolutionized the understanding of ancient Judaism and early Christianity. We will describe these writings and relate them to Middle Eastern history at the beginning of the Common Era, particularly their influence on Jewish and Christian doctrine and dogma.

November 11 - Michael Condit—*The Dead Sea Scrolls, Part 2*

We continue our discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls, emphasizing several specific writings and noting their significant influence on Jewish and Christian doctrine and dogma.

November 18 - Advocacy and Public Witness - A Fundamental UU Value?

Emerson Justice Advocates' 2019 Plan of Action

November 25 - The Slightly Un-Conversation - Discussion Part 2

A deeper dive into Upcycling the Congregation - where could Emerson use a bit of Upcycling - based on the book, Upcycle Your Congregation

Wheel of Life



We remember those continuing in recovery from illnesses or recent surgeries: **Betsey Sevy** is at home following surgery, and **Mindy Lawrence** continues recovering from previous fractures. **Lisa Estill's** mother is undergoing treatment for cancer and she is doing well.

We hold **Olga and Dom Nelson** in our hearts as Olga's mother battles cancer. Our hearts remain with longtime member **Susanna Painter** who is in declining health.

Congratulations to **Emily Brown**, former Office Administrator for Communications on our staff, on the birth of Wyatt Brown Goodell on Oct. 10. Mom, dad and baby are all doing great. Welcome to the world, Wyatt!

Share the Plate Nominations

The Outreach Committee is asking for nominations for 2019 recipients of our Share the Plate monthly offerings to be submitted by **November 30**.

If you know of a worthy organization, large or small, the Outreach Committee hopes you will fill out the 2-page nomination form for an organization to be considered as a recipient of 75% of the Plate collected for one month in 2019. Nomination forms will be available in The Gathering Place every Sunday after church and are available through the church website. If you have questions or wish to return a completed form, please e-mail sharetheplate@emersonhouston.org. Committee members include Karen George, Glori Reeder, Jane Collins, Lisa Rockett and Beth Hammer.

Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair

Sunday, December 2nd, after the service.

All creative folk and those who need to do a bit more shopping while supporting church members and their friends are invited. A percentage of the vendor's sales will support The Benevolence Fund. Contact Beth Hammer or Robin McElfresh to reserve tables. More details soon!

(Continued from page 1—Kilgore Lecture)

considered “climate pacesetters.”

Join us on **Wednesday, November 14 at 7:30 p.m.**, in the Sanctuary. After his lecture, Dr. Bullard will participate in a Q and A session. He'll be introduced by Rev. Becky. And, this is a fine opportunity to invite friends, co-workers, and neighbors to this free and enlightening evening.

Emerson Players Proudly Presents—

- **SECRETS ABOUND!** — Unbeknownst to their Mother Superior, two sisters of the Convent of Perpetual Sewing are making and selling wine (as a sideline to grape juice) to supplement the convent's earnings. They CAN'T let their Mother Superior know!
- **SECRETS COMPOUND!** — Sneaky reporters and suspected spies get tangled up in unexpected mistaken (or hidden) identities with surprising results!
- **HILARITY ENSUES!**

December 7, 8, 9 — Drinking Habits, A Farce by Tom Smith
Emerson UU Church, 1900 Bering Drive, Westwood Hall
Tickets on sale in November \$15 Adult/\$5 Students



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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- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 1-4 p.m. Registration is now closed but volunteer positions are still available!

Hurricane Flood Support Group -

First Sunday of the month at 12:30 p.m. in Room 204. All are welcome.

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: [Mary Ann Rusk](#)

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

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

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.

Religious Education

In my home, Thanksgiving is a BIG deal. Since my college days, out-of-towners who couldn't travel for the holiday were welcome to join us. When my children came along, so did my in-laws, visiting from Boston. And our friends (and their children and sometimes the grandparents, too!) fill the house, everyone bringing their favorite dishes.

Harvey interrupted our tradition last year – but this year we are BACK, baby!

And yet, things are a little different. The house was rebuilt from four feet down. The dining table, no longer an inherited antique, doesn't fit quite as many- we'll set out an extra folding table.

And now my children are grown and in college – they'll come home for just a few days (Can you believe that A&M has classes on Wednesday? That's the day to make pie!) – and perhaps they'll bring an out-of-town friend with them.

Our lives change... sometimes our traditions hold us steady, and sometimes we twist those traditions to better meet our new realities. When have you made such a switch? How long did it take to feel natural? Did it, eventually, turn out to be delicious?

Katy Carpman

Director of Religious Education
katy.euuc@gmail.com

Sunday School This Month

October 7: Children's Chapel*

October 14: Sunday School Classes*

October 21: Sunday School Classes

October 28: Sunday School Classes
& UNICEF Carnival



*Middle & High School youth have classes on Oct. 7th and attend service on the 14th.

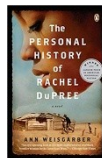
Speaking of traditions, my best friend Joanna and I have been crafting tamales together for the past fifteen years - at the 2018 church auction, we offered up a tamale-making class on December 1 - \$50/person. We still have a few seats open - [email me](#).



Book Clubs

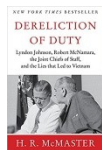
Daytime

Thursday, November 15, 10 a.m. in the Library. Book: *The Personal History of Rachel Dupree* by Ann Weisgarber
Contact: [Dave Bergt](#)



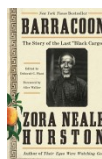
Men's

Monday, November 19, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine (10001 Westheimer) Book: *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* by H.R. McMaster
Contact: [Gabe Gelb](#)



Women's

Wednesday, November 28, 7:30 p.m. in the Library. Book: *Barracoon* by Zora Neale Hurston
Contact: [Jill Rose](#)



UniTunes Coffeehouse

UniTunes welcomes back Matt the Electrician on **Saturday, November 3rd!** Matt is a consummate songwriter, who creates folk music for the modern age with sensitivity, insight and humor, with a voice and delivery that is at once sweet, natural and pushed to a fray with understated emotion.

Please join us for this special show. As usual it will be 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary; tickets [online](#) or at the door.

Transitional Thoughts *Whose Are We?*

As part of our congregational discernment work, we have just finished the History Wall where we told stories and shared memories of the church from its beginning until today. The “new” church started in 1960 and was shortly named for Unitarian sage and American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. There were lots of interesting stories of dreams accomplished, challenges met and failures suffered. The church had a successful start and big ambitions—including focusing on church growth.

During my days as a layperson at First Unitarian Church of Dallas, my minister was the Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman, now retired. I recently discovered this quote from her on our denominational website:

“We cannot simply decide to grow for growth’s sake. The minute we do that, we fall into the downward spiral of sustaining the institution to sustain the institution; a death-knell for any movement. In-

stead, we must ask what it is we do that is unique, and attainable, and arises out of our faith and tradition.”

Laurel is also famous for beginning the conversation denominationally among our ministers of “Whose are we?” Not *who* are we, but *whose*—who or what calls us to be church in the world? This is not an easy question. It is more, really, than a mere mission statement, though an ideal mission statement answers that question.

As we move forward together in discernment, let’s think about enlarging our focus of what success for your church looks like beyond numbers. What is your calling as a congregation?

In the Good News of our Free Faith,



Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transitional Assistant Minister

Staffing Analysis Kicks Off!

by Staffing Analysis Task Force

As part of the discernment process to determine directions of the church in this transitional time the Board of Trustees has appointed a team to assess the staffing needs of the church. Dick Cheney, Lisa Estill, Beryl Kaminsky, Richard Loftin, and Ken McLeod comprise the team, with assistance and direction from Rev. Sam Schaal and Christine Purcell, UUA Transitions Program Manager for New England and the Southern district.

The goal is to prepare a recommendation to the Board and the congregation on the optimal staffing configuration, given current membership and financial and volunteer resources. The team plans to interview church staff and key lay leaders in structured interviews to gather impressions of what is going well and what needs more support in the various programs and ministries of the church. Then, using various analysis tools, which also include looking at demographic information in the sectors of Houston the church generally serves, the team will prepare their report for the Board. It is hoped this will be completed by mid-November.

November Share-the-Plate *Houston County Drug Court Foundation*

The Drug Court Foundation is one of Emerson's greatest achievements. We started and ran it for several years as the sole board members. The need? Commissioner's Court had set up the Harris County Drug Court but provided no funding for treatment. So Emersonians swung into the breach and 81 of us contributed the initial funding for the two-year program of treatment for each participating non-violent drug offender. (See plaque in Westwood Hall.) The result: 585 graduates over the years, with a 15% recidivism rate compared to jailed offenders who have a 75% recidivism rate after one year. They also provided funding for a highly successful training for Recovery Coaches.

Emerson Church Gets New Emerson Award For STAR Support

Two banquet tables of Emersonians gathered Oct. 11 at the Junior League in Houston for the annual STAR Luncheon (Success Through Addiction Recovery) of the Harris County Drug Court Foundation (HCDCF). STAR is a voluntary program for non-violent drug dependent offenders in the revolving door of the criminal justice system who want

Meet Emerson's 2018 Members!

Bill Brown



Bill is retired from the oil & gas industry. He enjoys bicycling, reading, traveling, attending movies, theatre and Astros baseball games.

Elizabeth Kantor



Elizabeth "Liz" is a teacher and enjoys reading, movies and hanging out with friends. Fun fact: She has seen the musical Hamilton 5 times! Go Liz!

Peter Minh Tran



Peter has an interest in history, philosophy, technology, startups and more. Interesting fact: He is a chess player and likes to talk "meow" with stray cats. Meowcolme to Emerson!

Mary Cochran



Mary joined Emerson this September after finding an immediate connection to the church on her first visit! Thank you Mary for being part of our beloved community. Welcome to Emerson!

Suzan Miles



Suzan, a retired ethics & compliance manager at Shell Oil Co., has many hobbies! Some include entertaining/socializing, cooking, yoga, performing arts and volunteering. Interesting fact: She is a gold medal snow ski racer and had been an avid sky diver!

Patricia Withers



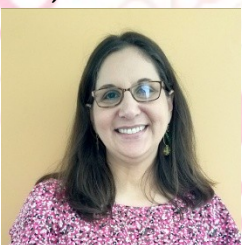
Patricia "Patti" is no strange face! Patti is a recently retired UU Director of Religious Education at Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church. She will now join her husband Ben in the pews! We are so happy to have her at Emerson. Welcome!

Steve Elmer



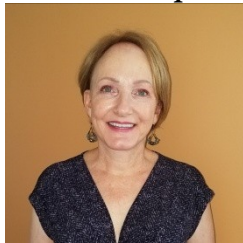
Steve joined back in April and we are so thankful to have him here at Emerson.

Alejandra Posada



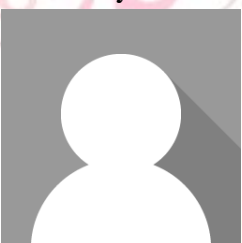
Alejandra was seeking a compassionate community oriented towards social justice and found us! Interesting fact: She spent a year living in an intentional community called Koinonia on a pecan farm in rural southwest Georgia.

Carrie Gillespie



Carrie is a retired engineer and likes hiking, travel, reading and spending time with friends. She is on a quest to visit 100 countries and is up to 80!

Kimberly Tabor



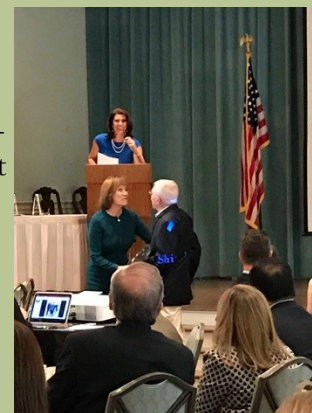
Kimberly had been visiting Emerson since last year and joined the Emerson family in July. Welcome Kimberly! We are lucky to have you!

to change their lives. STAR works with these offenders through voluntary rehabilitation to re-enter society.

At the luncheon, Gabe Gelb accepted the first *Emerson Community Partnership Award*. In 2003, the HCDCF was formed, initially funded through the faithful efforts of Emerson Church, notably the



Gelbs and others. (See the plaque at the Westwood Hall entry honoring the many financial angels from this church.) Our church's effort enlisted the support of other faith-based and community organizations for STAR. This was the first year of the Emerson Award, given to our church "whose members not only brought their vision to fruition through action, (but) continued to stay involved through volunteer and fundraising support." We look forward to other organizations getting the honor named for us in future years.





Becky Edmiston-Lange, Senior Minister
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**Daylight-Saving Time Ends! Remember to set your clocks back one hour
before going to bed the night of November 3rd!**

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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, November 13**

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