



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
Mid-April 2015 Newsletter**

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



April 19, 2015

Trent Hale

A Vocation for the Mundane

How can our experiences of the mundane, frustration, suffering, even death call us to joy, life, and unity? How do we find meaning and purpose in a world that, at many times, seems to have no inherent meaning or purpose...and, more importantly, why should we even bother in the first place? These deep and “angsty” questions are central to the existentialist movement in philosophy, but they are also lurking at that heart of our everyday life. Struggling with these questions deserves further consideration because of their potential for giving rise to a life that is full of joy, purpose, meaning, and nourishment even in the midst of absurdity, futility, and our ultimate mortality.

Trent Hale is a senior philosophy student at Sam Houston State University. He is currently developing an undergraduate thesis concerning an aesthetically-centered existential philosophy of religion. Trent, spent his first two years of college in a Roman Catholic seminary program and religious order, but after discerning to leave the program, found his way to Sam Houston where he now serves as the student minister of the Episcopal Student Center and the founding president of the on-campus Food Pantry. Upon his graduation this May, Trent hopes to begin graduate studies in theology.

April 26, 2015

**Not What You Think it Is:
Firewalking and Transformation**

Transformation is being different than the process of pain, change, and growth usually associated with it. Participants in the Firewalking group will discuss their experiences.



Minister: Rev. Tony Lorenzen

revtonyuu@gmail.com

508-344-3668

Office Hours

Tuesdays 10-3

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.

Not What it Actually Is by Rev. Tony

Our spiritual theme for April is transformation. My friend and Harvard Divinity School classmate

Mary Hess is a professor of religious education at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. For as long as she's kept a professional website, she's had this quote about transformation from educator Robert Keegan on her home page: *"The emotions and the experience, the gratitude or the terror, associated with transformation are very different from what transformation actually is."*

Transformation is thorough and dramatic change in form or appearance, metamorphosis, something becoming something else. We tend to think of transformation being quick and easy, even instantaneous. We think of a magician turning a prince into a frog, or whipping coffee and milk into a frothy latte, but transformation is rarely so rapid a process. A caterpillar transforms into a butterfly, but the process can take weeks. The process that transforms students in physicians or therapists or ministers takes years.

Transformation is not an event so much as a journey. Along the road we learn, make mistakes, learn again. We try and fail and try again. We are very active and we have times of inactivity. We engage life and yet at other times we seem to just exist day to day. Our experiences and the our emotions, the joy and the terror that are ours during the journey are not transformation. Transformation is the sum total of all the changes wrought in us through our engagement - with a course of study, a relationship, a spiritual program, a diet and exercise regimen, or life itself.

Getting Wet by Rev. Tony

Transformation can't be planned, organized, and scheduled. Progress on the road toward transformation can't be charted or mapped out. The more we try to plan our own transformation the less attention we give to the engagement of things that will, in the end, work the wonder of transformation in us.

In his book "Simply Pray", UU minister Rev. Erik Wikstrom quotes Episcopal priest Martin Bell, "You cannot engage the sacred and then commit; commitment is the one and only way of engaging the sacred." Rev. Wikstrom continues by saying that "you can't find out what "wet" feels like unless you get into the water...There's no way to talk about it. There's no explaining it. There's no understanding it, even. There is just getting wet."

Just as church growth is not a goal, but a byproduct of good ministry, neither is transformation a goal. Transformation is what happens when you work toward other goals. Transformation happens through the discipline of engagement. One can't plan for transformation. Transformation isn't the destination. Rather transformation is the result of traveling the road.

People often seek a spiritual renewal or transformation without wanting to get wet. We want to question religious and spiritual validity or teachings. We want to search spiritual methods for evidence of unreasonableness. We want to map out our course and our response to the road to such an extent that we never take the journey. At some point for any real transformation to happen, spiritual or otherwise, we have to trust that changing our behavior will change our perception and experience. If we engage life, practice a skill, stick to the discipline of meditation or yoga, the very act of doing these things over time will transform us. We will no longer be the people we used to be in very substantive ways.



Hello Everyone!

Sunday, May 3rd we will have our annual meeting. At that time, we will do several important things.

1. We will need to **vote on next year's budget**. It will be a bit different next year because Rev. Tony will no longer be our minister.

Please remember that for the next couple of weeks, there are dates/time selected that board members are available if you have questions about the budget. However, please be advised that if no one has shown up in the first 15 minutes of a meeting, then the board member is not obligated to stay. Of course, you are always welcome to call any of us before the annual meeting on May 3rd as well.

The dates/times are as follows:

Tuesday, April 14 at 11:45 am

Thursday, April 23 at 6 pm

Sunday, April 26 after potluck

2. We will also need to **vote for Board members**. Three of the current Board members—Rosanne Barker (President), Blaine Hinds (Treasurer), and Pam Maine Johnson (Secretary)—have all agreed to serve one more year if that is what the congregation wants. Our Vice President, Anne True, has asked not to serve next year. The Nominating Committee, consisting of Beth Williamson, Richard Lane, and Blaine Hinds, is eager to hear from each of you if you are willing to serve or know someone who would like to. The committee welcomes all suggestions, especially for the vice president. Please consider serving even if you have not done so before. Past and current board members are more than willing to train new leadership!

3. A discussion of future leadership development.

I look forward to seeing each of you at the Annual Meeting on May 3rd.



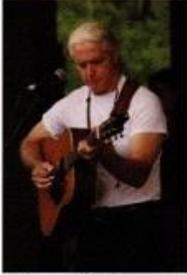
TWUUC EVENTS

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.

THOREAU WOODS COFFEEHOUSE

APRIL 18, 2015



Ken Gaines



George Ensle



Greg Whitfield



Scott McCarley

Ken Gaines is in his 18th year of producing & hosting the Thursday night Songwriter's Series "Anderson Fair in the Round" at Houston's legendary Anderson Fair. We asked him to recreate this wonderful experience here at TWC. He has selected George, Greg, and our own local Scott to share the stage. Ken, George & Scott have all graced our stage before.

144 E. Mosley Lane, Huntsville TX
7:00 pm, doors open 6:30 pm
\$15/\$10 students/seniors, refreshments available
(936) 661-6332 www.twuuc.org/coffeehouse.html



Standing Vigil

As a demonstration of a Unitarian Universalism presence in Huntsville, our church will gather as a group to stand vigil in front of the Walls Units during executions. As a church and as a religious people, we cannot accept retribution or social vengeance as a reason for taking human life. The use of the death penalty by the state increases the acceptance of revenge in our society and gives official sanction to a climate of violence. We thank everyone who showed up for the previous vigils.

The remaining executions scheduled for the month of April:

April 15, 2015 - Manuel Garza
April 23, 2015 - Richard Vasquez
April 28, 2015 - Robert Pruett

We ask that everyone join together in front of the Walls Unit (at the corner of Ave.

I and 12th St.) by 5:30 p.m. the evening of each scheduled execution. Any stay of execution will be published on the church's Facebook page by 5:00 p.m. the day of the scheduled execution. The vigil is usually over by 7:00 p.m. We often hold a candle in visual protest during our vigil as a signal that there is always hope for personal redemption. If you would like to do so, please bring one. Extra candles from church will be provided for those who forget. If any of us have "Standing on the Side of Love" t-shirts, please wear them as a demonstration of faithful solidarity.



April 21 (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. 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 revtonyyun@gmail.com.

April 26 May Newsletter Deadline

Please submit any items for the newsletter to pamjohnson05@suddenlink.net.

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.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

Worship Committee If you are willing to be on the Worship Committee, 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.

Charity of the Month

Rita B. Huff Humane Society Their Mission Statement is "To preserve the lives and well being of animals through adoption, rescue, spaying and neutering, and education. We serve the citizens of Walker and select neighboring counties, and we strive to protect the health, safety, and welfare of animals, children and citizens who reside in these communities." For more information go to <http://www.ritabhuffanimalshelter.org/>. Please make check payable to Rita B. Huff, and place in the collection basket.



Good Shepherd Mission

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

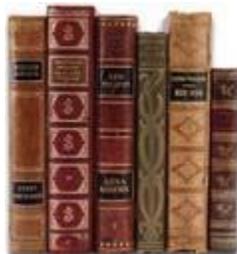
In order for Thoreau Woods UU Church to more adequately respond to the needs of our members and friends, we are now registered on the Lotsa website. Maybe you just need a ride, help when you are ill or just a visit from a friendly face or a chat with Rev. Tony. This site can help us keep track of all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



DENOMINATIONAL EVENTS



May 09, "Building a Strong Tomorrow: Taking Stewardship to the Next Level" with UUA stewardship consultant, Bill Clontz. UU Fellowship of Waco. Details [here](#).



The Bookshelf by Ann Staples

[Killing Patton - The Strange Death Of World War II's Most Audacious General](#) by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard, page 331. The lively style in which this book is written captures your attention. This is a very good World War II book with excellent descriptions of all the major "players". I probably will now read [Killing Lincoln](#).

The Golden Ratio - The Story Of Phi - The Worlds Most Astonishing Number by Mario Livio copyright 2002. This is a very interesting and readable book about a fascinating number and its application or lack of application in art, music, architecture, and other areas. (Richard if you haven't read this book, I think you would like it). Though leaving out the geometric construction of a golden rectangle a mistake.

Revisiting The Titanic - The Exploration Of The Wreck And Current Controversies Of The World's Most Famous Ship by Charles River Editors. This is a very interesting update. It is a book with a small font and light print but it is very short so dealing with those two issues is okay. Really neat!



EVENTS

Huntsville Music Festival

April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 (every Thursday), 5:30 - 9 pm
Rather Park, 1221 University Avenue, Huntsville
https://www.facebook.com/COHmainstreet?_rdr

Sam Houston Memorial Museum

April 4 10 AM to 2 PM, Spinning and Weaving Demonstration, Woodland Home Front Porch
April 11 10 AM to 2 PM, Woodworking Demonstration, Guerrant Cabin - Museum Grounds
April 18 Margaret Lea Houston's Birthday Celebration, Museum Grounds

Climate Change (Global Warming) Presentation

April 13, 2015, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Walker County Storm Shelter, 455 State Highway 75 N

Cabaret

April 15-18
SHSU Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre

Arsenic & Old Lace

April 17-19
Old Town Theatre, 1023 12th Street
<http://www.HuntsvilleCommunityTheatre.org>

Carson & Barnes Circus

April 20-21 4:30 & 7:30 PM
Walker County Fairgrounds
<http://www.bigtopshow.com>

The Language Archive & The Other Place

April 22-26, 2015, 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM
SHSU Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre
Website: <http://www.shsu.edu>

Casino Night
April 25, 6:30 pm
Veteran's Conference Center

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