

In
This Issue

Spring Meeting
is May 21

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Call to Action in
Turbulent Times
- Four Wednes-
days in May

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Red River Ramblings



May 2017
Volume 20
Issue 1

Grow your soul & Serve the world

Sunday, May 7, 2017

Religious Metamorphosis

The Rev. Dr. Don Fielding, *speaking*

This Reflection is about “change,” especially religious change. Don will try to explain why he believes religion is undergoing a major transformation today, what the old religion was about, and what the religion of the future might look like.

Refreshments A-G (but not C)

Sunday, May 14, 2017

Mother's Day

Flower Communion Sunday

Mothers and Grandmothers

The Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, *speaking (video message)*

On this Mother's Day (where more phone calls are made than any other day of the year) we will enjoy a video message from the Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, senior minister of Tulsa's All Souls Church .



We'll celebrate the annual flower communion service as well so do remember to bring a flower or two with you. Not familiar with Flower Communion? You're in for a wonderful treat. This simple yet significant ritual ties us to our Unitarian cousins living in Romania and dates back nearly sixty years.

Refreshments H

Sunday, May 21, 2017

Spring Congregational Meeting Today

Grounded in the Community that is the Congregation

The Rev. Thomas Squiers, *speaking*

What does it mean to not only coexist in a congregation but also be grounded in a congregation? A sermon about viewing a congregation as a community and developing ways to live in that community guided by our seven Unitarian Universalist principles.

Refreshments: Finger Food potluck before the Spring Meeting

Sunday, May 28, 2017

Home of the Brave (Immigrants and Pilgrims and Refugees)

The Worship Team, *leading*

We are all immigrants and pilgrims and refugees, some more recent than others. On Sunday, come celebrate with stories, videos and songs the tapestry that is America and honor those serving in our Armed Forces, our veterans and to remember those who gave their lives in service to our country.

Refreshments S-Z

Sunday Mornings

- **Meditation** ~ 9 am
- **Adult Forum** ~ 10
- **Morning Assembly** ~ 11:15
- **Conversations & Calories** ~ 12:15

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

A sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth.

Hello from Helen



I want to start by giving a big thank you to everyone who helped in the unseasonably cold Earth Day festival on April 22nd. I kept my coat on, but I appreciated seeing all the volunteer T-shirts running around!

I don't have any profound thoughts to share with you this month. I hope you have considered making a pledge to keep this little island of love and tolerance in Texoma on its feet for another year.

I know I have taken this place for granted sometimes in the past.; I hope to help contribute to keeping its doors open.

We will have our annual congregational meeting this May on the 21. I hope to see you there!

A Call to Faith in Turbulent Times

a 4 part small group experience

Many Unitarian Universalists and other people of faith feel challenged by this moment in our nation's history. The actions of political leaders are raising large moral questions. Many of us feel compelled to explore what our faith commitments and values require of us. Information is coming from every direction.

We have learned that it is crucial to stay informed, yet not all sources are reliable. Others ask us to contact legislators, attend meetings, join in protests, engage in political conversations with friends and acquaintances, and take public action, sometimes for the first time ever.

Many turn to our congregations and faith communities for help to clarify how our values call us to respond and to strengthen us to act.

Since the November election, have you encountered difficult conversations within our church community? Do you carry extra tension around current events? In today's political environment, the actions of our leaders and the tone of public discourse have led many UUs to reexamine long-held values and long-standing relationships.

Many seek solid ground in our faith communities, wishing to reconnect in covenant. To this end, the UUA is offering a new small group ministry resource, in four 90 minute sessions.

The sessions are designed to help nurture, support, and strengthen UU to respond to this moment and its significant challenges.

Each session offers a different lens for a group to examine together the call of our faith and our moral and ethical commitments at this extraordinary moment:

-  Call to Vision
-  Call to Love
-  Call to Imagination
-  Call to Relationship in Action

They were written by the Rev. Marta Valentín and use a standard "small group ministry" format, known as an effective tool for people to engage in deep discernment rather than in debate.

A Call to Faith in Turbulent Times will meet on 4 consecutive Wednesday evenings (May 10, 17, 24, 31) at church from 6:15 - 7:45 PM, so people can drive home before dark.

You do not need to register. Just come.

While it would be more useful for participants to attend all sessions, drop in participation is fine.

Spring Congregational Meeting ~ Sunday, May 21

The Spring Meeting is the time we will have an open dialogue about several issues which people have asked the board to include on the agenda. We will also elect new church leadership and we will vote on a budget for the new fiscal year. It is an important meeting.

Issues which will come before the membership for consideration include

- 🌸 Should Red River UU become a Reproductive Justice Congregation (as outlined in the Feb. 2017 newsletter)?
- 🌸 Should Red River UU continue to lock the building during the Morning Assembly?
- 🌸 Should Red River UU begin the Welcoming Congregation Program (as outlined in the Feb. 2017 newsletter)?
- 🌸 Discussion regarding establishing (again) a Caring Team
- 🌸 Discussion regarding moving beyond the partisan divide within the congregation
- 🌸 Discussion and vote on distribution of the Share The Plate donations for 2017-2018
- 🌸 Discussion and voting on Congregation's Goals for the 2017-2018 church year
- 🌸 Discussion and voting on the Proposed 2017-2018 Budget
- 🌸 Nominations (if any) and election of church leadership

The meeting starts at 12:35 PM in the chapel with a finger food potluck, to which everyone is invited to bring a dish to share.

All members will receive a meeting packet on Monday, May 7 as required by our bylaws. Everyone who wishes can download the packet from the church App or via the church web site.

Members unable to attend the meeting will be able to vote online, or they can download a paper proxy ballot. Details about voting will be in the Meeting Packet which will be emailed on Monday, May 7th.

Friends of the congregation are warmly invited to attend the meeting as well and can participate in the discussions. However, only members may vote.

Our New Chairlift



OK. It looks exactly like the old chairlift, but be not fooled! This one is completely new and guess what? It works!

A few words of caution are needed. Please do *not* unplug it or turn it off because that means the batteries are not charging and they will be ruined. There are two remote switches on the wall at the bottom and top of the stairs to bring the chair up or down. It would be nice if no one removes them.

There is a strange reality about chairlifts. Many people who would truly benefit from riding up or down don't do it. Experts are puzzled as to why. Hopefully those whose life would be a wee bit easier by riding will take the plunge and go for a lift.

Visitor Cards are vanishing



When people grab a card to jot down something - we keep running out of them. Good news: there are scratch pads in the credenza in the lower lobby which saves the cards for visitors.

So are the visitor nametags!

Often visitors overlook leaving their white nametag when they depart. So, if you happen to see visitors wearing the white visitor nametag as they head out the door, please remind them to leave the nametag.

Moveable Feast ~ May 20th

Marilyn Alexander and Ronda DeCaire are hosting the Feasters on May 20, 6:00 p.m., at Two Bears Ranch near Colbert. Marilyn and Ronda are preparing all the food, so Feasters are directed to just come and enjoy! Direct questions to Marilyn at galex @ cherokee-comm.com.

Here's what they say about plans for the evening: "We are thinking Italian." Antipasto appetizer, Lasagna, Shrimp Alfredo with linguini, Salad, Bread, Cheesecake. No need to bring anything, unless you would prefer a beverage different than what we can provide. We will have a selection of wines, BuzzBallz, and some beers, in addition to iced tea, lemonade and water. We will have spirits (bourbon, light and dark rum, vodka, gin) if you want to bring your own mixer."

Announcing the Candidates

Meet the candidates for our May 21 membership meeting:

Vice President (2017-2019): Linda Tracy has been on the board as our Trustee-at-large for the last year. She helps with the flowers in the sanctuary, and is the greeter team leader. Professionally she has been an award-winning realtor and leasing specialist for many years. Currently she works with Tracy Realty as their Marketing Manager. She is blessed with two daughters and three grandchildren. Linda began attending Red River in April 2015 and joined in January 2016.



Secretary (2017-2019): Megan Hutchinson first visited in September, 2016 and became a member in October of last year. She has already been volunteer coordinator for the Green Team, is a worship associate, our Care Team coordinator and has been working with Doug on learning the secretary's duties.



Treasurer (2017-2018): Dick Powell began attending Adult Forum and worship services last October and joined the congregation in February 2017. He served in the Peace Corps in Chile, and lived with his wife Carol in Bogota, Colombia, where Dick worked with an international CPA firm. Dick has been an active volunteer with Big Brothers, Habitat, and Meals-on-Wheels. In addition, Dick has spent several years as a part-time adjunct professor of accounting at UNT and at UT-Dallas.



Trustee at Large (2017-2019): Jim Holmes moved here from Austin and has attended both worship services and Movable Feast chalice group since his first visit in April 2016. He signed the membership book in February 2017. Jim's a former army brat, a military veteran, a former hippy, and a retiree after 35 years in the computer industry. He lives with his grandson in Denison.



Nominating Committee: (2017-2020): David Dyer first visited in November, 2014 and joined the church along with Kelly and their daughter Ellie in April 2015. David and his family enjoy Moveable Feast, volunteering for Earth Day, recycled the chapel carpet and installed it on the third floor and lends a hand to various church projects. He is retired and enjoys gardening, reading and fishing.



Committee on Ministry (2017-2020): Marla Lo turco has been a member of Red River UU Church since 2007. She has held the position of President, Vice President, and Nominations. She is a member of the Worship Team, Green Team, Moveable Feast, Meditation, Book Club and several other groups that have been active at various times. She is currently the NTUUC representative for Red River UU Church and serves as the NTUUC secretary.



Earth Day ~ a Great Success

The good news about the weather was it did not rain! Yes, it was cold and very windy which is probably the main reason the attendance was, at best, sparse. However, for the 700 or so people who did attend, it was a great success. Even the vendors, whose sales were dismal, agreed it was the weather and hope to return again next year. Thanks to the 19 folks from church who volunteered to make the day the success it was. Texoma Earth Day Festival is our largest outreach project. We can be proud that Red River UU is the reason Earth Day is in Texoma. Well done, everyone!

Treasurer's Report

In the month of March, we had income from general operations of \$3,569.

After operations expense of \$1,906, we had a net income from operations of \$1,663.

Operations expense include water and waste of \$93, gas bill \$66, electric bill \$128, UUA donation of \$118, internet \$68 and building insurance \$196.

In January, we received a \$3,000 grant from NTUUC for a/v improvements and community outreach. From the grant, we purchased the church app at a cost of \$240, an additional microphone at a cost of \$1,965 and Earth Day fliers \$116, leaving a balance of \$679.

The Small Congregation Conference was held in March. There are receipts still outstanding, therefore a financial accounting is unavailable at this time.

In March, we donated \$167 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

As of March 31st, we had \$7,488 available in checking.

Kelly Cofield,
Treasurer

An NTUUC sponsored training Conference is scheduled for June 10th, 2017. If you volunteer to work at the conference, your registration is waved. Information on the Conference and registration may be found [here](#).

Registration Assistance is available from NTUUC for many conferences/events around the cluster and also for GA. Details [here](#) or speak with Marla.

Training for the Our Whole Lives (lifetime sexuality education) program is July 14-15 for anyone wishing to become a trainer.

NTUUC is attempting to do a written history of Raible Place, the housing development which was the start of the NTUUC organization. Daniel Polk will be posting a flyer on Facebook. We would appreciate anyone who sees it to repost it. It is hoped that we might be able to reach people who used to live in Raible Place through this medium.

Happening Around the Cluster

Arlington UU - Received a grant from NTUUC for a face uplift in their church. They are starting their work on the sanctuary and coffee room.

Community UU - Finishing welcoming congregation program and expect to have congregational approval at the next congregational meeting. Film about transgender youth on May 13 from 10-12 they are showing a Katie Couric documentary which explains transgender identities in compelling detail. Details [here](#).

Denton UU - Annual meeting in three Sundays and new officers will be elected and Pam Watt will be at Horizon UU on May 21, 2017

First UU Dallas - First Church is proceeding with a capitol drive to pay off debts from repairs forced by the city. Their goal is to raise 10 million and they have a good start on reaching that goal. Also on May 20, 2017 they are hosting a seminar from 8:30 to 3:30 on End of Life Wishes.

First Jefferson UU - Doing landscaping to spruce up outside and allow signs to show is the current project.

Horizon UU - Teach-in about white supremacy will be occurring this Sunday in RE and soon in the pulpit.

Oak Cliff UU - received a grant to install outside lights in their back parking lot that are solar and self-contained. After working through code division they are finally getting permission to install them

Pathways UU - Structure and space is ever evolving challenge for Pathways. The rent is going up on the building and the air conditioning system isn't working correctly. A decision needs to be made between accepting the current limitations of their building or finding a new home. They have found a new real estate agent who specialized in church relocation.

Tyler UU - Allison Stovall's Celebration of Life is May 11 at 11:00 am in Tyler for anyone who would like to attend. Tyler just started a second adult study group facilitated by a member and attendance is good.

Westside UU - April 30, 2017 was the installation for Rev. Shari L. Woodbury as their new minister. Westside found a choir director they can hire for special events so there were about 50 people in the choir for the installation.

Our Little Free Library

needs children's books. All ages, all topics. Books for kids are very popular, measuring by how quickly they disappear. If you're at a yard sale, or library book sale, pick up as many as you want. Leave them in the Rev. Forrest Church Library and they will be put out a few at a time.

Green Team Meeting

will hold a working meeting on Monday, May 8th at 6 Pm at church. They will work on creating job descriptions for volunteer positions; planning calendars and online documents for next year's Festival. If you want to get in on the ground floor of planning next year's event, you're warmly invited to come. Amy Hoffman-Shehan, facilitator.

Booked for Fun

Read a great book recently? Or, want to find out about a great book to read? Come join the conversation as we talk about books. Booked for Fun meets on the 2nd Friday of each month - for May, that's the 12th at 1 pm. We meet at church and a snack will be available. Carole Harner, facilitator.

Stewardship Campaign

The latest update on this year's Stewardship Campaign is good news ~ *very good news!* As of May first, we've raised \$35,422.00 in pledges. This means that our proposed budget for 2017-2018 will be in the neighborhood of \$42K. To all who responded to the appeal, a heartfelt thanks. All pledges, regardless of size, are important, and if money talks, we are in love with our church! The budget will be discussed and approved at the May 21st congregational meeting.

Meet our 1st time speaker



The Rev. Thomas Squiers is a former Catholic priest who came to UU while in his first year of seminary. He resigned from the priesthood 4 years after his ordination as his belief system was more aligned with UU than traditional Christianity. He is a licensed Universal Chaplain and Certified Spiritual Therapist and operates Namaste Chaplain Services (which has an overwhelming number of Humanists). He is currently working on his certification in the Unitarian Universalist Society of Community Ministry to become a Commissioned Community Minister. Thomas is a member of Pathways UU in Hurst where he also serves as the NTUUC representative

Transylvania Pilgrimage –Summer 2016

by Sarah Nosal, First Parish Youth
First Parish, Unitarian Universalist
Bedford, MA

from *The Parishioner*, March 2017 issue

From the editor:

While I do not know this young person, I do know that the First Parish in Bedford MA has for years been in the Partner Church program that their church with the Unitarian church in Abásfalva, Romania. (Population 300.) I enjoyed the story and felt others may enjoy it as well. DMS

Do you remember all the baked potatoes you bought at coffee hour last year? I was one of the recipients of your generous donations, and we used those potato proceeds to fund my pilgrimage to Transylvania in August of 2016. I left from Logan Airport with ten UU youth from a congregation in Maine and four from Seattle, our ages ranging from 14 to 19. Our mission was to spend a couple days in Kolozsvár, the second largest city in Romania, before meeting up with around 20 Hungarian youth and beginning our international youth camp, where we would travel together to churches, villages, and historical sites, while learning about one another's religions and beliefs. After the camp, I travelled to our partner village of Abásfalva, and to Gyepes, the nearby partner village of the Yarmouth church.

I went on this trip to a place I've never been, with people I've never met, in a country with a language I've never spoken. With the combination of all of these factors, it was easy to feel alone, but I never did because of the many instances in which I was reminded of the community at First Parish that had sent me and supported me the entire time.

When the group went into the first Unitarian church in Kolozsvár--the first of seventeen churches that we visited during that trip--I was so excited to see the same style of embroidery that covers the hymnals in our church here in Bedford. I had grown up knowing that the hymnal covers were made in Transylvania, and there I was, sitting in a church where entire pews were covered in the embroidered fabric. It was really cool to realize that our church shares this aspect of Transylvanian culture with other churches from the birthplace of our religion.

After leaving Kolozsvár, we joined up with the Hungarian youth and began our tour around the country. We went to a Hungarian folk festival, hiked the citadel where the Unitarian preacher Francis David was im-

prisoned for his beliefs, slept in fortresses surrounded by the beautiful green hills of the Transylvanian countryside, and helped to rebuild a cemetery and re-tile a roof. On our way to Deva, an important pilgrimage site, we visited a small village with a large misty mountain. Here, we all gathered in a beautiful church where one of our trip leaders suggested we sing hymn: "Spirit of Life." I've heard this hymn time and time again in the walls of this church, and there I was, singing it halfway around the world with people from other states and countries. This song, like many others that I got to sing with the Hungarian youth, is one that unites UUs across borders.

Of course, the time I felt closest to the community we have here was when I was able to visit our partner village of Abásfalva. This was a place that I had always heard of in sermons, and seen pictures of on the walls and bulletin boards here, but I never thought that I would be able to visit it myself. I left the youth camp for a couple of days and embarked on a new adventure, joining the adult travelers from First Parish for the winter chapel dedication in our partner village. It was truly one of the highlights of my trip to see and learn about the beautiful village, as well as experience the incredible kindness and generosity of the villagers, who welcomed me into their homes with open arms. It was amazing to learn about village life there. I didn't know that "when the cows come home" was a real thing until I saw dozens of cows walking themselves down from the mountain in a herd, each to his own home. When the plaque in the winter chapel was unveiled, revealing the names of all the members of our congregation who had donated to help fund its construction, I could really see how closely connected our congregations are, even though we are separated by thousands of miles.

As I began college this fall, I was once again in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by unfamiliar people, but thanks to this incredible experience, I was not only prepared to face this challenge, but I am able to still find many things in my new city to remind me of the welcoming, supportive community here at First Parish.



First Parish, Bedford MA



A Romanian Unitarian church

Leaders

Board of Trustees

Helen Schulze, *President*
 Marla Loturco, *Vice President*
 Kelly Cofield, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Linda Tracy, *Trustee*
 Dan Althoff, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,
 Robert Shelton

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *various members*
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Finance:
 Membership: *Marion*
 Nominations: *Elbert, Kat, Lanan*
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
 RE Team: *Dan, Tommi*
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
 Social Action:
 Worship: *Doug, Marla, Robert*

So, you don't use the church app. **Seriously?**

Currently 64% of us look at the eNews, the newsletter, and other electronic correspondence from the church on mobile devices, rather than a computer. One real advantage of the church app is that you don't need wi-fi in order to use the app, as it is part of your device's data plan.

On the app you can almost instantly

- read the current newsletter
- check what's happening on Sunday
- review the month's calendar
- watch video clips (currently "a PSA from ACLU along with Steve Brook's song "The Pee Police" both clips speak against Transgender Bathroom Bills)
- connect to the church Facebook page or the church web site
- occasionally get a push announcement reminding you of important church events, or in case of a church emergency

A resource for everyone! Download "RedRiverUU" from the Apps Store and Google Play. You can simply click either icon (depending on your device's operating system). It is free.



Contact Us

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E-News: announce (at) rruu.org

Facebook: RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

Smart Phone App: download "RedRiverUU" free from the [Apps Store](#) & [Google Play](#).

Chalice Circles / Interest Groups ~ open to all

BOOKED FOR FUN, an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Friday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Emerson Room. In April the group meets on Friday, May 12th. Facilitator Carole Harner.

GREEN TEAM, is meeting on May 8th at 6 pm at church. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle. Ronda DeCaire and Marilyn Alexander are hosting the May feast on Saturday, May 20th at 6 pm at Two Bears Ranch (Marilyn's home) near Cobert. Details on page 4. Facilitators: Elbert and Marion Hill.