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Red River Ramblings



September,
2014
Volume 12
Issue 3

Sunday, Sept. 7, 2014 - 11:15 am

“Humanist Heroes Who Didn’t Know They Were Either”

The Rev. James Grant & Kristen Kuriga
(video sermon)

We will watch a sermon delivered last June by two wonderful speakers who are probably 50 years apart in age. The Rev. Jim Grant is a consulting UU minister and Kristen Kuriga is the Social Justice and South Bay Ministry team coordinator – both working in the larger San Diego area. Two perspectives of humanist heroes – from saving Jewish children in the 1930’s to saving immigrant children crossing into the USA today.

Sunday, Sept. 14, 2014 - 11:15 am



During our annual In-Gathering Celebration we will welcome back those among us who took the summer off from church, as well as those who faithfully read our newsletter telling themselves that they will come some Sunday. Today is the day! We’ll mingle water that people have brought from their summer travels (whether to the store or to the other side of the globe). And for those who stayed put all summer (and forgot to bring water from the home tap), you can get water from the church kitchen and mingle it with the rest.

The new church leadership will be properly “installed” to their posts also, and we will end the day with an all-church pot luck lunch! WHEW!

Finally, why not bring a friend to church to enjoy this special day? We all tend to have friends who share similar perspectives on life.

This is a Sunday for each of us to reach out to one of those friends – someone you know who would enjoy knowing about liberal religion – and inviting them to join you on Sunday. Today is the day!

Sunday, Sept. 21, 2014 - 11:15 am

“Love Beyond Belief”

The Rev. Doug Strong, *preaching*

If Unitarian Universalists ever decided to shift from having a faith freed from creed or dogma in favor of one claiming an intentional doctrine; I’d vote for something simple and direct. What would you want a liberal catechism to require or prohibit? I am not necessarily advocating such a change and only suggest it as a starting point for an exploration, on Sunday, of the various paths our religious tradition has taken over the last 400 years. Interesting stuff - our history!

Sunday, Sept. 28, 2014 - 11:15 am

“This I Believe – Credo Sunday”

Four among us will share their Credo Statements

We all have a foundation upon which we build our religious philosophy. It is nestled deep in our soul rather than printed in any brochure and hungers to be shared. It comes from the depth of our own thought and heart. It is the core of our individual spiritual path. Credo literally means, “I give my heart and loyalty to...” Astute credos marry the gifts of both intellect and spirit. Credos spur presenters to select highlights from their religious odyssey, highlight in those affirmations that sustain them during the happy and hard days and nights of life.

Our last Credo Sunday was so inspiring people asked the Worship team to do it again so they invited four members of the congregation to share their credo statements with us. Come and hear what they have to say.

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church ♦ Denison, TX

We are a sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity and spiritual growth..



Dan's Dispatch

September for me always means "busy." That's when the university where I work really gets into high gear and there's a renewed young energy on campus.

That's especially true this year. Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant just welcomed its new president on July 1st, and he's already having a visibly positive impact on the campus "vibe." He is relatively young in his late 40s, and he and his wife and two sons, ages 17 and 9, are living on campus in the President's House—along with their two rescue dogs, Daisy and Sweet Pea. The boys attend local schools. (And for what it's worth, he's also the past minority leader of the Oklahoma State Senate, meaning that he's a Democrat, too.) His younger son also has cerebral palsy and sometimes uses a wheelchair. As a result, there's a personal dimension and commitment to improving campus accessibility. The new president is out and about, seeing and being seen, introducing himself to everyone he runs into with a handshake. He's personally meeting with practically every constituency group on campus: I've already had one group meeting with him and there's another one scheduled soon. In comparison with the former president's style, the new president is making people almost giddy with his open embrace of his new job and new community.

All that's very nice, you say, but what does that have to do with us here at RRUU?

Well, I'm afraid that I've been infected by some of the new president's enthusiasm. I want to try to "steal" some of that new energy from campus and bring it here and spread it around. Personally I'll be contacting the office of Student Services to arrange a get-together with students on campus (with pizza, of course, a "must-have" to attract young people!) to talk about Unitarian Universalism. There's already a Freethinkers student group on campus, so there's a likely a certain small population that will also be interested in the type of community that UUism offers. Who knows what a little campus "evangelizing" might do—both for the students and for us!

Not to say that we're lacking in enthusiasm here at home! We're excited about undertaking a voter registration initiative in October on both sides of our Red River. In our new location, service to the community is an obvious ministry for us, and we have made some wonderful strides in making friends and letting our presence be known. And there's no doubt that we'll be doing even more.

And finally, a big shout-out and thank you to Joyce Peak for her years of loving and faithful service to RRUU as Director of Religious Education as she graciously steps back from that demanding position. We appreciate and honor her dedication and commitment to this small-but-mighty congregation, and I invite you to thank her, too, the next time you see her.

Visitor Sundays ~ New this fall!

Beginning September 14, RRUU starts what the Membership Team hopes will become a cherished tradition: Visitors Sunday. That's what we're designating the second Sunday of each month. Of course we should be inviting folks to visit us every Sunday, since we all know people who would enjoy learning about and perhaps becoming part of a liberal congregation like Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. But maybe designating one Sunday for this purpose will serve as a reminder of the need to share our good news with others.

I'm as guilty as anyone of failing to tell friends and acquaintances about RRUU. (And I'm the Membership Chair!) But to take just one example of the impact that inviting friends to church can have: Elbert and I were visiting with Gil and Marilyn Alexander one day before a meeting of a group we all belong to in Durant, when the subject of hide-bound religious beliefs in our area

of Oklahoma came up. (Hint to non-Oklahomans among us: They're not that different from hide-bound religious beliefs in north Texas.) I mentioned our church in Denison as being a breath of fresh air religiously in the region and invited the Alexanders to check us out some time. They hadn't heard of RRUU but showed up here soon after that. No, I'm not taking all the credit for the wonderful contributions Marilyn and Gil have made since, and continue to make, in our church and in the community around it. But by golly, I am taking credit for the fact that they knew to check us out that first Sunday!

Feel free to invite a friend to church any time, of course, but think about doing so especially on second Sundays. Who knows what wonderful additions to our church family may be out there, waiting for an invitation from one of us?

Marion Hill
Membership Chair

Treasurer's Report ~ For August 2014

In the month of August, we had income of \$2766.00 from general operations. After operations expense of \$3013.84 for the month, we had a net income from operations of (\$247.84)

In August, we had grant income and expense of \$600 for the Wide Awake Worship training. There was no renovation income or expense.

For the year to date period of August 2014, we had net income of \$6386.00 from operations, net expenses of \$5737.56 The total change in cash for the year to date period was a decrease of \$248.00.

As of the end of August 2014, we had cash of \$45,390 and debt of \$34,353. The cash amount includes \$2,690 reserved for grants. In August we donated \$64.00 from the Share the Plate program to the Earth Day Festival.

Robert Shelton, Treasurer

In-Gathering Highlights ~ Sunday, September 14th

Water Communion

If you ventured away during the summer and remembered to bring back a small container of water



this is the Sunday to bring it to church as we again mingle the water in a simple, yet significant ritual. If you didn't go away, you can bring water from any local spot – your kitchen sink, a swimming pool, a river, a stream or a neighbor's sprinkler.

There will be several small vases of water available as well so everyone can participate.

Installation of church leaders

During the morning we will pause to officially install those elected to leadership positions as well as appreciating those who have completed their terms of office.

All Church Pot Luck

Our In-gathering celebration concludes with the first All-Church Pot Luck lunch of the season.



Bring your favorite dish to share and plan on enjoying an array of food along with much fellowship. Some people think that UU theology is built on a foundation of coffee hours and pot luck meals. It is true that we do enjoy breaking bread together. It is the perfect way to get to know others and to deepen friendships.

Our potlucks are free flowing – no food assignments – which makes the event a lovely culinary surprise for everyone.

Remember: Should you not be able to bring something for the table, bring yourself and a warm smile. There will be plenty to eat!

It is time for a new Church Directory!

During September a few dedicated folks will be sending out a special email to all members and friends asking you to update your contact information. *PLEEEZE* take a few minutes to check your listing, make corrections and hit reply to send it back. When you take a few minutes to do it, it saves others many minutes to track you down to get the information and our new directory will be as accurate as possible.

Get Out The Vote ~

The letter arrived on Sunday, August 31st and during worship the envelope was opened. The letter began...

“CONGRATULATIONS. The Unitarian Universalist Funding Program has accepted your *Get Out The Vote* grant application. Your check will arrive in a few days.”

The banners have been ordered, three people in the congregation have been certified by Grayson County to be registrars (a ten minute process of watching a video and raising your hand to be sworn in).

The next step is to find locations where we can set up the tent, tables and get to work. If you have any suggestions where we could set up the tent, please speak up. The more people we can get registered the better for everyone.

So, you don't vote?
Register Here **Seriously?**

We're part of the UU "Get Out The Vote" project!
with the support from the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program

It would be terrific if we could get a few more people to become registrars for Texas (in Oklahoma things are far more 'user friendly' since anyone can register anyone else by giving them a registration card!).

One immediate goal is to see if we can claim to the world that 100% of RRUU'ers are registered voters. To that end, you can register any Sunday after church – right in the Clara Barton Parlor. What could be easier?

If you want to be part of this project – the deadline for people to register for the upcoming midterm elections is October 10th in Oklahoma and October 6th in Texas – please speak with either Gil or Doug.

A peek at our page

Do You Like Us? ~ on Facebook, that is!



Experts keep telling churches about the use of social media: *“If your church has a web site, you’ve got some work to do. It wasn’t too long ago that a church with a web site was on top of things, technologically speaking. A church web site used to be enough. That is no longer the case. Don’t fool yourself into thinking your church will be all set with a web site or that a web site is going to bring people into your church. Having a basic web site online and calling that “good enough” is like putting an ad in the Yellow Pages and calling that an “outreach strategy”.*

Growing our congregation is a priority goal for

us. While the web page helps, more people these days turn to Facebook to search for churches – especially people under 50! The numbers of people who ‘like’ the church facebook page is growing slowly (114 so far). Facebook pages need to be fresh and up to date. If you have not yet added your name to our ‘like’ category, please do.

Remember that you can easily invite all your Facebook friends to ‘like’ the church as well, or if that seems too intrusive, select some specific friends - the ones you feel sure would enjoy learning about the church - and send an invitation to them.

And, if you use twitter, tumblr, send selfies, write a blog, are on Google+ etc. Mention the church!

Board Bits ~ from the July Board of Trustees meeting

The August Board meeting was held on Friday, August 15. The agenda presented no surprises, and work the Board had begun in July as part of the new fiscal year was continued. Part of the work left over from the July Board meeting was the adoption of a new Board Covenant. The Board Covenant remains the same as the one adopted for 2013-14, but with one addition. The new item states that the Board covenants to “attend as many major church functions as possible, such as Water Communion, Flower Communion, In-gathering Sunday, all Congregational Meetings, and the Appreciation Dinner.”

Also continued from July was Dan’s close reading of the church’s By-laws and the current Policy and Procedures

Manual with a view to perhaps streamline and simplify organizational structure and procedures. Dan presented a summary of his findings, including a list of several open positions on Committees and Teams of the church. No action was taken on those findings, but Dan will continue his efforts along those lines for the next several months. Any proposals for changes must be approved by the Board and/or the Congregation.

The Board spent some time discussing and reflecting on the Wide Awake Worship workshop that we hosted on August 9, deeming it to have been worthwhile and successful. Dan reported that he had attended the NTUUC dinner for congregational presidents and vice-presidents at First Unitarian Church in Dallas on August 10. He said he felt a kinship with the president of the Arlington UU church, which is approximately our own size and that he would like to build a working relationship with that president.

The Board expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Alexanders & Gerry Shehhan for the generous gift of a new projector for the church; we now have two working projectors to use now. Finally, the Board discussed possible fund-raising activities for this year.

The Board is reviewing the Policy & Procedures with an eye to simplifying our organizational structure.

New to YoUU ~ a gathering for newcomers

It is not surprising that visitors and newcomers to church struggle to grasp “just what it is you good folks believe anyway?”

When faith is founded about an ever expanding and changing landscape, as is the case with Unitarian Universalism, it can be confusing.

This is why the church offers “New to YoUU” gatherings. It is a time when you can ask questions, listen to some long-time members speak about why they are part of the congregation and leave with a deeper understand about RRUU and the free faith tradition.

The next such gathering will be after worship on **Sunday, September 21st from 1 – 3 pm**. We will meet in the chapel. It isn’t a class, per se, nor a lecture but rather a conversation or a round table. You can see that even learning about liberal religion takes a different path than traditional religions.

We will have some snacks available along with drinks.

Everyone who would like to come is cordially invited – you don’t have to be “new”, perhaps you’ve been around for a while but still would like to learn more about our faith – The Uncommon Denomination.

Join us. You won’t be disappointed.

Marion Hill and Doug Strong will co-lead the gathering.

A gathering for all who wish to learn more about us.

New Rules for Church Email ~ Still having problems?

Two months we published a list of new church email addresses. Change comes slowly and after a month many people are still using the old email addresses. Effective in August, **the old email addresses were discontinued**. Change is difficult and for those frustrated because your emails are bouncing, here's a list of the most used church email addresses. You may want to print the entire list from the July newsletter as a reference for all church emails. Remember, to fool the software that phishes emails to spam, you need to combine a prefix (i.e. xxx) plus the suffix (@rruu.org) to make the entire email address (i.e. xxx@rruu.org)

RECEPIENT:	PREFIX:
If you want to reach the board	
Or any individual board member	
Board of Trustees	rruuboard
President of the Congregation	president
Vice president	vicepresident
Treasurer	treasurer
Secretary	secretary
Director of Religious Education	dre

} @rruu.org

If you want to submit something to the E-news, or the Newsletter, or the church Calendar:	
Church Calendar	calendar
E-news	announce
Newsletter	news

} @rruu.org

If you want to reach various committees; Chalice Circles; or interest groups	
Adult Forum	adultforum
Aesthetics Committee	aesthetics
Booked for Lunch group	bookclub
Buildings & Grounds committee	building
Committee on Ministry	CoM
Finance Committee	finance
Good Times Team	goodtimesteam
Green Team	greenteam
Meditation Group	meditation
Membership Team	membership
Moveable Feast Chalice Circle	feast
Nominating Committee	nominations
Social Action Team	socact
Worship Team	worshipteam

} @rruu.org

Moveable Feast ~ Thursday, September 25th

Because the October Moveable Feast has limited seating (the Cameron's deck can only hold so many people), the September Feast will have room for everyone who wants to come because we're heading to **Kc Roadhouse Bar & Grill**, in Durant.

According to their Facebook page, they have a wide variety of culinary choices to delight the taste buds – with a list of several items that are 'favorites'. The prices are reasonable and since everyone pays their own fare, it promises to be a pleasant gathering. The Roadhouse is at 116 North Second Ave in Durant. Their number is 580.924.9690 should you need it. Plan on arriving by 6:30 PM. The deadline for signing up is Monday, Sept 22 and you can do that simply by sending an email to feast [+ suffix].



Click the picture above for a 35 second video about the restaurant!

Dinner at the Shelter ~ 9/10



September 10 is the date for RRUU to provide its next shelter meal! At Grayson County Shelter, that is. About once each quarter, a group from

RRUU (usually 6-8 people, referred to as the Shelter Crew) decide on a menu, and Marion Hill calls the shelter to schedule a date. A couple days before that date arrives, she calls again to learn how many people are in residence and whether any are on special diets. The Crew prepare the foods at their homes, bring them to the shelter, serve supper to the residents and eat with them. The shelter residents may be RRUU's neighbors for only a short time, but that could be a pivotal point in their lives. Crew members report having interesting conversations with the residents, who seem to appreciate the fact that the Crew take an interest in them as individuals. Anyone interested in joining the Shelter Crew may contact Marion at 580-924-7715 to volunteer.

Returning in October...

BOOKED FOR LUNCH

Be A Greeter!

Friendly faces needed! RRUU is in need of greeters, to welcome attendees at Sunday service and help visitors navigate our church environment. To fulfill greeter duties, you'd need to arrive at the church by 11:00 a.m., stay by the door (handing out copies of the Order of Things to everyone and registering any visitors), then sit near the door inside the sanctuary once the service has begun, in order to catch late-comers. Have first-time visitors complete a visitors form with name and contact info, and assist all visitors with making a name tag (first name only; use plastic, erasable tags on foyer table). [If a family should come with small children--which has seldom happened lately--the greeter would help the parents get the kids to the nursery or to Children's R.E.; we don't currently have a regular nursery person but hope to have that remedied soon.] If 6 people will commit to acting as greeter once every six weeks, it won't be an onerous task for anyone. If you have other duties some Sunday mornings (and many of us do), we can schedule you on a Sunday that you won't be acting as worship associate, AV tech, etc. Tommi Homuth will schedule greeters, and Marion Hill will act as backup. If you're willing to act as greeter *occasionally*, send an email to greeters [+ suffix]. And if you have questions, either will be happy to answer them.

If you're willing to be a greeter occasionally, please let us know.

Leadership

Board of Trustees

Dan Althoff, *president*
 Gil Alexander, *vice president*
 Robert Shelton, *Treasurer*
 Doug Strong, *Secretary*
 Paula Blackshear, *Trustee*
 Elbert Hill, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Carole Harner, Gerry Shehan,
 Peter Schulze

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Gil*

Aesthetics Team:

Bruce, Joyce, Maura, Paula

Building & Grounds: *Marilyn*

Communications: *Doug*

Chalice coordinator: *Open*

DRE: *Open*

Finance: *Open*

Good Times:

Carole, Marilyn & Marion

Long Range Planning:

Amy, Gil, Marilyn

Membership: *Marion*

Nominations: *Helen, L.D., Marla*

NTUUC Rep: *Marla*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*

Social Action: *Gil*

Ways & Means: *Open*

Worship:

Dan, Doug, Faye, Marla

Contact Us

Red River UU Church
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 Denison, TX 75020

mail to:

PO BOX 1806
 DENISON, TX 75021-1806

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How to reach us:

Email: **info**[+ suffix]

Phone: 903.231.3232

Web: www.ruuu.org

E-News: **announce**[+suffix]

Facebook:

RedRiverUnitarianUniversalistChurch

Gay Pride ~ September 21st



Are you a Proud UU?

Ready to show your pride, and share it with someone who needs a boost?
 Come join 30,000 other people in celebration and love!

Texas Freedom Parade is September 21

2:00 pm • Cedar Springs Road, from Wycliff to Lee Park

IF YOU PLAN TO WALK WITH US:

The NTUUC float is #67 — Staging area is on Wycliff @ Congress, by the Tollway

A very limited number of seats are available in and on the truck,
 but you need to reserve a seat with Daniel Polk. executive@ntuuc.org

HOW TO GET THERE: Parking is available on the street if you arrive early enough, or
 pay \$5 or more in a lot a mile from either end of the parade, but...

AN EASIER SOLUTION: Park at First Unitarian Church and take the shuttle, with
 service directly to the staging area, and pickup near the end of the parade route.



There is plenty of parking at First—in the lot on St. Andrews, around the Y, and in the bank lots to the south. (Just don't block the ATM!)

The shuttles start running at noon, and parking spaces at First will be emptying out by 1:00.

Find the shuttle in the drive on Preston Road, from noon until everybody gets there.

After the parade, head to the Dallas Theater Center (Kalita Humphreys Theater) parking lot, Turtle Creek & Lemmon. Last planned pickup is 5:30.