

In this issue

"A Welcoming Place for
Children" Workshop
do come!



Buy A Fan
Project



Let's Make Lunch
for the Habitat for Humanity
Volunteers



What Would Your
Red River Tagline say?



Notes from the May 15th
Spring Meeting

Morning Meditation - 9

Adult Forum - 10

Worship - 11:15

Conversations & Calories
12:15

[Church calendar](#)
for the next
30 days:

Red River Ramblings



June 2016
Volume 13
Issue 12

Four Sunday mornings to jumpstart your week.

Sunday, June 5, 2016

The Importance of Religious Education

Teresa Wright, *speaking*

Teresa Wright is the former director of religious education at Pathways UU Church in Hurst, Texas. She has extensive experience leading the religious education there for all ages, and she is particularly interested in and knowledgeable about the challenges of children's RE for smaller congregations such as ours. She will also present a workshop on children's RE following next week's service.

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, June 12, 2016

On The Cusp of Memory

Dr. Randy Prus, *speaking*

Randy Prus will share his poetry, including work from his recent collection, *On the Cusp of Memory*. He is a professor of English and Humanities at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where he also chairs the Department of English, Humanities, and Languages. As he writes:

*the word & the world
never truly touch,
yet
the distance brings love*

Today is Share the Plate Sunday when all cash donations will be contributed to the Texoma Earth Day Festival

Refreshments: H

Sunday, June 19, 2016

The Summer Solstice Starts Tomorrow

The Worship Team

We Unitarian Universalists have a history

of exploring world religions. It is good to see what others hold sacred - without passing judgement on others. So it is strange how disapproving we are when it comes to Pagan traditions. On Sunday we will delve into some history and rituals of this tradition, along with a short video homily by the Rev. Jennifer Ryu.

Refreshments: I-R

Sunday, June 26, 2016

Life Transitions and the Art of Learning

Carolyn Althoff Fridley, *speaking*

American philosopher John Dewey wrote, "Knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow." Experiences become opportunities when they are viewed not as isolated experiences frozen in time but as experiences that will be useful "as long as life and learning continue." This conversion from experience to learning happens through reflection, with an eye toward its future application. Today we explore the possibilities of connecting experiences of the past to deepen the meaning of today.

Carolyn Althoff Fridley, M.B.S. teaches composition in the department of English, Humanities, and Languages at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Her degrees are in Psychology and Counseling, and her research interest is in the psychology of learning. Carolyn is active in the American Association of University Professors, serving as Southeastern's chapter president.

Refreshments: S-Z

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ◆ Denison, TX

Dan's Dispatch



The congregational meeting we held last month was a wonderful celebration of self-governance. The Unitarian Universalist commitment to the “right of conscience and the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large” is so profound that it’s the fifth of our Seven UU Principles.

For me, congregational polity is so important that I might almost consider it “sacramental”—to borrow a word from my former faith tradition.

At every May meeting, we decide on numerous items of importance, such as the election of church officers, trustees, and the upcoming budget. I want to express my thanks to all who attended our meeting, in person or by proxy, and made self-governance possible.

I am especially thankful for the generous financial support that we all pledged towards our church operations for next fiscal year 2016-17—we received an increase in pledged support of approximately 21%! At a time when budgets are strained in so many areas, and retirees do not receive even a modest cost of living adjustment in their Social Security checks, such an outpouring is truly remarkable. It shows we have confidence in ourselves and in our future. I think we deserve to take some well-earned satisfaction in that!

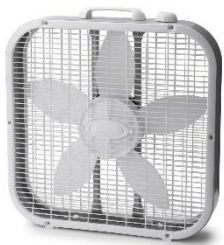
I am also very appreciative that the congregation voted in favor of simplifying our Bylaws. I believed personally we were burdened, rather than helped, by a document that required a lengthy list of committees (and committee members) to accomplish our mission. The Board now has the flexibility to appoint committees as needed, rather than as required by the Bylaws.

This flexibility is especially helpful in a smaller congregation such as ours.

My sincere congratulations and thanks to Marla Loturco (Vice-President) and Kelly Cofield-Dyer (Treasurer) on their election. Congratulations and thanks are due also to Elbert Hill (Nominating Committee) and Robert Shelton (Committee on Ministry). The Nominating Committee and Committee on Ministry stand independently of the Board of Trustees and serve as additional key sounding boards for the concerns of the congregation. They will begin serving officially in those capacities on July 1st.

It has been my honor and great privilege to serve as president for the past two years, and I hope I have contributed to the health of this congregation and to the cause of Unitarian Universalism in Texoma and north Texas. I was humbled and flattered that the Nominating Committee asked if I was willing to serve an additional term, but I felt unable to accept due to some impending additional responsibilities at Southeastern Oklahoma State University where I teach. You may be aware that we are facing a serious loss of faculty and administration in the next school year, and as Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate there, I expect to be heavily involved in the reorganization of the university. Your confidence in me has filled me with gratitude, and I did not want to leave the congregation headless—so to speak—at the end of our May meeting. That is why I accepted the honor of being nominated for president again, but also why I can hold the office only through the end of August. I will continue to do my best until then, when another is identified as a willing nominee for president. Again, my deepest thanks for allowing me to serve as president for these past two years.

Buy a Fan - *it's the cool thing to do.*



The 10th Annual United Way of Grayson County Fan Drive is June 10. Please join us in honoring Gil Alexander’s work as Social Justice Chair by donating a fan to the fan drive. We suggest an effective durable box fan at \$16.97 or any new fan that circulates well. The United Way

will distribute fans to seniors and disabled in Grayson, Fannin and Cooke Counties who cannot afford high electric bills. Most of the distribution is done through Meals on Wheels.

Sometimes our intentions get overrun by every day life and if you want a fan but haven’t purchased one, fear not! Just click [here](#) and a fan will be purchased (we’ll collect from you later) and added to this **fantastic** project.

A Welcoming Place for Children *Sunday, June 5 - worship and a special workshop after things*

Teresa Wright of Pathways UU Church in Hurst, Texas will present a workshop to everyone who is interested in learning how to create a religious education experience for children in small congregations such as ours. Her many years of experience in working with small numbers of children who attend occasionally at Pathways can provide us with a helpful model of greeting and engaging children when they visit. Teresa will share two sets of activities and lesson plans she has designed: one for younger children and another for older children.

Working with children in a UU setting doesn't have to be complicated. Although it certainly requires some degree of planning and preparation, she indicates there are only four principles involved:

- Everyone--adults and children alike--should have fun!
- Everyone should learn something
- There should be something physical for the kids to take away with them
- Everyone should feel welcome, included, and important.
- And though this last thing isn't a principle, snacks! Never underestimate the value and importance of snacks!

Whether or not you see yourself as a future volunteer for children's Religious Education, please stay to hear Teresa and support our important project of creating a welcoming place for children at Red River UU Church. We have something that can be found nowhere else in Texoma, something that some unknown number of young families may be aching to find--an openness to liberal religious ideas and a passion for social justice. Let's be ready to open our doors, our arms, and our hearts for them and their kids!

Why this is important

The Prime Directive (with apologies to Star Trek) of existence is a simple one: DO NOT VANISH! This dictate has kept families, businesses, organizations and even churches from becoming extinct. Most faith communities won't admit that their core mission is not to save souls, but to perpetuate their church into the future. Right now the Unitarian churches in England are on the brink of extinction. There are 173 Unitarian churches in Great Britain today, only 2 have more than 100 members. There were approximately 50,000 Unitarians around the time of the first World War - today that number is 3,600. (See details of what our Unitarian cousins in Great Britain are doing about it [here](#).)

The huge gap at Red River is our current inability to welcome children. It has not always been this way. The church database lists 133 children who've visited over our 17 years history. Parents visit with their kids, often, because they want their children to have some sense of a religious connection free of the angst they experienced in the church they grew up on. We thwart our prime directive each time we tell visiting families to check out Community UU in Plano or the Denton UU Fellowship. Our future or lack thereof is linked to those 133 children who are not here.

It is best that we spare ourselves knowing what the average age of our congregation is. Suffice to say it is north of fifty. Please linger on Sunday, June 5 for Teresa Wright's visit. Participation does not mean one has to volunteer. We're all in this together as a lay-led congregation and the more energy we can create towards creating a Welcoming Place For Children the better it will be for our church.

What Would You Write?

We've run out of tote bags and a new ones are soon to be ordered. The tag line for the last batch was *Not Just Another Pretty Faith*. It's time for a new one. Good taglines are no more than 6 words and do *not* include the name of the business.

Here are some from the UUA:

- *The Uncommon Denomination*
- *Nurture Your spirit. Help Heal our World*

From other UU churches

- *Come As You Are*
- *Where Spiritual Curiosity And Conscience Connect*
- *Grow Your Soul & Serve the World*
- *A Beacon for Progressive Values*
- *One Light, Many Windows*
- *Where Love and Wisdom Meet*

The order is on hold pending a new tagline. What would you write? Send your suggestions [here](#).

Spring Meeting Notes

The **2016 Spring Congregation Meeting** was held on May 15th with 28 members counted (present or by proxy). The minutes of the last meeting along with the various written reports were approved.

The proposed revisions to our bylaws were discussed and approved unanimously which brought a round of applause. The age of membership now is 13 and rather than having 11 standing committees we have three: Finance/Endowment; Membership and Worship. The board may now appoint committee as needed.

The proposed budget was reviewed and approved without any modifications.

The election of church leadership was done by acclamation, with Marla Loturco, VP; Kelly Cofield-Dyer, treasurer; Elbert Hill, Nominating; and Robert Shelton, Committee on Ministry. The position of president, however, remains vacant. Our current president explained his work at school will require more attention so he declined to run again (this was Dan's second round as church president). He did acquiesce in part by agreeing to stay on two additional months, leaving the office on August 31, 2016.

The congregation agreed that when the nominating committee announces the candidate for president, we will have a special meeting. We agreed to table discussion on the annual goals until that meeting.

A discussion regarding our need for children activities was held. We have funds to help entice people to lead activities for children. People indicated they were willing to help but dislike missing the service.

In the open discussion the congregation learned that we could get a filtration system for drinking water and stop using bottled water. The congregation approved the purchase. Also discussed was how to keep the new chapel carpet free of coffee stains by exploring using wide base travel mugs.

Small UU Church Conference

A conference focused on issues facing UU congregations of less than 75 members - like Red River - will be Saturday, June 11th from 10-4 at the Arlington UU Church. Registration opens at 10:00am with light breakfast and beverages. An ingathering service will be held at 11:00am followed by our keynote address. We'll break for lunch after the keynote. The afternoon will include three different breakout sessions: 1) Growing Membership; 2) Becoming a Welcoming Congregation and 3) Developing a Covenant of Right Relationships. Want to go? Details [here](#).

Things to do at Church

Booked For Lunch - an informal gathering of people who like to read (a lot). They talk about what they've been reading and what they want to read. It is a great way to learn about books you may enjoy reading. Book lovers plus their friends (that's everyone, you know) are warmly invited to the next meeting - Thursday, June 9th @ 1 pm in the Emerson Room.

UU JAM - our monthly acoustic music circle for musicians, singers & music loving listeners meets the last Saturday of the month @ 3 pm, in the Chapel. In June that's Sat. June 25th. The group takes turns performing and those who enjoy listening get to hear some fine music. Bring a snack to share.

Treasurer's Report

In the month of April, we had income of \$3,107 from general operations. After operations expense of \$8,717 for the month, we had a net income from operations of (\$5,610).

In April, we received a grant of \$500 for the Earth Day Celebration. We paid that amount to the Earth Day Committee. We spent \$74 from our Wi-Fi fund leaving us with a balance of \$1,236.

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 \$5,609.

As of the end of April, we had total cash of \$60,258 and our debt totaled \$26,945.

In April, we donated \$100 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

Bring Back Some H₂O



If you venture away at some point over the summer, remember to gather a small container of water for our annual Water Communion Service which will be in September.

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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How to reach us:

Email: info[+ suffix]*

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: www.rruu.org

E-News: announce[+suffix]*

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalist-
Church

*Church email suffix: @rruu.org

Let's Feed the Troops!

Save the date: Saturday, July 2, 2016 because we've been invited to provide lunch to the volunteers currently building a home at 420 South Rusk Street in Sherman.

There will be 15-25 volunteers who start at 7 am so by 11 they're *gonna be starvin'*! If you want to be part of the team making lunch point your cursor [here](#) and send the newsletter an email. As the date approaches everyone who has volunteered can work out the menu. A nice way for us to support the efforts of Habitat for Humanity.

The invitation indicated, "Just about anything would be appreciated, sandwiches, hot dogs, spaghetti, stew, your choice." What would 20 hungry volunteer who have been working in the July heat want for lunch?



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 June 9th. 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 June. 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. In June they gather on June 25th. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher.