

# SAN GABRIEL UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

*Together we are building beloved community where all are valued.*



Newsletter

May 2016

## Covenant

*Jennifer Van Buren, Board President*

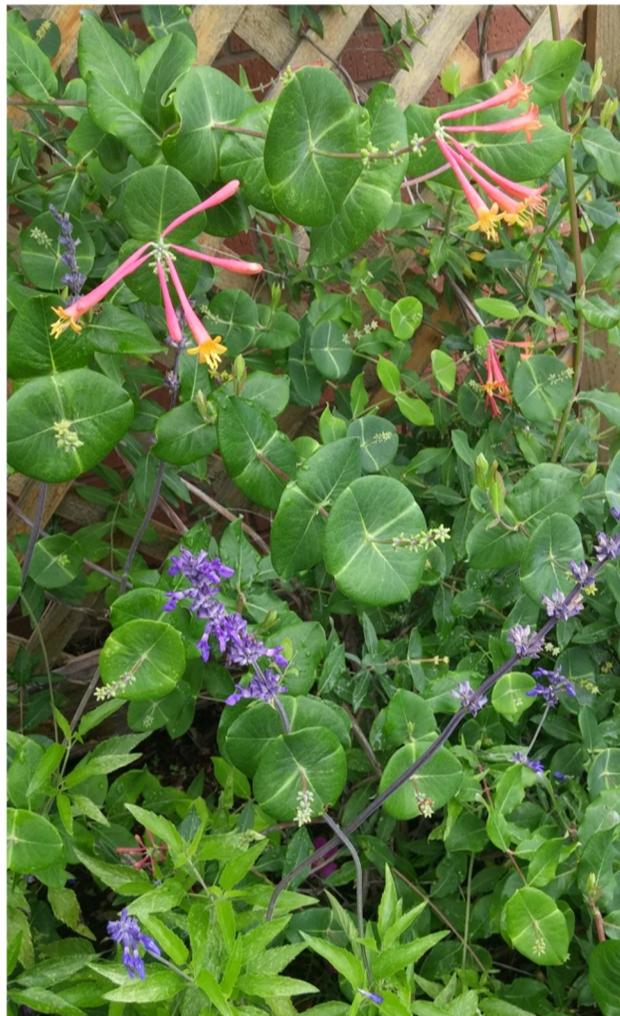
**D**id you know that the children and youth of our congregation have covenants with each other? They created these promises together. These are not rules sent down from above. The teachers did not create these. The children did. Their community did.

We are in covenant with Mark, and he with us. The board and the Committee on Ministry have covenants with each other as do other groups. These are not rules. They are not meant to get us in trouble. They are vows we make so that we and our fellows can feel safe, valued and cherished. If one of us is out of covenant, we are gently brought back into covenant by our fellow congregants.

Over a year ago, under the guidance of the COM, we gathered together to write a covenant. We held large and small group task forces. We gathered ideas and suggestions from all who wished to share. A small committee was formed to pull these promises together into a written covenant. I would like to read to you the finalized document. Please read and think, “Is this how I want to be treated? Is this how I would like to treat my fellow congregants? Is this how I want to be in relationship with my community?”

### SGUUF Covenant

*As members of our beloved community, we agree to act together in loving kindness to promote justice, equity and compassion. When together we will look for good will and good intentions, practice patience and try to seek first to understand, then be understood. By being generous in time, talent and treasure, we promise to work together in support of our mission. We will welcome the diversity among us with genuine curiosity and empathy, accepting and respecting the*



*difference among us. We commit to resolve difference by speaking directly to each other or through mediation and will work toward forgiveness when we fall short of expectations. Moving forward, we will embrace change and celebrate the success of our community.*

You may recognize these words from the many joining ceremonies over the past half a year. We read in unison these promises we make toward each other as a beloved community.



# 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.

**May 1**

## *The Practice of Mindfulness*

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

Jon Kabat-Zinn, pioneer in Mindfulness Stress Reduction at Boston's University of Massachusetts Medical School: "A working definition of mindfulness is: the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding experience moment by moment." Today let us explore the qualities of awareness that can be developed through simple practices of mindfulness.

**May 8**

## *What Does It Mean To Be a Mother?*

Martha House

May is well known for the celebration of Mother's Day, but being a mother is much more than giving birth to a child. What defines a mother and what qualities are important to being a good mother? Join us in exploring the possibilities.

Martha House has been an active member at SGUUF for six years and a Unitarian Universalist for fifteen years. She has a B.S. in Occupational Therapy from San Jose State University. Now retired, as an O.T., Martha most enjoyed working in pediatrics. She is a stone sculptor and a music enthusiast. Martha lives in Sun City with her two adorable 8 lb. dogs who are the light of her life.

**May 15**

## *Awakening By Living*

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

### *Multi-Generational Service*

Further to my time spent in silent retreat at the end of April and the Sunday School classes we've been sharing on Spiritual Practices, today's service addresses Being and Doing. Zen Master Dogen said: "To study the buddha way is to study the self...to be actualized by myriad things." Let's look at this kind of awakening that happens by simply living our lives. Our Family Choir will be providing music to enhance the beauty of our gathering.

*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.*

*This Service will be followed by a Congregational Forum on the topic of our Budget. Plan to remain for the discussion after Coffee and Conversation.*

**May 22**

## *Women In Islam*

Dr. Hina Azam

Dr. Azam will draw from her personal experiences to describe the life of women in the Islamic world.

Dr. Hina Azam is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on Islamic scripture, theology, and jurisprudence. Her publications focus on topics related to women and gender in Islam. Her book, *Sexual Violence in Islamic Law*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2015.

**May 29**

## *Memorial Day Celebration*

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

On the occasion of this Memorial Day Service, we will honor our dead and reflect on the meaning of their courageous sacrifices. All have families, friends and loved ones who grieve and seek to memorialize them. For their sake, and for the future of our global village, we will renew our commitments to make new and clear promises for liberty, justice and peace in the transforming power of love. Come let us contemplate our past, present and future.

# The Minister's Mind

The Rev. Mark Skrabacz

## The Sound of Silence

At April's Dining Out at Nancy Sky Garden I mentioned to my table companions that I was starting a silent retreat on the next day. I had made a commitment during my first year as full-time minister at San Gabriel to give myself the gift of a silent retreat. One person at the table asked: "Why would you want to be silent for a few days?" That's a good question, and after returning this week from that 4-day retreat, I'll take this opportunity to address it.

It's an understandable response to question the idea of a silent retreat. Yet such a practice has been done traditionally for ages as a part of many different faiths. Some of you know that I lived as a monk for 6 months at a Trappist Monastery, where the community practiced silence, and that was when I was a gregarious 26-year-old. Yet why was I visiting this mysterious realm now?

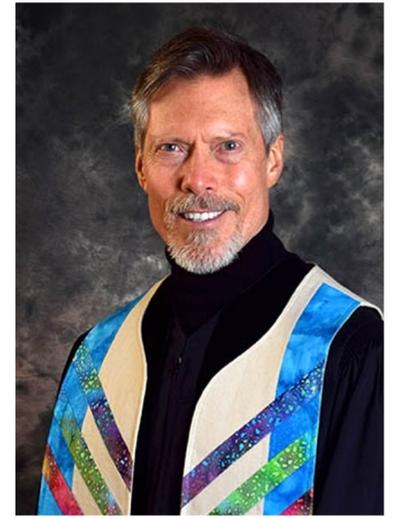
Primarily silence provides space to think, to relax, to rest and to be. And who among us couldn't use some of that? My motivation was to connect with a very basic and essential part of myself that precedes words and even the personality. A silent retreat is truly a vacation from oneself -- I mean the personality with its emotional programs and survival strategies. There's no need to impress anyone, or try "to do" anything. It's a clear change from our ordinary lifestyle.

Entering into the silence is a slow and long process. I drove more than 4 hours to a center where this is facilitated and lived in a solitary hermitage. Those first two days seemed like a week. What did I do? I ate three meals a day -- very slowly, chewing each bite and simply relaxing as I enjoyed the experience. After all, I didn't need to talk or engage with anyone, even though I wasn't alone. There were others sharing the dining table. We just sat politely and didn't look at each other, except every once in a while and just to acknowledge the other with kindness.

A few days of silence is helpful to keep in mind the priorities in one's life. To look at life from the bleachers rather than from on the playing field. There are the practical benefits of time to rest, an afternoon nap, an observant walk or simply to sit in a rocking chair for an hour. The presence of life in the silence becomes so very basic like the water we absolutely need for life or the air we breathe.

I didn't feel like I missed anything really. I didn't look at the computer, or news or any entertainment. Yet silence is not just the absence of talking or stimulation. It's actually an experience of the profound presence of everything. As a result of this experience, I feel more deeply connected to all the aspects of life. I have recommitted to taking a part of each week to practice silence, as a kind of sabbath, or day of rest. After all, I am no less gregarious than when I was 26, and I need a break from myself from time to time. If any of this sounds interesting to you, please let me know and we can look at it together. I will bring some additional insights and suggested practices to our May 1 and 15 Sunday Services .

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

[markskrabacz@hotmail.com](mailto:markskrabacz@hotmail.com)

He is always available for any emergency.

## Adult RE Continues in May

May 15th & 29th

Rev. Mark will offer a one-hour class on the 2nd and 4th Sundays 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, May 5th & 19th, at 8:00 a.m.**, men from the congregation meet at the IHOP in the Rivery Shopping Center facing IH-35.

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

## Ladies Luncheon

The SGUUF Ladies Luncheon will be on **Thursday, May 19th, 11:45 a.m.** at the home of Judy Mayo, 104 Wild Turkey Lane in Sun City. Lynn Ellis will present a slide show and talk on Portugal, Morocco, Gibraltar, and Seville, Spain. Please bring a bag lunch. All are welcome!

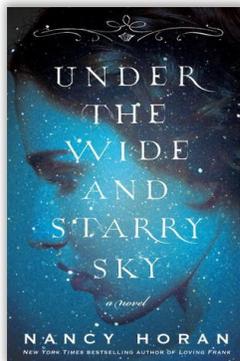
For directions please email/call Arlene at [arlene@zimbelman.com](mailto:arlene@zimbelman.com), (512) 869-6202.

## 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 **May 5th**, Arlene Zimbelman will be hosting the discussion of **Under the Wide and Starry Sky** by Nancy Horan.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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, May 14th and 28th** 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](mailto:mccor@suddenlink.net).



## Dining Out

**Wednesday, May 11th, 5:30 p.m.**  
3101 Williams Dr. Georgetown,



*It's almost summertime! It's near the end of school! It's time for a*

## UU Pizza Picnic!

Join us Sunday, May 22nd, at 5:30 p.m. at SGUUF. There will be fun for the whole family. Invite your friends. We'll have games outside and cool places to sit inside and out!

We'll be having pizza, salad and dessert.

There will be gluten-free pizza as well.

Please register ahead by filling out the form available at the back of the Sanctuary so we can know how much pizza to order.

Adults \$10.00 Children \$3.00 Under 3 are free.

Contact:

Susan Snelson [Susansnelson@aol.com](mailto:Susansnelson@aol.com) or phone, 512.484.4881, or Allison McKee, [marketing@georgetownchamber.org](mailto:marketing@georgetownchamber.org), 512.818.6800



The Family Aid Project has a need to find someone that is well informed regarding health insurance issues. If you know of someone that would be willing to act as an advisor to us please contact Larry McCormick at 512 869 0939, or [mccor@suddenlink.net](mailto:mccor@suddenlink.net).

## Georgetown Tara Circle



May 14 3:30-4:30  
In the Sanctuary @ SGUUF

Contact Susan Rogers, [sjrogers2004@yahoo.com](mailto:sjrogers2004@yahoo.com)

## Habitat Task Force Workdays in May

Thursday, May 5th 9- 11:00 am  
Thursday, May 12th, 9- 11:00 am

Work to be done:

- \* Continue planting beds by the Little House and Fellowship House
- \* Install drip irrigation system and set up a rain barrel in the Hutto Street bed
- \* Other maintenance work such as trim shrubs and dig up one small tree

Bring your garden tools. All are welcome! Contact: Billye Adams, 512-863-9636, or [billye\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:billye_adams@yahoo.com)



*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](mailto:markskrabacz@hotmail.com).*

## tea and drum circle

saturday, may 14, 2016, 5-7 pm  
to be hosted in the sguuf sanctuary  
1322 e university ave, georgetown, tx

come drum and have some fun in this growing community of sacred and creative expression!

this is both a meditation and fun social event.

bring a drum, shaker rattles and a healthy snack to share if you are inspired! we have a few drums and rattles to share but suggest you bring a drum!

we welcome new people to this growing event! we request that youth are respectful of the meditation circle and instruments!

call jk khalsa 512-921-9899 with questions



## PFLAG Support Meeting

Monday, May 23rd  
6:45 - 8:30 p.m.

Community Room,  
Independent Bank  
1503 Rivery Blvd.,  
Georgetown

As a community outreach project of our Welcoming Congregation join with facilitator Rev. Mark Skrabacz, members of San Gabriel and others to share our lives, discuss education and advocacy, and offer support to LGBTQ persons, families and friends. For further information contact Rev. Mark [markskrabacz@hotmail.com](mailto:markskrabacz@hotmail.com), land 512-819-1608, cell 830-928-3722

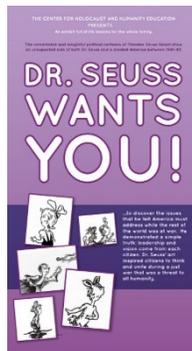
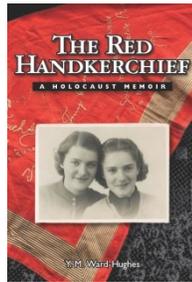
# Community Events

**Congregation Havurah Shalom** is sponsoring two upcoming events at the Georgetown Library:

## Lecture and Book Signing

**Sunday, May 1, at 2:00 p.m., in the Georgetown Public Library Hewlett Room**

The public is invited to a special presentation by Yvonne Ward-Hughes, author of *The Red Handkerchief: A Holocaust Memoir*. The book provides a unique glimpse into the lives of two Roman Catholic members of the Dutch Resistance and how they responded as Adolf Hitler ascended to power and began his persecution. This event is sponsored by Congregation Havurah Shalom of Sun City, to commemorate Yom Hashoah, the Holocaust Day of Remembrance. The program is free, and there will be a book signing after the lecture.



## DR. SEUSS WANTS YOU! Exhibit

**April 29-May 26, Georgetown Public Library**

The remarkable and insightful WW II political cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, along with Seuss memorabilia from the mid-20th century will be on display at the Georgetown Public Library throughout the month of May, and will include a lecture on May 18th. The exhibit is presented by Congregation Havurah Shalom of Sun City with sponsorship from the Georgetown Public Library.

Click the above links or the images to the right for more information.

## One Human Race

The One Human Race Initiative is a ministry of the Union of Black Episcopalians, Myra McDaniel Chapter. The goal is to create a safe, open, and productive environment for everyone to participate in discussions about race.

The One Human Race Series will meet weekly for three weeks in order to build community and common ground. The workshops create a safe environment to communicate about race using the following resources: the PBS Series "Race: The Power of an Illusion" viewed in one-hour segments, brief presentations about concepts related to the American idea of race, and group sharing with trained leaders.

An invitation-only series will be offered in **Georgetown** from 12:30-4:30 p.m., **Saturdays, May 14th, 21st & 28th**, at First United Methodist Church, 410 E University Ave. To register for this event, click the **Contact the Host** link [here](#).

We hope to see you at one of these series of important workshops. Thank you for your participation in helping to transform our beloved community.



## interfaith eco-network of georgetown forum

### Environmental Regulation:

### Reality vs. Myth

Dr. Christina Schwerdtfeger

Environmental Consultant

Monday, May 16th

7:00-8:30 p.m.

In the Sanctuary at SGUUF

Dr. Schwerdtfeger holds a PhD in Chemistry and is an environmental consultant. She will provide examples from her 29-year career to explain how things work and dispel some common myths. Areas of discussion include: examples of successful environmental regulations, examples of disasters in nations without adequate regulation, and recent disasters in the USA. and an overview of the regulatory process. We hope you can come and also bring a friend .



UBarU Retreat & Conference Center

# Spring & Summer Events @ UBarU

## Heart of Texas Mens Retreat

May 6-8, Friday 5:00 p.m. through Sunday 10:00

## Deep in the Heart Womens Retreat

Friday-Sunday, April 29 - May 1, 2016

## Family Camp 2016

Friday June 10 - Monday June 13

## Summer Camps for Kids

in June & July

## UBarU Star Party

Labor Day Weekend, September 2-5 2016

For more info, visit [ubaru.org](http://ubaru.org)

## 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, Tova McClurkan, [tova.mcclurkan@gmail.com](mailto:tova.mcclurkan@gmail.com).

## 2016 Leadership

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**President:** Jennifer VanBuren

[jkvanburen@gmail.com](mailto:jkvanburen@gmail.com)

**Vice-President:** Sean McClurkan

[sean.mcclurkan@gmail.com](mailto:sean.mcclurkan@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Michele O'Donnell

[modonnellUU@gmail.com](mailto:modonnellUU@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Martha House

[otrhouse@msn.com](mailto:otrhouse@msn.com)

### STAFF:

**Minister:** Mark Skrabacz

[markskrabacz@hotmail.com](mailto:markskrabacz@hotmail.com)

**Consulting Director of Religious Education:**

Sean Briscoe

[c.sean.briscoe@gmail.com](mailto:c.sean.briscoe@gmail.com)

**Choir Director:** Susan Meitz

[sfmeitz@gmail.com](mailto:sfmeitz@gmail.com)

### GENERAL COMMITTEES CHAIRS:

**Communications:** Ben Torres

[bentorres1971@hotmail.com](mailto:bentorres1971@hotmail.com)

**Facilities:** Keith Hoaglund

[keith@khlandarch.com](mailto:keith@khlandarch.com)

**Social Justice:** Rachael Jonrowe

[versluys8@aol.com](mailto:versluys8@aol.com)

**Past President:** Keith Hutchinson

[hutchinsonkeith@yahoo.com](mailto:hutchinsonkeith@yahoo.com)

### SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Caring:** Pat Laird

[pflaird@yahoo.com](mailto:pflaird@yahoo.com)

**Green Sanctuary:** Billye Adams

[billye\\_adams@yahoo.com](mailto:billye_adams@yahoo.com)

**Hospitality Co-Chairs:**

Sharon Covey

[sharonacovey@aol.com](mailto:sharonacovey@aol.com)

Pat Kessler

[prairielegal@yahoo.com](mailto:prairielegal@yahoo.com)

**Membership:** Roger Davis

[rjusme@gmail.com](mailto:rjusme@gmail.com)

**Religious Education Co-Chairs:**

Sarah Smith

[sarah@reborn.com](mailto:sarah@reborn.com)

Dorothy Light

[dorothylight@gmail.com](mailto:dorothylight@gmail.com)

**Social Co-Chairs:**

Susan Snelson

[susansnelson@aol.com](mailto:susansnelson@aol.com)

Allison McKee

[marketing@georgetownchamber.org](mailto:marketing@georgetownchamber.org)

**Stewardship:** Frank Sanders

[fcsanders@suddenlink.net](mailto:fcsanders@suddenlink.net)

**Sunday Services:** Mary Abbey

[marylabbey@gmail.com](mailto:marylabbey@gmail.com)

**General Email:** [sguufellowship@gmail.com](mailto:sguufellowship@gmail.com)



# May 2016

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY                                | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY | SATURDAY  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------|--|---|--------|---|
| <p>To reserve a meeting room on the SGUUF campus, please contact Toya McClurkan, at <a href="mailto:toya.mcclurkan@gmail.com">toya.mcclurkan@gmail.com</a>.<br/>           Available spaces include the Sanctuary (S), Meeting Room (MR), and Fellowship House (FH).</p> |                                       |         |  |   |        |   |
| 1  | 2                                     | 3       | 4  | 5<br>8am Men's Breakfast (IHOP)<br>9am Habitat Workday<br>2pm Afternoon Book Club | 6      | 7   |
| 8<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>2pm Meditation   | 9                                     | 10      | 11<br>5:30pm Dining Out<br> | 12<br>9am Habitat Workday<br>7pm RIDGE<br>7pm Family Choir                        | 13     | 14<br>8:30am Men's Discussion Grp (FH)<br>1pm SGUUF Board Meeting (FH)<br>3:30pm Tara Cir(S)<br>5pm Tea & Drum Circle (S) |
| 15<br>9am Adult RE(FH)<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>Multi-generational Service<br>2pm Meditation  | 16<br>7pm IENG Forum @ SGUUF (S)      | 17      | 18   | 19<br>8am Men's Breakfast (IHOP)<br>11:45am Ladies Luncheon Rehearsal             | 20     | 21  |
| 22<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>2pm Meditation<br>5:30pm UU Pizza Picnic!<br>  | 23<br>6:45pm PFLAG @ Independent Bank | 24      | 25   | 26<br>7pm RIDGE   | 27     | 28<br>8:30am Men's Discussion Group   |
| 29<br>9am Adult RE(FH)<br>10:30am Worship Service<br>2pm Meditation  | 30                                    | 31      | 1  | 2   | 3      | 4   |