

**First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of
Houston**

FALL 2023 PROGRAMS



ives
of the
pirit



ABOUT FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF HOUSTON

Located in Houston's Museum District, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston is a growing, covenantal spiritual community. This faith community has been a beacon of inclusive religion since 1914 in the most populous city in the southern United States.

Across the globe, our legacy reaches back centuries to liberal religious pioneers in England, Poland, India, and Transylvania. In North America, both Unitarians and Universalists can trace their roots to the early religious communities in Massachusetts and the framers of the Constitution.

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston is 'Widening Love's Circle' by honoring the inherent worth and dignity of all, advancing justice and religious pluralism, and inspiring an ever-deepening spirituality.

We are excited to bring you this brochure of the Fall's opportunities. We hope you will join us as we explore ways to grow spiritually and uncover meaning from many diverse viewpoints.

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**A MESSAGE FROM
REV. DR. COLIN BOSSEN**

Thank you for picking up our program book! We have a lot of exciting programs to offer. In this book, you'll find something for all ages.



Carol Burrus, Director of Religious Community, has information about our adult programs and religious education for children and youth. Dr. Jolie Rocke, Director of Music, provides chances to engage in the arts and music--including an invitation to join our wonderful Sanctuary Choir.

In the pages of this book longtime members are sure to encounter the familiar things that have kept them coming back to First Unitarian Universalist. And I anticipate that new members and friends will discover something of what makes our congregation such a wonderful community.

"Life is just a chance to grow a soul," preached Unitarian Minister A. Powell Davies. And over the course of the program year we will be exploring the lives and teachings of ten religious leaders or spiritual activists who grew beautiful souls. Each month, you will have multiple opportunities to participate: through worship, through covenant groups, through a book group, through exploring the readings we share in the service and through a workshop. I hope that you will take Lives of the Spirit as an opportunity to deepen your own spirituality and explore the many ways that people have grown their souls.

But mostly, I hope that you will take this program book for what it is: an invitation to participate in a religious community where we are devoted to widening love's circle and encouraging each other.

love,
Colin



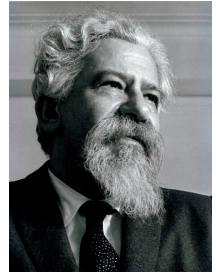
LIVES OF THE SPIRIT

Because part of the mission of our congregation is to increase opportunities for the transformative spiritual growth of members and seekers, this Fall we will explore the lives and teachings of some of the great religious leaders of the last century.

We are calling this exciting program Lives of the Spirit. Each month, you will have multiple opportunities to participate: a worship service will discuss the spiritual biography of the religious leader; covenant groups in English and Spanish will provide an opportunity to reflect on the significance of their lives; a book group will engage one of the leader's seminal works; then a lecture or workshop will bring a specialist on the individual to engage and enlighten us.

Lives
of the
Spirit

SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS
Introduction to Lives of the Spirit,
Awe and Meaningful Life:
Abraham Joshua Heschel



Worship: Sunday, September 10
Introduction to Lives of the Spirit



Worship: Sunday, September

We will ¹⁷observe Rosh Hashanah with a special service done in coordination with Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss and Cantorial Soloist Hannah Madeline Goodman of Congregation Shma Koleniu.



Worship: Sunday, September

Divine ²⁴Pathos: **Abraham Joshua Heschel**

Abraham Joshua Heschel, the rabbi and social justice activist



Covenant Groups: Sunday, September 17, 1:00 PM

Tuesday, September 19, 6:30 PM

Grupos de alianza: Thursday, September 21, 6:30 PM



Minister's Book Group: Tuesdays, September 12, 7:00 PM
September 26, 7:00 PM

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man's Quest for God*;
Albert Raboteau, *American Prophets*, xiii-25
(recommended).



Workshop:

September 28, 2023

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

"Awe and a Meaningful life: Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel"

led by Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss and Craig Oettinger

OCTOBER PROGRAMS
Borderlands: Gloria Anzaldúa



Worship: **Sunday, October 15**

Gloria Anzaldúa, the Texas born queer scholar and spiritual activist.



Covenant Groups: **Sunday, October 15, 1:00 PM**

Tuesday, October 17, 6:30 PM

Grupos de alianza: **Thursday, October 19, 6:30 PM**



Minister's Book Group: **Tuesdays, October 10, 7:00 PM**

October 24, 7:00 PM

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*



Workshop:

Thursday, October 12

6:30 PM

"Spiritual Activism in Our Times: the Borderlands and Gloria Anzaldúa."

led by Professor Brenda Sendejo

Professor Brenda Sendejo, Ph.D currently serves as Associate Professor and Chair of Feminist Studies at Southwestern University, and affiliate faculty in Anthropology, Latin American and Border Studies, and Race and Ethnicity Studies.

NOVEMBER PROGRAMS
Works of Mercy: **Dorothy Day**



Worship: **Sunday, November 12**
Dorothy Day, the founder of the
Catholic Worker movement.



Covenant Groups: **Sunday, November 19, 1:00 PM**
Tuesday, November 21, 6:30 PM
Grupos de alianza: **Thursday, November 23, 6:30 PM**



Minister's Book Group: **Tuesdays, November 14, 7:00 PM**
November 28, 7:00 PM

Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*;
Albert Raboteau, *American Prophets*, 63-94
(recommended).



Workshop:
Saturday, November 11
1:00 PM

led by Dawn McCarty of Casa Juan Diego.

Professor Dawn McCarty, Ph.D is the Director of the Bachelor of Social Work Program at the University of Houston-Downtown. She lives part-time in community as a Catholic Worker at Casa Juan Diego where she works directly with Houston's refugee, asylum seeking, and new immigrant communities.

DECEMBER PROGRAMS

The Common Good: **Howard Thurman**



Worship: Sunday, December 3

Howard Thurman, the minister,
theologian, and civil rights
activist



Covenant Groups: Sunday, December 17, 1:00 PM
Tuesday, December 19, 6:30 PM
Grupos de alianza: Thursday, December 21, 6:30 PM



Minister's Book Group: Tuesdays, December 5, 7:00 PM
December 12, 7:00 PM

Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*;
Albert Raboteau, *American Prophets*, 95-118
(recommended).



Workshop:

Saturday, December 2
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

"Emancipatory Premises"

led by Omowale Luthuli-Allen.

Omowale Luthuli-Allen is a human rights activist and community activist. Along with a core group of student activists, he co-led the fight to bring democracy to the University of Houston, graduating from the University of Houston in 1970- B.A. Political Science.

JANUARY PROGRAMS

The Practice of Nonpractice: **Thich Nhat Han**



Worship: **Sunday, January 21**

Thich Nhat Han, the monk and spiritual activist who helped to introduce Zen Buddhism to the United States.



Covenant Groups: **Sunday, January 21, 1:00 PM**
Tuesday, January 16, 6:30 PM
Grupos de alianza: **Thursday, January 18, 6:30 PM**



Minister's Book Group: **Tuesdays, January 9, 7:00 PM**
January 30, 7:00 PM

Thich Nhat Han, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*



Workshop:
Saturday, January 20
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

"Engaged Buddhism"

led by Rebecca McIlwain

Rebecca McIlwain is the Community Outreach Coordinator at Texas Climate Jobs Project. A longtime community organizer, she spent ten years living as a Buddhist monk.

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN:
RENEW, REBUILD, REJOICE!**



**Renew
Rebuild
Rejoice!**

Renew, Rebuild, Rejoice! is the theme of our 2023 Capital Campaign, launching October 1. This campaign will raise the resources needed to carry out our congregational vision of Widening Love's Circle. By inspiring pledges, to be paid over a 3-year period, the capital campaign will fund a variety of building enhancements identified as priorities by the congregation.

The capital funds will help us to enact our newly-adopted mission by doing such things as:

1. Becoming more ecologically responsible by installing new energy-efficient windows, lights and HVAC systems; mounting rooftop solar panels to produce most of our own electricity; and adding bike racks.
2. Expanding and deepening our intergenerational community by upgrading religious education spaces, improving technology to make worship services more accessible both in-person and online, and installing a dishwasher and ice maker to facilitate gatherings and special events.
3. Strengthening our commitment to social justice by enhancing our building's ADA accessibility, seeking out local and minority-owned contractors whenever possible, adding a water source that can be used by passers-by, and upgrading spaces used for community meetings and gatherings.

Visiting stewards will reach out to congregation members and pledging friends beginning in Fall 2023.

Your Capital Campaign team members are:
Peggy Harvey and Paige Powell, Co-Chairs
Sheryl Abrahams, Eileen Allan, Joe Lach and PD Wadler

Contact: stewardship@firstuu.org



ADULT PROGRAMS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Unitarian Universalists believe religious education involves learning for our whole lives. It is about personal growth and spiritual understanding. It is about engaging with the larger community and trying to make the world a better place. It is about learning to be our best selves. From regular yoga practice to exploring how to dismantle white supremacy culture in our book groups we cover a great deal of ground.

One of the best parts is getting to know others in small groups. Each participant has the opportunity to be heard and to listen and learn from others.

A MESSAGE FROM CAROL BURRUS

Unitarian Universalism has enriched my life. We hope your life will be enriched too. Here, you will find a community of people, learning, helping others, inspired to make the world a better place.



We invite you to be part of a small group in one (or more) of the many opportunities you will find in this booklet. There are ways to engage in the larger community. There are ways to create a more spiritual life or grow personally. There are places to be heard, to make friends and to feel supported. There are ways to find joy! We hope you will find something that fits your current needs. We hope you will find your way of getting connected....and soon!

GUIDED MINDFUL MEDITATION

A spiritual practice taking you through music, guided meditation on a variety of topics, more music, mindful listening and reflection.

Meets Sundays 8:55 - 9:45 AM by Zoom

SUNDAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE

All are welcome for fun, educational discussions on a variety of topics.

In this safe community, differing perspectives are shared and learning from each other is valued.

Meets via Zoom, hybrid some Sundays, 10:15 - 11:15 AM

PARENTS' GROUP

With a special focus on developmental issues for parents with babies, toddlers, and pre-school children, this group is open to all parents. Come to learn ways to have happy, healthy, satisfying family lives through gaining new ideas, getting support, and feeling the care of community.

Meets 1st & 3rd Sundays between services.

CHANGING WOMEN

Join this supportive women's wisdom circle and Earth-based spirituality discussion group. Alongside other women, reflect on the sacred at work in your life, inspired by readings from *Earth Medicine: Ancestors' Ways of Harmony for Many Moons* by Jamie Sams.

Meets Sundays, 9 - 10 AM, in person on 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays, online 1st & 3rd Sundays.



HOUSTON WOMENS' GROUP

A diverse, multi-generational feminist group of women. Each woman devines her own feminism. Join this group weekly, in person, for a featured presenter and discussion on topics and life experiences.

**Hybrid - in person & via Zoom Sundays
9:30 - 11:15 AM**

WEDNESDAY DISCUSSIONS

Join a discussion on a different topic each week, to learn and connect with others.

Wednesdays, 5 - 6 PM via Zoom

YOGA

Create stillness, space, silence in your mind, body, and spirit. Works for beginner and intermediate yoga participants.

Saturdays 10:15 - 11:15 AM

GARDEN TEAM

The Garden Team cares for our front garden throughout the year. While often a quiet, individual endeavor for members, the group works with the children in Fall & Spring to teach gardening skills & create joy at digging in the dirt and watching vegetables, herbs and flowers grow. Most members of the team water once a week, help with seasonal plantings, and have the opportunity to learn basic gardening from a few wise, experienced gardeners. If you'd like to learn, support the effort and care for a garden, join up!

CLIMATE ACTION TEAM

This team is working to make a difference in the lives of our congregants, the congregation's practices and building as well as the community at large, In addition the team hosts monthly plant-based potlucks combined with speakers, films, and opportunities to learn and engage with others to care for the earth.

Meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday evening, 6:30 - 7:45 PM online via Zoom.

JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

This group oversees all our outreach which includes working with immigration, voting, climate, refugees, The Metropolitan Organization, as well as our community service work.

Meets monthly on the 1st Wednesday, at 12 noon via Zoom

COMMUNITY PROJECTS TEAM

Opportunities throughout the year to help our larger community from giving blood, to donating food, to restoring homes & making food for homeless teenagers. Be on the team or come to one or more service events.

NEW PROGRAM! READINGS OVER COFFEE

Have you wanted a chance to connect with others about the readings and ideas shared in worship? Join our adult programs team for an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the themes over a cup of joe. Watch for more details soon.

Meets monthly on the 2nd & 4th Sundays, 10:30 - 11:30 AM in the Fireside Room

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Every Sunday morning we have engaging options for children & youth!

September to May, we have 5 groups on Sunday morning:

- 1) Our 9:30 Sunday Religious Education for all Ages,
- 2) 11:30 Spirit Play for ages 4-7,
- 3) 11:30 Spirit Explorers for ages 7-10
- 4) 11:30 YoUUth Unit for ages 11-14
- 5) 11:30 Youth Group for ages 15-18

On some Sundays, our two youth groups take walks to nearby green spaces. All ages engage in community service with non-profit organizations. For families of younger children, every Sunday, we end the hour with Closing Circle, when we sing songs, celebrate birthdays, share announcements and have a little time to get to know each other.

Five services per year are multi-generational, which means we create a worship for all ages and children stay with their families these Sundays: Water Communion, Bread Communion, Christmas Pageant, Flower Communion and a Summer multi-gen service.

We have monthly Saturday meet-ups at Levy park for families, for play, visiting and picnic dinner. We have monthly Parent's Night Out for parents to go out with each other and have free childcare at the church. We also schedule occasional walks to the park after Sunday service.

OUR WHOLE LIVES SEXUALITY EDUCATION (OWL)

Our congregation and our denomination believe that sexuality is an important part of being human and since the 1970s have had comprehensive education for teens. More recently in the past two decades, Unitarian Universalists have had education for all age levels appropriate to the child, youth or adult's developmental level and point in life. We help youth with developing understanding, knowledge and judgement. We help parents become the best sexuality educators they can be.

At First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, we offer these levels of sexuality education for our children, youth and their families every or every other year: K-1st, 4th-6th and 7th-9th.

In 2023-2024 we offer 7th-9th in the Fall and K-1st in the Spring.

ARTS AT FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF HOUSTON

Our congregation recognizes that a vibrant arts community is integral to our religious life and community. Member volunteers, guests, and community collaborators present a wealth of diverse arts experiences during worship, special programs, workshops, the Spring Arts Festival, and excursions to arts venues throughout the year.

A MESSAGE FROM DR. JOLIE ROCKE

It is an honor to serve this congregation in planning worship and arts activities for this truly open and affirming religious community.



Throughout the year the congregation experiences various genres and styles from many cultures across all arts disciplines. It is also exciting to be part of the Association of UU Music Ministries where I get to share what we are doing and learn from so many others.

SANCTUARY CHOIR

If you love to sing, join our choir. Enjoy learning choral music from a variety of composers and styles to share in our Sunday services, twice a month. There is no audition required.

Rehearsals are Wednesdays, 7 - 8:30 PM.

ARTS TEAM

The Arts Team meets monthly to support and promote the arts at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston. Through creative discussion and planning we are working to build community & connections with institutions and residents of the Museum District and Greater Houston.

STRING BAND

From folk, to 60's rock, to sacred songs, this group meets for the love of music and the enjoyment of sharing it with others. Learn the ukulele or bring any stringed instrument to play-along and sing music. The group shares songs occasionally with the congregation in services and for special events. If you are interested in learning to play or bringing your instrumental musical experience to share, we hope you will join soon.

Meets three Sundays per month between services and a weeknight once per month at a member's home.

ARTS FORUM

The Arts Forum series occurs each 3rd Sunday from 10:45 - 11:15 AM in the sanctuary and focuses on linking social justice with the arts.

Upcoming Arts Forums:

September: Visual Arts w/Sarah Trotty

October: Poetry w/Sean Singer

November: *Aesthetic Inheritances* w/Stacey Allen

December: *Soul Collage* w/Laura Heidel

ARTS VOLUNTEERS

In addition to the choir, instrumentalists, song leaders, and other talented artists participate in worship services and programming. We welcome and appreciate those who share their creative gifts with the congregation.



**ESPECIALLY FOR BIPOC - BLACK,
INDIGENOUS, PEOPLE OF COLOR -
VISITORS AND MEMBERS**

Unitarian Universalism supports national groups for our BIPOC members.

**DRUUMM (Diverse, Revolutionary
Unitarian Universalist Multicultural
Ministries)**

The oldest and largest Unitarian Universalist People of Color ministry and anti-racist community organization based in North America. DRUUMM traces their lineage to Black and African American Unitarian and Universalist communities, Latino/a UU Networking Association, ministers and religious professionals of color, and youth and young adults of color who have organized to resist racism, nurture our faith formation, and build the beloved community.

<https://www.druumm.org/>

Black Lives of UU

An independent organization initially sponsored by the UUA and an ever-growing spiritual family, is home to hundreds of Black UUs and Black people who don't necessarily claim Unitarian Universalism, but share our values.

<https://blacklivesuu.org>

PAN-AFRICAN FORUM

This autumn we'll be offering the final installments in our program on **Religion in Houston's Pan-African Community**. Supported by a grant from the Crossroads Project, housed at Princeton University, the program has been an opportunity to explore the rich diversity of religious practice in Houston's Third, Fourth, and Fifth Wards. Since the winter of 2022 we have conducted public oral histories with religious leaders and community activists about the intersections of their faith and political work.

Mama Ade

"The Caravan to the Ancestors"

October 7, 2023, 7:00 PM

Each year the National Black United Front organizes a caravan from their headquarters in the Third Ward to the Galveston beach where the slave ships arrived. Mama Ade has long been one of the caravan's primary organizers. She'll be sharing with us about its origin and import and offering some of her own story.

Imam Basil W. Abdullah

Resident Imam of Masjid Taleem Muhammad

November 9, 2023, 7:00 PM

511 E. 40th 1/2 St., Houston, TX 77022

Imam Abdullah has been running a unique Masjid in Houston since 1988. It focuses on serving those who have returned home from the prison system and encourages entrepreneurship and self-accountability. Imam Abdullah did prison time before founding the Masjid.

A third, and final, program is being planned for December or January. It will be announced closer to the date.

TEAM AND GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION

Adult Programs Team

adultprogramsteam@firstuu.org

Arts Team

artsteam@firstuu.org

Board

board@firstuu.org

Changing Women

changingwomen@firstuu.org

Climate Action Team

climateaction@firstuu.org

Community Projects Team

communityprojectsteam@firstuu.org

Sunday Discussion Circle

discussioncircleadvisors@firstuu.org

Garden Team

gardenteam@firstuu.org

Healthy Communication Team

hct@firstuu.org

Justice Coordinating Council

justicecoordinatingcouncil@firstuu.org

Parents Group

parentsgroupcoordinators@firstuu.org

String Band

stringband@firstuu.org

Wednesday Adult Programs

adultsprogramsteam@firstuu.org

Yoga

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FOR THOSE NEW TO OUR CONGREGATION

INQUIRERS SERIES

This casual small group setting welcomes all visitors and friends each Sunday to learn more about First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, programs, projects and Unitarian Universalism. A different topic is presented every Sunday by congregation leaders, volunteers, staff and ministers. Topics include Membership 101, Justice Advocacy & Community Projects, Virtual Offerings & Livestreaming, Music Program, Board of Directors and the Healthy Communications Team, UU History & Sources, Worship & Liturgy, and Religious Education and All Adult Group Meetings. Selected topics will be provided virtually on the second Thursday of each month via Zoom meeting from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM. Membership 101 is also offered virtually every third Thursday of each month via Zoom meeting from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM. You can also find the inquirers series table in Channing Hall after each Sunday service.

Questions can be directed to membership@firstuu.org

Virtually on Second and Third Thursdays

PATH TO MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

The Path to Membership is an individual spiritual journey that one takes before making a commitment to become a member of the congregation. Prospective members are not alone and share this experience with other friends who may be at different stages along the path. We provide social opportunities for our prospective members to gather to meet and grow together with the guidance of church staff, ministers, and leaders. Questions can be directed to membership@firstuu.org
