



January 2017
Volume 14
Issue 7

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Unitarian
Universalist
Church
Denison, TX

Red River Ramblings

Sunday, January 1, 2017

A Ritual of Letting Go, Cleansing, Intention, and Hope

Marla Loturco, leading

On the Sunday closest to January 1st, many Unitarian Universalist congregations find creative ways to celebrate or mark the beginning of a new year. Themes can include reflection upon the year that has just passed; letting go of regrets and pain; hope for the promise of the year to come; resolutions to change; the passage of time; hope; expectation; and dreaming of a creating a better tomorrow.

Our Assembly today will be all about letting go, metaphoric cleansing and quenching of thirst, setting of intentions, self-anointing, healing, new beginnings and possibilities. It is a service of words, music and the ritual of the Burning Bowl. At each stop around the circle of flame, water, oil and light, we becomes our own healer, priest/priestess, minister, teacher. It is for each a circle of release, cleansing, intention and hope to walk.

Refreshments: A-G, except for C.

Sunday, January 8, 2017

The Five Reasons You Shouldn't Be a Unitarian Universalist

Rev. Daniel Kanter, speaking (video message)

Of his remarks, Dr. Kanter writes, *"The sermon title should be enough of a tease. Not going to spill it here."*

Refreshments: H

Sunday, January 15, 2017

August 29, 1963

The Worship Team, leading

Eighty-seven years today Michael and Alberta King's son was born. They named him Michael. Five years later Michael King Sr., inspired by Martin Luther, decided to change his name to Martin Luther King. He also changed his son's name as well.

On August 29, 1963 during the March for Jobs and Freedom, Martin Luther King, Jr. agreed to be the last speaker of the day only because the other 9 speakers refused the time slot. He began his

speech but during a pause, Mahalia Jackson shouted out from behind the podium, "Tell them about the dream, Martin!" referring to remarks he had made two months prior in Detroit. He departed from his prepared remarks and delivered his legendary speech.

Today we will remember that speech in a novel way and look at the life and ministry Dr. King gave us.

Sunday, January 22, 2017
FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY

The Eighth Principle

Rev. Annie Foester, *speaking*

Without a creed, we are often at a loss to tell other people what our faith is about. *Building Your Own Theology* sounds to them like 'making it up as you go along.' It is not surprising that we often fall back on our seven principles. But do they say everything you want to express? Do they cover your faith, your beliefs, your values? Do you even know how we got them? If you could add to them, what would you say? What would you suggest we offer as an eight principle?

Sunday, January 29, 2017

Fling Off Your Bushel: Let Reproductive Justice Light Shine

Rev. Chuck Freeman, *speaking*

Vital rays of light leading to the Roe vs Wade decision were sparked at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas where in the late 60's, the Women's Alliance began to study the abortion issue, eventually signing the amicus brief of the landmark case for women's autonomy that beamed a nationwide beacon of light!

Texas and Oklahoma now have among the most restrictive abortion laws in the nation. We UU's have rested on our laurels in a dormant slumber for too long. We have overslept the alarm. It's time to wake up, stand up and let our lights shine for the sacred trust between a Woman, her Creator, and her Doctor.

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

Friendship Sunday

Let's start with some statistics:

- 70 to 90% of people who join a congregation have a friend or relative already in the congregation
- 75 to 90% visit because someone invited them
- We know that the most frequent way in which people hear about us is through word of mouth

However, the average Unitarian Universalist only invites a person to church once every 26 years!

So what's up with that? Why are we so hesitant to invite people to our congregation?

When we invite people to Friendship Sunday, the sign we're displaying should not be, "We need more members. Please help." It should be, "We have a beautiful congregation and a beautiful building and you haven't seen it."

We are inviting people because we want them to meet the people and see the place that has brought us so much joy and meaning. And we want them to see it because they as well have brought so much joy and meaning to our lives.

The Big Pitch

So what makes your invitation so special?

- You are only asking the person to experience something that is important to you, not to convert to Unitarian Universalism
- You are honoring the person by inviting them to meet others who are also important in your life
- You are being very clear and honest about the agenda and content of the day
- You are making a straight forward invitation without bargaining, pleading or coercing. The other has the right and opportunity to say "no" without consequences or diminishing of the relationship

Sunday, January 22nd

is our first Friendship Sunday. The Rev. Annie Foerster is our guest speaker. L.D. Clark is singing his song *Rapture* and hopefully many of us will take the plunge and invite a friend to visit. If you can remem-

ber your first visit to a UU congregation, use the excitement you felt from the experience to guide you as you extend your invitation. If you get stuck, here's some hints about how to reply to questions:

If they ask...	You say...
What happens during the service?	We listen to music and sing hymns. There are opening and closing words read by the Worship Associate. Our guest speaker also gives about a 20 minute reflection.
Do I have to sing?	Only if you want to.
Do people pray?	We often have moments of silence and reflection. These are private times when you can be alone with your thoughts.
Will I be asked to introduce myself?	You won't be singled out in any way. Hopefully, people will come over to us to say "hi" because they'll want to meet you.
I won't have to sign anything, will I?	Just a blank check. I'M KIDDING! You don't have to sign or do anything you don't want to.
Can my children come and what will they experience?	Yes, and they have the choice of joining you in the service or going to children's Religious Education classes.
So why is this Unitarian Universalism faith so important to you? Or Why is this congregation so important to you?	Insert your own answer here and be ready to respond. If you stutter and stammer and have to think about it for too long, your friend will begin to wonder if this is a place worth visiting.

Remember: The short term goal of Friendship Sunday is not to increase the membership. Rather, it is to enable our friends, neighbors and loved ones to experience the place that has brought us such joy and meaning. The immediate purpose is to spread the good news about Unitarian Universalism.

Hello from Helen



Greetings. The Old Year is coming to a close, giving us a taste of the deep freeze of winter followed by mild days that seem wrong for the holiday season, somehow. I had given myself a vacation from following national 'news' and find I have no inclination to resume the

habit. The election posturing was hard on many of us.

I don't have much of a message to share with you on the end of 2016. I am glad to be a part of this small group that shares so many of my values, and am grateful for the safe haven of this fellowship that is committed to what Linda likes to call "radical love."

May you find peace with your loved ones this season, and have time to meditate on the things you cherish. Give us the strength to be the change we wish to see in our world.

Looking forward to 2017!

See you there, Helen.

From Books to Yoga

Do you want to hear about new authors and interesting books? Our next book club meeting is on Friday, January 13, at 1pm at church. Open to book lovers everywhere. A snack is provided. The book club meeting is followed by Easy Yoga that starts about 2:15. You don't have to get down on the floor, so everyone can do it.

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

Facilitated by Carole Harner, Yoga Led by Wanda Holmes.

The Giving Tree Results

The church received an abundance of needed items thanks for the many people who participated in the giving tree. We received needed cleaning supplies, coffee, creamer and sugar, tissues and toilet paper, gardening supplies, stamps, envelopes, paper, toner

and even two new music stands. All in all nearly \$600 worth of needed supplies appeared under the Christmas tree in the chapel. Many thanks to all who were able to participate!

Treasurer's Report

In the month of November, we had income of \$2,750 from general operations. After operations expenses of \$3,088, we had a net loss of (\$338). As of 11/30, we had \$2,573 available in checking. In November, we donated \$228 from 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 \$182, electric bill \$151, gas bill \$63 and internet bill of \$67.50.

Kelly Cofield, treasurer

Congratulations, Carole!



In late December, NTUUC (North Texas UU Congregations) notified the church that Carole Harner will be recognized for her volunteer efforts on behalf of Unitarian Universalism. She will receive the

2017 Marty Robinson Volunteer Award on Saturday, January 28th during the Annual Awards Luncheon at the Oak Cliff UU Church in Dallas.

NTUUC established a series of awards eight years ago to recognize service by ministers, lay staff members, and volunteers.

Carole's involvement at church includes serving on the Board of Trustees as Treasurer; being a worship associate, an usher, operating the AV system and serving as the volunteer coordinator for the Texoma Earth Day Festival.

Our congregation is the only church in NTUUC to receive the Marty Robinson Volunteer Award every year since the award was created. Previous award-ees are: Amy Hoffman-Shehan, Marla Loturco, Bruce Cameron, Carolyn Cameron, Marion Hill, Elbert Hill, and Dan Althoff.

If you wish to attend the luncheon, the church has ten complimentary tickets available from Marla Loturco, our representative on the NTUUC Board.

Calling UU Women



The 2017 UU Woman's Conference will be February 10-12 in Dallas. Women and Teens 13 and older, join us for an inspiring weekend. Speakers, music, worship, workshops, vendors,

fellowship and fun! The location is the Magnolia Hotel Dallas Park Cities in Dallas.

One of the 12 workshops *The Spirituality of Laughter* will be presented by our own Marla Loturco.

Early Registration is \$190 but hurry because it ends January 1, 2017. After that the cost is \$225. The final deadline to register is January 28th.

Get all the details and register [here](#).

Visit Alaska with UUs



Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, **Whale Coast Alaska 2017** is for you! Four Alaska UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual pro-

gram next summer! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Seward, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, seals, and otters. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise ships – our program is the best way to visit Alaska! Programs led by Dave Frey, member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and Alaska travel expert. Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime before our tours sell out! Visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whale-coastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

Building Security Update

A reminder that the Board of Trustees agreed to enhance our building security by initiating the following procedures:

- The back door now has a sign encouraging visitors to use the front doors. The back door is now locked at 11:10 am.
- The front doors is locked at 11:15 am. There is a bell on the front door that, when pressed, flashes a light on the AV desk. Should you arrive late, press the bell and wait. Someone will come and welcome you.



Harmony House Concert



Tim Grimm & Family Band will present a concert at Harmony House on Sunday, January 15th from 4-6 pm. Tim grew up in the woods of Southern Indiana. His songs are full of the rural rumblings that have shaped his life. Rich with descriptive details and sung

with warmth and intimacy, his songs recognize the inextinguishable national romance with the idea of the family farm and the vanishing landscape of rural America. Ticket information and reservations available [here](#).

Board Bits

The December Board of Trustees meeting was held on Sunday, December 11th. During the meeting the board

- Approved the consent agenda after reviewing the financial report and various to-do assignments.
- Agreed to obtain a lock box to be placed on the grounds so someone needing access without a key can call a contact number to gain access to the building
- Set the next board meeting at January 8, 2017 @ 1 pm in the F. Church Library
- Agreed to send those mid-year pledge statements to all who made an ongoing financial commitment to the church
- Agreed to create a registration card for children in the Sunday School
- Approved creating a Giving Tree to give people an opportunity to purchase items for the church which are not within the general budget.

***Friendship Sunday is Jan. 22nd.
Who will you bring?***

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

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

A Letter from Rev. Peter Morales



I believe we are entering dangerous times," writes UUA President Peter Morales in a letter to Unitarian Universalist ministers posted on the Unitarian Universalist Association website today.

I expect that the new administration will unleash human rights abuses aimed at migrants and Muslims shortly after it takes office. In the longer term, other marginalized groups (women, the poor, people of color, transgender people, etc.) will be in danger. We are already seeing an increase in violent acts by people who see the election as validation of their hate.

Among the dangers we face is the temptation to "normalize" the situation. I pray that the incoming administration will be more humane than its rhetoric and many supporters. I see no evidence that we are in a normal

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face is the temptation to "normalize" the incoming administration will be more humane than its rhetoric and many supporters. I see no evidence that is irresponsible folly to act as though transition between administrations.

We must prepare to *provide sanctuary* and *resist*.

First, we must provide sanctuary in the broadest and richest sense of the term. We begin with offering safe places for reflection and healing for our congregants and for those coming to seek spiritual community. But these times demand more. We must provide sanctuary to those most vulnerable. In particular, migrants (primarily from Mexico and Central America) may well face mass deportation. In addition, Muslims have been targeted.

Second, we must prepare to resist human rights violations in active ways. We must make it much harder to deport, register, discriminate and despoil.

Morales goes on to describe ways the UUA and its partner organizations are shifting toward "playing defense" in its work for justice and compassion. "We will have to respond quickly to acts of the government. We will have to react rather than act. We will need to be agile and fast." [Read the whole letter.](#)

Rev. Peter Morales,
 President,
 Unitarian Universalist Association



Keep in the know – download the church smart phone app here: <https://redriveruuchurch.appsme.com> or scan the QR code:

