

Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2009

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

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2009 Earth Day Festival

“Save Money, Save the Planet”

April 18, 9am—5pm

Sherman Municipal Ballroom and Grounds

405 N Rusk Street at Pecan

Keynote Address

9:00 – Prof. George Diggs (Austin College)

Workshops

Energy Efficient Buildings • Greening Your Business
Alternative Energy • Carbon Footprint Reduction
Healthy Cooking & Shopping • Rain Water Harvesting
Yard Waste Composting • Yard Wise Practices
Square Foot Gardening • Rose Propagation
Electric Vehicles & Lawn Equipment

Children's Activities

Food Waste Awareness • Worm Composting
Trash Audit • Arts & Crafts

Children's Art Show

Community Wide Paper Shredding — 10:00–2:00

Annual Plant Sales

Grayson County Master Gardeners
Red River Rose Society

Tours of Sneed Prairie

TAPS buses at 11:00, 12:30, 2:00 and 3:30

Blood Drive — 10:00–4:30

University of Gymnastics demo — 2:00

For information or to volunteer:

www.ruuu.org/earthday/Earthday2009.html
Amy Hoffman-Shehan, Organizer • 903-892-4198
Kris Riek • kris_riek@yahoo.com • 903-271-8896

The 2009 Earth Day Festival is sponsored by the following:

Conservationist Level

107.3 Doc FM
RRUU Green Team

Environmentalist Level

City of Sherman
North Texas Illegal Dumping Resource Center
Red River Unitarian Universalist Church
Austin College Ctr. for Environmental Studies
All Saints Camp – Jolt Camp
Lone Star Ambulance
Wachovia Securities
Texoma Print Services

Preservationist Level

Art from the Heart
Green Market Natural Foods
Center for Workplace Learning
Texoma Landscapes and Garden Center
Jeannine Hatt, MD and Chuck Phelps, MD
Texoma Children's Museum
Covenant Presbyterian Church and Covenant Cooks
IIT Electric Automobile Association
CableOne Advertising
Best Buy

Recycler Level

Atmos Energy
CORE
Grayson County Master Gardeners
Red River Rose Society
Rapid Refill Ink
Balden Street Montessori School
Grayson County Democrats

Red River



Green Team Tip of the Month

Volunteer for or just attend Earth Day Festival in Sherman Texas on April 18, 2009. Focus is Save Money, Save the Planet. Contact any member of the Green Team for more information



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

Month of Sundays

April 5 Reverend Jennifer Innis

“In Search of the Spirit”

Since the mid-20th century, many mainstream churches are in decline while the desire for spirituality is on the rise. What is spirituality and how does it fit with religion?

April 12 “Agape” UU Christian Chalice Circle

A Multi-Generational Easter Sunday Celebration

Unitarian Universalism is a non-creedal, pluralistic religion, which seeks truth, wisdom and inspiration from a variety of sacred and secular sources. Over the course of the past year, our worship services have been inspired by Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Neo-Pagan, Humanist, and other sacred and secular traditions. Unitarianism and Universalism, of course, both sprang directly from American Christian soil. On this Easter Sunday, the holiest day of the Christian year, we again turn to this tradition in search of the meaning it can bring to our lives.

April 19 Ms. Scottie McIntyre Johnson

A Service for Earth Day “Take Up Weeping and Wailing for the Mountains”

Has nothing changed since the Hebrew Prophet, Jeremiah, uttered those words thousands of years ago? When will we ever learn? But, although the Prophets never flinch from speaking the terrifying truths they see, they also never fail to offer a glimmer of hope. What is the New Covenant we must make with the earth if our children are to dwell in “a land flowing with milk and honey”?

April 26 Fourth Sunday Forum Rev. Dr. Harold J. Recinos

“A Human Being Can Never Be Illegal”

A Discussion of the Practical and Moral Dimensions of U.S. Immigration Policy

Dr. Harold J. Recinos is a Professor of Church and Society at Perkins School of Theology (SMU). He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from American University, a D. Min. from New York Theological Seminary, an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary, and a B.A. from the College of Wooster. Dr. Recinos is the author of many books and articles and is an expert in the anthropology of religion, North American Latino/a theology, and racial and ethnic studies. He is the Director of Perkins’ Urban Ministry Program. Dr. Recinos is an engaging, thoughtful and well-informed speaker and a truly fine human being. Please come hear him speak! You won’t regret it.

The new RRUU Caring Committee is ready to go to work addressing concerns for our church family. Please contact Cylvia Lawrence at cylvialaw@aol.com or 903-482-5121.

Social Action—"One More Step!"

Our Share the Plate donation for March raised over \$120 for the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation. The April donation will go to local women's shelters. In the coming year, we hope to establish a program that may utilize the proceeds from several Second Sundays to commit to a larger project in the community.

NTAUUS is pleased to sponsor a Social Justice Empowerment Workshop. The workshop is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. on April 11 at Horizon in Carrollton. Two facilitators from the UUA, Rev. Carole Ann Cole and Susan Leslie, will lead the session. NTAUUS is covering the cost of the workshop, so there is not expense for our attendees other than transportation. RRUU will be sending four representatives.

2-1-1 Texas, the Texoma Area Information Center has recently offered our Social Action Committee a seat on their board. 2-1-1 is a professionally staffed service that provides quick information and referrals to services such as finding food, shelter, clothing, medical, and mental health assistance. It can also provide questions regarding eldercare, housing assistance, affordable childcare, disaster relief and much more. I have also posted a list of various services and contact numbers on the SA bulletin board. If you know of individuals in need, please don't hesitate to refer them. Simply pick up the phone and dial 211. There are many services available that go unused simple because of a lack of awareness.

By the time this goes to press, we will hopefully have completed our Habitat project and the Baker Lake Cleanup. I say hopefully, because the weather forecast is not promising. In the event that the Habitat project is postponed, it will be rescheduled for April 4. Please check the bulletin boards for pictures of both events.

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>

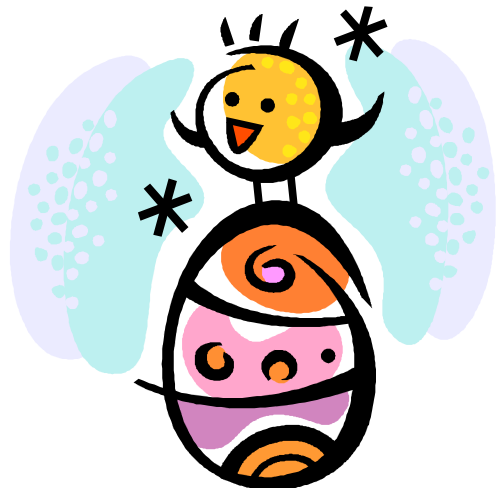
Hunting for Easter—Cans!?

Please bring some cans of food to church on April 5 and April 12. On Easter Sunday after church, the younger children will hunt, not for Easter eggs, but for canned goods, which the older children will hide. Those cans will then, of course, be given to the local food bank. And don't worry -- each child will also get a small bag of Easter candy!



Easter Breads

On Easter Sunday, April 12, you are invited, if you wish, to bring a small loaf (sliced or in the form of muffins) of any kind of bread you like to make to share during the Coffee and Conversation time after the service. You may want to bring a bread representative of your ethnic background or just an old favorite or new recipe you'd like to try. If you don't have time to bake, don't worry about bringing anything. There is always more than enough to go around!



Notes from the President

First of all, I want to thank all members who participated in the RRUU Check-In Survey last month. We had a total response of 48 out of 72 members, which is 67% of the membership, a very good showing. Thanks for taking the time to give us your input.

Also, I want to thank all members and friends who have made pledges toward next year's budget. Despite the economic difficulties of our time, we have exciting things ahead for us at Red River UU Church, and your pledge will help those things to happen.

My primary subject this month is to honor those of you who have contributed so much of your time and energy to our church without any monetary compensation. We, of course, value our paid staff members (our Minister, DRE, Newsletter Editor, Child Care Workers and Cleaning People). They are needed for those jobs that require special expertise and that the rest of us are glad someone else is doing. But we also value and could not do without those of you who do the volunteer work for our church and our community.

I'll start with our Ushers and Collection Counters. Without them our Sunday collections would not make into the bank. Our Treasurer makes sure those funds are recorded correctly and pays all our bills. Our Finance Committee helps plan our budget and oversees our financial operations. Our Stewardship Committee makes sure we have the resources to keep operating and pay those bills. Our Chalice Circles help keep us connected with each other and with the larger community, and their Facilitators deserve our gratitude for their organizational work. Thanks in particular this month to our Green Team, led by Amy Hoffman-Shehan, Marla Loturco and Kris Riek, who are putting together the most impressive Earth Day Festival our area has ever seen. Also, we cannot forget our Church Directory Team, headed by Jim Murphy and Marla Loturco, who are putting the finishing touches on our best church directory ever. Thanks also to David Lawrence, who keeps our Social Action and Charity Work going month after month. And to John Ockels for coordinating our Adult Religious Education classes and to the teachers who teach our children and youth. And of course, my fellow Board Members and the Committee on Ministry, all of who have been working especially hard during this time of year.

I don't have the space to mention every one I should, including all our various church committees and their leaders. My special thanks go out to all the unsung and even unnoticed RRUU heroes. It has been said that our church could not possibly afford to pay for all the work that is done for it and on its behalf. We are grateful, therefore, for our members, newcomers and old-timers, who have taken the initiative to volunteer and to be willing to serve when called upon. Without such generosity of time, energy and spirit, our little church would not exist. Each contribution of money, time, talent, and presence, no matter how small or how large, is absolutely essential to the health and well being of our church community. Thank you all. -Jim Johnson, RRUU Board President

February 2009 Treasurer's Report

RRUU is still doing very well financially. For March, we had total revenues of \$5,114.81, and our expenses were \$5,582.59, resulting in a net loss of \$467.78. For the fiscal year-to-date, we had total revenue of \$45,617.83 and our expenses were \$45,508.61, resulting in a year-to-date net gain of \$109.22. As of March 31, 2009, RRUU has a total of \$53,091.29 in the bank in checking accounts, savings accounts, and CD's. Those funds are dedicated as follows:

6-Month Emergency Reserve	30,392.50
New Home Fund - Restricted Assets	5,695.00
DBLE Scholarships - Restricted Assets	1,000.00
Uncommitted Funds	16,003.79

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

Minister's Letter

On the Journey...

From the Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, Unitarian Universalist Minister

“The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice. It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.”

After using these words at the start of the stewardship campaign on March 8, I find there is more to say about how important it is “to unveil the bonds.” In the March newsletter column, I offer a summary of many developments in the congregation. However, judging growth in how we are related to one another is harder to explain with facts and figures. Speaking for myself, I am very aware of the challenge of building a relationship when I may see the general congregation but once a month. Depending on schedules, a month or more may go by before we can say hello again in person. I have not had the chance to get to know many of you in depth beyond the leaders on the committees with which I work. Many of you may not know much of me outside of the services I lead and what I offer in the monthly newsletter. Yet, it may surprise you to know that when I speak of this church at the monthly Unitarian Universalist minister's meetings around the metroplex, I describe Red River as a light in my life. I enjoy being part of this community and seeing how you change and grow as a liberal voice in Texoma. My highest priority with this church is to serve as I am able to support your development.

It is my privilege to work with a congregation at its forming edge, where many of the patterns of how the community is with long members, new friends, and those in its service are in formation. Those patterns can be infused with health and adjusted along the way much more easily than those churches with more decades and centuries of life. The significance of unveiling the bonds is not just to discover their existence, though mere presence is powerful in its own right. e.e. cummings describes the “human merely being”. Knowledge of another's existence is indeed enough to act for justice. The next step is to go further in expanding the networks among us that will support a broader vision and a greater strength. As the church grows in numbers of people, each of us will be called to use greater levels of communication. This community has gone beyond the size of an extended family. RRUU is now a multi-celled community, with its own channels and groups within the whole. More than ever RRUU needs the gift of assuming good intentions and direct conversation. This religious community exists because of your willingness to unveil the bonds time and again. We are all on the same side in nurturing Unitarian Universalism in the Southwest. I have faith that we can succeed beyond all imagination if we so desire.

Namaste,

Jennifer

Where in the UU World is Rev. Jennifer?

I expect to be in Sherman/Denison to attend the Board meeting on April 1 and to lead the worship and help close the annual Stewardship Campaign on April 5. 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.

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 April 10-14 and 22-27. When I am in Midland, I ask that you let me know if a matter needs my immediate attention. Also, I will be in Montreal, Canada for the Spirit Play conference on April 29-May 3. 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 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. Meets on the third Sunday of each month @ the church after church @ 12:45 p.m. Next meeting: TBA.

ALL LIBERAL CHRISTIANS AND UUA's WHO WANT WORSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN FOCUS ARE WELCOME!

Facilitator: Drew Wade (andrewwademdpa@cableone.net)



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

NEW AND EXPERIENCED MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Facilitator: Nell Evans (westevans@verizon.net)



FREETHINKERS, A Humanist Chalice Circle. Meets on the second Sunday of each month @ the church after church at 12:45 p.m. Next meeting: TBA.

ALL FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!

Facilitator: L.D. Clark (ldclark45@yahoo.com)



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. We will meet April 7, & 14 to get ready for the April 18th Earth Day Festival. The meetings will be at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan in Sherman.

ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE WELCOME!

Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan (amychs@verizon.net)



IT TAKES A VILLAGE, A Circle of Parents Supporting Parents. Meet on various dates and places, depending on the activity. Next meeting: TBA.

ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ARE WELCOME AT "VILLAGE" ACTIVITIES!

Facilitator: Dianna Butler (dianna820@hotmail.com).



A MOVEABLE FEAST, A Cooking and Eating Circle. Meets at moveable times and moveable places! Next Meeting: TBA.

ANYONE WHO LOVES TO COOK OR EAT IS WELCOME!

Facilitators: Elbert & Marion Hill (mhill@communicomm.com).



Outdoor Activities Circle, Meets monthly, usually on a Saturday, for a hike or other outdoor activity. Next Meeting: In lieu of a hike or other activity this month, please volunteer to help – if only for an hour or two – at the Earth Day Festival on April 18.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Facilitators: Suzanne Durland & Kathleen Campbell (kcampbell@austincollege.edu or piet@texoma.net).



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Meets at various places on various dates. Next meeting: 4:00 pm Saturday, April 14. Join Rebecca Crystal at her home in Denison for a party and program in which she will explain, “Why I Am a Neo-Pagan”. This is for a project for one of her classes at Meadville-Lombard Seminary. It is supposed to be a multi-generational event, so children, youth and adults are encouraged to attend. Contact Rebecca for directions at (crystalclarity@earthlink.net)

NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Facilitator: Penny Bertrand (pdda2901@sbcglobal.net).



THE REEL DEAL, A Movie Watching Circle. Meets the last Friday of each month @ 7:20 p.m. @ the home of Linda Woytasczyk in Sherman. Next meeting: April 24. We will watch the film, *In Bruges*. Popcorn and other movie snacks are provided!

ALL MOVIE LOVERS ARE WELCOME!

Facilitator: Linda Woytasczyk (lindawoy@cableone.net).



UUJAM!! A Music-Making Circle. Meets the first Friday of each month @ 7:00 p.m. @ the home of Jan Fletcher. Next Meeting: Friday, April 3. Bring songs, songbooks, musical instruments and a snack to share. Please RSVP to Jan.

ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!

Facilitator: Jan Fletcher (jans_melodies@msn.com).

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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:

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Newsletter:

Lisa Cates

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Website:

Nell Evans