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# Red River Ramblings



April 2017  
Volume 19  
Issue 11

**Sunday, April 2, 2017**

## **The Danger of a Single Story**

Chimamanda Adichie, *speaking (video message)*

This Sunday, we will watch a video message from the Nigerian author of novels, short stories and nonfiction, Chimamanda Adichie. Her remarks focus on the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice – and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

*Refreshments A-G (but not C)*

**Sunday, April 9, 2017**

## **Take Down the Dulcimer**

The Rev. Annie Foerster, *speaking*

My sermon title comes from a Rumi poem and suggests that sometimes we just think too much. At such a time, he suggests, we should shut the door to the library and take down the dulcimer instead. My question is this: What do Unitarian Universalists know about the art of taking down the dulcimer? Can you play a song on the strings of your heart?

*Refreshments H*

**Sunday, April 16, 2017**

*Our Second Friendship Sunday*

## **Easter for the Non-Religious**

Flutist Cornell Kinderknecht, *in concert*

Religious communities often disagree more than they agree -conflicting theologies, writings, beliefs ... the list goes on and on. One thing, however, seems to be present in many, if not all, gathered communities of faith: music. This Easter, like last year, we will celebrate with a special concert by flutist Cornell Kinderknecht. For those who cut church last Easter (fearing it would clash with your sense of being), here's your chance for redemption!

Today is our second **Friendship Sunday**, selected precisely because friends you know who probably would *never* visit on Easter can be assured that visiting Red River will be both a delight and a surprise. (See details about Friendship Sunday on page 2).

*Refreshments I-R, plus C*

**Sunday, April 23, 2017**

## **Birdman, Religion, and the Environment or The Expected Virtue of Religion?**

Dr. Doug Wood, *speaking*

This guest speaker will investigate the role of religious denominations and their roles in environmentalism and conservation. Dr. Wood will bring his personal and professional views as an ornithologist and wildlife biologist to bear during the talk.

*Refreshments S-Z*

**Sunday, April 30, 2017**

## **The Crack in Everything: The Theology of Leonard Cohen**

Steve Brooks, *speaking*

Of the great songwriters of our time, Leonard Cohen was perhaps the most spiritual. He spent five years in a Zen monastery. His songs are cryptic koans, about the contradictions of seeking light, love and justice in a dark and fallen world, while holding onto humor and hope. Songwriter Steve Brooks sings and unravels some of his favorites, while he explores their lessons for surviving the New Dark Age.

*All Church Picnic In The Park*

## **Sunday Mornings**

- **Meditation** ~ 9 am
- **Adult Forum** ~ 10
- **Morning Assembly** ~ 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



I am planning a hiking trip in Big Bend National Park as I sit down to write this, and my mind is full of lists! I hope many of you were able to attend the 20th Anniversary sermon given by Doug. I am sorry to miss it.

I remember finding out about Unitarian Universalists when my sons' Montessori teachers told me about the new group meeting in Sherman,

and I have been a part of this group ever since.

We may be small, but we are an important presence in this community. I am very proud of the members of our 'Green Team' who have pulled off a well-attended Earth Day celebration for several years now. Please consider volunteering for this event and sharing in the work of the Green Team-it is our embodiment of one of our principles: respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

I'll be thinking of that as I hike in one of the most beautiful landscapes in Texas. Have a good month.

Helen.

## Cornell Kinderknecht Returns



Cornell Kinderknecht is an award winning, GRAMMY nominated recording artist, composer and performer of flutes from around the world. He performs and presents workshops throughout the USA.

Venues at which he's performed include the prestigious Carnegie Hall. His original compositions and playing have been described as soothing, soaring, haunting, and playful with influences of Native America, the Middle East, India, and the Far East.

His music has been heard in film, TV and advertising and is aired on radio throughout the US, Europe and Australia. In addition to his own recordings, Cornell's playing can be heard on numerous artists' CDs in multiple genres. He is a regular performer and presenter at music festivals around the US. You can learn more about Cornell Kinderknecht and his and listen to an audio sample [here](#).

## Friendship Sunday Apr 16

The number of friends you have at your place of worship has more to do with how happy you are than does theology or spirituality, is the finding of a research study.

Researches at Harvard University found that people who have three to five close friends in their congregation are more likely to report they are extremely satisfied with their lives than those people who attend a place of worship but don't have close friends there.

Why is this important for us at Red River? If you want to be happier in your life, reach out to a friend and invite her/him to join you on April 16<sup>th</sup> for our "Easter For The Non-Religious" flute concert with Cornell Kinderknecht.



One of the important functions of religion is to give people a sense of belonging to a moral community based on religious faith. It is friends that make the religious community real and tangible, and strengthen everyone's sense of belonging. So, having a friend join you on April 16<sup>th</sup> (you don't have to tell them it is Easter, they probably aren't even aware it is) will give you the opportunity to share the feeling of being in the right place at the right time. It starts when you bring a friend to church.



# Beyond our Partisan Divide

The video prelude for our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service was, intentional. Thirty-two metronomes, all starting at different times created a cacophony of clicks - little more than noise. Before people realized it, the clicks begin to synchronize and within 2 minutes all that was heard was one rhythmic click ... click ... click. The metronomes were a metaphor for how we might move from partisan perspectives to a more harmonious way of being together.

The first UU Principle calls us to see *the inherent worth and dignity in every person*. Our fourth champions a *free search for truth and meaning*. Still, living in our two-party political system, we sometimes struggle to embody a welcome that stretches across partisan division.

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Tiny congregations, like ours, can be the worst hit when the partisan divide is allowed to run rampant because it will drive people away. This is happening in our church. Throughout the spring opportunities to work on reducing the divide will be available for us, including a discussion at the Spring Congregational Meeting.

## Here are Ten Things to Do Right Now

1. Have a conversation with a board of trustees about the goal of extending our congregation's welcome beyond partisan division. Let the board know that you are willing to help serve this goal now and in the future.
2. Consider the welcome words shared during worship. Do they invite across partisan differences? Consider requesting the addition of a phrase that are more inclusive..
3. Join and invite others to join the "Love Reaches Out and In – Beyond Partisan Division" Facebook page and engage with the resources and the conversation. This is a forum not for conservative Unitarian Universalists but for all, with the goal of reaching beyond the partisan divide.



4. Work with a worship team to develop worship services engaging the theme of reaching beyond partisan division.

5. Hold a workshop utilizing the UU small group study guide "Will It Matter?" More [here](#).

6. Listen reflectively to the thoughts you hear delivered during worship services. Listen especially for exclusivist terminology, like "*All of us here support...*" or "*We all want ...*" Do what you can to advocate for the disenfranchised within our community.

7. Listen reflectively to the thoughts you hear delivered in social congregational settings. Often the most damning partisan affronts occur in these informal arenas. Be prepared to speak up for the voices that are not present or not heard.

8. Out yourself. As you become an advocate for widening the welcome in our congregation, across the partisan divide, you will be "outed" and recognized by the disenfranchised. You will be approached and likely, thanked, by those who thought they were alone.

9. Host a Book Discussion of Jonathan Haight's "The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion," or David Brook's "The Social Animal

- The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement." Or, host a Video Night to watch the TED Talks by Dan Ariely, "Are We in Control of our Own Decisions," and David Brooks, "The Social Animal."

10. Do the personal work. Consider the partisan divide and the way it affects our life. Pay attention to our own responses to partisan rhetoric. Study the emotions you experience when you engage in partisan debate. Work to serve a justice that is bigger and bolder than any political party.

Churches lose members when problems like the partisan divide are not addressed head on. Given the growing divide throughout our nation, it is critical that our small congregation not become swept into the fray. It could cause confusion and conflict.

Working together to revisit what it means, for us to be open and welcoming, we can move beyond the divide. Our metronomes can be in harmony with every click heard and respected.





the 2017-2018 Stewardship Campaign

Dear Friends,

On Sunday March 26<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated our twentieth anniversary. It was a jubilant gathering that culminated in a feeding frenzy of fine food and a large Tres Leches cake. The crowd, nearly 50, was engaged, cheerful and there was an unbridled sense of joy and excitement that permeated the place. Our spirits were unleashed and it felt splendid!

Over the last year, the spirit of our lay-led congregation has been unleashed over and over again: during informal gatherings, Sunday mornings with meditation, the Adult Forum and, of course, the Morning Assembly. Our worship experiences blend moments of tradition with innovative elements that touch souls, intellects and spirit. The renovations of the chapel and the third floor, along with new carpet throughout, have transformed our space. While the pleasing interiors draw us in, it is the warmth and friendliness that we each bring that makes Red River Unitarian Universalist church the special place it has become over the last twenty years.

We can be proud of our history and excited about our future. We are the only liberal religious gathering in Texoma. We provide a sanctuary for religious liberals where people with different ideas - spiritual, social, political - can find a welcoming community of kindred spirits.

Each Spring, at our congregational meeting, we approve the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Many UU congregations wrestle and fuss with how to ask for money. Some recruit volunteers to visit every member to personally ask for a financial pledge. Our approach is different. We all understand that without a financial base, there would be no place for our spirit to soar. Rather than spending a lot of money printing fancy brochures, sending loads of letters or making appeals during church, we're asking you to ponder why you are part of the congregation - either as a member, or friend or visitor - and what it means to you to have a free and open religious community in our area.

So, what will it cost to keep our church going next fiscal year? The bottom line is \$40,275. That's \$110.34 a day. How many days might you be willing to cover? You may pledge now below or download a Commitment Card [here](#) and return it to church. You can also simply send an email indicating your pledge to [treasurer@rruu.org](mailto:treasurer@rruu.org). In order to finalize a proposed budget in time for the May meeting, your reply by April 15<sup>th</sup> will save us having to give you a call.

Some, unleash your Spirit with us.



## Picnic In The Park ~ Apr 30<sup>th</sup>

It is our custom to have an all-church potluck on those months when there are five Sundays (5 times annually). With spring finally in the air, and with five Sundays this month, Lanan and Robert Shelton are hosting the April Moveable Feast and inviting the congregation to a Spring Picnic in the Park on Sunday, April 30.



Bring your favorite picnic fare and come to Munson Park (1.3 miles from the church). The park has a covered shelter, available rest rooms, water and electrical outlets in case you have something needing to be heated.

The Shelton's will provide dishes and drinks, we bring ourselves along with food for the table.

## Spring Congregational Meeting

Another upcoming spring event is the congregational meeting, which will be Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The spring meeting is important for several reasons:

- We will elect three members to the Board
- We will discuss several important issues
- We will approve Congregation Goals for the year
- We will adopt the Operating Budget for the year
- We will hear reports from:
  - The Board of Trustees
  - The President of the Board
  - The Membership Committee

While everyone is invited to attend and participate in the meeting, only members may vote. If you've considered becoming a member, please know that you must sign the membership book 30 days before the meeting, according to the bylaws, in order to vote. Speak with a board member or Marion Hill, membership chair, for details about joining the congregation.

## Spring Women's Retreat At UbarU

A weekend of fellowship, faith, and fun!

April 28-30 is a weekend to recharge your mind, body, and spirit in the companionship of other UU women.

This is an opportunity to commune with nature, spend time by yourself, or socialize; whatever feeds your spirit!

This is a weekend free from compulsory workshops and classes; however, opportunities for worship, spiritual practices, singing, and other group experiences will abound.



Our spiritual director will be Rev. Scottie McIntyre Johnson, minister of the San Marcos Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in San Marcos, TX.

The cost for the weekend is \$125 if you register by April 18, \$140 thereafter. FMI and to register, visit [UbarU.org](http://UbarU.org) and look under the "events" tab.

## Booked for Fun

Do you want to hear about new authors and interesting books? Our next book club meeting is on Friday, April 14, at 1pm at church. Open to book lovers everywhere. A snack is provided.

Facilitated by Carole Harner

## Many Thanks to All

who helped to make our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary so special. To the soloists, the message, the singing, the tables overflowing with food; to all who brought something, set up, and stayed to clean up; and to everyone (the count was nearly fifty) who decided to spend the morning at church - thank you. Our Spirit unleashed a bounty of fellowship and celebration. By all counts, a perfect morning.



## Our April Guest Speakers

April 2<sup>nd</sup>



**Chimamanda Adichie** was awarded a MacArthur Genius Grant in 2008 and is considered the most prominent of a procession of critically acclaimed young Anglophone authors that is succeeding in attracting a new generation of readers of African literature.

April 23<sup>rd</sup>



**Dr. Doug Wood** is a Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Southeastern Oklahoma State University since 2001. He is an ornithologist and wildlife biologist who teaches courses in Ornithology, Zoology, Mammalogy, Fisheries and Wildlife Management, Conservation of

Natural Resources, and Bioethics among others. He has conducted research on a wide variety of ornithological subjects such as brood parasitism, endangered species, migration ecology, and the impacts of habitat management on bird communities. Dr. Wood earned his BA in Biology from Boston University, MS in Zoology from Eastern Illinois University, and Ph.D. in Forestry and Wildlife Ecology from Mississippi State University.

April 30<sup>th</sup>



Cross two famous guys named Brooks – Garth and Mel – and you get Austin folksinger **Steve Brooks**. Singer, writer, Punster and ... Preacher? No, it's not a typo. A charter member of Austin's Wildflower Church, Steve's a lay speaker in the Unitarian Universalist tra-

dition. Over the last decade, he's spoken from more than two dozen pulpits around Texas and beyond. His trademark is to weave words and music together, appealing to both the head and the heart. He creates services in which the sermon and the songs – and even the hymns – fit together to explore a spiritual subject from many different angles.

## 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

Red River UU Church  
 515 North Burnett Ave  
 mail to:  
 PO BOX 1806  
 DENISON, TX 75021-1806  
 ♦ ♦ ♦

### How to reach us:

Email: info (at) rruu.org

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: [www.rruu.org](http://www.rruu.org)

E-News: announce (at) rruu.org

Facebook: RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

Smart Phone App: download "RedRiverUU" free from the [Apps Store](#) & [Google Play](#).

## Church App Tops 80 Downloads!!

📺 When a visitor asked about the Earth Day Festival, one quick tab let her see a 30 second video that gave her a visual overview of the upcoming event.

📺 When someone wasn't sure if this was their week to bring refreshments, a quick peek at the Wednesday's eNews on the App answered the question.

📺 When someone asked who goes off the board and other church committees this June, a quick tab or two and the church web site, which has all that sort of information, instantly answered the question (The Vice President; Secretary and Trustee at Large; along with one person on the Committee on Ministry and one person from the nominating committee).

📺 A resource for everyone! Download "RedRiverUU" from the Apps Store and Google Play. It is free.



## Chalice Circles / Interest Groups ~ open to all

**BOOKED FOR FUN**, an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Friday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Emerson Room. In April the group meets of Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. Facilitator Carole Harner.

**GREEN TEAM**, is meeting twice in March - both meetings are at 5:30 pm. Note a change in location: Meeting now in the Chapel at Church. Contact Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan for next meeting dates.

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle will gather Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup> for a Picnic In The Park (Munson Park). Open to everyone. Details on page 4. Facilitators: Elbert and Marion Hill.