



Red River Ramblings

In this issue:

**Flower
Communion
Sunday**

**Death with
Dignity
Workshop**

**The Spring
Congregational
Meeting**

**Who Will
Speak?**

**Texoma
Earth Day
Festival
Wins the
Cool
Congregation
Challenge**

The Church Calendar
(click the image)



Enter, Rejoice & Come In ~ to enhance our journeys

Sunday, May 4, 2014

**The Ultimate Human Right
Of The 21st Century**

Dr. Jim Chastain, *speaking*

Ours is the human and civil rights cause of this century, just as women's suffrage was in the 20's, racial rights in the 60's, and rights of the disabled in the 90's. Medical advances have created longer lives and sometimes, ironically, longer and more torturous deaths. While we applaud efforts that seek legislative change, until laws are in place to protect the right of every adult to a peaceful, dignified death, Final Exit Network will be there to support those who need relief from their suffering today.

Sunday, May 11, 2014

Flower Communion

"The Mother Load/Lode"

The Rev. Tamara Lebak, *preaching*

Sermons on Mother's Day can be dicey at best but the Rev. Lebak, Associate Minister at All Souls (Tulsa) remarks is uplifting, engaging with a wonderful message.



Bring a flower or two as we share together this simple yet significant communion, as only UUs can.

Children's Religious Education

meets upstairs and study world religions and the Seven Principles including stories from *What if Nobody Forgave* and *From Long Ago and Many Lands*. Snacks and a craft pertaining to the lesson follow.

Sunday, May 18, 2014

The Divine Beneath Our Feet

Amy Martin, *speaking*

Christianity and Islam are deeply informed by their desert origins, Hinduism reflects the fantastical jungle that birthed it, Buddhism and Taoism are imbued with the mountain serenity of their source. Most spiritual paths in the U.S. are imported from overseas. So what does the divine beneath our feet have to say? For that, we look to the surprisingly sophisticated cultures of the Moundbuilders, the 6000 BCE to 1400 CE peoples that pre-date Native Americans. We find an egalitarian social structure, love of mystical ceremonies, and a deep sense of being connected to both Earth and cosmos.

Remember the Congregational Meeting is today, starting with a Finger Food Potluck lunch.

Sunday, May 25, 2014

New Rules for "Religious Freedom"

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

The Affordable Care Act opponents are no talking in terms of economic freedom but are claiming the ACA violates their religious freedom. (Think Hobby Lobby.) Similar shifts are happening about same-sex marriage and civil equality for gay people. (Think Mississippi's 'Religious Freedom Restoration Act'.) As more Americans embrace equality for all, a growing backlash is looking for new ways to fight it. (Think First Amendment vs. Fourteenth Amendment.) On Sunday, a look at what is being said, claimed and hoped for.



Epistle from Elbert

Thanks to everyone who has visited, called, sent cards, emails, and flowers, and otherwise offered support during the time I've been ill.

For anyone who didn't know, I had triple-bypass surgery on April 11. The prognosis is good for a full recovery, but the process takes time.

Thanks, too, to all the folks at Red River UU who have handled various functions that I haven't been able to do, especially Doug for filling the pulpit on April 13, when I had been scheduled to speak; and Gil for chairing the Board meeting on April 17. Life does go on when we're temporarily unable to fulfill commitments. It's a drag for the ego to realize we're not indispensable, but it's reassuring to know the work of the world gets done anyway and often very well indeed.

Our annual Congregational Meeting, when we elect officers and make other decisions, will happen on May 18. Members will be encouraged to offer suggestions at the meeting for congregational goals and ways to achieve these, and I'm asking each of you to put some thought into these questions. Where do we want RRUU to go in the next few years, and how can we get there? I've heard it said that, if you're not going anywhere, just standing still, you're actually going backwards. At least the world is moving on without you.

RRUU needs to go forward, and one of the strengths of Unitarian Universalism is that we draw ideas from everyone in our congregations, not just from those in positions of leadership. Let's assemble lots of good ideas and choose the best!

See you in church, friends (hopefully soon).

Elbert

Spring Congregational Meeting ~ Sun. May 18th

The Spring Congregational Meeting will be Sunday, May 18 @ 12:35 in the Chapel. Our bylaws require that we hold two Congregational Meetings each year - in May and in October. At the May 18th meeting we will discuss several important issues

- The proposed budget
- Lay worship speakers for next year
- Our annual goals
- Elect people who have agreed to serve

The nominating committee slate is

- Dan Althoff - *president (2 years)*
- Robert Shelton - *treasurer (2 years)*
- L.D. Clark - *nominating committee (3 yrs)*
- Gerry Shehan - *Committee on Ministry (3)*
- Carole Harner - *Committee on Ministry (1)*

The Board agreed some years ago that only a balanced budget will be presented to the congregation. In order to balance the proposed budget some painful cuts were needed as our stewardship campaign came in about \$4,000 shy of our goal. One cut (\$1,800) was in the worship honoraria, which will mean next year we will be looking for more volunteers to speak or perhaps we will use more video presentations.

Please come to the meeting! Bring your thoughts and ideas. If you cannot attend the meeting, please complete a proxy and return it to the board secretary, Doug Strong.

In order to sustain us through the meeting, the board invites everyone to bring a food contribution for a finger food potluck.

All of the documents relating to the meeting, including proxy ballots are available on the church web page.

DYING in the AGE of CHOICE

A Workshop for Those Seeking a Death with Dignity



Sunday, May 4, 2014 2:00 - 3:30 PM ♦ Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ 515 North Burnett Ave ~ Denison, TX

Everyone will die. We know that. This workshop openly explores how to better prepare for end of life issues. Dr. Jim Chastain from the Final Exit Network will focus on several areas which are critical for those who wish to have a death with dignity.

These include

- How to talk with your loved ones about your wishes for care you do and do not want at the end of life
- How to assure your wishes will be honored and how to put those wishes in writing
- Selecting a health care surrogate to speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself
- What to do if you become irreversibly ill and can no longer bear the suffering
- The importance of Advance Directives and why a Last Will and Testament is critical in Avoiding Probate
- Preparing a Living Will and using the Living Will Registry
- How to use Hospice
- Turning to Final Exit Network to provide information and compassionate support



Dr. Jim Chastain grew up in Mississippi, as a son and grandson of Baptist ministers. He holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Utah, an MBA from the University of Chicago and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He spent his working career as a professor of finance. In retirement Jim worked in the Denver headquarters of the Hemlock Society for two years. Since Final Exit Network was formed as an outgrowth of the Hemlock Society in 2004 Jim has been active with it, first as Board and Advisory Board member and now as President of the Final Exit Network affiliate of Florida and as a Senior Exit Guide.

Final Exit's Guiding Principles

We hold that mentally competent adults who suffer from a fatal or irreversible physical illness, from intractable physical pain, or from a constellation of chronic, progressive physical disabilities have a basic human right to choose to end their lives when they judge the quality of their life to be unacceptable.

This right by its nature implies that the ending of one's life is one's choice, including the timing and persons present, and should be free of any restrictions by the law, clergy, medical profession, and even friends and relatives no matter how well-intentioned. We do not encourage anyone to end their life, are opposed to anyone's encouraging another to end his life, do not provide the means to do so, and do not assist in a person's death.

**Open to Everyone
without charge**

Financial Update ~ from our church treasurer

In the month of March, we had income of \$2,329 from general operations. After operations expense of \$1,628 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$701.

In March, we had grant expense of \$732 for worship and religious education. There was no renovation income or expense.

For the year to date period of July 2013 through March 2014, we had net income of \$12,107 from operations, net expense from renovations of \$5,857, grant income of \$7,450 from the new NTUUC grants, grant expense of \$6,849 and principal payments of \$2,961. The total change in cash for the year to date period was an increase of \$3,890. This was better than our budget primarily due to the new grants received in January.

As of the end of March 2014, we had cash of \$55,178 and debt of \$36,376. The cash amount includes \$4,487 reserved for renovations and \$10,959 reserved for grants. The amount reserved for renovations was increased in March by a transfer from savings of \$4,000 for the HVAC project currently underway.

In March, we donated \$53 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

Carole Harner, Treasurer

Board Bits ~ From the April 2014 meetings.

Highlights from the April 2014 board of trustees meeting:

- Combined with the recently installed insulated windows, a new energy efficient HVAC system for the third floor has been completed. Rather than having to heat or cool the entire third floor, each room has its own system which can be operated by a remote control. The next step in the project will be insulating the attic. Much appreciation and thanks goes to Marilyn Alexander who spearheaded the project.
- The proposed budget was beyond the income raised in the stewardship campaign so the board was forced to make nearly \$4,000 in cuts. After a lengthy conversation a balanced budget was created with the largest cut (\$2,300) coming from the worship. The board agreed this is a concern that will be brought to the May congregational meeting.
- The 2014 Leadership School will be Aug 4-8 in Denton. We can send two people and have dedicated funds to cover the tuition.

The new energy-efficient HVAC system on the third floor has been installed. We can now heat or cool each room independently!

Previous graduates from RRUU include Marion and Elbert Hill, Penny Armstrong, Marla Loturco and Joyce Peak. Anyone who might enjoy going this year is encouraged to speak with any graduate for an overview of this in-depth and very rewarding experience.

- The Nominating committee presented its slate for the upcoming election as follows: For President, Dan Althoff; Treasurer, Robert Shelton; Committee on Ministry, Gerry Shehan and Carole Harner; and for Nominating Committee, L.D. Clark.
- The Board agreed to shift the May and June board meeting from the 3rd Thursday to the 2nd Thursday.
- The next meeting will be Thursday, May 8th and anyone who would like to attend is invited.

Who Will Speak? ~ Leading Worship in the year to come?

Each Sunday we conclude by keeping *the light of truth, the warmth of community or the fire of commitment* in our heart. What light, warmth or fire is in your mind, your heart, your soul that if encouraged, nurtured, cultivated would burst forth in a spark of creativity longing to be shared?

The Worship Team can help you get your inspiration growing. Next summer the workshop *Hot Worship for the Free Church* will be at our church and everyone is invited to attend (Aug 9th from 10 - 3). Why you ask?

On a practical level, we need more speakers from the congregation. The worship budget for next year means that we will need at least 18 Sundays to fill with volunteer speakers. On a spiritual level, who

wouldn't like to take an idea or thought that quietly rests within your mind and let it become something to share?

If the notion of speaking (after getting over the sheer fear of it) sounds like something you'd enjoy - save the date and together RRUU can create some hot worship for the free church.

In addition, if you don't feel you have a sermon in your heart - how about being a Worship Associate? You can find your own material or the worship team will provide you with a script. Worship Associates help keep our services flowing and provide continuity for worship. It is both a challenge and an opportunity! Speak to any of us. Faye, Dan, Marla or Doug

Meet Our Newest Members ~ Tommi & Tracy Homuth



Tommi has been attending Unitarian churches, since her sister invited her to a Unitarian Potluck in 1975, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Tommi and Tracy attended Community UU Church in Plano, where Tommi was a member and Tracy a friend for many years. When Tracy and Tommi moved their real estate practice from Plano to Pottsville, in 2013, they began attending RRUU, and became members in April, 2014.

Tommi was a commercial business lender and active volunteer in the

Dallas area, for over 20 years. Tommi spent many hours with Consumer Credit Counseling, Educational First Steps, Aids Services of North Texas, and Dallas Can! Academy, Tommi enjoys fundraising, public speaking and counseling young students and adults. When they moved to Pottsville in April, 2013, Tommi joined Tracy as a real estate agent with Tracy Realty. Tommi also spends two days a week counseling entrepreneurs, on seeking small business loans and keeping accurate financial records, at the Small Business Development Center at Grayson College. The other five days, she can be found helping clients sell or buy residential and commercial properties. Tommi's motto is from Winston Churchill, *"You make a living by what you do, you make a life, by what you give."*

Tracy was a national sales manager for a large corporation, before being downsized and making a career change, nearly 20 years ago. He has been a broker in residential real estate market in Collin and Grayson Counties, and moved the office to Pottsville, after buying a lake house there in 2010. When asked to describe Tracy as a young boy, his mother nailed it when she said, *"Tracy was always fun-loving."*

Tracy's motto is on the back of his business card, *"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaim....WOW-WHAT A RIDE!"*

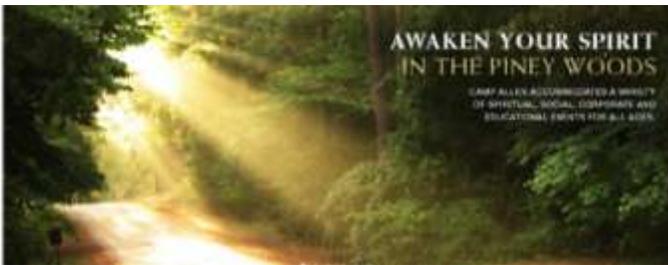
Love Is The Doctrine

~ An Elder Training Retreat

16-18 May, 2014 ♦ Camp Allen ♦ Navasota, TX

This event will give you opportunities to discuss your personal beliefs and the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism with other elders who share your beliefs, and with those who have beliefs that are quite different from yours. We will learn or refresh our knowledge of the practice of "intra-faith" dialogue so that we can encourage others to share their own discoveries on the quest for truth and meaning.

Our conversations will be sparked by intermittent sessions with our Scholar-in-Residence the Rev. Alice Blair Wesley. DBLE and SUULE grads will remember Rev. Wesley as the author of the introduction to our current publication of The Cambridge Platform. To prepare for this weekend, all participants are required to read her series of Minns Lectures -- The Lay and Liberal Doctrine of the Church: The Spirit and Promise of Our Covenant at <http://minnslectures.org/archive/wesley/wesley.htm>. We will have a unique experience of hearing Rev. Wesley remark on her reflections on the Platform and her Minns Lectures after many years of fielding questions about them.



[Camp Allen](#), in the Piney Woods, is a beautiful retreat center where we will have hotel-like rooms, excellent meals, lively worship and natural surroundings. You can enjoy nature walks, browse through the large gift shop or work out in the gym and refresh yourself in the spa and sauna. If you are flying into this event, Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport is the nearest major airport. Please contact Southern Region Registrar [Kathy Charles](#) if you need assistance getting from the airport to Camp Allen, or with any questions.

The registration fee per registrant is \$290 for a single occupancy room, or \$225 for a double occupancy room.

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

What have you been reading lately? Join us for the book club meeting at 12:30 on Thursday, May 8, in the Barton Parlor. The conversation is always fun and this is a great way to hear about interesting books. A snack will be provided. After this meeting, we will take a break for the summer.

Carole

The Meditation Group

meets on the last Sunday of each month (**May 24th**) 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

This month the Feasters will once again enjoy wandering through the many restaurants that have a booth at the annual Memorial Day Taste of Texoma benefitting the Boys & Girls Club of Denison at the Palazzo (506 W. Chestnut Street in downtown Denison), Memorial Day, Monday, May 26th. Feasters, along with anyone else from church, will gather at the entry at noon and can graze & nibble at each booth!

Out to Lunch

This month's Out to Lunch will be IN FOR LUNCH as we gather on May 18th for the Spring Congregational Meeting. Everyone is invited to bring finger food for our annual Spring Potluck Lunch before the meeting. Do come!

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

Congratulations Green Team!

The Interfaith Power & Light organization honors congregations - world-wide - who demonstrate programs or projects or events that reflect a religious response to Global Warming. RRUU's Earth Day Festival won in the category of Community Inspiration. Check out the other category winners [here](#). The award came with a check for \$1,000.00. Well done everyone.



Interfaith Power & Light

A RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO GLOBAL WARMING

Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~ for us all!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle is meeting for evaluation on May 8th for the completed the 6th Annual Earth Day Festival. Facilitator: [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets, generally, once a month. 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 May 25, 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 May 8th.

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. Email announcements@rruu.org if you have a restaurant suggestion.

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