

# the emersonian

Dear Members and Friends of Emerson,

You are invited to participate in a ground breaking re-imagination of religious education at Emerson. The conversation will begin on Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 1PM. And yes, there will be childcare and snacks.

When Masai greet one another they do not say, "Hello." They ask, "And how are the children?"

So how are the children? And how is our religious education program?

In some ways our program is still analog when it comes to addressing the digital reality of our lives. In our extensive conversations with Katy we have come to the conclusion that the program is not adequately preparing our children and youth for the moral and spiritual issues they will face in the coming years.

Will:

- Environmental stress and resource depletion (particularly water) force us to behave better than human beings prefer?
- International boundaries become increasingly porous so that national identity becomes increasingly tenuous and the movement of refugees become routine?
- The inherent worth and dignity of every person become a quaint idea or a powerful reality?
- Technological advances divide the "haves" from the "have nots" or provide amazing benefits for all people?

The power of fundamentalisms around the world wax – or wane?

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Within fifteen years, we hope to establish a human settlement on Mars. Teams are hard at work to equip them for the journey. How will they live together in tight spaces? What might they encounter in their explorations?

And what of our children and youth here on Earth? How shall we develop and sustain their creativity and grace to prepare them for an increasingly complex future?

Children already in Emerson's nursery have an excellent chance of reaching the twenty-second century! How can our faith community help them to thrive and to take on challenges and opportunities we have yet to imagine?

How might we retool our religious education program for the twenty-first (and twenty-second) century to grow the Unitarian Universalists who play a role in changing the world for the better?

Join the ministers and me for a conversation on **Saturday, March 5, 10 AM to 1 PM in Westwood Hall**. Parents, grandparents, and all who wonder grandly about our shared future--we'll consider the questions above, and start developing a courageous way forward. RSVP to [katy.euuc@gmail.com](mailto:katy.euuc@gmail.com). Childcare and snacks provided.

*By Katy Carpman, Director of Religious Education*



**Living on Mars**

CC James Vaughn

*Our beloved community of faith, reason, and affection welcomes all to grow in mind and spirit as we build a better world.*



tacklehunger.org

SM On January 17th, our children and youth got a little experience in meal planning. They looked through grocery ads and price lists to make a day's menu plan for their family, figured out how much it would cost, and then made adjustments based on what was in their (play money) wallets.

It's good for all of us to learn to budget. But what happens when the wallet and the cupboards are bare?

66,000 people in Southeast Texas are hungry on any given day, and 18% of us struggle with food insecurity—and that percentage is higher for children. The majority of these households have at least one working adult. In our land of plenty, no one should go hungry.

**Join the team on February 7th for SouperBowl of Caring!**

Buy and bring in cans, bags, and boxes of food (No glass and no baby food!)

Admire the CAN-structions teams of children and youth will build during their class time. Vote for your favorites with dollars or checks!

The Houston Food Bank works hard to get the maximum food value out of every donation—every dollar you donate becomes three meals of nutritious groceries. What a great opportunity for each of us to make a difference, as we tackle hunger together!

- Most Valuable Players:**
- Canned tuna or chicken (water pack)
  - Canned stews and pasta/meat, soup
  - Peanut butter
  - Dried beans
  - Cereal, cereal bars, canned fruit
  - Pasta
  - Cash and checks!

**Welcome Our New Members!**



**Geraldine Shawa**



**Allison and David Schwager**



**Kirsten Schachter**

# SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

## Typical Sunday Schedule

9 AM EIO Rehearsal • 9:45 AM Professional Childcare Begins  
10 AM Adult Ed and Kids' Activities • 11 AM Worship • 11:15 AM Kids' Programming

### **February 7**      *Two Visions of the Future: Part 1, The Rise of Theocracy in the Christian Right*

Bill Moyers has noted that people of faith have always sought to have an impact on the important issues in our society. But today it's different. Unwilling to settle for *influence*, an increasing number of leaders in the religious right want *control* of the reins of government reserved for people who will make decisions based solely upon fundamentalist Biblical interpretation.

### **February 14**                      *Will the World Ever Have Enough (Silly) Love Songs?*

A celebration of love in music and word - but not just romantic love - other kinds of love, too.

### **February 21**                                      **Patti Henry, Guest Speaker**

The congregation enjoyed her so much the last time we invited her back.

### **February 28**                      *Two Visions of the Future: Part 2, If It's Heaven You Want, Why Wait?*

What we imagine about the future is almost wholly determined by our views of the present. So, those who are disturbed/frightened/angry now see a very grim future which can only be avoided with stupendous efforts. On the other hand, if you fan the feathers of hope today, the future will unfold in all its beauty. So which do you want: The nightmare of hell or the dream of heaven?

## 10 AM Adult Religious Education

**Surviving Parenthood Discussion Group**—Starting February 7 at 10 AM,  
Room 209 Facilitator: Amy Harris

Let's get together and discuss how we might raise our kids to be thoughtful, compassionate adults. Let's get together and discuss how hard it is to be thoughtful, compassionate adults when raising kids is so darn hard! Join us in an open discussion on the topic of parenting-- let's brainstorm, let's commiserate, let's laugh at the hard parts and encourage one another! Both Moms and Dads encouraged to attend.

**Resistance and Transformation: Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Ministry** - February Sundays at 10 AM, Room 205/206 Facilitators: Jane Collins and Kenny Jones

Join us on a justice seeking journey with feet firmly planted in the present, hearts trained on a justice building future while learning from UU forebears such as Theodore Parker and Dorothea Dix. Your input and desires guide the direction of our interactive course. Historical study informs our justice work for the Sake of NOW and Tomorrow!

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**Un-Conversation Discussions:** This group is on hiatus for the month of February.

**Third Sunday Poetry Group:** A casual gathering of those who love poetry. Bring something you have written or a poem you wish you had written. February 21, Room 204

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## Celebrating the Declaration of Religious Freedom and Tolerance

By: Rev Steve Dick



On January 13, 2016, the Hungarian Unitarian Church honoured the 448th anniversary of the Declaration of Religious Freedom and Tolerance, an edict which might be considered as the first legal guarantee of religious freedom in the Christian Europe.

448 years ago, in 1568, on January the 13th, the Diet of Torda (Transylvania) proclaimed: His majesty, our Lord, in what manner he – together with his realm – legislated in the matter of religion at the previous Diets, in the same matter now, in this Diet, reaffirms that in every place the preachers shall preach and explain the Gospel each according to his understanding of it, and if the congregation like it, well. If not, no one shall compel them for their souls would not be satisfied, but they shall be permitted to keep a preacher whose teaching they approve. Therefore none of the superintendents or others shall abuse the preachers, no one shall be reviled for his religion by anyone, according to the previous statutes, and it is not permitted that anyone should

threaten anyone else by imprisonment or by removal from his post for his teaching. For faith is the gift of God and this comes from hearing, which hearing is by the word of God.”

The Hungarian Unitarians celebrated this special day with events in Torda and Kolozsvár. The celebration started in the morning in the Unitarian church of Torda with a worship service lead by Rev. Alpár Solymosi, minister of the Csíkszereda Unitarian congregation.

The service was followed by a visit to the Museum in Torda, which hosts the famous painting by Aladár Körösfői-Kriesch, commemorating the event.

The celebration was continued with an evening worship service in the Unitarian church of Kolozsvár, with István Török, Unitarian minister of Olthévíz and dean of the Háromszék-Felsőfehér district as preacher, followed by greetings from representatives of other denominations and guests. A concert featuring the Pálffy Ákos Choir from Homoródszentpál and the Concordia quartet enhanced the festivities.

The day was closed with a reception at the Unitarian headquarters.

In 2015, the General Assembly of the Hungarian Unitarian Church voted in unanimity to recommend to Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists around the world to join in the proclamation and celebration of January the 13<sup>th</sup> as Day of Religious Freedom.

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## The State of Black Lives Convening

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church is proud to host *The State of Black Lives Convening* where the real possibility exists to make great strides toward positive and effective ACTION on institutional racism in our community and beyond. The dates are Friday, February 12 and Saturday, February 13. If you can't attend, please share with your friends and networks! Also, please consider donating to help cover the expenses of this much needed and valuable event!

Volunteers from Emerson are both welcomed and needed to welcome and help conference attendees navigate our campus.

More information in regard to sessions offered can be found on the Organizer's Facebook page. Please contact Kenny Jones at [uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com](mailto:uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com) or 832-654-1779 for information on how you can help.

## Ministry for Earth– Planning Meeting

On February 28, 9:45 to 10:45 AM in the Library we will plan the coming year's programs. Come at 9:30 for coffee and bagels. We'll meet regularly on 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays. Our Renewable Congregations Program is gaining traction; come learn how you can help.



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**Continued from front page** Each of these and other challenges confront us all with amazing opportunities for substantive progress in the well-being of people and the planet. It could be said that some of our fondest hopes for the future are more likely to come true than they ever have before. But there is a big “if” that goes along with our building that future. Is:

- Our analysis of our circumstances profound enough to move us beyond the stuck places of so many of our moral and political debates?
- Are we and our children knowledgeable enough about the underlying dynamics so that we do not easily fall prey to cynicism and “business as usual?”
- Our confidence in our principles deep enough to sustain us in the face of resistance and setbacks?
- Our view of the “arc of justice” comprehensive enough so that we can instill a hope that sees beyond despair?

How can we prepare our children to navigate what is an unprecedented moral landscape with integrity and grace? How can we empower them to serve as witnesses to and spokespersons for the enduring worth of equality, freedom and justice? Will our children and youth be in a position to take advantage of the potential for progress?

Addressing these questions begins with a conversation with you so that together we can reconfigure the religious education experience at Emerson. We hope to see you on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. Collectively we can answer, “Yes, the children **are** well!” But we also feel it is important to do everything in our power to make sure that, “The children **will be** well!”

Yours in faith and affection,  
Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange

## Recurring February Activities - You Are Invited

**Choir Rehearsal:** Wednesdays, 7-9 PM in the sanctuary. All experience levels welcome, no auditions!  
Contact: Music Director, Adrian Rodriguez, [adrian.euuc@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.euuc@gmail.com).

**Emerson Intergeneration Orchestra:** Sundays, 9-10 AM in Westwood Hall. All musicians and ages welcome. Contact: Orchestra Director, Bill Tackett, [tackett.bill@gmail.com](mailto:tackett.bill@gmail.com).

**Stitchers:** Every Wednesday, 11 AM in Delaney Hall. Come for conversation, if not for craft!

**Women’s Evening Book Group:** Wednesday, February 17, 7:30 PM in the Library. *The Gilded Hour* by Sara Donati. Contact: Jill Rose, [jillorose@gmail.com](mailto:jillorose@gmail.com).

**Sandwiches for SEARCH:** Thursday, February 11, at 10:30 AM in Westwood Hall. Contact: Barbara Hopkins, [bbhopkins@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bbhopkins@sbcglobal.net).

**Men’s Book Group:** Wednesday, February 17, 6:30 PM at Luby’s, 2730 Fondren. The book of the month *The Art Forger* by B.A. Shapiro. Contact: Dave Bergt, [dbergt@comcast.net](mailto:dbergt@comcast.net).

**Daytime Book Group:** Thursday, February 18, 10 AM in the Library. This month’s book is *The Martian*, by Andy Weir. Contact: Dave Bergt, [dbergt@comcast.net](mailto:dbergt@comcast.net).

# February Events and Activities

**CHILI COOK-OFF**



Mark your calendars for one of the **HOTTEST** Events of the year!

**Saturday, February 20!** Tasting from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM in Westwood Hall. Whether you want to Cook & Compete or just want to Eat and Vote for your favorite recipes, you're sure to have a lot of fun and enjoy the music! Chili and dessert entries can be registered for the competition on a downloadable form on the Emerson UU Church website: ([www.emersonhouston.org](http://www.emersonhouston.org)). Completed entry forms are to be returned to the chili cook-off drop box in The Gathering Place at Emerson UU Church. Raffle items include an original painting by artist Noelle Shawa and a unique hand-crafted blue and white vintage Mennonite Quilt. Prizes will be award to the top three traditional chili and vegetarian/vegan chili recipes, and for the top three desserts! **Admission at the door for a charitable donation!**

## Get the FRESHEST ORGANIC VEGGIES here!

Exciting news! Plant It Forward Farms can bring farm fresh produce to Emerson every Sunday. This is not a farmer's market, but delivery to all who purchase a share of the farm. Buying shares provides a living wage for the local refugee farmers and enables them to know how much to plant. It works like this: You buy a share of the farm's products. Every Sunday, the farmers bring coolers to a pick-up site and where you pick up your share. What does it cost? How long is the season? What do I get? See the website <http://plant-it-forward.org/our-produce/farm-share/> In order for the farm to deliver produce to Emerson, we need definite orders for at least 10 shares. Interested? If so, please email Kenny [uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com](mailto:uuv4jhoutx@gmail.com). We'll contact you when we get enough shareholders.



## New Covenant Groups Are Forming—Please Join Us!

New covenant groups are forming at Emerson. If you would like to join a new covenant group or would like to lead a new covenant group please contact Betsy Gelb at [gelb@uh.edu](mailto:gelb@uh.edu) or Deborah Landis at [dlandis570@aol.com](mailto:dlandis570@aol.com). If you want information about what a covenant group is contact Betsy or Deborah and they will be happy to fill you in on how a covenant group can get you connected to a small group at Emerson.

## The Honor of Your Presence is requested at the Wedding of Alex Flores and Derrick Elliott.



Alex and Derrick are new members of the congregation but they have already had an enormous impact. Derrick is a tenor in our choir, lending his wonderful voice to our musical experiences. Alex can frequently be found at the greeter table by the front door, making sure that members and visitors alike are met with a smiling welcome. The wedding is slated for **Saturday, March 12, 2016, at 5:30 PM** at Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church. A potluck reception will follow in Westwood Hall .

Please RSVP to bring your favorite dish or help with set up / clean up at: [www.SignUpGenius.com/go/20F0E49ABA62DA0FC1-wedding](http://www.SignUpGenius.com/go/20F0E49ABA62DA0FC1-wedding)

# Share the Plate

## Emerson's English Class Project

By: Deborah Wotring Landis

Emerson's ESL project is the recipient of February's Share the Plate. This semester started off with a record breaking student attendance of 51 students and 23 children who were cared for by our paid child care workers. Emerson's English Classes are the only classes in the Houston area that we know that provides childcare for their students. Providing childcare allows our students who are responsible for caring for young children to take advantage of learning English. Our marketing efforts included taking flyers translated into Arabic to the Arabic Community Center and Interfaith Ministries Refugee Services, radio ads on a Spanish radio station, newspaper ads in a Spanish news paper, and English, Spanish and Arabic flyers sent to multiple schools near the church.



This is the beginning of our third year to teach English to adults in our community. We have progressed from one class and one level the first semester to three different levels two days a week. We have six full time volunteer teachers, three for our Saturday classes and three for our Thursday night classes. We also have an average of 12 volunteers in each class to assist the teachers, test students, and volunteer in the class rooms. Our mission is to make the world a better place for those in our community.



The Unitarian Universalist Funding Program awarded Emerson's English Classes Project a grant to assist with the 2016 school year; however, we are required to fundraise for matching grant funds. Please give generously in February for Emerson's efforts to change the lives of the immigrants and refugees in our community who need help with language skills to better

their lives and the lives of their children. The English Classes Project's leadership team consists of the following people who can provide you with additional information about the classes and about jumping in to volunteer: Leticia Anderson, Ann May, David May and Deborah Landis who are the volunteer and class coordinators, Norbert Welk, Clara Kosloff, Gerry Shawa, Tina Obut, Norma Atherton, and Elisabeth Lindheim who are our full time volunteer teachers, Dennis Kirby and John Minear are our most consistent class room volunteers. Thanks to all of them for making difference! You can make a difference too. **CONTRIBUTE TO SHARE THE PLATE! Share the mission!**

Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange, Co-Ministers

1900 Bering Drive Houston, TX, 77057

713-782-8250

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## New to UU? Want to Know More?

### PR News

Please send all submissions for the newsletter, E-blast, Order of Service, and website to [pr@emersonhouston.org](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org).

Our Newsletter submission deadline is Tuesday, February 16, by noon. Email submission to [pr@emersonhouston.org](mailto:pr@emersonhouston.org).

**Join Emerson Sunday** - Ready to join? The Membership Committee and Co-Minister Becky welcome you to a conversation about Emerson and to sign the membership book if you desire. Meet in the Library at 12:30 PM.

**Next Class: February 14**

*Child care is provided. Please RSVP with the office at [mary@emersonhouston.org](mailto:mary@emersonhouston.org) at least five days before the event.*

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

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Meetup: [/EmersonSeekers](#)

