

# Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER 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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**November 2**

**Rev. Jennifer Innis**

**“The Blessings of Liberty”**

The Pilgrims suffered a fierce ocean voyage and other hardships for the sake of their religious freedom. What do we harvest from our commitment to freedom of thought and faith?

**November 9**

**Dr. Kathleen Campbell**

**“Arts and Morality”**

Artists mature not only by the development of their imagination, but also by submitting their inspiration to the test of technique. What techniques might help us strengthen the connection between our beliefs and the way we live our lives?

**November 16**

**Ms. Megan Dalby-Jones**

**“Training in Joy”**

In this month of gratitude, how do we give thanks when the blessings are hard to find?

**November 23**

**Mr. Gary Stuard**

**“From Plum Village to Transfiguration: The Journey Home”**

Gary Stuard is a practicing Zen Buddhist, having spent 4 years as a Buddhist monk studying under Thich Nhat Hanh, and this service will be Buddhist-inspired with short periods of silent meditation and a Dharma Talk about the environment.

*(NOTE: This service is the service originally scheduled in September but canceled because of severe weather.)*

**November 30**

**RRUU Worship Arts Team**


**“Grateful”**

A Thanksgiving Service for all ages with special music and readings presented by the RRUU Worship Team: Dan Althoff, Kathleen Campbell, Darrah Dunn, John Ockels, and Scottie McIntyre Johnson.



**Adult Religious Education 10:00am**  
**Worship & Children's RE 11:15am**

# November 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Daylight Savings Ends
2 12:30 Pot-Luck Picnic	3	4  Election Day	5 12:00 Being Peace	6	7 7:00 UUJam!	8
9 12:15 Red River Earth Spirit 12:30 Freethinkers	10	11 7:30 Green Team	12 12:00 Being Peace	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 12:00 Being Peace 7:00 Agape	20	21 6:00-9:00 Parents' Night Out	22
23 1:00 It Takes A Village	24	25	26 12:00 Being Peace	27	28	29
30						

## Parents' Night Out!

Need a few hours to do some "secret shopping" for the holidays? Just want to go out to dinner alone with your partner or a friend?

Red River Earth Spirit will baby sit your child(ren) for no charge!

**Friday, November 21 5:30 – 8:30 pm @ the church**

We'll serve them pizza and stuff (you may make a donation to help cover this cost), play games, sing songs, and just have fun!

RESERVE YOUR SPOT BY SIGNING UP AT THE CHURCH ON NOV. 16

OR E-MAILING PENNY BERTRAND: [pdda2901@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pdda2901@sbcglobal.net)

## Minister's Letter

### *On the Journey*

In this month's worship themes I notice we have many opportunities to give thanks. It is not surprising, really, given the big Thanksgiving holiday coming up. I am not at Thanksgiving, yet. The holiday I have been thinking about is at the very start of November – All Souls' Day. This day is the time to remember those who have died in the last year especially, and any loved ones from all our lives. Many people include animal friends in their remembrances. I never gave the holiday much thought until I went to Alabama and found an unexpected bit of Universalist heritage honored in contemporary Unitarian Universalist congregations. On the Sunday on or before November 2, people would gather in the waning afternoon light and share candles while memorializing people of the past, distant or recent. In a harvest time such as this, many traditions hold that the line between life and death is more clear and more present in our lives. I feel it and I am pleased to find this liberal tradition of which we are a part has a place for grief and death.

Amid the challenges of the world and the near-end of the election, I offer this Universalist tradition as a way of cherishing the love we have in our lives from all sources. I hope May Sarton's words help you on your way.

May the season be a blessing for all of us.

Namaste,

Jennifer

### #2 of *The Autumn Sonnets* by May Sarton

*If I can let you go as trees let go  
Their leaves, so casually, one by one;  
If I can come to know what they do know,  
That fall is the release, the consummation,  
Then fear of time and the uncertain fruit  
Would not distemper the great lucid skies  
This strangest autumn, mellow and acute.*

*If I can take the dark with open eyes  
And call it seasonal, not harsh or strange  
(For love itself may need a time of sleep),  
And, treelike, stand unmoved before the change,  
Lose what I lose to keep what I can keep,  
The strong root still alive under the snow,  
Love will endure - if I can let you go.*



## Where in the UU World is Rev. Jennifer?

I expect to be in Sherman/Denison to lead the worship on November 2, to attend the Board meeting on November 4, and to offer the prayer during the service on November 16. In addition to meetings and worship, I enjoy visiting and going out to lunch with RRUUsers whenever possible. The best ways to contact me are by cell phone (972-639-7900) and by email ([revjinnis@earthlink.net](mailto: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, of course, I will respond as soon as possible.

I am also the Minister (1/2 time for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland. For this month I will be in Midland during November 7-11 and 19-23. When I am in Midland I may take a little longer to return calls and email due to my responsibilities with that congregation. I ask that you let me know if a matter needs my immediate attention. If you do not reach me directly, please let me know how to get in touch with you. More than a full-time minister, I rely on you to let me know how I can support you and how we can nurture this congregation.

Bowing to the light within,

Jennifer

## RRUU Green Tip of the Month



Store your leftovers in environmentally friendly containers. Try ceramic, stainless steel or tempered glass instead of plastic bags.

## Social Action—"One More Step!"

Out of respect for the service we held honoring the Jewish High Holy Days, we had our "Second Sunday, Share the Plate" on the third Sunday of October. The money from that collection was used to supply gift bags for the Grayson County Foster Kid's Halloween Party. Cathy Mancill was kind enough to pick up a supply of small gifts and treats and the Children's RE classes participated in putting the grab bags together. The collection totaled \$208.31. We've rearranged our donation schedule to include the local Women's Shelter next March.

Our November collection, to be taken on Nov. 9, will be donated to Callie Clinic. This is the former Aids Resource Center of Texoma (ARCOT). This donation is timely since December 1 is World AIDS Day. This day is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. The concept of a World AIDS Day originated at the 1988 World Summit of Ministers of Health on Programs for AIDS Prevention. Since then, it has been taken up by governments, international organizations, and charities around the world. UNAIDS chose the annual themes until 2005, when this responsibility was turned over to [World AIDS Campaign](#). They chose Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise as the main theme for World AIDS Day observances through 2010, with more specific topics chosen annually.

Future donations are scheduled is as follows:

Youth Shelter (Dec)

Grayson County Shelter -Denison (Jan)

UUA Service Committee (Feb)

Women's Shelter (Mar)

Upcoming Events

November 1-22 Food Pantry Collection for Area Food Banks

December 20 Gifts for clients at Day Star



Credit: UNAIDS map of global AIDS pandemic.

## New RRUU Photo Directory

Remember the new member or friend you like talking to but can't call because you don't remember his/her name? Did you know we have added approximately 20 new members since the last directory was published two years ago?

Starting in October, the Directory Team, will be taking individual and family pictures and checking your contact information. Participation and picture in the actual directory are optional but all members and friends of RRUU are encouraged to add or update their directory information. More details will follow in our Sunday announcements. Your Directory Team: Marla Loturco, Kris Riek, Carolyn Cameron, and Jim Murphy



**FOLLOWING THE WORSHIP SERVICE ON NOV. 2, THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION IS INVITED TO A COOK-OUT AND POT LUCK PICNIC AT THE LAKE-FRONT HOME OF DREW AND DAREN WADE.**

\*Drew will provide hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages for us.  
 RRUU members should bring side-dishes and desserts.  
 (College students and recent visitors to RRUU: You don't need to bring anything. There is always more than enough food, and your presence will be contribution enough to the festivities!)

Please come! The weather should be perfect, and Drew has a wonderful big lawn where the kids can run and play, while the grown-ups sit and look out at the lake and talk.

**THANKS SO MUCH TO DREW  
 FOR THIS WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIFE OF  
 OUR CHURCH!**

#### DIRECTIONS TO DREW'S FROM THE CHURCH

1. Go back to Hwy 75 via Spur 503 or Morton St.
2. Go NORTH on US-75 N
3. Take EXIT 72 toward TX-91 and turn LEFT onto TX-91. (Go 1.8 miles)
5. Turn LEFT onto FM 1310. (Go 1.2 miles)
6. Turn RIGHT onto LAKEVIEW DR. (Go 0.5 miles)
7. Turn RIGHT onto THOMPSON RD. Thompson Rd. is a tiny, gravel road, marked only by a little sign among the weeds in the dirt that says "11 THOMPSON RD."
8. Go one short block, and you'll dead-end at Drew's house: 154 Thompson Rd Denison, TX 75020-0422

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 ESTIMATED TIME: 17 min./DISTANCE: 14.10 miles

## Notes from the President

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This month I will highlight the RRUU Leadership Retreat led by the Reverend Mark Walz of Oak Cliff UU Church in Dallas on October 4, 2008. Jennifer and I planned the retreat to address a couple of topics relevant to our church at this stage of its history and development: (1) the question of size: the transition from a family size congregation to a pastoral size congregation and (2) membership development: How do we engage more of our members in the work of the church and in accepting leadership positions? We met for discussion and lunch during a Saturday morning and early afternoon; in attendance were our minister, the Reverend Jennifer Innis, the RRUU Board, the Committee on Ministry, and the Worship/Chalice Circle Coordinator.

Mark came to us as the pastor of a growing congregation: Oak Cliff UU Church. His church has gone through the transition from family size to pastoral size and is now a pastoral church with a full-time minister and a building. We with our 70 members are on the borderline between a family church, our past, and a pastoral church, our foreseeable future. Mark began with a warning that the pastoral church is not without its challenges: they are simply different challenges from those of the family church. Having a minister means that the minister typically handles most of the pastoral-care work, but that has the danger of permitting the members to sit on the sidelines. According to Mark, the entire congregation and its leaders should minister as well as the person they call the minister. Still, as a church grows, it needs a minister to handle most of the necessarily larger caseload of spiritual and personal needs. An important point made was that a church can not skip from, say, a family church to the third stage, the program size church, which normally has more than 150 members. The family stage and the pastoral stage are both essential to the proper growth and development of a church.

Among the things Mark emphasized regarding membership development were the need for members to become more engaged in the church and for the church to help people "go deeper" in their spiritual lives and in their church engagement. He also said that a church should do what it does well; i.e., do fewer things better rather than more things less well. He mentioned social justice, the education of our children, and care of the environment as primary articles of the UU Faith. Mark solicited from us the list of what our church's strengths were and felt that we had impressive strengths for a congregation of our size. We all felt that Mark had provided an excellent retreat for us, and we are grateful to him for performing this valuable service.

Best wishes,

Jim Johnson



This is a photo of the flaming chalice from Westside Unitarian Universalist Church in Ft. Worth, TX. They begin each Sunday morning worship with the lighting of their unique flaming chalice. 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 their former minister, the Rev. Sam Schaal, and is now lit to begin all worship services. When Westside's church building caught fire and suffered severe damage a few years ago, they were able to save the chalice.

## November Worship Leaders

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**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, and a native of that city, Megan came to Texas to serve as Ministerial Intern at First Unitarian Church of Dallas. She and her partner, Kristi, are the parents of a new baby boy named “Parker”, born April 2, 2008. 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 and have recently purchased a house in Plano. Megan is focusing 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.

**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 lives in Plano, Texas, with her spouse, the Rev. Patrick Price, minister of Community Unitarian Universalist Church. Their first child, Nathaniel Patrick Innis Price (“Nate”) was born on August 12, 2008.

**The RRUU Worship Arts Team** consists of Dan Althoff, Kathleen Campbell, Darrah Dunn, John Ockels, and Scottie McIntyre Johnson (Coordinator). All the members of the team, appointed by the President of the RRUU Board of Trustees, have received training in how to plan and lead Unitarian Universalist worship services and continue to read and study about this very important aspect of church life. On Nov. 14-16, Kathleen and Scottie will receive additional training on Unitarian Universalist worship for all ages at the SWUUC Fall Leadership Conference.

**Mr. Gary Stuard** is the Executive Director of the Interfaith Environmental Alliance of Texas, an organization dedicated to uniting members of various faiths to promote more responsible stewardship of the earth. Now an active member of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration in Dallas, Gary previously lived as a Buddhist monk for four years in Plum Village, the Buddhist meditation center in southern France founded by Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh. He continues to practice Buddhist meditation, studying under Dr. Ruben Habito, Perkins School of Theology professor who is a former Jesuit priest turned Zen Buddhist master. Gary leads an ongoing mindfulness meditation group at “Transfig” and conducts special meditation retreats. His day job is as a coordinator of research for UT- Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.



## 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. Because of Thanksgiving and Christmas, Agape will meet on the **THIRD** Wednesday in November and December. Next meeting: A Worship Service with Communion on Wednesday, November 19 @ 7:00 p.m. @ the church.

**ALL LIBERAL CHRISTIANS AND UUs WHO WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CHRISTIANITY AND THE BIBLE ARE WELCOME!**



**BEING PEACE**, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle. Facilitator: Nell Evans. Meets every **WEDNESDAY** from 12:00 to 12:45 p.m. @ Nell's home in Sherman.

**NEW MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

**EVENSONG**, *A Circle for Sharing Our Stories.* Facilitator: Scottie McIntyre Johnson. *We regret to say that EVENSONG is suspended until further notice.*



**FREETHINKERS**, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Facilitator: L.D. Clark. Meets on the **SECOND** Sunday of each month @ the church after church. Next meeting: Nov. 9. We will watch and discuss more of the DVD "The God Who Wasn't There". Also on the agenda will be a brief discussion of the subject of how Humanists who are called upon to say grace over a meal (Thanksgiving is coming up) can rise to the occasion with meaningful words that don't include the supernatural. Bring a brown bag lunch.

**ALL FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!**



**THE GREEN TEAM**, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Next meeting: Tuesday, November 11 at 7:30 pm at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan. We will work on Earth Day 2009 and discuss conducting a carbon footprint audit of the church.

**ANYONE WHO LOVES OUR PLANET IS WELCOME!**





**IT TAKES A VILLAGE**, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Dianna Butler. Next meeting: Sunday, November 23 after church @ the home of Linn Cates. The children will cook a meal for the parents!

**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! Meets at moveable times and moveable places! There will not be an open meeting of Moveable Feast in November.



**RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT**, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitators: Penny Bertrand. Next meeting will be a brief meeting after church on Nov. 9 to coordinate the PARENTS' NIGHT OUT @ the church from 5:30 to 8:30 on Friday, Nov. 21.

**NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**



**THE REEL DEAL**, A Movie Watching Circle. Facilitator: Linda Woytasczyk. Usually meets the last Friday of each month @ 7:20 p.m. @ the home of Linda Woytasczyk in Sherman. BUT BECAUSE OF THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, WE WILL NOT MEET IN NOVEMBER.



**UUJAM!!** A Music-Making Circle. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher. Meets the first Friday of each month @ 7:00 p.m. Next Meeting: Friday, November 7 @ 7:00 p.m. @ the home of Don and Suzanne Durland in Denison. Bring your instrument, voice and humor along with your beverage of choice and snack to share. Please call or email Jan Fletcher to confirm your place in the circle...and don't forget your songbook!

**ALL MUSICIANS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!**

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Southern Oklahoma and North  
Texas

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.RRUU.ORG](http://WWW.RRUU.ORG)

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## Church Leadership

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### Minister

Reverend Jennifer Innis

### Board of Trustees

Jim Johnson, President (2010)

Jim Murphy, Vice-president (2010)

Dianna Butler, Treasurer (2010)

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