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 Spring’s opportunities.

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New Members....................................................Back Cover
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 Spring we will continue to 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.
FEBRUARY PROGRAMS
Crying for America:
Fannie Lou Hamer

Worship: Sunday, February 25
Fannie Lou Hamer, voting and women's rights activist, community organizer and leader in the civil rights movement.

Covenant Groups: Sunday, February 25, 1:00 PM
Tuesday, February 27, 6:30 PM

Minister's Book Group: Tuesdays, February 13, 7:00 PM
February 27, 7:00 PM

*The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is;*  

Workshop:
Saturday, February 17, 2024
1:00 PM
The workshop for the month will be led by Glynda Carr of Higher Heights for America
MARCH PROGRAMS

The River is Our Blood: 
Mary Brave Bird

○ Workshop: Sunday, March 10 
Mary Brave Bird, Sicangu Lakota 
writer and activist

△ Covenant Groups: Sunday, March 17, 1:00 PM 
Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 PM

📖 Minister's Book Group: Tuesdays, March 5, 7:00 PM 
March 19, 7:00 PM 

Mary Brave Bird, *Lakota Woman*

Workshop: 
We are still putting together the details for an 
exciting and informative workshop about Mary 
Brave Bird.
APRIL PROGRAMS
The Next American Revolution: Grace Lee Boggs

Worship: Sunday, April 28
Grace Lee Boggs, Detroit-based author, social activist, philosopher, and feminist.

Covenant Groups: Tuesday, April 28, 6:30 PM
Sunday, April 30, 1:00 PM

Minister's Book Group: Tuesdays, April 9, 7:00 PM
April 23, 7:00 PM
Grace Lee Boggs with Scott Kurashige, The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century

Workshop:
Carmen Jules of Blue Heron Farm will be presenting. Stay tuned for the date of this exciting workshop.
MAY PROGRAMS
Think of God All the Time: Swami Vivekananda

Worship: Sunday, May 19
Swami Vivekananda, Indian Hindu monk who, in part through his close relationship with Unitarians and Universalists, played a key role in introducing Hindu theology and yoga to the United States.

Covenant Groups: Sunday, May 19, 1:00 PM
Tuesday, May 21, 6:30 PM

Minister’s Book Group: Tuesdays, May 7, 7:00 PM
May 21, 7:00 PM
Selections from: The Complete Book of Yoga: Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga by Swami Vivekananda

Workshop:
Sat. May 4, 6 - 8 p.m. - Talk on Swami Vivekananda by Swami Atmajnanananda, Resident Monk, Vedanta Center of Greater Washington, D.C.

Thurs. May 9, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. - Study/Workshop on Sw. Vivekananda by Swami Kirtipradananda, Resident Monk, Vedanta Society of Greater Houston

Thurs. May 16, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. - Study/Workshop on Sw. Vivekananda by Swami Kirtipradananda, Resident Monk, Vedanta Society of Greater Houston
Worship: **Sunday, June 9**  
Forrest Church, leading Unitarian Universalist minister, author, and theologian.

Covenant Groups: **Sunday, June 16, 1:00 PM**  
**Tuesday, June 18, 6:30 PM**

Minister's Book Group: **Tuesdays, May 28 7:00 PM**  
**June 4, 7:00 PM**  
Forrest Church, *Love & Death*

Workshop:  
**Saturday, June 29**  
1:00 PM

Rob Hardies will be leading this month’s workshop. He is the Senior Minister at First Parish, Cambridge
Our ministers, staff, and congregation are excited that this year we will be celebrating the 125th Anniversary of Unitarian Universalism in Houston and the 110th Anniversary of our church, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston. Our church has been integral to the religious and civic life of our city, and helped to generate multiple Unitarian Universalist congregations throughout southeast Texas.

The church has many notable achievements, including being the first congregation in the city to be a Sanctuary for immigrants fleeing persecution, the first to legally desegregate, and the first non-predominantly-gay church in the city to have an openly gay minister. The church formed the successful LGBTQ support group HATCH, now at the Montrose Center, and helped to start the Emergency Aid Coalition. Notable former members include Walter Cronkite, Phylicia Rashad, and Debbie Allen.

We hope not only current, but past friends and members will attend, as well as representatives of the many diverse religious, social justice, and non-profit groups the church has helped and partnered with over the years.
The REACHING FOR THE STARS Services Auction is on its way!

Online auction from Saturday, February 17 through February 24.

Live Auction and party on Saturday evening, February 24.

Bring your family and friends for this lively entertaining event.

So, MARK YOUR CALENDAR and think about what YOU WANT TO DONATE this year. Also consider UNDERWRITING this important church fundraiser. Underwriting donations can be made at Donate – First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston (firstuu.org) or by check.

Questions? Or are you already ready to make your donation? Contact the Auction Team at auction@firstuu.org.

Watch for the REACHING FOR THE STARS table on Sundays in Channing Hall.
FOTOFEST 2024  
“CRITICAL GEOGRAPHY”

For the third time, The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston will be a participating space for Houston’s biennial Fotofest, whose mission is to bring together a global vision of art and cross-cultural exchange with a commitment to social issues, community involvement, and the enrichment of cultural resources. This year’s exhibition will be presented in partnership with Rice University’s Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning.

“Wendel A. White: Difficult Histories”

The award winning Wendel A. White is originally from New York City, Philadelphia, and New Jersey. He was awarded a B.F.A. in photography from the School of Visual Arts in New York and an M.F.A. in photography from the University of Texas at Austin.

His work focuses on African American culture from the past, and how it relates to the present.
FOTOFEST HOURS

Monday—Friday, 10AM—4PM
Saturday, 10AM—2PM
Sunday, 1PM—4PM

FOTOFEST EVENTS

Opening reception for Wendel A. White: Difficult Histories: Selections from Red Summer and Manifest

March 1, 2024, 6–8 pm

Arts Forum:
Wendel A. White: Difficult Histories
Howard Bossen, co-curator

March 17, 2024, 10:45–11:15 am

Artist Lecture
Red Summer: Landscape and Archive in African American Historical Memory
Wendel A. White

March 28, 2024, 6:30 pm
Favrot Auditorium
The Glassell School of Art
5101 Montrose Blvd.
Houston, TX 77006
TORAH TALKS THROUGH RABBI EYES

Thursday nights, 6:30 – 8 pm
Feb 8, 15, 22, and 29, and March 7

Join Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss of Congregation Shma Koleinu and Rev. Dr. Colin Bossen for a deep dive into the Torah portion of the week. Based on the Jewish calendar, the Torah is read and studied by “parsha” (portion) “in order of appearance.”

Through the eyes of the classical, rabbinic commentators, we will study their interpretations, and get to know and understand the tools of interpretation, utilized by Jewish commentators for centuries.

Through multiple modes of learning (lecture, diads, journaling), we will ask and answer:

1. What is the Torah telling me/us this week?

2. How did our ancestors understand these words and are there implications for my life and today’s world?

3. How might I live my own life like I’m writing sacred text?
Navigating Grief is a class for those experiencing grief due to a significant life change, such as death of a loved one or divorce.

It is a six-consecutive-week course, and participants should plan to attend all six sessions. It will be held in person. Most of the session work is done in a group process by the participants, although the facilitators have information to impart. There is “group-think,” self-processing, table-sharing opportunities, and some writing work between sessions.

This class was offered last March, and Barbara Schott and Rev. Scott will be co-facilitating again. Rev. Scott has previously co-facilitated the program at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas, where it was created, and while at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento. Please look for an opportunity to register.
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 defines 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 donating food, to restoring homes & making food for homeless teenagers. Be on the team or come to one or more service events.

ANNUAL RETREAT TO U-BAR-U
Join us in a weekend at UBarU, the Unitarian Universalist Retreat center located on 142 acres in the Texas Hill Country. You get to relax, connect, sing, and play with other members and families.

Friday, March 22nd - Monday, March 25th
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 2024 we offer K-1st in the Spring and 6th-9th in the Fall.**
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 and experience a wealth of diverse programming throughout the year during services, special programs, workshops, the Spring Arts Festival, and excursions to arts venues.

A MESSAGE FROM DR. JOLIE ROCKE

It is an honor to serve this congregation in planning and executing worship and arts activities. In addition to programming at First UU Houston, the music team and congregants are welcome to join the Association of UU Music Ministries (www.auumm.org) where we can share our activities and learn from the global UU community. Email jolie@firstuu.org to volunteer your participation in our arts programming.

INSTRUMENTAL PROGRAM

Volunteers meet throughout the year to support music programming. Contact Chelsea@first uu.org to be included in this volunteer team.
The Arts Team supports and promotes the arts to cultivate community and connection through activities that help us:

- Discover and engage in cultural events that align with our Unitarian Universalist values
- Promote participation in presenting and attending performances, exhibits, and other arts-related field trips
- Promote and assist in the execution of annual events such as FotoFest and the Spring Arts Festival
- Identify and support social justice activities through the arts including the monthly Arts Forum

ARTS TEAM

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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.
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:

February 18: Kianna Taylor, “The Power of a Story”
March 17: “Wendel A. White: Difficult Histories”
Howard Bossen, co-curator
April 21: National Poetry Month with Toni Holland, Poet
May 5: Jason Fowler, School of American Ballet, Trained Danseur
June 16: Narissa Bond, Folk Musician and Composer

MUSEUM SUNDAY

After-church museum visits, generally on the first Sunday of every month and free of charge. Depart the church at 1:30pm:

February 4: Contemporary Arts Museum
March 3: Murals of Houston Tour with Toni Holland
April 7: Houston Center for Photography
May 5: Project Row Houses
June 2: Menil Collection
SPRING ARTS FESTIVAL  
May 4, 2024  
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM  

We are excited to host the Spring Arts Festival again. Many of the volunteer teams are hosting arts activities that participants of all ages would enjoy. Don’t miss the fun! Bring your family to dance around the May Pole, take a flower arranging or ukulele class. Create a kindness card, decorate cookies, make a Derby hat, or have fun with the other activities, games and prizes. Plus, you get to find out more about the church and the people we serve! There will be food, prizes, and lots of camaraderie.
SPECIAL SERVICES
Some of the worship services are unique to First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston. Here are some of our special annual services that our congregation enjoys:

To Make This World a Paradise: First Unitarian Universalist’s 110th/125th Anniversary and Inspiration Sunday
Celebrating the life and legacy of the church.

February 11

Covenant Sunday
We take one Sunday every year to revisit our congregational covenant.

March 3

Flower Celebration/Annual Meeting:
A celebration of Earth’s beauty where we share flowers from our gardens. Also, the Annual Membership Meeting occurs this day.

June 2

SPANISH LANGUAGE SERVICES
Our next Spanish language service will be Día de las Madres (Mother’s Day) at 5:30 p.m. with guest preacher Rev. Tania Márquez.

Día de las Madres (Mother’s Day)

May 11
5:30 PM
SOLSTICE / EQUINOX SERVICES

We also recognize the changing of the seasons in a more intimate and earth-centered ritual.

Spring Equinox – Tuesday, March 19
Summer Solstice – Thursday, June 20
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/](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](https://blacklivesuu.org)
The First UU BIPOC group is members and friends of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston located in the Museum District.

We commit to being a growing multicultural, multigenerational, and multiracial congregation.

Members of the First UU BIPOC Group identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

We provide a safe space for centering peace and spiritual projects to share the love of our congregation with the BIPOC communities that we identify with.

For more information, please email

Sanders Anderson brandidpro@gmail
Tawanna Grice tawanna@firstuu.org
Margarita Arevalo margarita@firstuu.org
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<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 11-May 5</td>
<td>Coming of Age Program (8th graders)</td>
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<td>Feb 4-Apr 7</td>
<td>Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education (Kinder-2nd graders)</td>
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<td>Feb 8-Mar 7</td>
<td>Torah Talks Through Rabbi Eyes</td>
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<td>Feb 24</td>
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<td>Mar 9-Apr 21</td>
<td>FotoFest Exhibition</td>
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<td>Mar 22-25</td>
<td>Annual Retreat @ UBarU</td>
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<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>“Wendel White: Difficult Histories” – Lecture</td>
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<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Easter Parade / Special Membership Meeting</td>
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<td>Apr 14</td>
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<td>June 29</td>
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<td>Rev. Dr. Colin</td>
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<td>Rev. D. Scott Cooper</td>
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<td>Tawanna Grice</td>
<td>Director of Finance &amp; Operations</td>
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<td>Dr. Jolie Rocke</td>
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<td>Cheryl Rivers</td>
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<td>Carol Burrus</td>
<td>Director of Religious Community</td>
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<td>Cassandra Maclin</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
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<td>Margarita Arevalo</td>
<td>Membership Coordinator</td>
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<td>Clean Unique Services</td>
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<td>Chelsea De Souza</td>
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<td>Rev. Dr. Dan King</td>
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<td>Christian Holmes</td>
<td>A/V &amp; Communications Coordinator</td>
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<td>Yanet Ferreira &amp; Roberto Caceres</td>
<td>Sextons</td>
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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