



Red River Ramblings



November 2015
Volume 13
Issue 5

Where spiritual curiosity and conscience connect

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30 days:



Sunday, November 1, 2015

Who Came Before?

Rev Jennifer Channin, *preaching (video)*

How have those who came before you paved the way for your life's journey? What kind of road are you making for those who will follow?

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, November 8, 2015

Divine Measures: The Poetry of Faith

The Rev. Dr. Christine Tata, *preaching*

Poetry is intertwined with religious faith in a graceful linguistic dance, so that a modern reader hardly knows where one urge ends and the other begins. Indeed, for some, the essence of their faith is in the weighty beauty of the words of the King James Bible. This service will explore how faith is found in many other surprising verses and poetry is all around.

Refreshments: H

Sunday, November 15, 2015

Our Call to Climate Justice

Aly Tharp, *speaking*

Guest speaker Aly Tharp will deliver a sermon drawing connections between our principles and culture as Unitarian Universalists and the global grassroots movement for climate justice.

Refreshments: I-R

Sunday, November 22, 2015

We Are What We Eat

The Rev. Jennifer Ryu, *preaching (video)*

A sermon about Ethical Eating – with not one comment about what anyone 'ought to' or 'should' or 'should not' consume. Just in time for Thanksgiving!

Refreshments: I-R

Sunday, November 29, 2015

A Morning of Holiday Music

The SonShine Sisters, *in concert*

Music is at the heart of the holiday season and on Sunday we have a special treat. The Sonshine Sisters, will bring us a special holiday concert. Our own Marla Loturco is among them. They are a group of women who meet to sing and play instruments together once a week and will offer music of Christmas, Solstice, Yule along with some of their own compositions. We will listen, and sing along (a few times). For those who are inspired we will decorate the chapel following the service.

After Things: This being the 5th Sunday, we'll end the morning with a "Staying IN for Lunch". Bring a dish to share, some fun, frivolous, fancy or funny food to feed our hearts and souls.

Morning Meditation – 9
Adult Forum - 10
Worship - 11:15
Conversations & Calories - 12:15

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

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

Dan's Dispatch



As November begins, the raucousness and tomfoolery of Halloween give way to a more sober and even contemplative month—at least, from my perspective. If I had such a thing as a favorite month, November would be a prime candidate for it.

The weather in this part of the world is much more to my liking, I have a birthday (woot!), and we celebrate Thanksgiving, which is undoubtedly my favorite holiday.

Some of you may have heard me say, at some time or other, that I look very skeptically at the recently created holidays of Kwanzaa and Chalica. My thinking is that they are too young; I see them as too deliberate and self-conscious; in short, they're just not "organic" enough in my mind to make for a good, authentic holiday. I mean, how can a "real" holiday actually have a living author or inventor?

Chalica, for example, was imagined by a young theology student from British Columbia, Daylene Marshall, in November 2005. It emerged from the South Fraser Unitarian Congregation in Surrey, B.C. Chalica hasn't done too badly for itself in the past 10 years: more and more people have begun to celebrate it. It has its own Facebook organization page (with 4,281 members!), and there's also a blog. Chalica takes place during the first seven days of December. Each day a chalice is lit, and each of

the UU Seven Principles is specifically honored in order, from First through Seventh. Some people even sing a song based on "The Hanukkah Son" by comedian/actor Adam Sandler, and may give small, often homemade, gifts. Some congregations observe it as part of their church year and have a special Chalica service (for more info, see:

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/chalica-gains-adherents>).

Kwanzaa, on the other hand, is much more venerable. It was created almost 50 years ago, in 1966, by Maulana Karenga (b. 1941). According to Wikipedi: "Kwanzaa is a celebration that has its roots in the [black nationalist](#) movement of the 1960s, and was established as a means to help African Americans reconnect with their African cultural and historical heritage by uniting in meditation and study of African traditions and *Nguzo Saba*, the 'seven principles of African Heritage' which Karenga said 'is a [communitarian](#) African philosophy.'" Although reliable figures are hard to find, the number of Kwanzaa celebrants in the US may be as high as two million.

And Thanksgiving? In the United States, the holiday has a complicated history, but modern Thanksgiving is frequently dated from 1863 when President Lincoln issued a proclamation. Hmm. A specific date? A specific author? Does that mean Thanksgiving is less than "organic?" Now that I think about it, maybe so. Maybe I should cut a little slack on Chalica and Kwanzaa, after all.

May your November be filled with reasons for thankfulness.

In for LUNCH ~ November 29th

In for LUNCH, the all-church potluck that happens on the fifth Sunday of a month, will be on November 29th. This falls the same day the Worship Team scheduled a special concert of Seasonal Music (Christmas, Solstice, etc.) with a fine singing group called the Sonshine Sisters (catchy name!).

Bring your favorite cold weather dish to share, wear you holiday duds and plan on enjoying a splendid morning.



Filled with songs in our hearts, and food for our bellies, those who wish may join Lanan Shelton as she guides us in adding a touch of the holidays to the chapel. We'll bring in the tree, unpack the ornaments and let the magic of the season be seen and felt.

Board Bits ~ from the October 14 meeting

During the meeting the board

- discussed the installation of a new video surveillance system,
- finalized the plans for the semi-annual Congregation Meeting on October 25,
- worked out what was needed to do to prepare the third floor before students from Austin College come to paint the Anthony Room, the F. Church Library, the upstairs hall and rest room (as part of the college's annual Great Day of Service on November 7

It was one of those rare, but wonderful meetings where no actions were needed.

All meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to the congregation, and we invite any interested members to submit agenda items and attend!

The Fall Congregational Meeting, October 25th ~ what we did

The meeting was short! Less an hour. Thanks to all who came and participated. No surprise that we passed the minutes from the July 12, 2015 meeting.

There was a lively and profitable discussion about having children's RE (Religious Education – the Free-Church term for Sunday School) at the same time at the Adult Forum. At last August's "Small Church Conference" some congregations trying this found it beneficial. The children (older than nursery age) remain in the chapel for worship and parents sometimes don't take the kids out. Or, if they do, they leave church perhaps because there is no place to take their children. We've had this happen more than once. Some felt kids would be kids and this could be disruptive to the whole sense of worship. Some felt it might help to let kids better understand our traditions and purpose. One advantage – volunteers teaching in RE could still come to the service. Several people volunteered to take small children out of service, if needed, so parents can remain. There was strong support for having RE and Adult Forum at the same time with an option should a child become disruptive and provided that we have nursery available (infant to age 5).

Then came our look at the current bylaws. There were several suggested revisions, based on the town hall meeting last month. Dan Althoff explained we are current not in compliance with our bylaws. To wit: we have 11 bylaw mandated committees along with the 3 elected committees (Board of Trustees, Nominating, Committee on Ministry) and several are currently staffed with no one. Comments from the floor: Leadership School teaches not to have too many committees; the bylaws were originally written to reflect

growth (the recommendation at the time); since the Board can create committees as needed, we don't need them in the bylaws. The discussion ended with people glad we talked about it all. The plan is to have more town hall meetings and present a revised version at the May 15, 2016 congregational meeting.

The discussion about establishing a line item in the budget for Social Action was the last item. A review of our history reminded people that we have, in the past, set aside a percentage (a tithe if you will) dedicated to outreach. We now have the Share the Plate (2nd Sundays) but this would be separate. Comments: This would give us funds for special outreach projects; we may get less on the Share the Plate. A straw vote indicated support of having such a line item. Dan explained this will come for a vote at the May meeting and is not something for the current fiscal year.

People who attended felt good about the conversation and appreciated that many, if not most, people had opportunities to offer ideas, comments and suggestions.

We Done Good, friends!

November's Birthdays

- 07 – Laura Shehan
- 08 – Dan Althoff
Carolyn Cameron
- 13 – Marla Loturco
Maura Shehan
- 16 – Cylvia Lawrence
- 22 – Peter Schulze



UUJam ~ Friday, November 6th

The November Jam will be Friday, Nov. 6th. Bring your acoustic instruments, song books, drink of choice & snack to share.



Contact Jan at (972.897.5796) to confirm your place in the music circle...a listening audience is warmly welcomed as well.

Booked for Lunch ~ Thursday, Nov 12th

The best part of B4L (think!) is coming home and knowing you have one or two (or maybe even more) books on your To Read list. Or maybe the best part is the conversation, always entertaining and enlightening. Or maybe it's the snacks. Or maybe it is whatever makes you smile and realize there are few things better than spending time with good people. Or maybe the best part is knowing you coming! Hope to see you there, we start at 1 pm.

Meet our November speakers

Rev Jennifer Channin, serves as the Assistant Minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of San Diego, CA. She has nearly 10 years of experience working in the not-for-profit sector, before, during, and after seminary. Much of this work has involved building up healthy and sustainable institutions, developing educational programs, and guiding organizations through periods of transition.



Rev. Dr. Christine Tata has lifelong ties to Unitarian Universalism, from her UU upbringing in the Texas Bible Belt to her service for UUA congregations, as well as in the progressive United Church of Christ, in which she is ordained. She served as senior pastor for UCC churches in Dallas and California, and was later called to be Associate Pastor for Worship on the startup team for the innovative Pathways UU congregation.



Aly Tharp grew up in Plano, TX, and is a member at Horizon UU. She coordinates the UU Young Adults for Climate Justice (uuyacj.org), co-chairs the NTUUC Social Action committee and is on the Dallas Peace and Justice Center's board. A 2012 Austin College grad with a B.A. in Environmental Studies



The Rev. Jennifer Ryu graduated from Starr King School for the Ministry and served the Williamsburg (VA) UU's from 2006 – 2015. We enjoyed watching her sermon last summer on the meaning of citizenship.



The SonShine Sisters is a group of women who play various instruments and sing in churches, and celebrations and festivals of all kinds. Marla Loturco, Sue Ellen Richey, Gay Holcomb, Ruthann Dodson, Lisa Compton, Lara Blair, Sandy Humes, and Marilyn Bullard are members of the group. The group formed primarily to enjoy playing music together but found that people enjoyed listening to them play and sing, so they like to accept requests to play for others whenever possible.



SonShine Sisters

The Adult Forum for November

November 8 & 15:

The Forum will start examining some Unitarian Universalist history often referred to as the Black Empowerment Controversy.



In 1961 the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America consolidated to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. As we witness the current conflicts around racism in our country, the Forum is going to take a look at a conflict that almost destroyed the fledgling Association.

Using the film *Wilderness Journey* which explores what UUs call the Black Empowerment Controversy, we'll discuss what many feel has been one of our most difficult moments as a religious movement. Even now, four decades later, many UUs remain unreconciled over what was for many a life-defining fight.

Because the film is 60 minutes long, we'll watch half each week with a discussion following.

Treasurer's Report

In the month of September, we had income of \$3,443 from general operations. After operations expense of \$2,435 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$908.

In September we received a donation of \$15 for the Wi-Fi fund.

For the year to date period, we had a net income of \$9,096 from operations. Those included restricted amounts of \$5,974. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$6,929.

As of the end of September 2015, we had total cash of \$61,572 and our debt totaled \$30,183.

In September, we donated \$112 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

Leaders

Board of Trustees

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

Committee on Ministry:

LD Clark, Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Gil*
 Aesthetics Team:
Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Finance:
 Good Times:
Carole, Marilyn & Marion
 Long Range Planning:
Amy, Gil, Marilyn
 Membership:
 Nominations: *Amy, Kat, Lanan*
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
 RE Team: *Carolyn, Dan, Tommi*
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
 Social Action: *Gil*
 Ways & Means:
 Worship:
Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

Special Food Drive ~ November 8 & 15



In Triumph is a faith-based home for young men 18-24 who find themselves in need of help. In Triumph provides transitional care for youth who have aged out of foster care with their Aftercare Youth program. They also assist Addicted Young Adults.

As members of the Grayson County NAACP, we've been asked to help collect food so the residents at In Triumph might be able to enjoy a Thanksgiving Dinner.

The list of needs:

- Green beans, corn, cornbread mix, stuffing, beans, greens
- Potatoes, Yams
- Turkey, Ham
- Paper goods
- Paper towels, plastic silverware, paper plates
- Clothes for man ages 18-24

The house, on East Main Street in Denison, is the former Traveler's Hotel. There will be a basket in the chapel for our donations.

Contact Us

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 515 North Burnett Ave
 Denison, TX 75020

mail to:

PO BOX 1806
 DENISON, TX 75021-1806

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How to reach us:

Email: info[+ suffix]*

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: www.rruu.org

E-News: announce[+suffix]*

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

*Church email suffix: @rruu.org

Chalice Circles / Interest Groups

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Thursday of the month at 12:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room, on November 12th. Facilitator Carole Harner.

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Team. The Team will meet on Thursday, November 19th – 7 p.m. at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's home. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets monthly. In November the Feasters will go to Bonham and enjoy dinner at Donna Toepper's home on the 21st. Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill.

UU JAM, an acoustic music circle for musicians, singers & music loving listeners meets the Friday, Nov. 6 at 7 PM at the home of Jan and Ken Fletcher. Bring your instrument, song books, beverage of choice & a snack to share. Please email your place in the circle: uujam [+ suffix]*. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher