

# In This Issue



Fall

Congregational Meeting Report



Our Annual Goals - How Are We Doing?



Our Behavioral Covenant Reaffirmed



New Member Ceremony Nov 6



Tx UU Justice Ministry Update



Thanksgiving Dinner Moveable Feast

# Red River Ramblings



November 2016  
Volume 14  
Issue 5

## Love Beyond Belief

**Sunday, November 6, 2016**

*Remember to turn your clocks back Sat. Nite*

**Two New Habitat For Humanity Homes - Just Around the Corner**

Laurie Mealy, *speaking*

During our fall meeting people wished there were more opportunities for us to reach out in our community. On Saturday, Nov. 5 at 10 AM, the walls are being raised at the newest HfH home at 321 West Walker Street. That's just 528 feet from the church! Then, on Sunday morning, Laurie Mealy, Executive Director of Grayson HfH will be in our pulpit to tell us about a brand new HfH project, literally in our own back yard and to give us some history of this amazing organization.

Refreshments: A Special Reception  
*No one needs to bring refreshments*



The New to UU discussion is today. If you are intrigued, curious, or even confused and want to know more about Unitarian Universalism and our lay-led church, join the conversation. We meet in the chapel from 12:45-1:30.

**Sunday, November 13, 2016**

**Gratitude and the Pursuit of Happiness**

Dr. Elbert Hill, *speaking*

Dr. Hill, a charter member of Red River UU, says this about "sermon": *Although gratitude might sound like a Thanksgiving talk, this is not that. Gratitude is also one of the most popular topics at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, but this is not another AA speech as such. I plan to*

*discuss things I've been grateful for during my 77 years, some of which may suggest happenings in listeners' own lives, some that may be surprising.*

Refreshments H

**Sunday, November 20, 2016**

**Humanism**

the Rev. Dr. Don Fielding, *speaking*

A reflection about how Don found Humanism. This is leading toward a definition of Humanism and a discussion about the relationship between Humanism and Unitarian Universalism. Thanksgiving is our most Humanist holiday and this is a most appropriate time of the year to discuss Humanism..

Refreshments I-R

**Sunday, November 27, 2016**

**Happy Lessons of Loss and Grieving**

the Rev. Annie Foerster, *speaking*

It might seem strange to see the words 'happy' and 'grieving' in the same sentence. But I've learned not to be surprised at the variety and complexity of the human spirit. Follow the bouncing ball--loss>pain>grief>healing. Is that a light I see at the end of the tunnel?

Refreshments S-Z

**Morning Meditation - 9**

**Adult Forum - 10**

**Worship - 11:15**

**Conversations & Calories - 12:15**

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

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

## Hello from Helen



Winston Churchill is quoted as saying "Democracy is the worst kind of government, except for all the others." By the time you read this, our congregational meeting will have passed, and we will be closer to the end of the political wrangling of our presidential election.

The rhetoric in this campaign seems especially ugly and divisive to me-I am afraid that I have chosen to avoid some media because of it. However, I am very firm in my desire to vote. Some of you may know that I am a Canadian by birth; I became a citizen of the US in 2009, because I wanted the privilege of voting. I am pleased that we, as a congregation, are instrumental in helping more people sign up to attain their voting rights.

I used to have a magnetized bumper sticker that kept being stolen from my car. It read "God bless the whole world-no exceptions!" I assumed that it was being taken because other people wanted it. However, after a few Walmart

parking lot conversations, I was made aware that many people took offense at it. How dare I bless anyone other than Americans? I was asked, more than once.....How dare I, indeed.

I became a UU because of my delight in the principles that we avow-especially the first one. We stand for the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Even me. Even the irate guy at Walmart. It's an important concept, and worth celebrating even more while we face the media barrage that seems to highlight the worst we have to offer. When I feel discouraged about this election, I reflect that most of the people I meet want the same things I do-a roof over my head, respect for myself and others, a way to make a living, a safe place to be. I am lucky to live in a country that lets me be part of the choice in how I am governed. I hope to help this country be a place where we can learn to respect one another in all our diversity.

I hope you voted. I did!

## A Special Gathering

*On Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup> we will have a New Member Induction Ceremony for Megan Hutchinson and Maura Shehan (along with any others who wish to join the church).*

*Eighteen years ago, Maura became the first baby born into the congregation, and her parents are hosting this special reception to celebrate her birthday and to honor her fellow new members.*



Note: Those who normally bring refreshments on the first Sunday (A-G) do not need to bring anything.

## Our Behavioral Covenant reaffirmed!

We, the members of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, affirm that in our interactions with each other:

- 🌍 We will communicate with respect and genuine positive regard
  - By recognizing positive characteristics in others
  - By giving and receiving both information and opinion with respect
  - By separating our feelings about people from our opinions of their behavior
  - By considering others' perspectives
  - By respecting each other's privacy and need for confidentiality
- 🌍 We will communicate with care to preserve our sense of community and belonging
  - By supporting the congregation, its mission and vision
  - By looking for common ground
  - By participating actively while reserving the right to pass
  - By expecting and accepting unfinished business
- 🌍 We will communicate with autonomy to preserve our personal and collective integrity
  - By speaking from our own experiences
  - By practicing forgiveness and finding our own absolution
  - By recognizing when to let go
  - By maintaining clear boundaries and monitoring our own status within this covenant

Further, we resolve that in our interactions with one another there is no room for assumptions, judgments, accusations, side conversation or triangulated communication.

## Books and Yoga



Do you want to hear about new authors and interesting books? Our next **book club meeting** is on Friday, November 11, at 1pm at church. Open to book lovers everywhere. A snack is provided. The book club meeting is followed by . . .

**Easy Yoga** starts about 2:15. You don't have to get

down on the floor, so everyone can do it. If you are planning to do yoga, please wear comfortable clothing that does not restrict your movements.

Come for just the book club or just yoga or both. Everyone is welcome.

Facilitated by Carole Harner,  
Yoga Led by Wanda Holmes,  
Refreshments by Carolyn Cameron

## Thinking of Belonging?



Our next **New Member Ceremony** will be Sunday, Nov 6<sup>th</sup> during the morning assembly.

If you've flirted with the notion of joining the congregation, you may wish to contact [Marion Hill](#) who will

be delighted to assist you in becoming a member.

Once you've made the decision, the process is a simple one - you sign the membership book, receive your New Member Packet of information and a warm welcome. Some like to sign the book during the The New Member Ceremony, other prefer doing it at a different time.

The 44 members of Red River look forward to having you join us.

## Great Day of Service Nov 5<sup>th</sup>

This year we will again welcome Austin College students who will be with us Sat. morning, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> from 9-noon. Projects include getting the flower beds 'put down' for winter, attacking the basement rooms; settling the RE rooms and maybe super gluing the gliders on the bottoms of the chapel chairs. Projects for church folks: cleaning the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor hall closet, washing windows, organizing the kitchen, and the bookcases in the Emerson Room. Just show up - you'll be loved!!



## Checkup on Our Progress

It has been three months since we approved the four goals for this church year (listed below). Time for our first check in, with ourselves, to see how we're all doing :

1. **Children:** Establish on-call activities for children through our "Welcome Children" program so each week children visit there is something planned for them

**Done!** *We now have both Ellie and Angie who are available each week, prepared with lesson plans and have worked with youngsters when they are at church.*

2. **Membership Assimilation:** Establish a program to track newcomers from their first visit to becoming members with an intentional 'Visitor Assimilation/Newcomer Follow-up' Project

**In Progress** *The membership team has met and have worked out ways to enhance our follow up with visitors and newcomers*

3. **Caring for Each Other:** Create an alert system by which people can share news when someone is in need - illness, emergency, tragedy - so the entire congregation can reach out (without calling it a committee or team etc. since that has not been successful). This may include educating ourselves to keep in mind that the church is a resource in times of need

**No Action Yet** *This goal needs someone to shepherd this to completion. Will you do it?*

4. **Sharing our Good News:** Schedule three "Bring-A-Friend-To-Church" Sundays where the entire congregation strives to identify people they know who would appreciate learning about us and designing worship experiences geared at introducing ourselves to our friends

**In Progress** *The Worship Team has scheduled the dates and is working on ways to help us find ways to invite people we know to church without sounding like a Baptist*

If you have ideas to help achieve the three goals, don't hesitate, speak up! Email your thoughts to suggestions (at) rruu.org.

## Treasurer's Report

In the month of September, we had income of \$2,226 from general operations.

After operations expenses of \$2,424, we had a net loss of (\$198.)

As of 9/30, we had \$2,197 available in checking.

Monies of \$4,000 transferred from savings on 7/22 were appropriated to finance a new air conditioner for the second floor. That bill was paid on 9/23: \$3,527.

In September, we donated \$102 for the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

Expenses include, building insurance of \$210, UUA donation of \$118.25, Water and waste bill of \$206.75, electric bill of \$190 and Cable One of \$67.50.

Kelly Cofield, Treasurer

## Board Bits from the Oct. meeting

At their October 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, the board

- Agreed to provide a stipend of \$40 to Ellie Dyer and Angie Cates when children are present and because they need to be present every week, a stipend of \$20 when no children are there
- Accepted a donation of a side-by-side refrigerator; dish washer, microwave oven and a kitchen sink from Jim Holmes who is remodeling his kitchen
- discussed possible unfunded needs which could be covered by a grant from NTUUC
- considered removing the small wall at the top of the stairs leading to the Barton Parlor in order to shift the chair lift closer to the outside wall, thus freeing up room on the stairs - decided cost overran the small gain of stair space
- Finalized agenda for the Fall Congregational Meeting and again approved online voting for those unable to attend
- Decided to create a Google Drive account where each board member can upload church documents as an easy way to collect material that will ultimately be placed in the various year Board books
- Set the November meeting: Sun. Nov 20 1 pm

## Fall Congregational Meeting

For all who fear that our biannual meetings are laborious and fear feeling trapped if you stay, you will be pleased to learn that once again our meeting was brief. The Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> meeting lasted 41 minutes. During that time, the congregation

- Approved the minutes from the July 31 special congregational meeting
- Accepted reports from various church committees
- Watched a short, well done video from NTUUC that explained the history, mission and hopes for the organization
- Discussed and reaffirmed our current Congregational Behavioral Covenant (see document on page 2) without amending it
- During the Open Discussion comments: 1) Some lamented that our church isn't very involved in social justice issues (locally or nationally); 2) Comments that Sunday refreshments are really weak on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday because we have few "I - R"; 3) Might we have a MeetUp group to reach out to newcomers? 4) Bike project needs one last work day to finish up getting ten bikes ready to give away
- Announcements included 1) NTUUC has scholarships to assist if people want to attend UU workshops or conferences 2) TxUUJM (Tx UU Justice Ministry) annual Texas Legislative Action Day will be next February in Austin

Thanks to all who participated, in person or by proxy.

Thanksgiving Day 2:00 pm  
**moveable feast**  
 An All-Church Potluck

Thanksgiving dinner is a meal no one likes to eat alone. Perhaps growing up your family found a place at the table for a neighbor or friend. While many Feasters already have plans, this Thanksgiving Day Feast is open to everyone in the congregation who would like to come.

The Feast will be Thursday, Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> at Doug Strong's home in Sherman, gathering at 2 pm.

It is a potluck affair and to help plan, if you wish to come, you need to contact [Marion Hill](#) and let her know what your food contribution will be.



## Leaders

### Board of Trustees

Helen Schulze, *president*  
 Marla Loturco, *vice president*  
 Kelly Cofield, *Treasurer*  
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*  
 Linda Tracy, *Trustee*  
 Dan Althoff, *Past President*

### Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,  
 Robert Shelton

### Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *various members*  
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*  
 Communications: *Doug*  
 Finance:  
 Membership: *Marion*  
 Nominations: *Elbert, Kat, Lanan*  
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*  
 RE Team: *Dan, Tommi*  
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*  
 Social Action:  
 Worship: *Dan, Doug, Marla, Robert*

## Contact Us

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Facebook: [RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch)

Smart Phone App:

<https://redriveruuchurch.appsm.com>

or scan this QR code:



## TX UU Justice Ministry Update

Tucked away in the recesses of Texoma, we often don't know how our Unitarian Universalist values are being put to work.

The Texas UU Justice Ministry (TxUUJM) is a powerful voice and our congregation is a member of this statewide social justice organization. (Unfortunately there is currently no state network in Oklahoma.)

Twenty-one states have UU state action networks. All are organizing for justice.

Here's an overview of some of the work our UU state action network is doing:

- One of the Justice Ministry's top 3 issues has been *Calling for an End to Family Detention*, the inhumane detention of Central American mothers and children seeking asylum in the U.S. The Justice Ministry working with the UU Service Committee feel now is an opportune time for religious communities to make the full weight of its moral authority known by urging an end to family detention. Add your voice [here](#).
- Working with NARAL (*National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League*) we can urge Texans not to enact rules that would require burial or cremation of fetal tissue following an abortion or miscarriage. This is clear that these new rules have nothing to do with public health and are part of the state's backlash against the Supreme Court's decision striking down the Texas highly restrictive abortion laws. You can comment [here](#).
- The *Religious Institute* and *Just Texas* invite us to attend a training to help faith leaders learn about reproductive access and justice. It is Nov 16-17 in Austin. More info [here](#).
- Health Justice Sabbath, Nov 18-20, sponsored by *Texas Impact* is a way to urge the Legislature to support a solution to the looming health care crisis. Details [here](#).
- Last month TxUUJM working with other action networks helped Texas dismiss its appeal of a suit against the federal government and private parties who resettle Syrian refugees. Details [here](#).

During the Fall congregational meeting people express a wish that we could be more involved in working with social change. The Tx UU Justice Ministry is striving to "*bend Texas towards justice*."

One way any of us might become more involved is to join other UUs from across Texas for the 2017 Justice Ministry Lobby Day at the Texas Legislature. Busses leave from Dallas early in the morning and you don't get home until late evening, but you spend the day speaking with our elected officials, bringing them a message of justice and equality, something they often don't hear. The Justice ministry's web site is [here](#).