



Red River Ramblings

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Enter, Rejoice & Come In

~ to enhance our journeys

Sunday, April 6, 2014

"If No Supernatural God Exists, What Then?"

Marion Moore Hill, *speaking*

In two back-to-back sermons, lay speakers Marion and Elbert Hill will present the recent book *God Revised: How Religion Must Evolve in a Scientific Age*, by the Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich. In the first, Marion discusses Dr. Guengerich's evolution from a Conservative Mennonite upbringing to pastoring one of this country's most prominent UU churches, and his realization that, in the conflict between modern science and ancient religions, "both are 100% half right." But if there is no supernatural God, as Guengerich insists there is not, what's the point of religion at all?

Sunday, April 13, 2014

"Why Religion Is Still Necessary"

Dr. Elbert Hill, *speaking*

In the second of two back-to-back sermons based on the Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich's book *God Revised: How Religion Must Evolve in a Scientific Age*, Elbert explores the author's contention that religion is still necessary—in fact, especially necessary—in an increasingly dangerous modern world. But a religion for the modern age, Dr. Guengerich argues—besides uniting people in community, grounding their morality, and not insulting their intelligence—must engage them "with a world that still holds more mystery than answers." Though Dr. Guengerich rejects the supernatural God of his childhood religion, he insists that the concept of God, redefined, still holds meaning for seekers today.

Sunday, April 20, 2014

An Easter Morning Concert

Cornell Kinderknecht, *flutist*



Last Easter Cornell Kinderknecht delighted us with his music and we are honored to have him return this Easter morning for a full-length concert. Easter has different significances for each of us which we may ponder as we are taken away from our ordinary lives to enjoy the everlasting peace we can achieve through music.

Sunday, April 27, 2014

Thanks! Oops! Gimme! Wow!

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

Ever since humankind started walking upright, we've been praying. Some pray to gods, some to saints, some to idols, some to ancestors and some pray to whom it may concern. Some never pray, some always pray. Some understand while others wonder why. Some feel prayers are answered while others ask who's listening. On Sunday, we will take a look at prayer - some history, some philosophy, some answers and perhaps even some prayers.

Children's Religious Education

begins at 11:15 upstairs. They study world religions, the UU Seven Principles using stories from *What if Nobody Forgave* and *From Long Ago and Many Lands*. Snacks and a craft pertaining to the lesson follow.

NOTE: Bio sketches of this month's speakers are on page 6.

Adult Forum ~ 10 ♦ worship & Children's RE ~ 11:15
Fellowship Gathering-12:15



Epistle from Elbert

Now that Spring has sprung, maybe we won't have ice or other really bad weather to interrupt church activities. Let's hope!

By the time you read this, the annual pledge drive will be over. However, if you missed turning in a pledge form and would like to, you can still fill one out. The forms are available in the church foyer or online, and "better late than never" definitely applies. The completed form may be returned to Carole Harner or Marion Hill (the Stewardship Team) or placed in the collection plate (preferably in a sealed envelope), or mailed to RRUU Treasurer, P. O. Box 1806, Denison, TX 75021, or emailed [here](#). It's important the board know by mid-April what each pledging unit (individual, couple, or family) expects to contribute financially to RRUU during the fiscal year 2014-2015, so that the budget for next year can be made and presented to the members for discussion and vote at the Spring Congregational Meeting May 18, 2014.

While I'm on the subject of the Congregational Meeting, I want to remind all members and friends that to be eligible to vote, one has to have become a church member and have made a contribution of record during the period between the dates of July 1, 2013, and April 18, 2014. To clarify the term "contribution of record," money given by check or by cash placed in an envelope marked with the donor's name does qualify. But undesignated cash placed in the collection plate—while a welcome donation—doesn't (since the treasurer doesn't know whom to credit it to).

On the subject of membership, we continue to gain and lose members at about the same rate as we have for a year or more. We gain members, but members move away, leaving us about where we were. There must be many people in our communities (even in this conservative area) who would be

interested in RRUU if they knew about it. We definitely need to get our message out to all like-minded people in north Texas and southern Oklahoma. We're planning a "picnic on the grounds" in early June to discuss ideas about how to let people with liberal religious ideas know about us and what we have to offer. More details about this picnic will be in next month's newsletter.

Due to Marilyn Alexander's research and work with local HVAC contractors, we are about ready to proceed with "airing" our top floor (adding heating and air-conditioning). We'll also need to add insulation in the attic, making the whole job cost more than the grant for HVAC that we received earlier this year from NTUUC (North Texas UU Congregations, the cluster of UU congregations in north Texas of which RRUU is a member)—about \$4,000 more. But it makes sense to add the insulation now, while we're doing the other work "up top," and the insulation should gradually pay for itself. It will certainly aid the church's mission to be able to use our top floor more fully than we currently can in weather that's either very hot or very cold.

Finally, the Nominating Team is looking for "a few good people" to fill some very important jobs (including president and treasurer) for the upcoming terms that will begin July 1. In a small church such as ours, without a huge pool of people to draw from, it can seem a thankless, almost impossible task to find nominees for the various slots to be voted on at the Spring Congregational Meeting in May. If you're willing to serve as an officer or committee member—even if (given your druthers) you'd prefer not to occupy an office—please get in touch with Marla Loturco [here](#). It takes the involvement of all of us to help our church "be all it can be!"

See you in church, friends,

Elbert

With Deep Appreciation ~ To Three Among Us



Three years ago the Board of Trustees established a special award to honor individuals who through their continued efforts have made outstanding contributions to the welfare and progress of this church community. The Board named this special award **The Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award** in honor of an individual who has performed exceptional service on behalf of RRUU members and this facility.

This year, at our annual Appreciation Dinner, the award committee (comprised of previous awardees) selected not one but three among us to receive the Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award. They are Marilyn Alexander, Carole Harner and Doug Strong. Each received a lovely engraved Lucite trophy along with the sincere appreciation of the congregation.



Our Principles

Unitarian Universalists hold the Principles as strong values and moral teachings. As Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove explains,

“The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in Unitarian Universalist religious communities.”

1. [1st Principle](#): The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. [2nd Principle](#): Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Calling all Thinkers ~

The Worship Team learned about a program done at First Jefferson UU Church in Ft. Worth. They did an eight month series of our 7 Principles, inviting members and friends who were interested in taking one of our principles and reflecting on how they live the principle in their lives. Such services can engage and celebrate our diverse theologies. What do our principles mean to you? Are there times when you realize that your views have been enhanced or shaped or challenged by one of our principles?

If participating in such a program (our thought was to have three such services over the next year and perhaps more the following year) please speak with one of us.

The Worship Team: Dan, Doug, Faye and Marla.

[PS: Click on each blue link to learn details about each of our 7 Principles.](#)

3. [3rd Principle](#): Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. [4th Principle](#): A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. [5th Principle](#): The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. [6th Principle](#): The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. [7th Principle](#): Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Good News Bad News ~ About the Budget

Our Stewardship Campaign has just ended, and your Stewardship Team has both good news and bad news to report.

First the good news: Almost all the people (members and friends) who attend RRUU more or less regularly have now pledged to contribute to our next year's budget (July 2014 through June 2015). That's very good news indeed, since it shows we have individually promised each other that we mean to keep this brave little liberal church going in this conservative area of the country.

Now the bad news: With almost all pledges now in, we still have a shortfall of about \$5,000 toward meeting the preliminary budget that the board discussed at the last board meeting. We expect the shortfall to be reduced somewhat by other promised pledges, but presumably, we'll still have a fairly significant gap between projected income and expected outgo.

That means we have hard choices:

1. Make up the shortfall with fund-raisers. However, we don't have a track record of making huge amounts from past fund-raisers. So unless someone comes up with a fantastic fund-raising idea (preferably one that would raise money from people outside the church rather than simply going back to the same "well" of RRUU folk), it seems unlikely we could close a sizeable gap in the budget this way.
2. Cut expenses. While budget estimates for some expenses probably do have a bit of "give" here and there, cutting that much would mean not just trimming fat but cutting into muscle and bone. Take the amounts for speaker fees and mileage that are paid to ordained ministers and some others who present Sunday services, for example. Though we're fortunate to have good lay speakers in our own congregation--our credo Sundays are always interesting and popular, for instance--it's very difficult for the Worship Team to always provide varied, interesting, and inspiring services without being able to offer compensation to some presenters, especially to ordained ministers and to those who travel some distance.

There is a third option, though: Can we each dig a bit deeper and increase our pledges? RRUU doesn't tell individuals and couples how much they're expected to give--just as we all have different income levels, we all have varying demands on our money--but if each pledging unit could increase its projected contribution level somewhat, we could meet the goal.

You've already looked at your budget for next year and suggested an amount you plan to donate, and we're grateful for every dollar each family has pledged. But we must be honest and not paint the financial picture as more rosy than it genuinely appears. Have you a great fund-raising idea? Or can you increase your planned pledge for next year a bit? Thanks for all those great suggestions we anticipate getting!



The 2014 Texoma Earth Day Festival

~ *RRUU's largest community out-reach project!*

The 6th Annual Texoma Earth Day Festival is a community-wide, free, fun, family event where ordinary people will learn practical things to improve the health of the planet, their children and themselves. The Festival is from 8:30 - 5:00.

There are activities for all ages, with live entertainment on the main stage throughout the day. Workshops on an array of topics as well as a keynote speaker have been scheduled conveniently in both the morning and afternoon.



The keynote speaker this year will be Internationally known solar-energy expert **Dan Lepinski** who lived "off grid" with his family in Wisconsin for eight years, with solar and wind energy their only sources of electricity. The 2400-square-foot all-electric home they currently occupy in Fort Worth uses solar electricity and hot water, plus numerous energy-efficient practices, yielding a monthly utility bill of \$48.

A former broadcaster and editor of a magazine focused on renewable energy, he is known for his ability to discuss complex aspects of solar energy and energy conservation in plain, understandable English.

Each year many, if not most, of our congregation have participated in one way or another - starting from contributing



every other month to the Share the Plate on the second Sunday of each month when the donations go to support the Festival - and continuing by working on the planning and by volunteering during the event.

Volunteers, especially from church, are important because the Festival is our largest community outreach. Over a thousand people attend the Festival and if you can help - a couple of hours or all day (or the day before to set up), please contact Marla Loturco [here](#) or speak with her on Sundays. All volunteers have to fill out a volunteer form which are available at church.

Everyone can do something, please come and be part of this wonderful outreach project of our tiny congregation!

*Saturday
April 26th
8:30 - 5:00*



Financial Update ~ from our church treasurer

In the month of February, we had income of \$1,451 from general operations. After operations expense of \$1,790 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$339.

In February, we had grant expense of \$599 for worship and religious education. There was no renovation income or expense.

For the year to date period of July 2013 through February 2014, we had net income of \$11,306 from operations, net expense from renovations of \$5,857, grant income of \$7,450 from the new NTUUC grants, grant expense of \$6,117 and principal payments of \$2,961. The total change in cash for the year to date period was an increase of \$3,822. This was better than our budget primarily due to the new grants received in January.

As of the end of February 2014, we had cash of \$55,110 and debt of \$36,376. The cash amount includes \$487 reserved for renovations and \$11,576 reserved for grants.

In February we donated \$88 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Carole Harner, Treasurer

Board Bits ~ From the March 2014 meetings.

At its March meeting, the RRUU Board approved having Alverson's Refrigeration Company of Denison to install a heating/air-conditioning system for the upper floor of the church building at a cost of \$8,983.57, with costs above the NTUUC (North Texas Unitarian Universalist Congregations) grant of \$6,250.00 that was received early this year to be funded from the church's reserve funds.

The Board discussed the possibility of fund-raisers to replace the money used for HVAC and to install needed insulation in the church building's attic (expected to cost between \$500 and \$1,000). Various ideas for fund-raisers were discussed, with no specific action taken.

The Board discussed various goals stated in the church's five-year

plan, focusing primarily on membership. It was agreed to hold an all-church picnic on June 8 following worship, to provide an opportunity for conversation between members and friends concerning ideas for membership growth.

The Board heard a report from the Nominating Team about the slate of officers it is compiling, to be voted on at the Spring Congregational Meeting in May. The team has made progress on filling some vacancies but still needs people to fill a few important slots. Officers elected at the May meeting will begin their terms July 1.

The Board learned that NTUUC's field trip from First Unitarian in Dallas to Tulsa (visiting several UU churches there) will stop at our church for dinner on both the outward-bound trip April 4 and the return trip April 6.

Volunteers are needed to help set-up

Thinking of Joining The Church?

Our next New Member Ceremony will be on Sunday, April 13th.

Membership in the free church tradition is open to all who wish to call Red River UU Church your spiritual home. Membership does not require any profession of faith. The church expects those who join to want to be here, to offer their time and talents, to make a financial commitment as one is able, to attend church often and to enjoy being part of the community.

If you have been pondering joining the congregation and would like to be among those welcomed on April 13th please speak with any board member

RRUU will serve dinner (to fellow UUers who are going to Tulsa for a field trip) on April 4 & 6. Help is needed setting up and cleaning up.

and clean-up. Carole Harner has created a sign-up sheet, and congregants are encouraged to sign up to help one of those dates. This will be a good chance to socialize with UUs from other churches in our area.

Elbert Hill

Introducing our Speakers

~ for April

Writing as **Marion Moore Hill**, Marion is a published mystery novelist and a charter member of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, having served as the congregation's first treasurer and chaired both the Finance and Endowment Team and the Membership Team. She has worked as a newspaper reporter, taught journalism and English at the college level, and once ran an ethnic/gourmet grocery. She and husband Elbert are facilitators of Movable Feast Chalice Circle. Check out her web site [here](#).

Dr. Elbert R. Hill retired nearly eight years ago as Professor of English from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant. A specialist in children's literature and Native American literature, Dr. Hill had taught nearly 40 years at SOSU and authored numerous academic papers for scholarly journals. A charter member of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church and currently president of the congregation, he occasionally also fills the pulpit (in nostalgia for his youthful ambition of being a Southern Baptist minister?). With wife Marion, he facilitates Movable Feast Chalice Circle.

Cornell Kinderknecht is an award nominated recording artist and performer of flutes and other woodwind instruments from around the world, including Native American flute, bansuri flute from India, ocarina, recorder and bamboo flutes. His original compositions and playing have been described as soothing, soaring, haunting, and playful with influences of Native America, the Middle East, India, and the Far East. His musical style draws from his experience in the areas of classical, pop, folk, jazz and world music.

Cornell's recent album, "Dreamtime", a collaboration with percussionist Martin McCall, is currently nominated in two categories for the 2014 Independent Music Awards -- for New Age Album, as well as for New Age Song for the track "Solitude". In addition to the music industry judging panel, there is also a public voting process. You can participate in the public voting process [here](#).

The Rev. Doug Strong, a sixth generation UU, served congregations in Massachusetts, Virginia, Maine, Wisconsin, California and Arizona before coming to Texas. He spent most of his active ministry in the Accredited Interim Program working with congregations during times of transition, retiring in 2003. Doug co-founded RRUU and has been involved with our congregation ever since, now serving on the Board of Trustees as well as other areas of church life

The Adult Forum

The Adult Forum meets each Sunday in the Barton Parlor at 10 am. We gather informally to discuss topics of interest - religious, spiritual, ethical or current. Topics are generally in 'sets' including *Building Your Own Theology* or from *The Great Courses*.

Booked for Lunch

Our next meeting is 12:30 pm on **April 17th**. Come tell us what you've been reading. Everyone is welcome to join us. It's a fun way to connect and get inspired. A snack will be provided. I hope to see you there.
Carole

The Meditation Group

meets on the last Sunday of each month (**April 27th**) at 12:35 pm in the chapel. If you enjoy meditating, or if you're interested in trying it, do come. It always is nice to sit together quietly.

Moveable Feast

The April Moveable Feast will be at the home of William and Carolyn Fridley, the date is still pending however. Check the weekly e-news for specifics

Out to Lunch

This month we're returning to *The Happy Cajun* on **Sunday, April 13th** which has been remodeled again and promises to be an enjoyable gathering. They are located at 50055 Texas 289 in Pottsboro. Our reservation is for 12:45 PM. Out To Lunch is our informal once-a-month (with some hiccups) gathering where we go to a local restaurant, enjoy good food, company and fellowship. We each pay our own fare. If you haven't come along, why not give it a try this month?



A peek at the new interior!

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: *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

Toiletries Needed ~ for residents at the Shelter



A wonderful donation of ten pounds of hotel soap recently from a friend of the congregation brought to mind a reminder to us all that our ongoing collection of personal toiletry items for residents at the Grayson County Shelter are always most welcome.

The next time you're at the drug store why not pick some shampoo, or deodorant, or soap or tooth paste or floss or whatever you think would be appreciated. There is a large basket in the lower foyer where you can add your items.

Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~ for us all!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle is working on the upcoming Earth Day Festival. Facilitator: [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle will gather at the home of William and Carolyn Fridley for supper in April. Speak with the facilitators: [Elbert & Marion Hill](#).

OMMMM... Meditation Group, meets the last Sunday of each month @12:35 in the Chapel, which this month is Apr 27, 2014.. Open to all who wish to learn more about meditation and to participate in meditating. Facilitator: [Paula Blackshear](#).

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, an informal book discussion group that meets the second Thursday from 11 - 1. Facilitator: [Carole Harner](#). NOTE: Next meeting is April 17th.

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. This month's gathering will be at De Happy Cajun on April 13th. Email announcements@rruu.org if you have a restaurant suggestion.

RED RIVER

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