



Red River Ramblings

News from Red River Unitarian Universalist Church

Denison TX

Vol 20, No. 7

November, 2017

Sunday November 5, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

Transforming Our Lives Through Forgiveness

the Rev. Nica Easton-Guinn,
(video message)



Forgiveness can be the path to profound personal and collective transformation, but it must be considered carefully and done with intention. Using the Jewish tradition of atonement (during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) as a starting point, we look at the transformative practice of asking for and offering forgiveness.

Sunday, November 12, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

Loving the Beggar, Welcoming the Stranger

the Rev. Rebecca Crystal, *speaking*

When confronted by a beggar, how do we handle the request with love while also being intelligent with our charity? How do we welcome the stranger that makes us uncomfortable? From a mite to a million, from a beggar to a refugee, what exactly is a right action?

the Rev Rebecca Crystal, M.Div., MSW is a graduate of Meadville Lombard Theological Seminary (UU). She is ordained in The Church of All Worlds, a Pagan denomination. She has been a member of Red River before, and returns after a long and interesting hiatus. She hopes to serve our community using her skills in various ways.

Sunday, November 19, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

A Little Gush of Gratitude

The Worship Team, *leading*

"If the only prayer you ever say in your whole life is 'thank you,' that would suffice." That tidbit of wisdom came in 1322 by Meister Eckhart, probably the most famous preacher of his time. Thanksgiving has become an eclectic celebration of food, football and family - in that order. History highlights Thanksgiving's early devotion to prayer and gratitude,. For many Thursday will be the only time family and friends sit at the table and actually speak, albeit briefly, about gratefulness. On Sunday, a program about the gratitude part of Thanksgiving.

Sunday, November 26, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

When Thank You Isn't Enough to Fill Your Soul

the Rev. Annie Foerster, *preaching*

Thanksgiving Day has passed. You've proclaimed your gratefulness. The four-day weekend is almost over. How do you feel? How does it go with your soul? Perhaps giving thanks isn't enough. But, then, what else is there?

Sunday Mornings at Red River:

Meditation ~ 9 | Adult Forum ~ 10 | Morning Assembly ~ 11:15 | Conversations & Calories ~ 12:15

Hello from Helen



Helen.

Hello again. It is November, the month in which we traditionally set aside some time to think about what we are grateful for.

Not being much of a wordsmith myself, I would like to share one of my favorite poems, instead of trying to write something original. I am hoping that the poet, Mary Oliver, won't mind.

MINDFUL
by Mary Oliver

Every day
I see or I hear
something
that more or less

kills me
with delight,
that leaves me
like a needle

in the haystack
of light.
It is what I was born for—
to look, to listen,

to lose myself
inside this soft world—
to instruct myself
over and over

in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
About the exceptional,

the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant—
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,

the daily presentations.
Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
How can you help

but grow wise
with such teachings
as these—
the untrimmable light

of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?

Here's hoping we all have a thankful thanksgiving.

Helen

Fall Meeting Stuff

Declaring a quorum (24 present), V.P Linda Tracy guided us through the agenda well. Here are **some** highlights:

- Marla Loturco reviewed the results of the recent Sunday Mornings at Red River and reported that 37 people completed the survey. The entire report is available on the church app, eNews, web site and [here](#). Reading the various individual comments lets people see that we, overwhelming, like our church.
 - 89% of us are comfortable watching video sermons
 - 70% are willing to bring refreshments and clean up afterwards
 - 43% would be interested in having a weekly 'Open Dialogue' after the service
 - 'The Morning Program' was the preferred name for the weekly bulletin

- Those present overwhelmingly felt strongly that we need to continue keeping the doors unlocked Sunday mornings and agreed it would be important for us to have another Emergency Response Team training for all interested
- A good discussion about ways that we might make the building more accessible for people with disabilities concluded with the membership telling the Board of Trustees that making our goal here is "Access For All" and not just some areas.
- People indicated that a change in how refreshments are handled is indicated and a solution was suggested (details elsewhere in this newsletter)
- Doug Strong gave a brief explanation of the history and importance of the Freedom of the Pulpit and Freedom of the Pew
- The four current goals were discussed with two of them accomplished already, the other two are in process



Red River Grassroots Zen



Thursdays-7-8:15 pm
Nov 9-Dec 21
Barton Parlor
No Charge
Open to all

In the book *Buddhist Voices in Unitarian Universalism* the UU Buddhist Jeff Wilson, who is also a

scholar in religious and East Asian studies, argues that most, if not all Modern American Zen Buddhism has been deeply influenced by Unitarian Universalism. While Christian Missionaries were forbidden and even punished in Japan in the 19th century, the UU's were invited there. It is not well-known that the UU movement has had a complex interrelationship with and at times even entwinement with Zen and other forms of Buddhism for centuries. The UU movement in turn has been increasingly influenced by Buddhism, especially Zen Buddhism as can be seen by the popularity of groups such as, for example, the UU Buddhist Fellowship and well as many others.

Zazen and *kinhin* meditation (sitting and walking), the main practices of the Zen tradition are practices that surpass words, letters and concepts. They are ways to make the pure experience of the dynamic reality of the present moment into a transforming practice based on the dual cultivation of calm abiding and clear seeing. We will train in what to do with your body, breath and mind in meditation.

In contemporary America the word "Zen" had been used and abused to mean almost anything; a socio/cultural habit that tends to eviscerate its depth of meaning and turns it into yet another stereotype, commodity or personality trait.

"Grassroots Zen" implies an influence by a practice group in Rhode Island and the book written about them entitled *Grassroots Zen* by Manfred Steger and Perle Besserman © 2001. The book is about structuring a non-patriarchal, non-hierarchical form of Zen while keeping the practice as traditional as possible. It is like the protestant reformation of Zen and is based on the reputed final words of Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as the Buddha, to "Be lamps unto yourselves, seek your own salvation with diligence."

If you have an interest in Zen as a topic, a practice or both, please come and practice sitting and walking meditation with us for 40 minutes followed by discussion centered on discovering what Zen really means as it evolves into a drastically changing, globalized world

characterized by what some have called "the long emergency."

Topics; What is meditation? How do you do *Zazen* and why? What is Zen? Buddhist history, Zen History, Engaged Buddhism, Critical Buddhism, Grassroots Zen, Social/environmental Justice.

Todd Ellis,
Facilitator

Todd has been an active friend of Red River. He holds a BA Philosophy, MA Bicultural/Bilingual Studies, Dzogchen and Zen training since 1983 in Dallas, Denton, Guam, India, Nepal, Salt Lake City and San Diego.

New Moon Rituals

Monthly New Moon Rattling Healing Circle: November 18 from 6 -7:30 pm. Bring your own rattles or use one provided to Rattle in a Circle of Intention. Open to everyone who wishes to participate. One note, please: Only rattles are part of this Circle. Drummers are urged to attend the monthly Full Moon Drumming in downtown Denison. Details [here](#).

Rebecca Crystal
Leader

Rebecca Crystal, is a church member and past National Board Member of the Covenant of the Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) and attended the proto chapter here at Red River. Questions? email Rebecca.

Dates:	Focus (focus changes may occur)
Saturday, November 18	Thanksgiving Circle
Monday, December 18	Yule Circle
Tuesday, January 16	Honoring Civil Rights Circle (MLK)
Thursday, February 15	Love Circle
Saturday, March 17	Spring Equinox Circle (Ostara)
Sunday, April 15	Earth Day Circle
Tuesday, May 15	Honoring Mother's Circle
Wednesday, June 13	Honoring Father's Circle
Thursday, July 12	(Rebecca out of town, who will lead?)
Saturday, August 11	Honoring Children's Circle
Sunday, September 9	Honoring Elder's Circle (Grandparent's Day)
Monday, October 8	LGBTI Circle
Wednesday, November 7	Veteran's Circle
Friday, December 7	Festival of Lights Circle (Hanukkah)

Chalica - a UU holiday



Chalica is a week-long celebration of our [Unitarian Universalist Principles](#). The holiday [first emerged in 2005](#) out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values.

Chalica begins on the first Monday in December and lasts seven days. Each day, [a chalice](#) is lit and the day is spent reflecting on the meaning of that day's principle and doing a good deed that honors that principle. Not all Unitarian Universalists celebrate Chalica, but it has a growing following. There is a Chalica [Facebook page](#), [blog](#), and many Chalica-themed [videos on YouTube](#).

You can download this year's [Chalica](#) flyer here.

Booked for Fun ~ Oct 13th

Do you want to hear about new authors and great books to read? Our next book club meeting is on Friday, November 10, at 1pm at church. Open to book lovers everywhere.

Carole Harner

Facilitator

Treasurer's Report

In the month of September, we had total receipts of \$2,599.00 from pledges and weekly offerings.

Total disbursements were \$1,775.21, including \$265 contributed to the Grayson County Shelter for September's Share the Plate collections, leaving net income for the month of September of \$849.29.

As of September 30, we had \$20,973.57 available in checking, \$39,812.43 in savings and a total of \$14,549.47 in Certificates of Deposit.

All bank accounts have been reconciled with no exceptions noted.

Dick Powell,
Treasurer

Earth Day Planning

Earth Day Planning Committee will meet Tuesday November 14 at 6:30 at church. We will receive updates on graphics and pending workshops.

Honoring Veterans

Remembering November 11

by Don Mathis

Children become soldiers; there are a thousand reasons why.

Some will die in combat, others will survive. I won't forget their sacrifices, their families who had to wait,

and their careers they put on hold. So, if it's not too late,

I want to thank the veteran. What he had to do, he did.

Soldiers grow old too fast. It seems yesterday he was just a kid.

We can flower and flag the cemetery. We can shed a little tear.

We can offer our thanks to the living veterans who are still here.

Don is a poet and former member of Red River and while he now lives in San Antonio, he occasionally sends us poems for the newsletter.

Ellie Dyer on stage!



Ellie Dyer has been rehearsing the part for weeks and Thursday evening, November 2nd she will become Charlie in Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka, Jr.* based on the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Curtain time is 7 pm in the Colbert Public School (high school auditorium) 4945 OK-91, Colbert. Tickets are \$2.

New Church Directory

Tis that time of year! It is prudent before compiling a new directory to verify that people have not moved, changed their name, contact info etc. In fact the only thing that remains constant is birthdays - for those whose birthdays are in the database.

During November everyone will be receiving an email asking that you confirm your information is currently correct and if not, to update the changes. In order to finish the directory soon, please return your email *even if there are no change* as quickly as you can.

New Approach to Nibbles



The recent survey indicated that while 70% of us (26 people) don't mind bringing refreshments each month, 16% said they don't stay for Conversations & Calories. (5% marked beverages only and 3% stay away when it is their turn.)

A suggestion at the meeting how to solve the problem of having refreshments without the universal draft was deemed brilliant.

- Make a list of all people who are willing to continue bringing something to share once a month
- Ask anyone else in the community who would like to also participate
- Divide the list into 4 groups, and each group will bring nibbles once a month
- Try it out for six months, starting in December.

Twenty people raised their hand and are the core group to date.

If you are willing to sign up to bring nibbles once a month for six months, starting in December, email Marla Loturco [marla.ruu(at)gmail(dot)com]

We will continue to have the "In4Lunch" potluck during the months that have five Sundays.

To all who have been bringing food over the last several years - countless blessings and thanks for making our weekly gathering after the service such a hit!

November Birthdays

Nov 7 - Laura Shehan

Nov 8 - Dan Althoff

Nov 8 - Carolyn Cameron

Nov 13 - Marla Loturco

Nov 13 - Maura Shehan

Nov 16 - Cylvia Lawrence

Nov 19 - Bill Mueller

Nov 22 - Tristan Cates

Nov 22 - Peter Schulze

Many happy return to y'all!

Did You Say YES?

The Committee on Ministry intentionally designed a survey that was completely anonymous. People tend to be more expressive when surveys don't have personal information. Twenty-five people answered the question *Would you be interested in participating in the Sunday service?* "Yes." Wonderful, but being an anonymous survey no one knows who you 25 wonderful people are. Here's the breakdown:

If you said YES..... please, please..... Contact

14 said YES to being a greeter	Linda Tracy
7 said YES to Worship Team	Doug Strong
7 said YES to Worship Associate	Robert Shelton
5 said YES to video scouting	Marla Loturco
4 said YES to AV help	Marla Loturco

[Note: Some people said yes more than once.]

Fall Clean Up Day

Sat. Nov 5th anyone who has a couple hours - 12 Austin College students will be with us to help with our annual Fall clean up morning. 9 - noon. Donuts and coffee provided.

Leaders

Board of Trustees

Helen Schulze, *President*
Linda Tracy, *Vice President*
Dick Powell, *Treasurer*
Megan Hutchinson, *Secretary*
Jim Holmes, *Trustee*
Dan Althoff, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Marla Loturco,
Robert Shelton

Team Leaders/Members:

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

Church App

We've hit a new high - the church app is now residing on 156 different devices. Currently on the app you can access

- The Survey Results
- This year's Chalice flier
- Two important videos
- Church calendar
- The November Newsletter
- The Wednesday eNews
- Our Facebook page
- Contact information
- Map to the church
- Gallery of church pix



Chalice Circles & Interest Groups

Church activities are open to everyone. Contact the facilitator if you wish more information.

BOOKED FOR LUNCH ~ an informal monthly gathering for those who love to read and enjoy hearing about what others are reading. The group meets September - May on the 2nd Friday at 1 pm. They meet in the Emerson Room. [Carole Harner](#), *facilitator*

EARTH DAY PLANNING COMMITTEE ~ The group is responsible for the creation, each year, of the Texoma Earth Day Festival. All who enjoy planning a large scale community event is invited to learn more. During the Festival many church members and friends volunteer to help. Planning meetings are the 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 pm, in the chapel. [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#), *facilitator*

MOVEABLE FEAST ~ a culinary chalice circle of people who enjoy food, preparing, sharing, and enjoying. A very popular church group that welcomes newcomers. The Feasters meet monthly and may gather in someone's home, at a restaurant, or church. [Marion and Elbert Hill](#), *facilitators*

NEW MOOM RATTLING HEALING CIRCLE ~ meets monthly at church on various dates focusing on holiday or ritual happening during that month. The monthly circle meets from 6 - 7:30 pm. [Rebecca Crystal](#), *facilitator*

ZEN MEDITATION ~ If you have an interest in Zen as a topic, a practice or both, please come and practice sitting and walking meditation with us for 40 minutes followed by discussion centered on discovering what Zen really means as it evolves into a drastically changing, globalized world characterized by what some have called "the long emergency. Thursdays, Nov 9 - Dec 14, 7 - 8:15 pm, in the Barton Parlor. Open to all, no charge. [Todd Ellis](#), *facilitator*

Contact Us

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Facebook: [RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch)

Our mobile App: free from the [Apps Store](#) & [Google Play](#).