

# SAN GABRIEL UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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



Newsletter

September 2016

## A Fresh Start

*Jennifer Van Buren, Board President*

New backpacks, new shoes, new notebooks and freshly sharpened pencils. Everyone remembers that excitement of new beginnings; a chance for a fresh start. Can we re-live that time in our lives of anticipation of a brand new day? A brand new year?

During the summer, many of us scatter. Vacations and travels and visitors from far away may keep us from our regular attendance at Sunday Service and committee work. Progress often slows down. We may come to feel disconnected from our greater community. It is time now to come back, refreshed, ready to start anew.

Every fall we join together in a symbol of this returning to community from our summer vacation with our Water Communion. This year our Water Communion will be on September 11th during regular Sunday Service. The UUA writes, "The Water Communion, also sometimes called Water Ceremony, was first used at a Unitarian Universalist (UU) worship service in the 1980s. Many UU congregations now hold a Water Communion once a year, often at the beginning of the new church year in September."

Members bring to the service a small amount of water from a place that is special to them. During the appointed time in the service, people one by one pour their water together into a large bowl. As the water is added, the person who brought it tells why this water is special to them. The combined water is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many different sources. It is often then blessed by the congregation, and sometimes is later boiled and used as the congregation's "holy water" in child dedication ceremonies and similar events.

May we get together during this second Sunday in September to rejoin our paths and recommit to the goals and aspirations of our work together. This first Sunday of the new fall season is an Intergenerational Sunday, with the children starting the new RE year the following week. We join together to wish our children and their teachers well as they begin their journey into a new year.



*Water Communion - Sunday, September 11th, 2016*

## 2016 Pledge Drive

Stewardship season is approaching once again for SGUUF. Over the next 2½ months, your Pledge Drive committee will be reaching out to you about this year's drive. The official kickoff will not be until October 23<sup>rd</sup>, but throughout the month of October and the 1st half of November, every Sunday service will have a brief announcement about the Pledge Drive. Last year we introduced some fairly significant changes that produced a bit of confusion. We felt it would be a good idea to go over how the Pledge Drive will proceed this year:

- \* Sometime late in September you will receive a copy of your Stewardship Brochure together with a Pledge Card. (Note: last year you did not receive your pledge card with the brochure)
- \* The brochure will contain a letter from your Pledge Drive committee, a calendar of events, a draft 2017 budget, and a copy of the UUA Annual Giving Guide.
- \* Your first opportunity to submit your 2017 pledge will be on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at our "Burrito Breakfast" preceding the Sunday Service. Besides breakfast burritos, there will be fellowship

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# 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.

## September 4

### *Is It Time To Rethink the Meaning of Work?*

Lou Snead

Many of us have been raised on the idea known as “the Protestant work ethic”, meaning we must work for what we earn. Most of us recognize, however, the difficulties that full time low wage employees face today in meeting their basic needs for food, shelter, and transportation. In cities all over our country we have seen proposals to raise minimum wages to living wages, but what do all these financial issues and concerns say about the value and meaning of work in our culture today? As we approach another Labor Day holiday, we will be invited to reflect on the meaning and value of work in our otherwise affluent society.

Lou Snead is a retired Presbyterian minister who serves on our Social Justice Committee and also on the Courageous Conversations Planning Team, an interfaith race relations group here in Georgetown.

## September 11

### *Gathering Again in Communion*

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

This annual in-gathering celebration welcomes us back to our Spiritual Home after the Summer. We bring the actual water or symbolic water from our travels to contribute to our common bowl. In commingling the water, we visually combine our lives in mutual solidarity and trust. Let's welcome each other back in a celebration of our very lives and life together! Let us experience why we come together as a spiritual community. This is a multi-generational service. Children and parents are invited to collaborate in the making of this multi-media and multi-sensory Service.

## September 18

### *Turn To, Not Against Each Other*

Rev. Mark Skrabacz

Paraphrasing U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, this service asks how can we live our values of justice, mercy and love in this time of confrontation, anxiety and distrust. Please join with us to explore this much-needed and vitally-important topic for our spiritual and human life.

## September 25

### *Celebrate the Earth, Our Mother*

Rev. Mark Skrabacz and our Green Sanctuary Team

Today we will celebrate our Autumn Equinox and the Earth. Join us and celebrate our interdependence as a part of the Planet. Learn what it means for all of us to be a certified Green Sanctuary. Plan to attend and visit with each other about our interdependence and Green Sanctuary activities after the service during Coffee and Conversation.

# The Minister's Mind

## Love Your Spiritual Home

*The Rev. Mark Skrabacz*

Five years ago, I related a story with an origin I no longer recall, except perhaps my own experience of living in a Trappist Monastery 30 years ago. It was about the common derivation of the seemingly disparate words "minestrone" and "ministries." Turns out they share the same Latin root "ministri" which means "to serve." One has to do with serving food that includes a diversity of flavors and colors, the other with the servanthood of various meaningful causes.

This year's Pledge Drive, a vital part of our membership and participation in San Gabriel, has the theme: Love Your Spiritual Home. We'll be hearing more about this theme from various viewpoints during the fall season.

What does the making of soup have to teach us about Loving Our Spiritual Home? Asking another question: How many of you consider your kitchen to be a center of your home? For me "home" is about nourishment and food.

In the story "Stone Soup," each person brings important contributions and gifts to a common life. I'd like to play on this image with a metaphor celebrating our shared ministry and the servant leadership that we experience at San Gabriel.

Coincident with the breakup of the Roman Empire, a new institution arose all over Europe, the monastery, and many of these monasteries had a mission of hospitality.

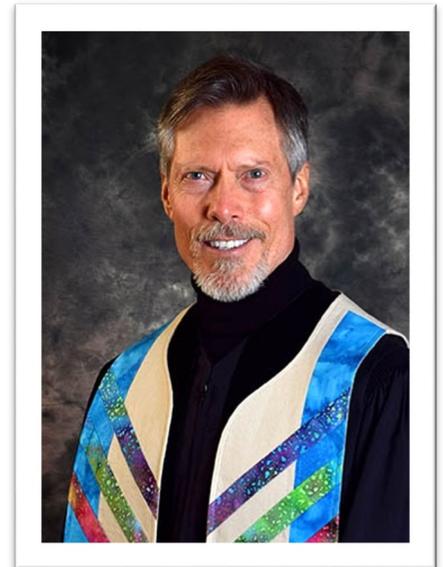
The monks always had a cauldron of soup simmering on the stove for hungry travelers. People would stop by after a day of traveling, partaking of the hospitality, this service of the monastery. The stuff on the stove became called "the minestrone." Minestrone, the ministry of hospitality, soup for weary travelers, is a powerful image that helps us understand our work together at San Gabriel.

To the monks, ministry was about feeding hungry souls on the road of life, and it was something they did together. They each had a role: wood gatherers, gardeners, carpenters, housekeepers. All were just as involved in the serving of that soup, as much as the cook and the servers at the table.

The Abbot, the spiritual leader, taught, counseled, trained, and helped each monk discern and practice his special gift. Yet the minestrone was the product of the whole community. The traveler who came to the monastery for hospitality received nourishment, savored the broth, vegetables, beans, and bread, the shared ministry of the monks' collective efforts.

Here at San Gabriel Unitarian Universalist Fellowship we also share in our common ministries. In our complex and highly mobile society, people come to our spiritual community seeking hospitality, nourishment, healing, and a sense of refuge, while desiring to make progress on their journeys.

As we begin our Fall Pledge Drive with its theme Love Your Spiritual Home, let us understand how we are nourishing one another in our spiritual community: through Sunday Services, Religious Education, Caring for each other, Women's and Men's Lunches and Breakfasts, as well as Retreats, Social gatherings and other ministries. We also make a significant difference in our greater community through collaborative works of charity, justice, inclusion and expansion in taking stands with the LGBTQ community, for workforce and



*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.

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## Minister's Mind, continued from page 3

affordable housing development, care for and education about our ecosystems, and leadership in Courageous Conversations about Race to name a few.

This is a special Spiritual Home even in UU circles, as we are one of a little over 20% of member congregations of our Unitarian Universalist Association that have completed a certification process for Green Sanctuary, and we are also a certified Welcoming Congregation. Together we are making a difference by making nourishing soup that embodies our vision and mission. This summer we helped organize healing vigils for the tragedies in Orlando, Baton Rouge, Falcon Heights and Dallas. We are a vital force for justice and compassion in our community.

The healing prayers of UUs most often show up in action and as deeds. We serve via participation and support of this Spiritual Home which means much to us. We come for the stimulation, for the fellowship, for the feeling of safety and connection. Together we embody and express our high ideals, stretch ourselves in order to understand better what to do and how to do it. We are a community of shared vision and leadership working for the common good. For all these reasons we are grateful to do and say: Love Your Spiritual Home .

With respect,  
*Rev. Mark*



## 2016 Pledge Drive, continued from page 1

### Curious about UU?

Every few months Rev. Mark and our Membership Committee offer the opportunity for all Members and Friends to participate in a UU Orientation. These are usually 2 1/2 hour sessions that focus on what it means to be Unitarian Universalist. We cover the history of our Fellowship, our governance, promises and commitments, as well as how to get involved in meaningful ways. It's a great way to get to know each other, as the emphasis is on a safe and enjoyable sharing our lives and questions. The next Orientation is planned for **Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.** To RSVP contact Rev. Mark at [markskrabacz@hotmail.com](mailto:markskrabacz@hotmail.com), call 830-928-3722, or sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays.

and entertainment before the service. Please remember to bring your pledge card to this service.

- \* If you would prefer NOT to submit your pledge at the Burrito Breakfast, but would rather have one of our "stewardship ambassadors" visit with you about any questions you may have about the pledge drive, your pledge, or in fact anything you would like to discuss about SGUUF, there will be a check box on the pledge card to indicate your wishes.
- \* If you would prefer to meet together with others to discuss such questions, there will be a check-off to indicate your interest in doing so. If a sufficient number so indicate, we will get together at a Pledge Café on Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>
- \* In the weeks following October 23, we will try to gather pledges from those that have not yet submitted their pledge and have not checked off one of the two alternative approaches indicated above.
- \* The Pledge Drive will officially end on November 12<sup>th</sup> by which time we should have made contact with all members of SGUUF. However, all members may not have submitted their pledges by that date, so the final tally will be announced at our Thanksgiving service on November 20<sup>th</sup>

That's it! If you have any questions about the Pledge Drive, please contact one of the members of the committee and they will be happy to assist you. The committee consists of Judy Mayo, Sean McClurkan, Frances Rieser, Jeff Richardson, Frank Sanders, and Rev. Mark Skrabacz, ex-officio.

## Life of the Congregation

### Men's Breakfast

On the **1st and 3rd Thursdays, September 1st & 15th, 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

We will resume our monthly luncheons on **Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 11:45 a.m.**, at the home of Judy Mayo, 104 Wild Turkey Lane in Sun City. Please bring a sack lunch, water and tea will be available. Frances Rieser will lead a discussion on **UUA Micro-Loans to Third World Women**. If you are interested, please see [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) or [www.uua.org/finance/investment/sri/microfinance](http://www.uua.org/finance/investment/sri/microfinance) for more information. This small loan program may be of interest to SGUUF. NEXT MONTH: **October 20th**, Mary Abbey will discuss **Famous UU Women** at the home of Kay Stauss, 105 Nueces, Sun City.

All are welcome! For more info, contact Judy Mayo, [judymayo@suddenlink.net](mailto:judymayo@suddenlink.net).

### Women's Book Club

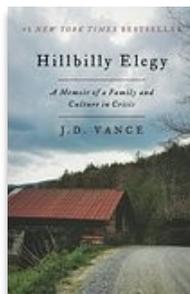
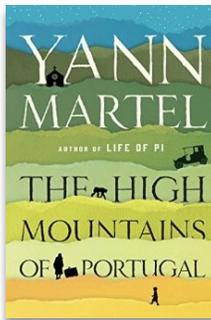
The Women's Afternoon Book Club meets on the **1st Thursday** of the month from **2:00-4:00 p.m.** at the homes of members.

On **September 1st**, we will be meeting at Marie Wagner's home for our discussion of [In The High Mountains of Portugal](#) by Yann Martel.

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 meetings for September are **Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>**, and **Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the home of Becky Greening, 103 Old Chisholm Trail, Sun City. We will be discussing the book [Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis](#), by J.D. Vance. The Introduction through Chapter 9 will be discussed at the first meeting. If you plan to attend, please contact Becky at 281-910-0037 or [rebeccagreening@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccagreening@gmail.com).



## Dining Out

# 'EL MONUMENTO'

Wednesday, September 14

5:30 p.m.

On the patio at El Monumento  
205 W. 2nd Street in Georgetown

## SGUUF Connections Fair

Sunday, September 18th

after the service

During Coffee and Conversation after the Service on **Sunday, September 18th**, SGUUF activity groups and service committees will have tables set up to inform you about the various ministries we perform, and how you can get connected. From the Finance Committee to Ladies Luncheon, Men's Discussion Group, or serving as a Religious Education volunteer, much of the life of our congregation takes place outside of our Sunday service. Please come and see all the ways we come together in beloved community to share our time and talent.

## 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, September 10th and 24th**, 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).



## Family Choir

We are resuming our monthly choir rehearsals and choir Sundays after a summer break. Our next rehearsal is **Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**, at **7:00 p.m.** in the Sanctuary. We are friendly, welcoming people that enjoy singing together. No previous experience is required. Join us! Email Susan Meitz if you have any questions [sfmeitz@gmail.com](mailto:sfmeitz@gmail.com)

## Georgetown Tara Circle



**September 10th**  
**3:00-4:30 p.m.**

**In the Sanctuary @ SGUUF**

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



## Fall Tea & Drumming Circle

**Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>**

**4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

**at SGUUF**

Bring a Drum or rattle and have some fun! We have a few extras to share but suggest you bring your instruments!

If you feel inspired to bring a healthy snack to share, please do.

We will be adding a Full Moon Healing Circle as part of our event, so if you wish to lay down and receive the good vibes, please bring a mat or blanket to lay on.

This is a fun community event with intention of holding a sacred space within and around us with joyful sound!

Contact JK Khalsa 512-921-9899



## PFLAG Support Meeting

**Monday,**  
**September 26th**  
**6:45 - 8:30 p.m.**

**Community Room, Independent Bank,**  
**1503 Rivery Blvd., Georgetown**

A community outreach project of our Welcoming Congregation. For further information contact Rev. Mark [markskrabacz@hotmail.com](mailto:markskrabacz@hotmail.com), land 512-819-1608, cell 830-928-3722



## UbarU Events

\* **UBarU Bee-Sustainable Weekend**

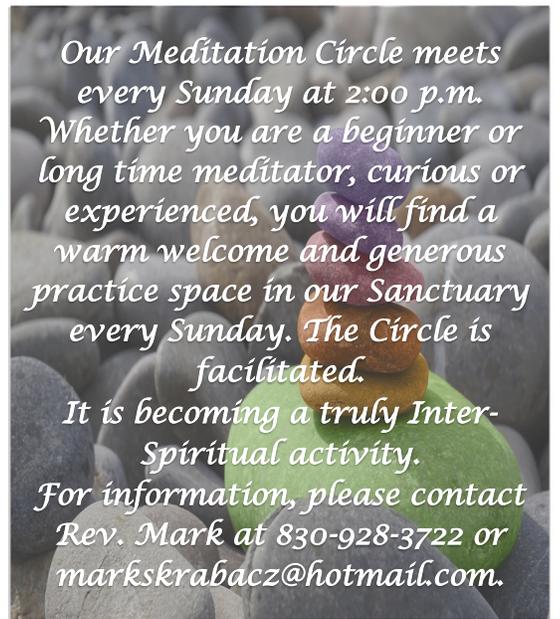
**September 30th - October 1st, 2016**

Explore the possibilities in sustainable living and help us celebrate the dedication of our UBarU bee yard - Fina's Flowerzzz Apiary.

\* **UBarU Women's Retreat** -

**October 14th - 16th, 2016**

This is a weekend to recharge your body, mind and spirit in the companionship of other UU women. Registration is now open.



*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).*

# Religious Education



## Religious Education Curriculum 2016-2107

### WHAT'S NEW IN RE?

It's been a long, easy-going summer, and R.E. will be kicking off our next semester on **September 11th!**

We hope all our wonderful R.E. volunteers are ready to get back into the swing of things.

The gates in our fences have been upgraded to be self-closing and latching to provide increased safety for our little ones. Please make certain they latch properly when they close behind you.

Also note that the eastern door of the Little House (the one facing the parking lot) is now Exit Only. Please always enter the Little House through the front door.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The RE program will be purchasing three tablets for each class. These will have all the media and digital material for each class in an easy to access tool. Each tablet will have all the attendance needed for that class in an easy to use application that will help us keep accurate records. This will allow us to better use our volunteer participation in a more efficient way, while also allow better planning for the future of the Religious Education program.

### THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN - CHALICE CHILDREN

Chalice Children delves deep into our Unitarian Universalist faith. It strives not just to teach about our faith, but also to provide experiences around the strength of community, the wonder of awe that transcend everyday understanding, and life issues we all share.

### KINDERGARTEN - 6TH GRADE - LOVE WILL GUIDE US

In this program, participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as "Where did we come from?" "What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?" "How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?" "What happens when you die?" Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these questions. Participants will learn that asking questions is valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.

### 7TH - 12TH GRADES - "MY NAME IS EARL"

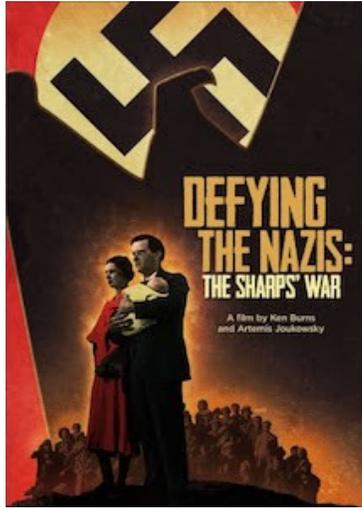
In this program the participants will explore Karma and have a better understanding on ethics and how we make decisions. We will use an episode from the show for each lesson, keeping the program relevant and entertaining. The participants will take a fun journey with characters that are flawed and understandable. The lessons focus on lists and projects that help the participants build real world solutions to complicated ethical problems.

## Defying The Nazis: The Sharps' War

a new film by Ken Burns & Artemis Joukowsky

to air on PBS **September 20, 2016**

*Defying The Nazis: The Sharps' War*, tells the story of Waitstill and Martha Sharp, a Unitarian minister and his wife from Wellesley, Massachusetts, who left their children behind in the care of their parish and boldly committed to multiple life-threatening missions in Europe. Over two dangerous years they helped to save hundreds of imperiled political dissidents and Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi occupation across Europe.



A companion book to the PBS documentary will be available from Beacon Press on September 6, 2016. Links to educational materials, including curricula from the UUA are available on the website, [www.defyingthenazis.org/education.html](http://www.defyingthenazis.org/education.html).

## 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:** Frances Rieser

[fh4@verizon.net](mailto:fh4@verizon.net)

### 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)

## 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](mailto:toya.mcclurkan@gmail.com).



# September 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>.            Available spaces include the Sanctuary (S), Meeting Room (MR), and Fellowship House (FH).</p>						
28	29	30	31	1 8am Men's Breakfast (IHOP) 2pm Afternoon Book Club	2	3
4 10:30am Worship Service 2pm Meditation	5	6	7	8 7pm RIDGE	9	10 8:30am Men's Discussion Grp (FH) 9am UUOrientation 3:00pm Tara Cir (S)
11 10:30am Worship Service Water Communion 2pm Meditation	12	13	14 5:30pm Dining Out 'EL MONUMENTO'	15 8am Men's Breakfast (IHOP) 11:45am Ladies Luncheon	16	17 4pm Tea & Drum Circle (S)
18 10:30am Worship Service Connections Fair 2pm Meditation	19	20	21	22 7pm Family Choir Practice (S) 7pm RIDGE	23	24 8:30am Men's Discussion Group (FH)
25 10:30am Worship Service 2pm Meditation	26 6:45pm PFLAG @ Independent Bank	27	28	29	30	1