

# THE ORACLE

*Thoreau Woods Unitarian Universalist Church  
September 2020 Newsletter*



WE WELCOME EVERYONE TO OUR CONGREGATION, RECOGNIZING NO DISTINCTION OF CLASS, NATIONALITY, RACE, GENDER, OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

***“Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand. The only true answer to give to this question is that we do not stand at all; we move.” Lewis Beales Fisher, Unitarian Universalist, theology professor, author***

## OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, BECAUSE OF COVID-19, ALL SUNDAY SERVICES WILL BE CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM. ZOOM SERVICES WILL BE HELD EACH SUNDAY AT 10:30 A.M. LOG IN AT 10:15 TO GREET OTHERS AND CHECK CONNECTIONS PEOPLE MAY CREATE THEIR OWN PERSONAL CHALICE TO LIGHT AT HOME WHEN THE CHALICE LIGHTING IS READ.

Each week email with a link and password will be sent to those on the newsletter list. If you do not receive the newsletter, and would like to, please send an email to [info@twuuc.org](mailto:info@twuuc.org). If you think you should be on the list, but are not receiving emails from the church, you may want to check your spam folder and add [info@twuuc.org](mailto:info@twuuc.org) to your safe senders or contact list.

## Our September Services

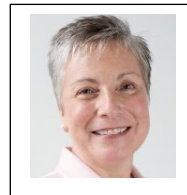
**Sept. 6**

**Rev. Adam Robinson**

*“Wise Women’s Words”*



**Sept. 13 – The Rev. Victoria DellaSperanzo Hernandez**



**Sept. 20 Dave Dersham**

**A Musical Service**



**Sept. 20 Richard Lane**

*“The Life, Teachings and Theology of Theodore Parker (1810-1860 – A Call to Social Justice”*



**Looking ahead to October: Oct. 4 Rev. Adam Robinson**

**Oct. 11 – Fellowship Sunday   Oct. 20 – The Music of Reggie Harris**

**Program Notes for Sept. 20 and Dave Dersham**

Was the political philosopher Antonio Gramsci correct? Does ossified, old world thinking have to die away — almost entirely — in order for a new way of thinking to be born, or is it more that these modalities grind against one another in perpetual parallel, alternating between periods of amplification and periods of contraction — sometimes even at the same time? Such questions will be touched upon through the medium of song at our Sept. 20 Zoom service.

Dave Dersham calls himself a “meandering fool.” In his 20s, he spent a searing Wyoming summer prepping gruel for Dornan’s chuck wagon in the Tetons; taught Eco-Ed to middle schoolers in the Black Hills; trekked the sage and occasional cottonwoods with underserved youth in southern Idaho; and explored the cultures of Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.

In his 30s he was part of Cambridge folk scene where he completed his first CD, “The Burn of Summer.” The album enjoyed regular airtime on folk radio’s WUMB, Emerson College’s WERS, and produced a finalist selection for the nationally syndicated Mountain Stage Emerging Artist competition. His second album, “Gilding the Lilies” was recorded with the assistance of Lloyd Thayer’s unorthodox lap-steel, as well as the shrewd production/instrumentation of Jared Fiske. The CD was released in the fall of 2011 and was distributed internationally.

He lives Northampton, MA and tours the subterranean folk pockets of the Northeast, Southern California and Texas. He’s currently working on his third collection of songs to be released in 2020.

If you would like to join us on Zoom at 10:30 a.m. please email us at [info@twuuc.org](mailto:info@twuuc.org).

***Upcoming at Johnson Studio***  
***House Concerts***

**Sept. 19 – Dave Dersham**

**Oct. 18 – Reggie Harris**

**Pam and James will provide details as we  
get nearer events.**

## ***Charity of the Month – Senior Center of Walker County***

Among its many services the Center provides homebound meals. This has become even more critical with COVID-19. The Center also is preparing “to-go” meals for seniors who are able to pick them up. To make a donation to the center you can send a check directly to 340-F Hwy 75 North, Huntsville, TX 77320. You also can donate through its website under the “donate” page via credit card or PayPal.

A quick note about another of our charities, Good Shepherd Mission. During Hurricane Laura evacuees put a strain on food supplies at the Mission. There likely will be repeats of this during hurricane season. Since we are not in church, please drop by your individual donations of food!

## ***Stewardship***

Even though the church is not meeting, there are still expenses. The Board is managing finances as closely as possible and as of the end of July the church is solvent with money in the bank. However, any unplanned, uninsured crisis could eat into that cushion. If you would like to make a donation to Thoreau Woods Unitarian Universalist Church, you can mail a check to P.O. Box 6751, Huntsville, TX 77342-6751 or via PayPal at [infor@twucc.org](mailto:infor@twucc.org) or [paypal.me/twuuc](https://paypal.me/twuuc)

## ***President's Letter – Rich Heiland***

Greetings!

There is not much to report this month. We have had some great programs. If you missed our Zoom service Aug. 23 with the Williams Brothers, leading force behind Huntsville Black Lives Matter, you missed a thought-provoking service. Vicki is meeting with BLM and Pride to see how our congregation might assist them. Pride, in particular, finds it difficult to get support from most local churches. If you have not been attending our Zoom services every Sunday, please join us!

Thanks to Richard Lane's constant monitoring we are doing well in terms of limiting expenses. We will have a large (\$500) expense coming up because, alas, we found our church building has termites. In addition, other insect pests have multiplied. So, we will be having both termite and pest measures done in early September. I'd also like to thank Paul Culp for continuing to come to the church and water and tend all our outdoor plants and trees.

Please keep in mind that without the social presence we all treasure our contributions have fallen off. We realize everyone has unusual and unexpected expenses during COVID so we are not pressuring members to give, but every little bit helps and allows us to maintain our critical reserves against building needs.



## ***The Minister's Message - The Rev. Victoria DellaSperanzo Hernandez***

Dear Ones,

Most of us have heard the phrase that church is not a building, but a community of like-minded individuals who create church whether we meet in person or virtually via Zoom. Yet there is no denying meeting virtually is a challenge. In speaking with many of you, I often hear that you feel heartbroken and disconnected that we have not met in our beautiful sanctuary since April. At the same time, we all agree that meeting virtually is for everyone's safety and wellbeing. Feeling detached is a natural response to our current situation, and it's perfectly fine to talk openly to me and each other about your experience. We simply can't ignore what is our new normal, at least for the time being.

Admittedly meeting virtually just isn't the same, so we are trying our hand at new kinds of gatherings. We have devoted Fellowship Sunday to a time when we listen prayerfully and hold space for those who wish to share the burdens and joys on their hearts. Sharing is voluntary, and all are welcome to join the Zoom session simply to be in community with each other.

In the past few weeks we've added a weekly Sharing Circle, an unmoderated casual hour-long conversation that has, at times, been quite animated. All are invited to bring their favorite snack or beverage as this is truly a casual gathering. Currently the Sharing Circle meets Tuesdays from 3:00 to 4:00pm, and reminders are sent in advance so be sure to check your text messages or emails. Keep an eye on our church Facebook page, too for service and other announcements.

Please make note that my email address has changed: [reverend.vicki.2017@gmail.com](mailto:reverend.vicki.2017@gmail.com). My phone remains the same 617-970-5430. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there is ever anything I can do to be helpful to you or another member of our congregation. Sometimes we rely on the church grapevine to share information, but I must confess that I rely on you to tell me about unmet needs or celebrations.

Abundant blessings,

Rev. Vicki

## ***The Member's Sharing Spot***

***Each month we invite members to share their thoughts about our congregation, UU as a church and issues that might concern members. This month's contribution is from long-time member and former board member Anne True.***

## Historical Perspectives of UU

by Anne True

Ten years ago, I wrote a series of columns about Unitarian Universalism history. I know with good authority that no one remembers my columns from ten years ago, mainly because I, myself, do not remember them. In these old columns I didn't get much beyond the eighteenth century, thus letting much of UU history remain unexamined. Recently, I thought that I would revisit the history of our religion, first starting with my old columns (with revisions) and then continuing on through important aspects from the nineteenth and twentieth century for both sides of our faith. Bear in mind that I am neither a historian nor a theologian, so I may get a few things wrong. It won't be the first time. Remember to read the footnotes - snide comments (and historical perspectives) abound.



### Why Trinitarianism?

The question is not so much why are there Unitarians, but why are there Trinitarians? With the exception of the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7-8, which we will consider at a later date), there is no mention or inference of the trinity in the New

Testament.<sup>1</sup> The concept of the Trinity itself is a confusing one - One God, but three different aspects: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost. And truly, there is no good analogy for understanding the Trinity. Anyone actually giving you an explanation has probably committed heresy.<sup>2</sup> For a humorous presentation of trinitarian heresies, watch St. Patrick's Bad Analogies from LutheranSatires: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQLfgaUoQCw>

It is impossible to know when the divinity of Jesus was first considered. But by the end of the second century C.E., Christianity had become almost exclusively a Gentile faith,<sup>3</sup> and the Christians in Alexandria Egypt had whole-heartedly embraced the concept of the divinity of Jesus.<sup>4</sup> These Egyptian theologians created sect of Christianity which incorporated aspects of Gnosticism, and Horus, Isis, and Mithras worship.<sup>5</sup> And these Alexandrian Trinitarians, believed that God had three equal aspects: The Father, the creator; The Son, as manifested in Jesus; and The Holy Ghost, which inspired the actions of ordinary men. However, there was a different theology being developed in Asia Minor - that of Unitarianism. The Unitarians believed that Jesus may be the greatest and the best of all men, the holiest of prophets and a divinely-inspired teacher, but he was not God. The chief advocate of the Unitarian viewpoint was an Alexandrian priest named Arius.<sup>6</sup>

Though Christianity started off as a persecuted minority religion, that changed by the beginning of the fourth century C.E. when the emperor Constantine I declared Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire.<sup>7</sup> Constantine supported the Church financially, built various basilicas, granted privileges (e.g., exemption from certain taxes) to clergy and promoted Christians to high ranking offices. But soon, the diversity in and the fighting among Christian philosophies so alarmed the emperor Constantine I (who, in part, owed his success

to the support given by Christians) that he convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. and ordered the bishops to settle the matter once and for all.<sup>8</sup> And thus the stage was set for a showdown between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism.

The Council of Nicaea was inherently a power struggle between two parts of the Roman empire, Asia Minor and Egypt, and the Egyptians won. The council voted to adopt the trinitarian Nicene Creed to which all Christians must adhere. Arius and several of his most vocal supporters were sent into exile. Most histories of Christianity seem to consider the controversy settled at this point. This is not at all the truth - the battle continued. The bishop of Nicomedia, Eusebius, was a staunch supporter of Arianism, and he had Constantine I convene a synod of bishops in 335 at Tyre. This council reversed the decisions at Nicaea, and now it was the Trinitarians who were sent into exile. Constantine I's son, Constantine II, was a fervent Arianist. Thus it looked like Trinitarianism would die out. However, every man dies, and when Constantine II died, his cousin, Julian (who was a pagan), became emperor and established complete religious freedom in the empire.<sup>9</sup> Although Julian's reign did not last long, it allowed Trinitarians to return to the empire.

In 381, a second ecumenical council to be held at Constantinople was called by the Emperor Theodosius I who was a staunch Trinitarian. At this council Unitarianism was again declared outlawed and Theodosius threw the full power of his empire behind this decision: Arians and all other heretics were forbidden to assemble, their churches were seized, and there was no longer any freedom of worship for any Christians except for those that followed the official position of the Catholic Church. Early Unitarianism was crushed.

<sup>1</sup>So concluded Sir Isaac Newton after severe scrutiny of the Gospels. (Of course, being an ambitious man, Newton confided his heretical views mainly to his private journal.)

<sup>2</sup>For example, the analogy of St. Patrick used with the three leaves of the shamrock committed the heresy of Partialism. Modalism and Arianism are also popular heresies.

<sup>3</sup>In the Jewish Rebellion of 70 C.E., the strongly pacifistic Jewish followers of Jesus refused to participate, and they were labeled traitors by their fellow countrymen. At this point all Jewish conversions to Christianity stopped almost completely.

<sup>4</sup>In fact, they embraced the divinity of Jesus so strongly that the Coptic Church, which espouses monophysitism (a denial of the humanity of Jesus), split off from the Catholic Church in the fifth century.

<sup>5</sup>And are still incorporated in mainstream Christianity.

<sup>6</sup>And thus Trinitarians claim that Unitarianism commits the heresy of Arianism.

<sup>7</sup>Constantine I understood the political importance of having a substantial (even if it was only a minority) portion of the population thoroughly indebted to him.

<sup>8</sup>Constantine I realized that if the Christians went to war among themselves, they wouldn't be much help against his enemies.

<sup>9</sup>This was partly because of idealism, but partly because Julian wanted the various Christian sects to tear each other apart.

Please!!! "Like TWUUC on Facebook!"

We are on Facebook!  
Thoreau Woods UU Church  
Thoreau Woods Coffee House

We are trying to keep Facebook current and vibrant through a variety of posts. We welcome your sharing of your thoughts. And, we also urge you to "like" us and to share posts you think are relevant with all of your Facebook friends!

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

**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 Rich Heiland at [heilandr1@gmail.com](mailto:heilandr1@gmail.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).

**Membership Committee:** We still need someone to head this committee. Anne True is maintaining the membership list.



**September Birthdays**  
Rich Heiland Sept. 1 Lee Stringer Sept. 5

## 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 environr



## CONTACT US

### Church Location

144 East Mosley  
Lane Huntsville TX  
77340 Off HWY 75  
South

Turn left on Mosley Lane approximately 1 mile  
south of McCoy's

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Huntsville TX 77342-6751

Phone: (936) 439-9505

Email: [info@twuuc.org](mailto:info@twuuc.org)

Website: [www.twuuc.org](http://www.twuuc.org)

### OFFICERS

#### President:

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#### Vice-President:

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#### Treasurer:

Richard Lane

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#### Secretary:

Sandy Fruhman

[sfruhman@savagebrands.com](mailto:sfruhman@savagebrands.com)

### LEADERSHIP

**Music Director:** Karen Peake

**Order of Service:** 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:** Vickie DellaSperansa Hernandez

**Newsletter Interim Editor:** Rich Heiland

(Deadline last Sunday of month)



