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Red River Ramblings



November,
2014
Volume 12
Issue 5

Sunday, November 2, 2014

The Truth About the "First Thanksgiving"

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

On the fourth Thursday of every November ... Thanksgiving! We all know the story - a horrible winter, friendly Indians who taught the Pilgrim Fathers how to plant corn; we've all been in a Weekly Reader Thanksgiving play - as a tree, an Indian or a Pilgrim Father. This year, in anticipation of the 393rd Thanksgiving, it is time to learn the truth about why the European settlers really made it through that horrible winter and why, today, this secular holiday is more myth than anything else.

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, November 9, 2014

Does this Faith Make My Soul Look Fat?

The Rev. Robert Coats, *preaching* (Video)

We live in a consumer age and a consumer society. We can tend to sometimes make decisions based on what's the fastest and easiest instead of perhaps what's the ideal. In our culture are we consumers or practitioners of spirituality, faith, and religion? Do we apply the same marketing principles to matters of spirituality, religion and faith as we do our other consumer choices? Is it possible in a culture of great abundance to also have an overabundance of easy, fast, disposable spirituality, faith and religion?

Refreshments: H

Sunday, November 16, 2014

Let's Talk About Mental Health

Tommi Homuth, *speaking*

A lot of time discussing our physical health, listening to the latest procedures for cataract surgery, asking about how many stents our husbands have and inquiring about,

have you had your flu shot? We are just not comfortable about discussing our mental health. There is a stigma attached to asking about someone's depression, or if your friend has had any suicidal inclinations, or how anxiety is affecting your loved one's lifestyle. Let me tell you how my eight day stay at a mental health care facility saved my life. Let's talk about mental health.

Refreshments: I-R

Sunday, November 23, 2014

Plato, Recollection, and The Wizard of Oz

Dr. William Fridley, *speaking*

Plato claimed that learning was a matter of recollecting innate knowledge. By analogy, the needy characters of The Wizard of Oz traveled down the yellow brick road and through the haunted forest, to ultimately discover that they had what they thought they needed the whole time.

Refreshments: Soup & Salad Lunch

Sunday, November 30, 2014

God, Impostors, and Other Mysteries

The Rev. Jason Cook, *preaching* (Video)

Are there any ideas about God that believers, agnostics, and atheists might share? In today's world, does God even have relevance? What common ground do Unitarian Universalists—skeptics and believers alike—share about God? What options are available for how we understand God? Join us as we celebrate the awe and wonder of the vast and glorious universe.

Refreshments: S-Z

Sunday mornings:

Adult Forum - 10 am

Worship - 11:15 am

Fellowship Gathering - 12:15 pm

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

We are a sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth..



Dan's Dispatch

The congregational meeting we had last month was a wonderful reminder of the power of the Free Church tradition. Even in a meeting dealing mostly with our administrative and

internal workings, we see a body of congregants working on and voting on a shared vision and shared commitments. That points towards the truth of Margaret Mead's much-quoted observation: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Although she refers to the body politic, we know that our actions as an organized religious community can and will have some impact upon the world we inhabit. (I think to myself at times—all in good humor, of course—that we are "more or less" organized and "more or less" religious: we're UUs, after all!)

Smallness, in and of itself, is neither good nor bad; it's merely a condition. But since we embrace a big vision, we know it's something we want to share with as many like-minded folks as possible. Our recent Board meetings and informal conversations, in person and by email, have dealt with increasing our visibility by seeking a grant from NTUUC for billboard advertising. As I write this, the grant proposal is about to go to NTUUC

Help with a Smile ~ on Sunday Mornings!

Several members of the RRUU congregation (thank you, Amy, Carole, Marilyn, Marla, Tommi, and Marion) have now agreed to act as greeters for Sunday services. It would be good to have more in the pool, especially since many of those who have stepped up so far already have other Sunday duties. It isn't an onerous task to be a greeter: give out copies of the day's Order of Things to everyone, have any first-time visitors complete a Visitors Form and make a name tag, and smile! If you'll agree to be a greeter, either on a regular basis or as needed when a regular greeter can't be there, please let Tommi Homuth (tshomuth @ gmail.com) know. Either Tommi or Marion Hill (mhill @ communicomm.com) can answer questions about the role. Please remove spaces from either email. Thanks!

for their consideration. How exciting it would be to see RRUU's name and logo from a highway, speaking to our neighbors of our presence and ideals! We'll send positive thoughts for a positive response.

Regardless of what happens with our requests for grant assistance from NTUUC, we see at the end of this month that 'Tis The Season! The holiday season is beginning—most certainly according to the merchants! Some people don't like "the calendar" telling them when they "should" feel grateful or when it's time to give gifts; my own father is one of those people. I understand that position completely. On the other hand, I personally appreciate the time set aside by the larger culture to reflect upon the good things we have and to express our appreciation and love to those closest to us--and to act with generosity towards those who have less than we do. And when I think about it, such is the spirit that moves NTUUC grants: love and support from those people who are most like us, who are near to us, and who generously have decided to share their good fortune and material blessings. I am grateful that we are a member congregation of such a group.

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Join the Green Team ~

The green team will meet Thursday, November 20 at 7:00 pm at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house.

Starting in December, meetings will be the second Thursday of the month.

At the October meeting, the team selected a theme for the 2015 Texoma Earth Day Festival, "Learning Green." We discussed possible key note speakers, workshop themes as well as number of workshops, music, and funding sources. We also discussed ways to improve attendance at workshops and types of fun contests we could hold. Before the November meeting, we will work to confirm recycling and a keynote speaker and apply for grants. At the November meeting, we will get updates from all team members, plan a publicity schedule and continue to strategize improvements to the festival.

*The Earth Day Festival theme
for next year: Learning Green*

Sunrise Reflections

*A Special Four-Part Series
with Dr. Don Fielding*

Have you ever attended SWUUSI during the summer? If you have, you probably know that the two biggest events are the Theme Speaker (often some prominent UU) in the mornings and the Sunset Talks (by a UU minister) in the evenings.

If you have never attended now comes a rare opportunity to experience some of what SWUUSI is like – at least, what the Sunset Talks are like.

In the year 2000 the Rev. Dr. Don Fielding provided the Sunset Talks. His title was *Shaking Like A Leaf: The Thought And Works Of Chet Raymo*. Chet Raymo was raised Roman Catholic, but gave up his birth religion and became a religious naturalist. He is often asked why he is not a Unitarian Universalist, but he prefers not to belong to any organized religion. Chet is a prolific author who has written many fiction and nonfiction books – one of his books of fiction *The Dork of Cork* has been made into a movie *Frankie Starlight*.

Someone recently suggested to Don that he recycle his Sunset talks on Sunday mornings, adding the comment that they are too good not to be re-used. Well, that little comment certainly piqued his ego and realizing that has been 15 years since they were first delivered, Don decided to rename them sunrise reflections, slightly revise them and re-offer them once again to our congregation.

So, on the second Sunday of Jan., Feb., March and April 2015, we will be able to "sort of" experience a SWUUSI Sunset Talks as a new Sunrise Reflections. A very rare and not-to-be-missed opportunity.

Treasurer's Report ~

In the month of September, we had income of \$2765.53 from general operations. After operations expense of \$1949.90 for the month, we had a net income from operations of 815.63.

In September we had a donation of \$1400 for renovations. There was no renovation expense. We received \$900 from Chalice Art sales and a donation of \$22 to seed an endowment fund.

For the year to date period of September 2014, we had net income of \$11474.53 from operations, net expenses of \$7680.46. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$1119.14.

As of the end of September 2014, we had cash of \$48,525 and debt of \$34,353. The cash amount includes \$2,690 reserved for grants. In September we donated \$172 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

Booked for Lunch ~

The November gathering for RRUU's book group will be Thursday, Nov 13th at 1 pm in the Barton Parlor. Come share what you've been reading, or come learn about an interesting book. Everyone is invited. Snacks will be served. See you there!

Dining for Dollars



THE RRUU ENDOWMENT

On Sunday, November 23, the Endowment Committee will provide a Soup and Salad Lunch after church. A variety of soups (including vegetarian) will be available, and diners may choose one or sample all of them. Participants will be expected to donate \$10 (or more) to our church's Endowment Fund. Anyone who needs an extra tax deduction in this calendar year might like to make a more substantial gift at that time (or at any other time).

Bicycles in the News ~ and RRUU Garages



We all know that Goodwill Industries has stores throughout the country. But did you know that Goodwill also has a reject center? It's called As Is and is located in a large warehouse behind their store on Highway 56. Recently LD Clark stumbled upon some bikes, well actually a lot of bikes. He saw it as an instant opportunity to help kids.

What are 148 bikes worth? Priceless, when you see the smile on the youngsters face when they are given a bike. On Saturday, November 8 we're going to have a "Bike Triage" where we can divide the bikes into three groups ...

Those that are far gone we will haul off to the metal recyclers or use for parts; the ones in need of some mechanical work and finally the ones that just need to be cleaned up and a little lubricating and tires aired up. It would be terrific if we could end up with 50 good enough to be placed with youngsters.

Saturday, November 8 from 10 AM until we're done we're going to have a bike clinic. We will have tools and an air compressor along with some rags and biodegradable cleaning solution. Assisting us will be students from Austin College as part of their Great Day Of Service. Come join the fun!



Wanted
~ clean plastic caps!

Please save your clean plastic caps from bottles and jars. Any color or size will do. The caps will be used in a bottle cap wall in downtown Sherman.

If you don't think recycling plastic caps could make anything beautiful, take a look at the wall being done on a side street in Long Island, NY.

A collection box will be placed at church on Sunday by the Green Team.

Lanan's ~ Bow making class

Come and learn how to make beautiful bows for your holidays.

Lanan Shelton will teach us on Thursday, Nov 13th from 7:30 to 8:30 pm in the Emerson room.

Bring with you a pair of sharp scissors, 1 dozen or more of your favorite cookies (along with the recipes if possible.) There will be a door prize awarded for the best bows.

Lanan will furnish all the supplies.



Board Bits ~ from the October Board of Trustees meeting

Board Bits from October 9, 2014

- We continue to search for a Director of Religious Education - suggestions from everyone would be helpful: Where to look? Who to approach? What to do? In the interim, we have toys and coloring books available in the chapel where youngsters can be safe and not bored
- Fliers advertising for vocalists and/or instrumentalists to enhance worship have been circulated to local colleges
- There was discussion on whether to seek a "membership professional" via an NTUUC grant, perhaps being able to share a position with other small UU congregations
- In anticipation of the fall congregational meeting, we reviewed our membership - which now stands at 40
- Over the years we've advertised RRUU in various ways - an ad in the local Parent's magazine; playbills from Sherman Players, on line at Texomaland.com and the North TX News, along with our weekly announcements in the Durant and Sherman papers. We discussed the possibility of expanding to college newspapers along the idea of seeking a grant for a highway billboard
- Contact has been made with the Freethinkers group on Southeastern campus
- Thanks to a special donation, new plantation shutters will be installed in the Anthony Room, the Forrest Church Library, Arts and Crafts room and the church office
- A new Habitat for Humanity house is being built in the neighborhood and we discussed ways we might, as a congregation, show our support
- The Endowment Committee is preparing a soup & salad lunch in November as a way to introduce the congregation to the Endowment Fund (lunch donation: \$10)

*We continue to search for a
Director of Religious
Education - suggestions from
everyone would help!*

Moveable Feast ~ Nov 6th - in the Chapel

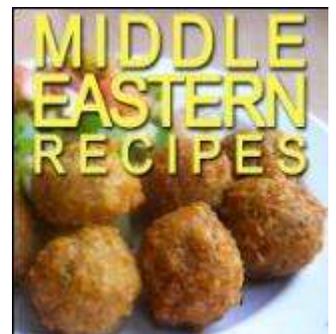
Movable Feast will meet November 6, at 6:00 p.m., at the church for a potluck Middle-Eastern-themed meal. The Feast is hosted by Facilitators Elbert and Marion Hill and by Marla Loturco. It is open to all, but those who wish to attend are asked to let Marion Hill (feast + suffix*) know that they'll be coming and, if possible, what dish they will be bringing.

The moveable Feast is a wonderful way for folks at church to get to know one an-

other better. If you haven't attended a Moveable Feast before - please consider coming.

Struggling to find a **Middle-Eastern dish**? Click on the image! Happy Hunting!

*the church email suffix is @rruu.org



Leadership

Board of Trustees

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

Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,
 Peter Schulze

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Gil*
 Aesthetics Team:
Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Chalice coordinator: *Open*
 DRE: *Open*
 Finance: *Open*
 Good Times:
Carole, Marilyn & Marion
 Long Range Planning:
Amy, Gil, Marilyn
 Membership: *Marion*
 Nominations: *Helen, L.D., Marla*
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
 Social Action: *Gil*
 Ways & Means: *Open*
 Worship:
Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

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 Facebook:
 RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

"Trans: The Movie



Sat. Nov 8th 6:00 pm @ First Unitarian Church, Dallas

You are invited to join Interweave for Movie Night and celebrate Transgender Awareness Month (November)! Our feature film is "Trans: The Movie," which explores the gender transition journeys of five people of all ages (detailed description below). The screening will be followed by a short panel discussion.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Suggested donation of \$5 includes popcorn and the movie. Drinks and other snacks will be available for purchase.

About the film:

Inspired by the work of Dr. Christine McGinn and her work as a transgender surgeon, "Trans" provides an up-close and very personal vision into the lives, loves, and challenges of five transgender people from various ages and walks of life, featuring: Danann, a 7-year-old who knew that she was a girl at 2; Dr. McGinn, a former Navy flight surgeon; Pam and Erica, undergoing surgery and beginning new lives in their mid-50s; Chloe, whose parents are coming to terms with her suicide; and Cris, a young adult who recently realized that he is transgender and is coming out to his girlfriend.

Chalice Circles / Interest Groups

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle usually meets on Thursday evenings @ 7:00 PM. Next meeting Nov 20 at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle will be meeting on Nov 6 at RRUU.

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, is an informal book discussion group meeting in the Barton Parlor on Thursday, Nov 13th @ 1 pm in the Emerson Room. Facilitator Carole Harner.

OUT TO LUNCH, One Sunday a month after things we go out for a Dutch-treat lunch. There is no agenda, no reports, no minutes - just everyone heading out and breaking bread together. This month OTL will be an IN for lunch - \$10 donation for Soup and Salad on Nov 23rd. Email **announce** [+suffix] if you have a restaurant suggestion.