



Red River Ramblings

The Monthly Newsletter of Red River Unitarian Universalists ♦ Denison TX ♦ Vol 21, No. 8 ♦ January 2020

Sunday, January 5, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

A Ritual for the Season The Worship Team, *leading*

The first Sunday of the new year is a time for reflection and introspection. It is a time of new beginnings and possibilities. To our ritual of letting go (flame), metaphoric cleansing (water), setting intentions (oil), and new beginnings (light), we are adding a way to reconnect to the Earth and growing things. We will be planting seeds for our Web of Life Monarch Way Station.

Sunday, January 12, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

20/20 Vision: Can We See Clearly Now? The Rev. Dr. Mark Y.A. Davies, *preaching*

A hopeful look forward for the 2020's – the make or break decade of the make or break century.

Sunday, January 19, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

From Struggle to Celebration Stephanie Luke-Williams, *speaking*

Stephanie Luke-Williams is a survivor of teen pregnancy, domestic violence and breast cancer. She is on a mission to raise awareness and to give hope to the victims and families dealing with these issues. Her hope is that she inspires others to rise above their struggle, celebrate their imperfections and ultimately learn to SOAR!



Stephanie attended graduate school at Southeastern Oklahoma State University from 1999-2003 and pursued her MBA. She also received her Bachelor of Business Administration from Southeastern in 1998 and graduated from Calera High School in 1994. She is a small business owner, community advocate and most importantly the mom of 2 amazing daughters: Maddison age 25 and Sydney age 16.

Sunday, January 26, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

The Still Point of the Turning Year Elena Westbrook, *speaking*

Why meditate? In our driven, achievement-focused world, what are the benefits of learning to create stillness inside yourself? Elena Westbrook will introduce a few different approaches, including breathing techniques and Tonglen meditation, that can be a powerful part of your spiritual practice.

What, say you? Is it time to take down the tree?
But we're too old to believe in elves. So, who can we call?
What are we to do?

Jim's Jabber

It's a new year so here's hoping that everyone has a great one.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's Giving Tree. Over 35% of the items were purchased. I added all the items up on the list when I put it out and they totaled to over \$1,000 so your contributions are greatly appreciated. Thank you for putting a dent in this amount.

There are several upcoming events planned for February. I hope you can attend at least some of these.

- On February 1 from 12-3pm, NTUUC (North Texas Unitarian Universalist Congregation) is holding their awards luncheon at First Church in Dallas. This is where we will find out if we get our grant and also find out who has won the Marty Robinson award from our church. We applied for a grant to upgrade our current security system and to add video streaming to our building (and beyond). If you are planning on going let me know since we need to RSVP. For the last few years Red River UU has had more people attend than any other. Yeah team!
- The following Saturday, February 8 from 10am-4pm, NTUUC is holding a special Stewardship Training class at Horizon UU Church in Carrollton. Some of you may think we don't need stewardship training because we do fine raising money. I agree, we have been successful with our approach of sending out one letter and waiting for the pledges to appear. If the day comes when the one

Congrats Jim!

Each year NTUUC honors volunteers from all 13 member congregations at an annual award luncheon. There are several different awards – all aiming to appreciate and pay tribute to the work of individuals within our various congregations. Some awards are for professional staff (ministers and other non-cleric positions) and one award is for volunteerism. The Marty Robinson Volunteer Award is named to honor the years of volunteerism Marty has given as an active volunteer within Unitarian Universalism.

This year Jim Holmes has been selected by the Awards Committee to receive the Marty Robinson Volunteer Award for his work, not only within our congregation, but also



letter might not result in a balanced budget, it behooves us to learn now how to have a successful stewardship campaign *before* a need, rather than shooting from the hip hoping we do right. Speak with me if you'd like to attend.

- On February 22 from 5-7pm. NTUUC will be hosting their annual Appreciation Celebration and dinner at Temple Shalom in Plano for all their cluster UU churches. This is their way of saying thank you to all the NTUUC members. Also let me know on this so I can give them a count. Ever been in a synagogue? Last year's event was a lot of fun. Low key, no real agenda beyond enjoying meeting and greeting UUs from the other 12 congregations in North Texas.
- Finally, on Feb 27 (Thursday night) from 6-8pm, Red River UU is having its annual appreciation dinner for all our members. This will be potluck. More to follow on this as we get closer.

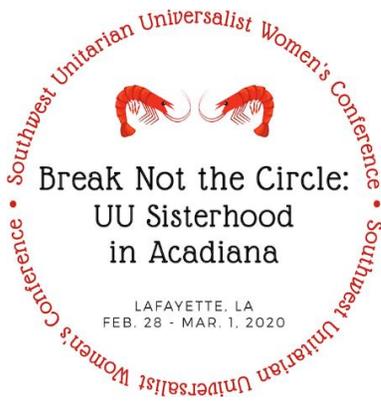
Enough about February, when January has just started! Did you notice the interesting topics the worship team has arranged for this month? Kicking off with a Ritual for the Season, then Dr. Mark Davies asking "20/20 Vision: Will We See Clearly Now (makes me think of Johnny Cash, of course) and ending with a talk about meditation. It promises to be a month of good Sundays.

See ya'll in church, soon.

Jim

being involved in various volunteer opportunities within the cluster. Our tiny congregation is the only church to receive the Marty Robinson Award each year since it was started in 2010. Previous honorees were Amy Hofman-Shehan; Marla Loturco; Bruce Cameron; Carolyn Cameron; Marion Hill; Elbert Hill; Dan Althoff; Carole Harner, Marilyn Alexander and Kelly Cofield-Dyer. The luncheon is Sat. Feb. 1st starting around 12:00 and run until approximately 3:00. Tickets are available from Marla Loturco. Tickets \$20/\$12 Elders. Several people from Red River UU Church will be attending so carpooling is possible. Grant awards for each church are also announced at the luncheon. Please join us!

Southwest UU Women Conf



We will be coming together in the heart of Cajun and Creole country to strengthen our sisterhood in Lafayette, LA, **Feb 28-Mar 1**. Our keynote speaker **Colette Pichon Battle** will talk about the challenges facing Louisiana as climate change

threatens its coastline and its people. We'll enjoy this unique and special part of the world with Cajun music from the **Grammy-nominated Magnolia Sisters!**

Early registration is now open. Scholarships are available. Details are available [here](#)

Committee on Ministry

This year the newsletter is going to highlight different committees, teams, and interest groups as a way for everyone to better understand the many aspects of sustaining our lay-led congregation. This month we focus on The Committee on Ministry, a 3-person team each elected to a 3-year term by the congregation.



The purpose of the Committee on Ministry (CoM) is to strengthen and support the congregational health of Red River UU Church by promoting effective ministries in all areas of Red River's mission. Working to uphold the philosophy of shared ministry, the Committee on Ministry seeks to affirm healthy relations between congregation members, between congregation and board as well as between a minister (should we call one) and the congregation.

In addition, if any individuals are experiencing an issue within the church that they do not seem to be able to resolve, you may bring it to the Committee. Please let one of the committee members know ahead of the meeting time. Committee members include Dan Althoff, Elbert Hill, and Marla Loturco.

The Committee has agreed to meet monthly on the

fourth Sunday at 12:45 in the chapel. We have reviewed the various areas of the church and made recommendations to the board.

The following statements are from the by-laws and the policies & procedures manual about the Committee on Ministry.

The committee on ministry will annually assess the effectiveness of the church's ministries and how well they hold to the congregation's values, goals and vision.

- Review all stated church goals/expectations related to ministry so that the committee can plan an effective annual assessment of the church ministries. This planned assessment will include co-ministry functions of the Board of Trustees, staff, committees, congregation and the services of the professional minister(s).
- Gather information from the congregation regarding its perception of the effectiveness of the church's ministries. Report the results of the above assessment to the Board of Trustees who will report as appropriate to others in the church.

The committee on ministry will facilitate communication leading to appropriate responsive actions between various parts of the church regarding concerns and wishes of friends, members, staff, committees, board, and professional ministers.

- The Committee will promote dialogue between groups representing various aspects of the congregation's ministry.
- The Committee will seek a commonality of goals and engender trust and mutual respect, always focusing on the positive potential rather than the negative.

Anyone wishing contact the Committee on Ministry can use their church email address: CoM (at) redriveruu.org.

January Birthdays

Jan 5 - Joe Combs

Jan 9 - Kelly Cofield-Dyer

January's Moveable Feast

¶ Six Ninety One Restaurant at Grayson College is the favored choice of the Moveable Feast for their January gathering. The dinner will be on **Tuesday, January 28th @ 5 pm**. Several feasters have already indicated they want to go. The dinner is \$15 and anyone who would enjoy joining in this month's feast is encouraged to contact [Marion Hill](#).

Indivisible Immigration Mtg

The Indivisible Immigration Initiative will meet in the chapel on **Tuesday, January 14 at 6:30 pm.** Please join us as we advocate for just and humane immigration policies and determine how to best assist organizations offering aid to those who seek refuge in our country.

The Indivisible Immigration Initiative is a new community-wide non-political advocacy effort. Newcomers are most welcome to come, listen and hopefully want to help.

Earth Day Planning

The Earth Day Festival Planning Committee will meet **Wednesday, January 15 at 6:30 pm** in the chapel. We are busily planning for the 2020 festival, which will be April 18. The theme is **Recycle - Freecycle**. We will hold a Freecycle event, partially sponsored by Sherman/Denison Freecycle.

Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *chair*

Treasurer's Report

In the month of November, we had total receipts of \$2,823.50. Expenses for the month totaled \$3,694.88, which included \$1,176.69 of building maintenance/improvements and Share the Plate contribution of \$356.00, which left an excess of expenditures over receipts for the month of November of \$871.38.

As of November 30, 2019, we had \$6,504.84 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 Stanczak, our bookkeeper, and I have discussed upgrading the version of Quickbooks which I currently use to the same version she uses. The main reason for the upgrade is to facilitate the transfer the monthly financial statements she prepares, along with the bank recs and budget variance reports. The version of Quickbooks I am using (Desktop Pro 2017) does not allow me to open the reports she prepares and emails to me.

I recommend that we upgrade to the 2019 version that she is using and am prepared to make an in-kind contribution of the Quickbooks Desktop Pro 2019 version which has a total cost of \$217.76.

Dick Powell, *Treasurer*

Shelter Dinner - Our turn!

As you may know our congregation has been preparing a dinner for the residents of the Grayson County Shelter each quarter. We've been quietly doing it for several years. We join other local congregations on a regular rotation, so there is no chance that two congregations will show up on the same evening.

Our next shelter meal will be on **Wednesday, January 8th**. Several volunteers agree to prepare (or purchase) various covered dishes and deliver them to the shelter just before dark. Some enjoy staying and sharing the meal with the residents. If you want to be part of the January dinner, please contact [Joyce Peak](#) ASAP. If you would like to help at other dinners, let Joyce know. Our next opportunity to bring dinner to the shelter will be April 16, 2020. If you can't help in January, how about reaching out to Joyce now for the April 16th dinner? . . .

And Another Way to Help...

the Grayson County Shelter is to consider serving of their Board of Directors. The board meets monthly at the Denison City Library and they are in looking for people who believe in the importance of the shelter and are willing to make a commitment to serve. Interested? Please speak with Tommi Homuth, who is on their board and would love to speak with you.

To the Editor

I really like the format of the newsletter! It's nice to not have to slide each page back & forth to read it.
J.P.

Thanks. The shift was made because 66% of subscribers read the December newsletter on their smart phone. One downside of the church app is the inability to respond when rotating your phone. Now rather than reading the newsletter or UP-DATE in the app, tapping it opens your browser where you can rotate the phone and expand the text using two fingers. Pleased you noticed.

Contact Us

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How to reach 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](#)

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, Dan, Robert, Tommi*

Dates to Remember

Jan 8 - Shelter Dinner @ 5:45

Jan 12 - Worship Team @ 9 am - chapel

Jan 14 - Indivisible Immigration Initiative @ 6:30 - chapel

Jan 15 - Earth Day Planning @ 6:30 - chapel

Jan 19 - Board Meeting @ 1 pm - chapel

Jan 26 - Committee on Ministry - 12:45 chapel

Jan 28 - Moveable Feast @ 691 Restaurant

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.