

emerson  UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST church

the emersonian

**NO FOOTBALL-FIELD-SIZED MUMS. NO CREPE-WRAPPED GOAL POSTS.
NO MARCHING BANDS**



Join us **Sunday, September 9**, as we launch a new church year with a Celebration of Emerson Spirit that invites you to



2018's homecoming festivities have been planned just for you by an energetic task force of Emersonians: Carol Trout, Lisa Estill, Ann May and Kent Scott, leadership team; and Katherine Hodge, Robert Hodge, Liz Kantor, Deborah Landis, Robin McElfresh, David Roessler, Creig Romero, Kris Taylor, Jane Zachritz-Holt and Mark Zachritz-Holt.







The committee would also like to extend a special thanks to Katy Carpmann; Jacqui Hunt and Robin McElfresh for artwork; and Ale Gonzalez and Karen Van Horn of the Emerson office staff.



Come Grow with Us
Come Serve with Us
Come Gather with Us
Come Share the Spirit with Us

And while you're at it... bring a friend!

We'll start our kick-off during the service and continue afterward in Westwood Hall with

-  food — pizza, finger foods and frozen treats
-  fellowship and music
-  a one-stop opportunity to learn about and get involved in the marvelous variety of Emerson activities tailored to meet YOUR interests and needs
-  activities for all ages, including a make-a-chalice to take home
-  childcare for babies and toddlers
-  fun door prizes

Want to provide munchies or help with other activities? Go to <https://tinyurl.com/ybrvc9d4> or sign up in The Gathering Place on September 2.

Fall Campus Cleanup



**Saturday, September 22
9:00 a.m. through noon.**

Choose outside trimming and watering or inside cleaning cabinets and cupboards.

We have the tools!

Snacks and drinks will be provided. Many hands make light work!

Autumnal Equinox Celebration

Saturday, September 22.

Potluck supper **6:30 p.m.** in Westwood Hall.

Outdoor service at **7:30 p.m.**

This is an informal, participatory service. You're invited to bring music or a reading about fall or



the changing seasons.

Questions? Contact Ann or Robin at ministryforearth@emersonhouston.org.

Open to all ages.

Revels

When I last wrote for this column, it was not long before I attended General Assembly (GA), the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. GA was in Kansas City this year. It was the second GA I've attended since Mark's death and I wasn't really prepared for how much grief I experienced while there. But, we attended GA together over 28 years, so it isn't surprising that GA would bring back a flood of memories associated with Mark. In addition, I kept running into folks who would ask after him – "Where's Mark?" or "How is Mark?", because they had either forgotten his death or never learned of it. And then I would have to tell the story yet again, experience their shock and grief and, of course, re-experience some of my own.

Interestingly, while we at Emerson are involved in our own "discernment process" about the future of this congregation, the UUA is itself going through a process of discernment regarding how to truly be an Anti-Racial, Anti-Oppressive, Multicultural institution while wrestling with declining membership and concerns about what form "church" will take in the years ahead. It is a challenging time for most denominations in America. Nonetheless, it was good to be there in KC, to be part of the conversation and to see beloved colleagues.

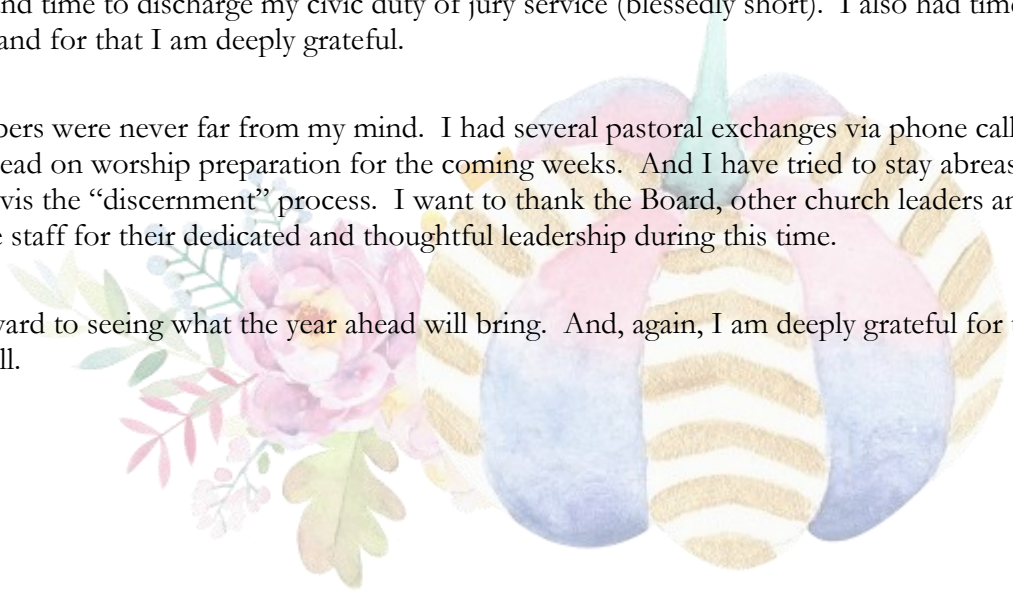
In the time since GA I have been on vacation and study leave. I have been blessed by visits with my brother and friends, some time spent at the beach and in the mountains, time to attend to deferred household maintenance items (some unanticipated!), and time to discharge my civic duty of jury service (blessedly short). I also had time to reflect, to read, to "just be" - and for that I am deeply grateful.

The church and church members were never far from my mind. I had several pastoral exchanges via phone call, email or text. I got a jump ahead on worship preparation for the coming weeks. And I have tried to stay abreast of developments at church via the "discernment" process. I want to thank the Board, other church leaders and volunteers, and the rest of the staff for their dedicated and thoughtful leadership during this time.

It's good to back. I look forward to seeing what the year ahead will bring. And, again, I am deeply grateful for the time away. Blessings to you all.

In faith and affection,


Senior Minister



Remembering Our Story in the History Wall

Later this month we'll experience the History Wall, when we gather for three-to-four Sundays after worship at 12:30 p.m. (Sept. 30 and Oct. 7-21) to recall, or perhaps hear for the first time, the journey of Emerson Church. We do this to celebrate the church's heritage, to explore its culture, and to get perspective on our forebears, our current ministry, and our future. Watch for more information later this month. This is the next step of our ongoing discernment process.

Discernment noun *dis cern ment \ di-'sərn-mənt *
a process of study, inquiry, and reflection on the future of
our congregation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.
Visioning
July – Aug.
To create vision and context for
other discernment processes | 3.
Staff Assessment
Sept. – Nov.
To provide strategic information
on staffing needs |
| 2.
History Wall
Sept. – Oct.
To remember heritage and un-
derstand church culture | 4.
Update Governance
Ongoing
To empower effective working
relationships |



Sunday Morning Schedule



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.

September 2—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange Harvey: A Year of Faith and Fortitude, of Loss and Love

A year ago on this Sunday we came together for the first time after Hurricane Harvey. Much has transpired during the past year but recovery is far from complete. We will share stories of grief and hope, light candles of memory and resolve, and join with other congregations who are holding similar observances in an interfaith meditation. Everyone is invited to participate. We were all affected by Harvey in one way or another.

September 9—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange Have We Got a Story to Tell!!

It's HOMECOMING SUNDAY! And there will be all kinds of excitement as we come together yet again to renew the bonds of affection that bind us as one and to rededicate ourselves to the principles of our faith. There will be a great story for children of all ages, the choir will return from its summer hiatus, a glorious after-church event is planned, and we will rejoice in one another's presence indeed!

September 16—Rev. Samuel Schaal A Time for Turning

This week is Yom Kippur in the Jewish tradition, the holiest time of the year. It is a time of repentance and atonement. How might we open ourselves to humility and forgiveness?

September 23—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange Abortion May Be the Battle, But Women's Rights Are the War

The struggle for Reproductive Justice is not just about the right to access a safe and legal abortion, or even the right to access safe and effective contraception and health care. There's a larger issue at play - the moral, political and spiritual equality of women - period!

September 30—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange Unitarian Universalist Optics

The lenses through which we view the world have a profound impact on our living. What is the lens through which Unitarian Universalism views the world and our current situation? What difference does that lens make?

Adult Religious Education

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

September 2—Women InSpirit, Inc., a Christian ministry that empowers girls and single mothers globally through education and business opportunities. Come hear about this vibrant ministry and learn how you might support and participate.

September 7—UU Spiritual Journeys – Selected Emersonians share their rich and varied spiritual journeys.

September 16—God is Not Perfect and Needs Humanity: Lessons from Ancient Israel, Lurianic Kabbalism and Hegel with Mike Condit – In most Western religions, 'God' is pictured as perfect and also in a static

or immutable state. How does that fit with the idea of a providential God who watches over us, answers prayers, and ultimately judges us? There have been examples in Western religious and philosophical thought that have seen 'God' differently - as a developing entity who depends upon humanity. We will examine three examples of such thinking.

September 23—The Reproductive Justice Congregation with Sonja Miller

September 30—Congregational Growth in Unitarian Universalism – Is growth only about numbers? If not, by what standard might we measure our growth?

Wheel of Life



We are grateful for those on the journey of healing. **Molly Hammer** is home recovering from her mid-August surgery. **Holly Gilliland** continues recovery

from her earlier surgery.

Trina Stanfield's mother passed away on August 10. Trina said her mother was ready, passing "with three quiet breaths."

Our hearts and prayers are with longtime member **Susanna Painter** who is in declining health.

We are thinking of **Craig and Cynthia Miller** as they help Craig's dad adjust to living in a care facility.

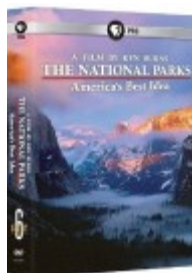
Outside of Emerson

Awakening the Spirit

Sunday, September 9, at 3 p.m.

at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
5308 Buffalo Speedway.

The Interfaith Environmental Network of Houston invites you to explore spirituality in nature with those of other faiths using a segment from Ken Burns' *The National Parks – America's Best Idea*, as a source of inspiration. The National Parks inspire us with their grandeur and at the same time draw us into an intimate relationship with the natural world. National Parks also afford us the time and space to consider our relationship with nature and how our individual and collective actions have a decided impact on these complex, wondrous ecosystems that we share. Please join us in considering nature and spirituality through the lens of the national parks! Please [register](#) for planning purposes.



Sign Up!

Sign up for a Cuban music lecture!

Friday, September 7, at 8 p.m. in Room 205/206

A lecture on the Origins and Development of Cuban Music, with slides and music, by noted professor of music Dr. Arthur Gottschalk of Rice University, approximately 60-90 minutes including Q&A. Dr. Gottschalk has visited, toured, and worked in Cuba during seven trips, most recently working at famed Abdala Studios in Havana this past January. \$25 per person. To register, [please e-mail the church office](#).



Circle Dinners

The first potluck Circle Dinner will be on **Saturday, September 15, 2018**. If you are already part of this fantastic group, a host will be contacting you soon. If you are new to Emerson and would like to be part of the group, e-mail [Mary Ann Rusk](#).

Hosts are still needed for dinners on November 17, 2018, January 19, 2019, March 16, 2019 and May 18, 2019.

Mapping the past, present, & future of beer



TCU Geography professor, and avid homebrewer, Sean Crotty, will guide you on an educational and sensory exploration of the geography of beer. This lecture will take place on **Saturday, September 22**, in Westwood Hall from **4-5:30 p.m.** \$20 per person includes beer tastings. (Must be 21 or over to taste). All proceeds go to support

Emerson UU Church. Contact [Barbara Crotty](#) to reserve tickets. Payment will be collected at the event.

ESL Volunteering Opportunities!

ESL Classes are underway! Registration is closed for new students, but we can still make use of willing volunteers! If you want to become involved in this amazing and rewarding outreach program, e-mail [Matt Griffes](#) or call the church office at 713-782-8250.

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 - Emerson's 2018 Fall Semester English classes begin **Saturday, September 8, from 1-4 p.m.** The Tuesday and Thursday classes begin **September 11 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Registration is now closed but volunteer positions are still available! *See pg. 4*

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 - 9:00 to 9:50 a.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.

Book Clubs



Women's
Wednesday, September 19, 7:30 p.m. in the Library.
Book: *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah
Contact: [Jill Rose](#)



Daytime
Thursday, September 20, 10 a.m. in the Library.
Book: *Piano Girl* by Robin Meloy Goldsby
Contact: [Dave Bergt](#)



Men's
Monday, September 17, 6:30 p.m. at La Madeleine (10001 Westheimer)
Book: *Munich*, a novel by Robert Harris
Contact: [Gabe Gelb](#)

The Reproductive Justice Congregation Initiative – Last Call!

For the past two years, I have sought a congregational vote on this initiative to have my church be the first in Houston to do so. We are here. **Sunday, September 23rd**, after the service, in the Sanctuary. We have held meetings, discussion, polled the members, and held question and answer sessions. The initiative says the following:

- We respect and trust women; (We do!)
- We believe that access to affordable health care, including reproductive health services, is a moral and social good. (We do!) (We do not take a position on how to make such care accessible and affordable.)
- We will not stigmatize anyone for any reproductive healthcare choices made, including abortion. (We do not now, nor will we in the future!)

If approved, our congregation will decide what level of participation we will pursue as it relates to reproductive health can justice.

1. We will publically proclaim the above principles.
2. We will offer accurate educational offerings to our members and the greater community on topics related to reproductive health.
3. We will participate in advocacy and public witness in support of reproductive justice.

We have done, are doing, and will continue to do these things because this is who we are.

Sonja Miller of Just Texas will present at the Adult Religious Education session on September 23rd. Please attend this session and cast your vote on this important initiative.

Kenny Jones



Transitional Thoughts

Welcome, Sojourner!

It is the season of homecoming at church. Worship attendance and program participation increase as we gather again in fuller force.

Maybe this isn't the only homecoming going on.

As a transitional minister serving congregations during shorter pastorates, I have the luxury of experiencing different communities and church cultures. What I find notable about Houston is its international character. In common places out in the community, I hear people speaking languages I can't understand. I notice distinctive native dress. The blend of cultures is remarkable and rich.

I think we don't fully appreciate either the city's international flavor, or the success of one of our ministries with the immigrant population. Our English as a Second Language (ESL) program conducts classes during the fall and spring that serves people from all over the world—in last spring's class there were students from more than 50 countries. If you've been in the building on a Saturday afternoon, or Tuesday and Thursday evenings, you've seen the halls full of people speaking various languages.

It's not uncommon for an occasional ESL student to be struck by the wall sculpture in The Gathering Place of the world's religious symbols with our flaming chalice. Most have never seen a church that actually honors all these diverse traditions (with perhaps one of the symbols reflective of their native religion). I'm told some students take a cell phone picture to send back home.



It has caused me to think about the mission of our faith. We have a remarkable ministry serving the immigrant population of Houston, reflective of the global character of our faith. It is one of the largest, most successful social service ministries I've ever seen in a church.

In this season of homecoming, let's also celebrate the homecoming we give the international sojourner—one who may be with us only a short time, yet feel a warm, supportive welcome here that touches their lives for years to come. This is ministry. Welcome home.



Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transitional Assistant Minister

September Share-the-Plate

Emerson's ESL Program

Please consider a generous contribution to Emerson's ESL Program when the offering plate is passed to you in September. Free English classes will be provided to immigrants at the church by volunteers three days a week. Your donations will help pay for supplies, student books, and childcare workers who, along with volunteers, help take care of our students' children while they attend classes.

See page 4 for ESL volunteer opportunities!

Coming Right Up!

Pre-Rally "Houston Strong for Climate" Meetup

Moving toward climate protection through music and art - **Tuesday, September 4, at 6:30 p.m.** in Westwood Hall. In preparation for the September 8 "[Houston Strong For Climate](#)" rally at Emancipation Park (10 a.m.), Citizens' Climate Lobby and Emerson's Ministry for Earth are sponsoring this inspirational event. We will explore moving toward climate protection through a beautiful music video and hear insights from guest speaker, [Tim Mock](#). Under [Dori Wolfe's](#) guidance, we will then make a banner for the "Houston Strong For Climate" rally.

Save-the-Date!

Blessing of the Animals— Saturday, October 6

Bring your animals (real and toy) to be blessed in an outdoor ceremony on the north lawn of the church! You can also bring donations of supplies needed to benefit Corridor Rescue's life-saving work with animals.



Watch for emerging details! For more information, contact [Robin McElfresh](#) or [Rev. Sam](#).

Religious Education

Do you have a chalice at home? A special candle you can light in times of celebration, sorrow, when you need some hope or focus? To say grace whenever you can all sit down for a meal*?

As part of our **Homecoming Sunday September 9th**, we'll have a table set out where Emersonians of all ages can create a chalice to take home for their table. And yes, we'll have graces, prayers, and readings for using it throughout the week!

Throughout the year we'll hold up ways for all ages to nurture our spirits and practice our values, on Sundays and beyond.

Sunday School begins **September 16th** – check out curricula and details at http://emersonhouston.org/youth_schedule. Once again our program will be a mix of age-specific classes and wider groupings coming together to worship and serve. Keep your eyes open for a class-sponsored coffee hour table later this month.

Saturday, September 22nd we've got campus cleanup - productive fun for all ages as we tackle yardwork, fix things, and heaven knows there's always dusting to be done!

Saturday, October 6th bring your pets or stuffed animals for a special Blessing of the Animals event! (See page 6 to learn more.)

See you soon!

Katy Carpman

Director of Religious Education
katy.euuc@gmail.com

*Rockstar hint: It doesn't need to be supper. Breakfast works. So does Thursday night ice cream sundae time.



**Game Nights for
teens and families!
Every 3rd Saturday of
the month from
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Contact Michael Bloom:
mfbloom12@gmail.com**

Gather the Spirit, Harvest the Power

Each year the church assembles a stewardship team to help raise awareness of the spiritual value of generosity and how members can help support Emerson's operations, its many activities and missions with their pledges, time and talent.

Recently, a small group of committed Emersonians chose "*Gather the Spirit, Harvest the Power*" as this year's stewardship campaign theme.

Visiting Stewards will be calling on as many members as possible to learn about their vision for Emerson and discuss how they can make it happen. Serving as a *Visiting Steward* is a great way to establish a deeper relationship with other Emersonians. It's easier than you think, too, especially after the excellent training Michael Bloom will provide.

This is a call for you to join our *Visiting Stewards Program* this year. Please contact Michael at 713-501-7008 (mfbloom12@gmail.com) or Marilyn Rambow at 713-664-4484 (mcrambow@comcast.net).

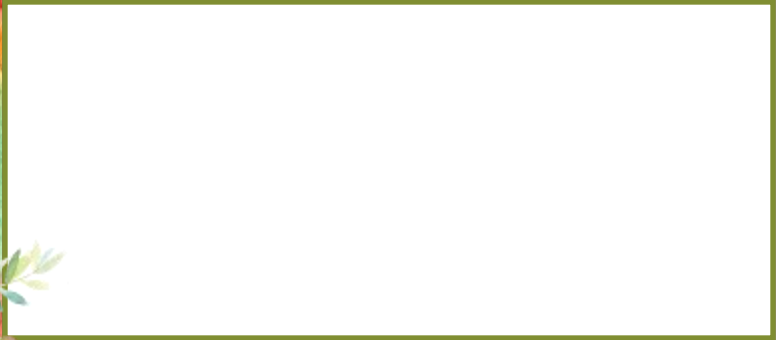


Becky Edmiston-Lange, Senior Minister
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Thank You for Giving—

Your financial donations support our self-sustaining congregation

Make a pledge by e-mailing Karen in the office at karen@emersonhouston.org or call the office at (713) 782-8250 with any questions.

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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, September 18**

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