A home for religious liberals in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas



Red River Ramblings

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 tell us all
 about what's
 happened
 over the last
 year
- Want to buy a 1908 Catholic Church?
 We've one for sale!

Sunday Celebrations ~To Enrich our Lives

September 4

COOL LABORS OF LOVE & DELIGHT A Special All-Church Morning 8:00 - 10:30

With a "Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off To Work We Go" we're heading to our new church home to have a reverse Labor Day - a day of labor and for those who shouldn't or can't haul or lug or paint or clean, there will be plenty of fellowship and fun (workers always like encouragement and cheering).

FULL DETAILS ABOUT THE MORNING ARE ON PAGE 4

There are NO activities at the Harrison Street location today
Note the time change:
early to avoid the heat of the day

September 11

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 - A DAY TO HONORThe Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong

The tragedies of September 11th have become an important part of our nation's history. and on this tenth anniversary, it is fitting to think how the events of the day impacted and changed our world.

September 18 ~ Water Communion

THE ECOLOGY OF A DISASTER Dr. Peter Schulze, speaking

This year's annual Water Communion will have to interesting twists. We will bring

Adult Forum ~ 10 Silent Meditation ~ 11 water from our summer travels and mingle it. We will listen to Peter Schulze speak about the Sahel of Africa, a fragile semiarid region extending through 10 countries south of the Sahara and what the use and misuse of water has done to help us better appreciate how precious water is to the planet.

We will also bid goodbye to our years on Harrison Street this morning.

Please bring a small container of water - whether from far off places or your own kitchen sink - to share in this uniquely UU annual ritual.

September 25

CONFESSIONS OF A UU MOTORCYCLIST MC Meador, speaking

MC Meador writes of his program: "I have been lucky enough to see some of the most spectacular scenery in the world from the seat of a motorcycle - the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, the New Zealand Alps, the Andes of Patagonia, the Himalayas of Northern India. Come share the pictures with me and contemplate the beauty, some of the issues of use vs. preservation and interaction with other users of the trails and how I try to apply my UU values."

MC is a member and former President of Horizon UU Church in Carrollton and has been a UU for 30 years. He has 2 children, 2 stepchildren, and 5 grandkids and has been riding some kind of motorcycles for over 50 years so, as he says, "I am old enough to know better."

Worship ~ 11:15 Fellowship Gathering ~ 12:15

Manna from Marla ~ We have a home ~ and we own it!

"Talk about Manna.
From no home to
two buildings
in a week."

Dear Friends,

Life is nothing if not full of wonder and worry and surprise and the last few weeks have given us a bit of it all.



A month ago we were facing the challenge of finding a new home in something like 19 days. Just when we thought we might end up using space at Texoma Inn, the New Home Team (N.H.T.) found a property which looked intriguing. An large old house (3,813 sf) just a block off Morton Street on half an acre and with a chapel attached no less (pews and pulpit too).

If that wasn't a surprise, the price was unbelievable: \$39,000. But, the surprises didn't end there. The interior was not, as anticipated, a total disaster; in fact it was in pretty decent shape - even with carpet that can't be more than a few years old.

The N.H.T. visited the place and felt it was prefect! A few hours after seeing it, someone noticed on line that the price had been reduced to \$29,000.

Does life get any better? After having it inspected, after checking out with the city if there was sufficient parking so we could get an

Permit of Occupancy we held a congregational meeting.

The overwhelming feeling and resulting 93% vote to purchase happened on August 19, 2011 and a few days later we assumed ownership of our first church building.

But another surprise happened the following morning when the owner of the former Wedding chapel (which we had considered leasing last spring but couldn't because there was no parking) called and explained that he had just had a long meeting with his CPA and wanted to donate the chapel to the congregation!

Talk about manna! From no home to two buildings in a week. The Finance & Endowments committee who oversees all charitable donations to the church reviewed the various options and recommended to the board that we accept the building. The building is currently being sold by sealed bid to anyone interested (a flyer was sent to everyone). The deadline for submitting a bid is September 15, 2011. Know anyone who would like to own a 1908 Catholic Parish Church? (flyer on page 5).

Call it whatever you want, Life is being very generous to RRUU these days. Marie Bellman writes in her column this month details about the various contributions we've received in the last ten days. She and I will be exploring with bankers about conventional loans and some members are putting together an invitation for members/friends to consider investing in our future by joining several families who propose lending the congregation funds to cover the cost of renovating the building. You can speak with either Marie or Marion Hill for details.

Since we got the building, a flurry of activities are going on. The huge old tree

which had fallen on the roof of the garages (there are three plus garages) was removed; two handicapped bathroom are being constructed as I write; the garages have new doors and a new roof; bids are out for two new air conditioning compressors (both were stolen some time ago) and new church signs have been designed and installed.

A massive Cool Labor of Love and Delight morning is scheduled for September 4th a time when everyone can come and work, explore, help, play, chat and dream together (see details on page 1).

First Unitarian Church in Dallas sent us an email advising that they have tables and chairs that need a new home. We now have enough trapezoid-shaped table to accommodate the entire congregation.

Have you had enough wonderful surprises for one month? Well, say no! During the last two weeks we've welcomed three new members to the congregation: Claudette Galen; Larry Snyder and Carole Harner have all signed the membership book.

Ahead we have lots of work as we settle into life on North Burnett Street along with much excitement about the many ways we might use our new building (drumming on the front porch, anyone?); how we can become a part of the neighborhood and reach out to people who will I am sure be curious about a group of religious liberals who celebrate compassion, diversity and spiritual growth.

Life is good. Especially this month!

See you in church, our church!

Smiling proudly of what we've accomplished,

Marla Loturco

Committee on Ministry Survey ~ What we want on Sunday mornings

The Committee on Ministry was asked by the Worship Team to get feedback concerning Sunday mornings. Twenty-seven people replied to the email survey. They asked three questions.

At the present, we usually have one forum type program on the fifth Sunday. Instead of hymns and readings, we have just candles of community, lighting the chalice and a speaker, followed by open discussion. Would you like to extend this type of program to more than one Sunday per month? What would be the ideal number (for you)?

The chart below shows the responses. It appears a majority would like to see at least one per month and a substantial minority would prefer at least two.

Times per month	Number of Respondents
none	1
as is	
(every 5th Sunday)	2
once a month	8
once or twice	1
twice a month	4
Two or three	2
Three times	1
Three or more	1

The second question:

What are some subjects you would like to hear discussed? Who are some Forum speakers you would like to hear again - or for the first time? These could be from within our congregation or anywhere else.

Here are the responses, just as they were written:

- all music service with appropriate slides and visuals
- annual service of rededication and commitment
- with forum services, a bit more 'worship feeling' maybe a hymn or reading
- UU history, theology, people telling our story, ethical issues, issues that speak to our aging population, current events, social action
- various individuals offering a 5 minute 'This I believe'
- speakers who show us how to fulfill our mission/vision in daily life
- RR-UNO Sunday the challenge of being liberal in a conservative community

- charity of the heart as well as of the hand or pocket We don't need hymns alternated by readings; we need a theme.
- Hymns from other faiths
- how others (non UUs) practice their faiths not their holidays
- environmental issues
- speakers from our own congregations; it would help us know each other better
- aspects of each and all living religions
- medical trends that affect all of us
- would like to hear from some of our own people but only if they are prepared and don't just ramble
- global warming, especially local effects of global warming relationship between health and humor
- honor, integrity, and morality how they relate and how they differ
- panel discussions with three or four of our own members
- all music program, not necessarily religious
- environmental issues
- volunteers from local service organizations

The last question:

Please name ministers/UU friends you would like to hear again - or for the first time. Include those we sometimes schedule and any others you would like for us to invite.

Several people responded with something like, "I have enjoyed all the speakers we've had." These are names suggested (in order of times mentioned):

- Doug Strong
- Pam Wat
- Don Fielding
- Dianna Niemann-Harris
- Dave Henderson
- Peter Schulze
- Aaron White
- Daniel Polk
- Megan Dalby-Jones
- Claudette Galen
- Carolyn Cameron
- Wendy Gruber
- Helen Schulze

Cool Labors of Love & Delight ~ Details about September 4th. . .



Things to do:

- Scrape paint off the windows
- Wash windows
- Move stuff out of the basement
- Move junk out of the second story
- Clean the upstairs bedrooms rooms
- Move the extra pews from the chapel to storage
- Clean out the downstairs hall closet
- Clean out the upstairs closet
- Paint the outside chapel railing
- Clean the basement
- Paint the second floor kitchen cabinets
- Scrape paint from the front step railing
- Remove the dead window a/c units
- Vacuum everywhere
- Yard work yank out some dead bushes

A morning of fun and fellowship, work and labor, meeting and greeting. We will NOT meet at Harrison Street, but rather gather at our new church, 515 N. Burnett Ave in Denison at 8 a.m. (there's no a/c yet). There is lots of things to do, and those who are able, we'll move furniture, clear out a lot of worthless stuff left in the building. We'll wash windows (all eighteen of them). But not all of us are able to labor. Mary Poppins reminds us "A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down" and workers always need support, words of praise and encouragement. So come and cheer folks up. Come and explore our new church home, come and meet others. Come and enjoy.

Then at 10:30 we'll gather briefly in the chapel for an informal Town Hall meeting – a time to offer your suggestions, ideas, comments, concerns as we continue to prepare for our move on September 20th.

Some are bringing snacks, ice, water, fruit, bring

anything you want, if you want. Just come!

Supplies we need:

- Windex
- Paper towels lots of them
- Heavy garbage bags many, many
- Fans it will be warm
- Vacuum cleaner

515 North Burnett Ave, Denison





CHURCH BUILDING FOR SALE to the highest bidder ◆ Deadline 9/15/2011

Location: 801 W Owing St., Denison, TX 75020
Offered by: Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, Denison, TX

We are selling this former Catholic church to the highest bidder in an "as is" condition. This charming historical church was built in 1909 and was previously a wedding chapel. The sanctuary has beautiful original stained glass windows, in great condition. The building includes a 75 person chapel, a reception room, office, kitchen and two bathrooms and new exterior paint. It was recently re-zoned from commercial to residential but can be zoned back at Buyer's expense. This is an excellent investment opportunity or if you've always wanted to live in a church, here's your opportunity. Let the bidding begin!

Building details:

- Built 1909
- 2,845 square feet
- · Chapel, reception, office, kitchen, 2 restrooms
- lot size 50 x 120
- 2011 taxes 3,270.05

Purchase details:

- · "as is" condition
- · has clear title
- · cash only sale
- · Buyer pays all closing costs
- deadline for bids: September 15, 2011

SEND BIDS TO: finance@rruu.org Deadline September 15, 2011

remember this is an 'as is' and cash only sale





















The Adult Forum ~ Sunday morning at 10

September Forums will start the month on **Sept 4**th by taking a well deserved Sunday off so everyone can join the Cool Labors of Love and Delight at our new place.

September 11:

We welcome Larry Snyder who will speak about his

9/11 experience.

September 18:

A morning to explore one aspect of Standing On The Side Of Love (the UU initiative): Immigration. Three members will share personal perspectives on this timely topic.

September 25:

TBA

Newsletter Deadline
Saturday, Sept 24th
@ 5:01 pm
Send stuff to:
newsletter@rruu.org

Austin College Opportunity Fair ~ Plying students with cookies works!

Each fall Austin College students sponsor an Opportunity Fair. This year's fair is in two parts - on Thursday, Sept 1 community groups - like our Earth Day Festival efforts from the Green Team - set up booths and invite students to sign up and on Sunday, Sept 4 religious groups are on site to

let students know about different faiths. We have been part of this effort for several years and will do it again on Sunday, Sept 4 from 1:00 - 2:30 in Winsor Mall.

There are usually 8-10 UU students at Austin College. This is a great time to let them know that we're their local

church. Students LOVE cookies and having them on the table is a great way to start a conversation.

We need 6-8 doz. cookies for the table. Anyone who can bring some Sun. 9/4 will be profoundly thanked!



Among Ourselves ~

Moving Pews - one last time, Sunday, Sept. 11th

After worship we need to move the pews from fellowship hall back into the sanctuary. We have pew dollies so it doesn't take a lot of muscle. If you can stay and assist, we can get them moved in about 20 minutes.

I.C.E. = In Case of Emergency. Take a minute and put your name, address and the phone number of your emergency contact, then save it under the

name ICE. Police, fire and medics are now trained to search through your cell phone should they find you and it sprawled across the sidewalk somewhere so they can identify you. They look for a listing called ICE! Not a bad idea!

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES TO ...

Judy Donahue 04th
Paula Blackshear 26th
LD Clark 30th
Dianna Niemann-Harris 30th

WISHING YOU A YEAR FILLED
WITH THE SAME JOY YOU
BRING TO OTHERS

MOVEABLE FEAST...

is going in two directions in September - with a dinner on September 9th at Joyce Peak's and a dinner at the Hills on September 10th simply because both hosts don't have the space for everyone. Feasters need to email Marion Hill to sign up (if it isn't too late, that is).

ESTATE SALE...

Patricia Eagle and her family are having an estate sale on Friday, September 2nd at her mother's home at 209 Texoma Drive in Whitesboro. They are selling most everything in the house starting at 7 am.

Three new members ~ Welcome them warmly . . .



Carole Harner 268 Sheryl Ln Houston, TX 75021 281.460.3617 carole.harner@gmail.com

I moved to Denison in June to help care for my parents after taking early retirement from my job in Houston. My daughter moved with me. We are living together with my parents in a house they had built on 50 acres of land on Sheryl Lane near Spur 503 in Denison. In addition to helping out my parents, I spend a lot of time helping take care of the animals. We have 3 horses (including a 4 month old filly), 4 cows, a calf, 2 dogs, and 24 ducks. Our first duck just started laying eggs. Over the last few months I've spent a lot of my time packing, moving and unpacking. I'm still waiting for my house in Houston to sell. I want to start a garden here, but it's been so hot and dry that I've focused on starting to prepare some beds for use next year. That mostly involves gathering and spreading manure. We have a lot of that around. I've also been making regular trips to the library since I love to read. When it cools down, I hope to start doing some hiking and biking. I'd also like to take some dance lessons. I'm looking forward to participating in all the RRUU activities. I'd like to thank everyone for the warm welcome.



Claudette Galen 1166 Quail Run Road Sherman, TX 75092 903.436.3218 tsoparis@tso.com



Larry Snyder 1166 Quail Run Road Sherman, TX 75092 903.436.0248 larry.snyder@peaceeagle.us

Bio's next month!

Moving Day ~ Monday, September 19th

Thur Sept 1 9:30 am Worship Team UUJam Sept 2 7 pm Cool Labors of Love Sun Sept 4 10 am and Delight - at our new home Austin College Oppor-1:00 tunity Fair Tues Sept 6 6:40 **Board of Trustees** meeting Fri Sept 9 6 pm Moveable Feast **PFFFT** Sept 10 10 am Moveable Feast 6 pm Sun Sept 11 10 am Forum, 11:15 Worship Fellowship Gathering 12:15 **Pew Moving** Sun Sept 18 10 am Forum, Worship 11:15 12:15 Fellowship Gathering Mon Sept 19 7 am Moving Day Sept 24 5:02 pm Newsletter Deadline Forum, Sun Sept 25 10 am Worship 11:15 Fellowship Gathering 12:15

HAPPENINGS THIS MONTH:

The Moving Company arrives at 7 am to move all church property from Harrison Street to North Burnett Ave. If you have loaned the congregation any furniture, appliances, electronics, filing cabinets, etc. your deadline to take it back home is Sunday, Sept 18th after church. The company charges by weight. If it is still there on Monday morning - it stays.

We have two pianos - but only need one. If you know someone who would like to purchase a piano, please let a board member know. If we can't find a home, we will end up leaving it in the building. If you know which of the two pianos is the better one, speak up so we don't accidently move the wrong piano.

If you have muscle, and are available, come help. If you just want to come and watch, it probably will be less expensive if you stay home because the company charges not only by weight, but by time as well. They work best when they aren't being engaged in conversations. Thanks for understand.

Board Bits ~ what happened at the August meeting

The board meeting was held on August 18, 2011. All members were present. Marion Hill as Finance Team Leader was also in attendance at the request of the board.

The next board meeting is Sept 6, at 6:40 p.m. Board meetings are open to all, if you wish to be on the agenda please contact a board member. In addition to normal board business the following topics were covered.

- Report on the Board Retreat
- Need to change the Registered Agent
- Begin review of by-laws
- Report on the Board Retreat
- Need to change the Registered Agent
- Appointment of Joyce Peak to the Nominating Committee
- Outcome of Congregational Meeting
- Motions required for conducting the purchase of 515 Burnett
- Begin talking about the moving plans

Those wishing a few minutes during the "open mic" will want to be ready to speak around 7 pm

Fall Congregational Meeting \sim Oct. 30th

The fall Congregational Meeting will be Oct. 30th after the worship service. Everyone, members and friends are invited to attend the meeting. One item on the agenda is to approve the revised budget. All voting members need to consider either attending or giving a proxy.

To vote, one must be a member. Eligibility for voting is set in our bylaws. "Section 2: Requirement for Voting Membership. Individuals who have been members of the Church for 30 days or more and who have (as an individual or part of a family unit) made

during the last 12 months, which must have occurred at least 30 days prior to the meeting, shall have the right to vote at all official Church meetings."

If you are not yet a member and would like to be able to vote in this meeting you must sign the book by September 30, 2011

All voting members must make or confirm a contribution of record by September 30. Contribution of record does not have to be financial - it can be a pledge of time. "Everyone - members and friends - may attend the Fall Meeting"

Heads Up: Reports are due

It is at the Fall Meeting that we review what the various ministries of our church have been doing for the last year (September 1, 2010 ~ September 30, 2011). Written reports, in accordance with our bylaws, are required from the following areas in the life of the congregation:

- Children's RE
- Adult Forum
- Communications
- Finance & Endowment
- Facilities & Grounds
- Long Range Planning
- Social Action
- Ways & Means
- Worship
- Chalice Circles

These reports become the written history of Red River UU Church and therefore are a critical part of who we are as a community.

The deadline for reports is October 11, 2011 so they can be prepared, published and distributed to everyone prior to the meeting. If you are the lead person for any of the above, please email your report to communications@rruu.org.

"These report become our written history and are a critical part of who we are as a community"

Treasurer's Report ~ in gratitude and appreciation

Although I was "cautious" about the purchase of a new home for RRUU, I am currently feeling much more optimistic. At the time of closing, only \$23,724.60 was needed, rather than the \$29,000 we expected. This was due, in part, to the generosity of two families who provided the earnest money for our purchase.

In addition, many members have helped to meet additional costs. Thanks go out to two families who will supply AC for us, to the two members who donated our new church sign, and to the three members who provided much-needed new flooring. A member's sonin-law installed the new vinyl and also removed the carpet while the member, herself, drew up the parking plan that was submitted to the city. Another family made the storage shed/garage far more secure and hauled away truckloads of trash. Huge quantities of elbow grease have been donated, and that is greatly appreciated. A special thanks to the

people who cut and hauled our neighbor's fallen tree. Much work remains to be done, and a group of church members is coordinating a loan of \$30,000, with a rate of 4% interest. It will be offered to the congregation for renovation purposes, and there is the possibility of an increase in the amount proposed. In addition, funds will be forthcoming from the sale of "the wedding chapel" property that was recently donated to RRUU. The future looks very good for our new home!

The day-to-day operation of

"At the time of closing, only \$23,724.60 was needed and with that we bought the building."

the church is also going well. We were able to cover all bills during the month of August, as well as to make donations to Families Feeding Families and Homeward Bound. We ended the month with a checkbook balance of \$122.83. Overall savings, including CD funds, total \$27,035.18. (Of this, \$14,000 has already been committed for specific projects.)

Marie Bellman, Treasurer

Loans & Grants from UU Sources ~

Red River Unitarian Universalist Church (RRUU) is fortunate to be located in an area with support for growth of Unitarian Universalist congregations. Funds potentially could be available through NTAUUS (North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies) and SWUUC (Southwest Unitarian Universalist Conference — the district of the Unitarian Universalist Association of which we are part).

NTAUUS offers low interest, short term loans for growth related projects such as purchase or renovation of a building. The loans are meant to be stop gap loans while congregation is arranging for long term bank financing. They interest rates range from 4-6%, and the loan terms are 3-5 years. The NTAUUS endowment committee looks closely at the congregation's financial records to assess the viability of the congregation and the property being purchased or renovated to assess the value of the project and chance NTAUUS would have to repossess it for default on the loan. Unfortunately for RRUU, the NTAUUS Endowment Committee did not feel the church was stable enough in our membership and finances to recommend a loan from NTAUUS.

SWUUC offers Chalice Lighter Grants for congregations that need a financial boost for projects such as purchasing a building, renovation of a building, hiring a minister, hiring a Religious Education Director, etc. Chalice Lighter Grants are funded by individuals who sign up and pledge to contribute every time a call for funding is made. Any UU can sign up to be a Chalice Lighter to help other congregations in the district by filling out the form on this link and mailing it in. It requires a minimum commitment of \$10 per call, up to 3 times per year.

When RRUU moved to the rental space on Harrison in Denison, our congregation was a Chalice Lighter Grant recipient. Many members of the congregation signed up to be Chalice Lighters as well.

SWUUC selects the recipients through an application process. Records are looked at much more closely to determine the viability of the congregation. They require records of the following from 2006 to the present:

- 1. Number of adult members reported to the UUA
- 2. Number of pledging units
- 3. Average pledge
- 4. UUA fair share dues assessment
- 5. UUA fair share dues paid
- 6. SWUUC fair share dues assessment
- 7. SWUUC fair share dues paid
- 8. Number of visitors
- 9. Number of newcomers orientations for visitors
- 10. Number of attendees in these classes
- 11. Number of children in religious education program

RRUU's numbers in all of the areas above have been in decline, and it is unlikely SWUUC would see our congregation as viable enough to qualify for a Chalice Lighter call. Since the loan amount for renovation will not cover everything that is needed for the new building, it would be a worthy goal to strive to improve our position over the next year. Chalice Lighter calls can generate \$10,000 to \$15,000 per call and could make a world of difference in our ability to renovate our new home.

Submitted by Amy Hoffman-Shehan

Leadership

Board of Trustees

Marla Loturco, *president*Don Durland, *vice president*Marie Bellman, *Treasurer*Elbert Hill
Richard Newlin
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

RED RIVER Unitarian Universalists 515 North Burnett Ave Denison, TX 75021

How to reach us: Email: <u>info@rruu.org</u> Phone: 903.465.5515 Web: <u>www.rruu.org</u>

Subscribe to the weekly E-News: announcements@rruu.org

Looking Ahead ...

As we settled into our new home, the worship team is arranging some interesting Sunday events, including an author speaking on antiterrorism; a stage reading honoring 19th Century women (which involves 5 women in the congregation), a Pilgrims Feast the Sunday before Thanksgiv-

ing and a purely UU ritual called Chalica the first week in December.

Also conversations are bubbling about our building dedication in the spring, perhaps in connection with our 15th anniversary.

Exciting times!

"It is not too early to think about when we want to formally dedicate our new church home!"

Chalice Circles ~ Everyone is invited!

GREEN TEAM, an Environmental Action Circle, generally meets once a month at Amy Hoffman-Shehan's home. Facilitator is <u>Amy Hoffman-Shehan</u>.

MOVEABLE FEAST, a Cooking and/or Eating Circle, meets on moveable dates at moveable locations. Facilitators are <u>Elbert & Marion Hill</u>.

PFFFT, an Outdoor Activities Interest Circle, meets the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10:00 am at Hagerman Wildlife Refuge. Facilitator is <u>Suzanne Durland</u>

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 <u>Jack Blue</u>.