



# Red River Ramblings



October 2015  
Volume 13  
Issue 4

Where spiritual curiosity and conscience connect

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Church calendar  
for the next  
30 days:



**Sunday, October 4, 2015**

## Our Unique and Splendid Callings

Julie Brock, *preaching (video)*



Julie Brock, a recent graduate of Starr King School, is the intern minister at the First Unitarian Society in Madison, WI.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> she wowed the congregation with her first sermon. Of her remarks Julie writes: Each of us has a ministry in this world, whether the work we do is labeled as such or not. We are called into being to exist as our specific selves. Each of these selves is deeply called by and to something – our work is to find out what.

AFTER THINGS: Picnic in the Park (details on page 2)

**Sunday, October 11, 2015**

## The Fourth Quarter

The Rev. Dr. Don Fielding, *speaking*

Don's reflection is about the intersection between meaning and aging. The title is not only a reference to the last quarter of a football game, but also the last quarter of an individual's life. His "Reflection" will include an interesting story of a famous college football game played only a few years after football became a popular sport in the United States, and, what he believes is the very best way to fill one's life with meaning in the Fourth Quarter of each person's life.

Refreshments: H

**Sunday, October 18, 2015**

## In Defense of Barbarians

The Rev. Dr. William Schulz, *preaching (video)*

Bill Schulz, president of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), will take up the cause of barbarianism and explain how you, too, may fall into that favored category or at least be allied with it.

The UU Service Committee is a vital part of the free church tradition and Dr Schulz will offer a glimpse of the work of the service committee while giving us a look at who were, and are today, barbarians.

Refreshments: I-R

**Sunday, October 25, 2015**

## No Shortcuts Home: Self-Help Myths and Illusions

The Rev. Dr. Christine Tata, *preaching*

For decades Americans have devoured self-help books and courses and websites, written by people of dubious credentials and a wide variety of experiences, but all promising to make us smarter, happier, thinner, richer, cooler, or all of the above. But do these mass marketed self-improvement schemes really help anybody? Or do they just lighten our wallets and sink our self-esteem? Come join Dr. Tata to consider some alternatives to the neverending quest for perfection.

AFTER THINGS: Finger Food Potluck & the fall congregational meeting

Morning Meditation - 9 ❖ Adult Forum - 10  
Worship - 11:15 ❖ Conversations & Calories - 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



Christmas is in the air!

Well, sort of. Bear with me.

When October arrives, I always give a sigh of relief: the worst of the heat has passed, and the easing of the sun lowers in the afternoon and evening sky feels refreshing to me. I'm glad when autumn arrives. I think my nature must be autumnal, because autumn is when I feel I'm at my personal best. The stores break out their Halloween items—right alongside their Christmas decorations! In a commercial sense, the “holiday season” begins in October and it won't end until January.

Although I don't particularly like it, I understand why stores are eager to put out their Christmas displays—to whet their customers' appetite as soon as possible for buying and consumption. What I understand far less is why so many ordinary people seem to embrace that pattern of rushing

the holidays. I've noticed that many houses in Texoma display Halloween decorations in early October. And when Halloween has passed, I have seen those same houses put up their Christmas decorations right away with barely a nod to Thanksgiving in passing. I really don't understand it.

But I think I might have an idea as to why they do that. A good friend of mine once told me that an important part of happiness is having something to look forward to. People want something to look forward to. Maybe that's it. Maybe that's all they have.

As Unitarian Universalists, we are fortunate to always have something to look forward to: diverse and interesting Sunday services, fellowship in larger and smaller groups, our Congregational Meetings (come on October 25th!) and a commitment to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, with fine companionship on the journey.

'Tis the season!

## Fall Congregational Meeting ~ Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>

What, you say? Another congregational meeting! Didn't we just have one?

Well, yes. Our bylaws require us to hold a spring meeting in May and a fall meeting in October. This is the meeting where we get to talk about how the church is doing; what concerns we have; what hopes; what suggestions.

We will devote time to ponder whether our current bylaws inhibit or enhance our congregational life. Do we really need 11 standing committees? Why do we have *two* congregational meetings each year (when it is hard enough to get us to come to one)? Is it, maybe, time to revise our bylaws so we can become a more perfect community?

We will talk about ongoing attempts to start a Sunday school for children and about some needs

our building has.

Self governance is no less a foundation of our church than the inherent dignity and worth of all people. It is no less important than knowing that we are a lay-led congregation. It is no less important than celebrating a faith free from dogma and creed.

On Sunday, come meditate, come listen, come worship, come eat and stay to participate in fall meeting.

Annual Reports are due from several committees, teams and chalice circles. Those who have reports to write received an email last week as a reminder.

Remember you can email your report – without having to do any formatting – to secretary [+ suffix]\*. The deadline is Wednesday, October 14, 2015.

*\*the church email suffix is: @rruu.org*

## UUJam ~ Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

At various Red River events in late 2007 some discussion often centered around creating a new challenge circle for musicians and others to enjoy live music. New member Jan Fletcher offered her home in the country between Sherman and Whitesboro as a location and the rest is history. Members agreed the circle should be acoustic and opted for a combination between music "jam", where musicians join in with each other in succession, and separate performances around the circle. Listeners are always encouraged.

Through the years the group could be as few as 2 to as large as 20. Musicians bring keyboards, guitars, banjos, dulcimers, flutes, autoharp and percussion. Most even sing! Typical of UUs, music is eclectic -- original compositions, pop standards, early rock n roll, country-western, folk, Broadway & show tunes and favorite singer-songwriters.



This opportunity for music and fellowship is returning the first Friday of each month at 7 pm with Jan's return to active membership. Once again, she hopes to provide a fun venue for acoustic musicians and a good listening audience at her home in the country. Music starts at 7 pm with a break around 8:30 or so and continues till all are tired. Bring a friend and join the fun!

The October Jam will be Friday, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bring your acoustic instruments, song books, drink of choice & snack to share. Contact Jan (972.897.5796) to confirm your place in the music circle...a listening audience is warmly welcomed.

## Picnic in The Park ~ Sunday, Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>



The weather forecast sounds ideal – a cool, autumn morning perfect for a Picnic in the Park!

After church, everyone is cordially invited to be part of the potluck picnic.

Bring a dish to share but leave your dishes, cutlery, napkins and table cloths at home – all will be provided. We'll also have tea and a chest of ice.

The best part is that there is no agenda, no specified purpose of the event beyond spending time breaking bread together in the beauty of the park. The shelter has been reserved for us, there are bathrooms and a couple of outlets, should you want to plug in a crock pot.

Be you a member, friend or visitor – please come. It promises to be an enjoyable time.

## Booked for Lunch ~ Thursday, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>

What have you been reading lately? Looking for something to add to your reading list? Or maybe you just want to get out of the house for a while.

Come to our next Booked for Lunch gathering and find out what others from church are reading. The conversation is fun, informative and always enjoyable. We even have snacks! See you there. We meet in the Barton Parlor at 12:30 pm.

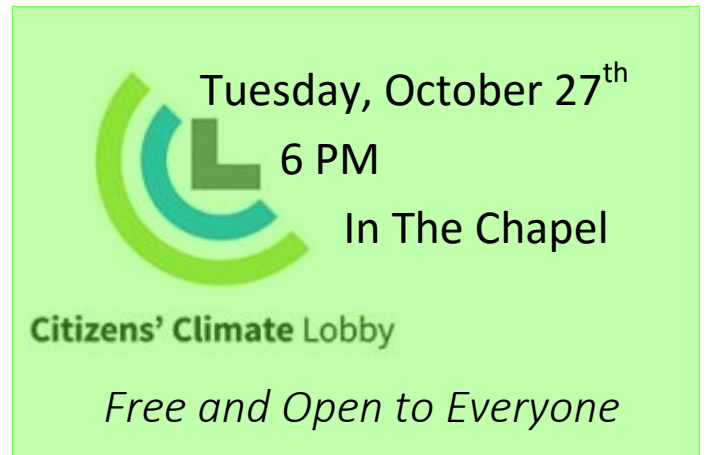
## News from the UUA

Two UUs are finalists *Forbes* magazine's contest for young social entrepreneurs who are creating solutions to global challenges.

Heather Concannon and Elizabeth Nguyen, Unitarian Universalist Community Cooperatives: These two 27-year-old clergy members co-founded the Roxbury, Mass.-based Unitarian Universalist Community Cooperatives. The organization offers cooperatively-owned affordable housing communities and opportunities for individual investors or organizations who value cooperation, and justice, but who struggle to find places to invest their money in ways that reflect their values.

## Texas Energy Freedom Tour ~ comes to our church

The Texas Energy Freedom Tour is coming to Red River! Here's your opportunity to get the facts, not fiction, about climate change. When we received information about the possibility of hosting a community-wide event to help the public learn more about climate change, the Board enthusiastically said YES! Traveling Texas to discuss how a market-based solution to climate change can increase your family's energy freedom of choice! Tell everyone you know to come! Here are specifics about the group:



**Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**6 PM**  
**In The Chapel**

**Citizens' Climate Lobby**

*Free and Open to Everyone*

### Who are we?

We are citizen volunteers committed to a vibrant, growing economy that manages climate risks appropriately. Most of us are former engineers in the oil/gas industry.



#### Meet Peter

Peter Bryn is an engineer who proudly spent eight years with ExxonMobil. Peter recently resigned to become a full-time volunteer with Citizens' Climate Lobby Texas.



#### Meet Brett

Brett Cease is a UT-Dallas doctoral student in Public Policy and co-leader of the Denton, TX chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby. He's worked the past decade in the field as a canoe instructor, camp director, and high school social studies teacher, and is now working with CCL to catalyze existing stakeholders to find common economic solutions.



#### Meet Ricky

Ricky Bradley is a Texan who knows America can achieve energy freedom while growing its economy. After volunteering full time for two years, Ricky now works for Citizens' Climate Lobby.

*We UUs understand that a changing climate is already costing us with droughts, heat waves, increased fire activity, water shortages and more.*

*[Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit mobilizing people to take action to stop climate change, protect our people and help Texas' energy economy make a smooth transition.*

*Our market-based Carbon Fee and Dividend policy would create jobs, support small businesses and families, and reduce emissions — all without burdensome EPA regulations or growing the government.*





## Board Bits

The September meeting of the Board of Trustees was especially productive and full. The Board decided on the following actions:

- To switch to laser-printed documents rather than inkjet-printed copies
- To proceed with all due speed in pricing and installing a video system for the building, especially for expected RE locations
- To prepare and distribute a summary of suggestions on revising the current Bylaws for more congregational input at the October Congregational Meeting
- To discuss restoring a "Social Justice" entry in the annual budget at the October Congregational Meeting
- To hire Doug Strong for a six-month trial period as "Communications Leader" in light of his substantial duties and contributions in the areas of communication and coordination.

All meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to the congregation, and we invite any interested members to submit agenda items and attend!

## Treasurer's Report

In the month of August, we had income from operations of \$1,478.

In August we received \$15 for the Wi Fi fund and spent \$254. The balance is now \$1,347. We also spent \$400 from the musicians fund for media training. That balance is now at \$172. For the year to date period, we had a net income of \$7,096 from operations. We have restricted amounts of \$9,194. The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$5,893.

As of the end of August 2015, we had total cash of \$60,648 and our debt totaled \$30,183.

In July, we donated \$89 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

## The Adult Forum for October

**Oct 4** - Hubble's Legacy and Beyond: the Kepler Space Telescope will be able to detect Earth-sized orbits, having a period of



a year or more and will answer the question humanity has asked for thousands of years, "Are Earth-sized planets rare or common around other stars in the galaxy?"

**Oct 11, 18 & 25** - we will watch and discuss the movie *Slavery By Another Name*.

*Slavery By Another Name* is a challenging 2012 documentary about the Jim Crow South. After the Civil War new forms of involuntary servitude took the place of slavery with shocking force and brutality. The film, narrated by Lawrence Fishburne, documents 80 years of African Americans being arrested, often guilty of no crime at all, compelled to work without pay, repeatedly bought and sold, and coerced to do the bidding of white masters. *Slavery By Another Name* is based on Douglas A Blackman's Pulitzer Prize winning book by the same name. Descendants and eminent historians are interviewed.

Langston Hughes poem, *I, Too* seems like an appropriate introduction to the film:

### **I, Too**

By Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.



## News From The North

The North Texas UU Congregations (NTUUC) is an umbrella organization of the 13 UU congregations clustered in North Texas.

A bit of history about the founding of NTUUC:

*In the mid 1960s the Federal government encouraged churches to build low-cost housing projects with very small interest loans (1%). NTAUUS (North Texas Association of UU Societies which has been rebranded NTUUC) was established specifically to operate such a low-cost housing project. By 1970 a 172 unit apartment complex, Raible Place (named for a former minister of First Church, Dallas) was completed in Irving.*

*In 2003 investors approached NTAUUS with an offer of selling the project and NTAUUS became the beneficiary of over two million dollars.*

NTUUC is a vital support to our 13 UU congregations and it is essential for us to be involved. We are lucky that Marla Loturco is involved – not only as our representative, but also as the secretary of the NTUUC board. She keeps us updated on the work of the other churches in the cluster. It is good for us to know what NTUUC is doing to for Unitarian Universalism.

Marla is not the only member from Red River who serves with NTUUC. Marion Hill serves on the LEAD (Leadership Enrichment Assistance Development) committee that gives scholarships to UUs to attend workshops, meetings, and GA).

Here are Marla's takeaways from the last board meeting:

- ♦ NTUUC is endorsing Commit2Respond, an organization for people of faith and conscience taking action for climate justice
- ♦ Secured the name CommonGround Street Choir - a local interfaith protest choir, created by UUs. They show up at protests to *sing* the

message of giving life the shape of justice.

- ♦ NTUUC congregations participation in the Dallas Pride Parade was a huge success.

## Upcoming NTUUC Events

- ♦ Oct 3 – Ft Worth Pride Parade
- ♦ Oct 10 – Endowment & Exec committee mtg – First Church
- ♦ Nov 7 – Board Meeting
- ♦ Jan 9 - Endowment & Exec committee mtg – First Church
- ♦ Jan 23 – Awards Luncheon, Oak Cliff
- ♦ Jan 30 – Social Justice Workshop
- ♦ Mar 12 - Endowment & Exec committee mtg – First Church
- ♦ Apr 2 – Board Meeting, election of officers
- ♦ Jul 22-23 – Board Retreat, Briarwood

## Happens Around the Cluster

**Horizon UU** – “Great Decision” series on world affairs. Oct 7: *Human Trafficking*; Nov 4: *India Emerges*; Dec 2: *Crisis in Syria*.

**Oak Cliff UU** – Welcomed 30 new members in the last year

**Tyler UU** – held the kick off service for the Art of Peace Week in Tyler with Rev. Tamara Lebak, speaking

**Pathways UU** – started Sunday evening services by streaming the weekly CLF (Church of the Larger Fellowship, UU) service that includes live on-line chat

**First Jefferson UU** – will be the Grand Marshall of the Ft Worth Pride Parade on 10/3

**Arlington UU** – hosted the DFW Pagan Unity Festival, with some 500 people attending. They also celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September

**Community UU** – held their 5<sup>th</sup> annual First Responder's Day by collecting and distributing cookies to the area fire stations

Want to expand you UU experience? How about getting involved with a NTUUC. Marla can give you more information.

Thanks Marla & Marion for your wonderful work.

## 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*

## Workshop exploring End of Life Transitions

Many people have things they want to do before they die. Maybe seeing Paris, swimming with a dolphin, or even skydiving. But what about those things you really *should* do? Get peace of mind and provide guidance to the friends and family members you leave behind by attending this free workshop:

### Authoring Life's Final Chapter: Preparing for End of Life Transitions

Saturday, October 10, 2015

10 – 3:30

Horizon Unitarian Universalist Church  
 1641 W. Hebron Pkwy Carrollton, TX 75010

### Topics addressed during workshop

- ◆ Family issues and dynamics
- ◆ Emotional and practical support for caregivers
- ◆ End of life care
- ◆ Legal documentation and issues
- ◆ Traditional and alternative ceremonies to memorialize the deceased

Register by Wednesday, October 8th by clicking [here](#).

## 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 October 8<sup>th</sup> this month. Facilitator Carole Harner.

**GREEN TEAM**, an Environmental Action Team. The Team has no plans to meet in October. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets monthly. In October the feasters will join the all-church potluck picnic in the park (details on page 3). 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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Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

**\*Church email suffix: @rruu.org**