

OUR CHURCH LIFE

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country Newsletter

December 2022



UUCHC Welcomes Three New Members on Sunday, November 20 - in the front from left to right are Surrena Rub, Linette Shine & Skye Alexander. The supporting cast in the rear are The Reverend Phillip Schulman, Helen Sherwood and Bryan Bristol.

UUCHC Annual Meeting Sunday, December 18 🕒 After the Service

All church members are urged to attend the biannual church meeting. At this meeting we will elect church officers and vote on important items to keep our church running smoothly and well. Members who cannot attend are urged to complete a proxy form (see page 8) to have another member vote in their stead. It is important!

There was food for all at the church's Thanksgiving feast which was held on Sunday, November 20 (below).



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Check out our Facebook page



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PASTORAL REFLECTIONS...

Holiday Greetings!

One of the great things about being UU is that because of the many different ways we do the holidays, conformity and peer pressure are not so much of an issue. When I lived in San Antonio, I loved to start the holiday season with the city's celebration of Diwali, Indian festival of lights.

By Thanksgiving we are in it. This is many people's favorite holiday. Others of us dread going to the annual family gathering. Some of us are estranged from family. Many feel acutely the absence of dearly departed.

A small significant minority that with observe 11/25 as a day of mourning that the Pilgrims coming was the beginning of a near genocide of Indigenous People.

Some of us are huge Christmas fans, and maybe have slowly learned to Christmas spirit to become holiday spirit. Some of us were never Christian. Whether Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist or not religious, we run the gamut of love to loathe for the season.

Have you ever noticed how many Christmas movies have the theme of "the Christmas that almost wasn't?" And for every movie where Santa and his mission are in peril, there are dozens more where the crisis happens on a family level. My holiday season isn't complete until one of these tear jerkers gets me; when peace, love and reconciliation happens just in time.

Our UU diversity, acceptance and encouragement of spiritual growth tells us that we need not force our holidays to conform to some cultural ideal. We can listen and honor spirit in us. If we want to push ourselves a little to join the holiday shebang, we can! If Silent night is more our style, let it be. For most of us it's a good idea to allow at least a little time for sadness or mourning. It's a good time of year to do something in memory of a loved one, or in honor of loss of dreams.

It's a good idea to practice self-empathy. We can give ourselves the gift of compassionately meeting ourselves whatever we are feeling. My heartfelt wish for the holidays is that we have them each in our way, together when we can, and most of all, I pray that we may find or create some peace, love, hope and fulfillment in this season!

**Alive in the Ministry of this faith,
Reverend Phillip Schulman
UU Church of the Hill Country**

"Our Church Life" - More Material on Sunday Services in Chronological Date Order...

- 4 **The Reverend Phillip Schulman** (Sarah Johanson, Service Associate; Trudy Boardman, Chalice Table) - **Sermon:** "What do UU want for Christmas? How do angels bring tidings of peace on Earth, good will to all into a cultural warzone? Can Christmas spirit grow in a multicultural environment? How can Universalists love Christmas? How about you? Do you want to dance?"
- 11 **Speaker: Carrie Holley-Hurt** (Mike Burkett, Service Associate; Sarah Johanson, Chalice Table) - **Talk: "Grounded in Our Faith".** Living in Texas can take a toll on us justice workers, how does our faith keep us grounded and held so that we can do the work of building beloved community.
- Carrie Holley-Hurt (she/her/ hers) is a third-year seminary student at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a Candidate for Fellowship through the UUA. As the saying goes, Carrie was not raised as a UU but got here as soon as she could. Since becoming a UU, Carrie has been an active and involved leader at First UU of Austin as the Social Action Chair leading efforts for UU the Vote and organizing in support of Trans rights and Voting rights during the 2021 legislative session and special sessions. Before getting the call to ministry, Carrie was a policy analyst for the Texas Legislature having earned her Master's in Public Policy. Carrie is married with two children.
- 18 **The Reverend Phillip Schulman** (Helen Sherwood, Service Associate; Marie Brown, Chalice Table) - **Sermon:** "Solstice, Boldly Embracing the Darkness". In homage to the coming Solstice, this service will bathe us in poem, words, ritual and song that help us prepare for the coming winter by honoring and reflecting on beauty and power of darkness. We'll also consider the experience of dark night of the soul.
- 24 **The Reverend Phillip Schulman** (Janet Belden, Service Associate) - **Christmas Eve Service - Sermon: "Gifts that money can't buy."** In addition to Rev. Schulman's homily on this subject, this service will feature UUCHC members

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December 2022 Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country Calendar



Updates & Revisions to this calendar may be found in the Weekly Calendar Update which is emailed on most Thursdays.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Church Friends may serve on committees. All listed meetings are open and all are welcomed.</p> <p>CS: Church Sanctuary PA: Wilma Palmer Annex</p> <p>All Sunday Services held at 10am in the Church Sanctuary unless otherwise noted.</p> <p>① There will be news, views, and thought provoking discussion. Guys bring your sandwich or gourmet repast as you wish. Contact: Bryan Bristol 214.392-4823/ bryan.bristol@yahoo.com</p>						
					1	2
					Men's Fellowship Lunch: 11:30am - PA ①	Goddess Gathering - 10am - PA - see page 4
	4	5	6	7	8	9
The Reverend Phillip Schulman (Sarah Johanson, Service Associate; Trudy Boardman, Chalice Table) - Sermon: "What do UUs want for Christmas?" - see page 2 December Happy Birthday Sunday				Board Meeting: 6:30pm - PA - All welcomed. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day		
	11	12	13	14	15	16
Speaker: Carrie Holley-Hurt (Mike Burkett, Service Associate; Sarah Johanson, Chalice Table) - Talk: "Grounded in Our Faith" - see page 2						Men's Fellowship Lunch: 11:30am - PA ①
Chanukah begins (see p. 4)	18	19	20	21	22	23
The Reverend Phillip Schulman (Helen Sherwood, Service Associate; Marie Brown, Chalice Table) - Sermon: "Solstice, Boldly Embracing the Darkness" - see page 2 Annual Congregational Meeting (held after service)			Last day to submit articles for January's newsletter: communicate on @uuchc.org			
	25	26	27	28	29	30
The Reverend Phillip Schulman (Janet Belden & Helen Sherwood, Service Associates) - Sermon: "Pancakes in Pajamas" - see page 4		Chanukah ends Kwanzaa begins (through January 1)				
						31
						 New Year's Eve

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“Our Church Life” - More Material on Sunday Services in Chronological Date Order...

24 UUCHC members and friends offering (gifts of) Christmas themed music, poetry, story and play.

If you would like to be one of the 8 featured performing artists in this year's Christmas Eve service, please contact Rev. Phillip ASAP

25 The Rev. Phillip Schulman (Janet Belden & Helen Sherwood, Service Associates) - **Sermon: “Pancakes in Pajamas”.**



*From the Jewish Community of the Hill Country:
We invite our UUCHC friends to our annual Menorah Lighting in celebration of Chanukah at 6:00pm on Sunday, December 18 on the County Courthouse lawn next to the large Christmas Tree and the gazebo--just look for the 12-foot Menorah! It's a lovely ceremony that will last less than an hour. Feel free to bring folding chairs for your comfort, should you desire.*



Above is Judy Ashcraft's Thanksgiving themed chalice table for Sunday, November 20. After the service the congregation enjoyed the annual Thanksgiving Potluck where no one went away hungry.

Nature Quiz Show with Kevin Hartley on Saturday, December 10 ♦ 3:30 - 5pm Wilma Palmer Annex

Eleven places in the contiguous forty-eight states. Do we know where/what these are or can find out? With 40 of Kevin's photos of these or nearby.

- Oldest living organisms on Earth
- Most massive organism on Earth
- Largest area in North America from which waters go nowhere
- Deepest canyon in North America
- Mountain range with "the worst weather in the world"
- Place with the lowest elevation in North America
- Tallest sand dunes in North America
- Western and eastern most points in the contiguous 48 states
- Biggest active volcano in North America
- Two most dangerous volcanoes in North America
- Only place on Earth where waters divide to three oceans



“Goddess Gathering” Monthly Palmer Annex ★ 10am

Goddess Gatherings (from the uwr.org) is a 13-session gathering, meeting the first Saturday of the month at 10am in the Palmer Annex.

Learning about different goddesses helps to you move into a more confident and authentic state of being. Learning about the goddesses is empowering in and of itself, but doing so with a group of like-minded helps us all to recognize more of our own innate power.

If you need a copy of the curriculum, email Frances Osborne for a free pdf:

osborne36@hotmail.com

The UU Small Group Ministry Meeting is planning to open up for two sessions beginning in January. If you are interested (or think you may be) in this sharing, listening, and supportive group, which follows topics from a book by UUs such as aging, prayer, spiritual growth, etc., please plan to attend to see if it's for you. Depending upon how much interest there is, we may split into two groups of eight after the two open sessions. We have determined groups of only eight (maximum) work best. Each meeting lasts about an hour to an hour and a half. Anyone who joins for the long term of a few months should commit to being there for every meeting, please. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month in the Annex, at 6:30. Feel free to find Sarah J., Stephanie, Marie, Karen, or Meredith after Sunday service or call Marie at 830-496-3318, Karen at 817-734-6856, or text Stephanie at 207-974-6928 for more information or questions.



Above is the chalice table decorated by Helen Sherwood for the Talk, "Banned!" presented by Carolyn Dreyer and Helen Sherwood on November 13. This service, created was protest response to the ongoing attack on our local Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library for their participation in the annual Banned Books Week in September.

Summary of the Wednesday, October 12, 2022 Board Meeting

Board President Vicki Luther called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. A quorum was present.

Present: President Vicki Luther; Vice-President Janet Belden; Treasurer Judy Bunch; Member-at-Large Don Pyle; Secretary Sarah Johanson; The Reverend Phillip Schulman

Financials - It is good and we are under budget. Sarah moved to accept and Janet seconded the motion.

Beautification - Jerry fixed broken window in annex. Wood needs to be in on the annex bridge. Church door and windows are repaired and painted, windows sanded and caulked. Outdoor light replaced. Landscaping done. Chalice symbol on church gable was painted. Two solar lights added to big church sign. The non-operative water barrels and down spouts were removed. Gutters cleaned. Total cost which includes new bird bath is \$2,147.13. Window panes need repairs, paint; Frank is going to do all. Motion to paint annex windows and handrails. Janet moved to accept and Don seconded the motion. Board approved.

Safety Committee Meeting - The fire extinguishers were recharged or replaced. Smoke detectors are being replaced.

Elections of Officers for Board -

Don - term is up.

Judy - term is up. Congregation waive Bylaws to stay in longer. Vicki and Janet will research.

Judy Ashcraft - to be on nominating committee, Vicki will ask her.

CCC -

No CCC meeting due to Don's hospitalization.

Activities and Events - Holiday Party great success.

Men's Group - going well.

Postcards - mailed to new visitors.

S.S.C - 4th quarter done.

UGRA - River clean-up completed.

5th Sunday - UbarU

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Continuation of the October 12, 2012 Board Meeting Summary of Minutes

Activities and Events: Holiday Party great success; Men's Group - going well; Postcards - mailed to new visitors; S.S.C - 4th quarter done; UGRA - River clean-up completed; 5th Sunday - UBarU.

Minister's Report -

Both services in September were unusual. Earth Connections camp-out and drumming were a great success. Houston's Tapestry UU will be at UBarU on November 4th - 6th. Dawn Necomer invited us to meet with them and have lunch Saturday, November 5.

Retreat

Board decided to join Tapestry on November 5th for lunch and to plan a one-day congregational retreat. Also we will bring cookies.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:42pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Johanson, Secretary

WE DUG DEEP FOR UBarU!

In October, we asked UUCHC members and friends to "dig deep" and give generously to our own UBarU Retreat Center, the recipient of our October 30 5th Sunday Donate the Plate collection.

UBarU has initiated a Capital Campaign to raise funds for a deeper well, pool and ranch house repairs, improved landscaping - all necessary to have UBarU ready to play a starring role as folks gather from around the world to view the great solar eclipse April 8, 2024. We dug deep indeed and were able to send the following letter to UBarU's treasurer, Patricia Baillif:

Enclosed you'll find a \$975 check sent to UBarU with gratitude from all of us at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country in Kerrville...

...(we dug deep) because we love our UBarU to the moon and back. Literally! From thrilling viewings of the Universe at the Dark Sky Observatory to meditative strolls on the Labyrinth or just watching happy dogs chase rabbits. In between heaven and earth, there have been countless retreats where we've created art, fellowship and new friends. There's the rewarding "sweat equity" of clearing brush, building trails, cleaning and painting. There's quiet camping, sunset services, even competitive weenie roasting/ marshmallow toasts. Every one of us has benefitted, in ways large and small, from UBarU and we thank you for your stewardship of this unique treasure."

Below are church members Amanda Biemer and Donnie Bunch with the telescope at the UBarU Observatory.



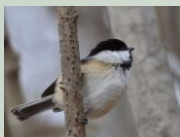
Below and on page 7 are pictures taken of the church of refurburation efforts evidenced over the past few months. Newly painted trim below!



Linda's nephew makes quick work of trim painting!



New Birdbath in front of church!



Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country
Board Members for 2022

President ~ Vicki Luther
Vice President ~ Janet Belden
Secretary - Sarah Johanson
Treasurer ~ Judy Bunch
Member at Large - Don Pyle

Sunday Services Chair: Janet Belden
Wayside Pulpit, Coffee Set-Up, Music/Choir, Greeters,
Order of Service, Chalice Table, Service Schedule/Associates

Ex Officio Board Member (Past President):
Jerry Best

Committee on Ministry (CoM) Chair: Linda Smith

Spiritual Development Chair: Janet Belden
Life Span Development (Adult and Children's Religious
Education), Free Speech Café, Forums

Membership Chair: Bryan Bristol
Congregational Care, Visitor Follow-Up, Exit Interviews,
New Member Orientation, Members/Friends List

Outreach/Social Justice Committee Co-Chairs:
Carolyn Dreyer & David Gross
TXUUJM, Donate the Plate

Finance Committee Chair: Mike Burkett
Stewardship, Budget, Financial Management & Reports

Facilities Chair: Zeke
Building/Grounds

Activities/Events Chair: Judy Ashcraft
Special Social Events, Recurring Events, Building Usage

Communications Chair: Jill Wiggins
communication@uuchc.org
Webmaster: (Contractor) Audra Arr
Facebook: Linda Smith
Newsletter/Weekly Calendar Update: Susan Lipp