



Red River Ramblings

The Monthly Newsletter of Red River Unitarian Universalists ♦ Denison TX ♦ Vol 22, No. 4 ♦ July 2020

SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2020 *Join us at 11:15 am on our [YouTube channel](#)*

“LIBERATING STRIFE: INDEPENDENCE DAY 2020”

The Worship Team, *leading*

The little-known third verse of “*America the Beautiful*” contains these words:

*“Oh, beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife
who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life!”*

Emerging from the liberating strife of the American Revolution, our country has faced strife many times before in its quest to form a more perfect union. Join the Worship Team this Sunday as we honor American independence as a liberating strife with prose, poetry, and music -- even as we pass through our own historic moment of strife that must ultimately be liberating.

SUNDAY, JULY 12 2020 *Join us at 11:15 am on our [YouTube channel](#)*

“REVIVAL OF RELATIONS, REVOLUTION OF VALUES”

The Rev. Danielle Di Bona, *preaching*

Our sermon this morning was given at the Service of the Living Tradition during last month’s UU General Assembly. *The Rev. Danielle Di Bona has served UUism for 30 years and is the 2019 recipient of the Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism. In her retirement she serves as the Palliative Care chaplain at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth, MA*

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2020 *Join us at 11:15 am on our [YouTube channel](#)*

“TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION”

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

In developing the myth of American Exceptionalism, our society has not fully come to terms with the most problematic aspects of our history - systemic racism and the genocide of our indigenous siblings. What might we learn from other societies that have more thoroughly confronted and repented from the worst of their past as we explore ways forward in Beloved Community?

SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020 *Join us at 11:15 am on our [YouTube channel](#)*

“THE CHARRED HOUSE & THE RISING MOON”

The Rev. Chuck Freeman, *preaching*

Right now, our world is being harshly confronted with two pandemics. First, a once in a hundred-year physical virus and the other a 600-year-old systemic spiritual cancer called Racism. Both are ravaging the globe with death, metaphorically and literally burning down the house of the world’s failed systems.

We can claim the insurance and rebuild with the same design flaws or transform our structures with rising moon consciousness. UU’s and all people of good heart and good faith can lead the way. Will we obsess over the obsolete ashes or will we reach to the rising moon?

Board Report from the Spring Congregational Meeting

Summary of the Spring Congregational Meeting June 28th, 2020

This meeting was held via Zoom. A quorum was reached counting the online participants, proxies, and online voters.

The Board wants to recognize the people that made this happen:

- Doug Strong for running the PowerPoint presentation and helping with the online vote counting.
- Marla Loturco for creating the PowerPoint.
- David Dyer for taking minutes and verifying the quorum count. And vote count.
- Dick Powell for helping with the quorum count, vote count, and presenting the financial statements.
- Don Rogers on running the chapel camera and being the Zoom host.

Here are some of the highlights from this meeting:

Annual reports from the Board, Membership Committee, Committee on Ministry, Nominating Committee, Facilities, and the Long-Range Planning Committee were presented.

This year's financial reports were presented. Once the books are closed in early July, the actual budget variance report will be available. For now, the report is showing a positive balance of \$1,513. The Board will be reserving money out of this balance to pay for replacing the outside sign that is in need of replacement.

The proposed budget was presented. This is a bare bones budget due to the lower pledge commitments for the coming year plus the fact that the building will be closed (for a while). The projected income and expenses budget of \$37,130 for 2020-2021 was approved.

The following officers were elected:

- President: Jim Holmes, 2 years (class of 2022)
- Treasurer: Jan Fletcher, 2 years (class of 2022)
- Committee on Ministry: Marla Loturco, (this is a full term, class of 2023)
- Nominating Committee: LD Clark, (this is a full term, class of 2023)

The congregation approved changing the name of the Barton Parlor room to the Gil Alexander Room.

The upcoming annual goals that were approved came from the recommendations in the updated 5 Year Strategic Plan. These goals for 2020-2021 are:

- Continue to use Zoom to help keep our community connected. Look for new opportunities to use Zoom.
- Continue using YouTube to post Sunday services online.
- Add staff to support Zoom meetings and the recording of the Sunday services for YouTube viewing.
- Have the many Red River UU Teams and Committees look for opportunities to increase our online presence to our community and outside our community.
- Fill position for Outreach Coordinator.
- Fill position for RE Team Leader.
- Monitor membership activity and Outreach activity and adjust and fine tune as needed.
- Monitor marketing and PR activity and adjust as needed.
- Apply for NTUUC Grant (subject TBD).
- Add 1 Outreach program.
- The Board, Membership Team, and other key people meet to come up with new ways to attract new (younger) members
- The Board to research the cost of getting a billboard to advertise the church
- Adjust Budget and plans once the building reopens

Thanks to everyone who showed up and who voted online or by proxy.

The Board:

Jim, Lisa, David, Jan, and Sabra

Jim's Jabber

We start a new budget year on July 1. This should be interesting since we are still impacted by the pandemic which is showing a resurgence – UGH. I hope everyone is staying safe, wearing your masks when in public, and keeping your proper social distance.

Hopefully, everyone has read the Board report in this newsletter on the Spring Congregational Meeting we held on June 28th. I thought the Zoom meeting went rather well since this was the first time we have done a meeting like this on Zoom. Please send me your feedback on any issues you may have had or suggestions you have so that we can improve going forward.

The one big thing I want to discuss from this meeting are the 2020-2021 congregational goals we approved:

- 🕒 Continue to use Zoom to help keep our community connected. Look for new opportunities to use Zoom.
- 🕒 Continue using YouTube to post Sunday services online.
- 🕒 Add staff to support Zoom meetings and the recording of the Sunday services for YouTube viewing.
- 🕒 Have the many Red River UU Teams and Committees look for opportunities to increase our online presence to our community and outside our community.
- 🕒 Fill position for Outreach Coordinator.
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- 🕒 The Board, Membership Team, and other key people meet to come up with new ways to attract new (younger) members
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These goals focus on two main areas that impact our future success. First, with our building closed for now and for an unknown time into the future we need to keep our community connected. Several of these goals address expanding and

improving our online presence through YouTube, Facebook, the App, and the use of Zoom. Second, we need to come up with creative ways to virtually attract visitors that we can encourage to become members.

The Board challenges all of us to think of ways we can use our online tools to help accomplish these goals. It may be as simple as doing a zoom meeting for small focused groups like book clubs, knitting circles or other hobbies, or having a virtual coffee and conversations meetings to replace the ones we all used to do before the pandemic. These zoom groups also give us an opportunity to ask visitors to join in and hopefully feel comfortable with us. Think about what you are missing and what type of zoom focus group you would like to see. I would like to see these focus groups be visible on our website, Facebook, and App so that visitors may see something that would interest them into attending.

Doug pointed out in the June 28 meeting that we have a virtual suggestion box: suggestions@redriveruu.org. Please use this to help us with your ideas on how we can improve. Robert Shelton also requests that we use this to give the Worship Team feedback on services, speakers, new topics, or any other things that will help this team continually improve our YouTube services.

Finally, I want to thank Dick Powell for his excellent work as Treasurer. We won't miss him too much since he will now be our bookkeeper so I will still be able to harass him with large and complex spreadsheets! I also want to thank Jan Fletcher for becoming our new Treasurer and I and the Board look forward to working with Jan.

Stay Safe and keep on truck'n

Jim ❖



July Birthdays

03 - Don Rogers
10 - David Dyer
13 - Linn Cates
14 - Meg McMurry
14 - Robert Shelton
26 - Scott Bowie

Were you born in July? Send the day in July that you were born and next year you will be listed as well.

Upcoming Zoom Meetings

Welcoming Congregation - July 5 @ 1 pm

Board of Trustees - July 19 @ 1 pm

Adult Forum - Sundays @ 10 am

Conversations sans Calories - Sundays following the morning assembly.

Meet our Newest Member

Darlene McKinnell completed the pathway to membership in early March and was all set to join on March 15th, but the pandemic put a temporary halt on connecting the membership book with Darlene. It came to be on June 23rd when Jim and Darlene, with proud dad Don Rogers looking on, met at church for the signing. Here's the proof:



Treasurer's Report

In the month of May, we had total receipts of \$3,385.00. Expenses for the month totaled \$2,702.87. The result was an excess of receipts over expenditures for the month of May of \$682.13.

As of May 31, 2020, we had \$8,453.18 available in checking, a total of \$65,120.95 in all savings accounts and a total of \$14,717.67 in Certificates of Deposit. Pledges received by mail in our PO Box are being deposited weekly. ❖

Dick Powell, *treasurer*

Have you taken the
The Pandemic Version
Survey yet?

RedRiverUU: The Pandemic Version

The Committee on Ministry requests your assistance!

The times they are a'changing. Because of that we need to determine if Red River UU Church is doing everything it has thought of to support the lives of its members, friends, and visitors.

The Committee on Ministry is reviewing the new pandemic version of Red RiverUU. We know that the worship team has been working extremely hard to create meaningful Sunday morning assemblies. The Adult Forum is now a zoom meeting on Sunday morning; Conversations sans Calories is also a zoom meeting for visiting each week, and the board has been making calls to the congregation to check with how we each are managing.

But questions linger:

- 🙏 Are we, as a congregation, doing enough?
- 🙏 Are there any other things we could be doing?
- 🙏 What could you contribute to our new Pandemic version of our church?

To that end the CoM has created a survey which you will be receiving in your email soon. For those who hate waiting - **you can take the survey right now [here](#)**.

We would appreciate your help by providing feedback about what we are currently doing and what we might possibly do.

This survey is open to everyone. It is anonymous, so please be candid.

Dan, Marla, and Robert.

Right On! Ellie!

On June 23 Ellie Dyer and a trans friend attended a BLM rally in OK City in front of Nappy Roots Bookstore. They joined a LGBTQ+ group to paint a block long street mural of a gay pride flag. It was a peaceful event.

On June 26, Ellie stood with others at the Police station in Edmond, OK protesting the death of Isaiah Lewis, a 17-year old black teen, recently killed by a white officer. It was also peaceful; there were no police officers visible.

Ellie intends to continue to add her voice to the BLM movement.

General Assembly Report

This year Marion and Doug were our delegates to the 2020 UUA General Assembly, held online. Each offers some impressions:

Marion wrote:

I was able to attend all the business sessions and make the various votes. I haven't seen a lot other than that--partly because my WI-FI was still wonky off and on, and it still isn't fully "normal"--but I will be attending several things that are archived. Here are a few observations for the newsletter:

This year's General Assembly was definitely a distinct experience from the previous 16 assemblies I attended. It was all virtual, of course, but many elements were the same: opening ceremony, Service of the Living Tradition, Ware Lecture, and a moving opening address by UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray (a talk that I understand we will be seeing in a future worship service at Red River). As one of our congregation's two delegates, I attended several business sessions and voted on by-laws changes concerning the election of co-moderators and on a business resolution stating that the UUA should make business decisions with regard to their impact on human rights.

I did miss many elements of in-person GA's, of course. Walking through a huge convention center or around on the streets outside it and seeing fellow UU's everywhere, some in colorful garb from other lands, all wearing name badges identifying their congregations from all over--that's a part of GA I love. In our part of the country, UU's are in the minority, but at GA we are the majority in any downtown where we're meeting. The general assemblies I've attended before have had around 2,000 attendees (give or take), but this virtual GA had over twice that many!

Obviously, there were many issues to work out in hosting so many people completely online. Not everything worked perfectly as planned; any time technology is involved; multiple opportunities exist for things to go haywire. But my hat is off to the organizers, who had anticipated many of the difficulties and dealt with them pretty well. Mostly, people adjusted to the changed circumstances of our coming together with humor and good will. I hope we'll be able to meet in person in June 2021. But if that isn't possible, I know we can still have a good General Assembly!

Doug wrote:

For over a quarter century I was a committed "GA Junkie" attending 27 annual gatherings of our clan. After retiring from active ministry, I took a break - for the next 17 years but attended this year.

General Assembly has changed drastically since 2003. It was abundantly clear from the opening celebration to the closing worship. We have grown beyond being a well-healed, well educated and, well, a white denomination. Throughout the five days, we embraced a vastly wider swatch of Americana than ever before. One of the joys of not being tethered to creedal statement or dogma is that we are free to evolve as humanity and the environment evolve. We are today, more inclusive, more anxious to live as anti-racist, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic congregations. We are more attuned to speaking words that embrace and support diversity and are less demeaning. Everyone is welcome within our congregations. One could not miss it at GA. People of Color, Latinx, LGBTQ, those with special needs, are no longer on the sidelines, but up front and center. I was brought to tears several times during workshops, general meetings, and worship.

Here's a summary of major actions taken by the delegates:

The Business Resolution [*Embodying Human Rights in Our Investment Decisions*](#) was adopted.

The [*Bylaw Amendments Co-Moderator Vacancies and Timelines for Nominating Committee*](#) were adopted.

The following proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) were adopted.

- [*400 Years of White Supremacist Colonialism \(PDF\)*](#)
- [*Amen to Uprising \(PDF\)*](#)

The following [*Proposed Responsive Resolutions*](#) were adopted.

- Widening the Circle: Establishing Ongoing Intersectional Accountability Commission and Sunsetting the JTWTC
- Supporting and Investing in Youth and Young Adults in Unitarian Universalism
- The Pandemic: A Religious Response

You will have opportunities to get glimpses of the people we are today over the next few months as we share several sermons from GA during upcoming online morning assemblies.

The 2021 GA will be in Milwaukee. Whether virtual or 'in person' think seriously about going!

Our Leaders

Board of Trustees

Jim Holmes, *President*

Lisa Cates, *Vice-President*

Jan Fletcher, *Treasurer*

David Dyer, *Secretary*

Sabra Jones, *Trustee*

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: *Jim (until we find someone)*

Finance: *Jim, Dick, Doug*

Grounds: *Marilyn*

Long Range Planning: *Jim, Marilyn, Robert, Ronda*

Membership: *Marion*

NTUUC Rep: *Marla*

RE Team: *Tommi*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*

Social Action:

Welcoming Congregation:

Worship: *Dan, Doug, Marla, Robert*

Contact Us

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For those faithful readers who actually scrutinize every page of our newsletter, a little something to brighten your day!

A Picture Really Is
Worth 1,000 Words!



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