

Red River Ramblings

Volume 7, Issue 12

December, 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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December 5th

Daniel Polk, speaking
"Far As Human Eye Can See"

Daniel, our NTAUUS president, says that this sermon was inspired by the question, "What is your Good News?", and that it is essentially an essay along the lines of "This I Believe", a guide for developing your own "elevator speech". He just couldn't limit himself to only four minutes. What is our UU "Good News"? Come hear how Daniel answers the question.

December 12

Rev. Don Fielding, preaching
"A Christmas Birthday"

Rev. Fielding, a frequent guest in our pulpit, describes his Christmas sermon this way: "It is a story I wrote many, many years ago, and that I have given many times. However, it is a story that, for me at least, perfectly captures the spirit of

Christmas. I hope that you will come, and that you will enjoy it as much as I will enjoy bringing it to you and to Red River."

Dec. 19

Rev. Dianna Niemann-Harris, preaching
"Breathing Beloved Community"

Our service this Sunday before Christmas will celebrate how we live and breathe and have our being within Beloved Community...that is as part of families of origin, our RRUU family, and the families of our hearts. Rev. Dianna Niemann-Harris will guide us in an experiential exploration which acknowledges the challenges and celebrates the blessing of Beloved Community, both temporary communities we are graced with and the ongoing communities which enrich our lives. Come join us to breathe in all that is part of your heart's

relationships then exhale and blow away the ghosts of Christmas Past which have haunted you!

December 26

Worship Arts Team, leading
"Winter Sharing"

On this Sunday after Christmas, we continue our tradition of having a relaxed, informal sharing circle where members are invited to share a favorite reading or song. Please limit yourself to three minutes, and make sure your contribution will be meaningful or inspirational for the congregation.



Adult Forum
 Worship & Children's RE

10:00am
 11:15am

Calendar of Events

December, 2010

- 3 – Fri, 7 p.m. UJJAM
- 4 – Sat, 10 a.m. WAT
- 11 – Sat, TBA. PFFFT
- 14 - Tues, 6:40, Board Meeting
- 17 – Fri, 7:30 p.m. RREarth Spirit
- 21 – Tues, 7:30 p.m. Green Team
- 31 – Fri, TBA. Moveable Feast

Rev. Peter Morales, Dr.
Thandeka to Speak in
Oak Cliff



On Friday, December 10, 2010, at 7:15 pm, Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association and Rev. Dr.

Thandeka, UU theologian and author, will lead a special evening service at the UU Church of Oak Cliff at 3839 W. Kiest Blvd. in Dallas, followed by a moderated conversation. The service will be multi-generational; children and families are welcome.



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

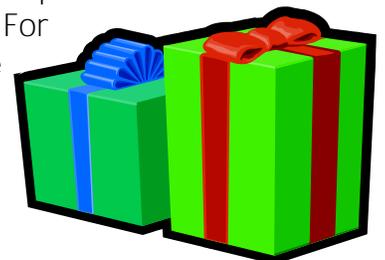
December Birthdays

- 03 Matt Schulze *
- 04 Donna Toerper
- 07 David Lawrence
- 16 Jason Harbour
- 17 Amy Hoffman-Shehan
- 29 Emi Shaw *



Green Team Tip of the Month

When purchasing gifts, try and think "earth-friendly" and socially conscious every step of the way; from the product itself to the packaging. If you buy green gifts, make a special effort to let the person know of its environmental benefit as you may just help set the receiver on the path to a greener life; or at least sow the seeds. This does not mean buying items the person may not need or want, but consider the person's interests and look for a green angle. For example, for chocolate lovers, perhaps organic, fair trade chocolate.



Member News

Kudos of the Month, and Thanks, go to....



...Douglas Morgan Strong overseer and organizer of the great carpet cleaning and sanctuary arranging of 2010! Thanks to Doug's attention to detail the moving, cleaning and rearranging went very smoothly and we are all in his debt.

...our Social Action Team for leading an invigorating service at RRUU on November 21st and our Worship Arts Team and Friends for doing likewise incorporating the Hanging of the Greens into an innovative morning service November 28th.

...a belated but none-the-less grateful thanks to Congregational Meeting Food Providers in October. We were able to snack through a productive fall meeting thanks to about 6 families who provided finger foods for our meeting munchies!

...Rev. Susan Smith who shared her time with us as a pulpit guest for Association Sunday. A gift was made to Chalice Lighters in her honor by way of thanks for her ministry among us.

...our appreciation to John and Billie Harwood who were our 5th Sunday Forum guests October 31st. Not only was John a captivating speaker sharing the story of his liver transplant, the Harwood's also helped us learn about

www.donatelifetexas.org for organ and tissue donation and declined to accept mileage reimbursement or honorarium for their time!

... Marla Loturco, Presidential Pew Polisher, Bruce Cameron, Managing Maintenance Master Chief and Dianna Niemann-Harris, Calculating Cushion Cleaner for going far above and beyond spending hours of loving labor for the cleaning and rearranging project.

... thanks as well to our Austin College Crew of 11 females and a token male who joined us on their Great Day of Service to help move pews and a thousand other things. We had significant woman power at work as the students teamed up and Got 'Er Done!

... Everyone who Helped with anything at RRUU which didn't make the Kudos Column!

RRUU Wear and Logo Bags: GGG*

*Great Green Gifts



Yes, we have RRUU Logo Shirts in stock and ready for gifting! There are polos, tees and sweatshirts in a variety of colors and sizes in the entryway each Sunday just waiting for your shopping pleasure. For the in stock shirts, Tees are \$10, Polos are \$15 and Sweat Shirts are \$20. Over the next few weeks we will be taking orders for Sweat Shirts in the size and color of your choice. These shirts must be paid for when ordered and are \$25 each.

You can also be exceedingly GREEN and save on wrapping paper by purchasing a supply of our RRUU Logo Reusable Shopping Bags to house gifts. The bags come in pink, black, blue, red and purple and are only \$2.50 each. Use an inexpensive towel or cloth napkin in place of tissue paper, tie the handles into a loose know to make a bow and these colorful bags create a totally GREEN "gift within a gift"! Since the bags are handy for shopping, they make a nice gift for anyone and help minimize the number of throw away bags adding to landfills!



Children's Religious Education

No information was available at the time of this printing.

Adult Forum



No information was available at the time of this printing.

New Sanctuary Arrangement



The buzz about the new sanctuary arrangement continues! Here are a couple pictures, and an invitation to try something different. You will note we now have the option of sitting in the side pews which gives you not only a view of the pulpit, but also those sitting in the rows. If you haven't yet tried the side pews, you might be pleasantly surprised.



Nursery Notes New "Second Attendant" Plan



There is news, News, NEWS from the youngest among us with changes in nursery care at RRUU! Last month Beth and Melissa who have served us admirably as attendants resigned as both felt the need to spend Sunday mornings with their own families. At our congregational meeting, members of RRUU indicated a willingness to be part of the child care needs. The Board made a consensus decision to hire one paid attendant to serve in the nursery from 11 am to 12:30 pm on Sundays and utilize the services of congregants to assist if more than four children need

attending.

To engage this plan, a task force was formed, consisting of Don Durland (Board Vice-President and RRUU Contract Staff Supervisor), Trier Ward (Friend of RRUU and parent with three of her children often in the nursery) and Dianna Niemann-Harris (Treasurer and former Contract Staff Supervisor). Advertisements were posted at the local colleges, email ads were sent to those who might know of someone and other churches were contacted for leads. The Task Force will call references, review experience information and narrow the applicants to three. These candidates will be interviewed by the task force and have criminal background checks completed. As a result of this work, we hope to hire a primary child care attendant as soon as possible.

The continuing need for the nursery is for members and friends to add their name to the list of "Second Attendants for Nursery" posted in the entry way. This list includes those of our RRUU family willing to be a "second set of hands" along with a paid attendant should there be 5 or more children in the nursery. As Supervisor, Don Durland will keep an eye on the nursery and any week a fifth child comes in, he will ask the next person on the "Second Attendants" list to assist. When a person assists, the date is written next to his/her name and they are not asked to assist again until everyone on the list also has a date written in.

Our new nursery plan insures the safety of our youngest ones, enables the congregation to get to know them (and our paid attendant), shares the responsibility for child care among us, and results in a cost effective, efficient program. Thanks in advance for adding your name to the list!



How To Begin *(Changing Your Life)*

Begin in the middle. Our lives will end mid-story, so why **not begin there? Don't wait around for the perfect starting pistol**, or until you are ready. You may never be ready. No reason to wait in the grandstand for some official to guide you to the gate. Jump the fence. Enter the race in the middle. Here. Now. As you are. By doing what you can. With those who are closest to you. By turning the page. Cleaning up your slate. Looking for new questions, not old answers. And with little regard for where your path will lead.

This is the 10th of 10 suggestions by Forrest Church. The other 9 can be viewed at UUA.org, Spiritual Life

Board Bits

What your Board did at their last meeting, November 9, 2010



Board Members in attendance included Don Durland, Amy Hoffman-Shehan, Dianna Niemann-Harris and Marla Loturco. Jim Murphy was on an out of town business trip but attended via phone conference to maintain a quorum.

The meeting began at 6:40 pm and finished around 9:00 pm. See full board minutes for details.

In addition to the standard agenda the board addressed/discussed:
 Evaluation of the October Congregational Meeting – proxy's need to be better explained.
 Budget Considerations & Child Care issues – Discussed ways to reduce the budget.
 Don & Leta Lanier and Kate Cherry have resigned their RRUU membership.
 Need to find new Hospitality Co-chairs for January
 DayStar is going to be contacted about gifts for their clients for the holidays

If you would like to see the full board minutes – **they will be posted in the “Board Book” in the Sanctuary Office** as soon as they are available. The next board meeting is December 14th, starting at 6:40 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 December 7th. Those wishing a few **minutes during the “open mic” will want to be ready to speak around 7:00 pm.**



Treasurer's Report



Our computer generated October Profit and Loss statement is misleading in that it shows a net loss of \$2,719.15 for the month. We spent \$2,682.18 for sound components and \$1,174.89 for the LCD player and community service. These expenditures were covered by ChaliceArt and RRUU wear sales, designated donations and \$175 from the Service Auction fundraiser. These funds, held in savings, were transferred to checking to cover the costs. Transfer funds do not show as income on the computer generated statement.

Our actual figures for October then are what shows on the computer generated report as a loss of \$2,719.15 plus the transfer funds of \$3,731.00 resulting in a net in the green for October \$1,011.85. Please note, an individual who resigned membership honored a pledge made in July, sending \$1,000 in October. Had that individual not paid the pledge in full, our net profit in October would have been \$11.85.

As in most of our homes, the income and expenses at RRUU are running very close. The Board has incorporated ideas and suggestions from the fall congregational meeting to trim costs and help us live within our budget.

Per the request at the congregational meeting, I will be sending pledge and giving-to-date emails within the next month when an updated email address list is available via the new directory.

Respectfully submitted,
 Dianna Niemann-Harris, Treasurer



Message From Marla

Marla Loturco, President, RRJU



I want to personally wish everyone in the Congregation a Happy Holidays! While we are each celebrating our various beliefs for the season, some UU's are celebrating a newly developing week long UU celebration "Chalica". This holiday begins the first Monday of December and each day focuses on one of the seven UU Principles. According to an article in [uuworld.org](http://www.uuworld.org) "Calica, new weeklong UU holiday, slowly gains adherents" by Donald E. Skinner, "It first emerged in 2005, from conversations that Daylene Marshall had with other young adults when she was a student at the Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, British Columbia." A Chalica website was developed and it has grown from there.

A quote in the above article from Rev. Lisa Schwartz of the UU Fellowship of Topeka, Kansas remarks "I see Chalica as an evolutionary celebration....It seems a fun and lighthearted way to fight the commercialization of our culture, introduce family ritual into homes, and deepen UUs' understanding of our Principles all at the same time."

From the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Southern Maryland website about Chalica:

"Chalica is seven days long and runs from the first Monday in December through to Sunday. Each day represents a different Unitarian Principle: a chalice is lit each day and actions, gifts, or volunteering that expresses the day's Principle are given and received. One can have seven different chalices or one common chalice.

* Monday: We light our chalice for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

* Tuesday: We light our chalice for justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

* Wednesday: We light our chalice for acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.

* Thursday: We light our chalice for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

* Friday: We light our chalice for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in society at large.

* Saturday: We light our chalice for the goal of world peace, liberty and justice for all.

* Sunday: We light our chalice for respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." For further information see the original article at

www.uuworld.org/news/articles/153582.shtml or a Chalica Sermon at <http://www.firstulou.org/scryingsarchive/sermontexts/20091206-Chalica-sermon.html>

Happy Chalica Celebration!
Marla

Voices of our Liberal Religion: Forest Church's Universalism

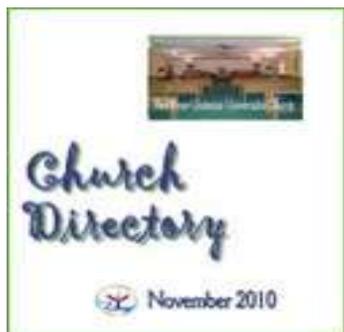
Christopher L. Walton

The Cathedral of the World brings together revised versions of essays and sermons written throughout **Church's career as a minister, theologian, and leading interpreter** of the Unitarian Universalist tradition. In five sections, he discusses God, American civil religion, religious dimensions of public issues, contemporary Universalism, and the primal concerns of all religion: the **mysteries of "being alive and having to die."**

Church is entranced by the motto *E pluribus unum* ("Out of many, one"), which he explores both as an American civic ideal and as a religious insight. American civil religion helps people feel their kinship in national and ethical terms, but Church also affirms a more deeply religious, **universal dimension to human interdependence: "Each part, every individual, faith, color, and nationality is distinct, but one mother holds us all to her bosom, giving us life, providing us a home—the Commonwealth of God."** Church offers another version of this idea, drawing on **our Unitarian and Universalist roots: "Unitarianism proclaims that we spring from a single source; Universalism, that we share a common destiny."**

Church has been called the most important UU theologian of his generation, but none of these essays uses academic language. Instead, he expresses his theological insights as a preacher, using extended metaphors, aphorisms, and anecdotes to make his points. Some readers may wish that he had taken a more analytical approach, but in discussing criticism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Church could just as easily be offering a defense of his **own work: "Mythic and parabolic language is imprecise. All Emerson could do was mirror his awe and humility in childlike reverence for the creation and his small yet consciousness-charged place in it."** Church's religion invites people into a renewed sense of awe and gratitude for the gift of life and a deepened sense of responsibility for each other and for the world, his beloved cathedral.

New Church Directory



The new church directories have been emailed to all members of the congregation along with friends who wished to be included. Please look over your listing and email directory@rruu.org if you see anything that needs updating or correcting. The deadline for submitting changes/corrections is Dec 15th. After that a "final" edition will be released via email. Anyone who would rather receive a printed copy can get one by calling the church care line (903.363.7717).

Social Action Committee

Social Action hat collection for field workers collected over 50 caps! These donations will be given to an organization that sends them to Central America where they are given to field workers who often suffer permanent eye damage from working in the bright sun without hats.



We were pleased to lead worship in November and invite members and Friend of RRUU to join in the Unitarian Universalist Association *Guest at Your Table* project. When the donation boxes are

collected they will be sent to join the gifts of others to help feed the hungry as one way we celebrate the worth and dignity of every person.



“Share the Plate” offerings of \$97.22 in November went to the Grayson County Crisis Center



which serves to assist women (and their children) in need of temporary housing, information and assistance taking measures to insure their future safety.

Our cash offerings on Sunday, December 12th are designated to Youth Connections Transitions Program. This program is designed specifically to meet the needs of young people **turning 18 years old and “aging out” of Youth Connections**. Transitions help those starting out on their own with housing deposits, educational programs, stocking up a first apartment and etc. Imagine getting your own place for the first time without family to help. That is the situation of many Youth Connections **18 year olds... and Transitions is there to assist in setting them up for success.** Please give as generously as you are able.



Food Pantry donations of cash and non-perishables have been slow coming in this quarter. If you are able, please join in this ongoing, all church social action project. The food pantries are able to buy food for cents on the dollar therefore your gifts of cash into the lock box near the new church office go the furthest to feed the hungry in our community. October, November and December donations go to the Salvation Army Food Pantry. After being notified this food pantry was high on requests and low on stock, the Social Action Team moved them up in our rotation of recipients.



“This is the season in our culture **when we’re called to remember each other and life itself and how precious it is.**”

Rev. James Ford, UU World.

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.



MINDFULNESS, a Meditation Circle, is currently without a host location and facilitator. If you are interested, please contact Chalice Coordinator. **NEW AND EXPERIENCED MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.**



FREETHINKERS, a Humanist Circle, is currently on temporary break. Facilitator Jim Gauthier will resume in the coming months.



GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle, meets December 21, the Third Tuesday of the month, at 7:30 pm in Sherman. Plans continue for the 2011 Earth Day Festival. Facilitator is Amy Hoffman-Shehan. **ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE WELCOME!**



MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle, meets on moveable dates at moveable locations. Facilitators are Elbert & Marion Hill. December Feast (date and time TBA) will be in the home of Dianna Niemann-Harris and Tim Riek in Denison. This will be a dress-up party with finger foods. Break out the fancy duds! (Or you'd probably be let in if you wear Unitarian casual. Is that redundant?)

Feasters celebrate a New Year's Eve party, at the home of Jim and Carla Murphy in Whitesboro. Last year's party was **such fun, the Murphy's have screwed up the courage to do a sequel.** (Since the party begins in December but lasts into January, this is our January Feast.) **ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!**



PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle, meets each month on a Saturday. December includes attending the 2nd Saturday lecture at **Hagerman's on December 11. When it gets cooler** they plan a hike so watch the weekly E-News for info. Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. **ANYONE WHO LOVES THE OUTDOORS IS WELCOME!**



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, a Nature-Based Spirituality Circle, meets seasonally at the Church. The next meeting is TBA at 7:30 at RRUU in celebration of Winter Solstice. Facilitator is Penny Armstrong. **NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**



UJJAM, a Music-Making Interest Group, meets the first Friday of each month at 7 pm at the home of Jan Fletcher in Sherman. The next meeting will be Friday, December 3. The group meets in an informal session circle with guitars, dulcimers, flutes, keyboards & voices to share favorite songs of all genre and all musicians and listeners are welcome. Bring your instruments, songs and snack/drink to share. Facilitator is Jan Fletcher. **ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!**



LAID BACK BOOK GROUP, a Book Reading and Discussion Interest Group, discusses the selection via email. Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. **ALL WHO ENJOY THOUGHTFUL LITERATURE ARE WELCOME!**



SPIRIT WITHIN, a New Thought Chalice Circle, is currently taking a break. The group will continue to study *Spirit of Life: Exploring Spirituality for UU's*, a new UU Tapestry of Faith program when it resumes. Facilitator is Richard Newlin who will be out of the country through the winter.

Two new Chalice/Interest Groups suggested need to hear from you. If you are interested in helping form a group to share videos & desserts in a member home or attend live theatre as a group, please respond to the Chalice Coordinator email above.



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

Don Durland,

Vice-president

Dianna Neimann - Harris,

Treasurer

Amy Hoffman-Shehan,

Trustee-at-Large

Jim Murphy,

Trustee-at-Large

Vacant

Trustee-at-Large

Penny Armstrong

Trustee -at-Large

Safe Congregation Panel

Jim Gauthier, Suzanne Durland,

Marla Loturco, Helen Schulze,

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: Marla Loturco (acting)

Social Action: Dianna Niemann-Harris (acting)

Building and Grounds: Doyle Adams

Communications: Doug Strong

Caring:

Finance and Endowment: Marion Hill

Hospitality: Carolyn Cameron & Joyce Peak

Historian: Open

Newsletter: Cynthia Evetts & Shann Schubert

Website: Open

Ways and Means: Don & Suzanne Durland

Committee on Ministry

Jim Gauthier, Carolyn Cameron, Peter Schulze