

The Latitudinarian

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley, College Station, TX

September 2021 Vol LX Issue X

"We create just and loving community."

All Ages Worship and Religious Education Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Reason

September 5
"Practical Taoism "

Pastor Kiya Heartwood

Pastor Kiya will preach of the Taoism philosophies, practices, and texts from the I Ching to Tai Chi and how some of these can benefit our everyday lives.

September 12
"Death Penalty"

Kristin Houle-Cuellar

Kristin Houle-Cuellar from the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty will bring us up-to-date on the abolitionist front in Texas.

September 19
"Water Communion"

Pastor Kiya Heartwood

Please send your photos, stories, and videos of water that has meaning for you to Pastor Kiya at : minister@Brazos-uu.org by **Sept. 16th** to be included in our Water Communion / New church year service. Contact Pastor Kiya if you need assistance or have questions.

September 26
"Immigration: Where are the immigrants in our community?"

Janet Morford

Janet Morford from the Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network will talk about local immigration issues and what programs BIIN offers.

Vision

In this spirit we, as a community of faith, seek to:

- Make Meaning as an ever-deepening spiritual community engaging with all we find sacred;
- Make Connections within our congregation, across generations, and with the wider community across differences of all kinds;
- Make Real our commitment to achieve a fair and just world by dedicating our resources, both physical and spiritual, to that end; and
- Make a Difference by empowering every person to serve others by working together as partners to eliminate oppression, to decenter whiteness, and to achieve social and environmental justice.

We welcome you!

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley welcomes people of all ages, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, classes, abilities, languages, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds. Our liberal religious denomination encourages each person to pursue his/her/their own spirituality journey.

Mission

We create just and loving community.

Core values

Members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley embody:

- Love, warmth, respect, and compassion;
- A welcoming spirit, offering hope and affirmation for all people and providing a sanctuary for members, friends, and all those working for a just and sustainable world;
- Respect for many paths and sources of religious inspiration and the continuing search for understanding; and
- An abiding commitment to fairness, justice, and equity for all people.

"Latitudinarian: One who is broad and liberal in standards of religious belief"



Letter from our Pastor, Kiya Heartwood

Dear UUCBV members and friends,

Allison and I are getting settled into our new positions. The church building project is going into construction. We are all functioning through another Covid surge. As Allison mentioned in her article, the theme for right now is "change." Change is hard. It's all kind of exciting and kind of stressful.

When we are stressed, we tend to go to what a psychologist might call our "stress behaviors." Some people tend to withdraw, and almost say, in essence, "wake me up when it's over." Other people step up to the plate because they are good at being at the plate, and they don't mind doing it, and they have the feeling they can fix it all. A third group might tend to flail around a bit, having anxious conversations with different groups of people, mostly resulting in a spread of anxiety all around all the groups. Fixing, flailing, fading.... I'm a fixer, and here is what I think. I think we need all of us as we navigate the turbulent waters of this time.

Whitewater can be fun, and we are loving and smart and kind, and we can do this, and we all need all of us! I am so looking forward to working with you as we move forward together.

Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes by Allison Faber

Cue the David Bowie. Really though, change is all around us. Whether it is in-person services not starting quite yet, new classes and opportunities for community, or construction starting at UUCBV's new church home on 29th Street, it is sometimes hard to find steady footing in such uncertain times. Change can be exciting, but it can make us all feel a bit nervous and unsure about what the future holds.

With all this change, I want to emphasize some constants from me as the Director of Religious Education. I am here for you, whether you are an infant, child, youth, adult, elder—you get the picture. RE at UUCBV will build and deepen our faith community while also connecting us to our larger community and world. UUCBV's RE Committee and I are deeply committed to providing safe spaces for faith development at any age and to facilitating opportunities to learn about living our principles every day. That won't change even if we experiment with some things in the future. That won't change when we meet back in person. That won't change.

BUT...

September offers a whole lot of opportunities for us to feel the exciting kind of change. First, we will begin experimenting with breakout rooms during RE time some Sundays. Participants under 18 will be invited to join a separate room where they can learn all about what and why we do what we do at church. In September, we will cover covenants and the chalice. Adults who remain in the main room will have a focus question that sparks discussion about worship that day. Some Sundays will remain multigenerational so we can all hang out and enjoy one another.

RE will also hold a class for children and youth once a month. This RE class will use the curriculum CartUUns, which uses Pixar shorts to explore our principles and values. There will be time to watch the short, have a discussion, and have free art or craft time. This monthly meetup will continue whenever our classes become face-to-face. This time dedicated to our kids is vitally important to authentically learn and explore what Unitarian Universalism means to each of them.

A multigenerational offering coming up in September is **Game Day!** Did you know that there are wonderful programs online that let you play all sorts of games together? Well, it exists and I'm excited! For our first game day, we will be playing Yahtzee. Join us for some fun and fellowship.

All this information and more can be found in **The Spark**. Wait, what? Oh yeah, we also have a new monthly newsletter for children and youth with RE news, extra opportunities for learning, and goodies including challenges,

September 5

"In My Control, Out of My Control" by Allison Faber

September 12

Kids Church Room: "What is a covenant?" Short RE covenant break outs

September 19

"Where did my water come from?" by Allison Faber

September 26

Kids Church Room: "What is a chalice and where did it come from?" Breakouts

activities, and links to cool videos. It will be sent out to the RE email list at the beginning of each month. Please let me know if you'd like to be added to the list!

Wow, that's a lot of change. But as feminist intellectual Adrienne Rich reminds us, change "is an invitation to live." Let's live it up this September!

President's Column by Pam Johnson

Howdy, UUCBV!

As many of you know, our plans to hold in-person services was circumvented by the rise in COVID-19 delta variant cases, and for the safety of our congregation, the Board and Pastor Kiya decided that it would not be prudent for us to meet in person at this time.

We are constantly monitoring the situation and have two contingency plans -

1. in-person service at the Brazos Valley African American Museum (BVAAM)
2. outdoor worship in Bryan when the temperatures cools.

I hope you and your family, especially all those going back to school, are healthy and well.

The Board will not have a second meeting this month; we will attend our Board Retreat on August 28th and 29th. The UUA Southern District will be helping us complete some important tasks:

1. We plan to develop our board covenant so that while supporting the values and mission of UUCBV, we covenant to work patiently together, communicating clearly and respectfully.
2. We plan to better define our shared ministry with Pastor Kiya and determine how we will execute our new mission and vision into reality?
3. We will agree on which governance style we will follow and work on developing the rolls of BOT members, church members and church leaders.
4. We will work on planning an overall Church Planning Calendar including fundraising, the stewardship drive, building projections and working on fundraising for the building project.

If you have any suggestions or concerns, please contact me at president@brazos-uu.org

Board Highlights by Alice Scott, Board Secretary

In August the Board of Trustees welcomed Pastor Kiya Heartwood to our congregation. Pastor Kiya will be supported by our Worship Committee and shifting back to sharing responsibilities in planning and producing our worship services. Pastor Kiya has hit the ground running and was on board and working before her contract started. The BOT has approved the hiring of Allison Faber for The Director of Religious Education (all ages) and Membership/Outreach Program. Welcome Allison and Kiya!

The BOT has accepted and approved a Gift Giving Legacy Policy with a committee led by Nancy Granovsky and Kathy Wheeler. Their Plan is to implement a Legacy program in the near future.

Bobby Presley needs your help. He has graciously once again agreed to lead the Football Parking fundraiser. There is a sign in sheet on our UUCBV website.

There will be a **20th Anniversary Interfaith Service of Remembrance of 9/11 on Wednesday September 8, 2021, 6:30p at First Presbyterian Church of Bryan**. It is an opportunity for us to work with other churches in the local area.

We continue to monitor the COVID 19 pandemic situation in order to be informed about whether we can go back to in person worship in the future or continue online.

Our next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on **September 14th 2021**. All are welcomed to join us. Our Annual Retreat will be held on August 28th and 29th, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Scott, Board of Trustees Secretary

Worship Committee News by Maya Lazarus & John Faber

What was true last month may not be true this month. That's how quickly all of our lives are changing and yet we amble along trying to make things as normal as possible. That is true for the worship committee as well.

We are so pleased that Pastor Kiya Heartwood has joined us as our part-time minister and has been here for a month already. Pastor Kiya is pleased to give two worship services per month while the worship committee is responsible for the other two or three. Our lineup for September follows:

Sept. 5 Pastor Kiya will talk on practical Taoism.

Sept. 12 Kristin Houle-Cuellar from the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty will bring us up-to-date on the abolitionist front in Texas.

Sept. 19 Pastor Kiya will lead us in a water communion service.

Sept. 26 Janet Morford from the Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network will talk about local immigration issues and what programs BIIN offers.

We have decided to postpone our interest survey for a month but please feel free to contact Pastor Kiya if you have a topic of interest you would like to hear on Sunday morning or if you would like to give a talk about a topic you feel passionate about.

The worship committee is planning to try breakout rooms during coffee hour starting in October. This would allow those who want to focus more on the worship service topic to gather in one or two breakout rooms while those who wish more free-flowing conversation to gather in other breakout rooms.

Thank you to our worship committee members, worship assistants, and greeters. Everyone, please continue to share your ideas about how to do church in new and unique ways. We welcome your comments.

Maya Lazarus deblazarus@yahoo.com

John Faber official.jmf.studios@gmail.com

Pastor Kiya Heartwood minister@brazos-uu.org

Property Progress by Kathy Wheeler, Chair

On Aug. 17, 2021, the City of Bryan approved the last required permit for our building project. On the Aug. 18, I talked to Kenn Walsh & he said there were no more obstacles to starting the process of building. **Work will start the week of Aug. 23!**

The SST met July 24, 2021 to get final wordsmithing on our document (now on our website) on Guidelines on Access by UUCBV Members & Friends During Construction at 1719 E. 29th St. The BOT approved the document.

Also discussed were points of importance to the UUCBV on Texas Tax Code 11.20 Religious Organizations. Major points covered were:

- 1) we are ok as far as being exempt from real estate deductions in our time frame for building.
- 2) The land should produce no revenue while building.
- 3) **Occasional** (not regular) use for secular purposes does not endanger our real estate deduction.
- 4) Opening a school on the premises would require legal guidance to avoid many legal hurdles.

The SST met Aug. 9, 2021 to discuss our Sanctuary chair order and delivery options. We decided to change the date of the delivery of the chairs from 2021 to 2022 incurring a moderate price increase. It was decided that the price increase would be offset by storage fees and moving and handling concerns.

I told the SST a true story from our member Martha Scott:

Martha Scott's story of her visit to the Anchorage Alaska's UU church:

The church was styled like a log cabin & had a nice sanctuary. There was one thing odd in the sanctuary. The

chairs there were fairly new but there were four different colors of fabric on the chairs. Martha asked one of the members why were there mismatched chairs in the sanctuary? The answer: No decision could be made on one color of fabric. Members were entrenched on their personal favorite color and no one would compromise. Members threw up their hands in defeat and everyone involved got some chairs with their choice of fabric. You know how UU's are when they have made up their minds!

A subcommittee was formed to address choosing a color of fabric and a color of stain for the chairs. Recommendations are to be given to the SST and forwarded to the BOT. I am sure the subcommittee can come up with excellent choices of fabric and stain.

News from the UU Women's Federation

by Katie Womack and Harriet Smith, Co-Chairs

The UU Women's Federation met virtually on August 15 and strategized about our annual retreat at Camp Allen, postponed from spring 2020 and currently planned for next month on October 8-10. Ideas were discussed for making the retreat as COVID-safe as possible. We are looking forward to our upcoming **retreat at Camp Allen October 8-10, 2021**. There is currently a short waiting list for the retreat. You do not have to be a member to attend the retreat. If you want more info about Camp Allen, especially if you are interested in coming to the retreat, contact admin@brazos-uu.org or Kathy Wheeler, treasurer of UUWF.

Our next UUWF meeting will again be on Zoom, **Sunday September 19 at noon**. Harriet will summarize themes in a recent book by historian Tiya Miles - *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* (Random House, 2021). Harriet will then lead a discussion relating themes of the book to own experiences with family stories handed down by women, and how our family history has been conveyed across generations via objects including fabric arts such as quilts or other household practices and traditions. (It's an amazing book, but you will not need to have read it to participate in the discussion!)

If you are interested in attending our UUWF meeting(s), you are welcome to attend. If you would like to join, dues are \$10/ year from Sept. 1 to Aug. 31. If you're not on the email list for UUWF meeting info and would like to be added or if you want more UUWF information, contact Nancy Deer (admin@brazos-uu.org) and she will pass along your request to Katie and Harriet.

Ministry for Social Justice and the Earth by Jerry Wagon

5th Principle: The Right of Conscience and the Use of the Democratic Process Within Our Congregations and in Society at Large

Our Fifth UU Principle is taking center stage these days on a state and national level, as attempts to discourage or intimidate voters from voting are getting pushed through state legislatures, including our own. This has led to the standoff between the Governor and a group of members of the Texas House who are refusing to attend the current special session thereby preventing a quorum.

To be clear, as a congregation we do not take a partisan stance, but do advance our UU Principles, in this case by defending the democratic process. While there are various scenarios that might play out on this current legislation, no matter what transpires in Austin or in Washington, an important way that we can do so is to participate in the electoral process in various ways.

Whether it means serving as a voter registrar or an election judge or in get out the vote activities, we can help potential voters navigate the changing system. Last year, many UUCBV members helped send out postcards as part of the UU The Vote campaign. Through our membership in Texas UU Justice Ministry, our denominational state-level advocacy group, we are partnering with Texas Impact, a larger organization of progressive faith organizations, in an important project to get faith communities involved in this work.

Texas Impact has also set up a special Rapid Response Team so we can contact our legislators when action is needed. You can join at

<https://texasimpact.org/take-action/>.

Please watch the eCast and future Lat articles as we organize local actions to secure our democracy.

Ways to Help in Haiti

The UU Service Committee is organizing a relief effort for those affected by the Haiti earthquake and other recent disruptions there. You can donate

here: <https://bit.ly/3kpk3aw>

UNICEF is also working to get relief to Haiti. You can donate here:

<https://bit.ly/3BtWLqX>

CROP Hunger Walk

Mark your calendar as once again this **November 14th**, a team of walkers from UUCBV will join other area congregations and organizations to raise money to fight hunger through the CROP Hunger Walk. This year, as the COVID-19

pandemic continues to rage around the world, the problem of food insecurity has worsened due to closures and job losses. One quarter of the funds raised by this event will go to local food banks with the remainder going to those in need outside our area.

Once you join the Brazos UU team, you find donors to sponsor you. This process is made easy by the CROP Walk Website. On November 14, you can do the full walk or any portion thereof. This is a great kid-friendly event and your dog on a leash is welcome to participate. The route is wheelchair accessible.

You can sign up for Team Brazos UU's here: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/brazos-uus>
We hope to have a successful showing this year!

How to Get the Word Out

We're a busy and active congregation with a lot happening. Have you ever wanted to get the word out about an event but are unsure how to do so? It's easy. Email Nancy Deer at admin@brazos-uu.org. You may also contact Nancy if you are not receiving weekly and/or monthly news or if you wish to be removed from our email lists.

The deadline for inclusion in the eCast, and the Happenings insert is **Wednesday at 5:00 pm.**, no exceptions. The deadline for Latitudinarian submissions is the **20th of each month at 5:00 pm.** All submissions must be ready for publication. The church calendar includes these deadlines for your convenience.

If you are a frequent author of articles, please add these deadlines to your personal calendar. Committee and Team leads, please plan your meetings prior to the newsletter deadline's so that your news can be shared prior to our newsletter deadline.

Thank you for being respectful of our deadlines and the unseen steps involved in sharing your news.

WHO'S WHO AT THE UU

Visit brazos-uu.org/info-directory to find out Who is Who at the UU.

Visit brazos-uu.org/calendar for our interactive calendar.

Pastor Kiya Heartwood: minister@brazos-uu.org

Administrative Assistant: admin@brazos-uu.org Tue–Th, 9:30am – 2:30pm

Director of All Ages RE, Membership & Outreach: DRE@brazos-uu.org

Online Administrator and Tech Support: official.jmf.studios@gmail.com

Treasurer and Bookkeeper: treasurer@brazos-uu.org

Board of Trustees President: president@brazos-uu.org

Committee on Ministry: c-o-m@brazos-uu.org