

Red River Ramblings



September 2015
Volume 13
Issue 3

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At The Same
Time

Church calendar
for the next
30 days:



Four Sunday mornings gatherings: to kick-start your week!

Refreshments: H

Sunday, September 6, 2015

The 2015 Ware Lecture

Dr. Cornel West, speaking (*on video*)

The Ware Lecture is the seminal event of the annual UUA General Assembly -- like a TED lecture just for us. Last June was the 93rd lecture, and the list of lecturers so honored is long and amazing. Martin Luther King (1966), Kurt Vonnegut (1986), May Sarton (1982), Norman Lear (1992), and Morris Dees (2000) have all been Ware Lecturers at UUA GAs. We now add to the list Dr. Cornel West. On Sunday we will watch the lecture he gave. Be prepared! It is incredible. (His bio is on page 3)

Refreshments: A-G

Sunday, September 13, 2015

Religion: Do You Take it With or Without?

The Rev. Annie Foerster, *preaching*

I heard a country-western-religious song on the radio last Sunday on my way to church. The chorus went something like this: *When life gets me down, help me remember that God's last name is not Damn.* I had to laugh and sing along. Sometimes it's good to laugh about serious subjects or subjects we don't usually like to talk about. Sometimes it's good to step back and take a look at them from a different point of view. So be prepared to step back and laugh--I'm going to be talking about GOD.

Sunday, September 20, 2015

No Mud, No Lotus

The Rev. Dr. Christine Tata

All religious traditions address the "problem" of suffering, with widely differing assumptions and lexicons. Those of us seeking a religious path that is rooted in practice and not ideology may need a bit of a minute to explore the options available. And, of course, we sometimes only tend to explore suffering when we are immersed in it. But even at our lowest, we can find paths out of pain and into happiness. Don't be afraid of the mud; we need it in order to have the lotus.

Refreshments: I - R

Sunday, September 27, 2015

Our External DNA

The Rev. Teri Massengale, *preaching*

In living organisms DNA does not usually exist as a single molecule, but instead as a pair of molecules held tightly together. These two long strands entwine like vines in the shape of a double helix. As a Unitarian Universalist congregation, we are held together in a religious community historically comprised of Unitarians and Universalists, our double helix. Like the backbone of a DNA strand formed from sugars and phosphates, our church is made up of and reflects our Unitarian Universalist values, providing stabilization and direction in our daily lives.

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



Like water for chocolate.

Have you heard of the book and the film by that title? Have you ever wondered what exactly that was supposed to mean? I did, and I discovered the meaning by accident some years ago when I was in graduate school, looking up another term in a dictionary of Mexican colloquialisms.

There are various ways to make hot chocolate in Mexico, but one very old, traditional way was to use coarsely ground cacao beans and hot water, frothed together using an instrument similar to a whisk rolled quickly between the palms of both hands. And key to this process was the temperature of the water. It had to be hot—very hot, but not boiling. And the temperature would be just right when the water in the pot would start to tremble on the surface, just before breaking into a boil. That is just the right temperature for water for chocolate.

In popular speech, it came to mean something big was about to happen. When somebody or something was described as being like water for chocolate, it could even mean that all hell was about to break loose! Around our community, I feel we're at the point of being like water for chocolate in a very positive sense. With plans for children's RE well under way, a new Safe Congregation Policy in place, and the fellowship of wonderful new members, I feel the water starting to heat and tremble as we continue work-

ing towards a congregational life as delicious and satisfying as hot chocolate. (I almost can't help myself: the water imagery is a strong lingering memory of our recent Water Communion!)

If you're able to do so, I hope you will join me on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 9, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm in the chapel for an open forum or "town hall" meeting—the first one we've had in a few years. There is no strict agenda, but the opening topic will be our bylaws, the document we use to govern ourselves and structure our operations. I will bring some copies of the bylaws and some ideas I have drafted about how to simplify them. (The bylaws are available online at our website if you'd like to review them before the meeting.) And as we come ever closer to reviving children's RE, I think we should consider what would be the preferred time to have it—during our regular 11:15 service or at 10:00 when the grown-ups are in Adult Forum?

The town hall meeting is an open venue where you can let your voice be heard about anything at all that is relevant to our congregation. We can brainstorm and discuss and share interests and concerns, but no binding votes will be made. Following the town hall meeting, the Board of Trustees will meet for its regular monthly meeting at 7:00 pm. Fifteen minutes are always set aside for concerns of the congregation, with five minutes allowed per speaker. If you wish to have a place on the Board agenda, please feel free to let me know.

The water's getting just to the right temperature and something big is sure to happen!

Picnic In The Park Sunday, October 4th

Nothing says lovin' like ... food – and at Red River, we do food well! Even though it's still summer, by October things will (surely) cool down. We're counting on it because we're heading to Munson Park (3 minutes from church) on Sunday, Oct 4th – following worship.

A Picnic In The Park! Bring a dish to share, you leave your dishes, cutlery, napkins, table cloths at home – all will be provided. We'll have tea and a chest of ice.

It promises to be a fun Sunday outing. The church has reserved the shelter. There are rest rooms and electrical outlets in case you want to bring something in a crock pot.

Details as the weather cools! Circle it on your calendar so you won't forget.



Our first-time speakers for September



Cornel West (September 6th) is a prominent and provocative democratic intellectual. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard and obtained his MA and PhD in philosophy at Princeton. He has taught at Union Theological Seminary (where he has recently returned to teach), Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Paris. He has written nineteen books and edited thirteen books. He is best known for his classic [Race Matters](#), published by Beacon Press in 1993. His latest books are [Black Prophetic Fire](#), which offers a fresh perspective on six revolutionary African American leaders (Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King Jr., Ella Baker, Malcolm X, and Ida B. Wells) and [The Radical King](#), a collection of MLK's writings curated and introduced by Prof. West to reclaim Dr. King's prophetic and radical vision as both a civil rights leader and—more broadly—as a human right activist. Both books were published by Beacon Press.

Cornel West appears frequently on *Real Time with Bill Maher*, *The Colbert Report*, CNN and C-SPAN, and he makes numerous appearances speaking to audiences large and small on subjects ranging from racial justice and queer rights to climate justice. He has recently been deeply involved in the Black Lives Matter protests and was among those arrested in Ferguson in 2015. Cornell West has a passion to communicate in writings and orations, through music and film, and in solidarity with groups and faith communities committed to justice in order to keep alive the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.—a legacy of telling the truth and bearing witness to love and justice.



Teri A. Massengale (September 27th) resides in Denton after severing as the called minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley in College Station, Texas. Along with her partner of twenty years, the Rev. Marilyn (Lenni) Lissberger, Teri assisted at Pilgrims in the Park an outdoor church for the homeless in Bryan, Texas.

After graduating from Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Teri served as chaplain at Harris Methodist Hospital in Fort Worth. Besides her love for Unitarian Universalism, Teri's first career was nonprofit management working with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Planned Parenthood, AIDS

Resources of Rural Texas and the League of Women Voters.

Welcome Jan, Keller & Joe: our newest members



Joe Jordan and Keller Holmes are from California. Joe was born and raised in Los Angeles, while Keller grew up in Central Texas, then attended high school and college in California. They moved to North Texas to be closer to Keller's family. Joe is a high school English teacher who can (and will) perform a one-man Shakespeare play if

prompted. Keller works from home, where she splits her time between her database work and fiction writing. They are happy to have found a community after the culture shock of moving from The Bay Area to Texoma.

They have two very skittish cats, who have no interest in community at all, and hide from everyone.

Jan Fletcher writes: I'm thrilled to return to Red River and hope to be an active part of the community, starting by reinstating RRUU JAM as a chalice circle. My husband, Ken, and I moved from Duncanville to Sherman in 2007 to be near his daughter, grandson and the art community in Texoma.



We settled on the prairie between Sherman and Whitesboro with five acres for our "rescue" Chieftain and my Ally McBeal kitty. My son, Rob, teaches theatre in Dallas; so I return to the Metroplex often. As a self-employed entertainer, I set my own hours which allows me lots of time to devote to a myriad of interests: reading, family, friends, cooking, travel, theatre and of course music. In addition, Entertainment Coordinator of Earth Day Texoma keeps me busy year round. This obviously skims the surface of "me"... see you at Church!

Herald Democrat

Faces of Faith

Unitarian Universalist Church Open to Theological Differences

**By Future Brown
Herald Democrat**

Saturday, August 15, 2015

*The fourth in a weekly series
featuring Texomans sharing their
personal faith.*

In 1961, the American Unitarian Association merged with the Unitarian Universalist Church of America to form the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Although both the Unitarian Church and the Universalist Church have roots in Christianity, the Unitarian Universalist Association does not have a formal doctrine and Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, 515 N. Burnett Ave., Denison, welcomes people of different theological perspectives to take part in weekly discussions.

Red River Unitarian Universalist President Daniel Althoff said that what really binds Unitarian Universalists together is not so much a common belief, but rather a common attitude toward how everyone and everything should be treated.

"UUs often participate in protests and demonstrations in favor of equal rights for women; equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; for peace; and in favor of humane treatment for refugees, immigrants, and prisoners. I find this inspirational and faithful to the UU tradition," he said.

The Unitarian Universalist Association is also united through the seven principles that guide the religious communities.

"The principles do not claim divine authorship or revelation; they were formulated by and voted on by the members of the Unitarian Universalist Association

and are subject to revision by the same democratic process," he said.

Although there are bylaws and rules that govern each congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Association leaves daily spiritual practices up to the individual.

"Some people choose meditation, yoga, or formal prayer. Other people find spiritual enrichment through gardening or contact with nature. Others have no regular daily practice at all," Althoff said.

Popular annual ceremonies, water communion and flower communion celebrate community life and honor individual uniqueness, Althoff said.



"Most UU congregations include the lighting of a flaming chalice, the symbol of Unitarian Universalism, at the beginning of Sunday services. This is probably the most widespread of UU ritual practices."

Althoff said he finds happiness with his faith in many ways.

"I have been deeply moved several times over the years by the variety, beauty and depth of our Sunday services at various churches, ranging from Pentecostal-inspired gospel songs, to quiet contemplative services, to poetry readings, to all-music services featuring instrumental soloists on flute and harp."

Althoff said what the church does stand for are love and justice.

"In our statement of Seven Principles, we call for respect for the interdependent web of life, of which we are all a part and which sustains us."

The Unitarian Universalist Church often draws inspiration from the Hebrew Bible, Althoff said.

"We strive towards what we call a beloved community in the here and now, where we all may 'let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,'" he said, quoting Amos 5:24.

One of the biggest misconceptions, Althoff said, is that the church gets mistaken for a cult.

"A cult typically focuses on a single charismatic individual as the leader who dictates beliefs and practice."

He went on to say that the Unitarian Universalist Association prides itself on transparent governance, democratically chosen leadership, insistence on each individual's right of conscience, and the stubborn independence of each congregation.

"If we're a cult, we're really bad at it."

Althoff said one of the main things he believes people should know is that the Unitarian Universalist Association does not believe there are easily found answers to life's questions which coincides with the fourth principle of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

"We do not offer ready-made answers about heaven, hell, the afterlife, the Bible, God, or Jesus. We ask. We discuss. We consider. We speculate. And we attempt to do this respectfully. We contemplate sacred scriptures, but we also employ the discoveries of science and the insights of poetry, art, music, and reason in what we call a responsible search for truth and meaning."

Board Bits

The following items were discussed by the Board of Trustees during their August 12th meeting:

- Keeping a close eye on electric utility bill due to AC and summer heat
- Researching and pricing a video security system for the RE areas upstairs and for the area around the building
- A request to seek congregational opinion at the September town hall meeting on when to hold RE classes
- Continue discussions with the candidate for the DRE position
- The Shelter Meal on August 25; also agreed that a closer relationship with Grayson County Shelter was desirable
- Inquiry to be made to Grayson County NAACP representative concerning the keynote speaker's offensive anti-gay remarks at annual NAACP dinner
- A successful and well attended Audio-Visual workshop

Treasurer's Report

In the month of July, we had income of \$7,039 from general operations. After operations expense of \$2,488 for the month, we had a net income from operations of \$4,561.

In July we received generous donations of \$1,100 for the elevator fund. We also received \$404 from the garage sale.

For the year to date period, we had a net income of \$14,394 from operations. Those included restricted amounts of \$9,833. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$5,054.

As of the end of July 2015, we had total cash of \$59,780 and our debt totaled \$30,183.

In July, we donated \$85 from the Share the Plate program to the Grayson County Shelter.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

The Adult Forum for September

Sept. 6 – The Hundred Year Waltz: Part 6, documents the century-long courtship between Unitarianism and Universalism that culminated in their merger in 1961.



Sept. 13 – The Hundred Year Waltz: Part 6, 2nd half, follows Universalism through its first half century and discusses where it may go from here.

Sept. 20 – Abell 2218 – A Massive Gravitational Lens: view of the double Einstein ring, which is an alignment of not just two, but three galaxies along the sightline.

Sept. 27 – The Hubble Ultra Deep Field: showed that the most distant galaxies tend to be peculiar, which is consistent with the evolving universe expectations of the Big Bang model. Also, this view shows that there are over three times as many galaxies in the Ultra Deep Field as the number of stars visible with the naked eye in the entire night sky.

Booked For Lunch

What have you been reading this summer? Our next gathering is on Thursday, September 10, at 12:30 pm. Everyone is invited to come and join in the fun conversation. Bring your own sack lunch. Dessert will be provided. Carole



Special Town Hall Meeting, Sept. 9th

Wednesday afternoon, September 9th from 4 – 6 PM, in the chapel. The purpose is to have an open conversation about revising the church bylaws and to consider the idea of having Religious Education (i.e. Sunday school) for kids from 10 – 11, rather than during the church service.

The meeting to bounce around ideas, not to make any decisions.

Read details in Dan's Dispatch (on page 2).

News from the North

The North Texas UU Congregations is an umbrella organization to which Red River UU belongs. We are one of thirteen congregations that make up NTUUC.

NTUUC, through their endowment, has given our Fellowship grants for multiple years. Marla Loturco of Red River UU is on the board of NTUUC as the secretary. This organization is a vital support to our Fellowship and it is essential for us to be involved. We receive education, training, and funding from this organization. It also connects us with the twelve other congregations in North Texas.

Marla attended the NTUUC Board Retreat on July 31 – August 1, 2015. . It was facilitated by Anita Mills the board president and attended by representatives from most NTUUC congregations. Work was performed to complete the NTUUC strategic plan and a regular NTUUC board meeting was held in the afternoon.

The following takeaways are from the retreat and board meeting:

- A one page job description for NTUUC congregation's representative was adopted. This will be given to each congregation's president.
- NTUUC by-laws were revised to provide a youth rep and observer from the congregation where the board meeting is being held as opposed to one rep who serves for a year.
- It was voted on and approved to add a NATUURES rep/observer to the board. NTUUC provides \$10,000



each year for this group. This is the North Texas UU religious education directors.

- Lyssa Jenkins and Aly Tharp were approved as the co-chair of the social justice committee.
- The climate change conference originally scheduled on 24 October 2015 has been moved to the last weekend in January, 2016. Details will be forthcoming. Aly Tharp is in charge of the program with help from Anita Mills.

The NTUUC executive committee met on 29 August at First UU Church. The primary tasks from the meeting include; work on the Strategic Plan, prepare a budget for 2015/2016 to present to the NTUUC board, and prepare the board agenda for the September 12th board meeting which will be held at Community UU in Plano. The board meeting is open if anyone would care to attend.

If you would like to expand your UU experience, there are multiple committees available in NTUUC, Education and Social Justice being two who can always use help. If you are interested, please talk to Marla Loturco for more details.

In September, NTUUC is involved with the Pride Parades. See the article below for details.

Are Pride Parades Social Action?

This question is certainly a valid one, and a good reminder of why we march. The parades are a major PR opportunity for us, but for a real reason and not just for a party. Those parades and street fairs are a chance for us to do ministry, reaching folks who have been abused because of their orientation or identity, often in the name of religion. The *It Gets Better* campaign and increasing number of school G/S Alliances point towards more acceptance, but negative messages still abound.

For decades, lesbian and gay teens have felt isolated, absent from media portrayals, and condemned by institutions and politicians. Substance abuse among LGBTQ people is double that of the general population, and suicide rates are triple. The numbers are even worse in the transgender community. And homelessness: as many as 40% of youth on the streets are LGBTQ, many of whom were kicked out of their homes or fled for their physical safety. Survival sex is a sad fact of life for many of them.

The parades are also not just a celebration of self; many of us

tired of that ages ago. Instead we march for others who have a shortage of pride, to give them a lifeline, a glimmer of hope. Many people know vaguely, if at all, of our welcoming congregations, of our affirming message and inclusive faith. The recent court decisions give us much to celebrate, and a wedding theme.

The Dallas extravaganza is a regional event, attracting at least 30-40,000 from all over North Texas and beyond, while Ft. Worth's is smaller, without the huge crowds. We're working on a new concept for our float – including a blimp and a bus for Dallas (with AC!)

Dallas Parade & Festival: September 20, kick off 2 pm
NTUUC float is number 29 in the parade.
Park at First Unitarian Church; ride the shuttle!

Tarrant County Pride Events
Parade and Street Fair: October 3 starting at noon
Picnic: October 4 starting at noon



From the Larger Community ~ a couple of announcements



Come pitch in to help local homeowners with safety and maintenance repair projects during the first ever "A Brush With Kindness" Week September 19 - 26. The three homeowners we'll be assisting this fall are listed in green on the construction schedule. **"A Brush With Kindness" Week is a new initiative by Habitat for Humanity, and we are one of 38 affiliates in the US who were chosen to participate!** Do you have some time? **We really need volunteers, individually or in groups, who can help!** All the projects will be exterior projects-painting, minor repairs, and yard cleanup.

What:

Habitat for Humanity of Grayson County is one of nearly 40 Habitat affiliates partnering with Valspar, Habitat's national paint partner, and Wells Fargo, to launch A Brush with Kindness Week, Sept. 19-26. A Brush with Kindness Week is a nationwide effort to transform neighborhoods by painting, providing minor exterior home repairs, landscaping and cleaning up yards in partnership with more than 130 low-income homeowners, many of whom are elderly or have a disability. Locally, Habitat for Humanity volunteers will work on three projects: two in Sherman and one in Denison.

When:

Saturday, **Sept. 19**, Wednesday, **Sept. 23**, and Saturday, **Sept. 26** at **each of these three sites**

Where:

701 E. Orange St., Sherman; 1826 S. Mirick, Denison; 301 Chisholm Trail, Sherman

Contact:

Carrie Bolin, Volunteer Coordinator, via her e-mail address carriebolin@hotmail.com or her mobile phone [903-327-3204](tel:903-327-3204). You may also contact Laurie Mealy, Executive Director, at [903-893-0009](tel:903-893-0009).

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Job Title: **Public Assistance Project Specialist**

Department: **Department Of Homeland Security**

Agency: **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

Job Announcement Number: **FEMA-15-DLH-126-RSV**

SALARY RANGE: \$16.14 to \$24.17/hr

OPEN PERIOD: Friday, July 24, 2015 to Thursday, December 31, 2015

SERIES & GRADE: AD-0301-00

POSITION INFORMATION: Temporary - Intermittent employment not to exceed 2 years

DUTY LOCATIONS: MANY vacancies - Location Negotiable After Selection, United States

WHO MAY APPLY: All United States Citizens

SECURITY CLEARANCE: Public Trust - Background Investigation

SUPERVISORY STATUS: No

JOB SUMMARY:**About the Agency**

When disaster strikes, America looks to FEMA. Now FEMA looks to you. Join our team and use your talent to support Americans in their times of greatest need. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepares the nation for all hazards and manages Federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. We foster innovation, reward performance and creativity, and provide challenges on a routine basis with a well-skilled, knowledgeable, high performance workforce.

Details here:

<http://www.fema.gov/reservist-program>

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:

LD Clark, Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Gil*
 Aesthetics Team:
Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula
 Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*
 Communications: *Doug*
 Finance:
 Good Times:
Carole, Marilyn & Marion
 Long Range Planning:
Amy, Gil, Marilyn
 Membership:
 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

Moveable Feast for September

Feasters, and friends, are invited to Donna Toerper's home in Bonham for a late September feast. While the date is still pending, keep it in your mind and check the e-news for details.

Red River's moveable feast is one of our chalice circles (what other faith traditions call Small Group Ministries). Each feast begins with a reading, and a check in and concludes the gathering with another reading and a check-out.

The purpose of the Moveable Feast is simple: it is enjoyable to break bread together. Some months it is a pot luck affair; some months a few people, or the host, prepares the food; some months the group goes to a local restaurant and often there is an annual outing to Dallas to visit ethnic markets and have a meal together (with the meal at one place and dessert at another). If you would like to be on the mailing list for the Moveable Feast, speak with Marion or Elbert Hill, the facilitators of the group.

Chalice Circles / Interest Groups

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, an informal book discussion group which usually meets the second Thursday of the month at 12:30 p.m. in the Barton Parlor, which is September 10th this month. Facilitator Carole Harner.

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Team. The Team will meet on Sunday, September 13th @ 7 PM at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets monthly. Check the weekly e-news for details of the September Feast. Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill.

UU JAM, an acoustic music circle for musicians, singers & music loving listeners meets the first Friday of each month starting at 7 PM at the home of Jan and Ken Fletcher. Bring your instrument, song books, beverage of choice & a snack to share. Please email your place in the circle: [uujam + suffix](mailto:uujam+suffix). Facilitator: Jan Fletcher

Contact Us

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♦ ♦ ♦

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