



# Red River Ramblings

News from Red River Unitarian Universalist Church

Denison TX

Vol 20, No. 8

December, 2017

## Sunday December 3, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

### Hope and Keep Busy: Literature, Faith and Social Justice in Dark Times\*

Dr. Randi Tanglen, *speaking*

"Hope and keep busy" is a line taken from the classic novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. Placed in the context of Alcott's life and her Unitarian family's dedication to the abolitionist movement, these words take on a power that can inspire those of us concerned with social justice issues in the present day. This presentation will provide an overview of nineteenth-century American women writers who used the power of the written word to advance the women's and abolitionist movements. Many of these writers were activists who were compelled to action through their religious commitments. Authors discussed will include Louisa May Alcott, Angelina Grimke, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Harriet Jacobs.

*\*Note: 'Dark Times' is not a reference to 2017, but the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.*

## Sunday, December 10, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

### Chalica and the Seven Principles

Marla Loturco, *speaking*

Chalica is a week-long celebration of our seven UU Principles. It first emerged in 2005 from conversations that Daylene Marshall had with other young adults when she was a student at the Vancouver School of theology in Vancouver, British Columbia. Rev. Lisa Schwartz of the UU Fellowship of Topeka, Kansas remarks, "*Chalica is designed to increase family time, provide a simple family ritual, deepen our knowledge of the Unitarian Universalist principles, and strengthen our resolve to resist consumerism at this season of intense marketing.*" The worship team has created a brochure to highlight the principles and provide a starting place for this celebration. On the back is a chart on which you can jot down notes about how you chose to celebrate the Principle. There will be a time for sharing your celebration on December 10th. Download your Chalica Flyer on page 3 and remember to bring it with you on Sunday.

## Sunday, December 17, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

### Celebrating the Longest Night of the Year

The Rev. Rebecca Crystal, *speaking*

Come hear of the battle between the Holly King and the Oak King, and sing his song in a celebration of Yule, or the winter solstice. The longest night marks the beginning of winter and is a time to be reflective in the ice mirrors of the season. What will you see this season?

## Sunday, December 24, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

### A Christmas Birthday

Written by the Rev. Don Fielding

No, Don will not be with us, but his words will. He delivered a special message to our congregation in December, 2010 which touched many hearts. He describes his Christmas sermon this way: *It is a story I wrote many, many years ago, and that I have given many times. However, it is a story that, for me at least, perfectly captures the spirit of Christmas. I hope that you will come, and that you will enjoy. I'm honored that you wish to share again this year.*

## Sunday, December 31, 2017

Morning Assembly - 11:15 am

### Annual Winter Sharing Service

Everyone who wishes to do so!

Holding a sharing service on the cusp of a new year is a long-standing tradition for Red River. Everyone is invited to bring something short (5 min max) to share - a story, a song, a poem, a thought, an memory - something we can ponder to take with us into 2018.

Sunday Mornings at Red River:

Meditation ~ 9

Adult Forum ~ 10

Morning Assembly ~ 11:15

Conversations & Calories ~ 12:15

## Hello from Helen



Greetings to all-I hope everyone survived what I call "Turkey Trauma Day." Thanksgiving is my favourite American holiday (it wasn't such a big deal in Canada....) because it doesn't involve presents!

The Board has been busy with several issues I would like to share with you. The Board met on November 19<sup>th</sup> with several guests to discuss plans to increase the safety of our members during our worship time. At this meeting, emails from several members were presented, along with the comments of all who attended. In light of the recent tragedy in another church in Texas, the Board has decided to reinstitute the 'locked door policy' for now. Many of us have expressed the view that they don't like the idea of a locked door, but it seems an acceptable price to pay if it makes some of us feel more secure. We started locking the doors on November 26<sup>th</sup>.

Once we are assembled, the front and back doors will be locked, and will be monitored by the Board rep on duty that Sunday. We do have monitoring set up so that we can let in latecomers and welcome them appropriately.

We also will be taking steps to shore up the security of the back door. Robert Shelton will do a reprise of his presentation on interacting with an angry intruder after service on December 10<sup>th</sup> as well. Please don't hesitate to come to any member of the Board if you have questions.

Right now, we are in the process of developing a security plan and looking into some training that is offered through our insurance and the local police department, as well as investigating what some other churches do.

On a brighter note, we are making progress in our search for solutions to make the second floor more accessible. We are looking at a wheelchair lift right now, and options for funding. I think this will be "phase 1" of the endeavor-right now a lift is affordable. If you are interested in looking at what the lift would look like, please talk to Jim Holmes for more information. In the future we hope to consider options that would lead to an elevator.

I have purchased a defibrillator for our use, and on December 10<sup>th</sup>, after the service and fellowship time, I will present a tutorial on '2 step CPR' and 'how to use the AED.' The new guidelines are surprisingly easy, as is the AED. I hope you will join me.

See you at church!

*Helen*

## Emergency Response Training ~ Dec 10



As noted in Helen's column above, the board has become more proactive in finding ways we can feel more safe while at church.

Part of the approach was to invite Robert Shelton to give a reprise of the training class he gave in February 2016 on how to deal with agitated individuals who pose a threat to our congregation.

This training will help in confronting a situation, if one ever arises. He has extensive training in deescalating a potential crisis and, if this fails, the next steps to be taken.

While we're learning about emergency responses, Helen will give a tutorial on 2 step CPR and how to use the new cardiac defibrillator. The training will be on Sunday, Dec 10 at 12:45

in the Chapel. Those who want to get this training, please attend the session. The more people who know the recommended ways to handle an agitated person, the better for everyone.

### I.C.E. for your safety!

Got your cell phone handy? Take a moment right now to put "ICE" by the names of the people you'd want called in case of emergency.

That's what "ICE" stands for -- "in case of emergency."

The point is to let rescue workers, police, or doctors check your cell phone and reach the people you would want contacted if you're in an accident or other emergency.

Most people don't have ICE on their cell phones, but all first responders check phones to see who to call.

If you don't know how to do it on your phone, click [here](#) and follow the instructions from wikiHOW. It makes a lot of sense.

## Celebrate Chalica ~ Dec 4-10



Starting Monday, Dec 4<sup>th</sup> read our first principle, then do some action that reflects the principle. Read the second principle on Tuesday and do an act. Continue through the week.

Download this year's [Chalice Flyer](#) so you have the principles handy. There's even a place to jot down what actions you did to embrace our seven principles. On Sunday, Dec 10, we'll celebrate Chalica, so remember to bring your flyer with you.

## New 'Good Times Teams'

When we first moved into our building a group decided we needed a hospitality committee. It formed with the name "Good Times Team". Its goal (from our Policy and Procedures Manual) was:

The goal of the Hospitality Team is to provide a welcoming atmosphere before Adult Forum and after the worship service and to encourage a feeling of camaraderie among members and visitors. The Hospitality Team achieves its goal by recruiting and supporting members and friends to provide:

- Beverages and simple snacks before Adult Forum and following the worship service.
- Beverages and food for occasional church-related special events as agreed upon between Hospitality Team and Board
- This Team works closely with Membership, Chalice Circles, and Worship.

The Good Times Team was amazing, hard-working and achieved their goals - much to the joy of the congregation. Time passed, burnout trumped enthusiasm and after several years, the team turned in their smocks (which are hanging behind the kitchen door).

That's when the congregation voted to institute an all-church invitation for refreshments - dividing ourselves by last name. This quasi universal draft has been equally successful. But again burnout trumped enthusiasm.

The "Sunday Mornings At Red River" survey indicated that many people were willing to continue bringing refreshments and at the Fall Congregational Meeting, 20 people volunteered to provide snacks.

The New Good Times Team's goal is not as expansive at the original team. Each week one team will provide refreshments and clean up after the service. They are not responsible for providing beverages before the Adult Forum, but will do clean up following their assigned week. The Good Time Teams are:

### **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Team**

Doug Strong  
Jim Holmes  
Jen Linson  
Dick & Carol Powell

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Team**

Lynn Cates  
Amy Hoffman-Shehan  
Linda Tracy  
Marion & Elbert Hill

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Team**

Donna Torper  
Marilyn Alexander  
Ronda DeClaire  
Robert & Lanan Shelton

### **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Team**

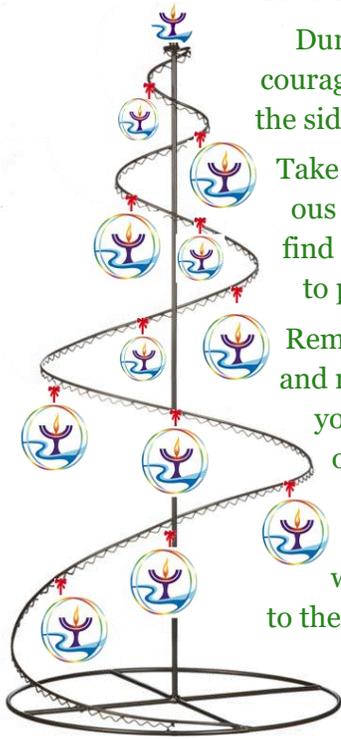
Megan Hutchinson  
Helen Schulze  
Tommi Homuth  
Kelly & David Dyer

These fine folks have agreed to do this for six months.

Want to sign up? How about being a backup volunteer in case a team member can't be there on their Sunday? It would be nice to have a few people who would be willing to fill in if someone on occasion. Speak with Marla if you'd like to be a back-up person.

## A Giving Tree ~ for the church

A tradition returns this Holiday season -  
A Giving Tree for the Church.



During December you are encouraged to stop by the tree, on the side table in the upper foyer.

Take a look on the back of various hanging 'ornaments' and find something you would like to purchase for the church.

Remove the chalice 'ornament' and reference the number, sign your name on the clip board on the table indicating how you wish to fulfill your gift purchase. We have two ways to do this: You can go to the store and pick the item(s) and leave up them by the Sneller Window in the chapel or

for those items identified with 'Amazon Purchase', you can put the payment in an envelope, leave it in the box on the table and someone will order the item from Amazon and bring it to church for you. Because we use Amazon Smiles, your purchase will benefit the church.

## Worship Team ~ Dec 4<sup>th</sup>

The Worship Team will meet Monday, Dec 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the Emerson Room to plan services for the next several months. Got a suggestion for a topic or a speaker? Email [worship@rruu.org](mailto:worship@rruu.org) and let them know.

## Zen Meditation ~ Dec 7, 14, 21



Red River Grassroots Zen meditation continues to meet Thursday evenings from 7 - 8:15 in the Emerson Room. Open to all who wish to come and sit with us.

## Booked for Fun ~ Dec 8<sup>th</sup>

Do you want to hear about new authors and great books to read? Our next book club meeting is on Friday, December 8, at 1pm at church. Open to book lovers everywhere.

## Earth Day Planning ~ Dec 12<sup>th</sup>

Earth Day Planning Committee will meet Tuesday December 12 at 6:30 at church. We will receive updates on graphics and pending workshops.

## Moveable Feast ~ Dec 16<sup>th</sup>

The Moveable Feast for December will be Saturday, December 16 at 1:30 pm. The theme will be a soup, salad and bread lunch. We can broaden the theme to include Xmas cookies if you would like.

We will also include a gift exchange like the one we did last year. Limit your gift cost to \$1-2 or something you have on hand that you can re-gift. Gag gifts are greatly appreciated.

Please [reply](#) and let us know whether you can attend and what you plan to bring.

## CUUPS Yule Circle ~ Dec 18<sup>th</sup>

CUUPS monthly rituals will continue in December on the New Moon from Dec 18 from 6-7:30p. All interested persons are invited to attend. The intention for the evening is to celebrate Yule. On Yule we can celebrate: (more info [here](#))

**Deities of Yule:** All Newborn Gods, Sun Gods, Mother Goddesses, and Triple Goddesses.

**Symbolism of Yule:** Introspect, Planning for the Future.

**Symbols of Yule:** Yule log, evergreen boughs or wreaths, holly, baskets of clove studded fruit,

**Herbs of Yule:** Bayberry, blessed thistle, evergreen, frankincense holly, laurel, mistletoe

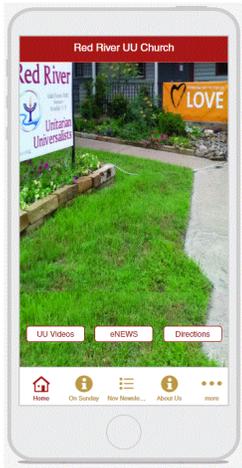
**Foods of Yule:** Cookies, fruits, nuts, pork dishes, turkey, eggnog, ginger tea, spiced cider,

**Incense of Yule:** Pine, cedar, bayberry, cinnamon.

**Colors of Yule:** Red, green, gold, white, silver, yellow, orange.

**Stones of Yule:** Rubies, bloodstones, garnets, emeralds, diamonds.

## Church App Update



The church app, available at the Apps Store and Google Play, has undergone a face lift because it is now hosted by a new company, AppInstitute. (It seems apps get sold, like mortgages.) The new company offers far more options for us, including multiple video clips (currently there are 5 on the app); more tabs for more content; you can now send a message to

the church via the app; more images in the gallery; along with an easier way to update each tab.

One major drawback of the new app, however: **The only way get updates is to close and reopen it.** If you have been leaving the app open in the background on your device, stop doing that. Close it instead. The next time you open it, all updates will happen automatically.

Soon there will be a sign in option, which will allow the church to send individual messages (perhaps to all members, or visitors, or various committees or teams, etc.) rather than having messages go to everyone's devices (currently that's 168 devices).

How do you like it? Give suggestions and reports about things aren't working. Just touch the Message tab and sent your feedback.

## Church Directory ~ needs you

Everyone listed in the current directory, along with new members and active friends received a personalized email "*The New Church Directory Needs You*" on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> asking to make changes, then reply. About 55% have yet to reply.

If you haven't done so, look for the email, check to see if the information we have in the church database is accurate; make changes and corrections as needed and reply. Even if there are no changes, please reply and say so. It would be nice to have the new directory finished this month.

## Treasurer's Report

In the month of October, we had total receipts of \$4,458.40 from pledges and weekly offerings. The Share the Plate offering was \$48.

Total disbursements were \$2775.78, leaving net income for the month of October of \$1,682.62.

As of October 31, we had \$21,498.97 available in checking, a total of \$41,822.39 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*

## Social Action Update

When I first joined a Unitarian Universalist church in Bloomington Indiana I didn't understand why "service is our law." Over the years I discovered that it is part of the "walk your talk" aspect of our chosen Faith. I now have a discipline of doing social action and strive to do one act a day. As the facilitator of our congregation's social action team I decided to visit the UUA.org website and found that there are newsletters to be subscribed to, and I chose all but one. Anyone can subscribe to them, and they are free. Here is that list:

-  Just Acts
-  Immigrant Justice News
-  Standing on the Side of Love
-  Welcoming Congregations & LGBTQ Justice
-  Catalyst
-  Voting Rights
-  Reproductive Justice
-  Congregation-Based Community Organizing News
-  International UU News & Updates

I intend to alert our congregation of the social actions the UUA and our sister congregations are doing in the United States. I hope to post action suggestions onto our Facebook page based on this research. I look forward to your feedback.

Rebecca Crystal  
*Facilitator*

# The Hanging of the Greens

Some people decorate literally everything in their homes - including the dog and cat. Others think three green balls in a silver bowl on the coffee table is gaudy. Each first Sunday in December, like between all nothing, afterwards to Chapel along Barton Parlor Room. If such activity brings a warm glow to your heart, please stay and help. Lanan Shelton will oversee the makeover from her wheel chair and the rest of us can be her elves. Together the transformation will inspire us.



*Hanging of the Greens*

*And gives them no way to gather the pieces. And men try to weld the pieces back together with rage. It only buys them a little time, and they know it. Eventually, when it melts, it looks like a pool of blood on the floor of a church. Some of us know that's not a metaphor, not really.*

*The roots go deep. One of them: if we want to address this crisis, we should address child and spousal abuse. That's what the latest shooter had been court martialed for, I hear. Was he abused himself? Or had he just absorbed too much toxicity? Whatever the cause, we need to get better at breaking the cycle of abuse, for both victim and abuser. At the very least, if we could see to it that a man who was driven out of the military for abusing his spouse could not so easily buy killing weapons, that would be useful, too.*

*I have written [elsewhere](#) that the 2008 TVUUC shooting was a canary in the coal mine. The toxicity has long been with us, but the level seems to be rising. In ancient Greek, krisis could mean "a moment of judgment." It could also be the turning point of a play, where the action changes. In medical terms, it's the moment when the patient's fever breaks. We have seemingly been in a crisis for a long time, and yet the fever seems unabated. We have not turned; we have not changed. We are, however, being judged.*

*Thoughts and prayers are not enough. In Texas, they were praying as they died. What will we do--what will \*you\* do--to break this cycle of rage and pain?"*

Thank you for posing this critical question, Rob. For some powerful insights and suggestions, we suggest this [recent article](#) in the York Times. As Unitarian Universalist congregations, we affirm and promote "justice, equity and compassion in human relations" and the "goal of world community, with peace, liberty, and justice for all". Each day is a chance to make our values real, even somber days like these. Let us challenge ourselves and encourage each other as we journey on.

## December Birthdays

- Dec 3 - Matt Schulze
- Dec 4 - Donna Toerper
- Dec 5 - Ronda DeCaire
- Dec 7 - David Lawrence
- Dec 17 - Amy Hoffman-Shehan
- Dec 18 - Jennifer Schwichtenberg

## Crises ~ a personal reflection

### *From the UUA Southern Region*

We in the UUA Southern Region are not strangers to violence and disruptions in our churches. This weekend's massacre at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, reminds many of us of that Sunday in July 2008 when the UU Church of Knoxville was visited by an(other) angry white man with a gun, leaving two people dead and six more wounded. Rob Spirko was in the congregation that day. He offered this post on Facebook in response to the latest mass shooting:

*"We are in crisis. A crisis of gun culture? Sure. But below that, a crisis of masculinity. A crisis of pain. This country, as it is, breaks people.*

The Rev. Kenn Hurto,  
Lead Executive, Southern Region (Retired)

## 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: *Rebecca*  
Worship: *Angie, Doug, Marla,  
Rebecca, Robert, Tommi*

## Contact Us

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Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: [www.rruu.org](http://www.rruu.org)

E-News: [announce \(at\) rruu.org](mailto:announce@rruu.org)

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

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

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 MOON 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 21, 7 - 8:15 pm, in the Emerson Room. Open to all, no charge. [Todd Ellis](#), *facilitator*