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Spring Meeting is

May 15th



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Needs

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Red River Ramblings



May 2016
Volume 13
Issue 11

Five Sunday mornings to jumpstart your week.

Sunday, May 1, 2016

Wandering in the Wilderness

The Rev. Gina Purcell, preaching

Of her remarks, Rev. Purcell writes, I will be preaching on the biblical story of Jesus in the wilderness and my sermon title is Wanderings in the Wilderness. Not very original, I know, but it is to the point! I'm planning on sharing my reflections on life/death/grief/joy etc. while on my spiritual retreat in the Grand Canyon. I leave on April 18th.

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, May 8, 2016

Socrates, Plato, and Luther:

On Writing and Reading

Dr. William Lloyd Fridley, *speaking*

Socrates wrote nothing, and he warned of the dangers of putting philosophy in writing. We know this from the writings of Socrates' pupil, Plato. What was going on with that? Martin Luther's theological insight led to a movement toward mass literacy in Germany. What was the insight?

Today is Share the Plate Sunday when all cash donations will be contributed to the Grayson County Shelter.

Refreshments: H

Sunday, May 15, 2016

Being a UU in Public

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

This morning before we gather for our annual Spring Meeting, the worship team has selected a sermon by the Reverend

Jennifer Ryu who shares some intriguing insights about ourselves as Unitarian Universalists. While the meeting will focus on being a UU within a congregation, she offers us some thoughts on being a UU in Public – do we dare?

Refreshments: I-R

Sunday, May 22, 2016

A Progressive Look at Juvenile Delinquency

Robert Shelton, *speaking*

I worked for twenty years in one of the most progressive Juvenile Probation Departments in the country. Our quest was to help troubled youth find a path toward becoming good neighbors and citizens. In this talk, we will discuss contributing factors to delinquency and various interventions used to positively impact the lives of those we served.

Refreshments: S-Z

Sunday, May 29, 2016

Why the Buzz About Bees?

Helen Schulze, *speaking*

Helen Schulze brings to us what she has learned in her adventures as a new beekeeper, including learning about the problems facing bees and the environment. Using video, slides, hand outs and an open dialogue we will understand why the buzz about bees!

Refreshments: 'In 4 Lunch' Potluck

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ◆ Denison, TX

A sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth.

Dan's Dispatch



Every May and October we get together as a body to make some big decisions about the life of the congregation. We don't do this because some Magnificent Pooh-Bah from On High commands us to, but because that's how we ourselves have decided to do it.

It is a pure expression of Unitarian Universalism's Fifth Principle, which promotes and affirms "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." We might even be able to see in our congregational meetings a hint of the Second Principle, which speaks of "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations."

As we gather again in mid-May, we will vote on how to spend the money that we give supporting the work of this congregation; we will be selecting new officers of the Board of Trustees (President, Vice President, and Treasurer); we will read various reports on church activities; and there will be information presented about our Safe Congregation Policy. While all of these are important, they are relatively routine and we have been observed them for a quite a number of years.

One item at our meeting is so out of the ordinary, however, that in order to approve it, we need a two-thirds vote in favor from the voting membership, whether in person or by proxy. That item is a completely revised version of our Bylaws.

When this congregation was first organized and incorporated as a non-profit entity in 2000, our Bylaws were extremely long and complex; they were quite "lawyerly" and were more cumbersome than helpful. They were subsequently revised in 2009, 2010, and again in 2012. With each revision, our Bylaws have become simpler, more coherent, and more reflective of how we actually govern ourselves.

The proposed revisions you will see in your emailed packet for the May meeting are significant. Many of the changes are simply editorial and have benefited from close reading and clarifying the existing language. Other proposed changes are more substantial. For example, there is a proposal to lower the age of member eligibility from 18 to 13 – we want any young people among us to know their voices are important and their vote counts just the same as that of any other member. Another example of significant change is the reduced number of standing committees that we require for our operations. We are not ones who believe in changing things "just because." The intention is always to make things better, less complex, and to adhere to the concept that we do (in life) what we say (in print). That goal may not be possible to achieve 100% of the time, but it's a good goal to keep in sight in order to keep our aim true.

I hope you look forward to this celebration of congregational democracy, and I look forward to seeing you on May 15!

Dan

Welcoming Children Workshop - June 5th

If we look around us on any given Sunday in our chapel, we see many "well-seasoned" faces, and that's a wonderful and beautiful thing. But I suspect we all know that if we truly want to be a "diverse" community, we want to welcome diversity in age as much as in any other category, such as race, gender, or national origin, and so on.

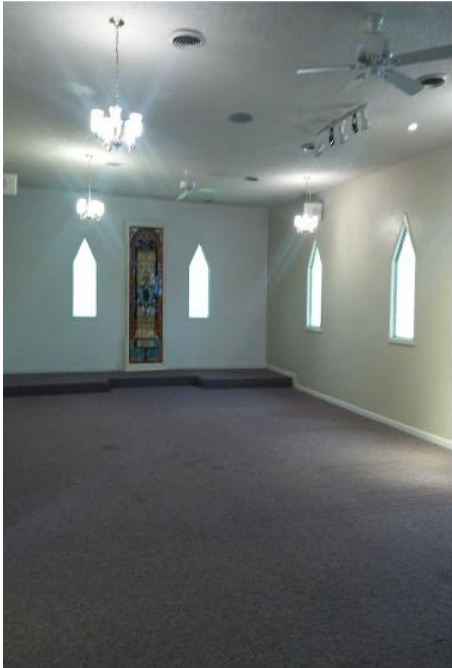
If you are like many of us who found an oasis of liberal religious thought in Red River Unitarian Universalist Church as adults, how much more exciting it would be for young families to find the same! Although it's difficult to come up with an accurate estimate of how many, we know intuitively that there must be many young parents in this area we call Texoma who ache to find a place for their whole family on Sunday – a place where their children can be themselves, learn about the Big Questions at their own level, learn what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, and where young parents feel supported and strengthened spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally at their stage of life. And—oh yeah—where everybody might have a little fun once in a while!

Our efforts to make a welcoming place for children have

been sincere and well-intentioned, but somewhat spotty. We have sought professional caregivers, regular babysitters, and even a director of religious education, all to no avail. We have had some very welcome help in the past several months from our in-house volunteers (thank you, Lanan, Robert, and Donna!), but we very much need to broaden the number of people who are willing to welcome the young ones as they come visit and—we hope—become a part of our congregation. It's all a part of becoming radically hospitable and welcoming to all!

After church on Sunday, June 5th, we will host our very first workshop on how to welcome young people. You may be surprised at how simple it really can be. You don't need a degree in Early Childhood Education, only a willingness to share time, play some games, share a snack, and talk--and especially listen--to our young friends. There's no mystery and no magic involved. The workshop will present a "plan of action" on what to do with young people for 60 minutes to keep them engaged, interested, and active as their parents take in the service in the chapel. Come and learn how!

Chapel Renovation Project ~ in pictures



Church Happenings

The 8th Annual Texoma Earth Day Festival, held April 23rd on a beautiful, warm, sunny spring day. While the low attendance was discouraging after all the effort, those who did show up seemed to enjoy the various activities.

The church booth this year was used to register voters as part of our grant from the UUA to Get Out The Vote. By mid afternoon to managed to have the number of people who registered outnumber the volunteers! (We got a total of 7 people registered. Unfortunately with the restrictive Texas Voter Laws, three of the young people who registered won't be allowed to vote because their Austin College address is not identical to their driver's license.) We got lots of positive comments about our clever banner!



Of the 55 volunteers who helped with the Festival, 22 came from our congregation. A huge thanks to:

Dan Althoff	Marla Loturco
Cass Brigham	Jim Murphyl
Ronda DeCaire	Faye Shadrick
David Dyer	Maura Shehan
Ellie Dyer	Lanan Shelton
Kelly Dyer	Robert Shelton
Carole Harner	Doug Strong
Marion Hill	Donna Toerper
Elbert Hill	Linda Tracy
Amy Hoffman-Shehan	Kat Walston
Tommi Homuth	

Booked For Lunch gathers on Thursday, May 12th at 1 PM in the Emerson room. Open to book lovers everywhere who always enjoy hearing what others are reading and sharing their own literary exploits.

Moveable Feast Summer Plans are indefinite while Feasters Marion and Elbert Hill are traveling. Updates and plans will be posted in the Wednesday eNews.

UU Jam will not meet in May. The group will return in June to Keep The Music Playing!

Treasurer's Report

In the month of March, we had income of \$1,687 from general operations. After operations expense of \$4,988 for the month, we had a net income from operations of (\$3,000).

In March we received a donation to cover new carpet. That carpet was purchased for the same amount as the donation. We spent \$60 for internet services leaving \$1,236 in the Wi-Fi fund.

For the year to date period, we had a net income of \$9,892 from operations. Those included restricted amounts of \$4,762. The total change in cash for the month was an increase of \$380. As of the end of March, we had total cash of \$67,031 and our debt totaled \$28,035. In March, we donated \$54 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

Board Bits (Times Two)

At their April 17th meeting, our Board of Trustees:

- Approved additional expenses from the renovation budget to finish work not included in original bid
- Reviewed proposed bylaw changes to present to the congregation at the Spring Meeting
- Reviewed reports required for the Spring Meeting
- Approved holding a "Welcoming Children Workshop" on June 5th and bringing in a consultant to help plan an approach for providing ongoing opportunities for visiting children
- Approved holding a CPR class to educate congregation on current approaches to providing immediate assistance if needed to be taught by Helen Schulze

and at their May 1st meeting, our Board:

- Agreed to phone all members to explain the need to have as many church members attend the meeting in order to be able to pass the bylaws (see details on page 5)
- Approved a proposed budget to present to the congregation at the Spring Meeting
- Agreed to discuss at the Spring Meeting ways to thwart coffee being spilled on the new carpet and the recommendation that the church install a water purification system and stop using bottled water
- Approved purchase of Red River Tote Bags

The Mighty Twenty-six

It was at last year's Fall Meeting that the congregation supported, by way of a straw vote, asking the Board of Trustees to explore ways that we might simplify our bylaws so they better reflect the congregation that we are today.

After several discussions at various board meetings and a town hall meeting, the board finalized a set of revisions which will be presented at the May 15 Spring Meeting. Most votes at Congregational meetings are a simple majority. Not so with bylaws. By intention bylaws should not be tinkered with on a regular basis nor at the whim of a few. This is why 2/3rds of the membership must cast a vote (in favor, in favor as amended, against, or abstaining).

For the upcoming meeting that translates to 26 members. If the meeting quorum – either in person or by proxy – is under 26 we will not be able to take action on the bylaws.

The proposed revisions to the bylaws are posted on the church bulletin boards for those who wish to look at them before the meeting.

Well Done, Tristen!

Tristen Cates graduates this month from Sherman High School and has been accepted - *with a four-year total scholarship* - to Swarthmore College's Class of 2020. Congratulations, Tristen! Swarthmore College accepted 12% of the young people who applied!

Fifth Sunday Potluck



May has 5 Sundays. This means on Sunday, May 29th we will have our "In 4 Lunch Potluck" after things. Plan on staying around! Breaking bread together is a splendid way to get to know people you see sitting across the chapel but never actually have an opportunity to talk to. Bring a dish to share - anything your heart desires! (That's what makes a 'potluck' live up to its name.)

Leadership Training

Leadership Schools offer a learning experience that can be transformational. Schools range from whole weeks to long weekends to online versions. Each school has its own culture and format, some offered by regions and some offered nationally.

Traditionally leadership schools have been an intensive, weeklong experience. Several members of Red River have attended previous schools. It is often difficult for people to take a week out of their lives to attend which is the main reason for the last few years no one from Red River has participated.

Starting next fall the leadership school experience, in our area, will be offered on four Saturdays between October and April. The cost to attend is \$120 with half of it paid by NTUUC. The church has scholarship funds available as well.

Each Saturday will be at a different local UU congregation (October 1 at Horizon UU, December 3 at Denton UU, February 4 at Oak Cliff UU, and April 1 at Dallas UU).

Leadership school graduates returned to their congregations with a deeper understanding of Congregational polity and a stronger commitment to liberal religion.

Feedback from those who attend leadership school is overwhelmingly positive. If you might be interested in participating in this alternative approach please speak with Marla Loturco, who is our representative with NTUUC.

Call for Children's Books

Our Little Free Library gets a lot of traffic. Books disappear each week - which, of course, is the whole reason for its existence. Some of the most popular books are books for children. If you are at a yard sale, or a second hand store won't you pick up some kid's books? The Salvation Army in Dallas sells them for 50¢ each, if you've ever at Parkland Hospital, pick some up.

Then, slip them inside our Little Free Library. The children in the neighborhood will be thrilled.

Don't forget the Spring Meeting on Sunday, May 15th.

Leaders

Board of Trustees

Dan Althoff, *president*
 Marla Loturco, *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: *various members*
 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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*Church email suffix: @rruu.org

We came, we worked!

Our all out assault on the church, held April 3rd, was a grand success. Eighteen of us showed up to clean, polish, move, sort, pitch, build and arrange. If a picture is worth a thousand words ...

The Church office - Before and After



The Hall Closet, outside the Emerson Room, Before and After



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 May 12th. Facilitator Carole Harner.

GREEN TEAM, is taking a well deserved sabbatical for a while, in order to recuperate from creating another wonderful Texoma Earth Day Festival. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle have only tentative plans for May. When plans finalize, details will be in the eNews. Facilitators: Elbert and Marion Hill.

UU JAM, an acoustic music circle for musicians, singers & music loving listeners usually meets the last Saturday of the month @ 3 pm, in the Chapel. However, the group is on Spring Break May. They return on June 25th. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher.