# Red River Ramblings

Volume 7, Issue 1

January, 2010

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

## A Month of Sundays

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# V n i t a r i a n i v e r s a ! Church

#### January 3

#### Megan Dalby-Jones

#### "The Burning Bowl: A Ritual of Release for the New Year"

Megan Dalby-Jones graces our pulpit on this first Sunday of the new year. Her interactive service offers activities geared toward spiritual renewal, and also features an infant dedication ceremony. Begin the New Year by joining with your RRUU friends in this celebration of endings and beginnings.

#### January 10

#### Worship Arts Team

#### **Epiphany**

In recognition of Epiphany, the official end of the Christmas Season, the Worship Arts Team leads today's worship experience with an exploration of those enigmatic moments we call "epiphanies". A variety of voices from RRUU have been invited to share their own stories of light and clarity, focusing on that particular moment when they first realized that Unitarian Universalism was the faith system they should embrace.

#### January 17

#### **Worship Arts Team**

#### "He Had A Dream"

The Worship Arts Team honors Dr. Martin Luther King and recognizes his birthday with this celebration of his life and work. Through music, personal reflections, and readings from his memorable speeches, we will explore why this Baptist preacher from Alabama is remembered as one of the finest ambassadors of our own Unitarian Universalist principles.

#### January 24

#### **Reverend Don Fielding**

#### "Theology and Unitarian Universalism"

UUs have never been big on theology; why is that? Is there a UU theology? In recent years the theology associated with "the New Atheism" has become popular (thanks to Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, et. Al). Is atheism the new trend for theology in the United States - and how does it compare with that of UUism? Let's discuss theology - something UUs seldom do.

#### January 31

#### Mr. Bruce Knotts

#### Unitarian Universalism at the United Nations

Today we have the distinction of being one of only two UU congregations to host the Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, Mr. Bruce Knotts, during his visit to the North Texas area. Show up early, get a seat, and hear him speak about his experiences with representing the ideals of Unitarian Universalism at an international level. Read more about Bruce later in this newsletter.



10:00am

11:15am

Adult Forum Worship & Children's RE

#### Calendar of Events

January, 2010

- 3 Sun, 10 am CHRISTIAN Interest Group
- 8 Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, meditation
- 8 Fri, 7 pm UUJAM, music
- 10 Sun, 12:30 PM Survey, Committee on Ministry
- 10 Sun, 12:45 FREETHINKERS
- 12 Tues, 6:30 pm Board Meeting
- 15 Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, meditation
- 17 Sun, 10:00 am CHRISTIAN Interest Group
- 19 Tues, 7:30 pm GREEN TEAM, environmental
- 22 Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, meditation
- 29 Fri, noon MINDFULNESS, meditation
- 31 Sun, 10:00 am CHRISTIAN Interest Group



# Green Team Tip of the Month

Recycle your technology. Dell, Hewlett Packard, Apple, and IBM, among others, offer recycling programs.

### January Birthdays

- 07 Cynthia Evetts
- 10 Anna Shaw
- 18 Barbara Powell
- 23 Jeannine Hatt
- 23 Mitchell Reid



# Come Have a "COSY" Evening at Harmony House, with TR on the Side!

On Friday, January 15, '10, Harmony House Concerts will feature not only Cosy Sheridan, but also her musical partner, TR Ritchie, at 7 pm. Both Cosy and TR have their own individual careers as singer-songwriters, but when they play together it's like enjoying fresh raspberries and cream.

Reservations are \$15 per person and can be made by calling 903/583-2661, leaving your name and contact information. Prepaid reservations are preferred and can be sent to Faye Wedell; P.O. Box 812; Bonham, TX 75418 by January 10th to ensure delivery. Please make checks to Cosy Sheridan.

Harmony House is located at Wildscape Acres, which is just 10 miles North of Bonham and 65 miles NE of Dallas. If you need directions, request when making reservations and they will be sent by e-mail (or given by phone). Bottomless cups of coffee, tea, or a variety of juices are available, as well as "goodies" during the break between the 45-minute sets. There will be a basket for an optional \$1 cash donation to defray the costs to hosts, Faye & Scott.

All February newsletter submissions are due to

newsletter@rruu.org by January 30th, at 5:00 p.m.

#### Member News

#### New Member

Joyce Peak joined the RRUU, Dec. 27, 2009. Joyce has already taken an active role in our community, by, among other things, helping to collect the offering on Sunday morning. Take time to welcome and get to know Joyce.

#### Dianna Niemann-Harris Participates in TMC Move



The day of moving from the old TMC building to the new was absolutely exhausting but went surprisingly well! Tim and I arrived at the new TMC at 5:30 am where I was deputy director for the family and patient support team. That meant I supervised 10 staff with one on each floor, one at the doors to "capture" families as they arrived, one monitoring where in the move process patients were and two staffing family hospitality room and one "float". We were responsible for family members from their arrival at the new building until 20 minutes after the arrival of their loved one/patient at which time they were allowed into the patient room to visit.

I made up a breakfast casserole and invited my team to come at 6 am to have coffee and food...the wily Chaplain's way of insuring the entire team was on site, briefed and in place as required at 6:45 am. Tim was on hand to serve up breakfast and later in the day we supplied two of the large sandwich rings from SAM's along with chips and cookies which fed our team, a number of families in the room at the time and about 20 other staff who were working in the area. Again, Tim served as a gracious host charming people and there was coffee, water and Big K Cola for all who wanted it.

The entire move was treated as a disaster drill. We worked under the guise of the new hospital as "up and running" and the 65 patients (being transported from the old site)site) were treated as if they were disaster victims. Critical (i.e. ICU patients) were brought in to the ER, received an immediate assessment to insure no ill effects from the move, and wisked up the dedicated elevators off ER which go only to the second floor (ICU and surgery floor). Other patients were treated as non-critical and were brought in through the main doors, triaged in the lobby, and taken to rooms via the central bank of elevators.

#### A few interesting things...

- --The first patient arrived at the new location 7:45 am & the last of 65 came in at 11:45 am
- --The last infant to be born at the old location came into the world around 7 am and the first to greet life at the new hospital was born that afternoon.
- --The first surgery at the new location was done the afternoon of the move

- --By 8 am the first "Code Blue" occurred in the new ER, a patient who came from his home via ambulance, and he was successfully resuscitated
- --Every TMC employee worked some part of move day and for several hours both locations were fully staffed
- --There were no adverse medical effects for any patients as a result of the move
- --The new building is not only state-of-the-art medically, it is also exceedingly well laid out and the nature themed décor throughout lends a sense of serenity and peace.

Tim and I finished up our roles at the new facility at 1 pm and 2:30 pm respectively and had a bit of time to go home and 'regroup' before doing our regular worship services at the Behavioral Health Center at 4 pm and at Reba McEntire Rehabilitation at 5:30 pm.

This morning I still feel so much joy and pride at being a part of this process... I only wish the second fulltime Chaplain position was funded so I could pour more of myself into being a part of this incredible organization! - Dianna

#### Jim Gauthier, RRUU member, Publishes New Book

Jim Gauthier announced this morning at Adult Forum that his book is now available on Amazon.com. The title is <u>Playground: The World is Yours.</u> He will lead a book review at an Adult Forum in the near future.

# Members Attend Rededication of Temple Beth Emeth

Marla Loturco, Don & Suzanne Durland, Kris Riek and Amy Hoffman-Shehan attended the rededication of Temple Beth Emeth on the first night of Hanukkah, Friday, December 11. The congregation worked up to the last minute readying the synagogue for the service, attending to last minute details as guests and members arrived. Attendance was around 100 people, almost evenly divided between members of the temple and members of the community who attended to show support for the temple. RRUU was not the only religious institution represented at the Hanukkah celebration. Also in attendance were two priests from the Anglican church in Denison whose cross was vandalized in November (and who received a gift and letter of sympathy from members of Temple Beth Emeth), members of both Sherman Presbyterian Churches, including Reverend Lander Bethel of Grand Avenue Presbyterian Church, and a representative of a local prison ministry. The Sherman police detective investigating the crime attended with his family, and his son lit a Menorah and danced to the Dreidel Song aside the other children. The Hanukkah celebration was happy, fun, light-hearted and poignant. We were proud to represent RRUU and celebrate in the Temple's spirit of moving forward.

#### From the UUA

Dear Red River UU Church,

On behalf of the staff here at the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), we wish you a happy new year! The UUA Office of Electronic Communications has been hard at work preparing for the launch of a revitalized website. In February, 2010, look for the new, more welcoming and informative UUA.org!

There have been significant changes to the UUA's services for visiting youth groups. The UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is now offering constituent meetings that can be scheduled at mutually convenient times during the UUA's regular business hours! However, tours of the UUA's 25 Beacon St. building are now only available during a narrow window of time in the late afternoons.

The Standing on the Side of Love campaign has designated Valentine's Day 2010 as 'National Standing on the Side of Love Day.' The campaign suggests three simple things that all congregations can do to get involved.

"What Moves Us: Unitarian Universalist Theology," A new Tapestry of Faith adult program, by Thandeka, is now available online. This curriculum offers a pathway for developing a personal theology and learning about the theological strands of our Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist heritage.

You can find this and past Congregational Bulletins on our website at:

http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/congregationalmonthly/153992.shtml.

Warmest Regards, Rachel Walden Public Information Assistant/Receptionist info@uua.org (617) 948-4652

#### Children's

#### Religious Education



Teacher Helen Schulze continues the study of the UUA curriculum, Learning and Living the UU Principles, with the children of RRUU. Children's RE begins after the children are sung out by the congregation. Snack and a drink are provided, and there is a huge emphasis on having FUN! Anyone interested in helping should speak with Helen at the church on Sunday morning.

# Christian UU Group Forming/Meeting at RRUU

What does it mean to be a Christian Unitarian Universalist? Is that different from a Unitarian Universalist Christian? How can I be responsible for the nourishment of my own Christianity within RRUU? Where is there space for a liberal Christian in a conservative part of the country? What do I need, desire, yearn for? Can we develop a unique circle for non-judgmental conversation? If these or similar questions spark an interest for you, come gather with the RRUU Christian Interest Group! We gather to wonder together every first and third Sunday in the classroom at RRUU at 10 am, led (loosely) by Liz and Dianna. Absolutely everyone is welcome but be forewarned... this is a gathering of people who have Christian beliefs. The group is likely to unapologetically talk about Biblical scripture, communion, worship and pray in the name of Jesus! Come join in as we celebrate together who we are and look to how we can become more fully spiritually nourished in the journey!

#### Adult Forum

No information was available at the time of publication. Watch for information in the Wed. E-News, or just come check us out.

#### **Board Bits**

What your board did at their last meeting (December 8, 2009)



Everyone on the board was in attendance. Carla Murphy and Penny Armstrong were also present to give reports on the November Leadership conference they attended. We started at 6:45 pm and went home around 9:20 pm. No other members of the congregation were present.

Dianna Niemann-Harris acted as our Process Observer and timekeeper for the meeting.

Minutes were approved for the last meeting and reports were accepted.

Penny Armstrong has agreed to accept a position on the Safe Congregation Panel.

Projects being addressed include:

Moving web site to DreamHost from Internet-Texoma

Replace florescent lights in foyer, hall, fellowship hall.

Oral History of the church to be recorded.
Writing NTAUUS Grant request for Audio/Visual
equipment - will require matching funds
Writing NTAUUS Grant request for 5 year planning
training -will require matching funds.

Mold issue in RRUU rental building.

T-Shirts on hold for logo, Logo is progressing slowly.

Beginning the Policies & Procedures Manual. Report by Penny Armstrong on RE Leadership. Training at SWUUC Glen Rose Conference. Report by Carla Murphy on Beyond Fundraising. Leadership Training at SWUUC Glen Rose Conference.

Report by Marla Loturco on Vital Small Congregations at SWUUC Glen Rose Conference.

Board has set aside \$3000.00 from the Chalice Arts Sale as a nest egg for matching possible grant funds.

If you would like to see the full board minutes – they will be **posted on the "Board Board" in the back of the Sanctuary as** soon as they are available. The next board meeting is January 12th, starting at 6:30 p.m. Board meetings are open to all; if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. Deadline for the agenda, and reports to the board, is January 9th.

Those wishing a few minutes during the "open mic" will want to be ready to speak near the end of the meeting.

#### Beautiful Plants Enliven Worship Space, Honor Many

#### **HOLLY PLANTS**

- Given in celebration of the life of <u>Harold and Grace Lambert</u>

   By Marla Loturco
- Given in thanks for my mother Bertha Marie Singer Niemann By Dianna Niemann-Harris
- Given in memory of my father <u>John</u>
   H. <u>Hicks</u>
   By Paula A. Blackshear



#### <u>POINSETTIA PLANTS</u>



- Given in memory of her love remembering <u>Eddy Edwards</u>
   By Marla Loturco
- Given in thanks for our Board President <u>O'Marla Loturco</u>

By The Board of Trustees

- Given in honor of <u>Maura Shehan</u> By Amy Hofman-Shehan
- Given in memory of my father <u>William Lee Rogers</u> By Dianna Niemann-Harris
- Given in joyous thanks for my family at <u>Red River Unitarian Universalist Church</u>
  By Dianna Niemann-Harris

#### Message from Marla Marla Loturco, President, RRUU



collective work since the beginning of time. This myth suggests that the human race is a single Karass dedicated to this holy purpose."

With this myth in mind may we go forward into the New Year, blessing others and ourselves to free and experience the holiness in all.

The following is from a chapter in <u>My Grandfa-ther's Blessings</u>, by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., pg 326.

"In the sixteenth century the great Kabbalistic rabbi Isaac Luria offered a profoundly beautiful cosmology of the world, a sort of mystical version of the Big Bang theory. In the beginning there is the Ein Sof, pure Being without manifestation, the Infinite, Absolute Source of the world. The world as we know it begins with the Or Ein Sof, an emanation of light from the Source. Rabbi Luria explains the fragmented nature of this world by postulating an accident of cosmic proportions the vessel holding the Or Ein Sof shattered and broke open, and the light of God was scattered throughout the universe into an infinite number of holy sparks. These countless sparks of holiness are hidden deep in everyone and everything."

"Like many other mystical cosmologies, this Creation myth is based on an idea of service. The purpose of human life is to uncover these sparks of light and restore the world to its original holiness. Everyone and everything we encounter is a shell or container for a hidden spark of holiness. It is up to us to help free the hidden holiness in everything and everyone."

"We restore the holiness of the world through our loving-kindness and compassion. Everyone participates. It is a collective task. Every act of loving kindness, no matter how great or small, repairs the world. All those ever born have shared this

Happy New Year Marla

# New Year's Resolutions



A New Year's resolution is a commitment that an individual makes to a project or the reforming of a habit, often a lifestyle change that is generally interpreted as advantageous. The name comes from the fact that these commitments normally go into effect on New Year's Day and remain until fulfilled or abandoned. More socio-centric examples include resolutions to donate to the poor more often, to become more assertive, or to become more economically or environmentally responsible. People may act similarly during the Christian fasting period of Lent, though the motive behind this holiday is more of sacrifice than of responsibility. The new year resolution is one example of the rolling forecast-method of planning. According to this method, plans are established at regular short or medium-term time intervals, when only a rough long-term plan exists.

There are religious parallels to this secular tradition. For example, during Judaism's New Year, Rosh Hashanah, through the High Holidays and culminating in the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, one is to reflect upon one's wrongdoings over the year and both seek and offer forgiveness. The concept, regardless of creed, is to reflect upon self-improvement annually.

[From Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\_Year%27s\_resolution]

#### **Bruce Knotts** Speaks at RRUU



We are fortunate to have

Bruce Knotts, Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, speak to members and quests of Red River Unitarian Universalists church on January 31, 2010. A brief biography of Bruce follows.

Bruce Knotts was born and raised in California. He got his Bachelor's Degree in History from Pepperdine University and his Master's Degree in International Education from the Monterey Institute of International Studies; both in California. Bruce was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia. He worked for Raytheon in Saudi Arabia and on a World Bank contract in Somalia, before he joined the Department of State as a U.S. diplomat in 1984. Bruce had diplomatic assignments in Greece, Zambia, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and The Gambia, where he was Deputy Chief of ous members and friends stand Mission. While in Cote d'Ivoire, Bruce served as the Regional Refugee Coordinator for West Africa covering all 16 nations of West Africa from Mauritania to Nigeria, but focusing on the refugees from the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and later in Cote d'Ivoire itself. In 2004, Bruce was elected to the Board of GLIFAA (Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies). Bruce retired from the Foreign Service in 2007 and joined the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office as its Executive Director at the beginning of 2008.

#### E-NEWS is Here!

Every Wednesday, all members and friends of the church should be receiving a weekly Red River UU Church E-News. The weekly E-News began just before



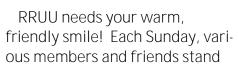
Thanksgiving. Each issue only covers activities from Wednesday to Wednesday and serves as a quick way to be reminded of what's happening next Sunday, along with whatever meetings or chalice circles or interest groups or activities are on the calendar for the week.

If you aren't receiving it, send a request to announcements@rruu.org and you'll be added to the list.

#### WORSHIP SURVEY, Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry will hand out a very short survey, along with the Order of Service, on January 10th. Questions will be about the Sunday morning service and you will have a chance to suggest program topics, speakers, and anything that relates to the Sunday morning experience.

#### Greeters Still Needed!



at the door to welcome each of you to our Sunday Service. Those GREETERS welcome our visitors and assist them with name tags, filling out Visitor Information Sheets, and direct them to the information forms about RRUU. They also distribute the Order of Worship. GREETERS have the opportunity to see everyone who comes that day. What a wonderful service for both GREETER and RRUU! See the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for 2010. Become a GREETER and let your smile shine!



#### E-mail Etiquette Tip of the Month

Don't reply to an e-mail message when you are angry, as you may regret it later. Once the message has been sent, you will not be able to recover it. Another term for e--mail might be "eternal memory."

One thing I have learned in life is that we are what we love. Sometimes we love things too little for our love to be meaningful. O ther times we love very, very big things, but in too small a way. In either case, ultimately we are what we Forrest Church, Unitarian Universalist minister love.

#### 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! If you are interested in attending a particular circle, contact Circle Coordinator, Jan Fletcher, at chalicecircles@rruu.org.

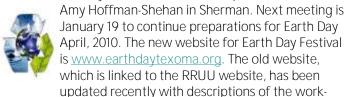
MINDFULNESS, a Meditation Circle, meets every



Friday at noon at the home of Sue Wells in Whitesboro. Facilitator is Richard Newlin. NEW AND EXPERIENCED MEDITATORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.

FREETHI NKERS, a Humanist Circle, meets the second Sunday of each month in Fellowship Hall at 12:45. The next meeting will be January 10. Facilitator is Jim Gauthier. All FREETHINKERS ARE WELCOME!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle, meets the Third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the home of



shops and last year's printed program. Anyone who loves the planet and would like to help with the 2010 Earth Day Festival is invited to join us. The theme will be "Green For Health" exploring the link between the health of our planet and our physical health. This is an opportunity for RRUU members to become involved and give our church a public face. Facilitator is Amy Hoffman-Shehan. ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH ARE WELCOME!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE, a Circle of Parents Supporting Parents, is suspended as of December. It will need families and a facilitator when returning to active status.

CHRI STI ANS, a Christian-Centered group meets everyother Sunday at 10 am at RRUU. There will be 3 meetings during January as the group continues to develop its format. Co-facilitators are Dianna Niemann-Harris and Liz Van-Huss. ALL CHRISTIAN UUS ARE INVITED.

REEL DEAL, a Movie Watching Circle, is returning to RRUU, possibly in January or February. Watch for details in future Wednesday and/or Sunday Announcements. Facilita-

tors will be Jim and Carla Murphy at their home in Whitesboro. MOVIE FANS ARE INVITED!

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle,



meets on moveable dates at moveable locations.

Next dinner is Thursday, December 31 at 7 pm at the home of Jim and Carla Murphy in Whitesboro. Everyone is welcome, but anyone desiring

to attend should let the Murphys and the Hills know beforehand. Members interested in hosting during 2010 need to contact the Hills. Facilitators are Elbert & Marion Hill. ANYONE WHO LOVES COOKING AND/OR EATING IS WELCOME!



PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Circle, meets each month on a Saturday. Planning is under way for the next outing. Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. ANYONE WHO LOVES THE OUTDOORS IS WELCOME!

RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT, a Nature-Based



Spirituality Circle, meets seasonally at the Church. Facilitator is Penny Armstrong. NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

UUJAM, a Music-Making Circle, meets the first Friday of each month at 7 pm at the home of Jan Fletcher in Sherman. The January meeting will be held Fri, Jan 8<sup>th</sup> due to the New Year's Day holiday. The JAM meets in an informal circle to share favorite songs and all musicians and listeners are welcome. The group will be provid-

ing a Valentine's service on Sunday, February 14. Please give some thought to songs of "love" to include. Bring your instruments and songs to share. Facilitator is Jan Fletcher. ALL MUSIC MAKERS AND LISTENERS ARE WELCOME!

LAID BACK BOOK GROUP, a Book Reading



and Discussion Interest Group, meets periodically to discuss the selected reading and share insights. Next meeting is TBA. Facilitator is Suzanne Durland. ALL WHO ENJOY

THOUGHTFULLITERATURE ARE WELCOME!



#### Red River Unitarian Universalist Church

...a home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas

102 West Harrison Street PO Box 1806 Denison, Texas 75021

Phone: 903-465-5515 E-mail: info@rruu.org

# WE'RE ON THE WEB!

#### Church Leadership

Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco,

President (2010)

Don Durland,

Vice-president (2010)

Dianna Niemann-Harris,

Treasurer (2010)

Amy Hoffman-Shehan,

Trustee-at-Large (2010)

Jim Murphy,

Trustee-at-Large (2010)

L. D. Clark,

Trustee-at-Large (2011)

Cynthia Evetts,

Secretary (2011)

Safe Congregation Panel

Marla Loturco, Helen Schulze,

Jim Gauthier, Suzanne Durland,

Penny Armstrong

Team Leaders

Worship: Darrah Dunn

Chalice Circles: Jan Fletcher

Adult Forum: Penny Armstrong & Suzanne Durland

Children's Religious Education: Helen Schulze

Youth Advisor: Open

Membership: Carla Murphy

Social Action: Dianna Niemann-Harris (Acting)

Building and Grounds: Doyle Adams

Communications: Open

Caring: Kris Riek

Ways & Means: L.D. Clark (Acting)

Hospitality: Open Historian: Open

Newsletter: Cynthia Evetts & Shann Schubert

Website: Open

Committee on Ministry

Elbert Hill, Carolyn Cameron, Sue Wells