



# Red River Ramblings

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## Four Sunday Mornings ~To Enrich our Lives

Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

### "Credo ~ 2012"

The Rev. Dr. Don Fielding, speaking

It is no surprise that there exists among UU congregations a variety of worship styles. This Sunday we will experience what the UU congregation in Minneapolis - a very Humanist group - enjoys each week. They don't sing hymns, have readings or prayers, and no "sermon". What do they do?

Come on Sunday and find out as Dr. Fielding explores his personal confession on what he believes about "the Standard Christian Package" - God, the Bible, and Jesus (plus a few other "religious" questions).

Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> - MOTHER'S DAY

### "Bending For Gladness"

A Sharing Celebration

While everyone has or had a mother, not everyone wants to be a mother. Mother's Day is a time for honoring mom or for forgetting mom; for feeling glad to be or not to be a mom. It is a day restaurant owners call "Alcohol Consumption Day". Whatever your thoughts are about mothers and motherhood, we all are Bending For Gladness and on Sunday you're invited to come and explain what your gladness is.

Bring a reading, a reflection, a thought, a feeling, a tribute about the tradition, now over a hundred years old, of setting one day a year aside and calling it Mother's Day.

Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

### "In Search of The Third Place"

The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong, speaking

"We are all longing to go home again, to a place half remembered, half envisioned.." writes Starhawk. It has been noted that we humans, in forming com-

munity, start with home and family, then with vocation and career. What we long for next, I think, is The Third Place - somewhere half envisioned where people welcome us with opening, non judging arms where we can pour out the contents of our heart, grain and chaff together knowing people will take what is worthy and with a breath of love blow the rest away.

I will confess this may well be a sermon I need to hear as I start a new chapter in my life's journey. What is your Third Place?

After things: **The Spring Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>

### "Mindfulness & Neuroplasticity:

A Natural Foundation for Your Personal Spirituality"

Bill Mory, speaking

An introduction to how you can begin to impact the evolution of your own brain and the depth of your own spirituality by understanding how neuroplasticity and mindfulness work together. Learn some of the more recent fascinating discoveries in neuroplasticity and why this is important to the development of compassion, spirituality and improved overall health.

Bill Mory, earned his post graduate degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. He has maintained a private practice over the last 18 years with offices in Sherman, McKinney and Plano. He has long been a student and practitioner of mindfulness meditation and education. He coaches clients on the powerful implications of mindfulness and intentional neuroplasticity on relationships, personal spirituality and compassion.

After things: Mr. Mory will lead those who are interested in a meditation workshop, followed - for those who attend - by a potluck lunch. [Details on page 4]

The Soul Café ~ 9:30  
Adult Forum ~ 10

♦ Worship ~ 11:15  
♦ Fellowship Gathering ~ 12:15



## Manna from Marla

Dear Friends - I decided I wanted not to write a separate letter this month, but rather share with everyone my report to the Spring Congregational Meeting.

First topic in my report to the membership for the May 20, 2012 meeting is a review of the goals for the Board of Trustees for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

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1. *Keep the church functioning*
  - a. *Handle day to day business.*
  - b. *Encouraging some money raising projects*

One of the rules for goals is that they are measurable. Since the RRUU still exists as a viable entity, and as you will see from reports by the treasurer and membership, we are in a better position financially and number of members, I believe the board has met with success for this goal. We have encouraged several fund raisers. We had our first concert at the church in January, with another one scheduled for June. Individual board members have also encouraged the bookmark fund raiser for the chapel renovation fund. With the advice of the Finance Team the board accepted the wedding chapel property and held a closed bid process to sell it.

2. *Move toward the Future*
  - a. *Develop a long range plan*

It was decided by the board that with other commitments required this year we put this on hold for the next board and concentrated our efforts on the policies & procedures below. Our board retreat which we hoped to learn about this process had to be canceled in August / September due to the church move and has not been rescheduled at this time.

- b. *Look for another church home to rent*

The board spearheaded a look at other properties for rent but with the help of

several members we found a suitable building to purchase instead.

- c. *New image for the RRUU website with areas of password protection –*
  - (1.) *New design*
  - (2.) *Members only area*
  - (3.) *Password protected membership database maintained on-line*

The new image for the website is still under advisement. We have started a facebook page which currently has 37 likes. The facebook page may also be viewed on the website.

- d. *Communicate to committee chairs the need of action plans for each committee.*

Has not been actively pursued, only requested policies & procedures from committees, and reports for board meetings.

3. *Policies & Procedures*
  - a. *By-laws study*

By-laws changes were approved by the congregation in February 2012.

- b. *Keep the board manual up to date*

Currently the Board manual is kept on thumb drives to make it easier for board members to access and to save paper. The plan is to collect each board member's thumb drive and update them in June, prior to new board members receiving theirs.

- c. *Continue the Building Maintenance Manual*

The Building Use Manual and application for use was completed in November of 2011. The Maintenance manual is now considered part of the Policies & Procedures Guidelines below.

- d. *Continue Policies and Procedures Guidelines*

The board has been addressing three sections of the P&P each month since January. The schedule calls for completion in June with it taking effect in July.

Second topic in my report to the membership for the May 20, 2012 meeting is a review of the goals for the Congregation for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

1. *Participation of members & friends – attendance to average 35 by December 1, 2011 attendance to average 40 by June 2012*

Attendance on December 1, 2011 averaged 27 and on December 31, 26. Christmas Day

attendance was not included as it was an open house, not an actual service. Attendance on April 29, 2012 averaged 28 for July 2011 – April 2012 Attendance average for the last two months of March and April has risen to 29.

2. *Support – financial – fundraisers & pledges*
  - 2 new fundraisers – collect money outside our church family by June 2012

Three fundraisers designed to raise money outside our church family have been organized. The first one was a concert in January. While that fundraiser did not cost us anything, we had promised the performer the first \$200.00 and then would have split money over that. We collected just under \$200. The second fundraiser which has been organized, but has not taken place at this time is another concert on June 15<sup>th</sup>. We have a good chance of actually making some money on this concert as it is not in competition with Harmony House (a local house concert venue) and they will send out to their mailing list as well as our marketing. The third fundraiser has already been successful. We have made bookmarks with beads and chalice symbols. They have been sold by Chalice Art when they have jewelry sales. We have already raised enough money to pay for putting sheet rock on the front wall of the chapel. Now workers are busy making more bookmarks for Chalice Art to take with them to GA.

3. *Communication – needs of the congregation communicated to board & committees.*

The board sets aside fifteen minutes at each board meeting for the congregation to present their concerns. Only a few members have taken advantage of that time. At the semi-annual congregational meetings there is also time for the congregation to bring up their concerns, not to be solved during the meeting but to make the board aware of issues to be put on their monthly agenda.

4. *Growth – 5 new members and 5 new friends by June 2012*

As of the end of April, 2012 we have added eleven members to our family and only lost six through moving or leaving the church. Of those six, four have remained friends. We have had many visitors but have not been able to encourage enough continued attendance to call most of them friends.

It has been a whirlwind of a year, no? I look forward to seeing everyone (yes, everyone) at the meeting on May 20th.

See y'all soon!  
Marla

## The Spring Congregational Meeting ~ Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

The Warrant for our Spring Congregational Meeting has been published. The meeting will be Sunday, May 20th at 12:35 pm in the chapel.

During this important meeting we will vote on a working budget - which has a shortfall of \$4,382.00 that we'll have to deal with; handle some routine stuff like approving minutes of previous meetings and then partake in one of the most sacred rituals of the free church: electing our own leadership.

Members are expected to attend, either in person or by proxy. Friends are warmly invited to attend as well, congregational meetings are always a

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*"We will partake in one of the most sacred rituals of the free church: electing our own leadership."*

joyful experience. Anyone who wishes can download the Meeting Packet (21 pages) [here](#). Everyone is invited to bring finger food for a potluck lunch to nourish ourselves while we meet.

Those standing for election are:

### Board of Trustees:

- President (2 yr term):  
**Elbert Hill**
- Vice President (1 yr term):  
**Carla Murphy**
- Treasurer (2 yr term):  
**Carole Harner**

### Nominating Committee

#### (Leadership Development):

- **Marla Loturco** (3 yrs)
- **Doug Strong** (2 yrs)
- **Faye Shadrick** (1 yr)

#### Committee on Ministry:

- **Joyce Peak** (3 yrs)

## Adult Forum ~ The Open Mind Center, Sundays mornings



**May 6:** Continuation of part #2 of *Long Strange Trip, A Journey Through Two Thousand Years of Unitarian Universalist History*. This is the second half of "The Birth of Unitarianism." Discussion follows the video.

**May 13** First half of part #33 of *Long Strange Trip, A Journey Through Two Thousand Years of Unitarian Universalist history*. This is the first half of "American Unitarianism." Discussion follows.

**May 20:** Second half of part #3 of *Long Strange Trip*. This is the second half of "American Unitarianism". Discussion follows.

**May 27:** Living in a spiritual environment in a cosmic reality. Discussions of Theism, Atheism, Agnosticism, Humanism, Liberal Christianity, Neopaganism, Pantheism, Panentheism, Process Theology and World Religions from *Building Your Own Theology Vol. 1* by Richard Gilbert. June will continue discussions from BYOT.

If you are not receiving emails about the materials ahead of time for BYOT, please tell [Joyce Peak](#).

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## Welcome new members ~ During April 5 people joined the church



**Gil and Marilyn Alexander** first came to the church as guests of Elbert and Marion Hill last January. After spending 40 years living and teaching in Montana they returned to their roots in Texoma land to retire (they both went to Sherman High School). The proud parents of three kids and 4 grandchildren, they were substitute parents for 17 foster teen agers during the 70's and 80's. They now garden and raise beef on a small ranch outside Colbert and last year celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and their 50th high school union.

**Brooke Rene Thome** learned about the church from her friends, Tisha and Chad Meyer and she glad she did. She and her husband, who is a OTR (over the road) long haul trucker, live in Sherman. After six years of marriage they decided it was time to stop those Big Wheels from rolling (Brooke is a truck driver as well) since they are expecting their first child in July. While Brooke loved her job, they both realized an expectant mother ought not be taking long hauls. In her free time, she enjoys expressing her creativity through mixed media art. She appreciates the warm welcome offered by everyone at church.



**Chad and Tisha Meyer** first visited us two years ago and after thinking things over decided this is their church home. Both Tisha and Chad are pleased to be part of the congregation. They have a son, Drake, who is 11 and the family has just moved into their own home - next door to Brooke! Chad identifies himself as an old-fashion county boy from Iowa who moved to Texas when he was 10. They enjoy time together, with their family and friends and look forward to getting to know folks at church. They both commented how welcoming people have been.

## Meditation Group ~ A new Interest Group

Bill Mory, therapist and counselor, will be our guest speaker on May 27 and has agreed to help us start a meditation group. His method of meditation is "mindfulness" which he and his family practice on a regular basis.

After Things, those interested will meet in the Adult Forum room from 12:30 - 1:30.

Please bring a pot luck dish to share after meditation and Bill and his family will probably be eating with us.

The meditation group is new to RRUU, will meet once a month and will be led by Paula Blackshear and Joyce Peak. Look for a signup sheet on the first floor bulletin board and sign up so we know how many to expect.

## The Church Calendar

The church calendar is now online. With one click you can see what's going on for the next 30 days (longer if you advance through the calendar). Try it out [here](#) or copy this link:

<http://www.localendar.com/public/rruucalendar?style=D2>

and paste it in your browse. Then just save it as a favorite and the calendar will always be easily available and current.

You can click on an event and open a new window that will provide details (for most events).

## David Roth Concert ~ In our Chapel, Friday June 15th



Returning again to RRUU is singer David Roth (who was with us a couple years ago). He will be in concert on Friday, June 15th - so plan ahead to save the evening. David Roth strikes many chords, hearts and minds with his unique songs, off-beat observations, moving stories

sense of the hilarious and powerful singing and subject matter. A singer, songwriter, recording artist, keynote speaker, workshop leader and instructor, David has earned top honors at premier songwriting competitions - including Kerville - and has taken his music, experience and expertise to a wide variety of venues around the world for more than two decades. (He also has a sister who is a UU minister!)



Click the picture to watch David sing!

## Building Updates ~ Three things. . .

1.] It looks so perfect and blends in with the house that most of us probably didn't even notice that the lattice under the front porch was cleaned and stained. Thanks to Bruce Cameron, Scott Bowie and Pablo Cohen for doing this.



2.] Also, after a complaint from someone that there was no official occupancy notice posted in the chapel (the fire Marshall was most

apologetic about having to dun us) we now are officially sanctioned to have 86 occupants in the chapel. (Strangely enough our occupancy numbers are not based on how many we can get into the room, but rather on how many parking spaces we have).

3.] A new 42" Flat screen TV which was donated to the church now graces the wall in the living room and being used by the Adult forum.



## Bookmarks for Walls ~ May 6th

The cost for renovating the front chapel wall came from selling the UU bookmarks that four folks made last January and were sold at the UU Women's conference in Houston. (You can see the difference in the picture taken after the front wall was redone.)

We'll have another Boormark party on Sunday afternoon, May 6th from 1 - 4 on the deck at Bruce & Carolyn Cameron's home in Pottsville. Stop by somewhere and grab a lunch for yourself (the Cameron's will have fresh tea) and

come help. There is something for everyone to do along the assembly line. If we can make a hundred more bookmarks we can get more of the ugly wood paneling in the chapel removed!

## Board Bits ~from the Apr 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting

The board meeting was held on April 17, 2012. All board members were in attendance. Carole Harner also attended as a candidate for Treasurer in the May election. In addition to normal board business the following topics were covered.

- The third three sections of the Policies & Procedures Manual were reviewed
- The effectiveness of the Town Hall Meeting on Social Justice was discussed
- Plans were made for the May 20, 2012 Congregational Meeting. Documents need to be sent by May 3rd or 4th
- Board members will review the Goals and come up with a list by that date
- The initial Budget to be presented to the congregation at the May meeting was reviewed and some changes made
- Disruptive Persons Policy was discussed with recommendations made and accepted by the Committee on Ministry

The next board meeting is May 15, 2012, starting at 6:40 p.m. Board meetings are open to all, if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. Deadline for the agenda and reports to the board is May 8th. Those wishing a few minutes during the "open mic" will want to be ready to speak around 7:00 pm.

## Financial Update ~the treasurer's report

The months since August of last year have been astounding for RRUU. Our small congregation purchased 515 N. Burnett, raised a \$50,000 loan for its renovation, and then donated \$24,900 more in cash for the renovation. Many gifts in-kind have also been given.

Our April Balance Sheet shows that we have assets of \$61,423.59. This includes approximately \$14,300 in CD's and \$23,300 in general savings. The church building is listed as an asset of \$23,724.60, the price RRUU paid for its purchase last summer. It is now clearly worth more than that.

The assets of RRUU have grown tremendously since last August. Our Profit and Loss Report for the month of April shows a "net income" or loss of -\$5,887.03. Net income for the fiscal year to date is -\$42,006.93.

Our current budget predicted a net income of -\$49,900, so we are about where we thought we would be, with two months remaining in our fiscal year.

Although not all commitment paperwork has been turned in, \$21,910.00 has been pledged to RRUU for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. This is more than was pledged last year, and with fewer pledging units.

Marie Bellman  
Treasurer

## Won't You ~ recommend us?



One of the new elements on Facebook is something called "RECOMMEND" where people can write comments about us and recommend us. So far only two people have done so (embarrassing, no?)

If you "do" Facebook, wouldn't you take a minute and recommend us? It is an easy way to share who we are. We have 38 people who "like" us (most *not* from the congregation). Anyone want to send those folks a message, maybe invite them to drop in some Sunday??

  
*"Although not all  
commitment paper-  
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## The New Chairs ~ Very Comfy!

On a warm April morning a crew gathered to await the chairs. The truck arrived only an hour late, and after having to jump the battery that controlled the tailgate lift, the two huge and heavy shipping crates were offloaded, ripped apart and the chairs removed.

They were unwrapped, the packing materials carted off to the recycling place and the chairs were brought inside. The twenty arm chairs had to have the wood arm rests installed (we ended up short 24 screws) and arranged.

The company advised that the chairs will feel stiff and recommended that people kneel on them and knead the cushions to soften them up.

During the dedication service, the congregation was invited to kneel on the chairs and a prayer of appreciation was offered, not to the universe, but to the members of an Anglican Congregation in Spring, TX whose purchase of our old pews made it possible for us to get new chairs. After what may be the only time UUs kneeled to pray, everyone kneaded their chair keeping time to the Mickey Mouse Club Theme Song.




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**■**

*"It may have been the only time UUs kneeled to pray, or kneeled and kneaded chairs to make them more comfy!"*

## Leadership

### Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco, *president*  
 Don Durland, *vice president*  
 Marie Bellman, *Treasurer*  
 Carolyn Cameron, *Secretary*  
 Elbert Hill  
 Richard Newlin  
 Kat Walston

### Committee on Ministry:

Gerry Shehan  
 Peter Schulze

### Team Leaders:

Adult Forum:  
*Joyce Peak*

Building/Grounds: *Laura Shehan*

Communications: *Doug Strong*

Finance/Endowment: *Marion Hill*

Good Times: *George Gravley*

Membership: *Marion Hill*

Worship: *no single leader, duties are rotated among members*

Ways & Means: *Don & Suzanne Durland*

## Got a Church Key? ~ It won't work!

At the end of April, all the church doors were re-keyed. If you have a key to the building, please do NOT pitch it out, but bring it back. New keys will be issued to those demonstrating a need, rather than giving keys to the whole lot of us. Makes sense, no? Better security. Please speak with Marla Loturco about getting a new key.

## Moveable Feast ~ Twice this month!

The Feasters will gather twice in May - first on Saturday, May 12th at the home of David and Cylvia Lawrence in Van Alstyne for a Build Your Own Pizza.

Then again on Memorial Day, May 28th the group is heading out to the Taste of Texoma in downtown Denison. The exact time hasn't been set yet, so contact the facilitators, [Elbert and Marion Hill](#), for details. Everyone is invited to come just bring your tastebuds and eating frenzy to Taste of Texoma!! Eateries and Vendors from all around the area are bringing the best tastes for you!

## Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~for us all!

**GREEN TEAM**, an Environmental Action Circle once a month. Contact [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#)

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets twice this month. Facilitators are [Elbert & Marion Hill](#).

**MEDITATION GROUP**, first meeting May 27th

### RED RIVER

#### Unitarian Universalists

515 Burnett Ave  
 Denison, TX 75021

mail to:

PO BOX 1806

DENISON, TX 75021-1806

How to reach us:

Email: [info@rruu.org](mailto:info@rruu.org)

Phone: 903.231.3232

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

weekly E-News:

[announcements@rruu.org](mailto:announcements@rruu.org)

