

Red River Ramblings

Meaningful and Spirited Sundays ~ Each Week!

In this issue:

We have a
new DRE!

Worship
Feedback
Survey com-
ing this month

Yard Sale
Photographs

RRUU dinner
at Grayson
County
Shelter

REMEMBER...

You can access the
church calendar by
clicking on the picture
below.



Adult Forum
10:00

Worship
11:15

Children's R.E.
11:15

Fellowship
Gathering
12:15

November 3, 2013 - Summer Time Ends!

Selected Readings from Six Books

Ron Wallace, *leading*

Ron Wallace was born in Durant, grew up there and went to Southeastern State College (now Southeastern State University) as a pre-law major. He started loving baseball and dating his wife, an English major and soon his focus shifted from law to literature. Among the professors he credits as "amazing faculty" that played a significant influence on his future as a poet was our own Elbert Hill! That was nearly 40 years ago! Mr. Wallace returns for a special morning of sharing his poetry with us.

November 10, 2013

Unitarian Universalist Theology

The Rev. Dr. Don Fielding, *preaching*

Using history to discover Unitarian and Universalist theology, and merging those two theologies we can discover the theology of Unitarian Universalism today.

Today: *Share The Plate Sunday*

Out To Lunch at Tuscan Grill

November 17, 2013

Technological Advancements & Advancements in Human Relations

The Rev. Nate Walker, *preaching on video*

In celebrating the installation of Rev. Meg Riley as the new Senior Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the Rev. Nate Walker of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia reflects upon the words of Huston Smith who said, "The century's scientific advances must be matched by comparable advances in human relations."

November 24, 2013

Behind The Curtain

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

Our Principles and Purposes have seven statements. The first: *We covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.* A worthy covenant for a People of Faith, yet regretfully UUs world-wide seem happy to modify the most significant word in our first principle, the word "every". While UUs often focus (rightfully perhaps) on the hypocrisies inherent in the dogmas of other faiths, what can we do about the hypocrisies within ourselves?

AUSTIN COLLEGE *Great Day Of Service* ~ Saturday, November 2nd

We will have 12 young, strong, willing students arrive at church at 9:15 AM to help us clean the second floor rooms, wash windows and liberate our four garages of fifty years of trash. So the students don't think that they are little more than slaves ... if you can come and work with them, the success of the day will be enhanced tremendously. Things conclude at noon.



Elbert's Epistle ~ Update from the president

The church yard sale (moved indoors due to rain) brought in almost \$350, and this was matched by a member of the congregation, so our church is nearly \$700 richer than before. Leftover clothing and

other items were donated to the Crowded Closet, an extension of the Grayson County Shelter. The shelter allows its residents to select needed clothing items from the Closet, and the rest is sold to raise money to carry out the shelter's mission as the only homeless shelter in Grayson County. (Photos on page 7)

RRUU is also collecting toiletries and personal care items for shelter residents. Bring any unused items of soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving supplies, etc., and deposit in the basket provided in the church foyer.

At the recent Fall Congregational Meeting, we voted to reestablish the church's Endowment Committee. The money that had been in that account was used in purchasing our current church home. The new committee will be charged with raising money, overseeing its investment, and protecting endowment funds for the future. If you would be interested in serving on the Endowment Committee, please tell me or another board member before the November 14 board meeting.

Another vote we took at the Fall Congregational Meeting was to continue our Share the Plate Sunday (the second Sunday of each month) contributions to the Earth Day Texoma Festival and the Grayson County Shelter. Several members spoke in favor of continuing the current contribution structure, noting that since RRUU isn't able to contribute large sums to any charity, we can maximize our impact by designating only two recipients of Share-the-Plate moneys. Although Earth Day Texoma is supported by a number of other organizations and businesses, our own Green Team chalice Circle is widely recognized as the

main organizer—thanks especially to members Amy Hoffman-Shehan, Marla Loturco, and Carole Harner.

A few weeks ago, Marion and I had lunch with Ashley Earls, director of the Grayson County Shelter, to talk about additional ways our church might help with shelter needs. Currently, besides our Share-the-Plate contributions six times a year, and besides allowing the shelter board to meet monthly in our building without charge, we prepare and serve a meal to shelter residents about once a quarter. (The next one is November 7. A "shelter crew" of half a dozen members plans a menu and prepare the dishes individually, and a few serve the meal and eat and chat with residents. If anyone wants to join the shelter crew, contact Marion Hill at mhill@communicomm.com.

Some possible ways RRUU members can contribute, which came from the meeting with Ashley, are these:

1. Teaching residents how to create a meal using ingredients on hand at the shelter. The residents have duties while staying there, and these involve meal preparation, but many are inexperienced in planning meals from what's available.
2. Teaching life-skills training, such as how to interview for employment and how to dress for an interview. (RRUU member Judy Donahue, who had a successful career in the corporate world, has volunteered to teach such a class, once in January and once in February of 2014.)
3. Transportation to take residents to doctors and/or jobs when needed.
4. Filling in for staff members who must be absent. Ashley said she could especially use someone (preferably a male) to fill in on Thursday evening and Saturday night when needed. A volunteer would need to fill out a volunteer application in order to do this.
5. Use of the church building occasionally (for a fundraiser or a special party for residents), since the shelter does not have a large room for such events. One fund-raiser Ashley contemplates doing is one in April, which would feature a mechanical bull ride. The shelter also will need sponsors for that event.
6. Friendly visitors, to stop in and visit with residents. Ashley noted that it's important for homeless people to know that "someone cares."

**"Another vote was to continue
our Share the Plate contribution
to the Earth Day Festival and the
Grayson County Shelter!"**

~ Elbert's update is continued on page 3

Adult Forum ~ Sundays @ 10 AM

Nov. 3: Adult Forum survey and discussion

Nov. 10: Among the smaller religions that have a large impact of cultures and societies are Jains, Sikhs and Baha'is. Characteristics of these religions are described, their history and where followers may be found.

Nov. 17: Religion and Law in America will explain the effects of the Constitution and what legal tradition says about religion. Dr. Berkson will cover religion in the colonies, deism, separation of church and state, the establishment



clause and free exercise clause.

Nov. 24: Religion Today---Trends, Challenges and Hope will cover some of the different attitudes members of one religious tradition may have toward members of other religions, violence and the role of religion.

RRUU Dinner At The Grayson Co. Shelter ~ Nov. 7th

Members of RRUU will be cooking and serving a meal at Grayson County Shelter on November 7, the third time we have done this.

The current RRUU Shelter Crew consists of nine RRUU women, who about once a quarter prepare dinner for all those residing at Grayson County's only homeless shelter, our church's near neighbor. A few of us eat dinner there and have had good conversations with residents.



Each time we bring a meal, Marion Hill calls ahead to check on the number to be served (usually 18 to 25) and any other pertinent information, such as whether

young children are there and whether one or more residents are diabetic. Crew members then settle on an entree and side dishes for individuals to contribute, and each may opt out of a particular meal as needed. Anyone wishing to participate in this good cause as a Shelter Crew member should contact Marion at hill@communicomm.com or

580-924-7715. (Crew membership isn't limited to fe-

Elbert's Epistle ~ Continued from page 2

7. A PR article in the local paper, listing churches and other organizations that support the shelter, the various ways organizations and individuals assist the shelter, and suggestions of other needs the shelter has. Marion Hill is working on such an article with Ashley. Not only can such an article help the shelter, but it's an opportunity to mention RRUU, since we're one of the churches that helps.

Actually, Ashley said, about anything church members can think of doing to help, the shelter would be glad to have!

The congregation voted at the Fall Congregational Meeting to join the Texas UU Justice Ministry, an organization of 20+ UU congregations in Texas that advocate on justice issues with the state legislature.

Less formally, we decided at the Fall Congregational Meeting to have monthly, or near-monthly, potluck meals after church, occasions when we can get better acquainted with each other. The first such potluck will be December 1, 2013, a time when people can get creative with Thanksgiving leftovers.

Peace. See you in church,

Elbert

Board Bits ~ from the October 2013 Board Meeting

Our Vice-President Gil Alexander had cardiac surgery on October 15, and his wife, Marilyn, had back surgery on the 23rd. Both are doing well.

At board meeting on October 10, we discussed the possibility of getting an elevator installed to go from the basement of the church to the top floor, to make our building fully accessible for all members and visitors. The church doesn't have sufficient funds in its operating budget to cover the \$50,000+ that an elevator and installation would cost, so we have been exploring ways to get grants. NTUUC (North Texas Unitarian Universalist Congregations, of which RRUU is a member) makes grants to churches, but since NTUUC only gives about \$60,000 in total grants each year, RRUU couldn't expect one large enough for an elevator.

Another possibility is a Chalice Lighters grant, but again we probably couldn't expect one large enough to pay for an elevator. Al-

so, although RRUU has received C.L. grants in the past, we probably don't qualify for one at this time. To apply for a C.L. grant, a church must be a Fair Share congregation—meaning that our dues to the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association, the national organization of UU churches, of which RRUU is a member) and SWUUC (Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference of the UUA, of which RRUU is a member) must be paid up for the year—and 20% of the church's members must have pledged to be Chalice Lighters themselves. Although RRUU is a Fair Share congregation, and although we have a few members who are signed up as Chalice Lighters, probably not enough currently are. (If you are a Chalice Lighter, please let me know at mhill@communicomm.com. If you would like to become one, a pledge form is at <http://swuuc.org/pages/stewardship/chalice-lighters.php>. To become a Chalice Lighter, you only have to pledge to donate at least \$10 each time a Chalice Lighter Call is made, three times per year. By doing so,

you can help other UU churches as they seek to grow within their own communities, and can also help RRUU qualify for a C.L. grant at some future time.)

The board felt that the church shouldn't go into any more long-term debt at this time, since we still have most of the \$50,000 debt to our own members for remodeling costs, so the matter of installing an elevator was tabled for the time being. We are, however, planning to ask for smaller grants from NTUUC to install a heating/air conditioning system on the top floor and to hire musicians for several Sundays a month.

The board is currently reviewing the Policies and Procedures Manual to make sure we are acting in line with what we say we should be doing.

The board hired Kevin Bartell to fix the sliding doors to the Clara Barton room. The doors are now working and can be used to shut out surrounding noise during Adult Forum.

Treasurer's Report ~ A Monthly Update on our Finances

In the month of September, we had income of \$3,995 from general operations. After operations expense of \$1,354 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$2,641.

In September, we had renovation expense of \$1,931 for the window replacement project. We also had grant expense of \$1,608 for the Fall Retreat, worship and religious education.

For the year to date period of July 2013 through September 2013, we had net income of \$6,806 from operations, renovation expense of \$5,201, grant expense of \$2,633 and principal payments of \$977. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$2,005. This was lower than our budget primarily due to the window replacement project. In September the board voted to transfer

\$2,000 from general savings to the renovation fund to be used to complete our current projects.

As of the end of September 2013, we had cash of \$49,283 and debt of \$38,360. The cash amount includes \$1,143 reserved for renovations and \$7,725 reserved for grants.

In September we donated \$105 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

Carole Harner, *treasurer*

Children's Religious Education ~ Exploring, Learning, Growing!

RE members should meet in the dining room between 11 and 11:15 and we will be going upstairs at 11:15 to the Arts & Crafts room for the lesson and craft of the day.

NOVEMBER 3 Alice (the alligator) will read aloud "Spite Fences" and will study some of the symbols of world religions and the symbols of One God-One Religion. We will practice drawing and labeling the symbols.

NOVEMBER 10 Gussie (the gorilla) will help us discuss the book Unitarian Universalism Is a Really Long Name, about the first two top-

ics in our religious experience. (Who Are We? What do we Believe?) We will make a mandala using religious symbols.

NOVEMBER 17 Mr. Turtle Band (the turtle) will help us discuss the second half of Unitarian Universalism Is a Really Long Name, about the next four topics in our religious experience. (How do We Worship? Who Leads Us? Do We read the Bible? What Is Our Religious Symbol?) We will draw and color a number of different types of chalices.

NOVEMBER 24 Chaz (the chicken) will help us discuss the remainder of Unitarian Universalism, about the last three topics in our religious experience. (Do We Pray? What is Sunday School? How Do We Celebrate?) We will discuss holidays some of us celebrate and create a collage of things we're thankful for.

We Have a New R.E. Director! ~ Meet Joyce Peak

Welcoming someone many of us know to a new position within the church is exciting! The DRE search team publicized the position throughout the area, and received a number of applicants, but none met our needs.

The team then turned to Joyce and asked her if she would consider taking the position.

She said yes! Hurray, said the search committee! Joyce starts on November 1st.

Joyce first visited our church in September 2009 and after spending three months attending she became a member on December 27, 2009.

She comes to her new position with 20 years of experience teaching in public schools in Oklahoma, Kansas, South Dakota and at a drug rehab center in Missouri. She also served as a substitute teacher in Nevada.

Joyce taught middle and high school and served as principal of an alternative school.

Joyce said, *"I've have more hours than any one person would ever need and I take classes every place I have lived because there's still too much to learn."*

In her leisure time she likes making art, traveling, doing research and writing her own lesson plans. Joyce also leads Adult Forum and is a member of the church aesthetic team.

For those who may not, Joyce also designed the religious symbol banners that grace the Chapel.



Worship Feedback Survey ~ It's Coming - Pleeze fill it out!

Unlike some religious communities where the people have absolutely no authority to tinker with worship, each UU congregation creates its own worship style. Please take the survey

Experts who devote their life in examining religious behavior tell us that worship is the glue which holds a congregation together. Upon hearing that many UU churches suspend worship for the summer, a Lutheran minister exclaimed, "If Lutherans did that, I fear no one would come back in the fall!"

Worship - from the Old English *weorthscipe* meaning 'worthiness, acknowledgment of worth' - is a complex conglomeration and merging of tradition, expectations, hopes and things 'of worth'. The Committee on Ministry wants to know what you think about our Sunday Worship Experience Attendance over the last year has slipped so the Worship Team has spent three month designing a feedback survey to get answers. Unlike some religious communities where the people have absolutely no authority to tinker with worship, each UU congregation creates its own worship style. Please take the survey.

You have three different ways you can take the survey and we will be sending an email shortly with the links:

- With one click you will be taken to SurveyMonkey.com where you can complete the survey on line (it will take about 15 minutes)
- With a different click you may down-

load a PDF file of the survey from the church web site which you can print, take and bring or mail to church

- Alternately, you may pick up a copy of the survey at church, complete and leave it at church

The survey has eight sections:

- THE VARIOUS PART OR ELEMENTS OF OUR WORSHIP EXPERIENCE
- RITUALS & SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS
- THE SERMON / REMARKS
- GUEST SPEAKERS & MINISTERS
- WHY YOU COME
- WHY YOU STAY AWAY
- SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS
- ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

In each section there is space to write comments if you wish.

The deadline for completing the survey is December 1, 2013. The Committee on Ministry will have a drop box on the AV table in the back of the Chapel.

If you complete the survey on line, you can see the statistical results from those who've completed it. The written comments will not display, however.

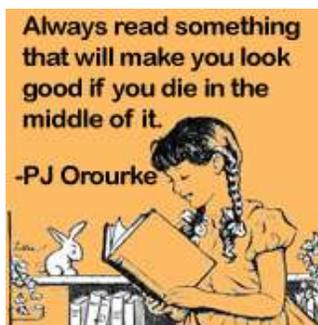
Meditation Group



The meditation group which meets the last Sunday of the month will go on Winter Break

starting this month and returning on Sunday, March 30th @ 12:35 PM. The group meets in the Chapel.

Booked For Lunch ~ November 14th



Reading is so much fun! Come tell us about the books that you've enjoyed lately. The next book club meeting is on Thursday, November 14, at 12:30pm in the Barton Parlor. Everyone is welcome. Iced tea and something sweet will be provided. You can bring a sandwich if you wish or eat before you come.

See you there, Carole



Special thanks for Setup/Sales to
Marion & Elbert Hill
Amy Hoffman-Shehan
Gil & Marilyn Alexander
Lanan & Robert Shelton
Carolyn & Bruce Cameron

First Yard Sale - October 26, 2013



Faye Shadrick
Carole Harner
Paula Blackshear
Judy Donahue
Kat Walston
Kevin Bartell
Kylie Buffington
Doug Strong
Marla Loturco

Thanks to all who provided merchandise

Leadership

Board of Trustees

Elbert Hill, *president*
 Gil Alexander, *vice president*
 Carole Harner, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Paula Blackshear, *Trustee*
 Marla Loturco, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Gerry Shehan, Peter Schulze

Team Leaders or Team:

Adult Forum: *Joyce*

Aesthetics Team:

Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula

Building/Grounds: *Marilyn*

Communications: *Doug*

Chalice coordinator: *Open*

DRE: *Joyce*

Finance/Endowment: *Dan*

Good Times: *Carole,*

Marilyn & Marion

Long Range Planning:

Amy, Gil, Marilyn

Membership: *Marion*

Nominations: *Helen, L.D., Marla*

NTUUC Rep: *Marla*

Safe Congregation Panel:

Elbert

Social Action: *Gil*

Ways & Means: *Open*

Worship:

Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

Out To Lunch ~ Sunday, Nov 10th

This month Out To Lunch will find us going to a new restaurant Tuscan Slice which is located at 306 E Hwy 82 Sherman, behind Starbucks. Andre, who took our reservation tells us we'll be in their private "Board Room".



Out To Lunch is for everyone! We each pay our own fare and enjoy being together. Do Come!

Moveable Feast ~ Saturday, December 7th

Moveable Feast will take November off. The next Feast will be a pot luck dinner at Doug Strong's home on Saturday, December 7th. The food theme will center around a New England Winter Supper (think chowder, hot breads, salads etc.) Doug will provide pumpkin and mince meat pies. If you've not participated in a Moveable Feast supper, they are loads of fun and a great way to get better acquainted with other church folks. Contact [Marion](#) by Dec 1st if you wish to come to the December dinner.

Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~ for us all!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle will meet on Thursday, November 21 @ 7:30 PM. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle will meet next at the home of Doug Strong for a "New England Supper" on Sat. December 7th. See details above. Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill.

OMMMM... Meditation Group, meets the last Sunday of each month @12:35 in the Chapel, however they are on hiatus until Mar 30, 2014.. Open to all who wish to learn more about meditation and to participate in meditating. Facilitator: Paula Blackshear.

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, is an informal book discussion group will meet this month on Nov. 14th in the Barton Parlor. Join in the conversation. Facilitator Carole Harner.

OUT TO LUNCH, One Sunday a month after things we go out for a Dutch-treat lunch. There is no agenda, no reports, no minutes - just everyone heading out and breaking bread together. See above for details. Email announcements@rruu.org if you have a restaurant suggestion.



mail to:

PO BOX 1806

DENISON, TX 75021-1806

How to reach us:

Email: [info @ rruu.org](mailto:info@rruu.org)

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: www.rruu.org

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalist
 Church (all one word)