



Red River Ramblings

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 5

MAY 2009

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

A Month of Sundays

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May 3

Ms. Megan Dalby-Jones

"Mayday! May Day!"

May 1st is also known as May Day, or in Celtic spirituality as the Festival of Beltane. Let's explore laughter, joy, and playfulness, as we enter the bright half of the year.

May 10

Rev. Jennifer Innis

"The Excellent (But Not Perfect) Mother"

It is 2009 and as human beings, we know better than to try to be all things to all people. Yet, pedestals remain open and waiting for the ideal mother who cooks with organic food, drives the kids to soccer in the right-sized hybrid, and is just cool enough to be a great hostess for the whole neighborhood! Let us find another path beyond June Cleaver for the 21st century, one of personal and community transformation.

May 17

Rev. Dr. Russell Elleven

"Living the Religious Life"

Russell Elleven is the minister of Westside UU Church in Fort Worth. He was ordained into the UU ministry after 17 years working in higher education as a professor and administrator. The American Humanist Society has also ordained him a minister. Russell holds a master's degree in Theological Studies from Vanderbilt University, a doctoral degree in Education and Counseling from UNT and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School. He is a licensed professional counselor and licensed chemical dependency counselor. At the age of 13 he lost his left arm due to cancer. He and his spouse, Gayle, live in Ft. Worth.

May 24

Mr. Andrew Weber

"Giggling with God: Humor as a Spiritual Practice"

Q: Why did the Unitarian Universalist cross the road? **A:** To support the chicken in its search for its own path.

Andrew Weber is currently the ministerial intern at Horizon UU Church in Carrollton. He grew up as a Unitarian Universalist in Pennsylvania and recently finished his theological education at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. After a summer chaplaincy internship at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, Andrew and his wife, Isabella, will be moving to Ann Arbor, Michigan where Isabella will pursue a degree in Public Health and Andrew will continue on the path towards UU ministry.

Fifth Sunday Forum May 31st

Mr. Marc Adams "From Fundamentalism to Freedom"

Marc Adams is the author of eight books and cofounder of a non-profit organization, HeartStrong, Inc. Heartstrong is a non-profit educational organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students of religious schools, colleges, and universities.

See Page 2 for more information

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

May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 7:00 pm UUJam!	2
3 11:15 am Worship: Megan Dalby-Jones 12:45 pm Agape	4	5	6 11:00 am Being Peace	7	8	9 10:00 am Outdoor Circle
10 MOTHER'S DAY 11:15 am Worship: Rev. Jennifer Innis	11	12 7:30 pm Green Team	13 11:00 am Being Peace	14	15	16 6:00 Ppm Moveable Feast I
17 11:15 am. Worship: Rev. Russell Elleven 1:00 p.m. ANNUAL CON- GREGATIONAL MEETING	18	19	20 11:00 am Being Peace	21	22 6:00 pm Moveable Feast II	23 9:00 am It Takes a Village
24 11:15 am Worship: Andrew Weber	25 MEMORIAL DAY	26	27 11:00 am Being Peace	28	29 7:20 pm Reel Deal	30
31 11:15 AM FORUM: Marc Adams			June 3 11:00 am Being Peace		June 5 7:00 pm UUJam!	

Fifth Sunday Forum May 31st— Mr. Marc Adams

“From Fundamentalism to Freedom”

Marc Adams is the author of eight books, including his award-winning autobiography, *The Preacher's Son*. Reared in a cultish, fundamentalist Baptist home, aware that he was gay by the age of seven and weaving his way through religious schools (including Jerry Falwell's Liberty University) and reparative therapy techniques, Marc began his journey to self-acceptance at age 23. At our Fifth Sunday Forum, Marc will share some of his life's story, talk about his latest book, *(lost)Found*, as well as the non-profit organization he co-founded, HeartStrong, Inc., a non-profit educational organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students of religious schools, colleges, and universities. HeartStrong has provided hope and help to GLBT students who have endured faith-based anti-GLBT bullying in religious schools around the world since 1996. All of Marc's books and resources will be available for purchase, including his latest book, the much anticipated follow-up to *The Preacher's Son*, *(lost)Found*.

Social Action—"One More Step!"

Our Share the Plate donation for April was donated to the Earth Day Celebration held April 18 in Sherman. Congratulations to Amy, Marla, and Kris who spearheaded to program.

In spite of the terrible weather, we were able to complete the landscaping project for Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, March 28. We also had the privilege of working with a great group of young adults from Austin College. The Texas weather completely reversed itself overnight and we had a sunny Sunday afternoon for the Baker Lake Cleanup. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Pictures are posted on the bulletin board.

As noted in the last newsletter, NTAUUS sponsored a Social Justice Empowerment Workshop at Horizon in Carrollton on April 11. Two facilitators from the UUA, Rev. Carole Ann Cole and Susan Leslie, presented a number of ideas for increasing involvement. Representatives from all North Texas UU churches shared personal projects. RRUU sent four representatives. A review of the meeting is being prepared by the presenters and will be made available once it is received.

As part of the future RE program, we hope to present several discussion opportunities. We plan to address the national Congregational Study/Action Issue chosen at the 2008 General Assembly. We are preparing a PowerPoint guidance document for "Ethical Eating: How Our Personal Choices Affect the World". The purpose will not be to provide simple solutions to complex problems, but will encourage group discussion and personal introspection exploring the relationship between our individual choices and world conditions.

President's Notes

Our Annual Congregational Meeting is fast approaching, and we have some important business to transact. The members of RRUU, will be electing two new members of the Board of Trustees for two-year terms to replace Mary Larkin-Baker and John Ockels/Marla Loturco.

Also, we will be voting on whether to continue our quarter-time consulting minister, the Rev. Jennifer Innis, for another year. This vote is significant in that it will determine whether we go into the new year with a minister or without one. As a small pastoral-size congregation of 75 members, we need a minister. We have outgrown the family-size church of 30 members that we were when we started Red River UU Church ten years ago. The second stage of our development is as a pastoral-size church of 50-150 members. Such a church is too large to be considered a family run by individuals, including so-called matriarchs and patriarchs. Instead, in such a church there is a need for a professional minister to coordinate the work of a growing church. This is where we are headed, and we must get there sooner or later.

The Board proposes to change what we ask of our minister based on the RRUU Check-In Survey and the Forums that followed it as well as what we have learned from other resources. The new job description, which you will vote on, has her more involved with membership development and work with committees and members of the church. We think this is the right direction to go, if Jennifer continues with us for another year.

One of our UU Principles (#5) is "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process." We have the opportunity to exercise this right and this process on Sunday May 17. Let's all exercise them responsibly and with a view to the best interests of our church. Adherence to this principle means that we trust and support the church as guided by the will of the majority with our words, our money and our work. Regardless of how this particular vote turns out, I will continue to support RRUU with my pledge, my time, and my energy. I ask you, my fellow members, to do the same.

We have much work ahead of us regardless of whether we continue our quarter-time minister now or not. In the Fall, we will need to consider our church's mission and vision and its strategic plan for the next few years. We all must come back together after the May meeting and participate in moving our church forward. To do otherwise will, I fear, doom us to shrink back to a small church with much less momentum in the community around us.

Jim Johnson, RRUU president of the Board of Trustees

Adult Religious Education—May and June

May 3 - Renewal DVD (Amy Hoffman-Shehan)

May 10 - Ethical Eating (David Lawrence)

May 17 - Spiritual Direction (Richard Newlin)

May 24 - TBA (Marla Loturco)

May 31 - The Baha'i Faith (Tammy Mease)

June 7 - What brought me to RRUU (Bob Mease)

June 14 - Social Action Meeting (David Lawrence)

June 21 - Profiles of UUA Presidency Candidates

Please contact Amy Hoffman Shehan if you are interested in presenting a topic to the group this summer. If you are interested in serving as the Adult R.E. Coordinator for the next church year, please contact Jim Johnson.

April 2009 Treasurer's Report

RRUU is overall doing well financially. For April, we had total revenues of \$4,781.06, and our expenses were \$5,239.41, resulting in a net loss of \$458.35. For the fiscal year-to-date, we have a total budget deficit of \$338.52, which is approximately ½ of 1% of our total budget. As of April 30, 2009, RRUU has a total of \$52,603.42 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	15,515.92

As of April 30, 2009, we have a total of about \$15,500 in pledges outstanding for the current fiscal year that ends June 30, 2009. 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...

May is a month for healing. As of this writing, the swine flu remains a growing presence in our neighborhoods and around the world. More and more public places are closed for a week here, a week there, including schools and sports programs. Some places of worship are canceling their special trips. We sorrow for the lives lost. We wish for the recovery of those who are ill. We hope for an end to these deaths and the spread of this infection. We honor Mother's Day, a time when many of us acknowledge what we did not receive in love, respect, or attention from our families. For Memorial Day at the end of the month, we honor those who have fought and died in war. We befriend the families of those in the service during times of absence, uncertainty, and grief.

May is a month for celebration. We visit with the people who are mothers to us. We cheer on graduates of any age and offer our hopes for the next chapter in their lives. We cherish those who came home from military service and are with us still.

May is a month for affirming the character and quality of religious community. Children's programs are embodied in worship. Volunteers receive thanks for countless hours given and fierce commitments kept for the sake of this beloved place. We are people who disagree in theology, language, politics, and money, and can begin again and again in love.

May is a month for looking to the future. New members and new babies are recognized and welcomed. Unitarian Universalist congregations across the continent are meeting as they have done for decades to determine the budgets and leadership for the year to come. The members of this congregation have an important set of questions on May 17 that go above and beyond the budget and the Board. The questions will address the ministry of the congregation and whether I will continue as your consulting minister. I encourage every voting member to reflect on the direction of this evolving congregation, to talk with friends and neighbors about your hopes and concerns for the future, and to stay after service on May 3 and 10 to talk about the questions to be determined on May 17. I will be available on the 10th for this conversation.

This congregation is a place in need of and capable of healing. This congregation is a place of celebration. This congregation is a place of passionate friends and families. This congregation is a place of transformation in Texoma. May we let this community we share bring out "the better angels of our nature" for our own sake and for the sake of those who will be here tomorrow.

Namaste,

Jennifer

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.

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. Meets on the third Sunday of each month @ the church after church @ 12:45 p.m. Next meeting: June 21. **ALL LIBERAL CHRISTIANS AND UUs WHO WANT WORSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN FOCUS ARE WELCOME!**



BEING PEACE, A Mindfulness Meditation Circle. Facilitator: Nell Evans. 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. **WILL NOT MEET IN MAY**, but usually meets on the second Sunday of each month @ the church after church at 12:45 p.m. Next meeting: TBA.

ALL FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!



THE GREEN TEAM, An Environmental Action Circle. Facilitator: Amy Hoffman-Shehan. Meets on the second Tuesday of each month @ 7:30 p.m. at the home of Amy Hoffman-Shehan in Sherman. Next meeting: May 12. We will select purchases for the RRUU library and set our outreach calendar for the next year.

ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE 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, May 23 @ 9:00 a.m. for the 2nd Annual Super Saturday at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge.

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 Open Meeting: Friday, May 22. 6:00 PM @ Fyrooz's Middle Eastern Restaurant in Sherman.

ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!



Outdoor Activities Circle, Facilitators: Suzanne Durland & Kathleen Campbell. Next Meeting: Saturday, May 9 @ 10a.m. @ Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge for hiking and a picnic lunch.

ALL ARE WELCOME!



RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, A Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitator: Penny Bertrand. 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 each month @ 7:20 p.m. @ the home of Linda Woytasczyk in Sherman. Next meeting: May 29. We will watch the film, *Last Chance Harvey*.

ALL MOVIE LOVERS WILL BE WELCOME AT THE APRIL MEETING!



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: Friday, June 5.

ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!



Green Team Tip of the Month – May 2009

Try to avoid using more detergent than you need to get your clothes clean. Overdosing can cause your washer to work harder.

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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 (2010)

Mary Larkin-Baker, Trustee-at-Large (2009)

Marla Loturco, 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:

Open Position

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:

Cylvia Lawrence

Website:

Nell Evans