



Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2009

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

A Month of Sundays

Inside this issue:

Calendar 2

**Minister's 3
Letter**

Social Action 4

Chalice Circles 6-7

February 1

Rev. Jennifer Innis

"Gods, Monsters, and Human Nature"

Ever wonder why Unitarian Universalists believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person? Join us for part two of Jennifer's sermon series on the theology of liberal religion.

February 8

Dr. John Ockels

"Finding the Courage to Be Human"

A major part of living is passing through times and events that are profoundly unsettling. The death of a loved one ... the ending of a core relationship ... the loss of employment and the vision of our own secure future ... or even our own failure to fulfill a promise of deep importance. Do we retreat into ideology and self-serving assertions at these points of profound transition, or do we find the courage to allow these encounters with life to evoke our deeper authentic humanity?

February 15

Dr. Peter Schulze

"The History and Future of Evolution"

In celebration of Evolution Sunday and the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, Dr. Peter Schulze, Professor of Biology at Austin College, assisted by Dr. John Ockels, will present a service focusing on the ethical ramifications of evolution.

February 22

Lora Ann Brandis

"Environmentalism: It's a Matter of Justice"

Lora Brandis is a Candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry, pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at SMU's Perkins School of Theology. She is the recipient of the 2007-2008 W.B.J. Martin Award in Homiletics given to the outstanding student in an introductory preaching class. Lora is currently enrolled in an advanced preaching class at Perkins, entitled "Preaching Public Issues." The sermon she will give was developed for that class.



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

February 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am Adult RE 11:15am Worship: Rev Jen Innis 12:30pm Souper Bowl of Caring Pot Luck	2	3 7:30pm Green Team	4 11am Being Peace 7:15pm RRUU Board	5	6	7
8 10am Adult RE 11:15am Worship: John Ockels 12:45pm Freethinkers	9	10 7:30pm Green Team	11 11am Being Peace	12	13	14 2pm It Takes A Village 6:30pm Moveable Feast
15 10am Adult RE 11:15am Worship: Peter Schulze 12:45pm Agape	16	17 7:30pm Green Team	18 11am Being Peace	19	20	21
22 10am Adult RE 11:15am Worship: Lora Anne Brandis 6pm Reel Deal	23	24	25 11am Being Peace	26	27	28

SOUPER POT LUCK!

Sunday, Feb. 1, after worship.

Bring a salad, bread, or dessert.

Soup and beverages will be provided. All are invited!

Every year since 2002, RRUU has participated in a nationwide effort to reduce hunger called the "Souper Bowl of Caring", and 2009 will be no exception.

Just as the children and youth of over 14,000 other churches throughout the nation will be doing on Feb. 1, our RRUU kids will be waiting at the door as the grown-ups leave the sanctuary, holding soup pots into which you may put money, every penny of which will be donated to a local charity addressing hunger needs selected by our kids. The amount collected will then be reported on-line to the national website of the Souper Bowl of Caring organization and the total amount of money raised across the country will be reported on television during the Super Bowl broadcast.

Thank You!

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
raised.

\$229.43 and 130 lbs. of food

Thanks to your efforts this year, more dollars have been raised, more lives have been changed and the entire community has seen the good that happens when we all work together to help those in need. Together, we are transforming Super Bowl week into an unprecedented time of giving and serving.



February 1st, 2009

Brad Smith
Rev. Dr. Brad Smith
Founder/Executive Director
The Souper Bowl of Caring

Minister's Letter

On the Journey...

A time of recognition is emerging from the long conversation between religion and science about the nature of human development. This new addition to the liturgical year is called Evolution Sunday. On February 15, John Ockels and Peter Schulze will offer their reflections on this cultural, social, and religious exchange.

In the spirit of Evolution Sunday, I and many other Unitarian Universalist ministers are signing on to a letter of support for the separation of science and religion in public education. I include the letter here. More information about the letter, the Clergy Letter Project, and Evolution Weekend can be found at http://www.butler.edu/clergyproject/rel_evolution_weekend_2009.htm

Namaste,

Jennifer

The Clergy Letter - from Unitarian Universalist Clergy

– An Open Letter Concerning Religion and Science

As Unitarian Universalists, we draw from many sources, including "Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life," and "Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit." While most Unitarian Universalists believe that many sacred scriptures convey timeless truths about humans and our relationship to the sacred, we stand in solidarity with our Christian and Jewish brothers and sisters who do not read the Bible literally, as they would a science textbook. We believe that religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth. Its purpose is not to convey scientific information but to transform hearts.

Fundamentalists of various traditions, who perceive the science of evolution to be in conflict with their personal religious beliefs, are seeking to influence public school boards to authorize the teaching of creationism. We see this as a breach in the separation of church and state. Those who believe in a literal interpretation of the Biblical account of creation are free to teach their perspective in their homes, religious institutions and parochial schools. To teach it in the public schools would be to assert a particular religious perspective in an environment which is supposed to be free of such indoctrination.

We the undersigned, Unitarian Universalist clergy, believe that the timeless truths of the Bible and other scriptures may comfortably coexist with the discoveries of modern science. We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as "one theory among others" is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children. We urge school board members to preserve the integrity of the science curriculum by affirming the teaching of the theory of evolution as a core component of human knowledge. We ask that science remain science and that religion remain religion, two very different, but complementary, forms of truth.

Where in the UU World is Rev. Jennifer?

I expect to be in Sherman/Denison to lead the worship on February 1, to attend the Board meeting on February 4, and to offer the prayer for worship on February 15. The best ways to contact 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 over. In case of emergency, of course, I will respond as soon as possible. Also, Nate, and I will be in Houston at the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women for February 26-March 1.

In addition to serving Red River Church, I am the Minister (1/2 time) for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland. For this month I will be in Midland during February 5-10 and 18-23. 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



Save energy and create your own fun. Have a no TV week at home. Instead, play board games, share stories or pick-up a great book.

Social Action—"One More Step!"

Our Share the Plate donation for February raised \$184.10 for the Grayson County Women's Crisis Center. This is a service that provides temporary shelter and support for women facing traumatic life experiences.

Our January food drive ended on February 1. We collected a total of 130 lbs. of non-perishable food, which was split between food banks in Grayson and Bryan Counties. We reported this total, as well as \$229.43 in cash collected by our youth to the national Souper Bowl of Caring organization. We were one of 8,383 church groups throughout the U.S. of many faiths who generated \$4,712,793 for local charities on Super Bowl Sunday.

We recently received and completed a survey for NTAUUS designed to detail services that they could provide to assist in furthering social justice activities among UU organizations in North Texas. While RRUU tends to address social issues more than legal and legislative concerns, providing grass roots training sessions for methods, contacts, and resources would be a great help. A copy of the completed questionnaire is posted on the bulletin board.

Our spring Habitat for Humanity project will be held on Saturday morning, March 29 (weather permitting). The house was completed in Denison in time for the owners to spend Christmas in their new home; however, the yard is still in need of some finishing touches. Late March is a great time to plant and a great opportunity for our youth to volunteer. The home is located at 803 N. 8th in Denison. We hope to work with the Grayson County Master Gardeners on this project. Please mark your calendars.

Future Share the Plate donations are scheduled as follows: UUA Service Committee (Feb) Women's Shelter (Mar)

Upcoming Events

March 28 – Habitat Landscaping Project

March 29 – Baker Lake Cleanup

At the 2008 General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, delegates selected "Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice" as a Congregational Study/Action Issue 2008-2012. Over the next few years, we hope to discuss and explore what we eat, where it comes from, and how the process affects the world.

For more information on this topic visit

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/ethicaleating/index.shtml>

Notes from the President

This month I am reporting on recent actions of the Board and upcoming processes.

As President, I submitted our congregation's "Certification of Membership" to the UUA. This is an annual report that establishes our official number of members with the UUA; they and other affiliated groups such as SWUUC and NTAUUS use this number to determine the annual dues we are expected to pay as a congregation. This year our membership is 70, up 6 from the 64 members we reported last year. Also, we reported other gains over the past year: average weekly attendance was 57, a gain of 7; amount pledged was \$55,550, a gain of \$5,000; number of pledging units was 43, a gain of 1; religious education enrollment was 26, a gain of 4. Also, I cast our vote in favor of the UUA's current Study Action Issue on Peacemaking, after polling RRUU leaders. These numbers suggest that our congregation is on a path of slow, but steady growth, which at least allows us to have greater confidence in our planning.

Board Actions: (a) The Board has formed a committee (John Ockels, Nell Evans and Viki Reeder) to coordinate our search for a new Director of Religious Education; Viki had requested to serve for only one year in that position. (b) The Board approved a recommendation by Dianna Butler, our Treasurer, that we provide workers compensation insurance for our employees at a total cost of about \$300 per year. The Board also is working with Dianna and the Finance Committee, chaired by Judy Donahue, to revise the duties and procedures of the Treasurer's office. Any amendments to the Bylaws that arise from this will be submitted to the congregation's vote at our May meeting. (c) The Board authorized our Building Committee to upgrade the audio system in the sanctuary. (d) The Committee on Ministry (Elbert Hill, Linda Woytasczyk, and Darrah Dunn) have been asked to establish a system whereby future committee members will be selected for 3-year rotating terms. (e) Roger Gregory-Allen together with Drew Wade and Carla Murphy will be this year's Stewardship Committee, who are scheduled begin the campaign in March.

In the months ahead, we will have our Stewardship Campaign, Budgetary Process and Personnel Contract Renewals, all of which will culminate in our Annual Congregational Meeting in May. In these difficult times, the Board and church leadership will strive to be careful stewards of our church's resources. We welcome any input from the members on this or any other matter. The Board meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:15 PM at the Church. Members are welcome to attend.

- Jim Johnson, President

January 2009 Treasurer's Report

Happy New Year and Tax Season to All!

This month has been a busy one for me, but I have successfully filed all of RRUU's required payroll tax reports and forms, and we are good with our friends at the IRS for another year.

For January, we had total revenues of \$4,829.88 and our expenses were \$5,631.62, resulting in a net loss of \$801.74 for the month. However, fiscal year-to-date, RRUU is financially holding steady with a net gain of \$218.74. As of January 31, 2009, RRUU has a total of \$53,805.63 in the bank in checking accounts, savings accounts, and CD's.

As of the end of January, we have received \$27,550.00 of our total projected pledges of \$55,550 or about 50%. I have configured my accounting software to track pledges, and I update those pledges on a weekly basis. If you would like a balance or need a history of your donation transactions, please send me an e-mail anytime (dianna820@hotmail.com) or call (903) 744-0570, and I will do my best to get back to you as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted by Dianna Butler, RRUU Treasurer

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).



A number of people have expressed an interest in forming a new Chalice Circle around the topic of “Voluntary Simplicity” or “Sustainable Living”. If you are interested in being a part of such a group, especially if you would be willing to facilitate it, please contact Scottie McIntyre Johnson, Chalice Circle Coordinator (scottieone@cableone.net).



AGAPE, A UU Christian Circle. Facilitator: Drew Wade. AGAPE meets after the regular worship service on the third Sunday of each month for a Christian-focused worship service with Communion. Next meeting: February 15 @ 12:45 p.m. @ the church. The worship service will be preceded by a light meal.

ALL LIBERAL CHRISTIANS AND UUs WHO WANT WORSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN FOCUS ARE WELCOME!



BEING PEACE, Meets every Wednesday from 11:00 A.M. to noon. @ the home of Nell Evans in Sherman,

NEW AND EXPERIENCED MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



FREETHINKERS, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Facilitator: L.D. Clark. Meets on the second Sunday of each month @ the church after church at about 12:45 p.m. Next meeting: February 8. We will view two controversial films, critical of Muslim Sharia Law. Bring a brown bag lunch.

ALL FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Next meetings: February 3, February 10 and February 17 at 7:30 pm at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan. We will continue to work on the April 18th 2009 Earth Day Festival.

ANYONE WHO LOVES OUR PLANET IS WELCOME!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Facilitator: Dianna Butler. Meet on various dates, depending on the activity. Next Meeting: Saturday, February 14 @ 2:00 p.m. @ the home of Dianna Butler in Sherman. The children (and adults) will make valentines to be taken to a local nursing home. Refreshments will be served.

ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ARE WELCOME AT "VILLAGE" ACTIVITIES



A MOVEABLE FEAST, A Cooking and Eating Circle. Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill. Meets at moveable times and moveable places! Next Meeting: February 12 @ 6:30 @ the home of Suzanne & Don Durland in Denison. Those who plan to attend should let the Durland's know as soon as possible. (ehman1@localnet.com or 903-327-8896)

ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!



Outdoor Activities Circle, Facilitators: Suzanne Durland & Kathleen Campbell. Meets monthly, usually on a Saturday, for a hike or other outdoor activity. February meeting: TBA.

ALL ARE WELCOME!



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitators: Penny Bertrand & Kris Reik. Meets at various places on various dates. Next meeting: a celebration of Imbolc. Time and place to be determined.

NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



THE REEL DEAL, A Movie Watching Circle. Facilitator: Linda Woytaszyk. Meets the last Friday of each month BUT the February meeting will be supper and an Oscar-watching party on Sunday, February 22 @ 6:00 p.m. @ the home of Linda Woytaszyk in Sherman.

ALL MOVIE LOVERS ARE WELCOME!



UUJAM!! A Music-Making Circle. Facilitator: Jan Fletcher. Meets the first Friday of each month @ 7:00 p.m. @ the home of Jan Fletcher. Next Meeting: Because of Jan's foot surgery, the February Jam must be rescheduled and will be announced at church.

ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!

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

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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

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:

Vacant

Website:

Nell Evans