

SAN GABRIEL UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

Together we are building beloved community where all are valued.



Newsletter

June 2016

Habitat Task Force

Billye Adams, Green Sanctuary Chair

"Habitat for wildlife is continually shrinking - I can at least provide a way station."

-Peter Coyote

That short quote sums up exactly the purpose of the Habitat Task Force of the Green Sanctuary Committee. We are grateful that we can use this SGUUF campus to support small wildlife. We have just completed installation of a butterfly garden by the Little House. The plants we chose are either host plants, upon which certain butterfly species lay their eggs and which are then eaten by the emerging caterpillars, or nectar plants. Our hope is that the children will be able to watch this cycle develop.

Because this area is for our small children, we also excluded any plants that are toxic or are skin irritants, such as milkweed; plants that have thorns or sharp points; or plants anyway incompatible with safety for children. They are there for everyone's enjoyment too!

We are also pleased to have three non-UU volunteers from the Good Water Master Naturalists in addition to Gail Salazar (a Williamson County Master Gardener), Kay Sanders and myself. Our thanks to Frank Sanders and Jerry Covey for installing the 65-gallon rain barrel that we purchased from Georgetown Conservation Services to support our city's green efforts.



Black Swallowtail caterpillar on a fennel plant growing in the Little House garden.

Intentionally Inclusive

Jennifer VanBuren, Board President

You may hear the term "intentionally inclusive" in our Sunday worship service. What does it mean? My first experience with inclusion was with my oldest son, Owen, who has autism. Ever since he was old enough to go to school, I pushed for inclusion, and I still do today. We sometimes think of inclusion as inviting those in the minority into the mainstream, however, he not only goes out into the regular classroom to work with his non-disabled peers, but he also experiences what they call "push in inclusion" in which non-disabled peers come into his self-contained classroom. Whether he is going to them or they are coming to him, he gets to experience being a part of the neuro-typical population.

This inclusion comes to my mind when thinking about our church community. Inviting people into our church and making sure they feel welcome and valued is one way to promote intentional inclusivity. When we go out into the community we also demonstrate that we are proponents of inclusion. Courageous Conversations, attending the Black History Month Banquet and leading the local chapter of PFLAG are ways we show interest in our community members, no matter their color, gender or sexual orientation.

Our demographic is rapidly changing from a community of mainly retired people to now include young families. How do we welcome this new group of people? We have made it our priority to include members of all ages by providing a top quality religious education program, including family friendly social options and providing childcare for Sunday service as well as other church events.

Members who are advanced in age reach out to younger families, invite them to be a part of the church family. Have you seen the leadership and participation of committees? Young members are turning out to be of

Continued on page 6

Sunday Worship Services

All services are held at our church home, 1322 East University Avenue (Highway 29), in Georgetown.

Service begins at 10:30 a.m.

June 5

How to Believe

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

People often ask UUs what we believe. There are as many answers to that question as there are UUs, because our faith is about our actions, not doctrine. Our communities support us to develop our own faith through direct personal experience. Let's further explore this way of understanding on this first Sunday of June.

After Sunday Service there will be a Monthly Forum on Religious Education. Plan to stay for a half-hour after Coffee and Conversation to visit among ourselves and with Sean Briscoe, our Consulting Director of RE.

June 12

LGBTQ Pride and Understanding

Rev Mark Skrabacz

When we can look at our biases and support each other in examining our own good intentions that often result in harm, we can make a difference. More than 4 years ago San Gabriel studied what it means to be a Welcoming Congregation. What have we done since? What does this mean to us today? What can it mean in a homo-phobic and trans-phobic culture?

June 19

Calling On Fathers

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

Multi-Generational Service

Today we need fathers who demonstrate a whole range of feelings and vulnerabilities, strengths and love. Demonstrations of fatherly love and care is needed now more than ever. Our epidemic of fatherlessness is a call to the development of fathers who are more real, more available and more involved. Plan to join us as we speak to fatherhood on this Father's Day.

This Sunday is our Multi-Generational Service where families are welcome to stay in the Service together. Child care is provided as on all Sundays for our youngest in the Little House.

June 26

For the Sake of the Song: Songwriting as a Spiritual Path

Steve Brooks

Songs and singing feed our spirits, but where do the people who write them find spiritual inspiration? How is songwriting like meditation or prayer? Austin Folksinger and UU Steve Brooks answers these questions and more, while unearthing the hidden link between Oedipus Rex and Mama Tried. He illustrates his ideas with songs by himself and the patron saint of Texas songwriters, Townes Van Zandt.

Austin speaker and folksinger Steve Brooks has appeared at more than 30 UU churches around Texas and beyond. Musically, he's known for writing a song-a-week for Jim Hightower's radio show, and for songs that have been recorded by folk and Americana artists like Slaid Cleaves, Albert & Gage, Russell Crowe and more. A master of words as well as music, he was featured on TV's "I've Got a Secret" as six-time World Pun Champion. You can sample his words and music at www.stevebrooks.net

The Minister's Mind

The Rev. Mark Skrabacz

Find Out for Yourself

Unitarian Universalism doesn't tell you what is false and what is true, but it encourages you to find out for yourself. Our UU culture extols the worth and dignity of individuals. Everybody's different. Human capacity is greatly varied. Plurality of religious expression is encouraged. And there's a great desire to question.

There are many beliefs, formulas, traditions and dogmas about the realities of life. Increasingly in our 21st Century with its growing multi-culturalism, and particularly in our UU congregations, we are exposed to many of these beliefs and practices. Today's question is: How do we receive that to which we are exposed? My experience is that as soon as I receive something from someone else, I have an experience filtered through the life and experience of someone else. Not that the other's experiences aren't helpful, but once I take on these for myself, I am hindered. I am removed from the adventure of learning for myself and of becoming my own unique self.

I have read a lot of Anthony de Mello, the late Jesuit Retreat Master, from whom some of my ideas come. Yet they are filtered and lived through my life. For example, his thoughts reinforce the idea that human language of any kind is insufficient to describe my experience. I may try to communicate the experience in language, music, art, poetry, photography or dance, but in my heart I know that what I have experienced is somewhat incomprehensible to anyone else.

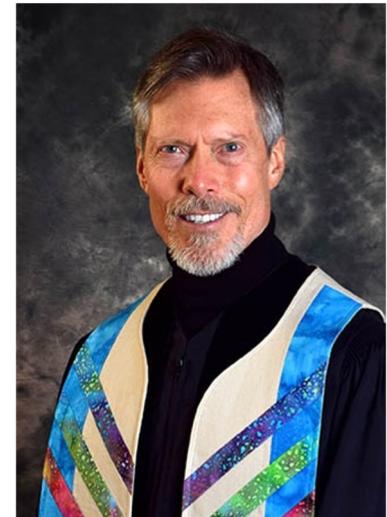
Maybe this is how you feel about god-talk or your own search for truth and ultimacy. It's just too mysterious to put into words. Lao-Tsu knew something of this when he wrote the Tao Te Ching in the sixth century BC. It begins with: "The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth."

Mmmmm...

I caution you about looking at reality in selective terms or through other's filters for that is not reality, but rather selective terms and filtered views. Is there any way to know that what you are experiencing is reality? Here is one sign. What you perceive does not fit into any formula, whether yours or another's. It simply cannot completely be put into words.

My hope is for you to find your own way, because in doing so, transformation will occur. In finding your own way, you will feel the freedom and confidence of knowing that only your direct experience will work for you. And every day will be a new experience and every single thing in Life will be your teacher. Dare to look at everything in your life without fear or formula and you will find out for yourself.

With respect,
Rev. Mark



Rev. Skrabacz received his Master of Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley. He is an ordained UU minister, serves as a Trustee of UBarU Retreat & Conference Center, and the Texas UU Justice Ministry and as facilitator of the PFLAG Austin monthly meeting in Georgetown.

Minister's Office Hours

Rev. Mark is available for pastoral care and counseling by appointment on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

To set up a visit, please call or text his cell 830-928-3722, or email marksrbacz@hotmail.com

He is always available for any emergency.

Adult RE in June

June 5th & 19th

Rev. Mark will offer a one-hour class on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in June, from 9:00-10:00 a.m., in the Fellowship House. Child Care will be provided. Join Rev. Mark for a series of classes designed to take interested persons into a deeper understanding of UU faith development and personal spiritual practices. Child Care will be available in the Little House.

Life of the Congregation

Men's Breakfast

On the **1st and 3rd Thursdays, June 2nd & 16th, at 8:00 a.m.**, men from the congregation meet at the IHOP in the River Shopping Center facing IH-35.

All members and friends are welcome. Contact: Frank Sanders, fcsanders@suddenlink.net or, 512-864-7385.

Ladies Luncheon

The SGUUF Ladies Luncheon will be on **Thursday, June 16th, 11:45 a.m.** at the home of Jane Owens, 114 Sandpiper in Sun City. Please bring your own lunch. Our topic is *Round Table - What's Up With You?*, a time to get to know each other better. All are welcome!

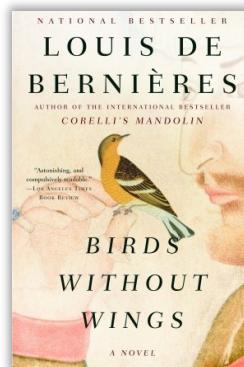
Please RSVP to Jane Owens at sjaneowens@gmail.com or call 512-864-3971 so she can plan accordingly .

Women's Book Club

The Women's Afternoon Book Club meets on the **1st Thursday** of the month from **2:00-4:00 p.m.** at the homes of members.

On **June 2nd** we will be meeting at the home of Lynn Ellis who will lead our discussion of *Birds Without Wings* by Louis De Berniers .

If you enjoy reading and discussing a wide variety of books, consider joining this group -- contact Arlene Zimbelman, at 512-869-6202 or arlene@zimbelman.com.



RIDGE

RIDGE meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, from **7:00-9:00 p.m.** If you plan to attend, please contact Larry at 512-864-2874 or klwalker@suddenlink.net.

Men's Discussion Group

A need has been felt by several of the UU men to provide a time and place where we can get together to discuss issues at greater length and depth than is available in current UU venues. The topics for discussion are varied (eclectic) ranging from world issues to local matters. We are meeting at **8:30 a.m.**, on the **2nd and 4th Saturdays, June 11th and 25th** this month, in the Fellowship House. If you are interested drag yourself out of bed Saturday morning and come on over. I think you will find sharing your thoughts with your UU Fellowship colleagues worth the time. Contact: Larry McCormick, mccor@suddenlink.net.



Dining Out

Wednesday, June 8, 5:30 p.m.
Wolf Ranch Shopping Center
1019 W. University Ave. Suite 1025
Georgetown, Texas 78628

Dining Out Part Deux?

Would you be interested in an additional Dining Out at a later hour? Maybe on a Thursday evening, say 7:00 p.m.? We will have sign-up sheets at the Welcome Table for the next few weeks that will include some suggested dates. Let us know if you are interested! When we have a consensus we will publish it in the July/August newsletter.

3rd Annual Ramadan Fast-Breaking Dinner



**Thursday, June 9, at 7:30 p.m., in
the Sanctuary at SGUUF**

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. It involves fasting and self control for the daylight hours throughout the blessed ninth month of the Islamic calendar. You are cordially invited to share this traditional meal of Iftar to break the daylight fast and participate in dialogue with our Muslim neighbors! For a third year our San Gabriel Fellowship will join with the Muslim Community of the Turkish Raindrop Center to share this evening meal, on **Thursday, June 9th, at 7:30 p.m.**, at our Church. The Muslim Community will bring all the food and dozens of their member families. All ages are invited! The meal will be served at sunset, 8:30 p.m., so, if needed, plan to eat a snack before arriving. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays so we can know how many to plan for!



Jerry Covey and Frank Sanders install our new rain barrel on the corner of the Sanctuary building. The water collected will be used to irrigate the new flower bed.



DRUMMING FOR SOLSTICE

Sunday, June 19 (not Saturday as previously!)

6:00 -8:00 p.m.

Hosted by John & Diane Smith and others from Sun City, in the Legacy Pavilion at Sun City, 200 Del Webb Blvd, Georgetown TX

They have some solstice type rituals in mind so bring your Drums, Rattles and Enjoy! Bring your beverage of choice.

Contact JK Khalsa if questions 512-921-9899

July & August there will be No Drum Circle officially.

JK Khalsa has a contact list of drummers - if there is a mid-summer gathering she will let folks know, otherwise stand by for September - possibly 9/17/16 date and location to be confirmed yet.

Our Meditation Circle meets every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. Whether you are a beginner or long time meditator, curious or experienced, you will find a warm welcome and generous practice space in our Sanctuary every Sunday. The Circle is facilitated.

It is becoming a truly Inter-Spiritual activity.

For information, please contact Rev. Mark at 830-928-3722 or markskrabacz@hotmail.com.



PFLAG Support Meeting

Monday, June 27th, 6:45 - 8:30 p.m.

For June only, meeting will be held at San Gabriel UU Fellowship, 1322 E University, Georgetown

As a community outreach project of our SGUUF Welcoming Congregation, join with facilitator Rev. Mark Skrabacz, members of San Gabriel and others in our wider Community to share our lives, discuss education and advocacy, and offer support to LGBTQ persons, families and friends. Throughout 2016, families of and members of our local transgender community have regularly attended. Please come greet and meet these sisters and brothers. For further information contact Rev. Mark markskrabacz@hotmail.com, land 512-819-1608, cell 830-928-3722

Georgetown Tara Circle



June 11, 3:30-4:30

In the Sanctuary @ SGUUF

Contact Susan Rogers,
sjrogers2004@yahoo.com

Inclusivity, continued from page 1

service to the community, they are made to feel valued and cherished. Do you find yourself inviting members of different age groups into your circle? Do you find yourself including yourself into their circles? Both forms of inclusion are important. Our congregation, through outreach and internal programs, sends a clear message that we do indeed practice what we "preach." All are welcome.

My son, Owen, is not your typical church-goer. However, he feels welcome and valued. He is a great judge of character; he can tell when he is wanted and appreciated, and that is how he feels at church. On Friday night, he is already chanting, "Time for church!" Last week, he was singing the hymn particularly loudly (he has many hymns partially memorized.) Instead of glares and stares, his participation was welcomed with grins and giggles. His enthusiasm at the snack table is met with a friendly smile and helpful hand. This speaks volumes to our claim to be "intentionally inclusive."

Inclusion goes both ways. We invite all to join us in our many activities, but we also have the courage and curiosity to step out of our own comfort zone and find ourselves in the position of being the minority, a part of those who are included. Both ways are important and I encourage you to keep on the path of intentional inclusion!



By request, Martha House has provided the reading she used during her Mother's Day service on May 8th:

The Wide Spectrum of Mothering

by Amy Young

To those who gave birth this year to their first child—we celebrate with you

To those who lost a child this year—we mourn with you

To those who are in the trenches with little ones every day and wear the badge of food stain—we appreciate you

To those who experienced loss through miscarriage, failed adoptions, or running away—we mourn with you

To those who walk the hard path of infertility, fraught with pokes, prods, tears, and disappointment—we walk with you. Forgive us when we say foolish things. We don't mean to make this harder than it is

To those who are foster moms, mentor moms, and spiritual moms—we need you

To those who have warm and close relationships with your children—we celebrate with you

To those who have disappointment, heart ache, and distance with your children—we sit with you

To those who lost their mothers this year—we grieve with you

To those who experienced abuse at the hands of your own mother—we acknowledge your experience

To those who lived through driving tests, medical tests, and the overall testing of motherhood—we are better for having you in our midst

To those who have aborted children—we remember them and you on this day

To those who are single and long to be married and mothering your own children—we mourn that life has not turned out the way you longed for it to be

To those who stepparent—we walk with you on these complex paths

To those who envisioned lavishing love on grandchildren, yet that dream is not to be—we grieve with you

To those who will have emptier nests in the upcoming year—we grieve and rejoice with you

To those who placed children up for adoption—we commend you for your selflessness and remember how you hold that child in your heart

And to those who are pregnant with new life, both expected and surprising—we anticipate with you

This Mother's Day, we walk with you. Mothering is not for the faint of heart and we have real warriors in our midst. We remember you.

Source: [The Messy Middle: where grace and truth reside](http://themessymiddle.com) (blog)



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

June 22-26, Columbus, Ohio

The theme for GA 2016 will be **Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect**. The faith world is increasingly multifaith. People are crossing borders of religion and spiritual practice to create wholeness in their lives individually and collectively. The labels—Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, theist and non-theist—no longer define who or what we love, or how spirit moves in our lives. General Assembly 2016 in Columbus Ohio will assemble leaders and communities of many faiths to worship together, learn from one another, and create a new vision of faith that no longer divides us, but connects us to an interdependent future that works for all.

For more information about registration, including off-site participation, go to www.uua.org/ga and www.uua.org/ga/off-site.

Our Principles



We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- 1st Principle:** The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2nd Principle:** Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- 3rd Principle:** Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4th Principle:** A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- 5th Principle:** The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- 6th Principle:** The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- 7th Principle:** Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Deadline for submissions to the Monthly Newsletter is generally the 25th of the month. Items for publication in the Monthly Newsletter should be sent to newsletter editor, Toya McClurkan, toya.mcclurkan@gmail.com.

2016 Leadership

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President: Jennifer VanBuren
jkvanburen@gmail.com

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Secretary: Michele O'Donnell
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Treasurer: Martha House
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STAFF:

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Consulting Director of Religious Education:
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Choir Director: Susan Meitz
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Facilities: Keith Hoaglund
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Social Justice: Rachael Jonrowe
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Past President: Keith Hutchinson
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Green Sanctuary: Billye Adams
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Pat Kessler
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Membership: Roger Davis
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Religious Education Co-Chairs:
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Dorothy Light
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Social Co-Chairs:

Susan Snelson
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Allison McKee
marketing@georgetownchamber.org

Stewardship: Frank Sanders
fcsanders@suddenlink.net

Sunday Services: Mary Abbey
maryabbey@gmail.com

General Email: sguufellowship@gmail.com



June 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>To reserve a meeting room on the SGUUF campus, please contact Toya McClurkan, at toya.mcclurkan@gmail.com. Available spaces include the Sanctuary (S), Meeting Room (MR), and Fellowship House (FH).</i>						
29	30	31	1	2 8am Men's Breakfast (IHOP) 2pm Afternoon Book Club	3	4
5 9am Adult RE(FH) 10:30am Worship Service 2pm Meditation	6	7	8 5:30pm Dining Out 	9 7pm RIDGE 7:30pm Ramadan Iftar Dinner (S) 	10	11 8:30am Men's Discussion Grp (FH) 1pm SGUUF Board Meeting (FH) 3:30pm Tara Cir(S)
12 10:30am Worship Service 2pm Meditation	13	14	15	16 8am Men's Breakfast (IHOP) 11:45am Ladies Luncheon	17	18
19 9am Adult RE(FH) 10:30am Worship Service 2pm Meditation 6pm TEA & DRUM CIRCLE @ Sun City	20	21	22	23 7pm RIDGE	24	25 8:30am Men's Discussion Group
UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, COLUMBUS, OHIO						
26 10:30am Worship Service 2pm Meditation	27 6:45pm PFLAG @ Independent Bank	28	29	30	2	3
UUA GA						