

Red River Ramblings

Volume 8, Issue 3

March, 2011

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 6

The Next Great Religion

Rev. Don Fielding, preaching

Rev. Fielding says, "Most everyone who is observant can see that most all religions are struggling these days just to stay afloat. Indeed, a new book out in June, 2010, is entitled *The End of Christianity* (you can find it listed on amazon.com). It is time to begin to ask, 'What will replace religion? What will the next great religion look like?' I will examine these questions and give you my opinions when I am with you on March 6th."

March 13

SPRING FORWARD

Worship Arts Team, leading

As you set your clocks forward this weekend, choose an

interesting timepiece to bring to church with you to display on the altar table while we think about the significance of time in our day to day lives. Maybe you have a great old clock you'd like to share, or your favorite watch, or your alarm clock, or your mobile phone.....What timepiece dictates how you coordinate your life?

March 20

Celebrating the Vernal Equinox

Earth Spirit Chalice Circle, leading

Penny Armstrong, the leader of Earth Spirit, RRUU's pagan chalice circle, leads us through a celebration of the vernal equinox, which occurs on March 20th. Explore with her how the ancient rituals of nature-based religions pay homage to spring, to the earth's reawakening, and to our own rhythms of productivity.

March 27

Pledging our Support Special Surprise Guest, leading

If you attend the church wide banquet on March 26, you will know who our special guest of the weekend is, and you will certainly want to be part of our service on the 27th, which will be led by that surprise guest. Please plan to be present and involved as we consider again what our financial contributions to RRUU for 2011-2012 will be. Plan, too, to be both inspired and entertained by our very special worship leader.

Congregational Meeting
 12:45



Daylight Savings Time begins
 Sunday, March 13th



Adult Forum
 Worship & Children's RE

10:00am
 11:15am

Calendar of Events

February, 2011

- 1 Tues, 7:30 pm- Green Team
- 6 Sun, 12:45- After Church Lunch Bunch
- 8 Tues, 6:40 pm- Board Meeting
- 12 Sat, TBA- PFFFT
- 13 - Day Light Savings Time begins
- 15 Tues, 7:30 pm- Green Team
- 17 - **St. Patrick's Day**
- 18 Fri, 7:30 pm- Red River Earth Spirit
- 20 Sun, 12:45- Stuffed Potatoes Plus! lunch
- 26 Sat, 6 pm– Fellowship Dinner
- 27 Sun, 12:45 pm- Congregational Meeting
- 29 Tues, 7:30 pm- Green Team

March Birthdays



- 04 Tom Rawson
- 12 Jan Fletcher
- 21 William Lloyd Fridley
- 22 Elbert Hill
- 27 Sonny Schwichtenberg

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 All April newsletter submissions are due
 to
newsletter@rruu.org
 by March 26th, at 5:00 p.m.



Green Team Tip of the Month

Try to be print conscious this week. Do you really need to print that email? If your printer is capable of printing double-sided take advantage of that whenever possible especially if you have to print long documents. Print on the back of paper that is already printed on one side, but **ONLY** if you are using an inkjet printer. **CAUTION:** Do not do this on a laser printer. The toner from the printed side sticks to the rollers.



Harmony House Concert Series

You are cordially invited to hear Curtis and Loretta, a husband-wife singer-songwriter duo perform at Harmony House Concerts. **Curtis League and Loretta Simonet's music comes straight from the heart.** The couple's extraordinary harmonies and their proficiency on a parade of stringed instruments create an alluring frame for their poignant original songs and carefully chosen traditional pieces from the British Isles, America, and beyond. The current collection of instruments includes Celtic harp, mandocello, mandolin, guitars, clawhammer banjo, and a National steel ukulele, plus a bit of kazoo, harmonica, and shakers.

Concert is \$15 per person prepaid donation with reservations – payable to Loretta Simonet. Call 903-583-2661 to reserve a seat. To confirm, please send your donation to Faye Wedell, P.O. Box 812, Bonham, TX 75418. Harmony House is on Wildscape Acres, 10 miles north of Bonham, Texas (65 mi. NE of Dallas) near Ravenna. Ask for directions when you call reservation. for your reservation.



Member News

In Gratitude

Dear Friends,

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all who participated in making the Celebration of Life Service for my husband, John R. Picot such a meaningful event. The flowers, the food, the fellowship and the outpouring of support and kindness touched my heart deeply. Please know how grateful I am to this congregation for your caring. It was comforting and incredibly kind.

Anyone who has lost a mate knows how difficult it is. Your willingness to do so much in so little time and with such love has eased my loss. I thank you now and will remember what you've done for the rest of my life.

In faith,
The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong

PS. If you wish, you can read his obituary [here](#).

Stewardship Campaign Kick-off Dinner



March 26th, 6-9 pm promises to provide an event to be remembered. The purpose of this dinner is to kick-off the annual stewardship campaign, and the planning committee is very excited by the response as the reservation list continues to grow. **Don't be left out, contact [Suzanne Durland](#)** now to add your name to the roster of friends who will gather for food, fellowship, and fun.

Camping, Anyone? Update



One way to get to know UU's from other congregations in a relaxed setting is to go camping with them. RRUU has been asked to join Community UU and Horizon UU Church for a camp out at Eisenhower State Park on April 8-10, 2011. More information is available at:

http://communityuuchurch.org/pages/outdoor_adventure

RRUU is planning on taking out Sunday breakfast and holding a joint worship service at the park. Even non-campers are invited to join the fun during the day on Saturday or Sunday.

Children's Religious Education



Helen Schulze has started a new curriculum with RRUU kids entitled, [The Stepping Stone Years](#). **Be sure to ask your children what they've discussed with Helen during religious education.**

Adult Forum



No information was available at the time of printing.

At the UUA Bookstore...

[The Sustainable Soul](#), written by Rebecca James Hecking, is a poignant and inspirational guide for a journey toward ecological spirituality and sustainable culture. Each chapter contains an essay and spiritual practices designed for both group and individualized reflection. Exercises include a wide range of suggestions such as guided meditations, journaling prompts, creative art projects, and ideas for concrete action. You can choose the exercises that best suit your personality, lifestyle and unique journey.



[The Green Devotional](#), written by Karen Speerstra, is a collection of voices is like a "green book of devotional hours," reminiscent of the Books of Hours medieval people used to hold in their palms. It was called "a cathedral in your hands." And like that medieval book, *The Green Devotional* reminds us that we are connected to something broader and wiser than ourselves. Included are selections from such people as Rachel Carson, Cornel West, Bill McKibben, Alice Walker, Sue Monk Kidd, Dean Koontz, Barbara Kingsolver, Daniel Pinchbeck, Arundhati Roy and many others. *The Green Devotional* ends with a section of "Closing Prayers" that prepare us not just to go to sleep but to rest up for another day of passionate action.





An Invitation to RRUU Members

Have you ever considered the possibility you have gifts of experience, discernment, creativity and/or leadership? Did it ever occur to you that perhaps YOUR unique personhood might be of service in guiding Red River Unitarian Universalist Church into the future? At **any time have you thought to yourself, "Maybe my spiritual life would grow if I were more involved in RRUU?"** Have you ever noticed a few people doing many things in our family and others simply attending on Sundays?

This is your chance! Your Board of Trustees cordially invites you to attend our upcoming Board meetings March 8, 2011 and April 12, 2011 to learn more about being involved in the life of RRUU! We will be electing Trustees to the Board and other key leadership roles in the congregation at our May congregational meeting. Now is the time to find out what is involved so you can respond with an enthusiastic YES to the nominating committee should they contact you!

Please note, attending a Board meeting does not guarantee you will be a candidate (that is up to the nominating committee) nor insure that you will be elected (that is up to the vote of the membership). Attending does, however, provide an opportunity for you to better understand how decisions are made at RRUU between congregational meetings and experience the cooperative and respectful community work of those currently on the Board.

Mark your calendar now... and join us at one or both meetings. Your elected leaders want to share with you what thoughtful, faithful, transparent leadership is all about!



Hospitality Update

Heralding the return of the after church coffee and conversation social gatherings, let us eat cupcakes, cheeses or cookies! Every other week we will be sharing time together with light refreshments in the entry area of RRUU. On alternate weeks the After Church Lunch Bunch will gather for a Dutch-treat lunch.

For the coffee hour times, volunteers will be asked to bring some type of snack which can easily be eaten

using a napkin and without plates or forks (to avoid a time consuming clean up). Dianna Niemann-Harris will be coordinating the bringing of refreshments for coffee hour socials. Please watch your email for an invitation to provide the snacks on a given Sunday or let her know (rruudianna@gmail.com phone 903-327-2069) if you wish to be in the refreshment rotation.

The After Church Lunch Bunch heads to Pop's Place on Mar 6th and will host another "Stuffed Potatoes" lunch on Mar 20th. These gatherings are open to absolutely everyone and are a great opportunity to get to know the members and friends of RRUU better.



WE NEED YOU!

Texoma Earth Day 2011
April 16th, 2011

Volunteers are needed to help with the RRUU Green Team sponsored 3rd Annual Earth Day Festival. Times are available on Friday April 15th from 12 pm to 6 pm, and on Saturday April 16th from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Friday tasks could include: marking vendor spots, **setting up the children's art show, setting up tents,** making signs, and other setup tasks. Saturday early morning tasks include directing traffic, manning barricades, putting up signs, assisting vendors to find their spaces, and other similar tasks. Saturday during the event, tasks include working the information booths, passing out programs, giving out water bottles and water, relieving vendors for brief breaks when they are by themselves, running errands, assisting in the workshop areas, taking pictures, and answering questions.

There are positions available for all levels of activity. Please consider signing up early this year. If you sign up prior to April 1st you will be eligible for a T-shirt in your specific size. Later volunteers wear available sizes. Volunteer registrations are available online at www.earthdaytexoma.org or at the church on the Green Team table.

Call for Chalice Facilitators

If you have an interest in current but inactive chalice groups, or would like to start a new group of a different interest, please contact Chalice Coordinator, Jan Fletcher. Small Groups are vital for the life of RRUU.



Board Bits

What your Board did at their last meeting, February 8, 2011



The board meeting was held on February 8. All members were present with the exception of Penny Armstrong.

In addition to normal board business the following topics were covered:

* Ways and Means discussion about budget creation – brought up by Don Durland during the concerns of the congregation for Suzanne Durland.

* Dates were set for the two upcoming congregational meetings. March 27 was the date selected for the short Mission and Vision meeting. May 22 was selected for the bi-annual Spring Congregational Meeting. Please set aside these dates for attendance.

* **“Thanks and Appreciation Campaign** – see president's letter in this newsletter.

* NTAUUS recommends that all churches have a facebook page. Doug Strong, as Communications Chair has also requested we set one up. The board has asked Doug to talk to the webmaster for NTAUUS and report back a plan for setting it up.

* There is a possibility we may require a new home. The owner has put the building up for sale. The board has declined to even consider purchasing the building. DayStar will be moving out of the building. They have been paying utilities. The board has declined picking up utilities. Our lease will be up for renegotiation in July. Our current lease has a 1 month notice for cancellation by either the owner or RRUU. Some board members have looked at the Denison wedding chapel as a possible rental. Doug Strong was asked to be the contact person for calling properties found by other members.

* Board is learning how to turn things over to committees. They used the Hospitality Committee as part of their research and learning experience.

* NTAUUS leadership training will be June 4th. It is open to any member from the church. The board will be inviting others to attend with them.

* We received NTAUUS Grant for a board retreat to be held as soon as possible after the new board takes office.

The next board meeting is March 8th, 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 March 1st. Those wishing a few minutes during the **“open mic” will want to be ready to speak around 7:00 pm.**

Treasurer's Report



Our January Profit and Loss statement shows income of \$6,691.59 and expenses of \$7,522.56. This results in a shortage of \$830.97 for January. Our continual monthly shortages mean funds from the savings account are being used to meet monthly expenses. This means that account is diminishing with the only dollars deposited therein being fundraiser income and other designated gifts.

Second mile designated gifts the past month include purchase of RRUU logo mugs to give to new members as gifts, plus the software necessary to install Powerpoint on the laptop computer donated to be used with our LCD projector. The congregation also responded to the collection for a needy family in the congregation with over \$250 in gifts.

End of the year giving statements, suitable as income tax documentation were distributed in person and by mail to each giving unit and discrepancies were reconciled by the treasurer. Please remember, those who make cash contributions without using an envelope with their name and the amount given written on it cannot be credited **for the contribution. Also the only way our “in kind gift” treasury records can be accurate is if YOU advise the treasurer of the gift in writing.**

Treasurer Apprentice Marie Bellman began training in February and will be taking on some of the recording aspects of the treasurer position. If it is the desire of the congregation to elect her at our spring meeting, Marie will be prepared to assume the full role of treasurer on July 1, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianna Niemann-Harris, Treasurer

Message From Marla

Marla Loturco, President, RRUU



In my last letter I invited the congregation to join the board for a discussion on “thanks and appreciation”, sadly no one took advantage and participated. From the discussion, the board has decided on a campaign.

Don Durland created three awards on ribbons. These awards are traveling awards. This past Sunday, several board members started off the campaign by finding three individuals being themselves and gave out the three awards. Once an award is received, that individual must bring the award back the next Sunday and give it to someone else they see being themselves. The presentation of the award should be accompanied by the words “I appreciate xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx” where xxxxxxx is what you appreciate about them right at that minute. It could be something like “I appreciate the joy you bring on Sunday morning.” “I appreciate your smile it makes me feel good.” “I appreciate the snow shoveling you did in front of the church this morning.” I think you get the idea. If one looks, there is always something that can be appreciated about another individual.

In addition to the three awards, all of us need to be more conscious about saying thank you. There are so many jobs around the church that get done each Sunday and the days in between to make RRUU the church it is. Since none of them are paid jobs it is very important to let people know that their work is not going unnoticed.

So I want to invite everyone to join the board in the “Thanks and Appreciation” campaign.

Marla

“There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.” – Mother Theresa of Calcutta

Voices of our Liberal Religion:

My Heart Changed

- Nancy Bartlett, UUA Trustee from Mid-South District

...My heart changed. No longer can I view “the immigration issue” as something academic to be studied and “tackled.” People are suffering and we must make it stop.

February 22 was Immigration Rights lobby day at the Georgia State Capitol. The Legislature is in session and a broad array of what are now referred to as Arizona-copycat bills have been introduced – “Show me your papers,” English-only driver’s license exams, no entrance to public colleges or universities, teachers and medical providers required to collect data on undocumented students or patients, and many more. Georgia is copying no one. We fully own the fear and anger and posturing that has found a new target in people who are living here without our permission.

I have much to learn and I don’t often lobby in person but this time my Unitarian Universalist faith kicked me out of bed, shoved a muffin in my hand, and rode me to the capitol to have my say. I wore my stickers and with my ministers and fellow congregants talked to legislators, Democrat and Republican. At a press conference on the capitol steps a speaker commended Unitarian Universalists for our witness. Then I came home and wrote letters and made calls. Human rights don’t depend on stamped documents. Justice doesn’t need a visa. And this UU nana is on her last nerve.

What is happening where you live? What are your experiences and have you been moved to action? What issues are you struggling with? We need to share our stories and concerns and listen to each other. I have shared mine. Now I would like to listen to yours.”

Nancy Bartlett

UUA Trustee from Mid-South District

Mission and Vision Statements



The mission and vision team took the final group pages from the workshop in January and consolidated the ideas into the following statements. Our consultant Joe Sullivan suggests we take into consideration the following when we are making our decision to accept: "I like to say that a mission and/or vision are good if they are useful, and that the measure of usefulness is whether and how they are used. How do they inspire and inform programs, priorities, processes, plans, and organization? How do they influence your relationships with others?"

We will be reading these statements on Sundays until the Congregational Meeting on March 27th to help us get a feel for the words and emotions invoked.

Proposed RRUU MISSION:

We are a sanctuary for religious liberals that celebrates compassion, diversity, and spiritual growth.

Proposed RRUU VISION:

Our religious community will

- welcome and accept all people, regardless of religious beliefs, race, or sexual orientation
- act out of love and compassion, doing no harm
- promote free intellectual pursuit and personal growth
- provide numerous opportunities for social and spiritual activities
- explore the wonders and mysteries of the universe
- encourage cultural involvement and healthy diversity
- be involved in service and social action, extending our reach into the world
- share our joy, time, talents, and money to sustain our community
- value and acknowledge each contribution made by each individual, and

- live the Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Social Action Committee



Our "Share the Plate" offerings of \$ 50

gathered the second Sundays of January and February went to *Unitarian Universalist Association Service Committee*. Because bad weather decreased attendance those Sundays, the cash offerings were combined and sent to the January designee (UUASC). March 13, 2011 is our next "Share the Plate" offering.

Social Action will gather at 10 am March 20, 2011 during the Adult RE hour to consider where donations will be designated the next six months. Absolutely everyone is invited to be a part of this process. All are also cordially invited to submit recommendations of non-profits to be considered as donation recipients. To submit your recommendation, simply email socialaction@rruu.org with 1.) Name and Address of the Organization 2.) Your name and phone number and 3.) A brief paragraph describing the organizations service and why you feel RRUU should give monetary support.

The Social Action gathering will also review our work with area food pantries, the Hat collection held this year and our participation in *A Guest at Your Table*. Special Social Action projects for consideration in the coming year will also be discussed and we will discuss who might have the gifts to chair or co-chair the group when our Acting Chairperson retires the end of June, 2011.

To participate in our on-going food pantry collection, please bring non-perishable foods, paper products and/or hygiene items and leave them in the green plastic bin in the rear of the sanctuary any Sunday. A lock box is in the same area for your gift of cash or check as food pantries are able to buy food for cents on the dollar making gifts of money very appropriate. The Whitesboro pantry is the most recent recipient of our donations.

"We hold the moral obligation of providing for old age, helpless infancy, and poverty is far superior to that of supplying the invented wants of courtly extravagance."

- Thomas Paine

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 Jan, the Chalice Coordinator.



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



GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle, will meet three times in March, as we march toward the 2011 Earth Day Festival. Meetings will be March 1, 15 and 29 at 7:30 at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's house. Check out the website (www.earthdaytexoma.org) and our facebook page 'Texoma Earth Day Festival' for frequent updates. 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. Due to the Stewardship dinner, MF will not meet during March. Plans are set for most months the rest of 2011; however, if you are interested in hosting, please contact The Hills. Facilitators are Elbert & Marion Hill. ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!



PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle, meets each month on a Saturday. They will meet at the 2nd Saturday lecture at Hagerman's on March 12. 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. Spring Equinox or Ostara will be celebrated Friday, March 18 at 7:30. Also, Earth Spirit will present the service on March 20. Any changes will be announced in the Wednesday E-News. Facilitator is Penny Armstrong. NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



UUJAM, a Music-Making Interest Group, meets the first Friday of each month at 7 pm at the home of Jan Fletcher in Sherman. 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. Due to the early February snow, JAM members opted to meet Feb 25. At present, no March plans are scheduled. Regular schedule resumes in April. Check the Wednesday E-News for any updates. 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.



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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

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:

Social Action: Dianna Niemann-Harris (acting)

Building and Grounds: Doyle Adams

Communications: Doug Strong

Caring: Everyone

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