



Red River Ramblings

The Monthly Newsletter of Red River Unitarian Universalists ♦ Denison TX ♦ Vol 21, No. 7 ♦ December 2019

Sunday, December 1, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

World AIDS Day

What is Truth and Why Does It Matter?

The Rev. Dr. Mary Y.A. Davies, *preaching*

We seem to find ourselves in an increasingly post-truth society in which many people simply confuse truth with ideology or whatever gets repeated the most by their favorite politicians or news sources. What does it mean for something to be true and why does this matter for the creation of human and ecological flourishing in our world?

Sunday, December 8, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

Celebration of Chalica and our Seven Principles

The Worship Team, leading

Chalica begins Monday, December 2nd and ends next Sunday, December 8. For these seven days Unitarian Universalists celebrate one principle on each day. The last Sunday, is normally devoted to the last principle. The worship team has invited seven members to each select one principle and share what it means to them. The speakers are Carol Powell, Jolene Whiten, Ronda DeCaire, Jim Holmes, Robert Shelton, Dick Powell, and Marion Hill. Which principle would you have chosen?

Sunday, December 15, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

Laughter in Dark Times

Certified Laughter Leader Marla Loturco, *leading*

When life gets you down, whether from personal or global tragedy, it is important to find your laughter. As Josh Billings says about laughter, "Genuine laughing is the vent of the soul, the nostrils of the heart, and it is just as necessary for health and happiness as spring water is for a trout." Come join us for a morning of therapeutic laughter.

Sunday, December 22, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

A Three-In-One Morning

The Worship Team, *leading*

Three special observances coalesce this week-end. The Winter Solstice on Saturday evening celebrates a pagan heritage. Christians look with Joy on this third Sunday of Advent and Jews light the first Hanukkah candle at dusk Sunday evening. Our assembly today will celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah and Solstice in readings and music.

Sunday, December 29

In 4 Lunch Potluck

Sitting On The Cusp Of A Year

Everyone! The Annual Morning for Sharing

We conclude this year, as is our tradition, with a morning assembly featuring all of us, everyone who would like to share a reading, song, poem, or a story. Being at the cusp concluding the first decade of the century and launching into the second one, what thought do you bring to this transition? Bring whatever you wish to share, with the only guideline being one of time. Six to seven minutes for each speaker allows more opportunities to listen to what others have brought.

Jim's Jabber



Since this monthly newsletter comes so close to Thanksgiving, I have to say that I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving. For those who attended the Friday moveable feast of Thanksgiving leftovers at Red River I enjoyed the opportunity of overeating again.

The Giving Tree is in the upper lobby and waits for people to select an item to purchase for the church. Red River needs several items that are not part of our operating budget. Things like coffee, and toilet paper, gardening supplies and light bulbs, just to name a few. The list is on the table, along with a few simple instructions regarding how to purchase. Thanks, in advance, for participating. Last year we, collectively, purchased over \$500 worth of necessities, all items to keep our vital community happy.

The renovation of the second floor is nearing completion. New ceiling crown molding throughout all the room, new chandler in the F. Church Library, concealing the wiring for the security cameras in each room, new flooring in the Arts & Crafts room and new lighting on both the front and rear stairways. Take the hike (18 steps) to the second floor and check it out. You will be pleasantly surprised.

The rooms will soon be waiting for children. Ellie and Angie have faithfully been working with visiting children. We have several UUA curricula ready for use. The only thing missing is one adult to be the coordinator of our Religious Education program. We have three people who are willing to serve on the RE Team, but need a coordinator. The board is looking for someone to serve for a two-year period to help get the program going. Lacking a

volunteer, it will not be able to establish an on-going program. If you want more information, please speak with me or any board member.

While speaking of volunteer needs - we have one more opening that is really important to fill, especially now during the multiple social action concerns facing the nation. We've heard of several during the last few months from various guest speakers on Sunday. A Social Justice coordinator would be a person committed to keeping the congregation informed, inviting people to participate by calling elected officials, writing letters, perhaps attending Indivisible Texoma events, etc. Studies indicate many newcomers are drawn to UU congregations because of our involvements in a wide range of social action opportunities. Again, if you want more information, please make my day/week/month by asking for more information.

For the last decade NTUUC (North Texas UU Congregations) has given grants to the 13 North Texas UU congregations. We've received many grants, but NTUUC has plans on stopping these annual grants. 2020 may be our last year to get a grant. The board voted to ask for funds to improve our ability to reach a broader audience by adding video streaming for our morning assemblies. Initially we will be able to steam to new monitors in the RE rooms on the second floor as well as in the Barton Parlor. Eventually the streaming services will also be on a Red River UU YouTube channel as well as on our LGBTQ+ and on the Church Facebook pages. This will require some technical upgrades and replacing our current security surveillance system (which is showing its age and having problems) with improved controlled cameras to allow people to monitor our RE rooms from smart phones. I'll have more about this as thing progress.

Jim

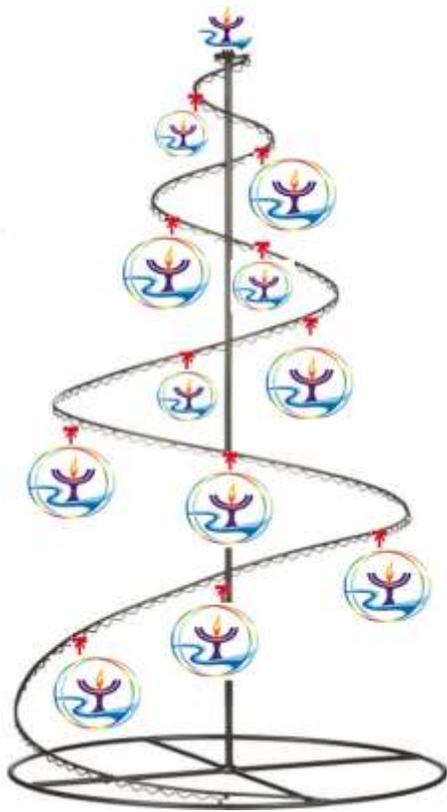


As 2019 winds down amid busy holiday activity and remembrances of the past decade, I feel so much gratitude for my family, friends, and colleagues and for each Unitarian Universalist and UU congregation living out their values in our very troubled world. And honestly, I am concerned for the future of our country.

Our democracy is deeply broken and so many are suffering. As we share stories of resilient hope and rituals affirming our interconnection over the winter holidays, I ask you to join me in supporting the UUA's new UU the Vote campaign. Tap the video to learn more about this values-based electoral justice effort and find many ways to meaningfully connect with the campaign.

Yours in faith, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, *UUA President*

The Giving Tree



We are again offering ourselves opportunities to make a small gift to the church to replenish those pesky products we can't live without but which are not included in the operating budget (no one likes to pledge to pay for toilet paper or furniture polish).

If everything on the list is donated, we will have collectively given over \$1,050.00 to assure we won't run out of supplies.

Here's the list, friends:

The Giving Tree is in the upper foyer. There are two ways to participate:

- Select the item you will be purchasing; sign your name on the sheet indicating you will pick up that item. Buy it, bring it to church and put it under the tree.
- **Amazon purchases:** If you want to help but don't like (or have time) to shop, sign on the list. Put a check, cash or your I.O.U. in the envelope, write the item name and number, sign your name and leave the envelope in the box on the table.

1-7th Generation Dish Washing Pacs, 45 Ct

\$11.99 Target 2 boxes

2-7th Generation Toilet Paper, 24/box, 2 boxes

\$19.89 Amazon

3-7th Generation Paper Towels, 24 Ct, 2 boxes

\$35.96 Amazon

4-Mimi Moos Half and Half, 365 Ct - 1 box

\$20.70 Amazon

5-Swiffer 360 Dusters 18/Box - 2 boxes

\$11.97 Amazon

6-Spray Bathroom Cleaner - 1 bottle

\$10.32 Amazon need 7 bottles

7-Big bag of lawn fertilizer

\$35.00 Walmart

8-Large Bag of Fire Ant Killer - 1 bag

\$16.99 Amazon

9-Miracle Grow 100 Ft Soaker Hose

\$19.99 Amazon

10-7th Generation Toilet Cleaner, Package of 2

\$11.41 Target

11-7th Generation Wood Cleaner, 12 bottles

\$11.82 Amazon

12-5 Folgers Coffee, 30.5 oz, 6 cans

\$6.92 Amazon

13-Regular Garden Hose 5/8", 100 Ft

\$33.19 Amazon

14- 6 Doz Votive Candles In Glass Holders

\$6.47 Walmart

15-Comet Cleaner with Bleach, 4 Pack, need 2

\$13.98 Amazon

16-Kleenex Tissues - 8 pack, need 3

\$11.98 Amazon

17-Kitchen Scissors, need 2

\$4.58 Amazon

18-Individual pack Sugar, 100 Ct

\$2.34 Amazon

19-Sweet & Low, 250 Ct

\$4.36 Amazon

20-Dawn Dish Detergent, need 2

\$2.88 Amazon

21-Seventh Gen. Natural Napkins, 500 Ct

\$25.45 Amazon

22-55 gal Contractor Bags, 50 Ct

\$36.09 Amazon

The 1619 Project

Several people requested more information after the December 17th morning assembly:

The 1619 Project is a program organized by *The*

New York Times in 2019 with the goal of re-examining the legacy of slavery in the United States and timed for the 400th anniversary of the arrival in America of the first enslaved people from West Africa. It is an interactive project by Nikole Hannah-Jones, a reporter for *The New York Times*, with contributions by the paper's writers, including essays, poems, short fiction, and a photo essay. Originally conceived of as a special issue for August 20, 2019, it was soon turned into a full-fledged project, including coverage in the newspaper and on its website.

The entire project can be accessed [here](#). There are six 40-50 minute audio segments, each accessible independently. with transcriptions as well. A powerful, and important history to help dismantle white privilege.

Rise? Sit? Kneel?

“Why do we rise for somethings during our assembly, and sit for other things?” was the question put to the worship team recently. It led to a meaningful conversation and I was asked to pen a response. By way of review, our ‘*standard liturgy*’ included 4 times to rise, in body or spirit: chalice lighting, spoken affirmation, benediction/parting thought and extinguishing the chalice. Yes, we did not include singing. We quickly agreed people sing better when standing. We do, however, on a regular basis we select songs and specifically ask people to remain seated.

We first asked when do people gathered for some function traditionally stand? People stand as the bride come down the aisle; when the queen/leader/president walks into the room; reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, or sing one’s National Anthem. Western Christians stand to praise God, sit to learn and kneel to pray. Eastern Orthodox Christians stand throughout their worship, (made easier by the lack of pews or chairs). Standing is an act of respect. Standing says what is about to occur is important and special.

We rise to light the chalice and to say our Spoken Affirmation The simple action of standing, I feel, is an act that reminds me what we are about to do is to enter special time, By standing, we call ourselves to be mindful that this time is not

mundane, but sacred. Standing for the Benediction, another long-standing religious tradition, serves as a way to prepare ourselves for leaving and when linked to reciting the same words every week to extinguish the chalice forms bookends for our assembly. For me, it serves to prepare me to return to the ordinary, everyday world.

The beauty of Unitarian Universalism resides within the heart of each of us. One’s personal sense of what the holy entails is not beholden on anyone else. We avoid the stand during our assemblies, believing language that excludes tarnishes worship. We don’t say, “Please stand,” because some physically cannot, or struggle mightily to do so. Rather we invite people to stand or rise “in body or spirit.” Those who find meaning and wish to do so, stand. Those for whom rising carries no significance remain seated.

On any given Sunday we have a loving balance during the four times we place an asterisk next to the liturgical term. And that is as it ought to be. In our free and responsible search for truth and meaning we care for ourselves as we wish. Rise? Sit? Kneel?

The worship team conclusion has been to offer inclusive options for people to make whatever decision feel most comforting to themselves.

Doug

LGBTQ+ Movie Night

Everyone is invited to come to the next LGBTQ+ movie night, Friday, Dec 20 when we screen *But, I'm a Cheerleader*. 7 pm, in the chapel. Watch the [trailer](#).

A Date To Save

A special one-day NTUUC Stewardship Event will be on February 8th. The details on the location TBA. They need *teams* of people from each congregation participating for the training to truly take hold in our congregation. Travel expenses will be covered and the training is free.

While we have been very successful in our annual stewardship campaign over the last several years, it behooves us to have a better grasp on other proven successful approaches. As our congregation grows we will no doubt benefit from this training. Look for details from the Board next month.

Meetings In December

Dec 7 - Worship Team meets @ 12:45 - chapel

Dec 15 - Board Meeting @ 1 pm - chapel

Dec 15 - Community Dinner for the Needy in partnership with The Church In Texoma (see below)

UU WORLD - winter issue

Tap any blue link to read more

FEATURES

[The call of our faith](#)

What is it in Unitarian Universalism's core message that demands that its people work toward building multicultural, antiracist Beloved Community?

by Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin

DEPARTMENTS

[Let's 'UU the Vote'](#)

by Susan Frederick-Gray in [From the president](#)

[UUA mission priorities](#)

by Christopher L. Walton in [From the editor](#)

[Indigenous Americans: A time to reclaim](#)

Four-page insert adapted from *Tapestry of Faith* lifespan faith development programs.
by the [UUA Faith Development Office](#) in [Families Weave a Tapestry of Faith](#)

LIFE

[Living in limbo](#)

For those in sanctuary, life is a waiting game.
by Arthur Hirsch

[UU values on display in three recent films](#)

Unsettled, American Heretics, and Beacon.
by Elaine McArdle

[SMILE Project helps teens realize their potential](#)

A Breakthrough Congregation's internship program offers Illinois teens valuable work experience.
by Sherri Daye Scott

[In cohousing communities, UU seniors are finding new ways to 'age in place'](#)

by Kris Willcox

[Welcome to UUism: Why do we take an offering?](#)

by Liz James

Treasurer's Report

In the month of September, we had total receipts of \$2,765.50. Expenses for the month totaled \$3,010.05, leaving an excess of expenditures over receipts for the month of September of \$244.55.

As of September 30, 2019, we had \$9,752.45 available in checking, a total of \$66,983.22 in all savings accounts and a total of \$14,645.47 in Certificates of Deposit.

Rebecca Stanczyk, our new bookkeeper, had the bank account reconciled prior to Oct. 6th and confirmed that, because of the limitations of the Cloud version of Quickbooks which she has been using on a free 90-day trial basis, she will, as we previously agreed, move the accounting records back to a desktop version of Quickbooks which will again give us the reporting flexibility we desire and previously had.

She and I will continue to work together to ensure a smooth transition back to a desktop version of Quickbooks and resolve any problems that may arise in this transition, though none are anticipated.

Dick Powell,
Treasurer

Circles & Interest Groups

Church activities are open to everyone. Contact the facilitator if you wish more information.

EARTH DAY PLANNING COMMITTEE ~ the group is responsible for the creation, each year, of the Texoma Earth Day Festival. All who enjoy planning a large-scale community event are invited to learn more. During the Festival many church members and friends volunteer to help. Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *facilitator*

FLEDGLING CHOIR ~ a small group of people who like to sing and are hoping to encourage other singers to join us. When we rehearse, it is Sunday after the assembly. Open to all singers.

MOVEABLE FEAST ~ a culinary chalice circle of people who enjoy food, preparing, sharing, and enjoying. A very popular church group that welcomes newcomers. The Feasters meet monthly and may gather in someone's home, at a restaurant, or church. Marion and Elbert Hill, *facilitators*

WEB OF LIFE MONARCH WAYSTATION ~ a new group in the planning stages right now, to tenderly love our monarch waystation and to help spawn more gardens at other churches or various locations. More as the summer wanes into autumn. Linn Cates, *facilitator*

Leaders

Board of Trustees

Jim Holmes, *President*
Lisa Cates, *Vice President*
Dick Powell, *Treasurer*
David Dyer, *Secretary*
Sabra Jones, *Trustee*
Helen Schulze, *Past President*

Committee on Ministry:

Dan Althoff, Elbert Hill, Marla Loturco

Nominating:

Kelly Cofield-Dyer, L.D. Clark, Amy Hoffman-Shehan

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Sabra*
Aesthetics: *Carol, Doug, Joyce*
Caring Circle: *Kelly*
Communications: *Doug*
Endowment: *Carolyn, Dick, Doug*
Facilities:
Finance: *Jim, Dick, Doug*
Grounds: *Marilyn*
Long Range Planning: *Jim, Marilyn, Robert, Ronda*
Membership: *Marion*
NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
RE Team: *Linn, Tommi*
Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
Social Action:
Welcoming Congregation: *Jack*
Worship: *Doug, Marla, Rebecca, Robert, Tommi*

Contact Us

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- Facebook: [RedRiverUnitarianUniversalist-Church](https://www.facebook.com/RedRiverUnitarianUniversalist-Church)
- Mobile App: 'RedRiverUU' free from the [Apps Store](#) and [Google Play](#).
- Calendar [here](#)

An Invitation from 'The Church in Texoma'

Note: The following email was forwarded to the newsletter by Lisa Cates. Contact [Lisa](#) to volunteer or want more information.

On behalf of the Church at Texoma, we want to invite Red River United Unitarian (sic) to partner with us to provide a Holiday Dinner for our community. The dinner is scheduled for December 15th at 2pm, to be served at 901 N. Grand Avenue, Sherman TX. It is the desire for the Church at Texoma to do what we can to care for the mental health of our community. We know the holidays can take a toll on those that are alone, have no local family, are not accepted by their family or just do not have the means to provide a holiday dinner. This is a problem we can do something about this year. And we want to do it together as a group of loving community organizations! If we can provide a space, a loving community and a warm meal for those that are in need, we will have accomplished the true purpose of the holiday season.

What you can do:

- 1. Advertise the event in your bulletins, emails, communications, social media, etc. We need your help to get the word out*
 - 2. Donate approximately 3 large pans of a specific dish from the menu (vegan meatloaf)*
 - 3. Volunteer two servers from your church that can assist with serving the food on the day of the event*
- With your help, we can help others have a more joyful, less stressful and peaceful holiday season. We hope you will join us. Happy Holidays!*

Hope to hear from you very soon!

The Church at Texoma

Unfortunately starting in January, we will only have recycling and trash pickup during those months that a volunteer has signed up on the Trash Troop calendar, posted on the bulletin board outside the chapel.

Currently, that means no recycle/trash for 10 months next year!