



Annual Appreciation Dinner

Feb 23



Small  
Congregations  
Conference III



Two Projects:  
Welcoming Congregation and  
Reproductive Justice



Church App  
now available at  
Google Play and  
the Apps Store



# Red River Ramblings

Sunday, February 5, 2017

## When You're a Jet!

Dr. William Lloyd Fridley, *speaking*

Sketches of West Side Story, Marty McFly, Richard Feynman, and Christopher Hitchens. What do they have in common? When you're a jet you can do it your way. Shake it up, let it loose, reconstruct, rearrange. They have the style, the swing and the sway—let's dance, let's move, let's play!

William Lloyd Fridley, Ph.D. is a professor of Education at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. William is active in the faculty senate and the American Association of University Professors.

12:45-1:30 PM - New to UU Gathering



On the first Sunday we invite newcomers, visitors and anyone else who would like to gather to learn a bit more about our church and the liberal religious tradition in which we find strength, comfort and opportunities to serve the world. Grab a snack and return to the chapel for a lively Q & A about Red River.

Sunday, February 12, 2017

## Love and Social Justice

A Musical Program with Tom Neilson

Tom Neilson is a story teller and an award winning folk singer. His presentation on Feb 12 will be a song and story account of his experiences with love and social justice beginning in the 60s and continuing to the present. Critics write of Tom that he "brings together some of the finest components of poignancy and comedy." "Tom does a great job of reminding people of what is really important, and the power of folk music to say it." (Continued on page 5)

Meditation - 9 am ♦ Adult Forum - 10 am ♦ Assembly - 11:15 ♦ Fellowship - 12:15

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

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



Sunday, February 19, 2017

## Testifying With Minds on Fire

Credo Sunday

New Member Ceremony

We UUs testify with our minds on fire. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it in his Harvard Divinity School Address in 1838, "The true preacher can be known by this: that he [or she] deals out to the people their life - life passed through the fire of thought."

Five members of Red River will offer us their credo on Sunday. Credo literally means, "I give my heart and loyalty to ..." What would your credo include? Come share the morning with Ronda Decaire, David Dyer, Joe Jordan, Donna Toerper and Linda Tracy as they give their credos.

Sunday, February 26, 2017

## Born to Land, Environment, & Spirituality

Dr. Virginia Parrish

I didn't become an advocate for the environment, I was born to it. Born to the land, sixteen acres nestled deep in the elbow where Tiger Creek empties into the Cimarron River, the river of my soul. In addition, I was born of blue collars, diversity, hard work, agriculture, refineries, unions, and oil. A contradiction, you say? Well, bridging the two were studies, spirituality, and a dash of science. Another contradiction? Not really. Settled back now and let me tell you a bit about my journey. (Continued on page 5)

# Hello from Helen



Greetings to you all in this new year.

I want to share the adventure I had on January 21<sup>st</sup>. One of my close friends invited me to participate in a 'Women's March' in Denton Texas, in support of equal rights, reproductive rights ... you know the list very well.

I felt glad to be involved with something to counteract the sadness I felt at the rhetoric coming out of our current White House. Well, who knew? Almost 3,000 folks of all ages, colors and persuasions showed up with colorful signs and apparel to stand together around the courthouse in Denton. I recognized some UU's from other congregations because of their sign proclaiming 'On the Side of Love.' It was a good place

to be. After we were done, we looked at the newspaper reports and saw just how many of us felt compelled to be on the streets that afternoon. It was a wonderful moment; I hope it will not end there.

I have written letters to our elected representatives in the past, but have never been involved in an event like this one. It really felt like the next right thing to do. I encourage all of you to think about what we can do to demonstrate that we stand for the values we believe in...this gathering was loud but peaceful. I was reminded that my favorite prayer (the Serenity Prayer) has a line—courage to change the things I can- in it. I can march. I can write letters/phone my senators and let them know that I expect them to vote for all their constituents.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine....lets put our lights together!

Helen.



It began a few years ago when Red River created a Saturday workshop called "Wide Awake Worship." It was a glowing success, to the point that the folks from Pathways went home so revved up about attending they vowed to plan one for the next year. Their workshop focused on Religious Education and gave the idea a name: Small Congregations Conference. The gang from Arlington carried the torch and organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> conference last year. There didn't seem to be an outpouring of enthusiasm to host this year's event, so those attended last year agreed Red River would keep the energy flowing.

The Small Congregations Conference III is March 11<sup>th</sup> and promises to be a day to learn, network, relax and enjoy. Four separate conversations will happen, each focusing on a separate topic:

- Growing Small Congregations
- Stewardship

- Effective Small Church Social Media
- Creating Religious Space

The planning committee is formulating the details of who will lead each conversations along with the logistics. In the day's plans will also include a Lunch With A Purpose, featuring energizing, singing and feasting.

## Morning

Prior to 9 am - Continental breakfast

9 - 9:15 - Ingathering in the Chapel

9:30 - 11 am - The morning conversations

## Mid Day

11:15 - 12:45 - lunch with a purpose

## Afternoon

1 - 2:30 - The afternoon conversations

2:45 - 3 - A parting thought

Event Planning is a lot of fun because it frees your imagination so you can be creative and engaging. If you want to help with this adventure, the planning committee would welcome you with open arms. Speak with Robert, Marla, Doug or Dan for details. Better yet come to our next meeting Thursday, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:30 - we meet in the F. Church Library.

# We UUs Covenant to Affirm and Promote...

There are two specific and very intentional ways that our congregation can let a light shine on our first principle to affirm and promote *"the inherent worth and dignity of every person"*. Both paths involve us to study, learn, explore and work but the results will make us a powerful voice that our church is a place where we can spark a change in the religious conversations about two issues that are becoming a focal point of President Trump's agenda for America.

One issue: Reproductive Justice which demands respect for individual conscience and religious freedom for a woman's personal decisions regarding the complexities of reproductive choices, including abortion.

The other issue: LGBTQ issues, including gender identity, discrimination in employment, housing, even who one can love. The growing number of reports of violence against LGBTQ people is increasing. As one man said after beating a 75 year old man in Florida, "My president says we can hate faggots."

We can help by assuring our church is known as a safe place for LGBTQ people and where women struggling with the decisions regarding reproductive justice can come and be welcomed..

There are two ways we can intentionally work to reach out to Affirm and Promote. We can:

## 1. Become a Reproductive Justice Congregation.



Too often, churches and congregations - even progressive ones - perpetuate a conspiracy of silence around reproductive health issues, especially abortion. This silence can make women reluctant to share their experiences or

reach out for support, for fear of being judged or condemned.

The Reproductive Justice Congregation initiative is a first step in bringing these issues out of the shadows. By meeting a few simple criteria, the organization *Just Texas* will certify that our congregation is a *Reproductive Justice Congregation*, which will have two important effects:

- When visitors see the designation, it clearly communicates that Red River is a safe and welcoming space for people to discuss the complexities of reproductive choices, free from judgment
- As more and more houses of worship across Texas join this movement, together we will be a powerful challenge to the broader societal stigma against abortion and reproductive rights.

This is a easy process which would involve a couple of people and can be finished within a month.

## 2. Become a Welcoming Congregation



We know that religious spaces haven't always been welcoming places for all people, especially when it comes to gender and sexuality. We are out to change that.

For 25 years UUs have worked hard to make sure lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people are full members of our faith communities. Being welcoming means striving for radical inclusion, and creating spaces that honor every part of our identities, backgrounds, and experiences.

The UUA has all the resources for us to use. We would need a small group of 2-4 people to shepherd us through the course. It is not a quick, one-shot process and will take time, effort and a willingness of the leaders to preserve. It is surprising how much we will learn, especially since we often feel that we are now very welcoming to everyone.

This project will take several months, with opportunities for various people to help.

Want to help with either (or both) projects? Speak with a board member (Helen, Dan, Linda, Kelly, Doug, or Marla). Given the current political push against reproductive justice and LGBTQ equality, our need to speak out could not be more important right now.

## Appreciation Dinner Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>

The Appreciation Dinner is an evening when everyone involved with the church can come together and celebrate that WE DID IT!

As a lay-led congregation we're literally 'it', anything and everything that happens we do. So, why not come together for a dinner and enjoy offering words of appreciation, along with hugs and slaps on the back, to everyone whose made a difference? Whether you're a pillar of the temple or someone who comes on Sunday in order to nourish your needs, everyone brings something to the life of Red River.

This will be our 5<sup>th</sup> annual dinner. The evening is casual affair - a time to break bread together, a time for meet some people you may not know, a time to celebrate the importance of our church being here for twenty years!

This is the evening when a special award is given to a member whose efforts are noted and appreciated by everyone.

The Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award is given in recognition of extraordinary volunteer service to the life of this congregation and to the cause of Unitarian Universalism.

It is the most prestigious award given by the Red River Unitarian Universalist Church and represents the congregation's gratitude, appreciation and recognition for volunteer efforts of individual members.

This Award is a tribute to Robert Bruce Cameron who through his involvement, dedication and outstanding service to the church community has created a level of commitment unaccomplished by anyone else. His work reaches beyond the normal service contributed by members of our beloved community and it is with profound appreciation and respect that this Award be named in his honor.

That's what the Annual Appreciation Dinner is all about. Please come. It is our time to remember the importance of sustaining the only voice of liberal religion in Texoma. Think how dreadful it would be if Red River didn't exist! Do come to be thanked and to give thanks!

## Becoming a UU



Two events in February are geared for those who may be considering becoming a Unitarian Universalist. The **New UU Gathering** on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> is an informal Q & A about the church (details on page 1).

On Sunday, Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, during the Credo Service, we will officially welcome new members in a simple **New Member Ceremony**. If you've pondered making the leap of faith (leaping from a faith of your past, into Unitarian Universalism) you might want to join this month.

Membership involves signing the membership book, after you're decided this is the religious home you want to call your own. We have no profession of faith, or theological requirements. You join because you want to. Simple as that. Speak with Marion Hill for more details.

## Book Club & Easy Yoga

Do you want to hear about new authors and interesting books? Our next book club meeting is on Friday, Feb 10, 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.

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

Facilitated by Carole Harner, Yoga Led by Wanda Holmes

## Green Team Meeting

for February will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30 pm at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's home in Sherman.

## TXUUJM Action Day Update

At print time - there are 184 UUs who have signed up to participate in the TXUUJM Legislative Action day at the state capital on Feb 15. Well Done all you UUs!



## Our 1<sup>st</sup> Time Guest Speakers

**Tom Neilson - Sunday Feb 12<sup>th</sup>**



Tom has been a singer all his life, and while in college his voice coach told him one day he could make a living with his voice, he felt, as an anti-war organizer in the 60's, he lead to Columbia after graduating from SUNY. The next twenty

years would find Tom living in Senegal and Portugal, working in public health, taught English and was arrested as a spy in North Africa! Back in the states, Tom was a tri-lingual counselor for an Alcoholism unit; got a degree in Psychology, took a break to live in Kenya as a training director for the Peace Corps. His social activism found him in Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan and when his son Jacob was born, he settled into days jobs helping people with additions, teaching physical education and coaching.

Tom provides a voice for those who believe in the power of folk music to effect change. Last year he won the IMA (Independent Music Awards) coveted Vox Pop fan vote for "It's A Crime To Tell The Truth" in the Social Action Song category.

His travels are reflected in his songs, intertwined with farm roots and a fervent commitment to social justice, as he writes about historical and current events. He has been at the for-front in helping communities organize against water privatization, mountain top removal, nuclear energy, incinerators, GMOs, fracking, & toxic waste.

**Virginia Parrish - Sunday, Feb 26<sup>th</sup>**



Virginia A. Parrish, Ph.D., is a professor emeritus of English, Humanities and Languages at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. While at Southeastern, Virginia was active in various university committees, the Faculty Senate, assisted in the establishment of a Student Veterans

Services Committee, and is a member of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). She continues her membership as retired faculty.

## Treasurer's Report

In the month of December, we had income of \$2,549 from general operations.

After operations expense of \$1,828, we had a net income from operations of \$721.

In December, we donated \$176 from the Share the Plate program to the Texoma Earth Day festival.

Operations expense include water and waste bill of \$154, gas bill \$150, electric bill \$127, UUA donation \$118 and internet \$67.50.

As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, we had \$3,352 available in checking.

Kelly Cofield, Treasurer

## New Arrivals for the Library



The Rev. Frank Church Library, on the third floor, has an ever growing number of books thanks to several people in church who donate to the li-

brary after reading them. It is a sunny, bright room that any book lover would enjoy spending time. Here's some new titles that arrived recently:

- *China - Inc.* by Ted Fishman
- *Tragedy and Farce: How American Media sells War, Spins Elections and Destroys Democracy* by John Nichols & Robert McChesney
- *The Great Unraveling* by Paul Krugman
- *The World is Flat* by Thomas L. Friedman
- *American Theocracy* by Kevin Phillips
- *State of Denial* by Bob Woodward
- *A Haircut in Horsetown and other great Car Talk Puzzles* by Tom and Ray Magliozzi
- *World War II: A Short History* by Michael J. Lyons
- *Spadework* by Timothy Findley
- *The Cuckoo's Calling* by Robert Galbraith (aka) J.K. Rowling

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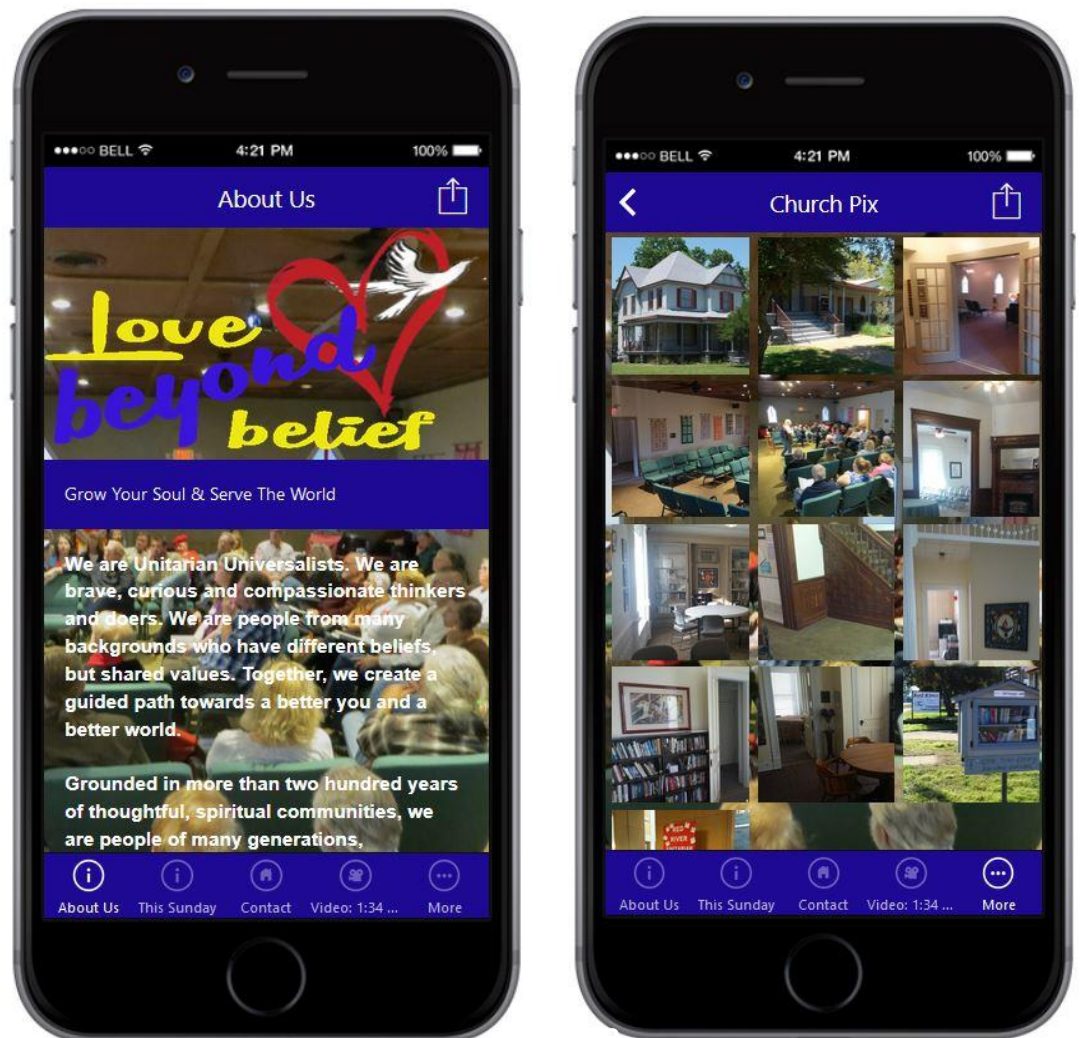
Facebook: [RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch)

## Our Church App Hits the Big Time!

Thanks to a wonderful grant we received from NTUUC (North Texas UU Congregations) our church App has been upgraded and can now be downloaded free from Google Play and the Apple App Store, just search for "Red River UU Church."\*

The upgrade offers us an array of options: videos, gallery, calendar, the weekly eNews along with the monthly newsletter. We can send subscribers messages and reminders. People can sign up for an event, send a message to the church, with, news and information about our church always at your fingertips. It is a great way for visitors and newcomers to learn more about us whenever they are curious about something.

Download the App and take it for a spin!\*



\*We're told It may take a few days before the App appears on Google Play or the App Store, so if you don't see it right away, try again in a day or two.