

Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 6

JUNE 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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June 1

Rev. Jennifer Innis

"Our Theological House" - Part 2

In my sermon on May 4, I first presented a house as a metaphor for a central Unitarian Universalist theology, one where we can live and transform the world. For June 1, we will review the parts and finish constructing the house.

June 8

Mr. George Leonberger

"The Joy of Vanilla Ice Cream"

"Just plain vanilla" is a life style and a real ice cream cone. On Sunday, June 8th, we will explore simple living and the transformation of green grass to white ice cream. We'll also meditate about beautiful miracles of life while enjoying a real, "just plain vanilla" ice cream cone. Ice cream cones will be served to everyone following the service!

June 15

Dr. John Ockels

"Once a Father, Do You Ever Have To Stop?"

Join us for a celebration of Father's Day that will explore the ups and downs of father/child relationships, from Daddy's point of view. We'll also see our growing picture collection of fathers of the congregation. You are invited to e-mail photos of your favorite fathers, grandfathers, or other father-like men "caught in the act" of fathering. A Father's Day slide show has become an annual tradition of our worship service. If you do not have a way to scan photos, please bring them to church on the 1st or 8th of June. The deadline for submissions is June 10th. ockels@mac.com

June 22

Mr. Steve Brooks

"For the Sake of the Song: Songwriting as Spiritual Practice"

You won't want to miss this very special and unique musical worship service from Austin-based singer/songwriter and Unitarian Universalist, Steve Brooks! Go to his website at www.stevebrooks.net to read more about him and to listen to his tribute to the late, great Molly Ivins, "What Would Molly Do?"

June 29 FIFTH SUNDAY FORUM Dr. Peter Anderson

"Silence and the South African Writer"

If the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 signaled the imminent collapse of apartheid, what did the prospect of massive social change mean for South African poetry, poetry for many years enmeshed in the liberation struggle? Peter Anderson, Associate Professor of English at Austin College, will discuss his experiences after apartheid, illustrated with poetry by himself (a white South African) and black South African writers.



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

June 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					

Schedule of Events

Thursday Mornings 11:00–Noon

Being Peace Meditation Circle

June 1 – Freethinkers, 1pm

June 5 – Board Dinner, 6pm

June 5—Board of Trustees Meeting, 7:30pm

June 8 – Texoma Area Interfaith Environmental Alliance, 4pm

June 10 – The Green Team, 7pm

June 14 – Denison Juneteenth Parade, 10am

June 14 – A Moveable Feast, 6:30pm

June 18 – Marion Hill at Pottsboro Library, 11:30am

June 20 – Red River Earth Spirit, 7:30pm

June 21 – It Takes A Village, 9am

June 22 – Celebratory Brunch for Rev. Jennifer Innis, 10am

June 24 – Evensong, 7:30pm

Thank You!

I want to extend my sincere thanks for all who so generously opened their hearts and pocketbooks to help those in Haiti who are struggling now with hunger and illness. The monies that RRUU sends to ICC will help buy food, medications, and provide adequate staff to care for ill children and their families.

Haiti, a country whose people are strong in spirit, rich in culture, art and music and blessed with boundless strength and resourcefulness, has the sad distinction of being classified as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. It has the highest infant, child and maternal mortality rates in the Americas.

My husband Chuck and I returned last week from the Dominican Republic and Haiti, having led a team from north Texas. The group had an introduction to what life is like for so many who struggle to provide their children the basics needed for survival. We saw children with disabilities in the poor barrios of Santiago receive treatment in ICC's community-based rehabilitation program. We visited with community leaders in rural Haiti making an appeal for help in building and improving their local healthcare system. We spent time with the children at Grace Children's Hospital in the capital of Port-au-Prince, some successfully recovering and others looking as if barely clinging to life .

The diseases that kill children in countries such as Haiti (pneumonia, dehydration, vaccine-preventable illnesses, usually exacerbated by malnutrition) do not require sophisticated technology nor large amounts of money to prevent nor treat. It is these diseases and problems that the staff of International Child Care and Grace Children's Hospital manages every day. GCH's 60 bed in-patient unit and large out-patient clinics serve over 100,000 patients a year, saving and improving the lives of children and parents through basic preventive and interventional health care. ICC also provides tuberculosis care for most of Haiti's 8 million citizens and supports children's health initiatives in the Dominican Republic.

Mesi anpil, muchas gracias and thank you RRUU for your compassion and generosity,

Jeannine Hatt

June Birthdays!



Chelsea Bertrand 6/2

Anne House 6/7

Jennifer Innis 6/14

Wesley Baker 6/29

Minister's Letter

BEGIN

This is now. Now is,
all there is. Don't wait for
Then;
strike the spark, light the fire.

Sit at the Beloved's table,
feast with gusto, drink your fill

then dance
the way branches
of jasmine and cypress
dance in a spring wind.

The green earth
is your cloth;
tailor your robe
with dignity and grace.

~ Rumi ~

On the Journey

I just started to subscribe to Panhala, a daily poetry group at Yahoo.com. Once a day, at some unexpected time, I receive a poem, maybe two. The subjects and authors range widely, including Mary Oliver, Rilke, and Anne Sexton. Many works are unexpected and do not match the events of my day but offer worthy paths for reflection, or simply a different point of view. Some poems are good companions for the day. The wildflowers, the green trees, and the changes of summer remind me of this piece by Rumi.

For me, the imperative that is the title says as much as the rest of the poem. Begin. Begin. Not "watch" or "listen" or even "be", but "Begin." Act. Do. Commence. Part of the wonder of summer is how it holds beginnings by its very nature. No matter our means, there is always something one can start during these few months. In the morning is a great time before the heat rises. And the day lasts deep into the evening. To Begin something, anything, in such a bounty of hours is to respond to this season and realize now is what there is.

There is something to be said for such a time of beginning coinciding with the transition from one program year to the next. The previous Board is passing the baton to the new Board. Vicki Reeder will assume the role of interim director of religious education. She and many volunteers will work on the children and

youth programs this summer and prepare for the fall. I will make my own plans for worship and the growth of the congregation before welcoming a new baby in August. Those of us in the midst of these changes benefit from a few less church events due to the travels and activities of so many people. Those of us remaining or stepping into leadership roles have a chance to discover how we would start the year. We can be present enough to enjoy the moment and understand how attention to the cloth of this congregation is part of our work.

Though the pace of church activity slows, worship continues to be led by members, ministers, and guests. It is good in fact to maintain the worship and other programs as much as possible because summer is the time for the greatest number of visitors. Yes, many people add "church-shopping" to the warm weather disciplines of retail therapy. They seek not to acquire material wealth per se, but to explore a new community or to look in on what is happening in religion after a long absence. In their own way, visitors respond to Rumi's imperative: Begin. May we heed the words of the poet and the actions of these newly discovered neighbors. Even the simple act of showing up to worship and greeting new and old friends can be our response. I wonder how else we will light the fire and sit at the welcome table. May we, too, find a way to Begin.

Namaste,
Jennifer

Where in the UU World is Rev Jennifer?

I expect to be in Denison to lead the worship on June 1, to attend the Board meeting on June 5, and to attend worship on June 22. 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.

For the next few months, in addition to my usual responsibilities with RRUU, I will prepare for the next program year and Patrick and I will get ready for the birth of our son in early August. My family leave includes the months of August and September. Also, I am on study and family leave from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland until the end of September. More information will come in the July newsletter about my leave and plans for the coming year.

Bowing to the Light Within,
Jennifer

Letter from the RRUU Board President

Being president of a congregation involves a great deal of learning on the job. I am very much aware, as I prepare to step down, that in some ways I am just beginning to get the hang of it. This is often true of leadership positions in organizations—it takes half of one's term to figure out the basics of the job, which leaves a limited time in which to do the things you feel need to be done. It's tempting to think that terms of office should be longer, but in fact few of us are able to devote more than two years to leading an organization.

Fortunately, our RRUU By-laws offer some help. As the immediate past-President of the Board of Trustees, I become an ex-officio member of the Board for another term. So I will be attending meetings, and putting in my two-cents worth on the various issues that come before the board in the coming years. I also plan to use the experience I've gained in a number of other ways to support the congregation's continued growth and development.

First, I have agreed to spend time this summer reviewing the by-laws and bringing recommendations to the board for possible changes. This review is part of a planned process of evaluation to help us carry out the recommendation of Carole Czujko, our UUA consultant. The final result of the Board's evaluation will be a new five-year plan for RRUUC. (I am sure they will be asking for input from the congregation on this project, and I hope you will respond with your ideas.)

I also plan to spend some time with our membership chair, Scottie Johnson, developing a brochure for visitors and a packet of materials for new members. With neither of us working full-time during the summer, we believe we can complete work on these projects and have them ready for use in the fall, if not earlier. Completing these projects is an important part of the continuing process of addressing elements of our current five-year plan.

I'm sure that other opportunities will arise for me to continue to serve RRUUC, and I hope to be able to respond to many of them. But I also know that the congregation will be in good hands with the officers and board members you have chosen to lead you during the coming year. I am grateful for all the support I have been given during my time as president, and I look forward to offering my support to the new leadership. Serving this congregation has been an exciting and enriching experience, and I wish our new officers and board the same sense of joy and fulfillment I have had. My thanks to the congregation for your support, and my best wishes to Jim, Jim, Dianna, John, Mary, Elbert, and Sylvia as they lead you on.

RRUU Board Meeting Highlights—May 1, 2008

The board reviewed the work completed since the April workday. Handicapped and visitor parking signs are now in place, the handicap ramp has been resurfaced, and the new picnic tables assembled.

The board discussed creating guidelines for email communications with church members and friends concerning how to pass along information about events in the community to our members, as well as ways to protect our members' privacy when sending emails. Among the ideas presented were using blind addresses, announcing activities of non-profit organization only, banning solicitation of funds for non-church events, and not passing on endorsements of or appeals for political candidates. Kathleen will write a proposed policy to be considered at the June meeting.

The board considered a suggestion made by Dianna Neiman-Harris that the church become a member of the Denison Ministerial Alliance. Our contribution would go toward providing assistance with medication to those in need. The board unanimously approved the affiliation.

The next meeting of the board will be June 5 at the home of Kathleen Campbell. Both old and new members of the board are invited to a 6:00 PM dinner, preceding the board meeting at 7:30 PM.

RRUU Congregational Meeting—May 4, 2008

The annual congregational meeting of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church was held following the service on May 4. Members approved the 2008-09 church budget and elected the following officers and board members:

President, Jim Johnson; Vice-president, Jim Murphy; Treasurer, Dianna Butler; Trustees, Elbert Hill & Sylvia Mitchell

Trustees John Ockels and Mary Larkin-Baker will continue on the board until 2009

A copy of the approved 2008-2009 budget is printed on page 8.

The new board members and officers will begin serving at the beginning of the fiscal year July 1, 2008.

Worship Leaders

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. They are expecting their first child this summer.

Mr. George Leonberger is a storyteller from Paris, Texas, who is a retired high school chemistry teacher now teaching astronomy part time at Northeast Texas Community College near Mt. Pleasant. He has been a science educator for 40 years, a storyteller for over 50 years, and a Unitarian Universalist for 25 years. George has presented story services many times at Unitarian churches in Tyler, Longview, Shreveport, and twice at the Arlington Street Church in Boston, as well as at RRUU.

Dr. John Ockels is a member of RRUU and currently works as the Director of the Texas Illegal Dumping Resource Center. He provides criminal environmental law enforcement training to peace officers throughout Texas. Dr. Ockels holds degrees in several subjects, including a master's degree in theological studies from Perkins School of Theology, SMU. John is a frequent and popular speaker in our pulpit and is a member of the RRUU Board of Trustees.

Mr. Steve Brooks is a member of Wildflower UU Church in Austin, Texas. Described as a cross between two famous guys named Brooks - Garth and Mel - Steve has a song for every occasion, from the sublime to the ridiculous and back. His tunes range from comic commentary and cracker barrel philosophy to lyrical love ballads and sharp-edged snapshots of Texas and the world. Perhaps best known for writing a song a week for Jim Hightower's radio show, Steve presents his own brand of worship service at UU churches in Texas and around the country.

Dr. Peter R. Anderson is currently an Associate Professor of English at Austin College. He is a poet from South Africa who is the author of many published works, including *In the Country of the Heart: Love Poems from South Africa*, and co-editor of *New South African Poetry*. He earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, and master's and doctorate degrees at Boston University.

Social Action—"One More Step!"

School is out and, while summer is not officially here, the temperatures indicate that it's right around the corner. As families begin planning vacations and trips, our social action activities continue. Later in the month, we will conduct a "share the plate day" for the Bryan County Youth Center. This type of program is growing in many UU churches across the U.S.

We are currently exploring the possibility of having a "float" in the Denison Juneteenth Celebration Parade on Saturday, June 14. In the event that we cannot coordinate a float, those that wish to participate individually are welcome on the Democratic Party's float. The parade will start at 10:00 a.m. on June 14th at the Community Youth Center in Denison. This is located at the corner of MLK Blvd. & Armstrong Ave. The theme of their float (decorated pickup truck) is "In Unity for Freedom. Those interested may contact *Glen Johnstone* at glenj@gceecisp.com

We have recently decided to expand our activities in Denison by participating in the Denison Ministerial Alliance. All of the churches in the alliance contribute to a fund that is used for one-time assistance for obtaining non-narcotic medications for those in financial need. Dianna Niemann-Harris has graciously volunteered to represent us at the monthly meetings.

Adult Religious Education

June 1: "Who Lives Around Here?" A review of the demographic and psychographic trends of our Texoma area as revealed by the Ministry Area Survey recently commissioned by RRUU.

June 8: "Who Lives Around Here?" A continued review of the survey material, focusing on the ramifications of anticipated change for our congregation.

June 15: "What should a RE Policy for the church include?" The RE Committee has begun a process that will eventually result in an overall Religious Education policy for the church. What should it address?

June 22: No RE this morning. Join us at 10 for a Special Brunch instead.

June 29: "Do UUs Pray?"

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. Facilitator: Drew Wade. For liberal Christians and UUs who want to learn more about Christianity and the Bible. We plan to begin meeting in August.



BEING PEACE, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle (Morning Session) Facilitator: Nell Evans. Meets *every* Thursday morning from 11:00 to noon @ Nell's Home in Sherman.

NEW MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

BEING PEACE II, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle. (Evening Session) Facilitator: Scottie McIntyre Johnson.

WE WILL NOT MEET IN JUNE, JULY OR AUGUST



EVENSONG, A Circle for Sharing Our Stories. Facilitator: Scottie McIntyre Johnson. Meets on the third or fourth Tuesday of each month @ 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: Tuesday, June 24 @ the home of Scottie McIntyre Johnson in Sherman. Topic: "Summer Memories".

NEW MEMBERS & GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

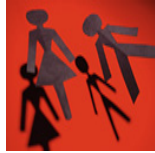


FREETHINKERS, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Facilitator: L.D. Clark. Meets on the first Sunday of each month @ the church after church. Next meeting: June 1. We will watch and discuss an interview with Richard Carrier, author of *Sense and Goodness Without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism*. Bring a brown bag lunch.



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Next meeting: Tuesday, June 10 at 7:00 pm at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan. We will work on environmental components for RRUU policies.

TEXOMA AREA INTERFAITH ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE MEETING: SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 4:00 PM, LOCATION: TBA. ANYONE WHO LOVES OUR PLANET IS WELCOME!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Dianna Butler. Next meeting: Saturday, June 21. We will go to Bailey's Berry Patch and pick blueberries. Meet at Dianna's house at 9a.m.

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, June 14 @ 6:30 p.m. @ the home of Sylvia Mitchell in Denison. Contact Marion or Elbert for details and to RSVP.



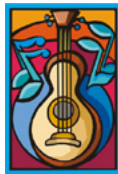
RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitators: Penny Armstrong & Kris Riek. Meets at various places on various dates. Next meeting: Friday, June 20 @ 7:30 @ the church to celebrate the Summer Solstice.

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.

WE WILL NOT MEET IN JUNE.



UUJAM!! A Music-Making Circle. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher. Meets the first Friday of the month @ 7:00 p.m. @ the home of Jan Fletcher.

WE WILL NOT MEET IN JUNE OR JULY.

We are building a video collage for Father's Day, and we need your help. If you would kindly send digital photos of your dad, the dads of the congregation, and their kids, 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 Father's Day service. Thanks!

RRUUC Approved Budget 2008—2009

INCOME

Interest	\$635.00
Pledges	\$55,550.00
Weekly Offering	\$3,600.00
Special Collections	\$1,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$60,785.00

EXPENSES

Category Total

Salary/Compensation			
Minister	\$15,525.00		
RE Director	\$3,000.00		
Secretary	\$2,484.00	\$21,009.00	
Administration			
Copying	\$600.00		
Postal Box	\$80.00		
Postage	\$360.00		
Supplies	\$350.00	\$1,390.00	
Community Engagement			
Social Action	\$2,500.00		
Environ Action	\$750.00	\$3,250.00	
Communications			
Telephone	\$600.00		
Advertising	\$1,800.00	\$2,400.00	
Denominational Support			
N'TAUUS (64x7)	\$448.00		
SWUUC (64X20)	\$1,280.00		
UUA (64x56)	\$3,584.00	\$5,312.00	
Facilities			
Building/Grnds	\$750.00		
Insurance	\$850.00		
Janitorial	\$2,700.00		
Rent	\$9,600.00	\$13,900.00	
Leadership Development			
Board Discret	\$480.00		
Conferences	\$400.00	\$880.00	
Child Care			\$3,360.00
Religious Education			
Staff development	\$600.00		
Children's	\$400.00		
Adults	\$150.00	\$1150.00	
Hospitality			
Children's RE	\$300.00		
General	\$300.00	\$600.00	
Worship			
Honoraria/mileage	\$5,500.00		
Pianist	\$550.00		
Supplies	\$1,484.00	\$7,534.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$60,785.00	
DIFFERENCE	\$0.00		



A Baby's on the Way

Join us for brunch to celebrate the new addition to Jennifer's family

10:00 AM, June 22

Gifts optional; Jennifer is registered at Target and Babies R Us

RRUU's own Marion Moore Hill will give an author talk about the two series of mystery novels she writes--the Scrappy Librarian Mysteries and the Deadly Past Mysteries--at an 11:30 a.m. luncheon at the Pottsboro Library, on Franklin St. in Pottsboro, on June 18. The public is invited.



RRUUC Lending Library

As many of you know, we have established a small lending library for RRUUC members. We began with books the church has purchased about Unitarian Universalist beliefs and history, church leadership, and various topics such as parenting, personal development, other religions. We also have a number of CD's and DVD's on Unitarian Universalism and church leadership. From this beginning, we have added a few books that have been donated, so that we now have over sixty titles in the library. We invite you to browse through the bookshelf at the back of the sanctuary and check out a book or disc of interest to you.

Checking out a book is very simple. On the card you will find in each book, CD, or DVD, write your name and a contact number and put the card in the basket on the top of the bookshelf. When you return the book, mark through your name and return the card to the book and replace it on the shelf.

Since we set up this system, some members or friends have dropped off books as, we assume, donations to the church library. Unfortunately, we have a limited amount of space and cannot accept all donations. This summer, we will be going through the books that have been left and selecting those that seem appropriate for the library, creating cards for them, and returning them to the shelves. Those that don't seem to fit, or for which we simply do not have room, we can return to the donors, if they will identify themselves, or we will make them available to church members to take for their personal libraries.

In the future, we request that those wishing to donate books to contact Kathleen Campbell, our "librarian," in advance, and to deliver the books to her so that check-out cards can be prepared. Since our space is limited, we will be able to accept only those that support the general purpose of the library of offering our members access to books explaining Unitarian Universalism, other religions, or supportive of UU principles in other ways. Regretfully, we do not have space at this time for other books or for a general book exchange. We encourage you to take other books to Half Price Books or another used book outlet.



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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:

Viki Reeder

Youth Advisor:

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