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Red River Ramblings



March 2016
Volume 13
Issue 9

Where spiritual curiosity and conscience connect

Sunday, March 6, 2016

Waiting for Godot

A Stage Reading*

Robert Shelton (as Estragon) and Elbert Hill (as Vladimir), assisted ably by Ellie Dyer (as Boy), will present a readers' theater version of *Waiting for Godot*. The award-winning absurdist play by Samuel Beckett, in which two characters wait endlessly for someone named Godot to arrive, has been called "the most significant English language play of the 20th century." The characters of Pozzo and Lucky appear in your imagination only.

* A stage reading is a form of theatre without sets or full costumes. The actors, who read from scripts, may be seated, stand in fixed positions, or incorporate minimal stage movement.

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, March 13, 2016

Daylight Savings Time Starts

Kairos--Catch It!

Dr. William Fridley, speaking

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: *chronos*, a quantitative concept, and *kairos*, a qualitative concept. What time is it?

Refreshments: H

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

Sunday, March 20, 2016

From Unitarian Universalism to Existential Humanism

The Rev. Dr. Don Fielding, speaking

This Reflection mixes two concepts: first it asks the question why does UUism do such a good job of being creative and constructive with its theology, but such a terrible job of being creative with its liturgy, choosing instead to just copy the Christian liturgical template we had at our origin. The second idea considered is: Is our message as meaningful as that which Christians feel about their God or an afterlife? What and where is the meaning in a humanist system of belief?

Refreshments: I-R

Sunday, March 27, 2016

5th Annual Easter Music Concert with Flutist Cornell Kinderknecht

Religious communities often disagree more than they agree - conflicting theologies, writings, beliefs ... the list goes on and on. One thing, however, seems to be present in many, if not all, gathered communities of faith: music. This Easter, like last year, we will celebrate with a special concert by flutist Cornell Kinderknecht. For those who cut church last Easter (fearing it would clash with your sense of being), here's your chance for redemption!

Refreshments: S-Z

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

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

Dan's Dispatch



For a small congregation, we have done—and continue to do—some pretty amazing things. Even an admittedly partial list is impressive, starting with the purchase and ongoing improvements to our unique and lovely building.

Then there's the continuous commitment to celebrating Earth Day in Sherman, which won a national award for the Green Team two years ago; the voters' registration drive; the quarterly dinners at the Grayson County Shelter; the remarkably varied Sunday services with performers and speakers of all sorts; and the Adult Forum with its rich array of topics and discussions.

And with all these, I know there are yet many other activities and interests that I haven't mentioned, and I apologize for my sieve-like mind as I type this out! I do know we are a group of people whose dedication and involvement span a vast field of service—service to our communities as well as service to individuals. We do a pretty good job, I think, of living out the words of the covenant we recite every Sunday.

With all this broad spectrum of interests and activities, though, we sell ourselves short as a liberal religious community if we don't also help attend to the personal concerns of our membership. That's why I'm once again calling for a few—maybe three, maybe four—members to revitalize our dormant Caring Committee. It's not that we *don't care* for each other; no, that's not it at all. We care very much. But we look after each other in informal ways, which is not at all surprising in a small congregation. And as wonderful and as effective informality often is, some of us may not know

where to go or who to talk to when we're experiencing a difficult time. Having actual names of actual members on our website linked to the Caring Committee could be the connection that a hurting or struggling friend is looking for.

And as we look towards how we care for each other, let's also look at how we welcome newcomers and visitors. I don't believe there's anybody among us who sees us now as forming a complete and "closed" circle—one that doesn't want to open up to anybody else. To borrow a phrase from the service on February 28, our "saving message" is open to people of all ages, including children. We are fortunate to have a group of two to three individuals who cheerfully volunteer their availability during our Sunday service to attend to young visitors who may come to church with their families. Data and the lived experience show that visiting families are much more likely to return if there is some special activity dedicated to their children. Looking after the needs of families with children is one of the keys to a healthy and growth-oriented congregation. So, in short, we still need more volunteers to be available to play with visiting young friends once a month. It might be an overused word, but it would definitely be a blessing to the church, to the family, and to the child.

As we all know, being a lay-led congregation is very hard work. We do not have any full-time staff. What gets done is entirely up to us—whether that's planning a service, helping to run a church garage sale, setting up for Earth Day, updating our website, producing the newsletter, lending a sympathetic ear to another church member, or playing bingo with a visiting child. It's all a part of what we do and who we are. And we all need each other to do it, and to do it well!

If you are interested in being on the Caring Committee or being a volunteer for children's activities one Sunday a month, please contact me (Dan) [here](#) (email: president at rruu dot org). I am looking forward to being overwhelmed by emails!



Annual Appreciation Dinner

The 2016 Appreciation Dinner was an evening of fellowship and fine dining. After enjoying the well known culinary talents of our congregation, a list of ongoing 'jobs' that are done at church was read with people raising their hand if they helped in that job. It was surprising the number of jobs that are needed to keep Red River the place it is!

We all do things that make us smile. We do things we're proud of. A twist on the theme this year included asking the group this question, "What have you done at church that you would like to be appreciated for?"

The replies were both surprising – some serious, some amusing, but all appreciated. The Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award was given to Dan Althoff for this long-term commitment to the church and post humorously to Gil Alexander who during the four years he was with us devoted time and resources to enhance the life of the congregation.

Chapel Ceiling Replacement Project

Our chapel is getting a new ceiling because the current one is sagging. Better to fix the problems before it comes crashing down one day. The project, supported with a \$5,900 NTUUC grant, will take two weeks to complete, starting on Monday, March 28th. During the work the chapel will be a construction zone with the doors sealed off (to keep the dust in and people out). Completion date: April 16th.

What will be happening inside:

- a new wood ceiling
- new wall-to-wall carpeting (current carpet will go into the Anthony Rm & the F. Church Library)*
- an extended chancel
- permanent placement and lighting for the Sneller Memorial Window
- recessed ceiling lighting throughout
- recessed spot lights to highlight the pulpit
- two video projectors mounted in the ceiling
- two recessed power screens for video projection
- new ceiling fans
- centralized light controls on the AV desk

When we are finished, we will be able to focus worship on either the north or west wall and there will be enough illumination so everyone can see. We will be able to run all sound, lights, video and screens from the AV desk.

Clearly there is no way we can use the chapel during the work. We get to become flexible.

Chalice Circle News

The Green Team is fast approaching this year's Earth Day Festival, on April 23. The team is meeting twice this month (March 10 and March 27 at 4 PM) at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's home in Sherman. The team will also meet on April 7th and 21st.

Booked For Lunch gathers on Thursday, March 10 at 1 PM in the Emerson room to learn what people are reading and to share what they have been reading. The conversations are always interesting and the company friendly.

UU Jam meets on the last Saturday of every month (March 26th) at 3 pm in the Chapel. As always, bring your instruments, song books, beverage of choice & a snack to share. A song circle will be set in a way that will include the listeners. Please contact Jan Fletcher, via email, text or call at 972-897-5796 to confirm your place in the circle! Hope to see lots of you there. *Keep The Music Playing!*

What we do during the project:

Sunday, March 27: 12:30 until we are finished

- Move EVERYTHING out of the chapel

Sunday, April 3: 10 AM – 1 PM

- Spruce Up Our Space for Spring!

No Worship Service

Come and help. Clean the Soul Café; the Hall Closet; Wash Windows; Polish the Oak Banister; Touchup Paint the Anthony Room and third floor hall; Clean the Church Office; Do Yard Work, Clean the Basement.

Sunday, April 10:

Morning Meditation: 9 am

In the Forrest Church Library

Adult Forum: 10 am

In the Forrest Church Library

Worship: 11:15 am

The Rev. Annie Foerstor, preaching

In the Barton Parlor/Emerson Room

We will return to the chapel on Sunday, April 17th with a special worship experience, including Flower Communion.

**The carpeting was not in the original plan, however a small group of anonymous donors told the board to add the carpeting. Such a splendid gift! It will be appreciated every time we walk in the chapel.*

Emergency Response Training



Fourteen people attended the special Emergency Response Training presented by Robert Shelton on Feb 27th. One person takes the lead in dealing with the situation. S/he will... use active listening; re-

main calm; not crowd in; arms by side; have palms up to demonstrate trust; use good eye contact; assess the situation while talking, never argue, humanize the situation, watch body language (heavy breathing, sweating).

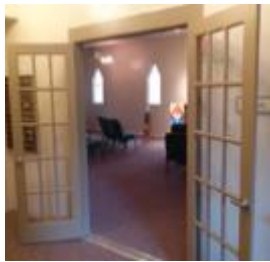
One person needs to sneak out and call 911 (local police can't get text message). The group agreed... we need several people who can act as lead person; we need crash bar on chapel outside exit door; and the whole congregation needs to know this information. Robert also demonstrated how to disable an intruder safely. Everyone felt it was valuable information for us.

Here's a Feel Good Story

One afternoon a woman pulled in the church parking lot and stopped at our Little Free Library. A member was coming out of the church. The woman called to her and said how pleased she was to have our Little free Library back. She had heard that we had taken it down for some minor repairs. She said, "I use your library all the time. In fact I drive from all the way across town. I am so glad that it is back. I've missed it."

The library is a quiet, consistent outreach we provide. We go through a lot of books in a month, especially children's books. Remember you can always bring books and place them in the library. It is as simple as that. The more books we put in, the more books get read.

A Suggestion Worth Trying



Often, after things, people like to greet our guest speakers. Sometimes there is a bit of a crowd and our guest speaker never gets an opportunity to have refreshments. Starting this month, our guest speakers will be escorted to the Barton Parlor as the service concludes so they can grab a beverage and/or snack rather than remaining in the chapel. This also helps visitors who are often reluctant to venture up the stairs when so many people are still in the chapel. The goal is to help newcomers, speakers and everyone else have a place to socialize while enjoying the bounty brought each week by members. And, if you don't remember which Sunday is your day to bring something: 1st Sunday: A-G; 2nd Sunday: H; 3rd Sunday I-R; 4th Sunday: S-Z. When there is a 5th Sunday everyone brings something for our *Fifth Sunday In 4 Lunch potluck*.

So far 5 people have become certified to be a Registrar and can sign up Texas residents to vote in the general election. We could use a few more people (you have to live in Texas). Red River will have a Get Out The Vote booth at next month's Earth Day Festival.

G.O.T.V



Regardless of one's political leanings, the November election is critical as the next president and senate will, among other things, appoint a justice to the Supreme Court. One way we can exercise our civic duty is to register people so they can vote. If you want to be part of this effort, please speak with Lanan, Doug, Kat or Robert.

There are loads of jobs that need to be done on Fri, Apr22 and during the Festival on Sat, Apr 23. Come support this important community project brought to the world by our congregation. To be a volunteer you need to click [here](#) and fill out the form. Return it to Carole Harner. Her contact info is on the form.

Third Floor Restroom

You won't believe the difference! The third floor restroom has been restored. New Beed board wainscoting, fixtures, wall cupboard and period mirror. A new ceramic tile floor along with repainted walls and trim have transformed what was originally the only bathroom in the house. Deep appreciation to our resident carpenter, Kevin Bartell, who volunteered his labor for this project.



Meet our Newest Member



Doug Simpson Doug has been blissfully married 53 years. He has three sons, six grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Doug spent most of his life on a bi-vocational path of mass retail management and church ministry. He managed stores from G.F. Wacker variety stores to Wal-Mart to an auto store and department manager for Montgomery Ward. The last 15 years prior to retirement he was IT, Production, & Press Director for the Herald Democrat newspaper.

He has served in churches as Music Minister, Music and Youth Minister, and Pastor. He served 10 years as a bi-vocational pastor and 5 years as a full-time pastor.

Doug currently serves as a Life Coach assisting people through spiritual awakening. He focuses on helping people break free from the constraints of religious doctrine and dogma to find freedom in their spirituality.

His wife Jan is employed at Landmark Bank with 35 years in banking. Doug loves traveling – cruises are the favorite travel adventure - especially with his family.

Texoma Earth Day Festival needs YOU

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Leaders

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LD Clark, *Carole Harner*,
 Gerry Shehan

Team Leaders/Members:

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

Contact Us

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How to reach us:

Email: info[+ suffix]*

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: www.ruuu.org

E-News: announce[+suffix]*

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalist-
 Church

*Church email suffix: @ruuu.org

EVERYONE'S IRISH on MARCH 17th



The Moveable Feast "Clan" along with anyone who has never attended a moveable feast will gather at the Red River Pub (a.k.a. The Chapel) on Thursday, March 17th for a pot luck dinner to celebrate Lá Fhéile Pádraig who died a mere 1,555 years ago.

Four people have volunteered to create their vision of a St. Patrick's Day Table Décor. That should prove interesting.

It will be a potluck affair, with everyone contributing Irish dishes (or whatever you feel like bringing). A partial menu: Colcannons, corn beef & cabbage, soda bread, scones, green key lime pies and Guinness beer (warm of course). It promises to be a festive time. Those who don't show up will no doubt be green with envy!

Thurs. Mar 17 – 6 pm
in the Chapel

Chalice Circles / Interest Groups ~ open to all

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Emerson Room, on March 10th. Facilitator Carole Harner.

GREEN TEAM, is gearing up for the 8th Annual Earth Day Festival (on Apr 23) so the Team will meet on March 10th and again on the 24th at 4 pm in Amy Hoffman-Shehan's home. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets monthly. In February the Feast-ers will celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 17th. Details above!

UU JAM, an acoustic music circle for musicians, singers & music loving listeners meets the last Saturday of the month @ 3 pm, in the Chapel. For March that's the 26th. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher.