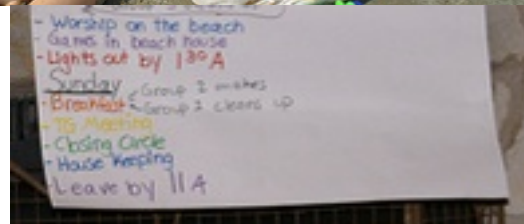




Emerson LRY Youth Help Galveston

11 LRY youth and 4 adult chaperones spent Saturday morning, 8/15, participating in a social action project on Galveston Island. The Galveston Salvation Army store had been overwhelmed by clothing contributions and needed help sorting and tagging the donations. The group dug in with high energy and positive spirit. The Salvation Army staff were effusive in their praise for the hard work the group put in.

This social action was part of a 2 night stay on Galveston Island thanks to the generosity of Tim Sexton who offered the group the use of his beach house. Excellent community building took place, and all will remember the lovely after dark beach bonfire, worship service (and s'mores!).



Revels - The Year Ahead!

Many good things are now happening or are just on the horizon. We are very excited about having our new Interim Religious Educator as part of Emerson for the next two years. Barbara Stoddard is widely recognized as one of the very best Unitarian Universalist religious educators in the entire denomination. We count ourselves blessed that the congregation was able to secure her services. Along with an energetic Religious Education Committee, enthusiastic parents, and a supportive Board of Trustees we are working to re-establish the kind of program our children and youth deserve. In a similar vein, Emerson now has a very strong Youth Adult Committee coupled with a group of amazing teachers and advisors for the Junior High and Senior High youth. The curricula and teachers for all the classes are dynamic and engaging. This is all "pinch us on the cheek - could it be this good?" Make that a "Yes!" Do you know any families that are looking for excellent Unitarian Universalist religious education? Invite them over - we've got the goods.

Some of you might recall the meetings of the congregation with Sue Smith our Southwest Unitarian Universalist Conference Director? Among the tasks the congregation set for itself as a result of those meetings was the creation of a statement of identity and purpose. The Committee on Ministry has been working very diligently on this task, in essence asking, "What is the ministry of Emerson Church?" Many conversations have been held and many people in the congregation have been consulted. All along the Committee has worked hard to avoid the typical pitfalls of such statements. It is easy to write a statement that is (a) too long, or (b) so bland that it is hard to see how it could be informative or useful. Coming up with such a statement that is succinct and packs some power is quite difficult.

Soon the Committee will be engaging the congregation at large in further extended conversations about the proposed statement of identity and purpose. They and we will be eager to hear what kinds of constructive suggestions you might have which will help us all deepen our sense of the ministry of this congregation. Intuitively we all know that we are doing something that is very important. And that "something" informs the many pieces of the mosaic that make up the elements of Emerson's life together. And do we ever have a busy mosaic. Music programs, education programs, arts programs, new groups forming all the time...Emerson is a very active and growing congregation. We look forward to another exciting year with you.

Becky and Mark

A personal message from Mark:

It has been an eventful summer. Much of it was dominated by my Father's death. Wow, that's a hard thing to say or write. My personal universe never had a place in it that could include such news. I had just about regained my bearings following my Mother's death last October - and now this? I've long understood the theory and had it fixed in my head that this sort of thing happens. And yes, he had become increasingly weakened over the past few months. I certainly did not wish him, any more than he wished himself, to linger on in such discomfort.

But it reminds me, to a depth I had not quite fathomed, just how precious is time, the time we have with those whom we love. Thank you for your many sweet sweet cards which expressed such compassion and wisdom. After all, many of you have already been in this spot. In some ways I am lucky because my mourning is not complicated by regrets or unease. We loved each other deeply, said it often, and knew it to be true. That's a gift, as the poet May Sarton wrote, "that cannot be ungiven." Thanks Dad.

And now a note 🎵 from your

Interim Director of Religious Education...Barbara Gay Stoddard

In UU Congregations, every child should: feel warmly welcomed, experience age-appropriate worship, experience and practice justice, engage in learning, take appropriate risks and walk among loving, committed adults. I don't know the author of these words but I have adopted them as my credo when thinking about religious education for children and youth.

I am so happy that I have this opportunity to work and play with the beloved souls of Emerson Unitarian Church for the next two years as your interim DRE. During this interim time, I hope to help guide the RE Committee and the congregation as a whole in looking at the vision, mission and future of Religious Education at Emerson. We'll learn from the glorious events of the past, we'll pursue ideas for new beginnings, and we'll explore the possibilities for the future.

For now I'd like to briefly share with you the outline for RE programming starting in September that the RE Committee and I have been working on during the month of August.

- RE families should receive a mailing with registration forms and a program brochure which will describe our programming in deeper detail. The brochure will also be available in various places around the church.
- 1st hour programming will consist of classes for: Preschoolers (3 and 4 year olds), Kindergarten and 1st grade, 2nd & 3rd grade, 4th & 5th grade, 6th, 7th & 8th grade and 9th – 12th grade. Childcare will be provided for our Infants and Toddlers.
- 2nd hour programming: Children in Kindergarten through 5th grade will gather in Schweitzer Hall following the time in the sanctuary. We will gather in community using ritual, visual arts, story and drama, group building using movement and games, social justice activities and play to help children find and make meaning of the world around them. Our guardian angels will guide our children in the activities as well as some playground time.
- 2nd hour programming for Infants through 4 year olds will be childcare. Our 8th graders will participate in the Coming of Age program. Our 6th & 7th graders will continue to meet during 2nd hour to work on community projects i.e. the Halloween carnival, social justice projects and other "junior youth group" projects and, our Senior Youth Group (LRY) will continue their programming during this time.
- Emerson is also the proud host church for this year's Our Whole Lives (OWL) program for 7th – 9th graders. That class will be meeting Sunday afternoons from 1:30 – 5:30.

Throughout the year, I hope to hold various meetings to help us as a congregation discern the future of religious education programming at Emerson. I hope if you have questions about anything you will contact me. I need to hear your ideas, concerns, and questions in order to make our time together a success. So come, come whoever you are and join us on this journey.

Just a thought, Barbara

Choir reunites
after summer
break with
Potluck Dinner
and Champagne

-
All singers are
invited to join in
the fun!

-
Rehearsals are
Wednesdays,
7:30 pm
in the Sanctuary



Thanks for keeping the cupboard full



Through June, you
generously donated
390 pounds of food to
the Houston Food
Bank, in addition to
981 pounds collected
at our Souper Bowl of

Caring event. Since the beginning of
the year, you also donated a
remarkable \$8185.50 to the Houston
Food Bank and Interfaith Ministries'
Food Programs.

HELP WANTED!

As the Adult RE Committee continue to expand the
high quality of programs offered to the congregation
and to the community, we need several more
committee members to support these efforts. For
example, Emerson will be hosting the World Religion
series, sponsored by the Amazing Faith Project, again
this year. We need someone to coordinate the
logistics for this event.

We have other challenging and rewarding
opportunities. So, if you are even curious, let's talk.
You can ALWAYS say, "No, thank you."

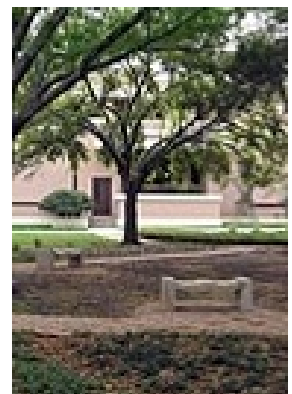
Contact Ken Salzman.

Memorial Garden



The Memorial Garden was planned after the construction of Delaney Hall. There were several memorial plaques on the wall of the old building. They had to be moved to a new location and the Memorial Garden was planned and paid for from memorial funds. Carol Huelbig planned the garden in front of Westwood Hall and it was approved by the Board in 2004. The memorial plaques that we had and many new ones have been placed on the wall in the garden. The beautiful statue and benches were given in memory of Jane

Joseph's daughter, Jana. A bench was given in memory of Karen Mullineaus by Dick Mullineaux. Polly Delaney has added a bird bath to the garden. This garden is a very special place on the grounds of Emerson. You may contact Karen Van Horn in the church office if you would like to give a memorial plaque for a church member.



Fall Activities Page

WELCOME MAT (Movies And Things)

We have arranged for 8 terrific films in our first series on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender themes. We aren't going to tell you which ones just yet...but the first film has Vanessa Redgrave, Chloe Sevigny, Sharon Stone and Ellen Degeneres (among others!) as stars. It is an incredible film, both moving and funny, so please plan to attend October 10 right after

service. Lunch will be available during the film. The other 7 films will be presented the following months on the 2nd Sunday through May 2010. They cover the range of GLBT themes, mixing serious with humorous with documentaries. We encourage all members of Emerson and their friends to come share the films, discuss some significant themes in the films and how they impact our lives and our community. Watch for the complete information in upcoming newsletters.



Autumnal Equinox Service Tuesday, September 22, 7:00 pm

As the days begin to shorten, we will celebrate the gathering of the crops and beginning of preparations for the winter ahead. Although our lives at this time and place are not a directly tied to the cycles of harvest, it seems appropriate to count our blessings, and pause as we finish old business and prepare for a time of rest and reflection. It is a time to stop and enjoy the fruits of your personal harvests.

Circle Dinners in homes on Saturday, September 19

Would you like a chance to sit down and have a good conversation over dinner with a group of your fellow church members and friends? If the answer is yes, join our Circle Dinner groups on Saturday evening, September 19. We meet in homes in different parts of our city and everyone brings a part of the meal. It is an opportunity to become better acquainted with the people you see briefly on Sunday morning. To get assigned to a host home. Call Gwen Essinger .



Will YOU Step Up to Relieve Hunger in Houston?

Time to walk the walk -- the CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, November 1. Last year, Emerson's 65-person team was the largest in Houston, and the organizers are still talking about it. Let's get 100 out there this year. This is an easy 3-mile walk, perfect for families, and the on-line donation page makes it easy for even the busiest teen or adult to find sponsors. For more information, see Linda Orr or Barb Adams at our table in The Gathering Place, beginning in September. www.cropwalkonline.org to register online or make a donation.

Mark Your Calendar for Saturdays, October 17 and 24

Emersonians are generous folks. Some support worthy organizations with donations, others with "sweat equity." For 19 years, we have provided young and old volunteers with two opportunities per year (on two Saturdays in October and April) to invest sweat equity in renovating the exterior of shabby homes belonging to vulnerable seniors in marginal neighborhoods you read about in the paper: Acres Home, Denver Harbor, the 3rd and 5th wards. We particularly welcome families, for eye opening conversations, teens, who can earn community service credits required by their high schools, covenant and social groups who want to work together, and solos, who prefer hands-on projects to volunteer meetings! Contact Laura Emerson to get on the email list for additional information.

Community Capacity Building Workshop

Saturday, October 17, 2009
9:30 AM to 3:30 PM (lunch provided)
Westwood Hall - Emerson UU Church
Facilitator: Dr. Richard Ford

The workshop on Saturday, October 17th, will offer a radically new strategy for promoting our UU values and enabling social change. Based upon the idea that people within a community already contain the knowledge and resources needed to improve their lives, the workshop will train participants as facilitators for helping communities develop their own plans and programs for improvement. <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba104.htm>.

The fee for the workshop is \$10, which covers the costs for a catered lunch and materials.

In order for us to plan for both space and food, please pre-register for the workshop by contacting Laura Nagel, or Eleanor Lane, or deForest Ralph.

Houstonians Are Talking...Are You?

Greater Houston Area Amazing Faiths Project Dinner Dialogue November 12, 2009

The evening of dinner dialogues will offer Houstonians of all faiths the opportunity to come together to share a meal, find common ground and build mutual respect.

Small groups of 8-10 will gather in private homes around the city to listen, learn, and share with one another. Don't miss it! Join the Dialogue; Change your Life; Transform the World

The registration deadline for hosts and participants is October 31, 2009. For more information and to register please visit www.amazingfaithshouston.org.

Presented by: Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, The Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance at Rice University, with support of the City of Houston Mayor's Office.

Join the Emerson Intergenerational Orchestra

Do you saw a violin? Do you toot a flute? Do you blow your own horn? Then come join the Emerson Intergenerational Orchestra (EIO). All ages/skill levels are welcome. There are NO auditions. Parts are chosen by the players. First rehearsal is September 20 at 9:00 AM in Westwood Hall. Music is posted at <http://www.atkerson.com/eio/>

EPIC (Emerson Parents In Community)

EPIC is a parenting support group, which provides a forum for fellowship and discussion, and to share resources, ideas, and struggles. EPIC meets twice a month; a parents-only get-together usually the second Saturday evening, and a Potluck Play-date at lunchtime on alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

This fall proves to be exciting for Emerson parents with some fantastic activities on the horizon. EPIC and adult education will present **Parents As Spiritual Guides**, a class taught by Judy Richardson. Parents are also invited to participate in a dinner-theater style viewing of the Emerson Players performing **The Complete History of America, Abridged**, as well as a wine tasting event, a seminar about age-appropriate social action, and a Ladies' Night at the Spa/Gentlemen's Night at the Club event. For evening events, childcare is provided by reservation.

For more information about EPIC or to RSVP for EPIC events, contact Alisha Loftin. Sign up for the EPIC list-serve at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EPICUUs/>

Interactive Adult Education

Experiential, interactive adult education has proved a valuable Sunday addition at Emerson. In the monthly *Living Our Faith* series in 2008-09, Emersonians examined the spiritual in their lives from a variety of perspectives. Participants developed new awareness of the way they live their UU values everyday and appreciated the deeper relationships they developed with other Emersonians. At the end of the ten-month series, 100% of participants who participated in the evaluation rated each program's personal reflection time and small group sharing *very meaningful*, rated the program leadership *very effective*, and recommended that interactive adult education continue as a 10:00 Sunday option.

In Fall 2009 the focus of interactive education will shift to our newer, younger adults who want to get to know other people at Emerson while they learn about Unitarian Universalism. Parents and teachers of the children in our church school will participate in the UU series, ***Parents as Spiritual Guides***. These programs will help parents/teachers understand their own faith journeys and articulate UU beliefs and values to our children. Judy Richardson, working with the RE Committee and the new EPIC parents group, will facilitate the programs.