



THE ORACLE

*"Conscience is an oracle of the
Divinity" - William Ellery Channing*

We welcome everyone to our
congregation, recognizing no
distinction of class, nationality, race,
gender, or sexual orientation.



**Thoreau Woods Unitarian Universalist
Church
December 2014 Newsletter**

**Sunday Morning Programs at 10:30
AM**

December 7, 2014

Dawn Newcomer

Ready for Reconstruction

Historical and present-day reconstruction efforts versus deconstruction efforts in the U.S. and how it relates to economic justice. Dawn Newcomer, a native Houstonian, is an accomplished marketing professional with a masters degree from The University of Texas at Austin. Her company is Aurora Design, Inc., and she has been in business for over 34 years. Dawn is also a commercial pilot and flight instructor, an avid organic gardener and an activist for social, economic and environmental justice. She has been a member of Northwoods UUC in The Woodlands for over 10 years, where she serves as chair of Northwoods Green and the Communications Committee. Dawn has two young daughters whom she adopted from China in 2000 and 2002.



December 14, 2014

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

The Inner Light

Rev. Tony talks about how to find your sacred center in times of chaos and confusion.



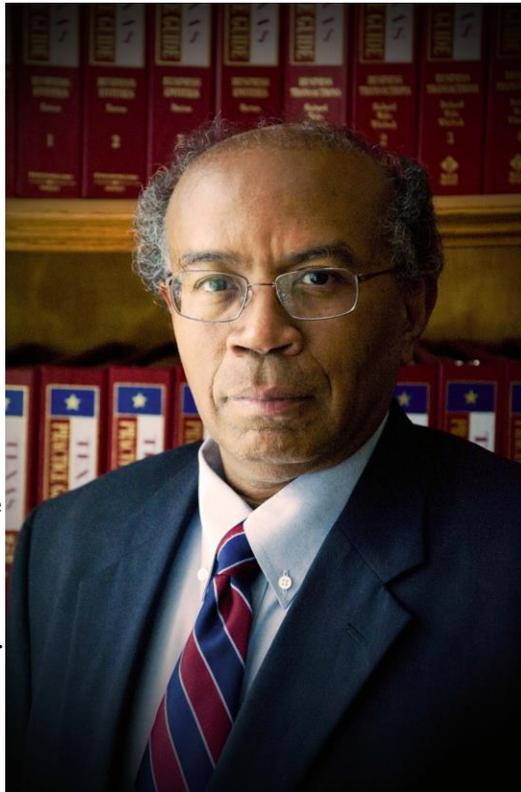
December 21, 2014

Rob Wiley

Progressive Christianity

The sermon will explore contemporary ideas about progressive Christianity and how it fits into the general picture of liberal religion. He will discuss reasons for religious liberals to explore progressive Christian thought and explore resources for learning more about it. He will also briefly detail his own journey from a traditional Christian upbringing, through years as a committed humanist, to his current involvement with a progressive Christian faith.

Rob L. Wiley grew up in a small town in Arkansas. He earned a doctoral degree in communication and a law degree from the University of Texas in 1985. After a brief time as Assistant Dean of the UT Law School, he began private law practice in 1987. His practice emphasizes business and commercial litigation and first amendment and media law. Ms. Stewart died in 2011. Mr. Wiley has five children, one of which is the director of religious education for a UU church in the Denver area.



December 24, 2014

Wednesday 3:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

Do You Hear What I Hear?

A Russian Folk Tale

On December 14 our Sunday morning worship service will be a Christmas Pageant written by the UU composer Joyce Poley. There will be no rehearsals or even any assigned roles until that morning, but we will need a variety of props and costumes for all ages. If you can donate any things that might be made into robes or clothes for angels, wise men (women/boys/girls), mary, joseph, and innkeeper and his daughter, shepherds, and an assortment of barnyard animals, please leave them for Rev. Tony in the church office. If you would like to help design a background or backdrop for our "Stage" please contact Rev. Tony as well.



December 28, 2014

No Speaker

There will be a discussion, sing a few hymns, and go to lunch after this meeting.



Minister: Rev. Tony Lorenzen

revtonyuu@gmail.com

508-344-3668

Office Hours

Please call or email for an appointment if you want to make sure to catch Rev. Tony at the church as he sometimes is at meetings or appointments in the community as part of his ministry.

Monday: Minister's Sabbath Day - Rev. Tony is tending to self care - and errands.

1st and 3rd Tuesdays: 2-7 p.m.

2nd and 4th Tuesdays: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Minister's Message

Ultimate Optimism by Rev. Tony

"There are sufficient resources, both divine and human, to justify an attitude of ultimate if not immediate optimism." - James Luther Adams

When I was in college a journalism professor gave our class an assignment to write down everything we know, everyone we know, every place we've been to, and everything we've accomplished. His point was that we all had an amazing supply of resources from which to write. Years later when I began studying Unitarian Universalism and learned of the five smooth stones of religious liberalism, I remembered my journalism assignment as an early theological exercise in ultimate optimism. The more resources we are aware of, the more we trust that we will ultimately be able to accomplish our goals. Things may be tough at the moment, but what we need to get there is at our disposal.

Thoreau Woods is going through a time of intentional evaluation and change. This is always difficult, but we have a lot of resources that justify our hope in a great future for the congregation. We have identified some new leaders and our new leaders are working hard on helping us forge a direction for the years ahead. Most of the congregation has participated energetically in regular congregational learning and sharing including a fantastic ministerial start up session with a UUA consultant a couple of weeks ago. We have a wonderful new adult spirituality program under way with Firewalking. We are working on updating our newsletter and website. We have learned that we see ourselves as a welcoming group with a keen interest in education and becoming more active in the community.

Later this month we will finish our work with Love Reaches Out and we'll identify a target group for outreach and begin active outreach to that group.

Following that journalism assignment about resources, I wrote a quote from American industrialist Billy Barton on the cover of my journalism notebook: "Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe something inside them was superior to

circumstances.” I believe our resources at Thoreau Woods are superior to our circumstances and I have a lot of hope that Thoreau Woods will achieve many splendid things in the months and years ahead.

Note from President Roseann Barker
Changes They Are A’comin...”

As many of you have heard, the make-up of TWUUC board has changed. Regrettably, Beth Williamson has stepped down as president and we are in need of a vice president. Blaine Hinds continues to act as treasurer and Pam Johnson has agreed to be secretary. Hats off to both of them! Beth will attend meetings when she can in the role of past president. I have attended TWUUC regularly for more than a year now, enveloping myself in the caring and loving ways of all of you. I took the time to grieve the loss of my father who was a UU for 60 years. Now it is time for me to give back and I have both the emotional strength and the willingness.

Rev. Tony, in his capacity as our consulting minister, has led us through the “Love Reaches Out” program and initial work with a congregational consultant, Margaret Borden. Her excellent “Start Up” session helped us determine some important goals such as establishing better communication between the board and the congregation. Margaret led an awesome session and we are the better for it. Thanks to all who stayed and helped to give shape to our future. I hope you can join us for **the third, and last installment “Love Reaches Out” on Sunday, Dec. 14th** as we strive to include as many as possible in this discernment process. There will be good food and even better company. We are learning a great deal about ourselves as a congregation and what we hope for in the future. I am inspired by our willingness to embrace change and to look outward toward the community of Huntsville. I envision an active, vital presence that encourages participation (whether in mind, body, spirit, and/or pocket!) from old, new, and potential members. I look forward to serving all of you, particularly in this time of transition. Roseann



TWUUC EVENTS

Religious Education News

Every Sunday - Religious Education for adults and for children will be held from 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. During multi-generational worship all children will remain with their parents during

the entire service. The younger members of our congregation will be invited to help with parts of the service such as Responsive Reading, Chalice Lighting and Offertory. If a parent is concerned that a child needs a little entertainment during the sermon, coloring books will be provided for use during the sermon only. If a child needs some time alone, the parent and child may retire to the children's R.E. classroom.



December 16, 3rd Tuesdays of the Month, September – June in the sanctuary. A spiritual Deepening Program for Unitarian Universalists. Firewalkers live their lives on fire for Unitarian Universalism. Firewalking is the spiritual formation program that helps people become firewalkers. Over ten months, firewalking will transform you and your spiritual life. As a Firewalking participant you will develop and commit to your own spiritual practice, learn to listen to your own heart and the hearts of others, connect your life and deepest values to Unitarian Universalism. See the detailed explanation of Firewalking in our recent newsletter and on our website. Registration is required for Firewalking and there is some required reading and viewing (videos). Contact Rev. Tony for more information or see our website for more information. Rev. Tony at revtonyyu@gmail.com.

December 28 - Newsletter Deadline. Please submit any items for the newsletter to pamjohnson05@suddenlink.net by the last Sunday of the month.

THOREAU WOODS COFFEEHOUSE



Please join us for the Spring 2015 Season

February 21: [Aimee Bobruk](#)

March 21: [Ellis](#) with [John Guedry](#) & Jon Hall opening

April 18: **Anderson Fair in the Round**

[Ken Gaines](#), [Scott McCarley](#), [George Ensle](#) & [Greg Whitfield](#)

May 16: [James Lee Stanley](#) with [Annalise](#)

[Emerick](#) opening *****5th

Anniversary*****

TWUUC Mission Statement

JUST HELP.

There are three interpretations of this mission.

It is the journey to answer the complex

question "Why am I here?"

It is help that is just.

It is to do no harm of any kind against ourselves, others or the environment.





December's Charity of the Month Guest at Your Table

The GAYT program exemplifies our commitment to social action and to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The UUSC envisions and works towards a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights. The work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee isn't just charity. It isn't just crisis relief. The fundamental task of UUSC is to show us each that we are all connected, that the barriers we erect between us are fictions, and that we must all work together toward our mutual benefit. Although the UUSC is the service arm of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the UUSC receives no money from the UUA. Thus once a year we, and other congregations, raise money for the work of the UUSC. The UUSC takes our contributions and combine it with those from other congregations to empower people like those mentioned in the "Stories of Hope".

Together, we can achieve much more than we could alone. Thoreau Woods started our GAYT program on November 23rd when the youth of our congregation passed out GAYT boxes and "Stories of Hope." If you did not receive a box, there are some available in the sanctuary.

Please place your spare change (and spare twenty-dollar bills) in the GAYT box, and return it to the church by December 21st. You may also donate online at uusc.org/givetoguest.

Please consider donating at the membership level. I am pleased to state that we are a "Vision of Justice" Congregation. That means that at least 50% of the members of this congregation are members of the UUSC. Yeah Congregation!

Toy Drive To further understand Faith in Action, the Youth's RE class is conducting a toy drive this Christmas season. We are asking people to please bring an unwrapped new (or gently used) toy to church on December 6th. Please place your toy in the colorful box marked Santa's Helpers. Toys are especially needed for children over 7 years of age, and especially, especially needed are gifts for teenagers. These toys will be given to the Santa's Helpers program at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church where the children from our church will help organize and distribute the toys to children from



Huntsville.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Order of Service If you are willing to take over the weekly OOS, please let Anne True know.

Religious Education If you would like to help with RE, please talk to Beth Williamson at 295-3170.

Building and Grounds If you would like to help maintain the building and/or grounds, please contact Paul Culp at culp@shsu.edu.

Coffeehouse If you would like to help with the coffeehouse, please contact Pam Johnson via email at pamjohnson05@suddenlink.net or call 936-661-4313/936-661-4313. We need help with admission table, kitchen, setup and teardown during the event, as well as bakers.

Good Shepherd Mission

Please continue to bring food. They are very low right now. Thanks for helping however you can. They also need volunteers.



In order for Thoreau Woods UU Church to more adequately respond to the needs of our members and friends, we are now registered on the Lotsa website. Maybe you just need a ride, help when you are ill or just a visit from a friendly face or a chat with Rev. Tony. This site can help us keep track of all that so no one falls through the cracks. If you need help or are willing to help, please go to <http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com>.

Joys & Concerns



Please wish a happy birthday to these members and friends with December birthdays!

- 2 Jerilyn Collins
- 4 Liam Dexter
- 5 Rick Norman
- 25 Joan Stringer
- 27 Sharon Marx
- 28 Carol Turner
- 30 Anne Sigler



DENOMINATIONAL EVENTS

February 20-22, 2015 **SW LREDA Mid-Winter Conference**, featuring a keynote address and concert by Nick Page, will be held at U-Bar-U, in Mountain Home, TX, 20-22 February, 2015. For a webflyer, go to

http://www.uuasouthernregion.org/images/SW_LREDA_Advertising_Flyer_Registration_2015.02.pdf.



EVENTS

Sam Houston Memorial Museum upcoming events

December 1, 4:30 to 6:00 pm: 5th Annual Photography Contest Awards and Artist's Reception

December 6, 10 am - 2 pm: Houston Family Christmas

For more information go to www.SamHoustonMemorialMuseum.com



Save the date TXUUJM Legislative Action Day @ the Capitol

Jan. 20, 2015 Plan now to join fellow UUs from across Texas as we gather at the Capitol for our first Texas UU Justice Ministry Legislative Action Day Tuesday, Jan. 20 to promote our main issues: women's reproductive justice, medicaid expansion and economic justice. We'll start the day from 8:30-10:30 a.m. with supportive legislators, who'll teach us about the legislative process and their views about the upcoming session. We'll also get briefed on how to handle legislative meetings from Austin UU Karen Neeley, who's worked as a lobbyist for community banks for about 25 years. From there, we'll visit legislators from the districts where each of us reside. We will do that in teams because numbers talk. Don't worry if you're just one person visiting from your area, because you'll have fellow UUs with you, but know the more people from an area signing the book will catch legislators' attention. We'll reconvene as a big group to debrief our day from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Those planning to arrive Monday, Jan. 19, will have the option of a special tour of the Capitol, by Karen Neeley, who will show us the shortcuts, back stairways and other secret spaces most people never discover, along with sharing a few juicy stories. Please sign up on our Evite invitation -

<http://www.evite.com/event/0325J7M2B3VPRMKKOEPEKSPBFA7MC4>. You and also contact our TXUUJM Executive Director, Rev. Chuck Freeman - Exec.Dir@TXUUJM.org. For more info about joining us from Thoreau Woods UU Church, please contact Anne True at ae_true@yahoo.com

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