

Red River Ramblings



August 2015
Volume 13
Issue 2

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Church calendar
for the next
30 days:



Five Sunday mornings in August: to leave you smiling all week!

Sunday, August 2, 2015

Wrestling with Confederate Symbols

The Rev. Doug Traversa, *preaching (on video)*

Rev. Traversa ministers to the congregation in Tullahoma, TN. He delivered this sermon on July 6th and talks about the history of the Southern Cross, the flags used by the confederacy and just what these symbols represent.

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, August 9, 2015

Sacred Journeys

The Rev. Gina Purcell, *preaching*

Drawing on her own experience working in hospice care, Rev. Purcell will provide a bit of history about hospice, share some stories of patients and the lessons they have taught her.

Refreshments: H

Sunday, August 16, 2015

Here Come the New Gods -- Same as the Old Gods?

The Rev. Christine Tata, *preaching*

It appears that as soon as human beings picked up tools and created words they also started making religions. And they haven't stopped. Making religions is what human beings do, and we can't seem to help it. We in Unitarian Universalist churches are making religions that we believe are more rational, more sane, and more compassionate than traditional religions. In this reflection, Dr. Tata will look at some current trends for believers and skeptics alike and ask the question: what kind of religion are we really making?

Refreshments: I - R

Sunday, August 23, 2015

You Don't Have to Hate Anyone to be a Bigot

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

Time was when you drove through Farmersville (on Rte. 380 between McKinney & Greenville) you were greeted with a sign "Home of the Blackest Land and the Whitest People." The sign's gone, but recently the folks in Farmersville erupted over news that the Islamic Association of Collin County has purchased 35 acres to create a cemetery. The residents are outraged. Comments from locals went viral - worldwide. Bigotry is as old as language and like censors who can read smut and remain holy (yet insist the rest of us will instantly become depraved), people who embrace bigotry claim they don't hate anyone. On Sunday an examination of bigotry - from slogans like "In your heart, you know he's right" to "Silent Majority." Bigotry is so pervasive we often are unaware how each of us uses it.

Refreshments: S-Z

Sunday, August 23, 2015

A Morning of Water Music for Water Communion

The Worship Team + Musical Friends

Water is one of the four elements. We drink, bathe, swim, soak, wash, clean, sprinkle, use and waste it. We watch it flowing in a stream or flooding the Red River. We capture it in countless photos and imagine it while listening to music. This Sunday is our annual Water Communion service - a uniquely UU ritual that we will celebrate uniquely: through music. The Worship Team, along with *several* musical friends are creating a special morning assembly aimed at whetting your appetite for water!

This morning we will also welcome those who recently signed the membership book.

After things: This being the 5th Sunday, we'll end the morning with our first "Staying IN For Lunch" (the reincarnation of 'Out TO Lunch'). Bring a dish to share, some fun, frivolous, fancy or funny food to feed our hearts and souls.

**Morning Meditation - 9 ♦ Adult Forum - 10
Worship - 11:15 ♦ Fellowship - 12:15**

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX
We are a sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth.

Dan's Dispatch



On Saturday, July 25, three of us from Red River—Marla Loturco, Donna Toerper, and I—traveled out to visit Hurst, Texas, just west of the DFW International Airport. We were there to attend a Small Church Conference hosted by Path-

ways UU Church, one of our sister congregations in NTUUC (North Texas Unitarian Universalist Congregations). David Pollard, president of the Board at Pathways, had noticed that there was more growth in the smaller congregations in our cluster than in the larger ones, and he thought it would be a good idea and worthwhile for the smaller congregations to talk to each other to discover what we were all doing right!

Besides the three of us from Red River, there were representatives from the UU congregations in Arlington, Tyler, and Pathways, of course. We were also joined by an "emerging congregation" in Wichita Falls, one which has not yet achieved the minimum number of members to become a fully recognized congregation of the UUA. (I didn't learn until recently that there was such a group in Wichita Falls.) David Pollard at Pathways had extended an invitation to all the smaller congregations in Texas and Oklahoma, and all of us present were especially impressed that two people had driven all the way down from Lubbock just to attend!

Smaller congregations have their own set of special challenges, and one that is common to most of us is how to handle children's Religious Education when there isn't a

Thinking of Joining Red River?

The water communion ceremony in church on August 30 signals "new beginnings" for many people. Children and teachers return to school, RRUU congregants come back from summer travels, and we all celebrate getting together again after forays into new territories or new pursuits. As part of this celebration, the church will induct two new members into the church. Jan Fletcher, a former member, is "returning home" to RRUU, and Donna Toerper is joining for the first time. We're delighted to welcome them both!

If you have been considering joining Red River, this would be the perfect opportunity to do so. We'll have you sign the membership book and will bestow gifts (plus a few somber words about privileges and responsibilities of church membership) upon you. To become a member of the church, get in touch with Membership Chair Marion Hill, 580-924-7715.

"critical mass" of children present every week. An experienced children's RE teacher, Theresa Wright from Pathways, discussed a number of possible scenarios for children at a small congregation. She presented four easy guidelines to keep in mind when planning and developing RE lessons and activities: (1) Have fun! (2) Everybody—students and teachers alike—should learn something; (3) There should be a "take-away," or something concrete or memorable to take home; and (4) Everybody should feel welcome, included, and important. Oh yes, and snacks—there should be snacks! Such down-home and basic guidance remove a good bit of apprehension and concern about having a very slick and very professional children's RE from the start. A little planning, a little good will, a little flexibility—and snacks!—will go a long way towards making families with children feel welcome and well looked-after.

And with that, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the entire congregation for approving a revised Safe Congregation Policy for RRUU at our special Congregational Meeting last month. I am convinced that our new policy has all the appropriate safeguards for children's safety without being overly burdensome to a congregation our size. Special recognition and special gratitude are due to the members of the Committee on Ministry who agreed to serve in a dual role as the Safe Congregation Panel should the need arise: L.D. Clark, Carole Harner, and Gerry Shehan. We're only able to "do church" and "be church" because of the time, treasure, talent, and dedication of all our members, and I am grateful to all of you.

See you in church!

Town Hall Meeting in September

Board President Dan Althoff invites all members and friends of Red River UU Church to a Town Hall meeting to discuss the current church Bylaws with a view towards simplifying them. The Town Hall session will be held in the chapel on Wednesday afternoon, September 9th, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Dan will have a limited number of the complete Bylaws on hand, but participants are encouraged to print their own copies from the website at rruu.org. Other items of interest and concern to members and friends are also open for discussion. Please come to make your views heard and to hear others, even if you can't stay for the whole session. And if you can't attend this time, feel free to email your suggestions and observations to Dan at [president \[+ suffix\]](mailto:president@rruu.org). The Board of Trustees meeting will follow the Town Hall gathering after a break. The Trustees will meet at 7:00 p.m., and you're invited to attend that meeting as well.

Another Town Hall meeting will be scheduled in early October to follow up from the points raised at the September meeting. We hope to see you!

Some of you may know what NTUUC is. Others may know it by its original name NTAUUS. Either way, NTUUC represents the thirteen UU congregations in the North Texas area. Each church has at least one representative on the NTUUC Board. I have been that representative for Red River UU for a few years, and the secretary of NTUUC as well. Previously I have reported happenings at NTUUC to the RRUU board and hoped that the congregation heard what was happening. Sometimes, at congregational meetings, I have talked about NTUUC. To make sure everyone is informed; I am going to be doing a brief column in the newsletter on NTUUC happenings.



The NTUUC Vision is: *By our creative actions, NTUUC inspires a just, loving and sustainable world.*

The NTUUC Mission is: *NTUUC proclaims and promotes our covenant of liberal religion by empowering its member congregations through education, collaboration and funding.*

On July 25th, NTUUC helped sponsor a Small Congregations Workshop which took place at Pathways UU in Hurst, TX. Three people from our congregation attended. Topics covered included: RE for children when the children do not always come; sharing video downloads from the web; how to create music videos with words; sharing from each of the attending congregations; Inquiry Classes; and community outreach. It was determined that the workshop was a success and another may be planned for April 2016.

On August 1st I will be attending the annual NTUUC board retreat, being held in Briarwood Camp near Denton Texas. There will be a board meeting during the retreat. Anyone with questions about NTUUC, please contact me.

Marla Loturco

August's Moveable Feast

A Summer Soirée Of Scrumptious Secrete Salads is the theme for the August 1st Luncheon Feast. The feasters will sample a variety of summer salads (brought by those attending) and then cast votes to determine the winners-based an assortment of wacky criteria. Unlike most moveable feasts, this one will be a luncheon affair, starting at 1 pm. The group will gather at Doug Strong's home in Sherman. If you would like to attend, consider this your invitation. But, please, email info [+ suffix]* no later than Friday, July 31 so there will be a place for you at the table.

*the church email suffix: @rruu.org

Meet our First Time Guest Clergy

Wrestling with Confederate Symbols

The Rev. Doug Traversa, *preaching (on video)*



By way of introducing our speaker: My story is similar to many Unitarian Universalists. It wasn't so long ago I was sure I'd never attend church again, having left a very fundamentalist form of Christianity. Yet I have learned there are some churches that welcome rationality, reason, hard questions, and open debate. I found Unitarian Universalism. This acceptance and love is the foundation of Unitarian Universalism, and it touched me deeply, so deeply, in fact, that I decided to serve in this church once I retired from the Air Force. I retired in January 2009, and the next day I became the lay minister of this church. After graduating from seminary, I was ordained on June 1st, 2013. And I could not be happier with my decision.

Sacred Journeys

The Rev. Gina Purcell, *preaching*



Rev. Gina Purcell is an ordained minister in the Metropolitan Community Churches. She has a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Religious Studies from the University of North Texas and a Master of Divinity from Brite Divinity School at TCU. Rev. Purcell has been active in ministry since 1996, and was ordained in 2005. She currently serves as a staff chaplain for Texas Health Resources Harris HEB hospital in Bedford, TX. Rev. Purcell lives in Denton with her family including her 8 year old son, Garrett, and is a member of the Denton Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. She also spends one Sunday a month working with the UU Fellowship in Longview.

Board Bits

During the July 10th Board meeting, the Board:

- Voted to hold regularly scheduled meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The next meetings are scheduled for August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11, and December 9. Meetings in 2016 have not yet been officially set.
- Agreed to sell some of our red chairs, which had come to us from Community UU Church in Plano, at the church yard sale on July 11.
- Reviewed the proposed budget for FY 2015-16 and the second revision of the Safe Congregation for presentation at the Congregational Meeting on July 12.
- Named Dan as authorized wedding officiant for RRUU under Texas State law.
- Reviewed the previous year's covenant, and re-adopted it for 2015-16.
- Discussed installing a high quality acoustical tile ceiling in the chapel as a priority for a future NTUUC grant.

Additionally:

- Dan expressed his intention to call a taskforce to review the church's Bylaws for revision.
- Elbert raised the possibility of holding a Moveable Feast in Munson Park in late September or early October.

Treasurer's Report

In the month of June, we had income of \$3,084 from general operations. After operations expense of \$2128 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$955.

In June we received \$80 in donations for the Wi-Fi fund.

For the year to date period of July 2014 through March 2015, we had net income of \$955. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$121.

As of the end of June 2015, we had total cash of \$3,203. We had \$3,203 reserved for grants. Our unrestricted cash totals \$41,205 and our debt totals \$27,729.

In June, we donated \$699 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

The Adult Forum for August

Aug. 2nd – Sombrero Galaxy, An Island Universe: one of the 20 brightest galaxies in the sky. The Hubble image provides a spectacular close-up view of this nearly edge-on spiral, with its pronounced central bulge and tightly wound spiral arms. The very bright nucleus harbors a black hole of a billion star masses.



Aug. 9th – Hubble's View of Galaxies Near and Far: Hubble's Law and observation show that galaxies appear to be moving away from the Milky Way. The simple explanation is that we live in an expanding universe.

Aug. 16 – Evolution: Part 5 follows both Unitarianism and universalism through the late 19th and early 20th centuries as they evolve from Christian bible-oriented religions to our present-day non-creedal movement.

Aug. 23 – Evolution: Part 5, 2nd half, discusses influences as diverse as the Civil War, Feminism and Suffrage, Darwin's On the Origin of Species, and the Social Gospel.

Aug. 30 - The Antennae Galaxies – A Cosmic Collision: stars in our galactic halo exhibit streaming motions that indicate they were one part of smaller galaxies which have been disrupted by the gravity of the Milky Way. Over time, the Milky Way has captured a number of small galaxies and shredded them.

AV Training Workshop

Saturday, August 8th from 9 - 11 the worship team is sponsoring a special workshop designed to teach us all what all those knobs, dials, sliders, switches and cables on the sound board are all about. Danny Beaver who owns an AV events store will be our facilitator. If you want to attend, please speak with anyone on the Worship Team. Expertise is *not* needed to learn this stuff!



Three Things to Remember ...

.... for our special Sunday morning on August 30th:

1. Bring your water for our Water Communion Ritual
2. Bring your contribution to the Staying IN For Lunch potluck
3. If you've been pondering signing the membership book, this would be a perfect day to do so.

Leaders

Board of Trustees

Dan Althoff, *president*
 Gil Alexander, *vice president*
 Robert Shelton, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Helen Schulze, *Trustee*
 Elbert Hill, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

LD Clark, Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Gil*
 Aesthetics Team:
Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Finance: *Open*
 Good Times:
Carole, Marilyn & Marion
 Long Range Planning:
Amy, Gil, Marilyn
 Membership: *Marion*
 Nominations: *Amy, Kat, Lanan*
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
 RE Team: *Carolyn, Dan, Tommi*
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
 Social Action: *Gil*
 Ways & Means: *Open*
 Worship:
Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

Church Yard Sale a HUGE Success

The crowds were not overly impressive, but a steady flow of folks grabbed up hundreds of items. The leftover stuff went to the Grayson County Shelter Resale store. We raised a total of \$1,504.00. In sales and donations. The proceeds have been deposited into the Church Elevator Fund. There are several pieces of furniture remaining. See anything you can't live without?

Thanks to Lanan/Robert Shelton; Donna Toerper; Paula Blackshear; Amy Hoffman Shehan, Tommi/Tracy Homuth; Marion/Elbert Hill; David Dyer; Marilyn Alexander (and Kerry), Doug Strong plus everyone who helped set up the chapel after church the Sunday before. It never would have happened without you!



Chalice Circles / Interest Groups

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Team. . Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets Sat. Aug 1st @ 1 pm for a *Summer Soirée Of Scrumptious Secrete Salads* at Doug Strong's home in Sherman.

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, is an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Barton Parlor. The group is on summer break (happily reading). They return in September. Facilitator Carole Harner.

Contact Us

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