

Red River Ramblings



July 2015
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Issue 1

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Church calendar for the next 30 days:



Sunday mornings in June: to kick-start your week

Sunday, July 5, 2015

The Good Citizen

The Rev. Jennifer Ryu, *preaching (on video)*

In her Independence Day sermon delivered last year, the Rev. Jennifer Ryu speaks about becoming an American citizen and what it means to be a Good Citizen. This morning we gather to celebrate the 242nd anniversary of our declaration of independence - through music, readings and a moving sermon about the importance of being a Good Citizen.

The Rev. Jennifer Ryu has served the Williamsburg UU church from 2006 to 2015. Born in South Korea, Rev. Jennifer grew up in Ohio, then moved to Baltimore, Maryland. There she discovered Unitarian Universalism and became an active lay leader in the church. During this time, she worked in Human Resources and HR Info Systems. After many years, she answered the call to ministry, entering seminary in 2002 at Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA.

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, July 12, 2015

Two Gifts: Spirituality and Creativity

The Rev. Annie Foerstor, *preaching*

They're not remotely the same, but they are distantly related, like the cousins of your cousins. They are gifts that are available to us all and gifts we can give ourselves when we choose to use them. People will tell you about them, but you have to discover their instructions on your own. Where do they reside? How can we find them? I don't know all the answers, but I understand some of the important questions.



During the past thirty years I have been privileged to serve congregations in Washington State, Texas, Pennsylvania and Ohio. I've failed retirement three times, being presented with opportunities I couldn't

Refuse to practice my calling 'one more time.' I currently serve a fellowship in Tyler, Texas, and do pulpit supply whenever I'm asked. I meet a lot of wonderful people this way continue learn about our amazing denomination and myself. This fall I will be returning to academic life to begin a Doctorate of Liberal Studies at SMU.

Share the Plate Sunday: Cash donations will benefit the Grayson County Shelter.

Refreshments: H

Sunday, July 19, 2015

A Morning of Poetry

Ron Wallace, *reading*

Back again to share with us some of his poetry is Ron Wallace. He is an Oklahoma Native of Choctaw, Cherokee and Osage ancestry and is the author of seven volumes of poetry published by TJMF Publishing. He is a three time finalist in the Oklahoma Book Awards. His work has been recently featured in "Oklahoma Today", "The Long Islander", "Concho River Review", "Cybersoleil journal", "Cobalt", "Red Earth Review", "Dragon Poets Review", "Sugar Mule", "Cross-timbers", "Gris-Gris" and a number of other magazines and anthologies.

Refreshments: I - R

Sunday, July 26, 2015

Jorge Mario Bergoglio: My New Hero!

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

Like many UU's, papal encyclicals have never stirred up much enthusiasm for me. Until now. 'Laudato si' - Pope Francis' Encyclical on care for our common home changed that. He sure didn't mince his words! "The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth," Francis said. "In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish." On Sunday a look this my new hero, from nightclub bouncer to pope, and why 'Laudato si' is making global corporations, energy conglomerates, right-wing politicians, scurrilous scientists, hands-off economists, uncaring individuals, callous Christians and myopic media professionals are up in arms.

Refreshments: S-Z

Morning Meditation - 9

Adult Forum - 10

Worship - 11:15

Fellowship - 12:15

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX
We are a sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth.

Dan's Dispatch



Happy New (Church) Year, everyone! This month of July marks the beginning of our new fiscal year, and this is an excellent time to thank and congratulate everyone for the very generous response to the call for pledges.

In a small congregation such as ours, we can do many things very informally. But to keep things on the up-and-up, and to know what our financial limits are, having an “official” pledge from members is indispensable to creating our balanced budget. We all recognize that circumstances can and do change, so nobody should ever feel that a pledge is some sort of contract with binding legal status. It's simply your best estimate of financial support for the upcoming year. If you need to modify your pledge at some point, please let me or Treasurer Robert Shelton know so that we can make the necessary adjustment—no questions asked. But again, a huge THANK YOU is in order for the gracious support!

This month also features a Yard Sale on Saturday, July 11 in support of our dedicated Elevator Fund. If you have any items to donate for sale, please let me or Doug Strong know. Volunteers to set up and work at the Yard Sale are also needed and welcome.

Following the Yard Sale on Saturday, a Special Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 12, after our regular service. We will vote to finalize the budget and to decide on a revised Safe Congregation Policy to make our congregation more welcoming to families

with children. I hope you will plan to be present (in person or by proxy) for these important two pieces of business.

As part of our new church year activities this month, we will start setting up our on-site church office right upstairs. It's a very ordinary and normal thing to do, of course, but this small change somehow signals for me that we really are finally “at home” in our beautiful building. Establishing a real church office has me more excited than I probably should be—but that's just the “policy wonk” in me!

And speaking of being a “policy wonk...” This Small But Mighty® congregation has accomplished an astonishing number of important things over the years. But also over the years, and for very good and very compelling reasons at the time, I feel we have accumulated an overly burdensome set of governing documents. From my perspective, a congregation of only 34 members doesn't need the eleven (!) standing committees that our current Bylaws require. My philosophy—and I hope you agree—is that our organizational structure should be the simplest one possible, and that we always do what our Bylaws say we do. My concern is that if we do not simplify our Bylaws, we will always technically be out of compliance with how we promised ourselves to do things. That leaves me feeling very uneasy, since our words and promises to ourselves, even from the past, do still matter. I invite each member and friend of this wonderful community to look over the Bylaws posted at our website and to consider how we might simplify our structure. In the very near future, I will call for any interested members to join me in reviewing the Bylaws and discussing how to improve them through simplifying them. I hope that our discussions will lead to a congregational vote on revised Bylaws, hopefully by May of next year.

Thank you for everything you do!

Dan

NAACP Scholarship Banquet



Each August the Grayson County Chapter of the NAACP, working with the Sherman Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance holds their annual scholarship banquet. It is a wonderful evening and because

RRUU is a life member of the local chapter we have been invited to be part of this important evening. The banquet is held in the Wright Center at Austin College and will be on Friday, August 7th at 7 PM.

We have eight tickets (a full table) which are \$30.00.

The purpose of the evening is to raise funds and to award scholarships to local high school students to help them attend college. Each year a speaker is invited to address the group, along with some gospel singers and a dinner buffet.

If you want to be part of this evening, you can get tickets from any board member.

During the May congregational meeting one of our goals was to become more directly involved with events and activities that reflect our commitment for equality and diversity. Joining those celebrating the achievements of children and youth is one excellent way to show our support.

Update on the TX 84th Legislative Session ~ not as bad as it could have been!



The 84th Legislature Session for the state of Texas ended in June. The TX UU Justice Ministry was busy throughout the 140 day session. In February over 100 UUs including Marla Loturco from RRUU, went to Austin for the first ever UU Day at the Legislature.

On June 23rd the TxUUJM advisory board met on a conference call to get an overview of the work done by the Justice Ministry. The Rev. Chuck Freeman reported that against long odds, TxUUJM did well. Through the work of volunteers, and by working in concert with other liberal organizations, the Justice Ministry stopped about 20 bad bills. Probably the worse bill to get through was the Judicial Bypass bill. None of the LGBTQ bills made it, which was good. During the last week of the session, legislators scrambled to try and get anti-gay attachments onto other bills. The only attachment that succeeded was a "Passive Protection Bill" which was framed to keep pastors from performing gay weddings against their personal beliefs. The original bill went further, indicating that hospitals, adoption agencies, etc. could also refuse services. Working with the Texas Freedom Network, the attachment was narrowed down to only refer to clergy and weddings. The bill passed. Now legislators can crow to their constituents that they succeeded in protecting their pastors. The irony, of course, was that the bill

was totally unnecessary because any clergy person has always been able to decline to marry anyone they wish.

Rev. Freeman felt that, given the hand we were dealt, the results were not as dire as they could have been. Regretfully 5 bills to increase minimum wage never got out of committee but working with people involved with the Industrial Foundations a bill passed to fund training for low income jobs. That was a good shot in the arm for income inequality.

WHAT IS NEXT?

Our congregation, along with other member congregations of the TxUUJM are asked to submit proposals for what priority issues we would like to work for during the 85th Legislature Session in 2017. The three issues of focus during the last Session were

- Women's Reproductive Justice
- Medicaid Expansion
- Economic Justice

Over the next two months we are encouraged to tell the TxUUJM what issues we feel are the most pressing. With the national election upcoming, perhaps Get Out The Vote? Perhaps Voter Registration issues; Perhaps Income inequality; Perhaps Climate Change and Global Warming? Perhaps Abortion Rights; Perhaps Water Distribution; Perhaps ???

If you have ideas, suggestions etc. Please speak with me. Our nominations need to be submitted by the middle of September.

Doug

A.V. Training Workshop ~ Sat. Aug 8th

Thanks to a wonderful NTUUC grant along with expert advice from Jim Murphy, we have a top notch AV system. Only trouble is we don't much know what all those knobs, switches and buttons do. For example we *could* record services if we understood how the equipment works; we *could* broadcast the service throughout the building. You get the idea.

The solution: A workshop to learn what we have and how to work it. We've found a teacher and on Saturday, Aug 8th from 9-noon, we'll become students for the morning.

We could use a couple more people to be an A.V. tech. If you want to learn the system, speak with the Worship Team. The workshop is free.



This is what our sound board looks like!

Board Bits

During the June 11th Board meeting, the Board:

- A small gift was presented to Paula Blackshear as she completed her term on the Board
- A welcome was made to incoming Trustee Helen Schulze
- RRUU Board meetings will be on second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm
- The need to clearly define and limit the role of Committee on Ministry in the revised Safe Congregation Policy was raised and agreed
- Closer collaboration with the local chapter of the NAACP was planned
- RRUU will participate in the "Amazon Smiles" program to help earn income

Treasurer's Report

In the month of April, we had income of \$2,722 from general operations. After operations expense of \$2,019 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$702.

In April, we received a donation to the Wi-Fi fund of \$90. We spent \$50 from the Musicians Fund for a guest musician.

For the year to date period of July 2014 through April 2015, we had net income from general operations and of \$703 and principal payments of \$1,370.

At the end of April, 2015 we had total cash of \$4,799. Our cash includes a restricted amount of \$4,493. Our unrestricted cash totals \$48,649 and our debt is \$31,241.

We donated \$150 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

The Adult Forum for July

July 5th American Unitarianism: Part 3, 23 minute video and discussion of the transcendentalist movement: Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller. Theodore Parker defines "Transcendentalist Unitarianism."



July 12th Astronomy: Hubble Telescope image of the Crab Nebula, Part 1, A Supernova's Aftermath. Among supernova remnants, none is more famous than the Crab Nebula. Its position in the sky corresponds to the location of a supernova witnessed on Earth in 1054. Betelgeuse is a red supergiant that will explode as a Type II supernova.

July 19th Universalism: Part 4, Development of Universalism from the early German and English pietists to John Murray, Elhanan Winchester, and Hosea Ballou.

July 26th Universalism: Part 4, 2nd half, Unprecedented explosion of Universalist churches across America during the first half of the 19th Century and why the movement began its precipitous decline after the death of Hosea Ballou in 1850.

Special Congregational Meeting

During the May 17, 2015 Spring Congregational Meeting two items on the agenda were tabled and the congregation requested that the Board of Trustees call a special congregational meeting at which time both items will be revisited.

The special congregational meeting will be **Sunday, July 12th** following morning worship. The agenda has only three items:

- Approving the minutes of the last congregational meeting
- Discussing and voting on a budget for fiscal 2015-2016
- Discussing and voting on a revised safe congregation policy

The documents pertaining to the meeting were emailed to all members on Saturday, June 27th as required in the church bylaws. All members are urged to attend. If, however, you are not able to be at the meeting, please complete and return a proxy, which are available on the church web site or on the counter outside the Chapel.

You can download the packet of documents [here](#).

Set Up Dates for the Yard Sale

- We will set up on
 - Wednesday, July 8;
 - Thursday, July 9;
 - and Friday, July 10
- from 10 - noon.

The chapel will be rearranged on Sunday afternoon, and the tables set up and marked where items can go.

Yard Sale
Saturday, July 11th ~ 9 AM - 1 PM

The Church Yard Sale ~ Third time's a charm!



The first date (May 16) was rained out. The second date (May 30) loomed with such frightening forecasts that it was again put off. No more procrastinations! The Yard Sale will happen (regardless of the weather) on Saturday, July 11 from 9 AM - 1 PM. If the weather is glorious, we can place larger items on the lawn; if it is not - we'll punt (maybe use the veranda, maybe escort people to the garage, maybe put up a pop tent).



GOT STUFF? If you have items to donate, please wait until after things on Sunday, July 5th because you can just leave them in the chapel rather than having to lug them to Garage 4.

SET UP SCHEDULE: We will set up on Wednesday, July 8; Thursday, July 9; and Friday, July 10 from 10 - noon. The chapel will be rearranged on Sunday afternoon, and the tables set up and marked where items can go.

YOU CAN HELP by

- pricing your items before bringing them to the church.
- Hanging clothing on hangers
- Saving plastic bags, we cannot have too many!
- Being a cashier
- Wandering around with an watchful eye (amazing what some folks will steal from a yard sale)
- Packing up the left overs
- Taking them to the Grayson County Shelter store
- Arranging the chapel for church on Sunday



PROCEEDS from the sale will benefit the church elevator fund. The plan is to be firm on pricing until noon. Anyone wanting to haggle can either pay full price now or take the chance it won't be sold and get it cheaper after 12.



Leaders

Board of Trustees

Dan Althoff, *president*
 Gil Alexander, *vice president*
 Robert Shelton, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Helen Schulze, *Trustee*
 Elbert Hill, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Gil*
 Aesthetics Team:
Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Finance: *Open*
 Good Times:
Carole, Marilyn & Marion
 Long Range Planning:
Amy, Gil, Marilyn
 Membership: *Marion*
 Nominations: *Amy, Kat, Lanan*
 NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
 RE Team: *Carolyn, Dan, Tommi*
 Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
 Social Action: *Gil*
 Ways & Means: *Open*
 Worship:
Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

Contact Us

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Web: www.ruuu.org

E-News: [announce\[+suffix\]*](mailto:announce[+suffix]*)

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

*Church email suffix: @rruu.org

'Out To Lunch' is becoming 'In For Lunch'

Over the last several months participation at the monthly Out To Lunch gatherings has been dwindling overall. Restaurants have prepared for more folks than decided to go. Add to this the suggestion from several people that it would nice to have more social activities at church along with the problem of finding new restaurants your illusive OTL (that's Out To Lunch) coordinator decided to take a break.

The Board offered the idea that we have a pot luck lunch at church on the fifth Sunday after things (which means 4 a year) and the Good Time Team has rearranged the "Who Brings What When" schedule accordingly.

Our "In For Lunch" dates for the new church year are

- Sunday, August 30th
- Sunday, November 29th (which will be a "Share Your Thanksgiving Leftovers" potluck)
- Sunday, January 29th
- Sunday, June 30th

There are three other potluck events planned during the year.

- A finger food lunch before the October 18th Fall Congregational Meeting
- The annual Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, February 18th
- A finger food lunch before the May 15th Spring Congregational Meeting.

Chalice Circles / Interest Groups

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Team. . Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle is not meeting in June. Look for a gathering in July.

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, is an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Barton Parlor. The group is on summer break (happily reading). They return in September. Facilitator Carole Harner.