



# Red River Ramblings

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## Four Sunday Mornings ~To Enrich our Lives

Sunday, August 5<sup>th</sup>

### "Ramadan: The Month and The Observance"

The Rev Douglas Morgan Strong, *preaching*

Islam is half way through Ramadan - the month and the religious observance. Ramadan, the month this year is from July 20th to August 18th - and true to its name (Ramadan means "scorching dry") it has been the hottest month in several decades. Ramadan - the observance has a rich heritage (it was during Ramadan that the Quran was revealed). At last month's Moveable Feast someone asked what is Ramadan and to the chagrin of everyone at the table, we could not collectively explain much. We ought to know more about it. On Sunday we'll explore why Ramadan is so important for Muslims and in the process learn more about Islam. It is, according to the latest US Religion Census, released on May 1st, 2012, the fastest growing religion in America.

Sunday, August 12<sup>th</sup>

### Steps on the Spiritual Journey

The Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, *preaching*

During the spring of 2011, I had the opportunity to take a sabbatical where I engaged in various spiritual practices in extended forms, including a silent retreat, a trip to the Taizé monastic community, and a 500 mile pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. I'll share some of that experience and what I learned from it about the spiritual journey.

Share The Plate Sunday: All cash donations will be given to the Texoma Earth Day Festival.



*About our guest minister: The Rev. Jonalu Johnstone serves as Program Minister of First Unitarian Church of Oklahoma City, devoting herself primarily to Adult Religious Education, Covenant Groups, and other programmatic aspects, including*

*working with Lifespan Faith Development. Her commitment is transforming lives to transform the world. Previously, as Growth Consultant for the Southwestern UU Conference (SWUUC), she helped*

small and mid-size congregations from Memphis to Houston to understand and address their particular strengths and challenges. She also served the Chaning UU Church in Edmond as Consulting Minister and the James Reeb UU church of Madison, WI.

Ordained in 1993 by the UU Fellowship of Greater Cumberland (MD), the lay-led congregation where she grew into UU leadership and began preaching, Jonalu has been active with outreach in the BGLT community, in congregation-based community organizing, and in the local food movement. Both she and her partner of more than 25 years, Jane Powell, a social worker and devout long distance hiker, have family in Oklahoma, one of the primary reasons they have settled in Oklahoma City. Raised as a Southern Baptist, Jonalu retains trust in Spirit, in everyone's ability to read and interpret for him/herself, and in congregational polity.

Sunday, August 19<sup>th</sup>

### Holy Foolishness!

Rev. Gail Lindsey Marriner, *preaching via video*

During these hot days of August, a Sunday with playful music and flying fish as we explore the importance of play as a spiritual discipline and a life practice. Rev. Marriner is minister of the UU church of Santa Fe, NM.

Sunday, August 26<sup>th</sup>

### Where the Wild Things Are

The Rev. Dr. Christine Tata, *preaching*

Maurice Sendak's award-winning tale has been speaking to children and their parents since 1963. Although it was made into a major motion picture, the true power of the story lies in the blunt, universal poetry that touches on a timeless theme. Dr. Tata invites you to walk through this story and reflect upon the fate of the wild thing that exists in each of us. While we won't see the movie, we'll have images from the book projected on the video wall.

Soul Café - 9:30 ♦ Worship - 11:15  
Adult Forum - 10 ♦ Fellowship - 12:15



## Epistle from Elbert

We've gotten the new church year off to a good start. July has been a month of meetings, workshops, and planning for the coming year and for the years beyond.

On July 14, most of RRUU's board members attended an all-day board-training workshop at First Jefferson UU in Fort Worth, sponsored by NTAUUS (North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies). A dinner the evening before at First UU in Dallas, which NTAUUS also sponsored and which Marion and I attended, brought congregational leaders from around north Texas together to compare ideas for working together to advance denominational work in this area.

Our first RRUU board meeting of the year on July 19 went well. We set up a calendar for the rest of the 2012-13 church year, discussed the board covenant, young family concerns, and ideas for church growth, and decided that board members will study together the book *Growing a Beloved Community*, by Tom Owen-Towle.

On Sunday, July 22, the congregation held its first New Member Recognition Ceremony in a long time, the first in our current building. We recognized 11 new members, some of whom had been members for quite a while but one of whom joined that morning. We're happy to have each of you and hope you'll all find many ways to participate in RRUU activities.

On July 27 and 28, the board held its retreat that a grant from NTAUUS funded. The main topic of discussion during the weekend was long-range planning, including developing a plan for growth.

Work is under way in the chapel to remove paneling and re-do walls. During the remodeling, services will be held upstairs in the Adult Forum room and adjoining dining area. It's a minor inconvenience to achieve a much nicer look for the chapel. Thanks, all of you who are involved in the work! And thanks to all those who contributed money or helped make bookmarks for sale at GA and elsewhere, to provide funds for the chapel's refurbishing!

See you on Sunday, everyone!  
Elbert



Each August we join other faith communities and collect school supplies for needy elementary kids. Amy Hoffman-Shehan is heading up this year's effort. You can leave your contributions in a box at church. Here's a list of recommended supplies:

- Boxes of Regular Size Crayons (24 count)
- Boxes of Fat Crayola Washable Markers
- Boxes of Crayola Colored Pencils (12 count)
- Sets of Water Colors
- Fiskars School Scissors (rounded with metal blades)
- Elmer's Small Sized Glue Sticks
- 4-oz. Bottles Elmer's Glue
- Large Boxes Tissues
- 12 packs of #2 Yellow Wooden Pencils
- 9x12 Assorted Color Construction Paper (No Tablets Please)
- 12x18 Manila Paper
- 2-pocket Plastic Folders with brads (solid color- red, blue, green or yellow)
- Pink Pearl Erasers
- Ziploc Bags (Quart Size and Gallon Size)
- Plastic School Boxes (4 1/2"x 8") with no handles
- Backpacks (without wheels)
- Packages of Baby Wipes

**We will collect items  
throughout August.**

## Chapel Renovation Update ~The ugly wood paneling is history!

The transformation is beyond description. Not only is the paneling and sparkles in the white paint above the paneling gone, but so is the wall between the entry and the lobby outside the chapel. When you walk in the airiness of the foyer is an invitation to come in. New French doors now grace the entrance to the chapel which complete the transformation.



During the work we have gathered in the first floor of the house for worship - which surprisingly has worked well, given we have to divide ourselves into two adjourning rooms. The plan is to have the chapel finished by August 12th when we have invited the Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, program minister from First Unitarian Church in Oklahoma City to preach.

## Adult Forum ~Sunday Mornings at 10 a.m.

**August 5** ~ No Adult Forum

**August 12** ~ 3rd lecture in evolution series by Prof. Edward Larson of University of Georgia. "Darwin's Inspiration" will be presented on DVD and is a product of The Great Courses. Discussion will follow.

**August 19** ~ 4th lecture in evolution series by Prof. Edward Larson of University of Georgia. "An Intellectual Revolution" will be presented on DVD and is a product of The Great Courses. Discussion will follow.

**August 26** ~ The first of four Adult Forum member-led discussions on topic of choice. Marion Hill will begin the discussions with a continuation of previous information concerning UU members who are less liberal and of different political persuasions than the majority.



***Call for three people to volunteer for topic discussions September 9, 16 and 23.***

There will be no Adult Forum Sept 2 because it is our annual *Labor of Love* work Sunday ( but please come at 10 to help with spiffy tasks). Please email [Joyce](#) or tell her after AF if you'd like to lead a discussion in September.

The discussions do not need to be dissertation quality material ..... pick a feeling, a concern, etc. and come prepared to talk and listen ..... tolerance or lack of, afterlife, this life, no life, boredom, overload, front yard gardens, volunteering, attracting kids to RRUU, etc.

## Financial Update ~the treasurer's report

This is my first report for the newsletter as your new Treasurer. I'm really impressed with everything that Marie Bellman accomplished over the past year. She put in a lot of work and deserves many thanks from all of us. Thanks to Marie's excellent instruction, the handover of the Treasurer duties went very smoothly.

We are changing the timing of the monthly reports in order to allow the newsletter to be published a little earlier. Therefore, I'll cover June again this month and talk about July in the next newsletter.

In the month of June, we received \$308 from fund raisers in addition to our regular income from pledges and weekly offerings, resulting in total income of \$2,263. However, we still ended up with a net loss of \$40 primarily due to an advance payment of \$500 for the board retreat planned in July. The \$500 was funded from savings due to a grant received last year.

For the year July 2011 through June 2012, we had a net loss of \$41,266 which was an improvement over the budgeted loss of \$49,900. The loss was primarily due to renovation costs that were funded by a \$50,000 loan.

As of the end of June, we had \$38,440 in cash and we own our building. This cash balance included \$3,117 donated specifically for renovations. To offset these assets we have debt of \$47,944 which was needed to pay for the required renovations.

In July we have received another \$2,525 for the chapel renovations. Work is proceeding on the chapel thanks to the volunteers who made the bookmarks and other generous donors of both cash and materials.

Carole Harner,  
Treasurer

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*"I'm really impressed with everything that Marie Bellman accomplished over the past year as the church treasurer. She put in a lot of work and deserves many thanks from all of us. "*

## Happenings Beyond Church ~that may interest you

**Saturday, August 4 @ 5:30 (potluck) 5:00 (program)** Our friends from the Baha'i Faith are having John Leonard, speak about "A Baha'i View of Jesus Christ" at Mo Said's home, 722 DeLeon, Denison and would love to have RRUU church members join us for the potluck and/or program. There will be an open dialogue following the program. It should be very interesting, and an opportunity for some lively discussion!

**RRAMS (Red River Acoustic Music Society)** will be meeting on **August 15 at 7 PM** at the church. Bring your instrument(s), voice (or just

your ears - we love having listeners) and favorite libation and join us for an evening of acoustic music in our song circle. We always have a good time and often the music is quite good as well.

**Friday, Aug 17 @ 6:00 p.m.** Gary Sisson, from the Sons of the American Revolution has a film of Patrick Henry which was filmed in Bonham at Fort Inglish Village last fall. The film will be shown, in conjunction with a showing of "The Patriot" (with Mel Gibson) at the Rialto Theatre on Main Street, Denison as part of the "Founding Father's Night". Folks are urged to show up in costume/period clothing for the showing. Sounds like a fun evening!

**Sunday, August 12, 4-6 pm,** John Fullbright will fill Harmony House with his talent. He will not only be singing his original tunes, but also be playing his "heart out" on his keyboard, acoustic guitar, and harmonica. We have watched this phenomenal young musician blossom and have witnessed his career soar like a red-tailed hawk over Oklahoma skies during our attendance at the Woody Guthrie Festival for the past three years. John just happens to hail from Okemah, OK, where Woody Guthrie was born. Book tickets via phone: 903/583-2661

*If you know of an event of interest to the congregation, email details to newsletter@rruu.org!*



## New Members Welcomed ~ Do you know who they all are?

- In a wonderfully creative ceremony, eleven folks were officially welcomed into the membership of the church on July 22, 2012. Each new member received a RRUU coffee mug representing the social aspect of belonging; a RRUU tote bag, symbolizing each member's willingness to share in the work of running the church; and a red rose which represents how special we consider each member as an individual. Just before the service began Jo-D Harrison asked if she could officially join the church during the ceremony and has become our newest member.



**Our newest member Jo-D Harrison writes,** *Who I am depends on which way the wind is blowing. I grew up as an Air Force brat and still get itchy feet every couple years but somehow the people in the Texoma area have kept me on fairly solid ground for about 7 years. I am a long-time advocate for the underdogs of our world including the two dogs I rescued from bad homes. I can make a computer do pretty much anything I want it to do and am still a believer in world peace especially if/when the women take over.*

Have you thought about joining the congregation? We welcome all who wish to consider RRUU their spiritual home. Speak with any board member - joining is not complicated and requires no "profession of faith".

## Booked For Lunch ~ Aug 9th



What have you been reading lately? Something wonderful, or interesting, or important? Is your leisure reading technical journals, or romance novels, smut?

Booked for Lunch - a book group that has no idea where it's going - met last month and behold - it was a wild hit - with everyone talking about something they've been reading. The group decided, "*This is worth my time.*" so we'll meet at 11 a.m. on August 9th in the Adult Forum room. Bring a good book you've read recently and plan to tell us about it. Bring a sack lunch or stop for fast food on the way. Iced tea and maybe cookies will be provided. Email [bookclub@rruu.org](mailto:bookclub@rruu.org) for more info (There isn't any.)

## A Letter ~ from Bob & Tamara Mease

*To Members of the Church --*

*Tamara and I just wanted to say Hello to all the folks we became friends with while attending the Red River Unitarian Church.*

*We are doing well living in the Phoenix. Tamara returned to college and will be graduating in August with her Bachelors, a goal she has had for many years. I am really proud of her going back to school after such a long time away from a class room environment.*

*We both work for the State of Arizona and enjoy our work. Hope all the folks we became friends with are doing well and that the church is doing well. We have followed the progress of moving to your new location and how successful the whole move was.*

*It seems that you had a lot of people contributing which just shows how united the congregation is. Saying goodbye for now and maybe see you soon.*

*Bob and Tamara Mease*

## Leadership

### Board of Trustees

Elbert Hill, *president*

Carla Murphy, *vice president*

Carole Harner, *Treasurer*

Carolyn Cameron, *Secretary*

Paula Blackshear

### Committee on Ministry:

Gerry Shehan

Peter Schulze

Joyce Peak

### Team Leaders or Team:

Adult Forum: *Joyce*

Aesthetics Team:

*Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Doug & Kat*

Building/Grounds: *Carolyn*

Communications: *Doug*

Chalice coordinator: *open*

Finance/Endowment: *Marion*

Good Times:

*George, Carolyn, Carole, Faye & Lura*

Membership: *Marion*

NTAUUS Rep: *Gerry*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Elbert*

Social Action: *Open*

Ways & Means: *Open*

Worship:

*Carla, Doug, Faye, Gerry, Marla, Richard*

## UU-UNO ~ 50th Anniversary!

The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office invites you on November 3rd to celebrate our 50th Anniversary at the United Nations. Join us as we celebrate the 50 Years of achievements, 50 years of Human Rights Justice, 50 Years of iconic work at the United Nations.

November 3, 2012  
6:30pm to 10:00pm

The Times Center  
242 West 41st Street  
New York, NY

Special Guests:

Reverend Peter Morales,

Gillian Sorensen,

Former Senator Adlai Stevenson III

Want to contribute? Donate to our [Silent Auction](#) today!



## Chalice Circles/Interest Groups ~ for us all!

**GREEN TEAM**, an Environmental Action Circle generally meets on the second Tuesday at 7:30 pm. Facilitator [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#)

**MOVEABLE FEAST**, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle meets next in October. Anyone willing to host something in August or September? Speak with the facilitators: [Elbert & Marion Hill](#).

**“OMMMM...” Meditation Group** Will meet the last Sunday of every month. The date for the next meeting is August 26<sup>th</sup>. CD Meditations and Drumming Circle with Potluck to follow – come join the fun at 12:30 PM in the Adult Forum Room. Facilitators [Joyce Peak and Paula Blackshear](#).

**BOOKED FOR LUNCH**, an informal book discussion group that meets the second Thursday of each month from 11 - 1 pm at church. Open to everyone. Facilitator: [Carolyn Cameron](#).

### RED RIVER Unitarian Universalists

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