

Red River Ramblings

Volume 7, Issue 4

April, 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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April 4

Megan Dalby-Jones

Easter Celebration

Megan, who ministers to us once a month, has recently been exploring major themes of the Christian tradition and how we can learn to reclaim the best of our heritage for the faith of today. This three sermon series comes to an end as we celebrate Easter Sunday.

April 11

Daniel Polk

"Why Does the World Need Unitarian Universalist Congregations?"

Lay leader Daniel Polk, the current board president at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Dallas, leads our service this morning as we consider the

importance of our community of faith to the Texoma area. As our annual canvassing campaign kicks into high gear, we will focus on our personal commitments, financial and otherwise, to RRUU and to Unitarian Universalism, our chosen faith.

April 18

Worship Arts Team

"Mother Earth, Mother Muse"

April 18th, 2010, is Earth Sunday, and April is national poetry month. This morning, RRUU's Worship Arts Team seizes the opportunity to combine these two provocative themes into one service. By exploring a variety of poetic forms, they will consider how artists through the ages have celebrated and reflected our indelible relationship to this planet, and using a simple exercise, will provide those in

attendance with a playful chance to release their own inner poet.

April 25

Rev. Don Fielding

Retired UU minister Don Fielding returns today with his own special blend of humanistic theology. Remember, Don always gives us the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback in the open dialogue following his sermons.



Adult Forum
Worship & Children's RE

10:00am
11:15am

Calendar of Events

April, 2010

- 2 - Fri, noon, MINDFULNESS, Meditation
Chalice Circle
- 2 - Fri, 7 pm, UJJAM, Music Interest Circle
- 6 - Tues, 7:30 pm, GREEN TEAM, Environ-
mental Interest Circle
- 7 - Wed, 7:30 pm, SPIRIT WITHIN, New
Thought Chalice Circle
- 9 - Fri, noon, MINDFULNESS, Meditation
Chalice Circle
- 11 - Sun, 12:45 pm, FREETHINKERS, Hu-
manist Circle
- 16 - Fri, noon, MINDFULNESS, Meditation
Chalice Circle
- 20 - Tues, 7:30 pm, GREEN TEAM, Environ-
mental Interest Circle
- 21 - Wed, 7:30 pm, SPIRIT WITHIN, New
Thought Chalice Circle
- 23 - Fri, noon, MINDFULNESS, Meditation
Chalice Circle
- 24 - Sat, All Day, GREEN TEAM, Earth Day
Festival
- 30 - Fri, noon, MINDFULNESS, Meditation
Chalice Circle

All May newsletter submissions are due
to
newsletter@rruu.org
by April 24th, at
5:00 p.m.

April Birthdays

- 02 - Addi Jo Dunn
- 07 - Bruce Cameron
- 18 - George Gravley
- 18 - Debi Hester
- 19 - Christine Davis
- 30 - Jaxon Schwichtenberg



Harmony House Concert

It's really a coincidence that Harmony House booked Tim Grimm for the Earth Day weekend almost year ago, but then "there are no accidents".....call it synchronicity! Just put on your farm overalls or casual gardening duds, and come hear Tim sing his "farm songs" and perform his roots/Americana music on Saturday evening, April 24, 2010, 7:30 pm, at Wildscape Acres, located 10 miles North of Bonham, TX. Tim lists himself on his website as a "singer-songwriter/actor/hay farmer", and all are true. Check out his website, www.timgrimm.com, to learn all the facts *and* hear some song clips. Then, call 903/583-2661 for reservations to this "down home" event in this "little house on the Red River/Blackland Prairie".



Green Team Tip of the Month

Recycle! Did you realize that 84 percent of all household waste can be recycled? It takes 90% less energy to recycle aluminum cans than to make new ones, recycled paper requires 64% less energy than making paper from virgin wood pulp, and the energy we save when we recycle one glass bottle is enough to light a traditional light bulb for four hours. [<http://www.planetpals.com/fastfacts.html>]

Member News

Kudos of the Month go to....



Everyone Who Pitched In to share preparing for the April 10 Dinner and Festivities when committee co-chair Suzanne Durland became alarmingly ill. Since her co-chair Don Durland unexpectedly became a caregiver, help was essential to free the Durlands up for the work of healing. You know who you are. Thanks to every one of you!

L.D. Clark who contacted our neighbors renting the commercial business at the Southwest corner of Spur 305 and W. Harrison and got permission for a sign on their rented land! Shortly people will be able to see clearly where our meeting space is!

The Worship Arts Team for another month of thought provoking worship services and for their work in imagining, dreaming and scheduling pulpit guests for the months ahead. Kudos as well for their efforts on the special RRUU Book of Options for Worship Associates to choose words for lighting the chalice and inviting us to the offering.

Amy Hoffman-Shehan who received the inaugural North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies Marty Robbins Award. Amy was nominated and received this lay leadership award for her outstanding leadership at RRUU, her continued dedicated work with the Earth Day Celebration and her willingness to pitch in and help whenever and wherever she can.

Everyone who provided refreshments in March for our Sunday morning fellowship. This is a part of our time together anyone can sign up for (board in the entryway to the left as you enter the sanctuary). The refreshments can be as complicated as you like or as simple as a grocery store cheese tray or drive-through doughnuts.

Cynthia Evetts, secretary of the Board of Trustees who, month after month, translates two hours of thoughtful conversation into two or three pages of easily understood minutes. (Minutes are posted monthly on the Board board in the rear of the sanctuary)

The RRUU Congregation for a fantastic beginning to our ongoing "Fill the Plate" offering project. The end of March we dedicated then delivered 5 regular size reusable shopping totes of paper/hygiene products/food to the food pantry at Grayson County Shel-

ter. Cash donations will be added to during April and given to the food pantry along with the food/paper/hygiene items which are given over the next four weeks.

Easter Sunrise Service Anyone?



Members and Friends of RRUU who wish to, are warmly invited by the Christian Interest Group to gather early Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010 to attend a Sunrise Service and enjoy a Dutch treat breakfast after.

We will meet at the RRUU parking lot at 5:30 am to carpool, and depart promptly at 5:35 am to participate in the Sherman Ministerial Alliance Easter Sunrise Service, which begins at 6:00 am. Following the service we will break bread (or biscuits) together at the Cracker Barrel, 75 and Loy Lake Road in Sherman.

Please send an email to treasurer@rruu.org, or call 903-327-2069, if you are planning to participate. Absolutely everyone who wishes to join in is most welcome to meet at RRUU at 5:30 am for travel to the worship, or to join the group around 7 am at the Cracker Barrel!

Texoma Earth Day Festival, 2010: Green for Health

The 2010 Earth Day Festival is a community-wide, free, fun, family event where ordinary people will learn practical things to improve the health of the planet, their children and themselves. Held on April 24, 2010, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., on the grounds of the Sherman Municipal Building, the

Celebration begins 9:00 a.m. with a keynote address by Tom "Smitty" Smith, Director of Public Citizen of Texas.





Wine Country Holiday

UU Fellowship of North Bay

“Napa was as delightful as I had expected. What was equally important and somewhat unexpected was the profound connections I felt with my hosts and hostesses.” - Carol Lim, Los Angeles

The UU's of Napa, California proudly announce a new season of our Wine Country Excursions. Again, we offer a variety of options for an inside look at one of America's most beautiful areas, internationally known for fine wines, gourmet dining and spectacular vistas. There much to see and do in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys: e.g. wine tasting at renowned and boutique wineries; visits to art galleries and museums; exploring the natural beauty of our hills and valleys on miles of hiking and bike trails or by car on our highways and back country roads.

We offer two choices: Both start with comfortable lodging in members' homes with full breakfast (up to 3 nights). You can choose a 2-day “Wine Country Excursion,” a guided, personalized tour conducted by one of our members--some with wine industry experience--or lodging and self-guided touring. If desired, we provide guidance, maps, etc.

The program runs from April through October. Our fees are below market rate for similar services and *all proceeds go to our small fellowship*. For complete details contact: Tom Wilson (707-254-7443) or 2wilson-s1dog@comcast.net

We look forward to sharing our lovely “home” with you!

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



April 4, 2010 -- Praying in Color Maybe you hunger to deepen your spirituality. Maybe you love color. Maybe you are a visual or kinesthetic learner, a distractible or impatient soul, or get tired of words. Perhaps you struggle with a short attention span, a restless body, or a tendency to live in your head. Praying in color is an active, visual practice which can take as little or as much time as you have or want to commit. For many it opens new doors to penetrate the locked cells of our hearts and minds. Led by Marla Loturco

April 11, 2010 -- Tai Chi or Yoga Demonstration is in the works for this Adult Forum. Plan on joining in to discover ways movement and meditation might be an avenue of spiritual contemplation and growth for you!

April 18, 2010 -- What's In A Name? Adult Forum this morning will explore names for who/what participants see as guiding or influencing the universe. We will also look at what's right with the world, what's wrong with the world, and what we'd like to see happen to change things. This session will be an exercise in dipping into our personal feelings and beliefs in hopes of discovering some of our commonalities. Dianna Niemann-Harris is the leader-guide.

April 25, 2010 -- A Yoga or Tai Chi Sharing (whichever didn't happen the 11th) is planned as the focus for Adult Forum. This is an opportunity to join with other RRUU adult members and friends to explore spiritual expression in ways which are new to many of us.

Childcare Needed

This is Trier Ward with a request for a babysitter. I need somebody who is over the age of 18, gentle, patient, reliable, and experienced with small children and babies to help babysit my four children sometimes. I am willing to pay \$8.00/hr or if the person wishes to volunteer their service, I will make a donation to RRUU in their name for this amount. I would like to interview and give the person the opportunity to meet my children beforehand.

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

Begin now. You have everything you need. Everything. Plus the bonus of today, one day more than you will have if you wait until tomorrow. Begin NOW.

This is the second of 10 suggestions by Forrest Church. The other 9 can be viewed at UUA.org, , Spiritual Life , Today's Readings.

Board Bits

What your Board did at their last meeting, March 9th



Everyone on the board was in attendance with the exception of L.D. We started at 6:38 pm and went home around 8:30 pm. No other members of the congregation were present.

Jim Murphy acted as our Process Observer and time-keeper for the meeting.

Minutes were approved for the last meeting and reports were accepted.

Agreed to hire another nursery worker to handle the additional young children.

The board agreed to send Elbert & Marion Hill to the UUA General Assembly as our official delegates in Minneapolis in June.

Need to find someone to be the SWUUC representatives for the meeting to be held on April 24, 2010.

Special reports on the Stewardship Drive, NTAUUS Luncheon, and DBLE.

L.D. was asked to check the By-Laws and find any amendments which need to be made to them for this spring.

Purchase of an RRUU sign was authorized for the corner of Spur 503 and Harrison Road since we now have permission from the owner of the corner property to put one up.

Brief update on the state of the union - attendance - accomplishments - still to be done.

Policies & procedures report - new manual is progressing. An attempt will be made to have the initial manual ready for concept approval at the Congregational Meeting on May 16. P&P would have to be ready to be mailed/emailed on April 28.

Logo - Tweeking of the design is still underway and should be completed shortly.

Standing on the Side of Love - immigration cards were purchased for Social Justice by Marla - and put into the bulletin by Dianna N-H. Hope to collect all which are given out to be mailed back to program.

It is going to be requested that all board and committee chairs submit their pledge cards prior to April 10.

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 April 13th, 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 April 9th. 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



Are you thinking about it? Have you asked yourself and reflected on the question to determine if you are the one? Would you like to stretch yourself to learn and grow? Could YOU be next in line? Do you have what it takes to be the new treasurer at RRUU? While I have asked the nominating committee to search for a new treasurer to free me to engage in other ministries at RRUU, I will most assuredly be there to work beside my replacement and avoid the tremendous learning curve we were faced with in fiscal year 2009-2010. Please consider if this is a way you might serve your church. Without a doubt my spirituality has deepened as a result of being intimately aware of the generosity and faithfulness of the RRUU family. Each week treasurer responsibilities call me to think of and send positive energy out for our congregation. Ask the **Universe if you are my successor... and wait quietly to hear** the response.

During March I took a hard look at our income, expenditures and budget. Because the revised budget **was not entered into the computer it's categories do** not always coincide with those on our Quicken Pro software. This meant it was necessary to create a budget vs. actual expense report manually. The bottom line is we are living within our means though pledging was at an all time low this fiscal year. Our year-to-date figures for FY 2010 the end of February (July 1, 2009 to February 28, 2010) show an income of \$32,184.57 and expenses of \$28,476.91 for a net income of \$3,707.66. Please note \$3,000 of the net income are designated funds, not available for general budget use.

Our February income was \$5,347.03 and our expenses were \$5,124.90 for a net income of \$222.13. The income includes the \$2038.80 special collections for **Haitian Relief. Our Second Sunday “Share the Plate”** offerings for February went to our local NAACP chapter in honor of Black History Month.

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

Message from Marla

Marla Loturco,
President, RRUU



Time Flies!! Sometimes there is just no substitute for a cliché. One month ago Carla Murphy, Joyce Peak and I were at the Southwest Unitarian Universalist **Women's Conference in Dallas. It was an interesting, informative, uplifting and engrossing event.** The workshops, worship services and other events were a much needed break from my normal routine. I was sorry to miss the RRUU worship service that week as I was looking forward to learning more about Harriett Tubman but the closing ceremony with a spiral dance of 100 plus women was a moving, spiritual experience I was glad I had attended. I highly recommend the **Women's Conference to all of the women in RRUU for next year.** It will again be held in Dallas.

Time really flies. These past 10 months at RRUU have been both a challenge and extremely rewarding. When I look at what has been accomplished in such a short time I am amazed. With 49 members total there are 26 members in a leadership position of some type. We currently average 36 adults in attendance each Sunday **morning. The children's average attendance is 7.** We are having a paid pulpit supply two to three times a month. We have adopted new by-laws, a behavioral covenant, Green Guidelines and a new logo. Our new Policies & Procedures manual is well underway. We have written two grants – one for sound equipment and one for training on creating a five-year plan. At the recent NTAUUS awards luncheon RRUU received funding from NTAUUS for each grant. We received \$3,300 for consulting and training on developing a five year plan and \$2,500 for the purposes of Audio/Video equipment. Another exciting occurrence at the awards luncheon, our own Amy Hoffman-Shehan was recognized by NTAUUS and awarded the Marty Robinson Award for Volunteerism for her work in the church, the community and on the Earth Day Texoma

outreach project. We all celebrate you Amy! All of us can be proud of our efforts.

I hope by now everyone has sent your R.S.V.P. for our annual Fellowship Dinner, this year at the Paper Plate Restaurant in Denison. The dinner is our time to celebrate our faith in one of the finest UU traditions – **breaking bread together! We haven't had a large all-church dinner since last Thanksgiving.** There is something worthwhile to gather in fellowship beyond Sunday morning – a time to meet friends and perhaps make friends. The evening is a gift from ourselves to ourselves – the church is picking up the tab to assure that everyone can be included. During the evening **we'll sing, laugh, eat, and celebrate this, our 13th year** of liberal religion in the Red River Valley. I look forward to seeing you there.

Also this month, April 24th is the Earth Day Festival. Please consider volunteering to help either at the festival or anytime before. Since it is sponsored by our Green Team it would be good if we could all support the outreach effort. Also when you come to the festival you will no doubt see scores of recycled water bottles with our church name and logo – a gift from two members of the congregation who donated the money to make RRUU a water bottle sponsor. We are an active, not-so-gentle, PR effort to let people know there is one church in the area that maintains a ministry to the Earth.

Then in May is our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, May 16th. Save the date! With all that is going on in the world – from national politics, to earthquakes **and wars, isn't it wonderful that we have a community** of kindred spirits and a place where we can come to pause and ponder what life and love and hope means to each of us?

I'm proud of what we've done and are doing and will do. I hope you are as well.
See you in church, friends

Share the Plate with EARTH DAY

All the cash in the offering plate the second Sunday of each month is designated to be given away to some local charity. Our April 11th **“Share the Plate” will be donated in support of the Earth Day Celebration** scheduled for April 24, 2010 in Sherman, TX. This is a Texoma-wide annual event, raising awareness of ways to be earth-friendly, and supporting such things as recycling, composting, avoiding use of disposables and the like. Please **support this project with a generous “second-mile” gift of cash in the offering on the 11th of April!**

“Fill the Plate”

Feeds Hungry People In Texoma

RRUU is engaged in the life of our communities... one way is through our ongoing “Fill the Plate” collection. Light green plastic bins and a lock box are **in the back of the sanctuary for “Fill the Plate.”** Friends and Members of RRUU are welcome to bring paper/hygiene/cleaning products, non-perishable foods and/or add to the cash collection at any time. (remember area pantries can get food for 10 cents a pound, so cash gifts help the most).

On 4th Sundays, this month the 25th, we will dedicate the gifts in worship, tally the cash box, and then deliver the items and check to an area food pantry.

April is paper month at RRUU. Many food pantry guests are people whose food stamps did not last to **month’s end. Essentials like toilet tissue, feminine hygiene products, paper towels and disposable diapers are costly and even essential paper products CANNOT BE PURCHASED WITH FOOD STAMPS.** We also have the chance to pass on our commitment to being earth friendly by buying and donating “green” recycled paper products.

If you would like to take a more active role in this project, talk with or email Dianna (socialaction@rruu.org)! Come be a part of supporting the dignity and worth of **all persons by joining in our “Fill the Plate” project** sponsored by the Social Action Team.

A thought from...



“TO BE HOPEFUL

in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.

What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places - and there are so many - where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.

And if we do act, in however small a way, we **don’t have to wait for some grand utopian future.** The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself **a marvelous victory.”**

~ Howard Zinn (1922-2010)

P.S. Remember the Caring Team is available to help in times of emergency need. You can reach us at caringcircle@rruu.org



E-mail Etiquette Tip of the Month

The rules of civil society apply equally to all conduct, including that carried out with e-mail. Whatever you would consider unethical in life is also unethical in e-mail. As noted in a recent edition of *USA Today*, **“Without seeing the immediate consequences on the recipient’s face or in their voice, it is easier to cross boundaries. People forget that there are real people reading what they write.”** Somehow, though, it seems easier to cross the line in e-mail than it does elsewhere in life. Your own values determine where the line is for you.

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, April 11 at 12:45 pm in Fellowship Hall. Facilitator is Jim Gauthier. **ALL FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME.**



GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle will meet twice during April. The dates are April 6 and April 20 at 7:30 at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan. They are completing preparations for the 2nd Earth Day Festival on Sat, April 24 in Sherman. Volunteers are still needed 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 carpool 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 not meet during April due to the RRUU Annual Social dinner April 10. Volunteer hosts for after April need to contact the Hills. Facilitators are Elbert and Marion Hill. **ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME.**



PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle meets each month on a Saturday. However, no April activities are planned at this time. 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, April 2 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 will be announcing the next selection 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 April at 7:30 pm at Jan Fletcher's home in Sherman. The meeting will have sharing, chanting and meditation. Facilitator is Kris Riek. **ALL SEEKERS ARE INVITED**





Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
 ...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 (2010)

Cynthia Evetts,

Secretary (2010)

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: Open

Ways & Means: Open

Hospitality: Carolyn Cameron & Joyce Peak

Historian: Open

Newsletter: Cynthia Evetts & Shann Schubert

Website: Open

Committee on Ministry

Elbert Hill, Carolyn Cameron, Peter Schulze