



Red River Ramblings

INSIDE:

- New To UU Series
- Christmas Angel Tree
- After Church Lunch Bunch
- Winter Solstice in Dallas

Church Calendar
for the next 30 days



Elbert's Letter	2
Winter Solstice	2
Name This Room	3
Angel tree Adult Forum	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Board bits	4
New to UU Series	5
After Church Lunch Bunch	5
NTUU's Award Lunch	5
Meditation Group	6
Chalice circles	6
Leadership list	6

December Sunday Mornings ~To Enrich our Lives

Sunday, December 2nd

Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment

Janet Heimlich, *speaking*

As freelance reporter for National Public Radio, Janet Heimlich won nine journalism awards, including the prestigious Katie, given by the Press Club of Dallas, the Houston Press Club's Radio Journalist of the Year; and the Texas Bar Association's Gavel Award. In addition to her radio work, Ms. Heimlich has written non-fiction articles for such publications as Texas Monthly, the Austin American-Statesman, the Texas Observer, Tribra and Edible Austin. Her book *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment* is the first to take an in-depth look at child abuse and neglect caused by religious belief.

Sunday, December 9th

Light One Candle

The Worship Team (with friends)

The Buddha said, "There isn't enough darkness in all the world to snuff out the light of one little candle." A burning candle is one of those lovely images used by humanity as a metaphor. *It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.. Candles in the wind .. Don't burn your candle at both ends or hide it under a bushel.* On Sunday we will Light One Candle and then several more as we explore the ways that candles, and by extension, light play in six different religious celebrations during the winters of religious life.

Sunday, December 16th

Yule Find It Here

The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong,
preaching

Many who found Unitarian Universalism after leaving a faith tradition may not grasp how difficult it can be to have been raised a UU. Take Christmas for example. I love Christmas. From *Adeste Fideles* to *donning my gay apparel* Christmas has always had spiritual significance for me. Christmas is dis-

appearing. I watch commercials where we see Christmas but we never hear the word. People send 'holiday' cards wishing me a happy "SolsticeHanukkahAdventKwanzaa". The tunes are familiar but they are singing about Target or Maxwell House coffee. I miss Christmas. A sermon about traditions, family, friends, diversity, respect and the importance of ritual in our religious life.

Sunday, December 23th

All Kinds of Time: Seasons, Cycles, and Singularities

The Rev. Dr. Christine Tata, *preaching*

Just past the winter solstice, it's a dreamy time to reflect on the wheel of the year, the seasons and celebrations of various faiths and the events that we have experienced over and over since childhood, like Christmases and birthdays. How do we see the beginnings of these cycles: And how are we to imagine their endings" The holidays invite us to experience our inborn sense of nostalgia along with our persistent hope for the future. Come together to seek a new perspective on some familiar and cherished occasions.

Sunday, December 30th

Annual Winter Turn of the Year Sharing Service

The congregation

A tradition of many years at RRUU is our annual sharing service. What have you read, heard, enjoyed during 2012? Bring a BRIEF (3-5 minutes) reading, reflection, song, poem, etc. that made you smile, think, ponder, wish, hope, sometime during the year and share it.

We'll sing some turn of the year songs and bid farewell to this year.

Soul Café - 9:30 ♦ Worship - 11:15
Adult Forum - 10 ♦ Fellowship - 12:15





Epistle from Elbert

At Marion Hill's suggestion, several members of our congregation planned, prepared, and served a meal at the Grayson County Shelter (which is located only a block from RRUU's "new" building) on November 29.

This is good outreach for our congregation to the community we're now a part of, and it makes RRUU part of a network of area churches supporting the only homeless shelter in Grayson County by periodically providing a meal for residents. Thanks to all those who helped plan and prepare food: Marilyn Alexander, Carole Harner, Lura Moitozo, Joyce Peak, Marie Bellman, Carolyn Cameron, Marla Loturco, and Marion Hill. RRUU will also join other local churches in providing Christmas gifts for shelter residents during this season of giving. (See Message from Marion in this newsletter.) If anyone has other ideas about ways we can be more involved in our community, please let me know.

Ongoing projects in the church include the Name This Room campaign, wherein people suggest names for vari-

ous rooms in our building. Sheets are hung on the wall along the stairway from the foyer to the Adult Forum room, for each room needing a name, with space to write in your suggestions. We have some good ones so far but can always use more.

The "Say Yes and Just Do It" project has also gotten off to a good start, but there are still plenty of small chores that need to be done. We don't have paid staff to do all the tasks that need doing on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis, and these are mostly small jobs that, if done regularly, are not too difficult. If you've not already done so, please pick out one (or more) of the jobs and sign up to do it (for whatever period of time you specify, so this commitment doesn't mean you're "locked in" to doing that task forever). We will all benefit from sharing the work of keeping our church functioning well.

Remember, invite someone you know who doesn't attend church and who is open to the Unitarian Universalist worship tradition to visit RRUU some Sunday soon.

See you in church,
Elbert

Winter Solstice Celebration

The 20th and final Winter SolstiCelebration explores the theme of Transformation through a variety of ceremony, ritual and performing and variety arts.

Celebrating the regenerative power of darkness and redemptive grace of light.

Held on Winter Solstice, Fri. Dec. 21, at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs in Dallas. Information at

www.EarthRhythms.org.

Contact Marla Loturco if you want to carpool

20th & Final
Winter SolstiCelebration
transformation
December 21, 2012 ~ Winter Solstice
service 7 to 9 pm
doors open at 6 pm ~ Yule Fest from 9 to 10 pm
Cathedral of Hope
5910 Cedar Springs, northeast corner of Inwood
Dallas, Texas 75235
best access through Ford dealership on west-bound Inwood, or turn
on Nash (1 block east of Cedar Springs)
Tickets: \$20 - \$17 in advance
\$15 children & seniors - \$13 in advance
Info: www.EarthRhythms.org - 214-261-5599
Service is signed for the deaf
Childcare from 7 to 9 pm for \$5 per child
Bring a flashlight to participate in the light ceremony
Bring food pantry (canned meats/pasta/skill preferred) & winterwear donations
Earth Rhythms
A presentation of Earth Rhythms
Celebrating the regenerative power of darkness and the redemptive grace of light

Name This Room ~Deadline is December 15th

The response from folks to "name that room" has been enormously underwhelming, but, you have two more weeks before the deadline.

The signup sheets are on the walls in most

rooms, or on the steps leading to the main place (yet to be named) from the space (yet to be named) at the bottom of the stairs.

Last call, friends! The clock is ticking.

Christmas Angle Tree ~Say YES!

MESSAGE FROM MARION:

"Angel trees" are now a December tradition, with people agreeing to buy less fortunate individuals in a community specific gifts that they request. At the November meeting of the RRUU board, we discussed ways our church could support the Grayson County Shelter (RRUU's close neighbor and the only homeless shelter for the county), in addition to providing its board of directors a meeting space for monthly meetings (which we already do).

One good suggestion was to have RRUU congregants provide holiday gifts for residents of the shelter. But in talking with the shelter coordinator, I learned that people move in and out so often that the "Angel tree" concept of gifts for specific individuals probably isn't practical. A better approach would be for us to provide generic items for various ages and genders, allowing the shelter to use these as needed depending on who's living there at Christmastime.

The coordinator said that several local churches work with the shelter, with each congregation agreeing to provide gifts of a certain type; one provides clothing,

another shoes, etc. She and I agreed that RRUU would focus on items for children and teenagers (toys, puzzles, games and books). These can be inexpensive and don't have to be "the latest thing" or to feature a celebrity's logo. I suggest we complete our collecting of items by Sunday, December 16, which will give time to deliver the gifts to the shelter well before Christmas Day.

Ideally, we won't all buy things appropriate for 10-year-old girls or for toddler boys (though if we have redundancies, we do). I'll place a basket or box at church for collecting the items. The coordinator says the shelter has a capacity of 36 people (20 adults and 16 youngsters), though of course no one can predict how many will be there at Christmas. Thanks, everyone, for whatever you can do to let our neighbors know they aren't forgotten in this season of good cheer.



Adult Forum ~Sunday Mornings at 10 a.m.

During December the Adult Forum will continue exploring various views and positions on evolution.

Dec 2 ~ "The Neo-Darwinian Synthesis" from the evolution series created by The Great Courses. We'll watch a video as the jumping off point for our discussion.

Dec 9 ~ Gil Alexander will speak and show a brief video which explains everything there is to know!

Dec 16 ~ "Scientific Creationism" is the topic this morning, a lecture (on video) by Edward Larson at the University of Georgia.

Dec 23 ~ "Selfish Genes and Intelligent Design" will be the last of our series on evolution from The Great Courses.

Dec 30 ~ "The New and Improved ME" An open confession ... um... discussion about New Year's Resolutions.

Financial Update ~ the Treasurer's report

I'm happy to report that we are doing better than the budget, primarily due to lower expenses. However, we are still using our savings to fund part of the cash payments of principal on our loan.

In October we spent \$1,855 for the playground fence. We have \$3,663 remaining for general renovations.

Excluding the renovations discussed above, in the month of October we had income of \$2,632 from general operations. After operations expense of \$2,501, we had a net income from operations of \$131.

For the year to date period of July through October 2012, we had income of \$67 from operations on the P&L. However, this amount does not include the cash payment of principal on our loan. The change in

cash from general operations including the payment of principal was a loss of (\$1,075) year to date. This amount was funded from our savings.

As of the end of October 2012, we had cash of \$36,410 and debt of \$45,847.

In October we contributed \$87 to the Earth Day festival from the Share the Plate program.

Carole Harner
Treasurer

"I'm happy to report that we are doing better than the budget, primarily due to lower expenses. But, we'll still using savings to fund part of the cash payments of principal on our loan."

Board Bits ~ From the Oct. and Nov. board meetings.

Since Carla Murphy had to resign as Vice-President due to medical reasons, the board appointed Carolyn Cameron to be Vice-President and appointed Doug Strong to be secretary. They will fill these positions until the end of the church year, June 2013.

The board is asking for NTAUUS grants in three areas: (1) \$4,200 to pay an R.E. coordinator to develop and implement religious education programs for children. (Our current lack of children's R.E. is an obstacle to growth, since visitors with children often look elsewhere on learning we've nothing to offer their youngsters.) (2) \$3,721.09 to refurbish nursery space and second-floor rooms for R.E. classes. (3) \$4,800 to pay honoraria and a small travel subsidy for Sunday speakers. Doug Strong did the "heavy Lifting" on writing these grant proposals, in spite of serious vision problems. Many thanks, Doug!

Last winter, we held our first church-wide appreciation dinner, at which we unveiled the Bruce Cameron Volunteer Award and presented it to its first recipient, Carolyn Cameron. People enjoyed the occasion so much that the board has decided to make the event an annual one (whether or not a new name is to be added to the Cameron Award plaque in a given year).

It's good to get together and express our appreciation for all the good work that many RRUUers do for the church. We informally thank each other often throughout the year, but this dinner is an opportunity to let everyone know that his or her contributions are noticed and valued. The date of the dinner has been set for February 21, 2013. We do need a volunteer to coordinate the dinner arrangements; please speak with me to volunteer for that. And if you want to nominate someone who has made contributions to RRUU "above and beyond" to receive the Bruce Cameron Volunteer Award, see Bruce or Carolyn. As the previous recipients, and thus the only

members of the congregation ineligible to receive the award this year, they constitute the award committee.

The board also discussed other ways to support the Grayson County Shelter and decided on two: preparing and taking a meal to the shelter residents, and providing Christmas gifts to the residents. (See the Epistle from Elbert and the Message from Marion in this newsletter for further details.)

"The date for our annual Appreciation Dinner will be February 21st."

The 'New to UU' Series ~ Looks at the purpose of religion this month

Exploring the purpose of religion may seem elementary for some, but not UUs. This month the New-to-UU series will focus on some history of both the Unitarians and the Universalists and how it was two separate denominations consolidated fifty-one years ago. We will also talk about the annual gathering of UUs - the General Assembly, held each June and

what it is like to come from a tiny congregation and be in a room of 4,000 other UUs.

The purpose of this series is to help newcomers and visitors and anyone else who wants to explore, in more depth, what sets us apart from other faith communities and why we're called "The Uncommon Denomination" (which actually is a bit of a misnomer because we're not tech-

nically a denomination, do you know why?)

We meet on the second Sunday of each month (i.e. December 9th from 12:35 to 1:35 in the chapel. You don't have to have attended last month in order to come - we're a welcoming group and would enjoy having you be with us.

For those who enjoy reading, we will have several books about Unitarian Universalism that you can check out from the church library and keep for a month.

We will also show a brief video made by one congregation called "Coming Home".

Hope to see you there!

N. Texas UUs ~ Awards luncheon Jan. 12th!



The 4th annual Recognition Awards Lunch for the North Texas UUs will be January 12th at the Oak Cliff UU Fellowship. It is a pleasant gathering of UUs from all over North Texas. We've applied for three grants from the group which, if we are awarded them, will be announced at the lunch. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister at All Souls in Tulsa, will ask *What's Our Net Worth?* Amy Hoffman-Shehan; Marla Loturco and Bruce Cameron have all won the Marty Robinson Award for Volunteerism! See Marla Loturco for tickets.

The After Church Lunch Bunch ~ De Happy Cajun on Dec. 16th

De Happy Cajun is authentic Louisiana Cuisine right here in Pottsboro and it is the destination for the December **After Church Lunch Bunch (ACLB)**. Located at 5005 N FM 289, Pottsboro, TX 75076 (903) 786-4909 the place has an open, friendly and warm atmosphere and the food was outstanding the last time we went. The cost is reasonable (and we each pay for our own food) and everyone is warmly invited to come along. Folks generally strive to arrive around 12:50. It is about 10 miles from the church (go west on Morton Street and turn left on FM 289, the place is ahead on your right). Google maps suggests giving yourself 20 minutes to get there.



The ACLB is everyone - not a special group, so consider yourself, your friends, your family all invited. It's a great way to meet others from church and have a good meal as well.



Leadership

Board of Trustees

Elbert Hill, *president*
 Carolyn Cameron, *vice president*
 Carole Harner, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Paula Blackshear, *Trustee*
 Marla Loturco, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Gerry Shehan, Peter Schulze
 Joyce Peak

Team Leaders or Team:

Adult Forum: *Joyce*

Aesthetics Team:

Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Doug & Kat

Building/Grounds:

Communications: *Doug*

Chalice coordinator: *open*

Finance/Endowment: *Dan*

Good Times: *Carolyn, Carole,
 Faye, Lura, Marilyn & Marion*

Long Range Planning:

Amy, Gil, Marilyn

Membership: *Marion*

Nominations: *Faye, Marie, Marla*

NTAUUS Rep: *Marla*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Elbert*

Social Action: *Open*

Ways & Means: *Open*

Worship:

Carla, Doug, Faye, Marla

RED RIVER

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The Meditation Group ~ On Break until March

The meditation group is taking a winter break and will return in March. Those who would like to meditate are urged to find a quiet corner in your home, create a focal point - perhaps a plant, flower, photograph, a piece of art or whatever you have that causes you to smile when you see it. Get a comfy chair and schedule time (yup, write it in your calendar) each week, or day, to sit for an hour. You can listen to music, stare out the window or nap. Do it for an extended number of days or weeks and you will find yourself being more centered and focused. It really works!

Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~ for us all!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle will meet on Tuesday, Dec 11 at 7:30 pm. Facilitator [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle. In December feasters will meet twice, first on Dec. 13th at Doug Strong's home for a Holiday Bash and then on New Year's Eve at Carla and Jim Murphy's home. Speak with the facilitators: [Elbert & Marion Hill](#).

"OMMMM..." Meditation Group will meet the last Sunday of every month when they resume in March. CD Meditations and Drumming Circle with Potluck to follow – come join the fun at 12:30 PM in the Adult Forum Room. Facilitators [Joyce Peak and Paula Blackshear](#).

BOOKED FOR LUNCH, an informal book discussion group that generally meets the second Thurs of each month from 11 - 1 pm at church. Look for the group to resume after the holidays. Open to everyone. Facilitator: [Carolyn Cameron](#). NOTE: Next meeting is January 10th

THE AFTER CHURCH LUNCH BUNCH, One Sunday a month after things we go out for a Dutch-treat lunch. There is no agenda, no reports, no minutes - just everyone heading out and breaking bread together. This month's gathering will be at De Happy Cajun in Pottsboro on Dec 16th. Details on page 5. Email announcements@rruu.org if you have a restaurant suggestion.