



Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 7

JULY 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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July 6

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?"

July 13

Dr. John Ockels

"Be Fruitful and Multiply"

As we think beyond biological reproduction, what could this urging from the Deity mean, and what, if any, is the sin involved in being a Cosmic Slacker?

July 20

Rev. Patrick Price

"The Flaws in Perfection and the Wisdom of Excellence"

What is the difference between excellence and perfection and why should we care? How do they affect our religious lives and faith journey? What impact do these ways of viewing the efforts and outcomes in our lives have on us and the world?

July 27

Ms. Megan Dalby-Jones

"How Can I Keep From Singing?"

In June, many Unitarian Universalist Congregations participated in parades and celebrations commemorating the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion, a series of violent conflicts between Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered individuals and New York City Police, which is widely recognized as the catalyst for the modern-day movement for LGBT rights. Why? What is the religious motivation behind advocating for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons?



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

July 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 A Moveable Feast @ Amy's 6:00pm
6	7	8 The Green Team @ Amy's Hoffman-Shehan's 7:00pm	9 RRUU Board Meeting @ Church 7:30pm	10	11	12
13	14	15 Evensong @ Scottie Johnson's 7:30pm	16	17	18	19 It Takes A Village goes to Theatricks @2:00pm
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Texoma Area Interfaith Environmental Alliance	28	29	30	31		

Our Principles

There are seven principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

July Birthdays!

Noah Dunn 7/9

Davis Gregory-Allen 7/12

Linn Cates 7/13

Ben Schulze 7/18

Tom Donahue 7/18

Kendall Caves 7/19

Tingey Tracz 7/21

Kyla Larkin 7/23

Christina Infante 7/25

Don Lanier 7/30



Minister's Letter

On the Journey

First, I would like to thank everyone who attended, brought food, cleaned up, or left a gift at the brunch baby shower on June 22. The gifts of your presence and encouragement are very kind. Patrick and I are very grateful for your ongoing support as we prepare to welcome our first child.

As of this newsletter, I am still due in the first week of August. Time is passing! I am working with the leaders of the congregation to prepare for the start of the year before my leave begins on August 1. If you have any questions, please see Jim Johnson or me this month. While I am beginning to adjust to life with a new baby, Megan Dalby-Jones will lead worship on August 3 and September 21. I expect to return to active duty at the start of October.

Second, I recommend taking a look around the church on any given Sunday and see who comes through the door. While there are fewer church events during the summer months, we have many new people who started attending this spring. Let's be sure

to say hello with one another. The first few months, even the first few weeks of a visitor's experience of our church makes all the difference in feeling welcome and connected to this community. Plus, studies show congregations across the country have the highest rates of new visitors in July and August. Certainly Christmas and Easter bring many new faces, but the summer shows the most significant increase overall. Why? The reasons are as varied as our own for coming to the congregation in the first place. During travels and summer breaks, people step away from their usual routines and try new places. They will not be missed if they do not attend their usual church. Or visiting could be one of those things on the long list of "been meaning to" do, and sometimes we actually get to a few items on that list in this season. A couple of months ago, I met a gentleman who chose to attend one Sunday's worship. He told me that was the first time he attended church, any church, in 15 years. He was greeted well and members and friends made the effort to talk with him before and after the service.

Seeing the success of that moment, I cannot help but wonder if we were ready for this visitor. Even when greeting is going well, I always question whether we are ready for the next person to come through the door. True, I admit that habit of wondering in the midst of success is part of my nature. Yet, keeping an eye out for those who enter this community is part of what we do, whether if that person has been here "forever" or if she or he has not set a foot near religion in years. To welcome is part of our spiritual practice. To welcome comes from our claim that "Love is the spirit of this church." What better way to practice this spirit than to do so with every person, known or unknown? For the next couple of months, let us all make the extra effort to greet the people who come in the door, whoever they are, however long or brief their connection with this place. We just might be so welcomed in return.

Namaste,
Jennifer

Where in the UU World is Rev Jennifer?

I expect to be in Sherman/Denison to attend the meeting of the Safe Congregation Panel on July 2, to lead worship on July 6, to attend the Board meeting on July 9, and to assist my spouse Patrick with worship on July 20. 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 begins August 1 and runs through the end of September. Also, I am on family leave from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland for August and September. Megan Dalby-Jones will lead the worship at Red River UU in my place on August 3 and September 21.

Bowing to the Light within,
Jennifer

Letter from the RRUU Board President

This is my first letter as the new President of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. As most of you know I am making a transition from the office of Church Treasurer, in which I have served for four years, to that of Church President, with a two-year term. I expect the two offices to be quite different. As treasurer, I served with two presidents, Judy Donahue and Kathleen Campbell, and I am well aware of the high standards that my predecessors have set. I had many occasions to observe their leadership in action and learn from them. I also hope that my own experience on the Board and in the church will be an asset during my tenure as president.

I believe that Red River UU Church is on an exciting course set by our new minister and our lay church leaders over the past few years. We have long enjoyed a rich variety of excellent worship services; our membership is steadily growing, as is our annual budget; our small groups, Chalice Circles, actively engage our members and friends in many different pursuits; our religious education programs – both for adults and for youth – are thriving; our newsletter and web pages effectively communicate our activities; and last, but not least, our church's commitment to social and environmental action is beginning to have an impact on the larger community around us and to make our congregation known as a progressive voice and an oasis for inquiring, thoughtful, caring people in a not-so-progressive area of the country.

I ask that you please bear with me as I begin to learn the ropes of this challenging office. I am grateful to our immediate past president, Kathleen Campbell, and to our minister, Rev. Jennifer Innis, for their generous and helpful advice in these early days of my term. I look forward to working with Jennifer and with a very capable and dedicated set of church leaders, including the Board, team leaders and church committees. Many of these individuals are continuing their previous service in church leadership while others are taking on new leadership roles. Together, they are a fine group who will be responsive to the church as a whole. I also look forward to working for and with you, the members and friends of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. I hope and trust that you will work with me and the other church leaders as together we seek to advance our congregation's positive mission in the Red River communities in which we live.

~Jim Johnson

RRUU Board Meeting Highlights—June 5, 2008

The board approved a policy for announcements of events of other organizations made by email or before the worship service. From time to time, members request that information about activities of other organizations be announced to the RRUUC membership. Given that members have provided contact information to the church for the purpose of communicating with them about church business, RRUUC recognizes a responsibility to protect the privacy of members' information and to avoid using that information inappropriately. Thus the following policy is established to govern email communications and oral announcements to the congregation concerning activities of other organizations. This policy states the following:

All requests will be screened by the Membership Chair and/or the President of the congregation, who will follow the guidelines below in determining whether it is appropriate to distribute the information to members.

All email communications involving other organizations will be sent by the Membership Chair; address lists will not be distributed to members or to other organizations.

All emails will be sent with blind recipient lists.

The church will distribute only announcements by non-profit or governmental organizations for projects whose goals and values are consonant with those of RRUUC.

No solicitations for financial contributions to other organizations will be distributed to members.

No announcements endorsing political candidates or promoting the positions of political parties will be made to members.

In other business, Elbert and Marion Hill were unanimously appointed as delegates to GA. Hillary Gregory-Allen, Sylvia Mitchell, and Marla Loturco will be attending the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience this year.

After a brief review of the State of Texas requirements for Lay Officiants, the appointment of John Ockles as a Lay Officiant for the church was approved.

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, July 9 at 7:30 PM at the church.

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.

The Rev. Patrick Price served for one year as interim minister of the historic Unitarian & Universalist Society of Mukwonago, WI, and for nine years as minister to the UU Fellowship of Columbia, SC. He serves as minister for the Community Unitarian Universalist Church of Plano, TX. A native of Ft. Worth, Patrick lives in Plano with his spouse, the Rev. Jennifer Innis, the Consulting Minister for Red River Unitarian Universalist Church.

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.

Ms. Megan Dalby-Jones is a Candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry, 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 served as Ministerial Intern at First Unitarian Church of Dallas. Megan and her spouse, Kristi, are the proud parents of a new baby boy, named Parker, after the great nineteenth-century Unitarian preacher and theologian, Theodore Parker.

Social Action—"One More Step!"

July marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for RRUU and the Social Action Committee. RRUU is continuing to show its commitment to social action by implementing a monthly "share the plate" program. One Sunday a month, all contributions not marked for pledge commitments will be used for a designated project. The July contribution will be used to purchase small table fans for those without air conditioning in the Texoma area. The fans will be distributed based upon recommendations by church members (first come/first served) and will be delivered directly to the home of the deserving recipient. If you know of a person or family that is without air conditioning and in need of a fan, please notify David Lawrence at dnlawrence@aol.com or call (903) 482-5601.

We would like to construct a monthly contribution schedule detailing charities and causes for the year. It has been suggested that we try to cover a variety of issues and geographical regions. I would like to ask all of you to send ideas and suggestions. Once I receive them, I will schedule a Social Action Committee meeting and we will vote to establish the coming year's program.

Mark your calendars. The NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet is scheduled at 7:00 p.m. on August 15. It will be held at the Wright Center, Mabee Hall at Austin College. Tickets are \$30. The proceeds are used to supply scholarships for members of the NAACP youth group. We hope to buy a table to show our ongoing support.

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. **ALL WILL BE WELCOME!**



BEING PEACE, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle (Morning Session) Facilitator: Nell Evans.

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

NEW MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME, BUT NEITHER GROUP WILL MEET IN JULY



EVENSONG, A Circle for Sharing Our Stories. Facilitator: Scottie McIntyre Johnson. Next meeting: Tuesday, July 15 at 7:30 pm at the home of Scottie McIntyre Johnson in Sherman. Topic: A demonstration of a meditative technique called “Praying in Color”.

NEW MEMBERS & GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



FREETHINKERS, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Facilitator: L.D. Clark. Meets on the first Sunday of each month at the church after church. Next meeting: TBA.

NEW MEMBERS & GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Next meeting: Tuesday, July 8 at 7:00 pm at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan.

TEXOMA AREA INTERFAITH ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE MEETING: SUNDAY, JULY 27, LOCATION AND TIME: TBA.

ANYONE WHO LOVES OUR PLANET IS WELCOME!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Dianna Butler. Next meeting: July 19. We will be attending the Theatricks performance of *Aladdin*. Curtain time is 2:00 pm at the Honey McGee Playhouse. Contact Dianna to RSVP.

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, July 5 at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan in Sherman. 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 at the home of Linda Woytasczyk in Sherman.

WE WILL NOT MEET IN JULY.



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

WE WILL NOT MEET IN JULY.

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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

Jim Johnson, President (2010)
Jim Murphy, Vice-president (2010)
Dianna Butler, Treasurer (2050)
Mary Larkin-Baker, Trustee-at-Large (2009)
John Ockels, Trustee-at-Large (2009)
Elbert Hill, Trustee-at-Large (2010)
Sylvia Mitchell, Trustee-at-Large (2010)

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:

Marla Loturco &

Amy Hoffman-Shehan

Communications:

Kathleen Campbell

Historian:

Marla Loturco

Newsletter:

Lisa Cates

Caring:

Viv Weeks

Website:

Nell Evans