

2nd and 3rd grade class bake sale



The 2nd and 3rd grade class bake sale was an incredible success and the kids and we adults had fun besides. The energy around our bake sale table was contagious so that Emersonians not only looked but bought. \$284.25 was collected and donated to the Food Bank

Thanks to the entire team for making this a memorable day for the 2nd and 3rd grade class.

Stitchers go on Vacation



Emerson Member Rosemary Lyday graciously invited the Stitchers to spend a few nights at her new, soon to be opened Bed and Breakfast. Rosemary's B&B named Alexandra's House is a wonderfully furnished house with 3 guest rooms. The main architect on the building of the B&B was Emerson Member Gail Shorre. The vacationers were Nancy Lipp, Louise Parmley, Betsey Sevy, Rosemary Lyday and not shown Sally Bercu, and Zena Taylor. For our good bye breakfast, former member of Emerson Monica Rasco came by for a visit.



New Year's Labyrinth Walk

On December 31 and New Year's Day Emerson will host the fourth annual New Year's Labyrinth Walk. Now a cherished tradition of the holiday season at Emerson, the New Year's Walk will again feature a labyrinth made of tiny lights. A 30' nature scene behind the labyrinth, a forest of sparkling evergreens on each side, and peaceful music will enhance the meditation experience in Westwood Hall. The theme, "Our Beautiful Earth," reflects the fact that most labyrinths are found in the beauty of natural settings.

This year you have the choice of two different labyrinth walks. On **New Year's Eve** from 9 pm to midnight Emersonians and guests will enjoy labyrinth walking, reflection on the past year, and optional activities in art, poetry, writing, and a nature video set to favorite UU hymns. Just before midnight we'll gather outdoors to burn away our individual joys and sorrows of 2009 in a bonfire. We'll then welcome the New Year with the traditional champagne and elegant holiday desserts. Adults and youth 12 and older are welcome to join in this New Year's tradition. The cost is \$20 per adult, \$5 for students. Prepaid reservations for New Year's Eve are available on Sundays. For information contact Judith Richardson.

On **New Year's Day** you can enjoy a quieter, more personalized labyrinth experience. Come anytime from 4-8 pm and stay as long as you wish. Enjoy walking meditation and related individual labyrinth activities and refreshments. This event is free to all.

Last year's attendees described the New Year's Labyrinth Walk as "peaceful . . . centering . . . illuminating . . . transcendent . . . filled with grace." Make this New Year's your memorable occasion of personal reflection, loving community, and inspiration.

December Quarterly 2009

New Bible in the Frank Schulman Library

The Frank Schulman library on the second floor of Delaney Hall has a new and noteworthy acquisition - a family bible, the gift of Dick Mullineaux, a long time member and Past President of Emerson Church. Published by National Publishing Company in Philadelphia about 1890, the Bible was given to Dick's maternal grandparents, Edwin Drew and Stella Withrow Drew, by Rev. and Mrs. F.K. Van Tarsel on their wedding day, November 30, 1892.

In addition to the beauty of its tooled leather cover, the Bible is impressive in its contents. In addition to the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, it contains many special features: a Bible dictionary; a history of the books of the bible, accounts of the patriarchs, prophets and kings; a natural history of the bible, describing animals, birds, insects and reptiles found in the bible; and, much more. All this is complimented by over 2500 illustrations on steel and wood, many of which are in color.

Just as interesting from another perspective is the story of the original owners of the bible and how it passed to Dick Mullineaux's hands. Dick writes of his maternal grandparents: "My grandmother, Stella Withrow, was a very strong willed and independent woman. She was born in Montrose, Iowa on October 15, 1859 and went to eastern Oregon in 1884 to live with her married sister. In 1886 she homesteaded, as a single woman, a tract of land in Ashland in southwest Oregon. After completing the necessary 5 years living on the homestead for it to become her property she met and married Edwin Drew. He was a surveyor on the right of way for the railroad that connects California with Oregon and Washington. He lived in Ashland while surveying the route over the mountains which divide Oregon and California. They were married in Ashland on Nov. 30, 1892. My mother, Mary Lorene, the youngest of 3 children, was born on Dec. 29 1896. The bible went from my grandparents to their oldest daughter, Genevieve, and from her to her only child, a son. He contacted me about 25 years ago and said I could have the bible if I would pay the shipping costs, which I did. I found the one remaining classical bookbinder in Houston who refurbished it to it's present condition. It occupied a prominent position in our living room until I sold the house after Karen died."

The Bible now rests in the Schulman Library on a special stand on top of the cabinet next to the card catalog. Please come take a look at this beautiful volume. Of particular interest might be the section "A History of All Religious Denominations". Check out its descriptions of Unitarianism and Universalism. You might be pleasantly surprised.

The Emerson High School-aged Youth are **hosting a District-wide Rally** on Martin Luther King weekend, January 2010. We will be welcoming nearly 100 Youth.

We are asking for volunteers from the Emerson Congregation to participate in a Potluck Supper on Saturday January 16th. We would like the Guest Chefs to join us for the Saturday evening meal! The Emerson Youth will be in the Gathering Place on Sundays to recruit Guest Chefs

COMING ATTRACTION

Love is usually credited as the basis for a healthy relationship, but other qualities are needed as well: generosity, collaboration, and play, to name a few. These elements will be explored in Principled Commitment, a series of adult workshops for couples offered in the spring through our Adult Religious Education program.

The 7-week series is free and open to married or partnered couples – of all gender combinations – seeking to enhance good relationships. It is not designed to fix broken relationships. Following the introduction, the workshop will explore the concepts of humility, trust, dignity, generosity, connection, play, collaboration, commitment, love, and celebration.

This workshop, part of UUA's developing *Tapestry of Faith* program, will be led by our own Kay Kamas and Jim Porter. Participation will be limited to 10 couples and is scheduled for April 9/10 to May 21/22. The workshop will start and end with Friday evening/Saturday workshops, with Friday evening workshops in the intervening weeks. Details, including registration information, will be provided in the Spring. Child care will be offered. Should you have any questions, you can contact Kay or Jim.

And now a note 🎵 from your

Interim Director of Religious Education...Barbara Gay Stoddard

I don't need to tell you all how amazing you all are - you already know. You have a wonderful group of children and youth, and adults who have demonstrated more than once this fall their compassion. To name a few: following an accessibility audit by the 2nd/3rd grade class, the Board of Trustees has agreed to correct the items reported and plan to make changes in other areas where accessibility is not as it should be. The Sr. Youth Group demonstrates exceptional leadership skills; planning a large Rally for the SW District Youth at Emerson in January, and is in the process of raising money so that some of their members will be able to attend General Assembly in June. Coming of Age youth and their mentors have begun the process of exploring their beliefs. Families have joined in various Social Justice Projects, put on an exceptional UNICEF carnival and are involved in the adult religious educational opportunities. Several folks have taken training in the sexuality education program entitled "Our Whole Lives," (OWL) so that we can teach the OWL curriculum in the future to our K-1st grade, 4th – 6th grade, Jr. and Sr. High and Adult groups. Currently, we are sponsoring the 7th – 9th grade OWL program for 30 Houston Area UU Youth. None of the above accomplishments have occurred or can continue to occur without your continued volunteer ministry to the people in this beloved community.

The Religious Education Committee developed a new safety policy to address: Medical Emergencies, Illness, Building Safety, and Privacy. Currently the committee is reviewing its vision and mission and committee structure. The committee is also examining models & philosophy towards the development of quality religious education programming.

The Board of Trustees is in the process of selecting a DRE (Director of Religious Education) Search Committee. This committee will begin work in January, 2010 and you will have a new permanent, professional, experienced director by August, 2011. Part of the search committee's work will include conversations with the entire community to discern your vision for religious education.

This is what I know to be true; it is not enough to have wonderful ideas and to share your vision about the ministry of religious education at Emerson. You must also consider what contributions you can make to accomplish the vision and mission of the community.

I feel such excitement and joy in the present RE program and I'm feeling the remarkably positive energy growing as we consider the future of RE. Come, come whoever you are; wonderer, worshiper, lover of leaving. Ours is no caravan of despair. Come, yet again, Come! Join us on this dynamic joyful beloved journey!

Just a thought....Barbara Gay Stoddard

Rebuilding Together Houston

A big round of applause for the following volunteers who built a wheelchair ramp, rebuilt a ramshackle addition, and painted the exterior of Ms. Gwendola Archie's home. UU volunteers and their friends ranged from teens to seniors:

Thank you: Tara Wells, Kay Kamas, Allyson and Moira Applebaum, Ariel and Cordelia Wilks, Andrew Hager, Jonathan Watson, David Bates, Annette Rybiski, Dodie McKellar, Kevin Crotty, Tony Collins, Bob Hopkins, Bruce Baskett, Clinton Hopper, Joe Shulsky, Mark, Christel, and Katy Collins, Mackenzie and Carla Hill, Bill Burchfiel, Tineke Berends and Nienka Sexton, Marthe Schreitmuller and Mark Edmiston-Lange. Thanks also to Louise Parmely who made a lovely lap quilt for Ms. Archie, who always feels cold. Thanks as well to Leticia Anderson, Rita Louks, Sally Phillips, and Peggy Sweeney, who fed the hungry, hard working volunteers. Special thanks to Tony Collins and Bob Hopkins, without whose tireless help, we couldn't get started or finished!

The next work dates will be the middle two Saturdays in April, 2010. If you missed this one but would like to get on the contact list, contact Laura Emerson.



Welcome M.A.T. encourages you to join us Sunday, December 13 after church for the third film in our series; the film will be Jeffrey. This is a romantic comedy about a young man who decides to be celibate in the face of A.I.D.S/H.I.V. Just as he does that, he meets the man of his dreams, who turns out to be H.I.V. positive. Can this romance be saved?

The movie is from 1995 and stars Steven Weber, Patrick Stewart and Nathan Lane and is based upon a play by Paul Rudnick (who wrote the movie Addams Family Values, among others). We will meet in Delaney Hall, room 205/206 at 1:00 PM. A selection of sandwiches and iced tea will be available for lunch in the room for a donation. Childcare is provided free of charge, but please help us plan adequately for childcare needs by calling the Church at (713) 782-8250 by Thursday, Dec 10. The film lasts approximately 95 minutes with discussion of the film afterwards.

“SERVICE IS OUR PRAYER”

Social Action Council has been busy this quarter. **SAC** special collections, along with other groups at Emerson, have collected over \$33,600 for outreach as of November 16th. Most of this money has been distributed to local charities and areas of need. We have agreed to sponsor three international UU students. Two high school students in India and One college student in Transylvania. Locally Emerson Church has collected and delivered \$400 for **school supplies** to Gordon and Bonner Elementary Schools, and \$400 to **Family Services of Greater Houston** for distribution of school supplies and uniforms. We also gave \$7,991 to **Interfaith Ministries** for food for the **Houston Food Bank**. We are supporting three local college students by providing money for tuition and books.

Other programs include collecting day old donuts every Friday and Saturday morning from Shipley's and delivering them to **Loaves and Fishes** catholic charity down town. We also participate in the annual **Crop Walk** where we had over thirty walkers. Down from last year, but still a significant number. Emersonians, along with other UUs and local neighbors spent time with **Rebuilding Together Houston** over four Saturdays this Fall restoring Mrs. Archies home in the near Fifth Ward of Houston.

We are currently looking at participating in a **Micro Loan** project and working with a local community organizing group **Texans Together**.

Come join us on the first Sunday of the month at 12:45 in room 205 in Delaney Hall.

New Positions within the Arts at Emerson

Many of you may have noticed a recent change in our Sunday morning choir line-up. It is an official change, made with the happy cooperation of all involved.

John Branch, previously our choir director, is now Artistic Director of Emerson. As such, he is in charge of all our performing arts enterprises including the production of all performance.

Bonnie Wellington, who was previously alto section lead, is now our choir director.

We have two new section leads in our choir: Abigail Levis is leading the alto section, and Adrian Rodriguez is leading the men.

Meanwhile, the Emerson Intergenerational Orchestra is celebrating the return of Bill Atkerson and is profoundly grateful to Bonnie Wellington and Allyson Applebaum for leading the orchestra to a wonderful concert last September while Bill was out of the country.

An EPIC Event

Saturday, December 12 SPECIAL TIME!! 1:00 PM

Join EPIC as we celebrate the Holiday movie season! On Saturday, December 12, EPIC will sponsor a field trip to see the matinee showing of Clint Eastwood's new movie, Invictus, and then for Happy Hour drinks.

Childcare is available. So we can plan for your childcare needs, please call Nancy at the church (713) 782-8250 before Thursday December 10. For more information, contact Alisha Loftin.

Upcoming visit to our Partner Church

Are you interested in taking a trip to Transylvania sometime during the summer of 2010? The trip would include visits to the historic sites of Kolozsvár, Deva, and Torda, as well as time in our Partner Church's town of St. Nicholas. If it sounds interesting, contact deForest Ralph.