

Section B. Services Our Church Offers

1. Worship Services

The following information is from our web site at

<http://www.firstuusanantonio.org/visitorinfo.htm>

What can you expect at a worship service at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio?

Unitarian Universalists are noted for their openness to new ideas and a diversity of worship experiences. At First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio we have a strong tradition of minister and lay led worship that enlivens and broadens our individual and collective search for meaning.

Worship services take many forms. They may

- follow a familiar sermon focused model
- include a period of discussion
- be an all music service
- celebrate the gifts of our children
- honor a seasonal event
- include a Flower Communion
- focus on supporting community organizations in the city

Worship services may be led by

- our minister
- our director of religious education
- our minister of music
- a visiting minister
- a lay leader
- our church youth

A brief orientation to Sunday worship at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio

In general you will find that our services include the following elements, however, every Sunday offers us something new.

- **Sound of the Bell:** A few minutes prior to 11AM a bell will be rung on the patio to call people to worship.
- **Order of Service:** Ushers distribute the Order of Service (or Bulletin) at the center doors to the sanctuary. The Order of Service provides an outline of the service, contact information for the minister and church staff, and announcements that provide information about current events in the life of the church.
- **Welcome and Announcements:** A lay person welcomes the congregation and visitors. Recognizing the need to communicate effectively about the life of the church, the Welcomer

reads a few short and important announcements. Board or Council persons may also make short important announcements at this time. To have an announcement read aloud it must be written out and placed on the clipboard at the podium prior to the start of the service.

- **Chalice Lighting:** The worship leader and/or a family/individual in the congregation light the chalice. As the chalice is lit the worship leader shares an inspirational quote, poem, or observation.
- **Music and Hymns:** At least three times a month, we enjoy the great musical talents of our Music Director and choir. The choir is accompanied on the organ or piano, and occasionally, members of the congregation who are instrumentalists will also perform. Our hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*, draws on diverse faith traditions and offers a wide variety of music for our worship. Throughout the service, everyone is welcome to sing the chosen hymns (if you sit in the side pews you may need to share a hymnal). The worship leader will indicate if he or she wishes for people to stand, but you may always remain seated if that is more comfortable.
- **Children's Story Time:** An inspirational short story is read by our minister, our director of religious education, a special guest speaker, or a lay person comfortable with children. The children are invited to come to the front of the church and sit before the storyteller. After the story, children may leave for supervised play on the playground or return to sit with their family.
- **Sharing of Joys and Concerns:** Part of being in a community means sharing what's going on in your life. You are welcome to come to the dais and silently light a candle or share your joy or concern briefly and then light a candle to symbolize your joy or concern now expressed to the larger community. A microphone is provided so that everyone will hear you.
- **Offering:** We are a self-governed, self-supporting church. The ushers will pass the offering baskets and we ask that you contribute, as you feel comfortable doing so.
- **Sermon:** These articulate the theme of the service. Unitarian Universalism is a truth-seeking religion and gravitates towards exploring life, ideas and faith paths. The sermon may challenge, educate, question, comfort, or anger. We affirm the freedom of the pulpit and encourage discussion with worship leaders about their services.
- **Closing:** The closing words are offered by the worship leader and are often followed by an organ postlude. At each door to the sanctuary there will be a person to greet you. The worship leader will be at the center door.

A few other things that are important to know:

- **Coffee Time:** You are invited to join us on the patio before and after the service for pleasant conversation and refreshments. Coffee and other beverages are always available. Often during this time a committee of the church will have a table on the patio with information about their activities.
- **Accessibility concerns:** To aid in the enjoyment of our services by people with reduced sight or hearing we offer large print hymnals and sound amplifiers for those who need them. In addition, our sanctuary and its restroom facilities are accessible to persons using wheelchairs and walking aids.
- **Wiggle Room:** At the back of the sanctuary there is a room available where child caretakers can go and sit with a child that is crying. From this room you can still hear and see the service but your child will not disrupt the worship experience of others.

2. Education

See our web site for the following:

Adult Religious Education: <http://www.firstuusanantonio.org/adulted.php>

Adult Affinity/Interest Groups: <http://www.firstuusanantonio.org/groups.php>

(Also see *Appendix 4. Small Group & Service Opportunities for Adults*)

Youth Religious Education: <http://www.firstuusanantonio.org/yre.php>

3. Pastoral Counseling

Pending input from the Minister

4. Opportunities for Leadership

The congregation's leadership is derived from its members and staff, with some guidance offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and The Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference (SWUUC). We are, however, almost completely dependent on our own members to provide the huge majority of leadership. These positions consist of new and longtime members, young and old. Some have had no leadership experience but have been willing to learn. In January of each year the Nominating Committee begins considering individuals to fill the many Board and committee positions that will be presented in the election at the May congregational meeting. They can function only by receiving recommendations and *volunteers* for these positions. They solicit your input. No member need hesitate to approach any member of the Committee and offer his or her skills. We urge you to do so.

5. Service Opportunities

Our church depends on volunteers to exist. All Religious Education (Sunday School) teaching positions, playground supervision, choir, and committees, including social activities, fund raising, adult education, member care, etc., are staffed by volunteers.

To learn about current service opportunities, see our web site, newsletter, announcements, and *Appendix: Small Group & Service Opportunities for Adults*.

If you have any interest in areas in which you think the church can benefit, let any officer or member of the staff know. There are big jobs and little jobs. If there are no volunteers, then it won't happen. We're counting on you. It's fun, too!

6. Facilities

Rentals

One time rentals are handled by the Church Office Administrator with fees determined by the Board.

On-going rentals require approval from the Church Office Administrator and the Director of Administration, and include signed agreements.

Space assignments are reviewed annually by the Church Office Administrator and are communicated to the Council and Board.

See *Appendix: Rental Rates and Policies* pertaining to rental rates for members.

Repairs and Maintenance

Emergency repairs and routine maintenance are handled by the Church Office Administrator and the maintenance crew.

The Maintenance & Repair Committee oversees all buildings and checks regularly for things which may need repair, upkeep, or upgrading. The Maintenance & Repair Committee may suggest major projects which may require funding through the budget or by special request from the Board to the Endowment Trust Fund.

Heating and Air Conditioning

All buildings except for the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall have their own heating and air conditioning controls. The library is programmed, but has manual controls marked “Warmer” and “Cooler” which can be manipulated by anyone using the space.

The Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are programmed each week by the Church Office Administrator using a computer program with modem.

6a. Weddings/Sacred Unions

See *Appendix: Wedding/Sacred Union brochure* and *Appendix: Rental Rates and Policies*.

6b. Memorial Services

Procedures for Memorial Service

- Family notifies minister of death
- Minister consults with family re: their wishes for the service
- Church Office Administrator contacts:
 - Head Usher
 - Member Care to set up reception
 - Musicians
- Minister gives Church Office Administrator Order of Service to print and fold
 - Homily to copy for family
- For Reception, the Member Care Committee ensures that
 - Tablecloths are ironed
 - Cups, Punch Bowl, Plates of cookies, tea and coffee are provided or prepared

July 19, 2006: Board established policy that former members, for rental fee purposes, be treated as non-members. If food is required for a reception after a funeral, a catering service should be used. Emeritus members are excluded from paying fees.

[Funeral Consumers Alliance San Antonio](http://www.satx.com/fca/) (FCASA) (<http://www.satx.com/fca/>) can assist with arrangements, as they are dedicated to simple, dignified, and economical funeral and memorial arrangements. The Funeral Consumers Alliance of San Antonio was established in 1948 as the San Antonio Memorial Society. It is an all-volunteer, non-profit consumer and educational organization that offers guidance to members in making preliminary funeral and burial arrangements. The chief goal is to educate the public to the availability of dignified and less expensive burial and/or cremation arrangements. FCASA is affiliated with the national [Funeral Consumers Alliance, Inc.](http://www.funerals.org/) (<http://www.funerals.org/>), formerly The Funeral and Memorial Societies of America, Inc.

7. Other Affiliated Groups

See the announcements, newsletter, web site, or *Appendix: Small Group & Service Opportunities for Adults*.