



# Red River Ramblings

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Celebrating the Seven Days of Chalica
- Hospitality Anyone?
- Guest at your Table boxes

Hospitality?	2
Marla's Letter	2
Movable Feast	3
Adult Forum	3
Chalica info	4
UUJam	5
Board Bits	5
Financial Report	5
Calendar	6
Solstice celebration	6
UU Gift ideas	7
Chalice Circles	7

## Sunday Celebrations ~To Enrich our Lives

### December 4th "Getting our GPS"

Nityananda Chandra Das, speaking

This Sunday we continue our exploration of world religions and look forward to welcoming Nityananda Chandra Das to our pulpit to speak to us about Krishna Consciousness. Of his remarks, Chandra writes, *"Every journey starts somewhere, knowing where you're coming from is equal to if not more important than the desired destination or goal. This is a discussion into the journey of the self."*

We may be able to listen to a special guest along with Chandra. He sent this email this week: *There is a chance I may be able to bring a world renowned guru His Holiness Prahladananda Swami with me.*

Chandra Das is the minister of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), Dallas.

### December 11th "Celebrating Christmas Without Christ"

The Rev. Doug Strong, speaking

There's a billboard on the Austin Street bridge that reads, "Keep Christ in Christmas". Frankly I don't think that *"Jesus is the reason for the season"*, yet I cherish, love and celebrate Christmas without suffering any theological hiccups.

A sermon about why Christmas speaks to our hearts and enriches this - the Season of the Heart - for us. We will also tell one another how we individually honored the Seven Days of Chalica. A morning for those who adore and those who abhor Christmas.

### December 18th "A Festival of Lights"

Many of us grew up knowing only one holiday in December. As the world becomes more pluralistic we now have the many "Holidays of December" which are an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of faiths in the human community. This morning we look at four traditions - Hanukkah; Yule; Advent and Kwanzaa - each has messages which speak to this, the Season of the Heart.

### December 24th - 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve "A Quiet Christmas Eve Service of Readings and Harp music"

The Rev. Doug Strong, leading with Victoria Gandy, harpist

A special treat - harpist Victoria Gandy (who happens to be a UU!) will be with us for what promises to be a wondrous evening. The service will be a dialogue of not-so-common Christmas readings and music of the season on harp. We will end with a communion of lights and sing Silent Night. This quiet, pensive gathering is a special time when you can step aside from all the rush and chaos of Christmas and enjoy a quiet time to contemplate what Christmas means to you.

We will start at 5:30p.m., seven minutes after the sun sets so we can enjoy a service of candles, music, readings, eggnog and Christmas cookies.

### December 25th - 11:15 a.m. "Christmas Open House"

Christmas is one day when no one likes to be alone. The church will be open for anyone who would like to drop by and visit. While there won't be a service, per se, lots of fellowship and warm wishes will abound. For those who want a break from the chaos of the morning, stop by and relax.

Adult Forum~10      Worship~11:15  
Silent Meditation~11      Fellowship Gathering~12:15

*"We can find someone to bring light snacks and announce a place for the After Church Lunch Bunch."*



## Manna from Marla

Dear Friends,

I have always enjoyed Christmas traditions but when I stumbled upon a Unitarian Universalist celebration that honored our seven principles and learned about the Seven Days of Chalice, I was impressed.

Who's to say that a new family ritual can't begin at any time? Sure, many of the traditions people bring to this time of year have been ongoing for eons, but here's a celebration which speaks directly to Unitarian Universalists.

Creating a new ritual certainly isn't new. Look at Kwanzaa, a celebration of African heritage. Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chairman of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach, created Kwanzaa in 1966. After the Watts riots in Los Angeles, Dr. Karenga searched for ways to bring African-Americans together as a community. He founded US, a cultural organization, and started to research African "first fruit" (harvest) celebrations. Karenga combined aspects of several different harvest celebrations, such as those of the Ashanti and those

## Food, Fun, Fellowship ~ an invitation to us all

*Is anyone interested in re-instituting the Hospitality Committee?*

*I'm hoping that in January, or after our wonderful new kitchen is completed, three or four people would join me in this re-start.*

*We would be responsible for making coffee and washing the pots, finding someone to bring light snacks on some Sundays and announcing a place for the After Church Lunch Bunch on other weeks.*

*Sometimes we work with*

*the board or worship team to plan pot-lucks and parties. This is fun if several people work together on it.*

*If you have the slightest interest, please talk to Carolyn Cameron or email [chaliceart@yahoo.com](mailto:chaliceart@yahoo.com)*

of the Zulu, to form the basis of Kwanzaa.

In the insuring 40+ years, Kwanzaa has become an intriguing part of American life - with songs, readings, videos and even a US postage stamp. Maybe it's our turn for a uniquely UU holiday!

If you've never heard of Chalice, you are not alone. 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.

But just like Christmas, the exact origins of this holiday are already lost to history. In her own words, Marshall said, "I don't remember where the initial conversation started. I had been talking with a UU friend from Seattle about winter holidays and the fact there should be a UU holiday. And we may have discussed the same thing in the young adults group at church." That would be the Unitarian Church of Vancouver.

"I went home after one of those discussions—that was probably November of 2005—and wrote something that I thought embodied our values" she said. "I sent it to a few friends and one of them created a Chalice website and it's grown from there."

I hope everyone will celebrate Chalice this year. It isn't a complicated holiday -

starting on Monday, Dec 5th take time during the day to light a candle and think of a way you can make our first principle come alive somehow. Then, each day during the week focus on a different principle and on Sun. Dec 11th we'll share the ways we each honored our principles.

Simple, yet significant at the same time. During the month we'll also celebrate Advent, Chanukah, Yule and of course Christmas - including a special service on Christmas eve.

I hope you have a joyous and fulfilling holiday season and I look forward to seeing you at church.

Warm wishes,

Marla

PS You can learn all things Chalice by clicking on the chalice below.



## The Adult Forum ~ Building Your Own Theology

During the month the Forum will continue exploring the UU curriculum **Building Your Own Theology**.

**December 4th** ~ We will conclude writing our spiritual autobiographies taking into consideration the eight prompts that were emailed to members last week. We will also draw four pictures of our visualization of "god" during childhood, youth, pre-UU, and "god" now. (Joyce Peak will lead this group.)

**December 11th** ~ We will share our spiritual autobiographies using approximately 5 minutes apiece, depending on how many are present. The conclusion will be for each person to very briefly tell what they learned from telling their stories and how it felt to share them. (Joyce Peak or Carolyn Cameron will lead this group.)

**December 18th** ~ The assignment this week is to write 10 convictions or habits to be learned by highly ethical people. You should probably think about this before Adult Forum, in order to be finished in time for everyone to

share their convictions. To get your thoughts flowing, the following information is quoted directly from BYOT, Richard S. Gilbert, 2000, The Unitarian Universalist Association.

*"Hosea Ballou, that nineteenth-century Universalist preacher of universal salvation, was riding the circuit in the New Hampshire hills with a (different sect) minister one afternoon. They argued theology as they traveled. At one point, the (other) looked over and said, "Brother Ballou, if I were a Universalist and feared not the fires of hell, I could hit you over the head, steal your horse and saddle, and ride away, and I'd still go to heaven." Hosea Ballou looked over at him and said, "If you were a Universalist, the idea would never occur to you."*

The Ten Commandments are listed below.

- *I am the Lord thy God, ... Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
- *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images.*
- *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*
- *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

- *Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long.*
- *Thou shalt not kill.*
- *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
- *Thou shalt not steal.*
- *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*
- *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.*

(Joyce Peak or Carolyn Cameron will lead this group.)

December 25th ~ No Forum today.



## The Pilgrim's Feast ~ Nov 20th



## Guest At Your Table ~ Remember...

You can return your Guest at your Table boxes at the Christmas Eve service, or the next Sunday, January 1st. It will be most helpful if you would count the contents of your box and write a check (payable to UUSC) rather than bringing cash to church.



Also, by filling out the form on the side of the box and returning it with your check will help UUSC and credit our congregation with your gift.

If you have any questions, please contact [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

## Movable Feast ~ A Holiday Gathering...

Movable Feast will celebrate the holiday season with a come-and-go party at the church on December 16, from 6:00 to 9:00 (or so) p.m. Bring hearty hors d'oeuvres, salads, finger foods, or desserts, but be aware there's no working kitchen yet (so no food preparation or dishwashing at the church). Beverages will include punch, coffee and BYOB. Wear your fancy party clothes, or not!



Monday, Dec 5<sup>th</sup> ~

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

On this day we are aware that honoring inherent worth and dignity takes practice. Take time to make peace with others, honor differences, celebrate diversity, give gifts and donations to groups that help to bridge differences and resolve conflicts, open a dialogue with someone you have had a disagreement with. Open your mind.



Tuesday, Dec 6<sup>th</sup> ~

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

On this day take time to be aware of the wealth in your life and share with others. You might make donations to homeless shelters, serve in a soup kitchen, take part in a demonstration for social justice, write letters to support human rights. Meditate on the ways that your work is needed by our world.



Wed, Dec 7<sup>th</sup> ~

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

On this day reflect upon the way that you participate in your church community that helps yourself and others grow spiritually, you might make a gift of a hymnal to a friend or your congregation, recognize the way that other people's insights help you further along your own journey, extend words of peace or forgiveness to a fellow Unitarian .whom you may have hurt / not understood in the past.



Thursday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> ~

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

This day is dedicated to awareness of our lifelong ability to grow and expand our minds. Keep on learning, teach someone something you know and love, support religious education, stretch your mind, and share books. Stay on the journey.



Friday, Dec 9<sup>th</sup> ~

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

This day is dedicated to our healthy and balanced ways of governance. It is a good time to remember the founders of our democracy and to be proud of their connection to our historic movement. On this day, make your voice heard, but even more, find out ways to make the voices of those less powerful heard in the halls of power.



Saturday, Dec 9<sup>th</sup> ~

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

The world in which we yearn to live is one which we shape and it is far away for most people. On this day, reflect upon the interconnections of all our lives, of our money and the livelihoods of others on the other side of the world. Resolve ways that you can offer your own time, and effort to help to further peace, liberty, and justice.



Sunday, Dec 11<sup>th</sup> ~

**We light our chalice in respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.**

We are a part of all that is. On this seventh day we remember the fragile web of life in which we live and all the beauty we have inherited in this world. Our world is a stunning gem set in infinite space. No gift wrapped beneath a tree is the equal of this precious world that is ours. Simple things can make our world safe and liveable long into the future. May our faith heal our world.

*We will share with one another how we each celebrated Chalice this year during worship on Sun. Dec 11th*

## UU Jam ~ Friday, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>

*“Music is  
Humanity’s Gift  
to Itself.”*

Musicians, Singers, Listeners...lend your...presence! Everyone is warmly invited to come.

UUJam meets in the Meadows of **Wesley Village Community Room, 2603 Meadows Dr, Denison, TX 75020-7280.**

(click the address to see a map) Use of adult beverages *in moderation* is allowed at the Community Room.

UUJam creates a circle of performers, moving around the circle as each chooses and performs a number, then the next person offers a piece. Listeners are welcome to request a song when it is their “turn”. UU Jam last 2-3 hours with the opportunity to come and go at will, eat, laugh, share, sing, hum, whistle and be at ease.

Generally the music is inside and conversation is outside.

Questions? Need a ride? Call Jack Blue who is coordinating this monthly (on the First Friday) gathering. Her number is 903.624.0004

## Board Bits ~from the Nov 16<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting

Everyone on the board was in attendance. We started at 6:40 pm and went home around 9:00 pm. See full board minutes for details. Don Durland acted as our Process Observer and timekeeper for the meeting. In addition to normal business, our agenda covered the following:

- Discussion of concerns presented in writing by Doyle Adams
- Discussion and Acceptance of the proposed Building Use Policy (which will soon be posted online at rruu.org on the governance page)
- Discussion of proposed bylaw changes and setting dates for town hall meeting in January 15 and Special Congregational Meeting on February 5

- Update on Board Retreat which will take place in January – we are in the process of finding a consultant who will be available to assist with the retreat
- Review of October Congregational meeting.

If you would like to see the full board minutes – they will be posted in the “Board Meeting Book” in the office as soon as they are available. The next board meeting is Wednesday, 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.

## Financial Update ~the treasurer’s report

*“Remember if you  
make a purchase for  
the church to use  
our tax exempt  
number. It sure  
saves a lot over the  
course of a year!”*

November was a bountiful month. Close to \$2,800 was given to RRUU in pledges and other weekly offerings, and the bills to operate the church came in at under that amount, at \$2,093. This left a surplus of about \$700.00 for upcoming church operations.

Due to our congregation’s generosity, we were able to make several donations in November. The Second Sunday Share-the-Plate total was \$37.00, and it was sent to the Salvation Army Food Bank; \$40.00 was donated to the UU United Nations Office.

Several people have asked how much our utilities are running per month, and in November, they totaled \$294.31. We have bud-

geted \$360/month for utilities.

Church renovation news: another \$200.00 was added to the cash renovation fund and was used for the new ceiling fans in the chapel.

In November, \$9,950.74 was spent on church renovations. Items included service units for heat, heat filters, lumber, and large numbers of tools and supplies from Lowe’s. By the end of November, the total of all checks written for the renovation was \$39,653.29. This leaves about \$24,550 remaining in the renovation fund.

I will be working on totaling up 2011 in-kind gifts for those in the church who have donated items

to RRUU throughout the year. The gifts might be anything from food for a church event to postage stamps to a usage fee at the local dump.

Please give your receipts to me, and I will prepare paperwork that can be used for tax purposes.

Marie Bellman  
Treasurer

P.S. Remember if you make a purchase for the church, please use our tax exempt number. While the tax may not be much on an individual purchase, it sure does add up over the course of a year. I can give you the number. A simple way to remember it is to put it in your cell phone call list so it is always readily available.

## The Chapel ~ Pews, window screens and AV equipment

*"The pews are have found a home with a tiny Anglican congregation in Houston and we now have \$3,000.00 to buy chairs for the chapel."*

A member of a tiny Anglican congregation in Spring, TX saw our Craigslist ad offering our pews for sale. Several emails later - covering such important questions relating to the color of the cushions and what the fabric is; what the stain on the wood is and what it might cost for them to have kneelers installed we settled on a price for the lot of them - \$3,000.00.

The pews were loaded in a moving van on December first and taken south to their new home.

The money will be used to purchase new chairs for the chapel. Several companies have been contacted. Among them is a company what makes their chairs right here in Texas.

You can look for some sample chairs coming over the next few weeks. The hope is to purchase fifty chairs, some with arms, some with a place to store hymnals, all with lumbar support .

Have you noticed that there is no longer a glare from the windows in the chapel? That's because each window has been fitted with solar screens - which will be a real help in reducing summer heat!

Our fancy audio and video system looks both impressive and complicated. While it is impressive, it is not complicated. Since we use it every week, volunteers are needed to learn how to operate it. If you're intrigued, don't be bashful - speak with anyone on the board about learning how to be an AV techie! It is a lot of fun.



19th Annual Winter Solstice Celebration  
"OUR HUMAN JOURNEY"

December 16 & 17, 2011  
Friday & Saturday  
7 to 9 pm

doors open at 6 pm ~ Yule Fest 9 to 10

[Cathedral of Hope](#)

5910 Cedar Springs at Inwood, Dallas, Texas  
75219

northeast corner, access through Ford dealership on Inwood

TICKETS:

\$15 ~ \$10 seniors & kids ~ \$12 in advance:

[Click to purchase tickets](#)

Childcare (6:30 to 9 pm) \$5  
Service is signed for the deaf  
Hotline: 214-261-5599



### HAPPENINGS THIS MONTH:

Fri	Dec 2	7 pm	UU Jam
Sun	Dec 4	10 am	Adult Forum
		11:15	Worship "Getting our GPS"
		12:15	Fellowship Gathering
Wed	Dec 7	10 pm	Board reports are due
Sat	Dec 10	10 am	PFFFT - outdoor activities
Sun	Dec 11	10 am	Adult Forum
		11:15	Worship "Christmas Without Christ"
		12:15	Fellowship Gathering
Tues	Dec 13	7:30	Green Team meeting
Fri	Dec 16	6:00	Movable Feast Holiday Gathering - in the Chapel
Wed	Dec 14	6:40 pm	Board of Trustees meeting
Sun	Dec 18	10 am	Adult Forum
		11:15	Worship "A Festival of Lights"
		12:15	Fellowship Gathering
Sat	Dec 24	5:30 p	Christmas Eve Worship
Sun	Dec 25	11:15	Christmas Open House
Mon	Dec 26	5:01 pm	January Newsletter Deadline

## Leadership

### Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco, *president*  
 Don Durland, *vice president*  
 Marie Bellman, *Treasurer*  
 Elbert Hill  
 Richard Newlin  
 Kat Walston

### Committee on Ministry:

Carolyn Cameron  
 Gerry Shehan  
 Peter Schulze

### Team Leaders:

Adult Forum: *Suzanne Durland*  
 Building/Grounds: *Doyle Adams*  
 Communications: *Doug Strong*  
 Finance/Endowment: *Marion Hill*  
 Hospitality: *open*  
 Membership: *Marion Hill*  
 Worship: *no single leader, duties are  
 rotated among members*  
 Ways & Means: *Don & Suzanne Durland*

## Looking for a perfect UU gift ~



The [UUA Bookstore](#) has hundreds of titles - books written by UUs and books which UUs would love to own and read. They are offering free shipping on all orders but you have to place your order by Dec 9th.

The [Beacon Press](#), the printing arm of our denomination, has a wide

selection of books available that you can order on line.

If your taste run more towards something to wear, why not take a look at the unique chalice jewelry that you can also order on line from [ChaliceArt.Com](#). Exquisitely crafted UU jewelry by UU jewelers.

Another place for an assortment of UU items is [Uni Uniques](#). They carry t-shirts, music, books, fine art, chalices, jewelry.

Then there is the [cafepress](#) which carries an array of UU stuff - aprons, bumper stickers, mouse pads, and all things UU.

Google "UU Gifts" for more options!

## Chalice Circles ~ Everyone is invited!

**GREEN TEAM**, an Environmental Action Circle will meet this month on Dec 13th at 7:30. Facilitator is [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle, meets on moveable dates at moveable locations. The group will gather at church on Friday, Dec 16th from 6 - 9 for a holiday party. Facilitators are [Elbert & Marion Hill](#).

**PFFFT**, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle, generally meets the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10:00 am at Hagerman Wildlife Refuge. Facilitator is [Suzanne Durland](#).

**UUJAM**, a music making and music listening Circle – highlighted this month on page 5. Facilitator is [Jack Blue](#).

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