



Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 5

MAY 2008

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

A Month of Sundays

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MAY 18 - SPECIAL COLLECTION TO HELP ALLEVIATE HUNGER IN HAITI

You are probably aware of how worldwide food shortages and rising prices are affecting the poorest people on the planet. This crisis is profound in Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. On May 18 a second collection will be taken up during the worship service. Funds we collect will be channeled through International Child Care, a respected relief organization we have supported in the past. Please come to church that Sunday prepared to give generously. Thank you!

May 4

Rev. Jennifer Innis

“Truth without Certainty”

What we believe has to make sense and has to make a difference in our lives. So how do we determine what we believe within a liberal faith that runs the risk of being “open at both ends?”

May 11

“The Poetry of Nurturing”

From the epic poems of sleepless, baby-rocking nights to the haiku of abbreviated communication with restless teenagers, two mothers of our own will help us uniquely celebrate one thing we all do the same way: begin life through a woman. Celebrants: Helen Schulze and Sarah Somers.

May 18

Rev. Dr. Daniel Kanter

“When God Isn’t There”

Some Unitarian Universalists are theists, that is, they believe in the existence of God, although they may differ in the ways they define that God. Our creedless religion, however, welcomes the agnostic and the atheist as genuinely as it does the theist. What is faith for someone who doesn’t believe in God? Come to church on May 18 and hear one Unitarian Universalist minister’s answer to this question.

May 25

Scottie McIntyre Johnson

“In Remembrance”

Our nation will celebrate Memorial Day on May 26, as it does every year. Originally begun just after the Civil War, “Decoration Day,” as it was first called, was a day set aside to honor the Union war dead. In the southeastern United States, however, Decoration Day was a day to decorate the graves of all family members, not only those who had served in the military. We will follow this tradition with a service to honor all those we love who have passed away.



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

May 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	30	31

The Village Goes To The Zoo!

On May 3rd, the Spring Fling is coming to the Frank Buck Zoo in Gainesville, Texas. The "It Takes a Village" Chalice Circle will meet at facilitator Dianna Butler's home in Sherman, 1002 N Cleveland Ave, at 9:30 to caravan to Gainesville. The Spring Fling lasts from 10am until 4pm. Join us for all or part of the day. There will be arts and crafts booths, festival food, live music, lil' britches rodeo, costume characters, Critterman, Radio Disney and more. The live music is Eddie Coker at 2pm! He typically performs over 200 concerts a year; fellow Texas musician Sara Hickman has described him as "the James Brown of children's music... the hardest-working man in kids' show business." Contact Chalice Circle Coordinator Dianna Butler with any questions.

Texoma Area Interfaith Environmental Alliance

RRUU's environmental action Chalice Circle, The Green Team, has been instrumental in organizing the Texoma Area Interfaith Environmental Alliance (TAIEA). This group will be meeting again on May 4th. Recognizing that religious institutions can be powerful organizations through which to effect social change, TAIEA is an attempt to bring together people from various local churches to support each other in our efforts to work for more sustainable living on our planet. The group meets on the first Sunday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at Grand Avenue Presbyterian Church in Sherman. Anyone interested in working with others in our community on environmental issues is welcome to attend.

Schedule of Events

Monday Evenings 6:30-7:15

Being Peace Meditation Circle

Thursday Afternoons 12:15-1:00

Being Peace Meditation Circle

May 1—RRUU Board Meeting 7:30pm

May 2—UUJam! 7:00pm

May 3—It Takes A Village Zoo Trip

May 4—Annual Congregational Meeting after Church

May 4—Texoma Area Interfaith Environmental Alliance 4:00pm

May 13—The Green Team 7:00pm

May 18—Baby Shower for Tobin Baird and Karine Kyle after church

May 20—Evensong 7:30pm

May 24—A Moveable Feast

May 30—The Reel Deal 7:20pm

May Birthdays!

Jake Mancill 5/4

Hilary Gregory-Allen 5/14

Tobin Baird 5/15

Rachel VanCitters 5/20



Minister's Letter

On the Journey

In his book, *From Beginning to End: The Rituals of Our Lives*, Unitarian Universalist minister, Robert Fulghum, reflects on how we pay attention to the meaning in our daily actions. He posits:

From beginning to end,

The rituals of our lives shape each hour, day, and year.

Everyone leads a ritualized life:

Rituals are repeated patterns of meaningful acts,

If you are mindful of your actions, you will see the ritual patterns.

If you see the patterns, you may understand them.

If you understand them, you may enrich them.

In this way, the habits of a lifetime become sacred.

And after every such statement he asks the question: Is this so?

In the course of his writing, it is the question of whether the proposition is valid that keeps him moving into one area of life after another – greeting the day, the union of two people, birth, death, rebirth, people coming together after a long separation, and the ritual of remembrance, such as the simple act of sharing an answer to the sentence, “I never will forget the time I . . .” Fulghum looks at all of our daily habits and layers of patterns and is willing to assign them some level of connection with the larger flow of life, at times whether or not we are mindful of that connection. If these patterns allow us a way to focus on our lives and relationships and make us

richer for them, then there is something of worth within yet another day of putting on the water to boil and washing the breakfast dishes. I submit for our consideration the ritual nature of the annual congregational meeting.

In the earlier generations of the Congregational church, the annual congregational assemblies were known as the May Meetings. These meetings usually came at a time of year when the roads turned to mud and it was that much harder to haul a wagon full of voting members to the required gathering. Yet gather they did to discuss what the church needed and vote on the budget. They also renewed friendships, saw people who had not been to worship in a long while due to poor health or weather, and shared a meal together. All this they did for the benefit of a congregation where they were the ones who determined its health and its future. All this they did, every year, in service to the larger spirit of life.

This congregation and many others in and beyond Unitarian Universalism still practice the Congregational way with our own May Meetings. Following the rules of the church, we send a letter to give advance notice. The minister makes an effort to offer a good message during the worship. We share a meal before the meeting. We have leaders and an agenda, and we commit to discussing only the items named in the letter. We follow the guide of Robert's Rules, a tradition with its own language and rites, the mysteries of which can require interpretation by recognized keepers of this esoteric knowledge within the church. Most importantly, it is the voting

members who determine what the congregation needs and how to use the resources. The business can be as mundane as the minutes from the last congregational meeting to as important as approving a new building or a new minister. The agenda, the discussion, and the vote are all determined by the congregation and come out of the established relationships within the church and the larger vision of the congregation in the world. This freedom of choice accompanied by a sense of the larger responsibility is at the core of our liberal spiritual practice. Even if the meeting lasts 10 minutes and everything is approved quickly and efficiently, we have satisfied a religious observance of sorts. When the business is controversial and it looks like a resolution is far from us, having done the practice in the past and remaining committed to it in all times is even more important. Even in a meeting when the only items for vote are the budget and the slate of officers, we have a chance to maintain the covenant we share as part of a Beloved Community so that it will be there when we really need all the help we can get.

When we are tempted to think the congregational meeting is just another business meeting, I say participation in such a gathering is an expression of the heart of our theology. The act of showing up and having a say is part of how we record what is of worth, including our friends and neighbors. And our own voice too. See you on May 4.

Namaste,

Jennifer

Where in the UU World is Rev Jennifer?

As of this newsletter I will be in Denison to attend the Board meeting on May 1, to lead the worship on May 4, and to attend on May 24. The best ways to reach me are by 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 complete. In case of emergency, please call me and I will respond as soon as possible.

In addition to serving the Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, I am the minister (1/2 time) for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland. When I am in Midland I may take a little longer to return calls and emails due to my commitment with that congregation. I ask that you let me know if a matter needs my immediate attention.

For this month I am in Midland during May 9-18.

Bowing to the Light Within,

Jennifer

Letter from the RRUU Board President

Who are we at Red River Unitarian Universalist Church? How many of you, for example, consider yourselves Unitarian, in some meaning of the word? Or Universalist? Are you a UU Christian, turning to Jesus as your principal spiritual guide? Or a UU Buddhist? Do you identify principally with the Unitarian Universalism's humanist tradition? Or perhaps you are a neo-pagan? An agnostic? An atheist? Do you still honor your roots in another faith tradition, or are you rebelling against an earlier religious experience? Is Sunday worship an important part of your experience at RRUU, or do you wish we had more lectures like our Fifth Sunday Forums?

I'm sure we have members who would answer yes to at least one of those questions, some who might say yes to more than one, and others whose preferences weren't on the list. We are certainly a motley crew. We often say we gather together in a community to support each other in our individual spiritual journeys. We do not just respect or tolerate other points of view--we support them. We attend worship services regularly, regardless of the theme or the faith tradition focused on. We encourage each other in finding and practicing the expressions of faith and reason that are most meaningful to us as individuals. We give generously to the church to support all of its programs, not just those we personally want to participate in. We seek to understand the beliefs and ideas of others, to walk in theiroccasins for a few steps now and then.

This mutual support for our differing beliefs is crucial to our ability to reach out into the community. Individually, or in the small groups we might find that share our particular belief, we can do a little. Together, we have the potential of making a real impact on matters on whose importance we can all agree--helping those in need, protecting the environment, speaking up for reason and justice. When we are clear in our respect and support for varying beliefs, our members and friends feel that they have a place in our church. Because we do not privilege one way of thinking, one way of doing worship, one way of being a Unitarian Universalist over another, we are becoming stronger and more effective in working together for the common good of our community, both locally and globally.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
102 W. Harrison
Denison, Texas 75020
May 4, 2007 12:30 PM

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church will hold its annual congregational meeting on May 4, at 12:30 PM in the sanctuary. The meeting is open to all members and friends, but only those on the membership roles are qualified to vote. The agenda for the meeting will include election of board members and officers and approval of the 2008-09 budget. Copies of the agenda, the slate of nominees, and the budget were mailed to members in April. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you may vote by proxy by using one of the forms printed in this newsletter.

RRUU Board Meeting Highlights--April 3, 2008

The Board received a report from the Religious Education Committee concerning plans for the coming year. Viki Reeder will replace Linda Woytaszyk as an Interim Director of Religious Education. John Ockels will work on a plan for growth for the religious education program as a whole. During the coming year the religious education committee will be working toward a recommendation for a part-time professional Director of Religious Education. The Board expressed its appreciation to Viki for stepping forward to fill the position.

Scottie McIntyre Johnson reported that all of our existing Chalice Circles (small groups) are going well. In addition, L. D. Clark will be forming a new chalice circle with a focus on Humanism and Drew Wade will organize a UU Christian Circle. (See Chalice Circle News for more information.) Regarding worship, Scottie reported that the pulpit is filled for April, May, and June.

The Board reviewed the draft budget prepared by the finance committee. After making a few changes, the Board approved the budget for submission to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 4. The most significant change was adding an income line to reflect the funds that come in special collections during the year. This amount was added to the budget for community action. The Board also approved a practice of taking a special collection once a month, with the proceeds earmarked for a different community action organization each month. The Social Action and Green teams will be charged with recommending appropriate recipients.

The next Board Meeting will be Thursday, May 1 at 7:30 PM at the home of Dianna Butler.

PROXY FORM FOR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

According to Red River Unitarian Universalist Church by-laws, if you will be unable to attend a congregational meeting, you may send your voting proxy with another member. One of two types of proxy may be given: (1) limited proxy or (2) directed proxy.

With a limited proxy, you are giving someone else the right to cast your vote as he/she sees fit on any motions or amendments that might come before the meeting. Although it is expected that you will give guidance to the person exercising your proxy as to how you would prefer him/her to vote, the document does not spell out what that vote must be. This has the advantage of allowing your vote to be cast on amendments or items that might be brought to the meeting from the floor.

With a directed proxy, you are giving someone else instructions concerning exactly how to vote on agenda items, as stated in the proxy document. In this case, you are sure your vote will be cast in the way you want it to be cast at the time you signed the proxy. Your vote cannot be counted, however, on any substantial amendments regarding the issue or on any additional items that may be brought from the floor.

Forms for limited and directed proxies are given below. Please make additional copies of the forms as needed for members of your household.

Annual Congregational Meeting May 4, 2008

Limited Proxy

This is to inform you that I, _____, a voting member of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, am naming _____ my proxy to vote on my behalf on all issues at the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on May 4, 2008.

This proxy will expire at the conclusion of said meeting.

Signature / Date

Directed Proxy

This is to inform you that I, _____, a voting member of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, am naming _____ my proxy to vote on my behalf at the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on May 4, 2008 as follows:

This proxy will expire at the conclusion of said meeting.

Signature / Date

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! You do not have to be a member of RRUU or even attend Sunday services in order to participate in a Chalice Circle. If you are interested in attending a particular circle, contact Circle Coordinator, Scottie McIntyre Johnson (903-892-4751; scottieone@cableone.net).



AGAPE, A UU Christian Circle. For liberal Christians and UUs who want to learn more about Christianity and the Bible. We hope to begin meeting in June. If you are interested in participating, please contact Drew Wade: andrewwademdpa@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: Scottie McIntyre Johnson. Meets every Monday evening from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. @ Scottie's home in Sherman.

NEW MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS 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: May 20 @ the home of Scottie McIntyre Johnson in Sherman. Topic: "Summer Dreams." Come share some of your favorite memories of summers past.

NEW MEMBERS & GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



FREETHINKERS, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Facilitator: L.D. Clark. Meeting times and places for this new circle will be worked out at their first gathering, last Sunday in April.



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Next meeting: Tuesday, May 13 at 7:00 pm at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan. We will begin working on environmental components for RRUU policies.
ANYONE WHO LOVES OUR PLANET IS WELCOME!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Dianna Butler. Next meeting: Saturday, May 3. We will spend the day at the Gainesville Zoo. Meet at Dianna's home at 9:30 a.m. or meet us at the zoo in time for the Eddie Coker concert at 2:00 p.m. Bring a picnic lunch. Admission to the zoo is \$6 for adults and \$4 for children.
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: Saturday, May 24. We will spend the day in the Metroplex, eating at Ali Baba's in Richardson for lunch, shopping at ethnic markets and eating dinner at Zander's in Plano. Join us for all or part of the day! Contact Marion or Elbert for details and to RSVP.



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitators: Penny Armstrong & Kris Riek. Meets at various places on various dates. Next meeting: TBA.
NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS 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, May 30. Not sure what the film will be, but it will be a comedy!
NEW MEMBERS & GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



UUJAM!! A Music-Making Circle. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher. Meets the first Friday of the month @ 7:00 p.m. @ the home of Jan Fletcher. Next meeting: May 2. Bring snacks, beverages, musical instruments and songs to sing. Our musical genres this month are Broadway tunes and '60's folk music.
MUSICIANS AND LISTENERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

We are building a video collage for Mother's Day, and we need your help. If you would kindly send digital photos of your mom, the moms of the congregation, and their fruit, we would be very appreciative. Please send them as soon as you can in an email attachment to John Ockels at ockels@mac.com. We'll put all of these together and show them in the Mother's Day service. Thanks!

Social Action—"One More Step!"

April was a busy month for local social action projects! We had great weather and a fine turnout for both the Baker Lake clean up and the Habitat for Humanity landscape project!

We were especially happy to be working together with youth from Texoma Christian School on the Habitat for Humanity project. With the plants and landscaping material purchased by our contribution, a donation of three pallets of Bermuda grass from a sod farm, and "pass along plants" brought from home gardens, we were able to provide a Texas friendly landscape for a new home.

In May, we will respond to the urgent issue of rising food prices and diminishing food supply world-wide by taking up a special collection during the May 18th worship service to send to help alleviate hunger in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. Donations will be challenged through International Child Care, Inc., a respected relief organization we have contributed to in the past. RRUU member, Dr. Jeannine Hatt, serves on their Board of Directors.

In June, as part of our continuing pledge to support worthy causes in all areas of Texoma, we will conduct a drive in support of the Bryan County Youth Center.

Pangea Day will be celebrated May 10. Pangea Day is a global event designed to bring the world together through film. Starting at 1:00 p.m. CDST on May 10, 2008, locations in Cairo, Kigali, London, Los Angeles, Mumbai, and Rio de Janeiro will be linked for a live program of powerful films, live music, and visionary speakers. The entire program will be broadcast – in seven languages – to millions of people worldwide through the internet, television, and mobile phones.

The 24 short films to be featured have been selected from an international competition that generated more than 2,500 submissions from over one hundred countries. The films were chosen based on their ability to inspire, transform, and allow us see the world through another person's eyes.

The program will also include a number of exceptional speakers and musical performers including Queen Noor of Jordan, CNN's Christiane Amanpour, and musician/activist Bob Geldof.

You can view all or part of the celebration on line at www.pangeaday.org.

You'll need to have Flash v. 9 (or higher) installed on your computer in order to watch the Pangea Day program online. If you need a free copy you can obtain it at the following site:

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/flash/about/>



Cleanup At Baker Park



RRUU At Habitat Landscaping



Youth From Texoma Christian School

Help the Historian!!

RRUU has a new Historian! One of our newest members, Marla Loturco, has enthusiastically accepted this important position. Since Marla is unable to be at every single event our congregation has, she requests that we all help document what we do. Please take digital photographs of any and all RRUU activities and forward them to her at marla_ll@suddenlink.net. Your assistance will be much appreciated and will help us keep a complete history of our wonderful presence here in Texoma!!

RRUU BABY SHOWER!!!



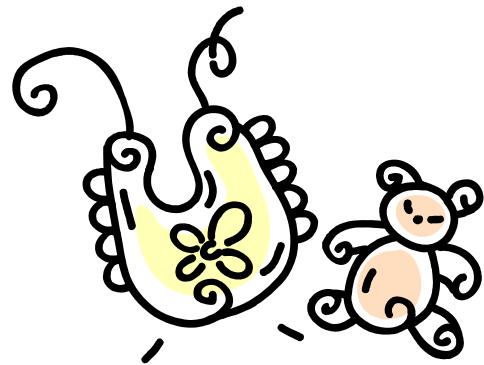
For Tobin Baird & Karine
Kyle

May 18, 2008

hosted by It Takes A Village Chalice Circle

after the Church service, in the Fellowship Hall

beverages and light fare
provided



Everyone is invited!!

102 West Harrison Street
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E-mail: info@rruu.org

A home for religious liberals in
Southern Oklahoma and North
Texas

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.RRUU.ORG

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:

Marla Loturco

Newsletter:

Lisa Cates

Caring:

Viv Weeks

Website:

Nell Evans