

Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2008

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas

“Shine a Light into the World” The 2008 Stewardship Campaign

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This last year at Red River Unitarian Universalist Church has been a time of growing our institution as well as our membership. We have matured significantly as a church organization as we have expanded Religious Education programs, learned to work with our minister, and explored our past, present and future with outside consultants. Our church is healthy, vibrant, and well managed!

In the coming year, we want to *Shine a Light into the World* by making sure our message and vision is realized in our church and felt in our community. In Religious Education, we want to increase funding and improve training, as well as implement the Safe Congregation Policy. We plan to improve our public image and our outreach to the community by growing our social action programs and beautifying our worship space. And we will continue to build our future with expanded membership programs and leadership training, all the while keeping our eyes on the goal of a new church home down the road.

Your 2008 Stewardship Campaign will kick off with a special event at church on March 2nd, 2008 and conclude with a celebration on March 30th. This year, we will again have a series of meetings in members' homes to discuss our church, its future, and your participation in it. These meetings will be small, casual and intended to last no longer than 90 minutes.

At each meeting there will be light refreshments and a discussion led by a member of the church board. You are encouraged to have in mind at least one question, comment, or suggestion regarding RRUUC. You can expect a call in late February from your host inviting you to one of these meetings, which will be held during the first half of March. If you are unable to attend that meeting, you will be given the dates and times of other meetings to choose from, and the caller will inform the host of your selected meeting that you will attend. Your attendance at one of these meetings is urgently requested; the Board of Trustees and the Stewardship Committee believe you will find them enjoyable and informative.

One of our goals this year is to hear from everyone in the church. You can expect a call from your meeting host and also calls from the Stewardship committee to be sure everyone is represented in this campaign. Of course, a pledge from everyone will be ideal, but the most important thing is that everyone has a voice.

-The Stewardship Committee



Adult Religious Education & Jr./Sr. High RE 10:00am
Worship & Children’s RE 11:15am

February 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	

Candlemas (Imbolc)



February 2 is one of the great cross-quarter days which make up the wheel of the year. It falls midway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox and in many traditions is considered the beginning of spring.

The Red River Earthspirit Chalice Circle is going to have a Candlemas celebration!

Saturday, Feb. 2 @ 6 PM

4566 Theresa (Kris Riek's house)

Denison, Tx 75020

Please bring food and drums or noisemakers. In case of weather, we will meet at the church.

Call Kris for directions - 903-464-0786.

Schedule of Events

Monday Evenings 6:30-7:15

Being Peace Meditation Circle

Thursday Afternoons 12:15-1:00

Being Peace Meditation Circle

Feb 1 UUJam!!, 7:00

Feb 2 Red River Earth Spirit, 6:00

Feb 3 Souper Bowl (potluck), 12:45

Feb 6 The Green Team, 7:00

Feb 7 RRUU Board Meeting, 7:30

Feb 8-9 Meditation Retreat (Dallas)

Feb 10 Celebration of Joy, 5:00 (Dallas)

Feb 13 The Green Team, 7:00

Feb 16 A Moveable Feast, 6:30

Feb 19 Evensong, 7:30

Feb 20 RRUU March Newsletter deadline

Feb 24 It Takes A Village, 12:45

Feb 29 Reel Deal, 7:20

Coming Up...

March 2 Westside UU Building Dedication, Ft. Worth

April 25-27 SWUUD Spring Conference, Austin

February Birthdays!

Jerry Harris 2/2

Mike Ellsberry 2/11

Marshall Reid 2/16

Lauren Caves 2/18



A Month of Sundays

February 3

A Moment of Practice, A World of Possibility

Each day we wake and meet the morning. From that very first moment, we have yet another chance to greet our lives with awareness and reverence. Unless we automatically reach for the coffee first! Let us consider how spiritual practices may – or may not – fit in our lives.

The Rev. Jennifer Innis has served UU congregations in Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, Alabama, and South Carolina. She currently serves as Consulting Minister for both RRUU and for the UU Fellowship of Midland, Texas. Jennifer was raised as a Unitarian Universalist, granted a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School and ordained by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester, Massachusetts. She now lives in Plano, Texas, with her spouse, the Rev. Patrick Price, minister of Community Unitarian Universalist Church.

February 10

“A Liberal Lent”

Forty days of repentance and preparation? For many of us this sounds like just the sort of religion we want to avoid! Few know that Unitarianism has a long history of observing Lent. We'll explore a way to live the season in our lives today.

Ms. Megan Dalby-Jones is a Ministerial Candidate, as recognized by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association. A student at Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago, one of our two Unitarian Universalist seminaries, she and her spouse, Kristi, came down to Texas in order for Megan to serve as the most recent Ministerial Intern at First Unitarian Church of Dallas. At the moment, the family is giving priority to Kristi's career, and so they plan to stay put geographically for the next few years. Megan is using that time to focus as much as possible on preaching, which she loves, by being a UU “circuit rider” on the weekends. She also has a “day job” at Borders Books.

February 17

To Be Announced

February 24

“What You See Is What You Get!”

Some reflections on how we might live more happily in the voluntary, covenantal relationship known as a Unitarian Universalist congregation.”

Scottie McIntyre Johnson is a founding member of RRUU, a past president of the congregation and current coordinator of the RRUU Worship Arts Team. She is currently a member of the Southwestern UU Conference Board of Trustees and has served as Dean of the district's Dwight Brown Leadership Experience for a number of years. Having recently retired from a long career in Montessori education, Scottie has begun her second year as a student at Perkins School of Theology (SMU), preparing for the UU ministry.

Our Unitarian Universalist Heritage...



Peter Cooper was born on February 12, 1791. He was a workingman's son who had less than a year of formal schooling. Yet he went on to become an industrialist and an inventor who designed and built America's first steam railroad engine and obtained the very first American patent for the manufacture of gelatin that

we know today as Jell-O. Cooper made his fortune with a glue factory and an iron foundry. He even once ran for president.

As a boy, Peter Cooper learned carpentry, beer brewing, hat and coach making. But he was acutely aware of his lack of "even a common education," a deficiency that bothered him throughout his life. Though he later became one of America's richest men, he could not spell. Cooper never forgot his beginnings or his lack of education.

Believing that education should be "as free as water and air" he founded Cooper Union in 1859, where free courses were offered in science, engineering, and art. As one of the first colleges to offer a free education to working-class children and to women, Cooper Union was a pioneer long before access to education became public policy. The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art continues to offers tuition-free bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering, and bachelor's degrees in architecture and art. [Pictured, Cooper Union main building today]

Cooper Union is also the place where Thomas Edison and Felix Frankfurter were students; where the Red Cross and NAACP were organized and where Susan B. Anthony had her offices.



Peter Cooper's dream was to give talented young people the one privilege he lacked – a good education. Interestingly, Peter Cooper did not name the

institution after himself; rather, the name was pressed upon him by the New York State Legislature, which insisted that the institution he founded bear his name.

If Cooper sounds like a real-life Horatio Alger, (another UU) perhaps it is no surprise that three of Alger's tales tell of young men passing The Cooper Union's stately Foundation Building and, duly inspired, deciding immediately to lead productive and moral lives.

Cooper was the first wealthy industrialist of the 19th century to equate the acquisition of wealth with social responsibility. Cooper gave his money away without receiving any tax breaks. His example directly nudged Carnegie and many others into commencing their more famous philanthropies.

In the presidential election of 1876 he headed the minority Greenback Party ticket in order to place before the public his economic views, which ran counter to the prevailing deflationary doctrine.

Cooper was 84 years old when he announced his candidacy for the Presidency. Unlike some independent candidates, he did not use his own fortune to finance the campaign. He was asked to serve as the party's candidate, and he

viewed it as his duty to do so.

Cooper and his family lived quietly on Gramercy Park, close to All Souls UU church on the Upper East Side to which they belonged.

Peter Cooper died on April 4, 1883 in New York City at the age of 92. Thousands of New Yorkers spontaneously poured into the streets as his casket was taken to its resting place in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, in tribute to the great man who lived his religious principles, dedicated his life and fortune following this simple belief: "I have endeavored to remember that the object of life is to do good."

It is a tragedy that history, especially the history we teach our schoolchildren, seems to have largely forgotten this pivotal figure in the history of New York City, the United States, and perhaps the world.

I have endeavored to remember that the object of life is to do good.

"Celebration of Joy"

Interfaith Buddhist

LUNAR NEW YEAR "Celebration of Joy"

Sunday, February 10, 2008 (5:00 pm)

- 5:00 Gathering Music
5:30 "MEDITATION & MORE" Celebration
7:30 Dinner & Refreshments

Musicians **Gary Floyd** (voice & piano), **Robin Hackett** (voice & guitar)
& Artists: **Lainey Bernstein & Charity Lankford** (vocals)
 Monica Lecrone (dance), **Cornell Kinderknecht** (world flutes),
 Michael Kenny, Cynthia Stuart & Frank Lunsford (percussion),
 Amy "Moon Lady" Martin & more, etc...

Facilitated by **Br. ChiSing**, MDiv., M.A.
(an ordained disciple of Zen master **THICH NHAT HANH**)

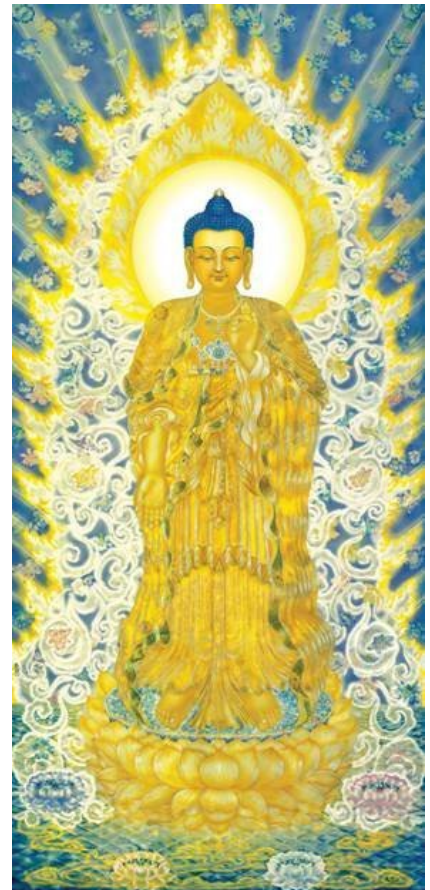
"BREATH OF LIFE"

Interfaith Mindfulness Fellowship

UNITY CHURCH OF DALLAS
6525 Forest Lane (between Preston & Hillcrest)
Dallas, TX 75230

\$5 - \$20 donation requested
American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for the deaf available,
Childcare available upon request in advance by noon on Wednesday
(This is an official "Season For Nonviolence" Dallas event)

www.InterMindful.com



Green Team Tips from January

01/06/08 **Insulate Your Water Heater**

Keep your water heater insulated could save 1,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$40 per year.

01/13/08 **Weatherize Your Home**

Caulk and weather strip your doorways and windows. Save 1,700 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$274 per year.

01/20/08 **Put on a Sweater**

Instead of turning up the heat in your home, wear more clothes Save 1,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$250 per year.

01/27/08 **Insulate Your Home**

Make sure your walls and ceilings are insulated. Save 2,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$245 per year.

"Coffee & Conversation" - February & March

The RRUU Hospitality Committee (Elbert & Marion Hill, Coordinators) would like to thank in advance the people that have agreed to provide refreshments for our coffee time after the February Sunday worship services. The sign-up list for March is in the foyer, and you are invited to contribute to the life of our congregation in this way. Your help is much appreciated!

Hospitality will be handled by these people in February:

Feb. 3, Kris Riek	Feb. 10, Jim and Carla Murphy
Feb. 17, Cynthia Evetts	Feb. 24, Nell Evans

Souper Bowl of Caring



Every year since 2002, RRUU has participated in a nationwide effort to reduce hunger called the "Souper Bowl of Caring", and 2008 will be no exception.

Just as the children and youth of over 17,000 other churches throughout the nation will be doing on Feb. 3, our RRUU kids will be waiting at the door as the grown-ups leave the sanctuary on Feb. 3, holding soup pots into which you may put money, every penny of which will be donated to a local charity addressing hunger needs selected by our kids. The amount collected will then be reported on-line to the national website of the Souper Bowl of Caring organization and the total amount of money raised across the country will be reported on television during the Super Bowl broadcast.

Last year, over \$7 million was raised and since this project was started in 1990 by one Presbyterian youth group in Columbia, South Carolina, over \$70 million has been donated directly to local charities; none of the money collected goes to the Souper Bowl organization, which is funded largely by donations from business, including three NFL team owners.

Other churches in our area will be participating in the Souper Bowl effort as this is truly an inter-faith effort to make a positive difference in our world. Please plan to contribute generously on Souper Bowl Sunday!

All are invited to stay after the worship service for a Souper Pot Luck! Bring a salad, bread or dessert. Soup and beverages will be provided.

A Lenten Meditation Retreat



“Rolling the Stone Away: Mindfulness Meditation for Resurrection Living.”

FRIDAY, FEB. 8 - 5:30 to 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY, FEB. 9 - 8:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

At the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

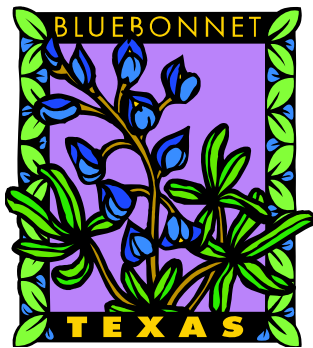
14115 Hillcrest Road,

Dallas, TX

Gary Stuart, facilitator of the retreat, was an ordained Zen Buddhist monk with Vietnamese Zen Master and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh, and is currently studying with Zen teacher, Dr. Ruben Habito, teacher of the Maria Kannon Zen Center and professor at Perkins School of Theology (SMU).

To register, call Gary Stuart at 214-564-9329. A \$10 donation is requested to cover the cost of breakfast and lunch. For more information, contact Bill Mory (903-624-3860; morytherapy@sprintpcs.com).

Southwestern UU District Spring Conference—April 25-27



YOU are invited to Austin, Texas, to the District Spring Conference, hosted by First UU Church of Austin. It's a "don't miss" UU event.

Our theme is "What the World Needs from Religious Liberals" with two keynote speakers -- David Bumbaugh and Natalie Fenimore -- and worship services with the hosting minister, Dr. Davidson Loehr. David is Professor of Ministry, Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Natalie is a Master Credentialed Director of Religious Education, Fairfax, Virginia. Davidson has been minister at First UU of Austin for more than 6 years, has gained a deserved reputation as a scholarly and thought-provoking preacher.

Our workshops will include subjects on: Sustainable Architecture, Talk-backs with the Keynoters, UU History, Update from U-Bar-U, Greening your Grounds, Jesus Seminar, Winning Religious Education Grants, and more. Saturday early morning extras: Yoga or Walking tour of Lady Bird Lake.

Austin is the Live Music Capital of the World, so we are scheduling some of our best local talent for worship services and evening entertainment. For a quieter and more spiritual mood, we'll offer a video presentation of work by world-acclaimed artist, Andy Goldsworthy, featured on the cover of UU World, Summer 2006.

And if you've wondered why we say "Keep Austin Weird," now's your chance to find out. Please plan to join us for a memorable occasion. More details to come.

Social Action—"One More Step"

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church started the New Year in a fitting way. Elbert and Marion Hill delivered a trunk load of shelf stable food items to Loaves and Fishes in Durant. Shelves in all of the local food pantries are very lean after the holidays.

A number of our members attended the Martin Luther King Day Celebration Breakfast at Austin College on January 21 and the Candlelight Vigil at Bethel Baptist Church in Denison. Next year we plan to sponsor a table at the breakfast to insure that our unified presence is noted.

The congregation has also taken to opportunity to exercise our vote and help determine which Congregational Study/Action Issues will appear on the GA

2008 agenda. Votes were cast internally during the last two weeks of January and an electronic ballot representing the congregation's decision was submitted.

Please mark your calendar for the Souper Bowl of Caring that will be held Feb. 3, 2008. (See related article on page 6.)

We will also be trying to provide landscaping for Habitat for Humanity homes that are being completed in 2008. Reverend Innis suggested that we could increase the landscaping budget by using "pass along" plants that we donate from our own gardens. This is a great way of providing tried and true plants for Texas and including a personal connection with RRUU.

Upcoming Events:

The cleanup scheduled for March 30 at Herman Baker Park in Sherman has been rescheduled for April 6 to avoid a conflict with the church birthday party. I am drafting a letter to the Sherman City Manager requesting permission. We plan to promote the cleanup and encourage other community groups to join in.

The RRUU Social Action Project for April will be to provide aid for the Bryan County Youth Center.

UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home*

**UU'RE HOME
43 VERMONT CT
ASHEVILLE, NC
28806**

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and

are happy to provide directions and advice for their area?

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) can fulfill your dream. For 28 years,

we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at info@uurehome.com, or at 828-281-3253, and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the *UU're Home* website at www.UUreHome.com are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The paper

edition is published every year in April (and has some listings different from those on the website). For a copy of the 2008 directory and a year's access to the website listings, please click on "become a member" to pay by credit card or send a check for \$25 and your e-mail address to:

UU're Home
43 Vermont Ct.
Asheville, NC 28806

Area UU Church Building Dedication—The Westside Story

Fourteen years after a few Unitarian Universalists began meeting in homes in west Fort Worth, Westside Unitarian Universalist Church of Fort Worth announces the Building Dedication of the property they recently purchased at in south-central Fort Worth. The dedication will be held Sunday, March 2, at 4 pm, and you are cordially invited to share in this celebration.

The Westside Story –

In March of 2005, fire destroyed the rented space Westside had leased for 9 years. Westside met at Temple Bethel for the balance of 2005 and began sharing space with then building-owners Angel of Hope Christian Church at 901 Page Avenue in January of 2006. In March of 2007, with the support of NTAUUS and Westside's members and friends, Westside accomplished a "first" with the purchase of real estate at 901 Page Avenue in historic Ryan Place. As Westside approaches the one-year anniversary of closing on the purchase of 901 Page Street, they are dedicating their building and celebrating both the calling of a full-time minister and a more than 25% membership growth in the past year.

Westside's new property was the home of Unity Church of Fort Worth for many years. Angel of Hope, a progressive and welcoming Disciples of Christ church, bought the property from Unity and later provided a new home for a Montessori Pre-School previously housed at the adjacent St.

John's Episcopal Church. The Montessori Pre-School remains at Westside as a tenant and a fulfillment of Westside's mission. Westside has worked on repairs and improvements to the interior of the building for the past year, and they will begin exterior repair and improvements this calendar year with the assistance of a Chalice Lighter grant.

Westside had been served by one part-time and one full-time minister during two periods before calling Dr. Russell Elleven to part-time ministry in 2005. The congregation is pleased to announce that Dr. Elleven has now been called to full-time ministry. Westside Unitarian Universalist Church is a Welcoming Congregation. Their mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of their members, their families, and the world at large through supportive relationships, religious exploration, and social action. They envision that they will grow and become a more influential liberal religious presence through active service to their community and the world at large.

Westside has experienced membership growth in excess of 25% in the past 11 months. In 2007 Westside reported 84 members and in 2008 will report 108. Newcomers are plentiful at Sunday worship. The community is served by a network of thriving small groups, classes and activities that meet regularly. The warm welcome provided by the minister and congregation has encouraged many to return, and membership numbers have increased accordingly.

Westside UU Church begins each Sunday morning worship with the lighting of the flaming chalice. Their chalice is unique. It was designed by noted local artist and Westside Church member Charles Boren. This freeform rendering is also a symbol of our own fragile human lives. It is carved from mesquite, a common but hardy wood native to Texas. Like us, it is full of imperfections: knot holes, weak spots and places worn smooth by the years. And like us, it has been shaped into something beautiful and precious within a community of love and common faith. The chalice was first designed for the ordination of our former minister, the Rev. Sam Schaal, and has subsequently been used in worship services.

Westside is poised to continue steady growth. Please show your support of their efforts and celebrate their success Sunday, March 2, at 4 pm. For more information, please call 817-924-6988 or go to www.westsideuu.org.



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, Scottie McIntyre Johnson (903-892-4751; scottieone@cableone.net).



BEING PEACE, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle (Afternoon Session) Facilitator: Nell Evans. Meets every Thursday afternoon from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. @ the home of Nell Evans in Sherman.

BEING PEACE, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle. (Evening Session) Facilitator: Kathy Whisman. Meets every Monday evening from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. @ the church.
NEW MEDITATORS WELCOME AT EITHER CIRCLE! JUST SHOW UP.



EVENSONG, A Circle for Sharing Our Stories. Facilitator: Scottie McIntyre Johnson. Meets the third Tuesday of the month @ 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: February 19 @ the home of Scottie McIntyre Johnson in Sherman. Topic: If you won a million dollars, what would you do with it?
NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Linn Cates. The Green will meet twice this month on consecutive Tuesday evenings. Both meetings will be held at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan, 1503 S. Travis St. in Sherman, at 7:00 p.m. February 6: We will discuss the work and projects The Green Team has taken on and decide on the direction we want to take. February 13: The Director of Interfaith Environmental (a Dallas area environmental organizing effort that is poised to go statewide) will meet with The Green Team to discuss working with his organization. Please contact Amy for further information



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Dianna Butler. Meets the last Sunday of each month, after church @ the church. Next meeting: February 24th.
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



A MOVEABLE FEAST, A Cooking and Eating Circle. Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill. Meets at moveable times and moveable places! Next meeting: February 16th. 6:30 p.m. @ the home of Jim & Scottie Johnson.
RSVP if you intend to attend.



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitator: Penny Armstrong. Meets at various places on various dates.. Next meeting: Saturday, February 2nd @ 6:00 p.m., Imbolc Celebration with Pot Luck Supper, @ the home of Kris Riek.
NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS WELCOME!



THE REEL DEAL, A Movie Watching Circle. Facilitator: Linda Woytasczyk. Meets the last Friday of the month from 7:20 to 10:00 @ the home of Linda Woytasczyk in Sherman. Next meeting: Friday, February 29th.
NEW MEMBERS & GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME!



UUJAM! A Music-Making Circle. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher. Meets the first Friday of the month @ 7:00 @ the home of Jan Fletcher. Next meeting: February 1st. Contact the facilitator if you cannot attend. You are welcome to bring snacks to share.
MUSICIANS AND LISTENERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Pastoral Letter on Violence in Kenya and Pakistan

January 17, 2008

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

—*Psalm 61:2*

Dear Friends,

The troubles in our world are many and overwhelming. And yet today there are two crises that are unusually traumatic and vividly present to us since both have touched our global Unitarian/Universalist family.

I am sure that you have been paying attention to the reporting about the post-election violence in Kenya, as well as to the harrowing events occurring in Pakistan—preceding and following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. I am sure that your hearts and souls have been troubled. I am sure, because I have been troubled as well.

Many of you are also aware that Unitarian/Universalists in Kenya and Pakistan are among those who have suffered directly. We have received reports that the home of a Unitarian pastor in Kenya was among those that have been burned to the ground, and that many Unitarian families are among the nearly 500,000 newly displaced people in Kenya.

And on Thursday, January 10th, we received a report that two members of the Unitarian Universalist Christians of Pakistan were among the 23 people killed during a suicide bombing in Lahore.

As a faith community, let us first Gather the Spirit, and then Harvest the Power in response to the violence in these two regions.

Would you join me in a Prayer in a Time of Mourning?

(on last page of newsletter)

Now, let us Harvest the Power. A joint Unitarian Universalist Service Committee/Unitarian Universalist Association (UUSC/UUA) Kenya Crisis Fund has recently been established. Please consider contributing to this effort to provide emergency assistance. The UUSC is working in Kenya with long-time, grassroots partners and relief organizations. In addition, the UUSC is sending a delegation to Kenya to meet with regional partner groups, community members and leaders, and humanitarian specialists. You can read more about the UUSC's work in Kenya and contribute to the fund, or you can mail your contribution to:

**UUSC-UUA Kenya Crisis Fund
Unitarian Universalist Service
Committee**

PO Box 845259

Boston, MA 02284-5259

Please make checks payable to "Kenya Crisis Fund."

For information about supporting relief efforts in Pakistan, please contact the International Resources Office at the UUA.

Thank you for supporting these vulnerable communities during a time of urgent need. We may not be able to stop the tide of violence, but we can assist those in harm's way as we bear witness for a more just world community.

In Faith,

William G. Sinkford

President

Unitarian Universalist Association



**UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF
CONGREGATIONS**

Letter from the RRUU Board President

January 1 marked the beginning of my last six months as President of RRUU. This circumstance has caused me to think a bit about what we have done during the last eighteen months and what we might accomplish during these next six months. I say “we” because nothing at RRUU happens as the result of one person’s action. I may throw out an idea, push and tug a bit to get things started, but the participation of the board and our members is essential to get anything done. There is no I, there is no they; there is only we.

At the request of the Stewardship Committee, we spent some time at the last Board meeting thinking about our immediate past and discussing our vision for the future. It was clear from discussion that the past eighteen months, and especially the past year, have been about the maturational growth of our congregation. Maturational growth is the term used for the growth of the church as an organization. Our progress has been aided by our use of outsiders—bringing in a facilitator for a board retreat, participating in a workshop with Susan Smith, inviting a UUA consultant for an assessment workshop. These consultants, with their more experienced and objective viewpoint, have been invaluable in helping us see who and where we are, what is possible for us in the future, and how we might get from here to there. I hope we will continue to utilize such resources as we move forward.

Also important to our growth has been the development of our religious education program. Our DRE, Linda Woytaszyk has guided the children’s transition from one to two classes, which are now thriving with Miss Linn and Miss Linda teaching. Roger Gregory-Allen and Viki Reeder have stepped forward to organize a program for our youth. With a repainted and refurbished classroom, we expect that program to grow during the next year. Adult education has seen a growth in attendance under John Ockels’s leadership, with a variety of interesting topics. We are also on the verge of voting on a Safe Congregation Policy, an important resource for helping us keep our children safe.

Perhaps the most important step in our maturation as a congregation is our hiring of the Rev. Jennifer Innis as our part-time minister. We received valuable nurturing from the Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong during the early years of our development, but it is a somewhat different thing to contract formally with a minister. Some congregations that have been very independent have difficulty accepting the help that a minister can offer. Change is accepted most readily when an organization is in some kind of crisis, and that has not been our experience at RRUU. So one might expect some growing pains in learning to work with a minister. But, as we have with so many other challenges, we have met this one with grace and good spirits. Not that there haven’t been bumps along the way—but from sorting our expectations for a quarter time minister to just remembering to keep her in the loop on what’s happening when she’s not here, we are learning how to make the best use of her talents and experience. Jennifer, for her part, has been unfailingly generous with her time and advice, and her commitment to our church is deep and long lasting. I am proud of our ability to reach out and accept the challenge of ministerial leadership, and I am looking forward to the continuing development of our relationship with Jennifer as we move into our second year together.

Kathleen Campbell

RRUU Board Meeting Highlights--January 10, 2008

John Ockels reported that as a result of the Safe Congregational Policy meetings, he had added one sentence to the policy. The Board agreed that the policy was ready to be brought before the congregation for a vote on January 27. He also stated that he was looking for an attorney to review the policy from a liability/exposure standpoint. The Board approved the expenditure of up to \$300 for an attorney to review the policy.

Last fall the Board ordered, through a UUA program, demographic studies of the Sherman-Denison area and of the larger Texoma geographical area that our congregation serves. These are complicated reports, and the board has been reviewing them individually. Soon we will also be inviting members of the Committee on Ministry, the Stewardship Committee, and other leaders to review them. Later in the spring the Board will be discussing how these analyses of the area can help us in planning.

In December the Board approved the recommendation of the Committee on Ministry to appoint a task force to plan and facilitate the covenant workshop on January 27. Members of that task force are Elbert Hill (representing the Committee on Ministry, Mary Larkin-Baker (representing the Board), and Scottie Johnson (representing the membership at large). Jennifer Innis will work closely with the task force to plan the workshop.

In March our contract with the Rev. Jennifer Innis will be up for renewal. The Board asked the Committee on Ministry to review the contract and make a recommendation to the Board, which will be considered at the February meeting. Members are invited to share their thoughts on the matter with members of the Committee on Ministry (Linda Woytaszyk, Elbert Hill, and Darrah Dunn) or the Board.

At the request of the Stewardship Committee, the Board spent some time thinking about the church’s success during the past year and a vision for the future. The congregation will hear more about these strengths and weaknesses, and have an opportunity to contribute their thoughts, during the upcoming stewardship campaign.

Next Board meeting Thursday, February. 7 at 7:30PM at the church.

Minister's Letter

On the Journey

There is much good happening in this congregation: a covenant is in process, quality religious education and worship is created every Sunday, and the annual stewardship campaign is about to begin. Lately, however, my mind turns to the events in the larger world, especially the recent violence in Kenya and Pakistan. For our shared reflection, I offer the recent pastoral letter from Bill Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and notice of a special campaign to support the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in Kenya.

If you would like to know more about events in Kenya, look up the personal blog of UUSC President Charlie Clements on www.uusc.org. He and other UUSC staff are documenting their current experience as of this writing.

Each of us can make a difference. Together, we can do much more. Together, our strength is widened and our vision and our hope are renewed.

Namaste, Jennifer

Where in the UU World is Rev Jennifer?

The best ways to contact me are by my cell phone: 972-639-7900 and by email: revjinnis@earthlink.net. My day off is Monday. I will return general calls or email after my day off is over. In case of emergency, I will respond as soon as possible.

When I am working with the Unitarian Universalist church at Midland I may take a little longer to return calls and email due to my responsibilities there. I ask that you let me know if a matter needs my immediate attention. For this month, I am in Midland during February 8-17. If you do not reach me directly, please let me know how to get in touch with you.

Bowing to the light within, Jennifer



Prayer in a Time of Mourning:

The deaths of our brothers and sisters—by virtue of both faith and humanity—have shaken us.

The chaos of homes burned to ashes, of explosions that have killed innocents—have shaken us.

Stories of these events have reached our ears and our hearts, though we are more than an ocean away.

And we are left staggering,

Yet shaken down with despair, we raise our eyes to the rock that is higher,

And we find inspiration not only in our own communities of faith, but from the very places where these atrocities are occurring.

Because we hear from the very same places that Freedom and Justice are still on the lips of our brothers and sisters there:

That Hope remains alive,

That Compassion is still at work,

That the Dawn of a New Day is yet within sight.

So, we will join our brothers and sisters in crying unto thee: "LEAD US ALL TO THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER."

Spirit of Life, be with us and help us be healers in this hurting world. Inspire us to confront injustice with the power of love. And show us how to make the power of love real and tangible; we know this is the work that we are called to do.

Amen.

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas

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Church Leadership

Minister

Reverend Jennifer Innis

Board of Trustees

Kathleen Campbell, President (2008)

Tom Rawson, Vice-president (2008)

Jim Johnson, Treasurer (2008)

Dianna Butler, Trustee-at-Large (2008)

David Lawrence, Trustee-at-Large (2008)

Mary Larkin-Baker, Trustee-at-Large (2009)

John Ockels, Trustee-at-Large (2009)

Committee on Ministry

Darrah Dunn, Elbert Hill, Linda Woytasczyk

Team Leaders

Worship and Chalice Circles:

Scottie McIntyre Johnson

Adult Religious Education:

John Ockels

Children's Religious Education:

Linda Woytasczyk

Youth Advisors:

Viki Reeder & Roger Gregory-Allen

Social Action:

David Lawrence

Hospitality:

Elbert & Marion Hill

Communications:

Kathleen Campbell

Historian:

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Newsletter:

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