



PEACE & JOY

Red River Ramblings

In this issue:

David Roth
Returns

Song Writing
Workshop

Hanging of
the Green

Plus FIVE ex-
citing Sun-
day Mornings

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

Meaningful and Spirited Sundays ~Each Week!

December 1, 2013

Yule Find It Here

The Rev. Doug Strong, preaching

Many who found Unitarian Universalism after leaving a faith tradition may not grasp how difficult it can be to have been raised a UU. Take Christmas for example. I love Christmas. From Adeste Fideles to donning my gay apparel Christmas has always had spiritual significance for me and I fret and fuss that Christmas is disappearing. I miss Christmas. A sermon about traditions, family, friends, diversity, respect and the importance of ritual in our religious life plus a bit of schmaltz.

I originally planned on writing this sermon last December but the tragedy of Sandy Hook pre-empted it.

After Things: An All-Church "Leftovers" Potluck Lunch (Details on page 3)

Sunday, December 8, 2013

A Sermon in Song

David Roth, *speaking*

Songwriter and singer David Roth returns to grace our chapel with a morning of music. David Roth strikes many chords, hearts, and minds with his unique songs, offbeat observations, moving stories, sense of the hilarious and powerful singing and subject matter. As singer, songwriter, recording artist, keynote speaker, workshop leader, and instructor, David is wonderful. This is a morning *NOT* to miss.

David will stay with us to lead a special songwriting workshop "Express Lane to Creativity" from 2:00 - 4:30 PM, in the chapel. (Details on page 7)

Share The Plate Sunday! Cash donations will be given to the Earth Day Festival.

Sunday, December 15, 2013

The Star Didn't Stop

D. Scott Cooper, *preaching*

When they heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. (Matthew 2:9) But for UUs, the star only paused. The living tradition we share draws from many sources, and in a season focused on one of our sources, we'll take a moment to acknowledge all of them.

Sunday, December 22, 2013

Two Perspectives on the Winter Solstice

The Revs. Randy Lewis and Marlin Lavanhar, *speaking (on video)*

Often in the rush of Christmas, we overlook the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. This Solstice this year happens at 11:11 PM on Dec 21 and we will gather to celebrate it on Sunday morning. The Solstice has a rich heritage, worthy of our appreciation.

Sunday, December 29, 2013

The Annual Sharing Sunday

Everyone who wishes to bring a reading!

On this, the last Sunday of the year, we come together to share with one another readings, poems, reflections, even a song if you are so moved, which you've run across during the year that stuck in your head and would like the rest of us to hear. Perhaps a short passage from a book ... maybe a joke or two that made you smile ... possibly a poem taped to the door of a friend's refrigerator?

The only thing the Worship Team asks is that you limit what you share to no more than 5 minutes. This isn't the day to pontificate, sound off or hold forth but rather to bring to the congregation those brief "ah ha" moments that made you smile, or think, or laugh, or ponder.



Elbert's Epistle ~ Update from the president

Our attendance at Sunday worship seems to have settled into an average of 20-22 for the past few months, down from 27-29 of about a year ago. If you are

among those who don't attend regularly, can you help us to understand why? The Committee on Ministry is circulating a Worship Survey, asking for answers to a variety of worship-related questions, and I hope that you'll complete one if you haven't done so already. It only takes a few minutes to complete, and the results can help our worship team plan services that better serve the needs of all our members and friends.

On the plus side, we have had numerous visitors try out RRUU the past few months (including some who have brought children!), and several have returned. So it seems that we are making visitors feel welcome in our church. Let's keep it up, and keep inviting those we think would appreciate RRUU's approach to Sunday activities.

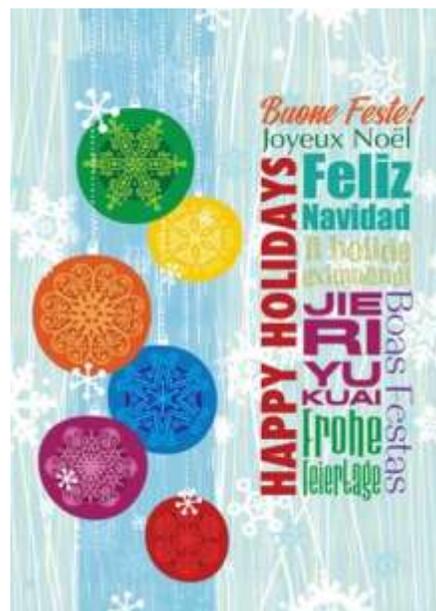
Marion and I took some of the toiletries collected in the basket in the lobby at church over to the Grayson County Shelter last week, so that these can be distributed to the current residents. We will continue to collect such personal care items (shampoo, shaving cream, etc.) for the foreseeable future, since their clientele keeps changing. Some get on their feet and move on, but others find themselves in need. A little later, Marion (along with Ashley Earls, the shelter director) will be writing an article about the various needs the shelter has and about those groups that are currently helping out with those—including RRUU. The RRUU Shelter Crew recently provided a meal for shelter residents (the third such meal we have provided), feeding several mothers with children and visiting with them as we shared supper.

In an earlier Epistle, I mentioned the Chalice Lighter program that SWUUC (the Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference of the Unitarian Universalist Association) has, which provides grants to UU congregations that need to remodel a meeting space, hire a minister, develop a new outreach effort, or otherwise improve their church's effectiveness. Chalice Lighters is a program that individuals join if they wish, promising to contribute regularly when each Chalice Lighter call goes out (no more than three times per year). A few days ago, I received a letter about grants recently funded and the information that the Chalice Lighter program is increasing the minimum contribution for CL members from \$10 per call to \$20 per call.

I already know of several at RRUU who are CL members, but there may be those among us who are and whom I don't know about. The reason I need to know of your CL membership is that RRUU may be applying for a CL grant before long (to do needed work on the building's top floor or for other projects), and a requirement in order for a congregation to apply for a Chalice Lighter grant is that at least 20% of the congregation must be Chalice Lighters themselves. If you are a member of Chalice Lighters, please let me know at president@rruu.org as soon as possible.

I hope everyone has a good holiday season and finishes up 2013 in good health. See you in church,

Elbert



holiday cards from uusc.org

"If you are among those who don't attend regularly, can you help us understand why?"

Adult Forum ~ Sundays @ 10 AM

During December the Adult Forum will continue an exploration of the UU course *Building Your Own Theology*.

December 1: *On Being Good for Nothing*...Traditionally religion incorporates an institutional relationship and a way of behaving. Ethics is the way we behave and treat people and it's determined mainly by what we believe.

December 8: *Can We Be Good Without God?* Discussion of our early ethical teachings and by whom. Discussion of the Moral Compass.



December 15: *Caring and Deception*...a story of moral dilemma.

December 22: *Motivation*...Doing the Right Thing for the Wrong Reason...situation and discussion.

December 29: *Responsibility*...The Difficult Art of Doing Good...an ethical show-and-tell.

Leftovers Potluck Lunch

Dec. 1st



Most of us eat too much on Thanksgiving, but who can blame us - with all that wonderful food before us. Turkey, potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, salads, vegetables, rolls, breads, along with pumpkin, or apple, or cherry pies. Getting hungry?

On Sunday, Dec. 1st we're having a Leftover Potluck lunch! Bring whatever you want and we'll have a great meal together and your leftovers won't end up hiding in the back of your refrigerator only to be discovered after Christmas!

Introducing Scott Cooper, our guest speaker on Dec. 15



D. Scott Cooper Scott has been an active member of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas for over a decade. He has helped facilitate RE classes and the

Minister's Book Study and has taught ninth-grade Coming of Age and YRUU. He has been, for several years, a Worship Associate, assisting in worship with the readings and was also one of the co-chairs when the Circles Small Group Ministry Program was begun. Scott is in his second year of seminary at Brite Divinity School and lives in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas with his partner, Conrad.

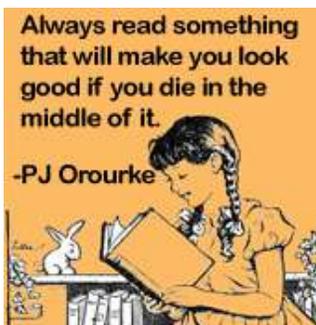
Meditation Group



The meditation 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 ~ See you in March



I'd like to thank everyone who came to the November meeting. It was a lot of fun. I'm planning to add purple carrots to my diet.

Since the winter months are so busy, we will be taking a break for the next few months. We'll plan to return in March. Carole

Board Bits ~ from the November 2013 Board Meeting

RRUU's recent all-church yard sale was a real success, with about \$700 added to the church coffers. At its November 14 meeting, the RRUU Board decided to add all that money to the church's general budget, rather than designating it for a specific purpose.

The church needs to install heating and air-conditioning on the top floor of our building. Previously, that floor had seldom been used, but now that we have children coming for Children's R.E. on Sunday mornings (Yay!!!!!!), upper-floor rooms are needed for chil-

dren's classes. The Board is in the process of preparing a proposal for a grant from the North Texas Unitarian Universalist Congregations organization (NTUUC) to defray the costs of this installation. We will also be requesting an NTUUC grant for money to help provide special music for the next year, since appropriate music greatly adds to the congregation's enjoyment of worship services.

We appointed members to the new Endowment Committee: Gil Alexander, Marion Hill, and Doug Strong. The church had earlier had a separate Endowment Committee, but then it

was combined with the Finance Committee. Following a vote in the October Congregational Meeting, we once again have a separate Endowment committee.

Another decision made in that October Congregational Meeting was for RRUU to join the Texas UU Justice Ministry, an organization of 20+ Texas UU churches that lobbies the Texas Legislature for progressive changes. At the November board meeting, we appointed Doug Strong and Gil Alexander to be our representatives to the UU Justice Ministry's advisory board.

Elbert Hill,
President of the Congregation

Year End Gift? ~ We hope so!

This time of year we all receive five or six letters a week wanting our money. Money desperately needed to save the rain forests, fund drug education programs, support political groups, or help starving children.

You may think that an appeal from the church is just one more charity to add to your list. Not so. The truth is that no one is much interested in supporting our church except people whose lives are directly touched and blessed by it.

If during this, the Season of the Heart, you would like to include your church in your holiday giving, please do. (Appropriate tax receipts are available.)



Treasurer's Report ~ A Monthly Update on our Finances

In the month of October, we had income of \$3,071 from general operations (including the garage sale). After operations expense of \$1,831 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$1,240.

Thanks to more generous donations and bookmark sales, we had renovation income of \$1,015 in October. We had renovation expense of \$740 primarily for the chapel lights. We also had grant expense

of \$555 for worship and religious education.

For the year to date period of July 2013 through October 2013, we had net income of \$8,046 from operations, net expense from renovations of \$4,926, grant expense of \$3,188 and principal payments of \$1,964. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$2,032. This was lower than our budget primarily due to

the window replacement project.

As of the end of October 2013, we had cash of \$49,256 and debt of \$37,373. The cash amount includes \$1,418 reserved for renovations and \$7,155 reserved for grants.

In October we donated \$81 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

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.

DECEMBER 1 We will read and lead discussion about the first two of the Seven Principles from Everybody Is Important. ("Everyone is important" and "treat one another with respect".) Role play or brain storm. We will continue with the collagraph project.

DECEMBER 8 We will read and lead discussion principles three and four from Everybody Is Important. ("How to be the best we can be" and "together we learn about the world and what is true".) Role play or brain storm. We will continue with the on-going craft project.

DECEMBER 15 We will read and discuss principles five, six and seven from Everybody Is Important. ("Everyone has a right to be heard", "together we work to a world that is peaceful

and fair", and "we respect the earth and all living things".) One sheet of paper, one marker for each person. Draw a shape or object on your paper and pass it to the right. The next person draws another shape or object that touches the first one, continue around the table until everyone has drawn on each sheet. Discuss what you see in each drawing.



DECEMBER 22 Students will read *The Third Gift* about the gifts the Three Wise Men brought the baby Jesus. Discussion and kirigami snowflakes will follow.

DECEMBER 29 We will read the story and lead discussion from What if Nobody Forgave? for the story by the same name. Collage calendar will follow. Pick pictures that remind you of those months, if you can find them. 3 months on each page because the winter and summer solstices and spring and fall equinox happen about the 21st or 22nd of every third month...Dec., March, June and Sept.

Joyce Peak, D.R.E.

Worship Feedback Survey

Thanks to those who have turned in your Worship Feedback Survey. During December the Worship Team will be going over the information and preparing a report which will be printed in the January *Red River Ramblings*.

Since this issue is now in your hands and it is still November - if you have not completed a survey, you still can. Download (and then print) the survey [here](#), or email info@rruu.org to get the link to take the survey on line.

The deadline for completing the survey is December 1st.

Hanging of the Green

Sat. Nov 30th

Want to get into the holiday spirit? Come help decorate the chapel on Saturday, November 30th starting at 10:30 AM.

Now that the garages are neat and clean, it won't take long to bring in the large Christmas tree what was donated to the church last year. (It is even pre-wired with lights!).

There are several boxes of ornaments as well as other assorted decorations. If you've been making Christmas cookies and want to share ... please do. We'll have eggnog!

See you there.



Take
the Survey

"EXPRESS LANE TO CREATIVITY"

a songwriting workshop with

David Roth

Sunday, December 8, 2013

2:00 - 4:30 PM

\$30

Red River Unitarian Universalist
515 N. Burnett Ave. Denison, TX

(903) 231-3232 - info@rruu.org
More info at www.rruu.org

We welcome David Roth back to Denison.

His music has found its way to...

Carnegie Hall

The United Nations

Several *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books

The Kennedy Center

Peter, Paul, & Mary concerts

The Kingston Trio

The Space Shuttle "Atlantis"

12 CDs

Two songbooks

and countless venues around the world.

David's teaching resume includes
some of the finest music gatherings
in North America, *and*
he's a lot of fun to be around...join us!

Watch him perform at
www.DavidRothMusic.com



**Remember: David is leading worship
on the morning of December 8th**

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

mail to:

PO BOX 1806

DENISON, TX 75021-1806

How to reach us:

Email: info@rruu.org

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: www.rruu.org

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalist
Church (all one word)

Out To Lunch ~ Not in December

Rather than going Out to Lunch in December, we're having a "leftovers potluck lunch" the Sunday after Thanksgiving, which this year is December 1st.

Moveable Feast ~ Saturday, December 7th

Moveable Feast took 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 4th if you wish to come to the December dinner.

Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~ for us all!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle usually meets on Thursday evenings @ 7:30 PM. The next meeting TBA. Watch for details in the E-News
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 is also taking a winter break but will meet in the Barton Parlor on March 13th. 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.

