

Thoreau Woods  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church

The Oracle

March 2020



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

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

SUNDAY MORNING

9:30-10:15 Adult Religious Education  
9:30-11:30 Youth Religious Education  
10:30-11:30 Program



March 1, 2020  
Ralph Stephenson - The Exodus

The Exodus has become a core tradition of Western civilization. The story is an epic that has been hollywoodized in several movies. Millions read it, retell it, and celebrate it. But did it happen?

Biblical scholars, Egyptologists, archaeologists, historians, literary scholars, anthropologists, and filmmakers are drawn to it. Unable to find physical evidence until now, many archaeologists and scholars claim this mass migration is just a story, not history. Others oppose this conclusion, defending the biblical account. Recent findings by secular historians and archeologists have proven the AN exodus of mono-theists from Egypt did in fact occur, but the actual Exodus bears almost no resemblance to the Biblical story.

**Ralph L. Stephenson**, BS, MS, PE, is a professional environmentalist who retired from his position as the Environmental Manager of a multi-billion dollar engineering and construction company with worldwide operations and projects. He has traveled extensively and managed environmental issues for projects in dozens of countries. He is a lifelong student of theology and other religious subjects, is a member of both the TWUUC and Temple Beth Shalom, and has written the following books on religious subjects.

3. Biblical Living. A book about what the Bible says about how to live our lives and an exegesis of the biblical economic plan for individuals, businesses, nations, and the world.

9. The Seven Religions of the Bible, An Exegesis of the seven religions of the Bible.

11. The Seven Temples of God, An Exegesis of Jewish and Biblical history telling the story of the Seven Temples of God.

12. Where is God?, A journey through Science, Psychiatry, Philosophy, and Theology to find God.

March 8, 2020  
Rev. Vicki DellaSperanza Hernandez -  
There's An Ear in Your Heart

Intentional silence is one of the most important principles of holding space. To hold space for other people and for ourselves we must know when to speak and when to remain silent. When our egos get in the way, we want to offer advice, improve on someone's story, control the outcome, or at least let people know how smart we are. What if we practiced being a heart with ears?

Minister's Letter

Dear Ones,  
I'm recovering well from hip replacement surgery and feeling optimistic about getting out and about over the coming weeks and months. Although I'm not ready to drive, I will be returning to church the first Sunday in March and to be quite honest, I am giddy with joy!

Thank you for the plethora of well-wishes and prayers that sustained me before, during and after the procedure. Being completely dependent on the love and kindness of others for ten days after surgery was a lesson in mindfulness. Wanting and needing assistance taught me that sacred accepting was a gift for the giver. When we are visibly moved by the kindness of another, it conveys that they've made a difference in our lives. We may then bask together in a moment in which there is no distinction between the giver and the receiver. Both people are giving and receiving in their own unique ways. This shared experience can be a profoundly sacred moment of grace. Abundant blessings,  
Rev. Vicki



March 15, 2020  
Andrew McKnight - Treasures in Our Chests

Andrew's exploration of his musical ancestry led to remarkable finds and insights, illustrating how each of us is a product of our ancestors accumulated sets of stories





and gifts while transcending their limitations.

Andrew's original songs are often used in spiritual and worship services by various progressive communities of faith. He is a past Workshop Leader at the **Western UU Life Festival** at Georgia O'Keefe's Ghost Ranch (NM), and serves as Musician of the Week for Friends & Family Week at **Ferry Beach UU Conference Center** in Saco ME. Andrew and his family are members of the [UU Church of Loudoun](#) near Leesburg VA.

Since leaving his environmental engineering career, award-winning folk/Americana artist Andrew McKnight's musical journey has traced nearly a million miles of blue highways, while earning a wealth of critical acclaim and enthusiastic fans. His new album and book *Treasures in My Chest* adds a dynamic new cast of spellbinding songs and stories drawn from his family history. With three guitars, a dobro, Native American flute and an African hand drum, the stage comes alive with intimate detail and vibrant lyricism. The result is powerful and entertaining one-man theatre, delivered with warm humor and down-home comfort. For more visit [www.AndrewMcKnight.net](http://www.AndrewMcKnight.net).

He will be doing a house concert that evening. Andrew's shows are like one man theatre; the songs threaded with humorous stories and poetic drama, and the musical soundscape spanning Appalachia, tasteful slide & jazzy blues, feisty anthems, rustic folk, and a little fancy flatpicking. He's been a guest on NPR's "Art of the Song" and "River City Folk" shows, and performed at the Kennedy Center and Olympic Games as well as festivals, intimate theatres, and house concerts nationwide.

**March 22, 2020  
Fellowship Sunday**

Instead of a single speaker, all present are invited to share events, issues, poems, stories, or songs that they find relevant to our UU principles. We will also use this time to have special ceremonies or communions throughout the year. After the service, we will have potluck lunch. Please bring food to share



**March 29, 2020  
Rev. John Pepper - The Myth of Control**

We live in a world where we often believe we can control our lives. The truth is, there is precious little we actually control. Author and priest Richard Rohr tackles the subject where he maintains the first half of life is trying to control life while the second half is settling into the fact that you can't control it. His insights are valuable for us all. Please join me as I explore some of his insights. Namaste!

*Rev. Pepper was our minister from 2009-2011. He was instrumental in the building of our building. Here he is pictured in the hospital chapel, where we used to meet.*



**Johnson Studio House Concerts**



*Presents*



# Andrew McKnight

**March 15, 2020 (Sunday)  
5 pm potluck, 6 pm concert**

Since permanently leaving his corporate environmental engineering career in 1996, award-winning folk/Americana artist **Andrew McKnight**'s musical journey has traced nearly a million miles of blue highways, and earned him a wealth of critical acclaim and enthusiastic fans for his captivating performances and seven recordings. Andrew's powerful and entertaining show is like one man theatre, delivered with warmth and down-home comfort. His finely crafted songs are woven together with humorous stories and poetic drama, while the musical soundscape traverses influences from Appalachia, tasteful slide and jazzy blues, feisty anthems, rustic folk, and even a little fancy flatpicking on a Carter Family tune. While his skillful guitar work provides a tasteful foundation, the touches of native American cedar flute, resonator guitar, djembe (African hand drum) and even mandolin add delightful and mesmerizing embellishments to the show. Andrew has performed at many prestigious venues like the Kennedy Center, the International Storytelling Center and the Atlanta Olympics, has been part of the Rocky Mountain, South Florida, Boston and Delmarva Folk Festival lineups, and a guest on NPR's "Art of the Song" and "River City Folk" shows.

*These are private events and you must RSVP to [pammoon41@aim.com](mailto:pammoon41@aim.com) or call 936-661-6332. You will receive address after RSVP. For more information, go to [johnsonstudiotexas.com/HouseConcerts.html](http://johnsonstudiotexas.com/HouseConcerts.html). Suggested Donation: \$10-20.*

**Next at Thoreau Woods Coffeehouse: April 4, 2020 – An Evening With Joe Crookston**  
**Next at Johnson Studio House Concerts: June 20, 2020 – Lisa Sanders**

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at the church  
Thursdays at 5:30 pm.



## Joys & Concerns

- Best wishes to Rev. Vicki who is recuperating from surgery.
- Condolences to Tamela Shirley whose father-in-law recently passed away.
- Thoughts and prayers for Pam Johnson's granddaughter Sierra who was recently in Texas Children's Hospital with a new diagnoses of Type I Diabetes.
- Welcome to new members Gwen and Nelson Thompson.



March Birthdays:  
March 13 Erin Owens  
March 26 Mary Welborn  
March 29 Linda Parks

If you have a March birthday and would like to be included next year, please let Pam Johnson know.

### 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.

### Charity of the Month

#### **Friends of the Huntsville Public Library**

Please make check payable to the charity, and place in the collection basket and Sunday in March.

Huntsville Public Library Friends Inc. is a group whose purpose is to raise money for projects beyond the means of a normal library budget. In the past, Friends money supplied computers, furniture for the library, special cultural programs for children, and helped support the Texas Reading Club during the summer.

For more information or to become a member, go to <https://www.huntsvilletx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9231/HPL-Friends-Inc-2017-Brochure>

#### **Good Shepherd Mission**

Please continue to bring food. Thanks for helping however you can.



### **\*\*\*\*\*VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES\*\*\*\*\***

#### Treasurer:

We are in immediate need of an interim treasurer through June 30, 2020. Please contact Pam, Beth, or Richard if willing and able.

Sunday Morning Programs: If you would like to be the meeting leader, guest speaker, or have something you want to share during Fellowship Sunday, please contact Pam Johnson at [pammoon41@aim.com](mailto:pammoon41@aim.com).

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

Coffeehouse: If you would like to help with the coffeehouse, please contact Pam Johnson via email above or call James at 936-661-6332. We need help with admission table, kitchen, setup and teardown, and bakers.

Membership Committee: We still need someone to head this committee. Currently Rev. Vicki is visiting members who are ill, and Anne True is maintaining the membership list.



#### **Death Penalty Witness**

We will be standing vigil in meaningful faith-filled presence to protest the non-redemptive nature and violence of the death penalty during some executions.

For a list of upcoming executions, go to

[www.tdcj.state.tx.us/death\\_row/dr\\_scheduled\\_executions.html](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/death_row/dr_scheduled_executions.html).

For more information on when, where and how we participate, go to <https://twuuc.org/fellowship/death-penalty-witness/>.

### **JOIN OUR PRISON MINISTRY**

The Unitarian Universalist First Principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Yet every day millions of incarcerated people are told the exact opposite of this principle, that they are worthless and undeserving. Through prison visits and letter writing, we at TWUUC have a special opportunity to show incarcerated people living right here in Huntsville that they are inherently worthy of love and justice.

We need you to help nurture our nascent prison ministry. Working together we can show incarcerated people that they are not forgotten and that those of us in the "free world" care about their well-being. Our program consists of one-on-one visits, letter writing and phone calls with local inmates at the Ellis Unit located on FM 980 in Huntsville.

This ministry is organized and led by Vicki DellaSperanza Hernandez and her husband Martin Hernandez who is incarcerated at Ellis Unit. Vicki organizes and trains volunteers in the so-called free world, and Martin leads the program from inside the prison. Together they launched a letter-writing campaign that connects pen-pals who write monthly. Their vision is to establish one-on-one (non-contact) visits with men, who over the years, have had either very few visits or none at all. Whether you are interested in writing or visiting, you will receive guidance and assistance every step of the way. Vicki and Martin are committed to ensuring a safe, secure and



mutually beneficial experience for both volunteers and inmates. For more information contact Vicki at (617) 970-5430 or [revvicki@twuuc.org](mailto:revvicki@twuuc.org).

CONTACT INFORMATION

The church is located at: 144 East Mosley Lane, Huntsville TX 77340. It is off Hwy. 75 South, approximately 1 mile south of McCoy's.

Please do not mail to this address. The mailing address is:  
P. O. Box 6751, Huntsville TX 77342-6751

Phone: (936) 439-9505  
Email: [info@twuuc.org](mailto:info@twuuc.org)  
Website: [www.twuuc.org](http://www.twuuc.org)  
Facebook: TWUUC and Thoreau Woods Coffeehouse

**MINISTER**  
Rev. Vicki DellaSperanza Hernandez  
[revvicki@twuuc.org](mailto:revvicki@twuuc.org)

**OFFICERS**  
President: Beth Williamson  
[betwil@aol.com](mailto:betwil@aol.com)  
936-661-7114

Vice President/Program Chair: Pam Johnson  
[pammoon41@aim.com](mailto:pammoon41@aim.com)

Treasurer: position available

Secretary: Richard Lane  
[rhlane1999@yahoo.com](mailto:rhlane1999@yahoo.com)

Past President: Rosanne Barker

**LEADERSHIP**  
Music Director: Karen Peake  
OOS Editor: Sandy Fruhman  
Youth R.E. Chair: Tamela Shirley  
Adult R.E. Chair: Richard Lane  
Building and Grounds: Paul Culp  
Membership List: Anne True  
Parliamentarian: Rick Norman  
Public Relations: Rev. Vicki  
Webmaster: Pam Johnson  
Newsletter Editor: Pam Johnson (deadline last Sunday of the month)

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