



# Red River Ramblings

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## Sunday Celebrations ~To Enrich our Lives

July 3

### AN UNEXPECTED CAREER

The Rev. Dianna Niemann-Harris

This Sunday the church family is invited into reflective moments on freedom, patriotism and military service through thoughts shared by a peace loving, political activist, the Mom of an unexpected military staff sergeant turned veteran. Come join the wondering, the angst, the struggle to be faithfully who we are when life tosses curve balls which sometimes appear to be hand grenades. The sermon began about 8 years ago and is not likely to be finished for another 8 or more.

July 10

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCEPTANCE

Tish Burkhalter

**Families Feeding Families** initially began simply feeding people. We strive to provide nourishment for the physical hunger people experience as well as the emotional and spiritual hungers so many people experience on a regular basis. We offer dinners 5 nights a week. There is no charge. All that is needed to qualify is a hunger for food and fellowship. If you are there, you will be served.

July 17

### FIVE STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Wendy Gruber

It isn't often that religion draws on the manufacturing industry for inspiration. Wendy Gruber has taken the '5S' approach to improving productivity in business as a way to becoming a more spiritual person. An intriguing idea that she will explore on Sunday.

July 24

### IF YOU WERE ARRESTED FOR BEING A UU, WOULD THERE BE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONVICT YOU?

The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong

In most religions people are TOLD what to believe, in UUism we're ASKED, "What do you believe?" This unique approach can baffle people – even us. A look at our heritage and how it has shaped religion, politics and hope.

July 31

### FIFTH SUNDAY FORUM\*

#### DRUG WAR:

#### HOW WE GOT INTO THIS MESS

#### AND THE VESTED INTERESTS THAT KEEP US HERE

Suzanne Willis

As we define "the drug war," it does NOT include education, prevention or treatment. The drug war has attempted to co-opt these important tools and made them less effective. Money is being spent in ways that are up to 23 times less effective than available alternatives. We are making remarkably bad investment decisions. This forum's goal is to promote the well informed open debate and discussion that are essential in making constructive policy changes.

*\*On Fifth Sunday's we suspend our normal approach to worship and invite a community leader to speak. We light a chalice and candles of community and then introduce the speaker. A Q & A follows. No hymns, no readings, no offering. A good morning to introduce a friend or two to our unique approach to religion.*

Adult Forum ~ 10

Silent Meditation ~ 11

Worship ~ 11:15

Fellowship Gathering ~ 12:15

*“We need to be out of the sanctuary this Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> and will need loads of help to get the job done”*

Dear Friends,

The English playwright, Arnold Bennett said it best, “Any change, even a change for the better, is



always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.” Keeping that in mind, I have good news and bad news about our current location.

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church needs to move. The board and others in the church have been looking at various places. In that process we contacted Temple Beth Emeth. After much deliberation, the congregation at Temple Beth Emeth decided they did not want to share their space. Now the board is continuing to look. Doyle Adams has found we could rent the meeting room at the Texoma Inn quite inexpensively. Joyce Peak has looked at many of the places in Denison that are for rent. So far there has been nothing which we can afford on the 2011-2012 budget. The board would appreciate any other leads or ideas from anyone in the congregation.

Meanwhile back at the current building, Bettye Hales Russell, our landlady, has decided to put it up

## We're Moving ~ into Fellowship Hall

for sale again. She wants to refinish the ceiling in the Sanctuary, and paint each of the rooms along the corridor which have been used by Day Star. To achieve that goal she has requested we move out of the Sanctuary for some period of time. We will use one of the classrooms as an office, another for Adult Forum, and a third for storage of anything currently in the sanctuary which we choose not to use. The Fellowship Hall will be set up for use as a Sanctuary.

Good news - our rent from now on is \$500.00 per month with an additional \$100.00 per month for utilities. We will be on a month to month lease, but since we have always had a one month out on the lease this isn't much of a change.

Bad News – Bettye wants to begin these projects as soon as possible. To that end we need to move all of our stuff out of the sanctuary.

Bettye's plan of upgrade.

- Remove the “popcorn” and repaint the sanctuary ceiling
- Paint five of the classrooms that Day Star had been using
- Put either a solid door or a wall in the women's bathroom in the back stall
- Possibly put a partial wall and door to hide the commode in the men's bathroom
- Remove the Day Star sign and paint under it. Remove the RRUU sign temporarily to paint under it but put it back up.
- Bettye is asking \$135,000 for the building - that does not include any of the furniture.

## What we need to do this Sunday, July 3rd

- set up the old sound system in the sanctuary or figure out how to attach the new speakers, setting

them on the floor so we have a sound system for Sunday morning worship.

## Then after services ...

- move the current office in the back of the sanctuary to one of the rooms on the back wall - probably the purple one.
- set up the yellow room for adult forum meetings
- use a third room for storage of anything from the sanctuary we won't need right now (dividers immediately come to mind)
- remove all wall hangings and pictures from the sanctuary walls.
- move six to eight of the pews from the sanctuary down to the fellowship hall.
- move the small lectern to the fellowship hall
- move the candles of communion to the fellowship hall
- move the pianos - one to fellowship hall, one to a storage room
- make sure we have found a temporary home for everything that we own that was in the sanctuary.

We will be in the fellowship hall until the work is complete – while there is no time line right now, I think we can anticipate several weeks. Once we return to the sanctuary, our rent will be \$750.00, plus \$100.00 toward utilities.

If anyone has any questions please let me know.

Thanks  
Marla

## The Adult Forum ~ “Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life”

For the next several weeks the Adult Forum will focus on a far-reaching thesis offered by Dr. Karen Armstrong (author of *The Case for God*). It takes courage for a religious historian and writer of Dr. Karen Armstrong’s stature to step out from behind the scrim of scholarship and analysis to offer guidelines for a spiritual practice designed to make humanity a kinder and saner species. Armstrong has composed a Charter for Compassion, which calls for the restoration of “compassion to the heart of religious and moral life” in a “dangerously polarized” world. Exquisite and affecting explications of

Buddhist, Confucian, Judaic, Christian, and Islamic commentary prepare the ground for meditation exercises meant to engender “open-mindedness” and the cultivation of compassion, making for the most sagacious and far-reaching 12-step program ever. The schedule (always open to revision once we get into the book) looks like this:

**July 3:** *Wish for a Better World*  
**July 10:** *Learn About Compassion & Look at Your Own World*  
**July 17:** *Compassion for Yourself & Empathy*  
**July 24:** *Mindfulness & Action*  
**July 31:** *How Little We Know & How Should We Speak to One Another*  
**Aug 7:** *Concern for Everybody & Knowledge*

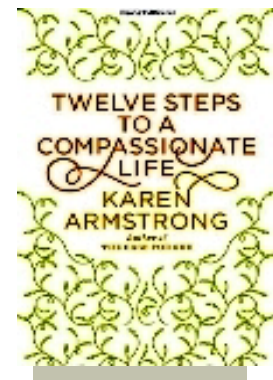
**Aug 14:** *Recognition & Love Your Enemies & A Last Word*

Dr. Armstrong delivered the prestigious Ware Lecture at our General Assembly in Charlotte and you can watch her talk [here](#).

Everyone is warmly invited to attend the Forum, which meets at 10 each Sunday.

Marion and Elbert Hill will be the leaders of this series.

The book is available everywhere.



## Among Ourselves ~ Two Opportunities to Help

### GREETING US ON SUNDAY MORNINGS ...

Appreciation and Praise for a group of 14 who have agreed to be greeters for the next year. They have divided themselves into Teams.

Our greeters are:

- Bruce and Carolyn Cameron
- Don and Suzanne Durland
- Dave Henderson
- Elbert and Marion Hill
- Don Mathis
- Richard Newlin
- Joyce Peak
- Doug Strong
- Leon and Charlotte Teeter

Amy Hoffman-Shehan is an alternate. If YOU would enjoy being an alternate and being a greeter once in a while, click [here](#).



### THE AFTER CHURCH LUNCH BUNCH [ACLB] ...

Has, for the last year, ventured to local restaurants twice a month (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays). It has been a very popular event and can continue if someone would be willing to coordinate it until July 2012. Last year the group went to 8 or 9 different places. The work involves selecting restaurants, emailing the dates to the newsletter, checking to be

sure the place is open and enjoying lunch.

Everyone going pays for their own meal and everyone is invited. Last year 15 to 25 folks generally went each time.

Want to be the ACLB guru? Click [here](#).

Newsletter Deadline

Saturday, Jul 23

@ 5:01 pm

Send stuff to:

[newsletter@rruu.org](mailto:newsletter@rruu.org)



Elbert and Marion Hill report that the 2011 General Unitarian Universalist Association in Charlotte, NC, inspiring, and fun (as were all previous GA's that beginning in 2004). As delegates for RRUU, they of voting on matters of Association business, in-laws changes and which positions the organization licly about social issues. For instance, the UUA has out against the Supreme Court's recent Citizens that declared corporations to be persons before



Assembly of the was informative, they've attended, had the privilege cluding a few by-should take pub-decided to speak United decision the law.



← The Hills were also among a few hundred UU's who marched from the Convention Center to Marshall Park in Charlotte to support the cause of LGBT rights in the U.S. and in Uganda, in particular voicing opposition to proposed legislation that would ban marriage equality in North Carolina (the only state in the South that has not already written discrimination against LGBT families into its state constitution).

RRUU received special recognition at a reception held by the UU-UNO (Unitarian Universalists at the United Nations Organization) as one of 21

Blue Ribbon congregations honored for their support of the organization (holding a special UU-UNO service, donating money, etc.). RRUU was in high-powered company, as two neighboring congregations (both much larger than RRUU)--First UU in Dallas and All Souls in Tulsa--were also honored. Elbert accepted the award given by Bruce Knotts, UU-UNO director for RRUU. →



← The Hills also hung out in the Exhibit Hall from time to time, buying provocative books and schmoozing at the Chalice Art booth about good restaurants (can't leave Movable Feast at home), that is, when Bruce and Carolyn Cameron could take a moment from their brisk jewelry sales!



The Ware Lecture by Karen Armstrong, one of the world's leading commentators on religious affairs and a best-selling author, was enthusiastically received by conference attendees. Adult Forum of RRUU will be discussing Armstrong's latest book, *12 Steps to a Compassionate Life*

throughout the month of July and part of August.

Conference attendees were urged to encourage as many of their home congregants as possible to attend the 2012 Justice GA in Phoenix. This general assembly will do a minimum of regular association business in order to focus on issues of justice for all people, especially for immigrants (in light of Arizona's recent "papers, please" legislation). Elbert and Marion will be there, and hope many others from RRUU will journey to Phoenix next June also!

## Board Bits ~from the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Board Meeting

*“We need to find a new home.”*

The board meeting was held on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. All members were present with the exception of Penny Armstrong. New board members Richard Newlin and Kat Walston were also in attendance while Elbert Hill was representing RRUU at GA.

In addition to normal board business the following topics were covered.

- Spring Congregational Meeting – Review of the meeting, what we learned from it
- Budget 2011-2012 – Incorporate the 10,000 the congregation authorized to be spent from savings if necessary for worship and the increased pledges. Board will review for a week and then it will be distributed to the congregation for approval.

- Goals 2011-2012 – review of the changes in the goals as authorized by the membership. Will be distributed to the congregation at the same time as the budget for approval.
- Concerns voiced from Pledge Drive – Discussion of how the process was accomplished and what could have happened instead of what did.
- Need to find a new home. Temple Beth Emeth is no longer a possibility. Texoma Inn has some potential for a temporary meeting place. Joyce Peak has done lots of research of what is available in the Denison area.

The next board meeting is July 19<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:40 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 July 12<sup>th</sup>. Those wishing a few minutes during the “open mic” will want to be ready to speak around 7:00 pm.

### HAPPENINGS THIS MONTH:

Fri	Jul 1	7 pm	UUJam
Sun	Jul 3	10 am	Forum, Compassionate Living
		11:15	Worship
		12:15	<b>MOVING STUFF into Fellowship Hall</b>
Mon	Jul 4	4 pm	Moveable Feast
Sat	Jul 9	9:30 am	Worship Team
		10 am	PFFFT
Sun	Jul 10	10 am	Forum, Compassionate Living
		11:15	Worship
		12:15	Fellowship Gathering
Sun	Jul 17	10 am	Forum, Compassionate Living
		11:15	Worship
		12:15	Fellowship Gathering
Tue	Jul 19	6:40	Board of Trustees meeting
Sat	Jul 23	5:02 pm	Newsletter Deadline
Sun	Jul 24	10 am	Forum, Compassionate Living
		11:15	Worship
		12:15	Fellowship Gathering
Sun	Jul 31	10 am	Forum, Compassionate Living
		11:15	Fifth Sunday Forum

*“Our July Share the Plate will benefit Families Feeding Families”*

Our annual collection of school supplies will be in July this year so we can help Families Feeding Families Backpack drive. The Back 2 School backpack program is an opportunity to reach out and show our love and concern to those in need.

We can provide backpacks, notebooks, pencils, pens, marker and other schools needs. This program is meant to reach out, love others and simply “be willing”. Please be generous!



## Our July Speakers ~brief bio's

**Dianna Niemann-Harris**, an ordained minister, serves as Associate Chaplain at Texoma Medical Center, social worker at Bonham Nursing and Rehabilitation and fills a dual role as a chaplain - social worker with Victory Home Health and Hospice. She served as pastor for 5 years at a relocation-renewal congregation in Missouri, has been an interim minister and served as a pulpit supply pastor in Missouri and now in Texas. Dianna is a member of RRUU who fills our pulpit occasionally and has served as Treasurer, Acting Chair of Social Action, Worship Arts Team member and in a variety of other roles in the church as needed. She is the mother of a son, the step-mother of two daughters and delights in her three grandchildren, Dawson,

Alyssa and Addison. Dianna lives in Denison with her partner Tim, their three dogs, two aquariums of fishes and often a friend or two in need of temporary living quarters.

**Tish Burkhalter** and her husband co-founded Families Feeding Families in 2004 in Durant, OK. The *Families Feeding Families* Kitchen is located at the George Washington School in Durant and acts as a working kitchen providing daily hot meals and also acts as a clearing-house through which the food industry and community may donate food and other goods. *Families Feeding Families* is a nonprofit 501c3 charity. The Burkhalter's have five children and one grandchild.

**Wendy Gruber** is a member

of Temple Beth Emeth in Sherman and spoke at church last January. She is an industrial engineer with a wide range of experiences working in the manufacturing and marketing area.

**Doug Strong** is a sixth generation Unitarian Universalists who spent his active ministry both as a settled minister and as an Accredited Interim Minister. He has served congregations in Maine, Virginia, Mass, California, Wisconsin and Texas. He co-founded our congregation in 1997 and has been a member ever since. Doug holds BA degrees in Spanish and Psychology from the University of Wisconsin and a Masters of Divinity from Starr King School for the Ministry.

**Suzanne Wills** is a board member of the Drug Policy Forum of Texas. DPFT members are citi-

zens from a variety of political and social groups who are concerned about the effects of the war on drugs on our society. Suzanne is a retired CPA with special interests in the historical and economic aspects of the drug war. Her interest started in the 1960s when she was a teenager and the drug war was beginning.

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*“Individually,  
we are one  
drop. Together,  
we are an  
ocean.”*

## Facebook ~Come, “like” us and become a fan

One of the exciting outcomes of the recent *Standing on the Side of Leadership* conference was a renewed nudge to create a church Facebook page.

It has happened and we're the newest UU facebook page around (we think).

So far ten people have clicked that they “like” us and are fans.

Once the exclusive domain of college students,

Facebook has been creeping steadily into adult social networks, businesses, and groups. Founded in 2004, Facebook now has over 500 million people who use it, and a full 50% log onto their page every day.

New pages are created at the rate of 10,000 daily. Each user has a personal “page,” where they can post personal information and photos. They can become “friends” with other Facebook users, send and

receive messages, and link themselves to their alumnates, workplaces, and any other group—such as a religious organization—that has established a Facebook presence. Now we're one of those religious organizations!




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*“Over 50% of  
Facebook users  
log onto  
their facebook  
page  
every day.”*

## Leadership

### Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco, *president*  
 Don Durland, *vice president*  
 Marie Bellman, *Treasurer*  
 Elbert Hill  
 Richard Newlin  
 Amy Hoffman-Shehan  
 Kat Walston

### Committee on Ministry:

Carolyn Cameron  
 Gerry Shehan  
 Peter Schulze

### Team Leaders:

Adult Forum: *Suzanne Durland*  
 Building/Grounds: *Doyle Adams*  
 Communications: *Doug Strong*  
 Finance/Endowment: *Marion Hill*  
 Hospitality: *open*  
 Membership: *Marion Hill*  
 Worship: *no single leader, duties are rotated among members*  
 Ways & Means: *Don & Suzanne Durland*

## It's Nudge Time ...

More people have NOT completed the 2011-2012 Time and Talent Forms than have.

A gentle nudge ~ if you haven't done yours, please do. You can click [here](#) and do it right now (it won't take more than 4-5 minutes, unless you're a really slow reader).

One outcome of the form...

A couple of people have expressed an interest in starting an informal "Night at the Flicks" by watching DVD's at church. If you're intrigued and want more info, send an email by clicking [here](#).

*"One outcome from the form is an interest in having a "Night At The Flicks"*

## Chalice Circles ~ Everyone is invited!

**GREEN TEAM**, an Environmental Action Circle, generally meets once a month at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's home. Facilitator is [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle, meets on moveable dates at moveable locations. The group will gather for a July 4<sup>th</sup> picnic at the Durlands on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Facilitators are [Elbert & Marion Hill](#).

**PFFFT**, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle, meets the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10:00 am at Hagerman Wildlife Refuge. Facilitator is [Suzanne Durland](#).

**RED RIVER EARTH SPIRIT**, a Nature-Based Spirituality Circle. Facilitator is [Penny Armstrong](#).

**UUJAM**, a music making and music listening Circle – meets the first Friday of each month. Facilitator is [Jack Blue](#).

**RED RIVER**  
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