



# Red River Ramblings

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## Five Sunday Mornings ~ To Enrich our Lives

**Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup>**

### "A Fool's Work?"

Patricia Eagle, speaking

When Patricia moved back to Texas over a year ago to live with and care for elder parents, it occurred to her how this might be a fool's work. Amidst delivering and negotiating elder care, she has spent this past year writing a memoir while learning to trust and leaning into forgiveness. On this April Fool's Day, she encourages embracing our unwise, silly selves and acknowledging those ways our life is no fool's journey.

*Patricia Eagle is about to complete training as a Life-Cycle Celebrant through the Celebrant Institute and Foundation. She looks forward to drawing on her passions as a writer and story gatherer to compose and officiate openhearted, inclusive ceremonies. Meaningfully celebrating life's transitions or transformations, she says, can be hugely healing and offer an expanded awareness of what and how we are choosing to live.*

**Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup> - EASTER**

### "Infinity Plus One"

The Rev. Christine Tata, PhD, speaking

At the end of the season of Lent, Easter arrives -- the holiest day in the Christian calendar, richly layered with pagan cele-

brations and the onset of spring. Come prepared for a lighthearted but serious-minded reflection on celebrations, fancy hats, process theology, fake grass, the existence of God, and the promise of the beloved community. Not necessarily in that order!

*Christine Tata has served Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ congregations in California and Dallas, and is currently working as Director of Policy Administration for UT Southwestern Medical Center. She and her husband Chet live in Garland, for reasons they cannot fathom, since their wonderful offspring (one who just got married last month) both live in Austin.*

**Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>**

### "Our Environmental Policies from Nixon to Obama"

Dr. Brooks Flippen, speaking

This Sunday, Brooks Flippen returns for the second part of his presentation on America's approach to environmental policies. In his remarks with us last January he traced policies from the ancients to Nixon. People were so captivated and spellbound by his insight he was immediately invited to return to complete the time line from Nixon to Obama. A perfect topic given Earth Day is next Sunday!

**Sermon Info continued on Page 2** 

The Soul Café ~ 9:30 ♦ Worship ~ 11:15  
Adult Forum ~ 10 ♦ Fellowship Gathering ~ 12:15

## Five Sunday Mornings ~To Enrich our Lives (continued)

Brooks received his doctorate in modern American history from the University of Maryland and is presently Professor of History at SOSU, where he has been for sixteen years. He has authored three books: Nixon and the Environment; Conservative Conservationist: Russell E. Train and the Emergence of American Environmentalism and Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family and the Rise of the Religious Right. Brooks has commented on environmental politics for NPR and spoken at the Nixon Presidential Library, among other locations. He lives in McKinney with his wife and two daughters.

Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

### "There Once Was A Man From Nantucket... Why Humor Keeps Us Alive"

The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong, speaking

Attention, please! It's National Humor Month and everyone from the ISHS (International Society for Humor Studies) to HAHA (Humor Alliance for Healthy Attitudes) are talking. The Scholarly members of the ISHS will gather in Krakow in June to explore, in depth, the current research into Polish humor. HAHA is having a laugh-in somewhere in Florida.



Flower Communion  
April 29th

We should not be left out! We laugh, giggle, grin, snicker, chuckle, smile, titter, and smirk our way through life thanks to humor, which, by the way, wasn't always nearly as humorous as it is today.

A somewhat serious and somewhat light hearted look at humor, poking some fun as ourselves and Garrison Keillor who has some pretty not-so-funny things to say about Unitarian Universalists.

Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> ~

### FLOWER COMMUNION SUNDAY

#### "Why Do We Paint The Roses Red?"

The Rev. Nate Walker, video sermon

Norbert Čapek, who was also the founder of the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He saw the need to unite the diverse congregants of his church, from varying Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish backgrounds, without alienating those who had left these traditions. For this reason he rejected the Eucharist. The Flower Communion instead borrows from the universal beauty of nature. The first Flower Communion was held in Prague on June 4, 1923. Čapek's term is more accurately translated as "Flower Celebration," a term which continues to be preferred by Czech Unitarians today.

**Bring a flower with you** to church as we celebrate the 89<sup>th</sup> Flower Communion service. We will watch A Flower Communion sermon where Reverend Nate, minister of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia draw upon Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" to ask, "why do we paint the roses red?"



## Manna from Marla

This month I want to give you an overview from the Town Hall Meeting held in the chapel after things on Sunday, March 25th. The topic was **Social Justice – Where Do We Go From Here?** Many good ideas were presented and several people have done research in our local area to check out the possibilities.

We listened to a detailed report written by George Gravley on his meetings with Denison City Council member and the Shalom movement in North town (the neighborhood our church is in). George could not be with us for the meeting because he was visiting his new grandson in Washington D.C.

He found that **Shalom**, an association of seven area churches, provides tutoring to local youth; summer Vacation Bible school programs; beginning computer classes; a back to school festival in August; and a variety of other programs. We could:

- participate in current programs
- help start Spanish / English language classes
- raise money for future use through a joint Garage Sale
- assist in attracting more tutoring participants
- Participate in other ways

We would need to have a Shalom Coordinator.  
Marion Hill and Carolyn Cameron

reported on their meeting with Ashley Earls at the **Denison Shelter**. Some ways we might help them could include

- Allow the shelter to hold their board meetings at our church. – this is currently being arranged.
- Cook an occasional meal for the residents
- Have an “open porch”, inviting the women and children from the shelter over to play on the church grounds and enjoy cookies, coffee & juice.
- Assist with craft evenings and/or life skills classes
- Instead of RRUU giving out money at the church for local individuals who need help, the Shelter is already set up to handle this and also food. We could give our 2nd Sunday collections to the shelter and then send people from the neighborhood there for help
- The shelter always needs personal items like toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo.
- Assist with the food bank at the shelter
- Explore other possibilities

Jim Murphy has looked into the **Summer Reading Program** and the Denison Library – they could have used help to coordinate the program – they might be able to use volunteers for the summer.

A suggestion was made by Carole Harner that we might want to begin having one Sunday a month where we have a service project instead of a worship service.

Several speakers voiced the feeling that RRUU should focus its social-justice efforts on making an impact in our local community. There is an organization forming in Texas of UU Churches who

would like to have an impact on Texas legislation. If anyone is interested in this organization, private individuals may join for \$25.00 and the church for \$2.00 per member reported to the UUA. Please ask me about it. The UU congregations in Arizona have had similar legislative watch projects for some years.

Where do we go from here? We need to know what support exists within the congregation before we commit RRUU's resources and people. There is nothing worse than being all fired up with no follow through. The board is preparing a brief feedback survey of potential ways we can do social justice work to change and grow at RRUU. Everyone is invited and encouraged to look for and complete the survey (sent on line). What issues would you personally support - not only financially, but with gifts of time as well. Watch for it coming soon. If you couldn't attend the meeting, you can email me with your ideas, concerns and suggestions about where we can go from here. Thanks.

See you in church, everyone!

Marla

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*“Look for a brief survey coming your way soon. We need input from everyone to know where we should go from here.”*

## The Spring Congregational Meeting ~ Coming on May 20<sup>th</sup>

The Spring Congregational meeting is fast approaching. It will be held May 20th so please save the date. It is at the Spring meeting that get to exercise the cherish tradition of the free church. We get to vote!

We hear the annual report from the Board of Trustees, President and the Membership Committee., We hear a presentation of the Treasurer's annual financial report and approval of the Board's budget for the next fiscal year

We also look at and approve the goals for the next fiscal year including Social Justice initiatives and conclude with the

election of the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee and Committee on Ministry. A full slate of candidates will be announced in the May newsletter.

April 20 is an important date because our bylaws indicate that one must be a member 30 days before a meeting in order to vote, so any friend of the congregation who would like to vote will need to sign the membership book before April 20th. Also, the bylaws require that all members must make a contribution of record (either financial or volunteerism) by Apr 20th in order to vote at the meeting .

*"It is at the Spring meeting that we get to exercise the cherish tradition of the free church!"*

## Adult Forum ~ The Open Mind Center, Sundays mornings



The Forum will continue exploring the world through the works of Friedrich Nietzsche for the first part of April.

- April 1 ~ One has to pay dearly for immortality; one has to die several times while one is still alive.
- April 8 ~ There is not enough love and goodness in the world to permit giving any of it away to imaginary beings.



Then, come explore the history of Unitarianism. A new film series **The Strange Trip** takes us on a sojourn through history - our history! These three videos are part of the new UU History Series.

**Because each film is 60 minutes, we will start promptly at 9:45 each week.**

- April 15, 9:45 am ~ Part I examines the early roots of liberal religious thought, concluding with the life and work of Michael Servetus (sometimes called the "first Unitarian").
- April 22, 9:45 am ~ Part II focuses on the spread of Servetus' message through countries in Europe and concludes with the emigration of Joseph Priestley from England to American.
- April 29, 9:45 am ~ Part III portrays the development of Unitarianism in America through the death of Theodore Parker in 1860, including the Transcendalist movement led by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller.

**What? No Monthly Calendar? - Yup! The calendar is now part of the Wednesday E-news. Makes it more current and easier for everyone to access.**



## The After Church Lunch Bunch ~ A special Easter Brunch at church

In April, instead of the usual Lunch Bunch outing on the second Sunday, the Good Times Team (GTT) will prepare and serve a light Easter brunch after the service.

It will be set up on a table, or tables, at the back of the

chapel, light food that will not require seating so that people can walk around and visit informally with their friends.

No reservations required, just stay after the service. No need to bring anything, GTT will provide food and beverages.



## Building Updates ~ walls, railings, paint

The front wall of the chapel has been renovated. Gone is the wood paneling, up is new dry wall. Thanks to Mike Alexander and Kevin Bartell who donated the labor for this project. They are also installing the chair lift. Thanks, guys!

The outside railings in front of the chapel entry have been replaced with new wrought iron railings that match the porch railings.

The nursery is finished.

HOWEVER ... we have three painting jobs awaiting volunteers. Do you "do paint"? How about one of these projects:

- The newly dry wall in the chapel needs to be painted
- The new nursery, which the kids have enjoyed, needs to be painted
- The lattice under the front porch also needs painting

Send an email to [aesthetics@rruu.org](mailto:aesthetics@rruu.org) if you're willing to take on one (or more) of these projects.



## Bookmarks for Walls ~ Apr 15!

The cost for renovating the front chapel wall came from selling the UU bookmarks that a group of folks made last January and were sold at last month's UU Women's conference in Houston.

Another bookmark making afternoon is scheduled after things on April 15th. It is pleasant work - stringing beads and attaching a small metal chalice. The bookmarks will be sold at General Assembly.

Bring your nimble fingers and let's make bookmarks - just think how lovely the chapel will be without wood paneling!!

## Board Bits ~from the Mar 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting

The board meeting was held on March 20, 2012. All board members were in attendance. In addition to normal board business the following topics were covered:

- Carolyn Cameron's resignation from the Committee on Ministry was accepted and she was appointed as a board member to replace Amy Hoffman-Shehan who had resigned last fall. Carolyn will be acting Secretary for the rest of this Board term.
- The Second three sections of the Policies & Procedures Manual were reviewed.
- The Town Hall Meeting on Social Justice Possibilities being held on March 25 was planned

The next board meeting is April 17, 2012, starting at 6:40 p.m. Board meetings are open to all, if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. Deadline for the agenda and reports to the board is April 10th. Those wishing a few minutes during the "open mic" will want to be ready to speak around 7:00 pm.

## Financial Update ~the treasurer's report

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**Good News  
continues for  
RRUU renovation  
Funding!"**

Good news continues for RRUU renovation funding. A \$2,500 donation was very recently received, and \$200 was raised from the bookmarks created by several women of the congregation. The current budget projected that \$10,500 would be given to RRUU in cash donations.

In fact, the total stands at \$24,900! Combined with the \$50,000 loan from the congregation, \$74,900 was raised for the renovation of our "new" building.

At the end of March \$67,968.62 had been spent, which leaves a remainder of \$6,931.38. Of that funding, \$200.00 is earmarked for chapel improvements and \$500.00, for installation of the donated chair lift.

Several gifts-in-kind have also recently been received. They include a la-

pel microphone, dinnerware, a folding table and seven tablecloths. In addition, a six part series of films was donated. Titled, *Long Strange Trip*, the series details "the history of Unitarian and Universalist thought from the beginning of the Christian era to what we know today as Unitarian Universalism."

Net income for March was -\$1,496.92. This looks worse than it really is. The budget projected a net income of -\$49,900, or over -\$4,000 per month. The large renovation cash donations, the sale of

church pews and chairs, and the lower-than estimated costs in many areas including worship, building maintenance/ janitorial services, utilities, administration, and child-care have kept expenditures down. .

Gifts-in-kind have also helped to reduce expenses.

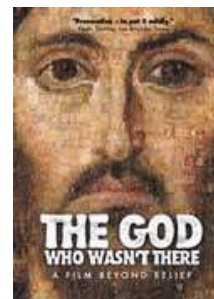
Marie Bellman  
Treasurer

## Sunday Soapbox ~ April 15

The wait won't be long! The next Sunday Soapbox speaker will be on April 15th.

Remember the Soapbox is a two-part event with the speaker talking for 3.5 minutes starting at 11:05 a.m. and then returning after things for a question & answer time.

## FreeThinkers ~ April 18



The first meeting of the FreeThinkers group resulted in no one coming. The group is not discouraged - yet - and will give it another try on Wed. April 18th. The movie *The God Who Wasn't There* will be shown. If you know any

one who might be interested in this outside group who would like to use our building on a regular basis, please spread the word. The film starts at 7 pm.

## Texoma Earth Day ~ Let's Help!

Did you know that Amy Hoffman-Shehan and Marla Loturco are the wizards behind the curtain and make the Earth Day Festival a reality? While others help, without their leadership the event would never happen. For the last three years many members and friends of the congregation have volunteered the day of the festival.

Let's not make this year any different. Come one! Come all! It is always fun to work together, especially outside, for an event that is dear to our hearts.

You can get details [here](#). You can work a few hours, or join those of us who will be there all day. Currently we really need people who like to get up early. If you can't help, do come and visit the various booths, attend some of the interesting and unique programs, buy raffle tickets. You will meet people you know and maybe even make some new friends.

Volunteers must register, however. But it isn't complicated. Just click [here](#) and you can download the volunteer registration form.

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*"For the last three years  
many members and friends  
of the congregation have  
volunteered.  
Let's do it again!"*





## Leadership

### Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco, *president*  
 Don Durland, *vice president*  
 Marie Bellman, *Treasurer*  
 Carolyn Cameron, *Secretary*  
 Elbert Hill  
 Richard Newlin  
 Kat Walston

### Committee on Ministry:

Gerry Shehan  
 Peter Schulze

### Team Leaders:

Adult Forum:

*Joyce Peak & Suzanne Durland*  
 Building/Grounds: *Laura Shehan*  
 Communications: *Doug Strong*  
 Finance/Endowment: *Marion Hill*  
 Good Times: *George Gravley*  
 Membership: *Marion Hill*  
 Worship: *no single leader, duties are rotated among members*  
 Ways & Means: *Don & Suzanne Durland*

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 weekly E-News:  
[announcements@rruu.org](mailto:announcements@rruu.org)



## District Spring Conference ~ In Houston, Apr 27-29

### Our Theme: One World – Many Voices

From space, our world seems small and fragile. The differences among us almost disappear in the vast emptiness of space around our big blue boat. And yet, we can find strength in our many voices to propel us into new places we would never reach with a single outlook. We can find leadership for a Multi-Cultural Age!

### Keynote Speaker:

Juana Bordas  
 Author of *Salsa, Soul and Spirit*,  
*Leadership for a Multicultural Age*

### Host congregation:

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church  
 1900 Bering  
 Houston, Texas 77057  
 713-782-8250  
[www.emersonhouston.org](http://www.emersonhouston.org)  
[www.swuuc.org](http://www.swuuc.org) for on-line registration



## Chalice Circles ~ Everyone is invited!

**GREEN TEAM**, an Environmental Action Circle meets on to work on the upcoming Texomaland Earth Day Festival (April 21<sup>st</sup>). Everyone is invited and encouraged to help on Festival Day. Contact [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](mailto:Amy.Hoffman-Shehan)

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets on April 20th for a dinner at the church. Facilitators are [Elbert & Marion Hill](#)

**UUJAM**, a music making and music listening Circle – meets Fri. Apr 6. Facilitator is [Jack Blue](#)