



Huntsville, Texas Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

September 2009 Newsletter

Services are generally held on the second and fourth Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. in the Laura Chapel of Huntsville Memorial Hospital. From 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., we gather and have coffee. For more information call (936) 295-3170.

*"Music religious heat inspires,
It wakes the soul, and lifts it high
And wings it with sublime desires,
And fits it to bespeak the Deity"*
~Joseph Addison

Sunday, September 27th

Our speaker will be John Pepper, a UU from Houston. Last year, John recently completed his Master of Divinity degree at the Houston Graduate School of Theology while working full time as an engineer with the federal government's USDOT Office of Pipeline Safety. John began graduate school several years ago after discovering a passion for theology and religious history. John plans to perform some form of community ministry after retirement in the near future. Our congregation just recently agreed to ask John as our Ministerial Intern for the next two years. John Pepper lives with his partner, Randy Joiner, in Houston, but maintains a lake house in Goodrich. His sermon is entitled "Seasons of Holiness."



Seasons of Holiness – The Islamic tradition will have recently completed the celebration of Ramadan and the Jewish tradition is about to experience their holiest of holidays – Yom Kippur. These religious traditions require deep introspection and reflection during these celebrations. How did these holy celebrations come about and how can we learn and benefit from them? Please join me as I offer some thoughts and suggestions. Namaste!



Sunday, September 13th

Our service will consist of a new tradition that will occur on the first Sunday after Labor Day: The Water Ceremony Ritual. Every member and friend attending the service is asked to bring a small vial or jar of water to use in the ceremony. This is the first offering of this ritual, and tap water may be used as a symbol of a place or water-

connected event of the past year, which you would like to share. Following our water ceremony, we will enjoy violin duets by Javier Pinell and his wife Naomi Gjevre

Javier Pinell is Assistant Professor of Violin and chairperson of the Strings Area at Sam Houston State University. With a broad teaching experience he also serves on the violin faculty at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan. As a recipient of the prestigious Theodor Presser Award, Dr. Pinell has done pioneer research on compositions for the violin by contemporary Bolivian composers. As a performer he has traveled extensively including appearances with orchestras in Bolivia, Venezuela, Japan, Germany, Luxemburg, Peru, and throughout the U.S. As a chamber musician, Dr. Pinell is a founding member of the Lindsayan String Quartet.

Naomi Gjevre serves on the faculty at Sam Houston State University, where she teaches violin, chamber music, and performs with the Sam Houston String Quartet. During the summers, Dr. Gjevre also serves on the violin faculty at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. Dr. Gjevre has had a varied career as a performer, scholar, and pedagogue. As a performer, she is a founding member of the Lindsayan

String Quartet. Dr. Gjevre's orchestral experience includes the Savannah Symphony Orchestra, the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, and the North Carolina School of the Arts Orchestra with which she toured several European countries including France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy.



Eid Greetings
September 20th

Chalice Lighter Call:

Congratulations Everybody!! It was announced at SWUUSI that our Fellowship was awarded the Summer 2009 Chalice Lighter Call for the Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference to help us with the costs of the electrical, heating and air conditioning systems. We thank everyone on the Building and Aesthetic Committees for their hard work in helping us obtain this grant.



We can demonstrate our gratitude for this grant by encouraging all members and friends of our congregation to become Chalice Lighters. Please join and donate generously (especially for this call ☺). Chalice Lighters is a program of the Southwestern U-U Conference in which members contribute small donations (typically \$10.00 - \$25.00, but larger amounts are gratefully accepted) up to three times a year to help other congregations build or improve their churches and programs. 100% of the money collected goes to help the Chalice Lighter recipient congregation.

Please either give your contribution to our Chalice Lighter coordinator, Anne True, or send your check, made out to "SWUUC Chalice Lighters", to:

**Chalice Lighters
SWUUC District Office
6720 Brentwood Stair Road
Fort Worth, Texas 76112**

Or you may also donate via PayPal to "Chalice Lighters" using SWUUC's website: <http://swuuc.org/pages/stewardship/support.php>.

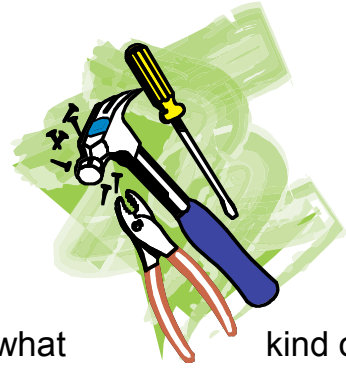
Thank you for your generosity of spirit and resources.

SWUUC Fall Leadership Conference

This year's Fall Leadership Conference will be held from November 13th-15th at the Glen Lake Camp and Retreat in Glen Rose Texas near Dinosaur State Park. It will be a fun-filled weekend of workshops, training and spiritual realization, and it is a great way to meet other UU's from around the district.

We encourage everyone in the congregation to attend and participate. More information about themes, workshops and registration will be given in next month's newsletter.

Building Work Day September 26th



We have been waiting for cooler weather to announce a Work Day for our church building. Our building needs to be caulked and painted, so that the dirt daubers don't have a chance to set up housekeeping under the Hardiplank. Mike Watkins has not only advised us as to what kind of caulking to use, but he has also agreed to come to show us how to caulk the Hardiplank. In October, we will have a Work Day for the painting of the building.

If all who-are-able will turn out for this, it will be a fun and productive day. It will also give everyone a chance to check out the paint colors that have been chosen. Please come with caulking guns and gloves and an attitude of "we will get this done" on September 26, 2009. We hope to start early in the morning; the exact time will be announced later.

Gut Yuntif Everyone!



moved to Huntsville



We welcome our newest member, Joan Hinds, who asked to sign our membership book at our August 9th service. Joan has been a Unitarian for many years. She is the mother of Pam Johnson who has been a member of our congregation for many years. Joan and her husband, Blaine, recently



Charitable Giving

At our September 27th service, we will have a collection to benefit Habitat for Humanity of Walker County. Walker County Habitat for Humanity (WCHFH) is a non-profit Christian organization that helps low-income families own decent, affordable housing. Habitat houses are sold to selected families using a no-interest mortgage loan. The program is made possible by community financial support, donated materials, and volunteer labor, including labor by the selected family.

In the future it is asked that people who wish to make charitable donations make the check directly out to the designated organization. The donations will be passed on directly to the charitable with an appropriate cover letter.

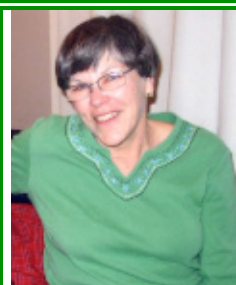
News from the 48th UUA General Assembly

Rev. Peter Morales, senior minister of Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, CO, was elected to be the eighth president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) at the UUA's 48th annual General Assembly (GA) in Salt Lake City. Morales, the first Latino leader of the UUA, received 59% of the vote.

Incumbent Moderator Gini Courter and Incumbent Financial Advisor Dan Brody, both ran unopposed and were re-elected to four-year terms. Two Trustees-at-Large and members of several Association committees and commissions were also elected by congressional delegates. The General Assembly also featured a public witness event in support of immigration reform to benefit all families; a Prom-for-All; and the Ware Lecture, delivered by professor Melissa Harris-Lacewell.



On his aspirations for Unitarian Universalism, Rev. Morales said, "I want to grow our faith, to reach all those people who are looking for non-dogmatic, liberal religious community. I look forward to working with partners in many other progressive and justice-seeking religious groups. There are tremendous issues that we'll be facing in the coming years and we're going to need one another."



A Note from Our President

If you think that we are too small to get things done, just reflect for a minute. On August 10, 2008, the congregation approved \$8000 to fund the construction of the city-required weir on the church property. It was built, under that amount, and we were able to see it in place when we had our first picnic on church grounds on November 2, 2008. On April 8, 2009, the congregation voted to build a structure on the church property. As of the latter part of July, 2009, the structure was dried-in and the keys were given to Kelley Sigler to paint for ID purposes. On August 6, 2009, the Chalice Lighters Grant was awarded to this congregation. On August 9, 2009, we approved a proposal by John Pepper to hire him as our intern minister. All of that adds up to quite an exciting year!!!

Now that we are starting on another church year, there is a lot to do as we continue on religious journey and on the path to growth of our membership. We are soon to move into our church building, so we need to start some meaningful traditions. Many UU congregations follow an annual Ingathering tradition on the first Sunday after Labor Day that includes a Water Ceremony ritual. Lee and I have enjoyed participating in a water ceremony in three different UU churches and would like the Huntsville UUs to have such a tradition.

The Board has approved the incorporation of a short water ritual along with the musical program that is to be presented on September 13, 2009. Please bring a small vial or jar of water to add to other's collection. Because this is a new ritual for a great number of you, just bring some water from your tap as a symbol of a place or a water-connected event of the past year that you would like to share. The water can represent a far-away place, or your favorite fishing hole, or a wonderful rainstorm here in Huntsville (if anyone can remember a rain storm) where you just enjoyed nature and just being. This ritual is about water

and sharing sustaining us. Please plan to share in this meaningful ritual.

The Board also approved another, very different, ritual for the first service in January. The details of that will be shared later.

Our church building needs to be caulked and painted soon, so that the dirt daubers won't have a chance to set up housekeeping under the Hardiplank. We have been waiting for cooler weather to announce a work day to complete those two tasks. If all who are able will turn out for this, it can be a fun and productive day. Mike Watkins has agreed to come to show us how to caulk the hardiplank and has advised what kind of caulking to buy. Most of you probably already have a caulking gun. Please come with caulking gun and gloves and an attitude of "we will get this done" on September 26, 2009.

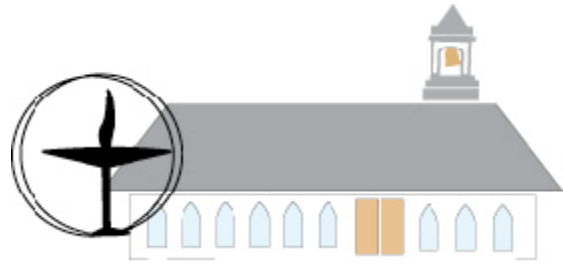
The Board has listened to the problems of the Treasurer and auditor and approved a new way of collecting money for charity donations. From now on, checks that you wish to donate to charity should be made out directly to the designated charity for that month. The Treasurer will put all of the checks into one envelope with a cover letter advising the charity that it has been chosen receive the monthly charity donation from the Unitarian Fellowship. This will allow the Treasurer to not have to enter the checks, or to deposit the checks, or to write another check. There will be no confusion as to what money is for charity and what is for the church. The Fellowship will still get credit for contributing to the specific charity. This way, you can be sure that your money will get to the charity of your choice. We are trying to meet everyone's wishes, yet keep things as simple as possible.

Hopefully, everyone will have a good end of summer and be ready to start a productive church year. Hope to see all of you on September 13th with a LITTLE bottle of water in hand! Someone asked if we will drink this water.....no, it is to be symbolic of our water connectedness.

Peace, Joan

Message from the Building Committee

I have good news to report. First, the columns have been installed on the porch. Also the center beams have been finished on the inside the building. I encourage you to check it out.



Second, at SWUUSI Susan Smith announced that the Huntsville UU Fellowship had been selected to receive the Fall 2009 Chalice Lighter grant! What will this mean for us? Well, it means that we will be able to steadily continue our construction! This will be a huge bump upward for us at a time that our funds have been largely depleted due to the construction.

Members and friends already have been outstanding in their generosity. This has allowed us to dry in our structure with no debt whatsoever and we still have some money in the bank. Members and friends have been steadily giving to the building fund on a monthly basis.

The Chalice Lighter grant is not a fixed amount as you may know. It is funded by the individual generosity of UU's throughout the Southwest district. In the past the average amount has run about \$10,000 as I understand it. Sometimes more. By no means can we expect enough to finish our building. That would not be realistic. But we do have good reason to expect that those funds ADDED to our own continued giving will allow us to get much closer to being able to actually occupy and use our building. And the sooner we occupy the sooner we can use the building to benefit the people of Huntsville.

I will be working with Mike Watkins in the very near future to get firm bids for the electrical and heating and cooling. I will be giving you more specific information as we get actual bids. When we collect enough cash to do a segment of work, we will proceed.

Thank you all so very much for making this building program possible. It has been a team effort in so many ways. And the more we do ourselves the more friends will step forward to help us. At SWUUSI we had an offer from a San Antonio band to come do a fundraiser for us, perhaps in early November. Also, a minister in the Austin area offered to come do a program for us. Things are looking very good for us and we appreciate that greatly.

Lee Stringer,
Building Committee Chair

P.S. How can we thank the Chalice Lighters? A most obvious way is for us to work to have all our members become Chalice Lighters. If you are not yet a Chalice Lighter now would be an excellent time to consider becoming one.



Welcome to Our New Ministerial Intern

Last month our congregation welcomed John Pepper as our new Ministerial Intern. He will serve in this capacity for the next two years as partial fulfillment of his requirements for becoming an ordained UU minister. John recently



completed his Master of Divinity degree at the Houston Graduate School of Theology while working full time as an engineer with the federal government. John began graduate school several years ago after discovering a passion for theology and religious history.

John will be preaching on the fourth Sunday of each month. He will also be developing religious education programs for both children and adults. He is also available to officiate at funerals and

weddings and for hospital and hospice visitations. John asked that everyone should feel free to call him if he is needed. He can be reached on his cell phone, 713-826-3575, or by email: john.pepper@sbcglobal.net

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Ministerial Intern
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