

Red River Ramblings

Volume 7, Issue 3

March, 2010

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
 ...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas.

A Month of Sundays

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March 7

Megan Dalby-Jones

Megan Dalby-Jones continues with her recent pattern of ministering to us on the first Sunday of the month. Her warm insights and humble musings on life, faith, and the spiritual journey helped put her name at the top of the "speakers we enjoy" list on our recent congregational survey. We look forward to hearing what she's thinking about this month.

March 14

Reverend Don Fielding

Sharing A Beer With Jesus

Rev. Don Fielding, who describes himself as a secular naturalist, contributes this interesting title to our season of Lent/Ostara/Easter: "Sharing a

Beer With Jesus". Where could he be going with this one? Maybe he's throwing St. Patrick's day into the mix? Come and find out, and offer your response to him during the Open Dialogue immediately following his sermon.

March 21

Earth Spirit Chalice Circle

The Pagan festival of Ostara will be celebrated today, the actual day of the Spring Equinox, in a service led by Penny Armstrong and the Earth Spirit Chalice Circle. Explore the equal balance of darkness and light that occurs as our planet cycles toward the longer, warmer days of growth and renewal that we call Spring.

March 28

Reverend Dianna Niemann-Harris

Steppin' Up To Spring

As the last chill of cold and snow fades away, our worship service will explore what the renewal of spring might mean for our winter-weary spirits. Together we will consider the seasons of our lives in light of spiritual evolution. Do we need different seasons of belief just as our planet needs changing temperatures? Can we refill the "spiritual bucket" without it being first empty and dry for a time? Be forewarned, answers will not be supplied, but perhaps together we can frame some lovely questions for spiritual nourishment in the process of steppin' up to spring.



Adult Forum
 Worship & Children's RE

10:00am
 11:15am

Calendar of Events

March, 2010

2 - Tues, 7:30 pm GREEN TEAM, Environmental Interest Circle

3 - Wed, 7:30 pm SPIRIT WITHIN, New Thought Chalice Circle

5 - Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, Meditation Chalice Circle

5 - Fri, 7 pm UJJAM, Music Interest Circle

12 - Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, Meditation Chalice Circle

13 - Sat, PFFFT, Outdoors Interest Circle

14 - Sun, 12:45 pm FREETHINKERS, Humanist Circle

16 - Tues, 7:30 pm GREEN TEAM, Environmental Interest Circle

17 - Wed, 7:30 pm SPIRIT WITHIN, New Thought Chalice Circle

19 - Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, Meditation Chalice Circle

19 - Fri, 7:30 pm RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, a Nature-Based Spirituality Chalice Circle

26 - Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, Meditation Chalice Circle

26 - Fri, 6 pm MOVEABLE FEAST, Dining Chalice Circle

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All April newsletter submissions are due to
newsletter@rruu.org
by March 27th, at
5:00 p.m.
.....

March Birthdays

12 - Jan Fletcher

21 - William Lloyd Fridley

22 - Elbert Hill

26 - Mildred Cates

27 - Sonny Schwichtenberg



Harmony House Concert

Hi! It's time for you "groundhogs" to come out of your winter abodes and join us at the upcoming Harmony House Concert, featuring Beth Wood of Oregon, with Joseph Leavell opening. Call for reservations. March 14th marks the beginning of Daylight Savings Time, and it will almost be 6 weeks since the groundhog saw his shadow.....time for some sunshine in your life! This festive event promises that.

Our best,
Faye & Scott
Harmony House Concerts
Wildscape Acres
903/583-2661



Green Team Tip of the Month

If you're looking for a pig in your basement, look no further than your water heater. It's responsible for up to 20% of your home's energy consumption. Put your pig in a blanket. A blanket made from fiberglass insulation wrapped around your water heater will make it more energy efficient and save you money.

<http://www.bogfrog.com/fftips3rs.htm>

Member News

Kudos of the Month go to....



Carla and Jim Murphy who spent a day in deep Dallas volunteering at *Creating Change* the meeting of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force which promotes civil rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. **The Murphy's represented RRUU as part of the North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies** which both Jim and Carla serve as members of the Board of Directors.

Hat's off in February to the Social Action Team for choosing recipients for the "Share the Plate" offerings and initiating the "Fill the Plate" ongoing drive at RRUU to feed hungry people in our area (see related articles elsewhere in this newsletter).

Special thanks to *Darrah Dunn* during Black History Month for recruiting and sharing his friend, actress Sandra Daniels to educate and lead us in celebration by offering her one woman show February 28, *Harriet Tubman: An American Woman*. It was genuinely a spiritually enriching and moving experience.

The *Policy and Procedures Workshop Attendees* receive a hearty thanks and sincere pat on the back for giving a February Saturday to make a huge dent in the business of drafting the beginnings of a P & P manual for our congregation.

Yet again we thank *RRUU JAM chalice circle* who **provided an awesome Valentine's Day worship service**. What a delight to celebrate romantic love in with a wide variety of experiences and great music!

And finally, after many months of many hands doing many things, a giant YIPEE and deep thanks to *Joyce Peak* and *Carolyn Cameron* for volunteering to be co-chairs of RRUU Hospitality. Remember to say thank-you by offering to help with set-up, clean-up or signing up to bring refreshments some Sunday!

News from the Nursery



One thing you can say... there's nothing quiet about the nursery at RRUU – except for the infants and toddlers that is! The reason there is such a calm and serene sense in our child care corner is because of our excellent attendant *Beth Wells*, now joined by her sister-in-law, *Melissa Holbrook*.

We welcome Melissa to our employ as a contract child care attendant and appreciate her gentle, loving care of our wee ones. With 3-4 infants and 2-5 toddlers in the nursery weekly, Beth and Melissa are on the go the entire time we are in worship. We are also blessed that *Anabelle Dunn* has agreed to be our **"back-up hands" for weeks either Melissa or Beth cannot be with us, or in the event there are more children than two people can manage.**

What a wonderful thing it is to be a growing congregation with the need to increase our nursery attendants! Whether you have small children or not, drop by the nursery before or after worship sometime soon to **meet Melissa and say "thanks" to her and Beth for the excellent care they provide!**

RRUU Book Swap

Courtesy of your Social Action Committee, RRUU will join in a book swap during March and the first two weeks of April! This is an easy, fun and money saving process to be a part of.



Simply:

1. Check your book selves, night stands, boxes and storage bins and dig out any books you are finished with and ready to pass on to others.
2. Bring the books to RRUU Sunday March 7 (or any Sunday in March) and place them on the tables in the back of the sanctuary.
3. Browse the book tables weekly and take any books of interest to you as a gift from a fellow reader at RRUU
4. Help April 18 after worship with boxing the remaining books to go to the Earth Day Festival book table.

Easy, Fun, Environmentally Friendly,
Enlightening, and Free.

How To Begin (Changing Your Life) by [Forrest Church](#)

"Begin here. How deeply you would long for all the things you take for granted, if suddenly you lost them. So much of what we want we have already, so want what you have. Begin here."

This is the first of 10 suggestions by Forrest Church. The other 9 can be viewed at UUA.org, , [Spiritual Life](#) , [Today's Readings](#).

Giving With Heart from the Stewardship Committee



The questions of who we are and where we are and how we are going to find our way in the future are **real for every friend and member of RRUU, and that's the reason we're here. We are a concerned and caring society.** We generally have high ideals and moral integrity about and toward our fellow beings. We come together to share a part of our lives and to reach out when we can to touch and make contact with others in a spiritual trust.

But RRUU cannot operate with just good intentions; it has to be funded. The church has to be able to plan ahead with a yearly budget. A budget requires pledges of intention. Gifts beyond a pledge and other fund raisers will be appreciated and well directed, but having a specific pledged amount is essential to the flow and operation in our church.

Please carefully consider what a fair share of support might be and pledge that amount during this pledge period. With your support, Red River Unitarian Universalist Church will continue to be a home for liberal and broad-minded seekers of truth and justice. RRUU will be here for you.



Fill the Plate Drive to Feed the Hungry begins at RRUU

When two or more of the RRUU family get together, things begin to happen. Actually, the happening began with eight RRUUers gathered in Adult Forum on February 21st to explore the future of our Social Action Committee. Acting chairperson Dianna Niemann-Harris guided Chelsea, Penny, Paula, Marla, Don, Amy and Suzanne through the process of considering a new idea which the group heartily adopted!

Beginning this month, March 2010 in addition to our regular **"Share the Plate" monthly offering, RRUU will also be engaged in filling the plates of hungry people in our community!** A large plastic bin is now located in the back of the sanctuary complete with wheels for easy moving and a slot-**ted lock box for financial contributions to help "Fill the Plate."**

Members and friends of RRUU are invited throughout the month to bring donations of paper products (tissue, toilet paper, paper towel, napkins, sanitary supplies) and/or hygiene items (toothpaste, deodorant, smaller bottles of

shampoo, conditioner, mouthwash, etc.) to fill the plastic bin. Non-perishable food may also be included, however donations of cash or check in the lock box afford the food pantry to purchase food for 10 cents a pound, far less than individuals would pay per pound to buy and donate food.

The fourth Sunday of each month has been designated **"Fill the Plate" day, at which time there will be a brief dedication of our food pantry gifts as part of the morning service. For our first quarter (March, April, May) of "Fill the Plate",** Dianna has agreed to deliver the donated items and a check for the total in monetary gifts to the Grayson County Shelter food pantry. Amy Hoffman-Shehan will be compiling suggested giving items and researching other pantries to receive our gifts in the future on a rotational basis. Penny Armstrong will insure information is submitted for the monthly newsletter and weekly announcements and E-news. Marla Loturco and Paula Blackshear will tally the deposit of cash and checks the 4th Sunday of the month, add the deposit to the bag to go to the bank, and give the treasurer the deposit slip copy for writing the monthly check to the food pantry. Chelsea, Marla, Amy, Penny and Dianna agreed to take rotational turns doing the dedication in worship. Others who feel moved to be a more active part of this project are most welcome to talk with or email Dianna (socialaction@rruu.org) to be added into the rotation. **Together we will "Fill the Plate" and help address hunger throughout the region!**

P.S. Suzanne Durland is researching a "Hat's Off" project for providing baseball caps or other hats with good eye shade to send to field workers whose eyesight is at risk from harvesting in regions of intense sunlight... more to come on this as the project develops!

Children's Religious Education



Teacher Helen Schulze continues the study of the UUA curriculum, *Learning and Living the UU Principles*, with the **children of RRUU. Children's RE begins after the children are sung out by the congregation.** Snack and a drink are provided, and there is a huge emphasis on having FUN! Anyone interested in helping should speak with Helen at the church on Sunday morning.



Adult Forum

No information was available at the time of publication.

Board Bits

If you would like to see the full board minutes – **they will be posted on the “Board Board”** in the back of the Sanctuary as soon as they are available. The next board meeting is March 8th, starting at 6:30 p.m. Board meetings are open to all; if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. Deadline for the agenda, and reports to the board, is March 5th. Those wishing a few minutes during the **“open mic”** will want to be ready to speak near the end of the meeting.



Treasurer's Report

Each month I serve as Treasurer at RRUU my appreciation for those who have held this position through the years in churches expands and deepens. That is probably most richly true for the month of January during which I had my lifetime first experience with completing W-2 and 1099 forms for employees while compiling calendar year giving statements for members and friends of RRUU.

Despite some snags and initial errors on my part, the four 1099 forms and five W-2 forms as well as our employer W-3 form were all completed, submitted accurately and timely to the IRS with appropriate copies to current and former employers and contract staff. 2009 giving reports were mailed January 15th to former members and distributed to current members and friends of RRUU on the last two Sundays of January.

Our January income was \$7,095.75 and our expenses were \$3,019.83 for a net income of \$4,075.92. The income includes the \$2038.80 special collections for Haitian Relief. Our Second Sunday **“Share the Plate”** offerings for January will go to NAACP as will the February Second Sunday gifts.

As of the first Sunday in 2010 weekly offerings are being entered in our computer accounting program crediting the individual giving units. I have hopes of finding time to enter this data (now on

paper) for July to December of 2009 as well.

If you have questions concerning this report or other aspects of our financial status, please email me at treasurer@rruu.org or call 903-327-2069 and I will respond as quickly as possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianna Niemann-Harris, RRUU Treasurer

MHMR Services of Texoma Recycling Fundraiser

MHMRST is holding a recycling fundraiser on Saturday, March 27, 2010, from 9:30 am until 2:00 pm in Sherman. Items may be in any condition – damaged, non-working or fully operational. Your donations help ensure proper recycling and save valuable landfill space plus benefit our local MHMR Services.

Please note, *television sets and microwave ovens will not be accepted*, however any and all of the following may be donated: COMPUTERS, SPORTING GOODS, CAMERAS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, OFFICE EQUIPMENT, HOME & GARDEN ITEMS, ENTERTAINMENT ELECTRONICS, NON-FICTION BOOKS, VEHICLES, COLLECTIBLES, ATV'S, POTTERY, COOKWARE, GLASSWARE, DINNERWARE, PORTABLE ELECTRONICS, JEWELRY, VIDEO GAMES

Items must be brought to 315 West McLain, Sherman, TX on Saturday, March 27 between 9:30 am and 2:00 pm. Please help yourself to a flyer for this event (handing on the Social Action bulletin board in the entryway) for more detailed information.



Message from Marla

Marla Loturco,
President, RRUU



Marla's column will return next month.

The Value of Personal Spiritual Practice

Denise Davidoff,
former UUA Moderator

I was raised in a conservative Jewish home by parents who were the children of immigrants from Eastern Europe. My parents were well-educated and assimilated and successful. They were living the great dream of America. Mom and Dad offered my brother and me advantages and middle class privilege. They offered us freedom to think and dream, but the offer did not cover religious training. They could not imagine a child of theirs who would question Hebrew scripture. They could not imagine, much less sanction, a child of theirs leaving the tent.

But in my college years at Vassar, I began to do just that. Twenty years before the emergence of a vocabulary of feminist religious thought, I cringed from the patriarchy, resisted the chains of orthodoxy, peeked tentatively outside the walls that felt so stultifying. What was out there?

Well, you know what was out there, awaiting my discovery at age 28, now forty-five years ago. Unitarianism, just one year away from becoming Unitarian **Universalism. That's what was out there!**

It is my practice to take time to consciously acknowledge the gift of life most every day. I look at the world about me and acknowledge awe before the miracles of nature.

I acknowledge the joy of family, the blessings of health and the comfort of substantial material possessions. It took me a while to realize that this practice is

actually meditation, perhaps it is prayer. It is a personal religious ritual, simple and at the same time complex and, I believe, very Unitarian Universalist.

Given the freedom to figure out how to be conscious of the grace in my life, disobliged to repeat a litany not of my choosing, encouraged to be awake to wonder, I can see that I am growing into the life of a serious religionist. I love this facet of Unitarian Universalism more than any other. The imperative to learn, to discover, to not necessarily finish up where one starts. How lucky can we get to have this opportunity for spiritual sustenance and deep worship experience! The challenge is to get more of us to understand and value the gift.

I tell you these intimate details about my spiritual life because it is important for you to understand that if I am effective as a UUA leader, it is because I engage in individual spiritual practice. This relationship between the private person of liberal faith and the liberal faith public figure, this necessary source of centeredness and energy is the single most valuable lesson I have learned in the course of serving the Association in a variety of roles. The lesson is profound and ample payment for going to all those endless meetings!

Stephen Covey, author of the book *First Things First*, writes: **"We settle for the illusion society sells us that meaning is in self-focus, self-esteem, self-development, self improvement. It's what I want. Let me do my own thing. I did it my way. But the wisdom literature of thousands of years of history repeatedly validates the reality that the greatest fulfillment comes in our willingness to more effectively reach out and help others and to live for something higher than ourselves. I think that's why we gather in congregations. I think that's the essence of our common call as Unitarian Universalists.**

This Audio Essay series was created by the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, for the purpose of supporting its valued lay leaders. Copying and sharing these essay texts, downloadable audio files, and the companion LayLeader Drive Time Essays compact disc is welcomed and encouraged. Comments or suggestions? We welcome your ideas about this Audio Essay series and your lay leader questions. Please send them to Don Skinner, the editor of InterConnections, a resource for lay leaders. Email: dskinner@uua.org

Share the Plate 2nd Sunday Cash Offerings Designated

As part of the Adult Forum on February 21, 2010, those who participated were asked to consider sixteen possible recipients for “Share the Plate” offerings. A lively and thoughtful discussion resulted in choices for distribution of those offerings monthly from March, 2010 through February, 2011.

The following is a listing of where our “Share the Plate” offerings will be donated for the next 12 months. The Social Action Committee will provide a brief description in the newsletter of that month’s recipient organization.

March 2010 – Callie Clinic

April 2010 – Earth Day Celebration

May 2010 – Court Appointed Special Advocates

June 2010 – Youth Connections (Transitions Program)

July 2010 – Families Feeding Families

August 2010 – Salvation Army (School Supplies Program)

September 2010 – Women’s Crisis Center

October 2010 – Unitarian Universalist United Nations Organization

November 2010 – Callie Clinic

December 2010 - Spirithorse

January 2011 – Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

February 2011 – NAACP

Callie Clinic to Receive March 14th “Share the Plate” Offering

Recognizing the needs in our communities and our obligation to give as well as receive, Red River Unitarian Universalist Church has a tradition of having “Share the Plate” the second Sunday of each month. On “Share the Plate” Sunday, all cash offerings in the morning collection are given to a particular non-profit

organization in one of the areas where our members live.

All cash gifts in our offering on March 14, 2010 will go to the Callie Clinic, formerly known as ARCOT. ARCOT began in 1991 to serve Grayson, Fannin and Cooke Counties. In 2007 the name was changed to Callie Clinic to honor Callie Frost who served the Texoma community with her charitable efforts. The clinic is the sole provider in the tri-county area for individuals impacted by HIV/AIDS. Funding comes from the donations from the community and foundations as well as state and federal grants.

While all services funded by the grants are limited to Grayson, Fannin and Cooke Counties, with donated funds and items, Callie Clinic is also able to provide some limited assistance to individuals from Southern Oklahoma. Please consider the incredible difference this program makes to those impacted by HIV/AIDS in our region and add your “green” to share hope and kindness on March 14th.

NOTE: If you wish for your cash donation to be added to the accounting of your 2010 giving, please use one of the envelopes provided in the pew pockets and write your name/Callie Clinic on the outside.

Hospitality, anyone?

The new sign up board for hospitality is right outside the sanctuary, where we hope you can't miss it. You may volunteer to make coffee OR bring refreshments. People who have very little time during the week will still be able to help with coffee (and cleaning up).

If you aren't familiar with the kitchen, or with making coffee, someone will be there to help you. Don't worry that you'll forget; you will get an email reminder.



E-mail Etiquette Tip of the Month

Be careful when replying to mailing list messages or to messages sent to many recipients. Are you sure you want to reply to the whole list?

RRUU Chalice Circles: Which Small Group Is Right For You?

Chalice Circles are small groups of people who meet regularly for the purpose of getting to know one another while learning, discussing, and acting on topics of common interest. All members and friends are welcome! If you are interested in attending a particular circle, contact Circle Coordinator, Jan Fletcher, at chalicecircles@rruu.org.



MI NDFULNESS, a meditation chalice circle, meets every Friday at noon at the home of Sue Wells in Whitesboro. Facilitator is Richard Newlin. **NEW AND EXPERIENCED MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.**



FREETHINKERS, a Humanist Interest Circle will meet the second Sunday, March 14 at 12:45 pm in Fellowship Hall. Facilitator is Jim Gauthier. **ALL FREE-THINKERS ARE WELCOME**



GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle will step up the pace on preparations for the Earth Day Festival in April and will meet twice during March. The dates are March 2 and March 16 at 7:30 at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan. The Festival needs volunteers and Volunteer Registration forms are on the Green Team table in the foyer. **ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE WELCOME**



CHRISTIAN UU, a Christian-Centered Chalice Circle is suspending meetings for a season. However, along with the Worship Arts Team, they will host a car-pool to an early morning Easter service on April 4, 2010 for those who wish to participate in a traditional Christian worship prior to Sunday services at RRUU. Please contact the Chalice Coordinator.



MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking, Dining and Fellowship Chalice Circle will dine Friday, March 26 at 6 pm at the Durant home of Elbert and Marion Hill. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Hills. **ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME.**



PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle will meet the 2nd Saturday at Hagerman's Wildlife Reserve with details to be announced for time and topic. If weather permits, watch your mid week E-News for possible "park walks". Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. **ANYONE WHO LOVES THE OUTDOORS IS WELCOME.**



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, Facilitator is Penny Armstrong. Watch for the next meeting to be announced in the Wednesday E-News. **NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.**



UUJAM, a music-making interest circle will meet Friday, March 5 at 7 pm at the Sherman home of Jan & Ken Fletcher. The group meets in an informal circle to share favorite songs of all genres. Bring your instruments and song books to share and call Jan to reserve your chair in the circle. Remember to bring a snack to share. **ALL MUSICIANS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME.**

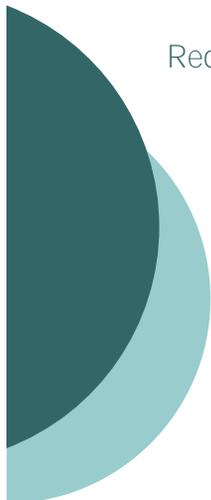


LAI D BACK BOOK GROUP, a Book Reading and Discussion Interest Circle finished their selection, "Lambs of God". The March selection will be announced via email. Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. **ALL WHO ENJOY THOUGHTFUL LITERATURE ARE WELCOME.**



SPIRIT WITHIN, a New Thought Chalice Circle will meet the first and third Wednesdays in March at 7 pm. This month's focus will be transcendent experiences, chanting and choosing a book for study. Facilitator is Kris Riek. **ALL SEEKERS ARE INVITED.**





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 ...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.RRUU.ORG

Church Leadership

Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco,

President (2010)

Don Durland,

Vice-president (2010)

Dianna Niemann-Harris,

Treasurer (2010)

Amy Hoffman-Shehan,

Trustee-at-Large (2010)

Jim Murphy,

Trustee-at-Large (2010)

L. D. Clark,

Trustee-at-Large (2011)

Cynthia Evetts,

Secretary (2011)

Safe Congregation Panel

Marla Loturco, Helen Schulze,

Jim Gauthier, Suzanne Durland,

Penny Armstrong

Team Leaders

Worship: Darrah Dunn

Chalice Circles: Jan Fletcher

Adult Forum: Penny Armstrong & Suzanne Durland

Children's Religious Education: Helen Schulze

Youth Advisor: Open

Membership: Carla Murphy

Social Action: Dianna Niemann-Harris (Acting)

Building and Grounds: Doyle Adams

Communications: Open

Caring: Kris Riek

Ways & Means: Marion Hill

Hospitality: Carolyn Cameron & Joyce Peak

Historian: Open

Newsletter: Cynthia Evetts & Shann Schubert

Website: Open

Committee on Ministry

Elbert Hill, Carolyn Cameron, Sue Wells