



WILDFLOWER CHURCH

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
AUSTIN, TEXAS

December 2011

Transforming lives

Volume 11, No. 12

THE GIFT OF WARMTH AND FRIENDSHIP

December's gifts—custom, ceremony, celebration. A month of sharing memories. As we untie the gifts of this joyous season, let us remember the ties that bind our gifts of warmth and friendship. How do we view ourselves here at Wildflower? Are we authentic as we go about our Sunday service ritual? We come together in friendship to share ourselves and to reach out to others who need warmth and help on their spiritual journey.

As each of us ponder these questions within ourselves, let us search our hearts for compassion and understanding for those in our church family that are volunteering to be on the front lines of this very important service. Each of us in this church community have at some time been the recipient of this warmth and caring. So as members, we extend to visitors each Sunday the same warmth and caring. It is not just the responsibility of certain members to extend a hand in friendship. the entire membership must reach out and extend a welcome to each and every visitor just as you would do in your own home.

We are a loving and compassionate community. let us be sure to recognize those that make that extra effort to be the face of Wildflower every Sunday and help spread the warmth and friendship we all enjoy by stepping up and extending a hand of welcome.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Saturday, December 24
5 p.m. in the Sanctuary at FPC

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Sunday, December 25
11:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary at FPC

WILDFLOWER'S ELEVEN NEW MEMBERS

Please give a very warm welcome to new members who joined the church this fall! Now "they are a part of us and we are a part of them."



Nancy Amos
Emma Beverage
Linda Beverage
Ken Bleyer
Patches Brashear
Karen Collett
Dennis Cook
Richard Cowley
Susan Hightower
Ross Jones
David Moore



AUSTIN INTERFAITH NEIGHBORHOOD WALK

Wildflowers and students from Travis High School's College Forward program participated in an Austin Interfaith neighborhood walk on November 19 to ask residents what their hopes and concerns are for the community. Many thanks to all who were able to attend!



Rev. Eliza Galaher

WALKING TOGETHER – THE GIFT

The other day a friend said to me “This Christmas, I just want to give ducks and geese and cows and stuff.” Of course, she was talking about the Heifer Project, and how that organization provides opportunities for people to purchase livestock in honor of a friend or family member, the livestock being sent to families from all over the world in need of renewable sources of nourishment and income. My friend’s comment got me thinking, how do I want to spend Christmas? What gifts can I offer to my friends and family? (Does my friend know she’s now set herself up to get a bunny rabbit sent in her name to a family in Peru?) How will you be spending your Christmas? Do your children or grandchildren really need more plastic toys? Do you really need more clothes? (Do I really need more books, when I’ve got a giant pile of unread books already awaiting me?) Maybe so. But maybe you also want to offer to people the gift of your time, the gift of your creativity. Maybe you can offer the gift of simplicity—the simplicity of being together, doing service, remembering the true spirit of Christmas, which, whatever your theological beliefs, has never been about consumerism, but about always hope and love.

~ Eliza

IF YOU NEED TO TALK, WE’RE HERE TO LISTEN

“Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand.” ~ Sue Patton Thoele

Members of Wildflower’s Listening Ministry do not consider themselves trained counselors, nor do they try to take the place of our minister, but instead, act as skilled helpmates who practice the art of compassionate community by listening to the thoughts and concerns of individuals trying to work through various life challenges. Current members include: Janie Bolger, Debbie Groves, Gary Lichtenstein, Jean McDermott, Frances Osborne, and Karen Schrupp. If you are in need of a caring, attentive presence or want to know more, please contact Reverend Eliza at minister@wildflowerchurch.org.

WHAT’S A WILDFLOWER ORIENTATION?

Wildflower’s orientations are a great way to meet new friends, talk with the minister, and find out more about the church. During each two-hour orientation Rev. Eliza explains the church’s mission and how the church’s programs implement our mission. She also discusses membership requirements and answers lots of questions about Unitarian Universalism and the church. Participants have a chance to eat lunch and share their spiritual journeys. Child care is provided on request. We’re offering three orientations in 2012. If you’re interested in joining the church, please contact the Membership Committee at membership@wildflowerchurch.org.

STEWARDSHIP ROUND-UP



Cathy Cramer, Stewardship Chair

Several people have come up to me in the last few weeks asking about the next step for Wildflower, in light of the pledges we have received. Thanks to a number of different factors, I am happy to report that we are doing just fine. First, our pledge income has risen a bit: we now have 141 pledging households for a total of \$183,726. Second, our committees have been frugal this year, and we are facing a \$10,000 surplus in the budget that will be applied to next year. Finally, the Board decided to decrease the amount of money that we give to the UUA and to the Southwest District. Wildflower has been a Fair Share congregation since joining the UUA in 2005, but desperate times call for desperate measures. The Board plans to return to Fair Share status as soon as we are able. So, although times are tough, we have much to be thankful for this holiday season! And on that note, Ann Steine is organizing a Holiday Bazaar after church in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 17. It’s a great opportunity to buy special gifts for loved ones, keep money local, and support our fabulous Wildflower artists. Feel free to contact Ann for more information at 512-936-5128. Hope to see you there.

~ Cathy

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

December 4 – Rev. Galaher

Drag Racing on William Cannon

Henry David Thoreau wrote, “Why should we live in such a hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. I wish to live deliberately, to front only the essentials of life.” Where and how are we hurrying our lives? How are we living deliberately? Lay Leader: Martha Allen. Service Coordinator: Janet Spencer.

December 11 – Antaro Burke guest speaker.

The Denial of Death

About 25 years ago, I was bowled over on first reading of Ernest Becker’s brilliant exegesis on the central overriding dilemma of man’s existence, The Denial of Death. I want to share and discuss Becker’s painful insights, contrasting them with some of the contrary spiritual experiences involving “life after death” that I and others have had. I will also integrate this with the rich framework of death and dying of Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow, in their work, Thank God for Evolution. Lay Leader: Janet Spencer. Service Coordinator: Allen Fisher.

December 18 – Rev. Galaher

And the People of the Earth Were Glad: A Celebration of Winter Holy Days

Join us for this annual intergenerational service in which we celebrate the holy days and nights of winter. Lay Leader: Cathy Cramer. Service Coordinator: Michael Stanbury.

December 24 – Rev. Galaher

In this Night: A Christmas Eve Service

Wildflower will hold a 5 p.m. Christmas Eve service for people of all ages, singing, sharing readings, and remembering the gifts of hope, faith, and love. Service Coordinator: Jan Austin.

December 25 – Rev. Galaher

The Work of Christmas

With Christmas falling on Sunday morning, we will gather in celebration, remembrance and reflection for a special Christmas Sunday service. Ly Leader: Kathy Murphy. Service Coordinator: Allen Fisher.



OUR WELCOME MINISTRY

Do you remember the friendly greeting you got when you first came to Wildflower? Our church believes welcoming is an important ministry, especially for newcomers searching for a religious community where they can feel at home.

At Wildflower, five teams welcome people to church—one team each Sunday. Five greeters serve on each team. Their mission is to smile and extend a warm welcome to everyone who comes to our door. Here’s what they do:

- ☼ One greeter stands outside the door, hands out Orders of Service, and says, “Welcome to Wildflower!”
- ☼ Another stands inside and says, “Hi!” while handing out Orders of Service.
- ☼ Another stands at the Visitor Table and says, “Welcome!” while helping visitors with name tags.
- ☼ Yet another stands at the hymnal cart and says, “Hi!” while handing out hymnals.
- ☼ And finally, the team leader keeps things organized and says, “Hello and welcome to Wildflower.”

Can you say “Hi!” on one Sunday a month? Or serve as a substitute greeter? If you can smile and extend a warm welcome to everyone who comes to our door, please contact our new greeter coordinator, Diane Purcell,

membership@wildflowerchurch.org



Penny Burnette

We will have regular classes on December 4 and 11. Everyone is invited to attend the intergenerational services on December 18 and 25.

NURSERY

A combined Infant care is now available for Wildflower and Faith members. The infant nursery, located just north of the Fellowship Hall, has been painted and decorated and is now ready for use! The nursery is for babies 6 weeks and older. They can stay with the two caregivers or a parent is welcome to be with their baby. We have a rocking chair and plenty of cribs for naps. The service can be



heard through speakers in the room, so parents are welcome to stay with their babies and enjoy the service. We will offer toddler care as always in the CDC building in the classroom on the right that has so many wonderful toys and activities.

HALLOWEEN FUN HAD BY ONE AND ALL



YOUTH NEWS

This Fall has been a great start for me as the new Youth Director. We have some wonderful youth. We all really enjoyed the Southwest district rally at First UU San Antonio. The kids and I were able to meet UU youth and youth advisers from Houston, Dallas, Baton Rouge and Oklahoma City. A rally is a youth conference both the provides fellowship and connection for UU Youth and gives them a chance to participate in a social action project. The social action project in San Antonio was at Haven for Hope, a campus of charity organizations that provide services to the homeless. They volunteered by cleaning up the campus. Also, two from our group participated in the Youth talent show and were quite excellent!

In December, we have a few fun activities planned. We will hike and have a picnic at Mary Moore Searight Park on December 4. Sadly, we have had to cancel the U-Bar-U Youth Retreat, December 2-4 due to scheduling conflicts.

Even more exciting is our Holiday Ice Cream Social, planned for Sunday, December 11, from 11:30 to 1 p.m. in the Youth Room at FPC. We have invited the Faith youth to join us. We will eat ice cream with a ridiculous amount of candy on top, decorate a tree, play holiday games and get to know each other better. Happy Holidays!

~ Laura



BLUEBONNET ELDER COVENANT HAS A NEW MEETING LOCATION

Beginning January 1, the Bluebonnet Elder Covenant will meet on the first Wednesday of every month at the Manchaca Library, and on the third Wednesday of every month at the home of Alice Tharinger, 2200 Panther Trail #411. Meetings are from 2 to 4 p.m.



WANT TO HELP UU CHURCHES? BECOME A CHALICE LIGHTER

The Unitarian Universalist Chalice Lighter Program is an opportunity for congregants to assist with various needs of other Unitarian Universalist churches. Wildflower was the recipient of a grant when we first began. Eliza mentioned the historical facts and all the good the Chalice Lighter money can do. Kelly Ramsey recently sent in a long list of new Chalice Lighters, still hoping for 100%, even in difficult financial times. What does this mean? It means you get a notice by mail who has won the grant for the money specified. It requests only \$30 per year, or \$10 per seasonal call. If Wildflower wants to ask for a future grant, we would love to have a certain percentage of our members onboard.

Please see Kelly Ramsey, Chalice Lighter Liaison, to sign up. She'll be around after church with her clipboard, or you can call her at 512-326-5618 to sign up.

MEETINGS OF UU GROUPS THAT DRAW MEMBERSHIP FROM AREA UU CHURCHES/FELLOWSHIP

Heritage Book Club meets Friday, December 9. The Heritage Book Club welcomes people who enjoy rich dialogue around a different book each month. We meet at 7 p.m. for a pot luck dinner and start the discussion at 8 p.m. For location information or directions, call Tom Moran at 512-233-6488. Having read the book is not a prerequisite for participation.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Austin Philosophical Discussion Group. This group informally examines the philosophical ideas and assumptions that influence our contemporary worldviews. The exact topic and date for the meeting is set at the previous meeting of the group. Meetings are on a Tuesday evening each month at 5930 Republic of Texas Blvd., Austin TX 78735. For more information, contact Mike Pore at 512-892-4790.

ANNOUNCING FIFTH ANNUAL AMY YOUNG MEMORIAL SERVICE TRIP DATE AND PLACE

The fifth annual Amy Young Memorial Service Trip is now in the planning for March 10-17. We will return to Turley, Oklahoma. Because we had a successful, rich, and rewarding experience including children and teens last year, we are again opening the trip up to children and teens, as well as adults. Requirements include having health insurance and, if you're a minor, having a parent or guardian with you. So if you're interested in expanding your sense of community, as well as your assumptions about how you can contribute to the good of humanity and the good of the earth, save the dates and come along! Peace and thanks,

~ Eliza

NO IMPACT MAN



The Wildflower Sustainability team is inviting ALL Wildflower members and friends to a relaxing afternoon showing of the DVD "No Impact Man", a funny look at what happens when a family in New York City tries to live for one year without creating any negative environmental impact. The film will be shown on December 3 at 2 p.m. at the home of Karen Schrupp, 6000 Cannon Mountain Drive, 512-394-1169. Light refreshments and good conversation will be provided. Children are welcome. If you've ever had an interest in the Sustainability Team, this is a great opportunity to visit with them. We hope to see you there!

ADULT PROGRAMMING

Visit our table at FPC or email adultprograms@wildflowerchurch.org. All classes will take place in the Parlor at Faith Presbyterian Church. The courses will also be integrating the theme of Standing on the Side of Love.

** indicates that childcare is available; please email adultprograms@wildflowerchurch.org or indicate when you sign up for the course that you would like childcare.

We will be registering for our Winter schedule of offerings during December. Our courses are:

- ☼ Money, Money, Money: Standing on the Side of Love with Our Money – Cathy Cramer
- ☼ Immigration as a Moral Issue – Rev. Eliza Galaher
- ☼ Study of Gnostic gospels: Thomas and Mary – Annice Ellington (co-sponsored by Faith and Wildflower)
- ☼ UU 102: Principles of Unitarian Universalism – Mike Ignatowski

In mid-December, visit our table at FPC or register by emailing us at adultprograms@wildflowerchurch.org. We will also have more information in the weekly and Sunday email announcements and on the web about the schedule and courses.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY HAPPENINGS (alphabetical order)

7/12 Recovery Ministry meets Monday, December 5 and 19. 7/12 Recovery Ministry meetings, based on 12-step programs and the 7 principles of Unitarian Universalism, are open to all Wildflowers whose lives are (or have been) affected by addiction or compulsive behaviors, and meet twice a month, on the first and third Monday evenings, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Classroom I at FPC. Contact Helen Burnette, burnette.helen516@gmail.com or Bobbie Erb, 512-825-1373 for more information.

Buddhist Meditation and Study Group meets Thursday, December 8 and 22. If you are interested in Buddhism and in developing a meditation practice, this group can be a resource and support for you. Participants study and discuss books by Buddhist teachers, and meditate for 25 minutes at each meeting. The group meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm in Classroom I at FPC. Contact Helen Burnette at burnette.helen516@gmail.com for more information.

Conversation Café meets Saturday, December 17, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Hampton Branch of the Austin Public Library, Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Road. Don't miss this opportunity for meaningful conversation and great fellowship. We welcome your presence. There are no books to read or assignments, just interesting conversations. The group meets the third Saturday of each month. For more information, contact Joan Harman at 512-454-3160 or wildflowerconversationcafe@gmail.com.

Grow Your Inner Wildflower meets Wednesday, December 14 and 28 at 6:30 pm in members' homes. It is a self-development and support group that shares emotional support, practical coping skills, and strategies with the goal of empowering members toward personal growth, positive changes, and healing. Topics discussed include assertiveness, relationships, loneliness, stress, co-dependency, and

emotional issues. Members will conduct exercises and activities that allow them to practice the concepts discussed. If interested, contact Marilyn Stone at 512-644-1814 or marilyn934@yahoo.com.

Soul Collage® Group meets Sunday, December 18. Soul Collage® engages participants in using images to explore the inner landscape of their soul. This creative and intuitive process allows people to access their inner wisdom, explore feelings and thoughts about life's purpose and foster a deeper spiritual connection. Intrigued? New members—men and women—are welcome! The group meets in members' homes. If you're interested in learning more and discovering the location of this month's group, contact Pat Laird, pflaird@austin.rr.com, or 512-282-2551.

Wildflower Choir meets Wednesday, December 7 and 14. "Sing and Rejoice!" Those two words really do seem to go together, don't they? Find out why by coming to a Wildflower Choir rehearsal any Wednesday night at 7:30 pm in the Multipurpose Room at FPC. In addition, you may find that you can participate in and contribute to the worship service on Sundays. Come give it a try and you, too, can "sing and rejoice." For information, contact Elke Baitis, Choir Director at 512-228-7699.

Wildflower Minds Connect meets Tuesday, December 6. People who have been diagnosed at any time in their lives with a mental illness are invited to join Wildflower Minds Connect. This covenant group meets to encourage deep connections with one another as well as foster an environment of sharing, support, and encouragement. We will be meeting on the first Tuesday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Parlor at FPC. If you have any questions, please contact Danna Luther at danna@dluther.com or 512-567-6997.



**GREAT WEIGH IN
NOVEMBER 20**



**NOVEMBER 13 POT
LUCK WITH
WILDFLOWER
AND FAITH**



**HONORING VETERANS
ON NOVEMBER 6**



**GIVING LIFE THE SHAPE
OF JUSTICE:
TOP TEN REASONS FOR
ATTENDING GA 2012**



10. You'll meet old friends and make new friends from all over the country.
9. You'll renew your spirit.
8. You'll feel the power of justice, compassion and love.
7. You'll stand on the side of love.
6. You'll represent freedom of conscience and the democratic process.
5. You'll be inspired to make the world a better place for all.
4. You'll learn to deepen your understanding and expand your vision.
3. You'll embrace the worth and dignity of every person.
2. You'll speak out for justice, equity and compassion.
1. **You will give your life the shape of justice.**

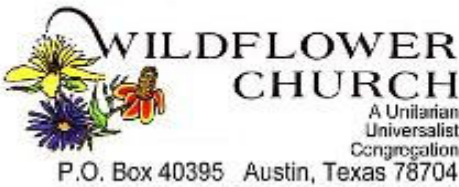
**COME TO PHOENIX, AZ
JUNE 20-24, 2012**

COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

We, the members of Wildflower Church, covenant:

- ☸ to extend the welcome, hospitality, and acceptance at Wildflower Church that we would wish to receive
- ☸ to keep the well being of the whole Wildflower Church community at the forefront of our work to practice caring for one another, especially in times of need
- ☸ to contribute to the mission of Wildflower Church while practicing self-care and staying mindful of our own needs
- ☸ to practice mutual responsibility and shared leadership
- ☸ to inform ourselves and others about church roles and resources
- ☸ to engage in direct, respectful communication and active listening, particularly in times of conflict and misunderstanding, and
- ☸ to honor and celebrate our differences.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, thus do we uphold this covenant.



Minister

Rev. Eliza C. Galaher
minister@wildflowerchurch.org

Director of Religious Education

Penny Burnette
dre@wildflowerchurch.org

Acting Youth Director

Laura Miller
mrssockterrier@gmail.com

Office Administrator

Dotti Sizer
office@wildflowerchurch.org

Bookkeeper

Cindy Steel
bookkeeper@wildflowerchurch.org

**Sunday Worship Service and
Children's Religious Education
11:30 a.m.**

Sunday services held at the
Faith Presbyterian Church
1314 E. Oltorf
Austin, Texas
(Located west of the intersection of
Oltorf and I-35)

Website: Please visit our website for
the latest information:
www.wildflowerchurch.org

Message Phone: (512) 428-9464
Email: office@wildflowerchurch.org

Office

(staffed on Tuesday and Fridays)
1314 E. Oltorf
PO Box 40395
Austin, TX 78704-7659

Wildflower Church Mission

Wildflower Church is a deliberately inclusive, open-minded religious community in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. We joyfully nurture one another in our lifelong spiritual journeys, and we commit to transforming ourselves and the world around us through acts of compassion, love, and social justice.

Newsletter Submissions

The deadline for the January issue is December 15.
Send submissions to newsletter@wildflowerchurch.org.
Newsletter editor: Dotti Sizer
Newsletter copyeditor: Holly Gonzalez

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Send questions and/or comments regarding church matters to board@wildflowerchurch.org
Eva Andries, Chris Brewster, Terri Everett, Matthew Markert,
Charlie Moss, Andi Napier, Kelly Ramsey, Lois Smith, Larry Thompson,
Rev. Eliza Galaher (ex officio)