



# Red River Ramblings

The Monthly Newsletter of Red River Unitarian Universalists ♦ Denison TX ♦ Vol 21, No. 9 ♦ February 2020

Sunday, February 2, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

## **Communitarian Personalism**

The Rev. Dr. Mark Y.A. Davies, *leading*

A closer look at what it means to be persons-in-community and how awareness of this reality changes our self-understanding and sense of responsibility for the world around us.

Sunday, February 9, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

## **A New Plan for a New Year**

Marion Hill, *speaking*

A hopeful look forward for the 2020's – on Sunday a look at a new, exciting focus. The Pathway to Membership becomes clearer, easier to follow. At least the Membership Team hopes so! Marion Hill will speak about a new approach to church membership that the congregation has voted to begin using. This Pathway to Membership, based on a workshop Marion heard at the 2019 General Assembly of UUA, is not radically different from the procedure the church has been following. But the focus is different, and the workshop presenters (from the UU Congregation of Phoenix) say that the approach has brought them members who have a clearer understanding of what their church is about, and who are more committed to the congregation's values, than before they began it.

Sunday, February 16, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

## **Neil Postman, Prophet? Technology, Gods, and The End of Education**

Dr William Lloyd Fridley, *speaking*

Author, educator, media theorist and social critic Neil Postman (1931-2003) argued that television was playing on our *appetite for distraction* as we *amused ourselves to death*. Writing on the cusp of the internet, Postman warned of the dangers posed by the *false god of technology* for culture, politics, and education. We'll consider what he had to say.

Sunday, February 23, 2019 ~ 11:15 am

## **Our Building: A Site of Memory**

James E. Smith, *speaking*

Memory is an essential part of consciousness and places embody our memories. Old buildings are like memories you can touch. However, in order to experience this connection, we must first know of its history. On this last Sunday of Black History Month, we welcome Funeral Director James E. Smith who will speak of his 40 years at James Smith Funeral Home For Blacks, the only funeral home open to African Americans, along with giving us a glimpse of what it was like to live in this old, stately home.

# Jim's Jabber

February is going to be a busy month at Red River UU. Here's a list of some of the things happening:

- Feb 1 (Sat). - NTUUC awards lunch: First Church 12-3. If you want to go be sure to buy your ticket from Marla. Carpooling available. (poster below).
- Feb 8 (Sat) - NTUUC Stewardship training: Horizon UU, 10-4. Dick, Marla, and I will be going. Interested in joining us? The training is free. Let me know if you'd like to join us.
- Feb 22 (Sat) - NTUUC appreciation celebration, a come-and-go event: Temple Shalom, Plano, 5-7. All are invited and there will be plenty of good food and conversation. (poster below).
- Feb 27 (Thurs) – Red River UU Appreciation dinner - 6-8, potluck. I hope everyone can make this evening of food and fun and help us celebrate this year's winner of the Bruce Cameron Award.

Earlier this week I was putting up some of the supplies we got from the Giving Tree. I noticed that we have lots of toilet paper so decided to count what we have. I counted what was in storage in the four bathrooms, the hall closets on the

first floor and second floor, the cabinets in the back hall, and what was stored in the basement. We have 180 rolls which I estimate to be at least a 2 years supply. If you are thinking about donating any supplies, please bypass the toilet paper aisle.

Also, earlier this week I went to the Texoma Earth Day planning meeting. Robert, Marla, Amy, and I attended from Red River. We are always looking for outreach programs that fit the requirements of supporting our core beliefs and present an opportunity for getting exposure to the community for Red River UU and this is an ideal event to do this.

I hope to see more members volunteer to help make this event even more outstanding. Because Red River is a major sponsor, we get free booth space. What we don't currently have, and need, is someone to be our booth leader and volunteers to run the booth. Let me know if you are interested. Texoma Earth Day will be April 18<sup>th</sup>, hopefully the weather will cooperate this year.

Check out the new earth day's Texoma Earth Day's [website](#) that Marla has created. Well done Marla!

See ya'll in church, soon.

Jim



## NTUUC

North Texas Unitarian Universalist  
Congregations

### 2020 Awards Luncheon

February 1, 2020

Social 12:30 pm • Lunch 1:00 pm  
First Unitarian Church of Dallas

Tickets are \$20 or \$12 for students/Seniors and are available at [www.ntuuc.org/awards](http://www.ntuuc.org/awards)



**Speaker: Rev. Dr. Rodney Lemery**

Minister of the Worthy Now Prison Network,  
Church of the Larger Fellowship

**"An Ever Expansive Faith"**

*The stories and experiences of our incarcerated members demonstrates the power of an expansive theology that covers many of the faith traditions of the world. Please join us as we explore how these stories and experiences could and arguably should shape our own traditional brick and mortar spaces.*

We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2020 Robinson Award:

**Susannah Garza**  
First Unitarian Church of Dallas

**Jim Holmes**  
Red River Unitarian Universalist Church



We will also present the NTUUC grants to the congregations.

We offer our congratulations, and hope to see you at the luncheon.

# Red River UU's Ninth Annual Appreciation Dinner

Small congregations matter not the theological proclivities, all rely on members and friends to assure their beloved community will not perish for lack of commitment, participation, financial resources, or love. Large congregations have the distinct advantage of having staff to oversee much of what it takes to keep things going well.

We do a sterling job and have achieved amazing results over our 22 years.\* We own our own building. We are growing. We have a balanced budget. Sunday attendance averages 35 and membership stands at 52 caring individuals.

Ten years ago, we quit paying rent and purchased a former funeral parlor on North Burnett Ave and spent a year transforming it into our church home. It was arduous, grueling and demanding work, but we did it. The Board of Trustees, under Marla Loturco's leadership, felt we deserved to take a break, to spend one evening celebrating our achievements. They also wanted to somehow appreciate one person, Bruce Cameron, who had volunteered to be the Transformation Project Director. He spent hundreds of hours working.

The result is the *Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award* and, ever since, we've set aside a Thursday in February for an Appreciation Dinner. It's a time to celebrate with gratitude how successful we, as the only liberal religious community in Texoma, have been.

When your birthday rolls around, don't you quietly think, you know, I'm glad I was born? The Appreciation Dinner is when we collectively say, "You know, I'm glad Red River Unitarian Universalists was born and thanks to ourselves for making it happen."

Being a lay-led congregation, everyone is responsible for this success. We all bring gifts. **Gifts of presence** - on Sundays at the morning assembly or Adult Forum, and by participating in meetings, chalice circles, social events and workdays. **Gifts of leadership** - serving on committees, teams, and elected positions. **Gifts of economic resources** - small or grand, which sustains the fiscal institution.

This year's Appreciation Dinner will be a blending of fine Red River UU cuisine (aka potluck), some singing, some talking and a lot of thankfulness. The Bruce Cameron Award will also be awarded to someone.

**Come**, share in this, one of our own special traditions.

**Come**, whether you only rarely have been at church or if you are there every Sunday.

**Come**, whether you are a visitor, a friend, or a member.

**Come**, because you are part of what makes our small congregation vibrant, dynamic and vital.

Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup> – 6 pm.

\*Our 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday is March 26<sup>th</sup>!





The Membership Team is refining the church's membership procedures, with the goal of helping prospective members understand how one joins the church and what is expected of those who do. Red River UU has always tried to be a welcoming church, for people who come from varied religious backgrounds and with various needs in a worship tradition. Congregants often say what a relief it is to have found a church that doesn't tell them what to think, but that values them whatever they think.

UUs pride us on not demanding a specific religious belief from congregants, and the Membership Team isn't suggesting a change from that orientation. But sometimes people who are considering joining our church wonder exactly what they're getting into and what is required of a church member. So, the Membership Team is trying to offer clarification of those points.

Red River UU doesn't make a lot of requirements, actually. No catechism instruction, for example. But we do agree on a few areas of belief and activity that church members should subscribe to and participate in: theological diversity, justice-centered involvement, church participation, and environmental preservation.

Marion Hill will be talking about these areas of commitment in a talk in worship service on February 9, and she will give examples of ways members can contribute in each area. At the end of her talk, she will welcome discussion about the new Pathway to Membership, especially suggestions for improvement of the plan.

One of the joys of being a UU is that we never assume we've found the absolute best way to accomplish a goal; improvements are always possible. Let's together make our Pathway to Membership clear and easy to follow!.

## Indivisible Immigration Initiative

The Indivisible Immigration Initiative meets on **Tues, Feb 11 @ 6:30**. The I.I.I. is a new community-wide, non-political advocacy effort to support immigrants in our area. February's meeting will focus on our participation at the Earth Day festival and volunteering at the Multicultural Family Center.

## Earth Day Planning

The Earth Day Planning committee is working hard to organize the 12th annual Texoma Earth Day Festival which will be on **Saturday, April 18** from 9-4 at the Sherman Municipal Grounds.

This year's theme is **Recycle – Freecycle**

The committee is confirming various recycling vendors, scheduling entertainment, working on graphic design and more. Marla is in the process of launching a new website for the festival.

Dr. Mark Davies has been confirmed as our keynote speaker. Several acts have been confirmed for our entertainment schedule, and Jan Fletcher is speaking to Austin College students about giving an update on the state of our climate.

We will be coordinating a Freecycle event with Freecycle of Sherman/Denison. We will probably need to rent a large tent to house it. Area residents will be invited to drop off unwanted clothing, movies, music and games. Anyone in need will be able to come and take anything they want from the Freecycle tent. We will have to coordinate a way to donate anything that is not claimed to a local organization that sells used clothing, etc.

Soon, we hope everyone from our greater church community will help distribute flyers and posters, and we are counting on everyone to sign up to volunteer at the festival. Volunteer sign-up forms are now on the [EarthdayTexoma.org](http://EarthdayTexoma.org) web site, as well as available at church.

Red River UU ~

The Reason Earth Day is in Texoma

## Congrat's Dan!

Remember Dan Althoff's musical morning assembly last June 2<sup>nd</sup>? Inspired by such diverse sources as pop, rock, country, opera, Black gospel, Broadway musicals, as well as the sung liturgies from his Catholic background, Dan presented his original music based on the usual Sunday morning format here at Red River UU, including our Call to Community, Candles of Community, Chalice Lighting, Spoken (and Sung!) Affirmation, and Extinguishing the Chalice. It was an inspirational morning and he has been invited to present it at Community UU, Plano on Feb 16<sup>th</sup>. We'll miss him, but the UUs in Plano are about to have a very special UU Sunday.

## February Birthdays

Feb 02 – Jerry Harris | Feb 22 – Dick Powell

## Treasurer's Report

In the month of December, we had total receipts of \$8,211.00, which included the entire balance of one of the pledges for this fiscal year. Expenses for the month totaled \$3,534.58, which left an excess of receipts over expenditures for the month of December of \$4,676.42.

As of December 31, 2019, we had \$5,911.78 available in checking, a total of \$66,983.22 in all savings accounts and a total of \$14,645.47 in Certificates of Deposit.

As previously reported, I have upgraded our version of Quickbooks in order to facilitate the transfer of the monthly financial statements that our bookkeeper, Rebecca Stanczak, prepares, along with the bank recs and budget variance reports.

Rebecca has prepared preliminary schedules for year-end tax reporting which we will be finalizing within the next several weeks.

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 winter wanes into spring. Linn Cates, facilitator.

## Our Speakers This Month

### The Rev. Dr. Mark Y.A. Davies February 2



Dr. Davies has, for the last 23 years, been the Wimberly Professor of Social and Ecological Ethics at Oklahoma City University and Founding Director of the World House Institute for Social and Ecological Responsibility, looks at the systemic barriers to peace within the economic, political and culture process. He is a United Methodist minister and holds a Ph.D. in Social Ethics, from Boston University.

Mark engages in advocacy and activism in the areas of peace, social justice, and ecological sustainability. Locally this is expressed through his work with the Human Community Network, which works to create non-violent systemic change for a just and flourishing human and ecological community through collaboration, education, innovation, and action.

### Marion Moore Hill February 9



Marion Hill, a charter member of our congregation and chair of the membership committee, is a mystery author who writes two series of novels (the Scraggy Librarian Mysteries and the Deadly Past Mysteries—see [www.marionmoorehill.net](http://www.marionmoorehill.net) for details. She formerly taught English at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and both English and journalism at Carson-Newman College (now University) in Tennessee and has been a legal secretary.

### Dr. William Lloyd Fridley February 16



William Lloyd Fridley, Ph.D. is a professor of Education at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He is a faculty activist, working on academic policy and shared governance with the SOSU Faculty Senate and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). He was recently chosen as the president-elect for the Society of Philosophy and History of Education and has Master of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees from Grace Theological Seminary.

### James E. Smith February 23



James is a native Denisonian and began working with funeral homes in Denison/Sherman at the age of 13. He is a graduate of Terrell High School in Denison and Commonwealth College of Mortuary Science in Houston, Texas. James is a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer in Texas since 1970 and in Oklahoma since 1996. James has 46 years of experience as a funeral professional. He has been married to his wife Barbara Kinney Smith for 52 years. They have three children and six grandchildren.

## 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*

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- Mobile App: 'RedRiverUU' free from the [Apps Store](#) and [Google Play](#).
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## Heretic of the Week: Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Editors crave news, and always relish "filler" believing it superior to blank space. In each week's issue of The Catholic Herald author Charles Coulombe writes a column called Heretic of the Week. His work is food for thought, especially for UUs as his heretics are our heroes. To wit:*



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) is considered to be one of the greatest writers the United States has ever produced. Generations of schoolchildren have read his essays, and his opinions have been drilled into

students as the epitome of American individualism and rectitude.

His influence, moreover, has been reinforced by his disciples, such as Henry David Thoreau. In a nutshell, these American Transcendentalists were the first and most eloquent proponents of what is today called being "spiritual, but not religious". Pantheists and Deists by turns, their views have been a strong current in American intellectual and theological life since Emerson's time – and greatly due to his pre-eminence.

In 1829, following in his father's footsteps, Emerson was ordained junior pastor of the Second Church in Boston, which had become officially Unitarian in 1802. Three years later, his ministry came to an end, because he refused to celebrate the Lord's Supper, declaring in a sermon that he did not believe that Christ had really ordered his Apostles to perform the rite, and that it made Christ the sole mediator between God and man.

More importantly, "This mode of commemorating Christ is not suitable to me. That is reason enough why I should abandon it. If I believed that it was enjoined by Jesus on his disciples, and that he even contemplated making permanent this mode of commemoration, every way agreeable to an eastern mind, and yet, on trial, it was disagreeable to my own feelings, I should not adopt it."

While the ensuing uproar ensured the loss of his post and ejection from the ministry, it is in truth the quintessence of the Protestant notion of private judgment. That he is considered the ultimate American philosopher does not speak well for us.

Image: Emerson's grave in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord