



Red River Ramblings



December 2020
Volume 22
Issue 8

Grow Your Soul & Serve the World

In this issue:

[Breathe: A Letter to My Sons](#) by Imani Perry is the new UU Common Read. Join our Common Read Discussion Group!

Make your video for our annual Sharing morning assembly.

The Adult Forum looks to the heavens this month.

Deck the Halls with the sound of music! The Dec. Music Circle is Dec 19.

Our YouTube channel now has 61 subscribers.

Virtual Worship Sundays @ 11:15 am on both our [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#)

Sunday, December 6, 2020

The Once and Future Tabernacle
the Rev. Dr. Christine Tata

In these pandemic days, our congregations have changed, challenged to find new ways of being together and of remaining faithful. We are becoming more like loosely knit communities of prophets crying in the wilderness, relying only on the spirit--and adequate bandwidth--and some of our churches may never physically reopen. Although that may feel like the end of everything, I believe it could be just the beginning. The question is: beginning of what?

Sunday, December 13, 2020

Existentialism in a Time of Existentialist Threat

the Rev. Dr. Mark Y. A. Davies

In this discourse I will explore the philosophical perspective known as existentialism which found popularity in the thought of thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Jean Paul Sartre. Existentialists claim that our existence as persons precedes our essence and that we are the creators of our own meaning and value. To live as genuine or authentic persons, we must will ourselves to be free while also willing the freedom of others. What might the existentialists be able to teach us as we live into authentic freedom in a time of growing existential threats?

Sunday, December 20, 2015

Holy Is the Longest Night
the Rev. Dr. Christine Tata

Dark energy, scientists have recently discovered, accounts for more than two-thirds of the total energy in the observable universe; dark energy drives the expansion of creation. Now it's time for earthlings to celebrate the rich and varied beauty of darkness: in our language; in our persons, both on the surface and at our cores; and in our dreams, when we inhabit the darkness of healing sleep. Join the Rev. Dr. Christine, on the eve of the longest night of the year, to honor the dark.

Sunday, December 27, 2020

A Time to Share
The Entire Congregation!

Our annual sharing Sunday is time for everyone to bring a 3-5 minute reading you feel the rest of us would enjoy hearing. A poem, a joke, a story, or even a song if you wish. We need one another and being a virtual congregation, for now, makes it nearly impossible to "bring a reading to share" as we have for many years. Here's our virtual approach: 1) Find what you want to share. 2) Read the details on the next page how the Worship Team will record what you want to share. 3) Schedule your time with Dan Althoff. 4) Read from your home and then join us on Sunday to listen to what other have shared.

Red River Unitarian Universalists ♦ Denison, TX

We are a sanctuary for religious liberals celebrating compassion, diversity, and spiritual growth.



Jim's Jabber

As the pandemic rages hopefully all of you have been able to have a nice Thanksgiving while staying safe. Unfortunately, things will get worse before they get better and we will all need to continue with our practices through the Christmas and New Years holiday season. Stay safe out there and wear your mask, avoid crowds, practice safe distancing, and wash your hands.

I hope everyone is doing their best to follow our Annual Goals that I have listed below. I want to highlight #7. With all the restrictions we are having to do during the holidays, people may be feeling more isolated than ever. Please reach out (phone, facetime, zoom, dog sled, carrier pidgin, pony express, OMG a real letter, etc.) not only to your friends but also to members of Red River that you haven't seen in a while.

-  *Subscribe to our YouTube Channel and watch 2-3 morning assemblies each month*
-  *Attend 1 Zoom coffee hour a month*
-  *Sit in on 1 Adult Forum a month*
-  *Read the church newsletter 5 times over the next 8 months*
-  *Read the wednesdayUPDATE every week*
-  *Find and join 1 UU Zoom event*
-  *Reach out to 4 other members/friends over the next 8 months and have a friendly conversation (zoom/Google/FaceTime/Duo)*
-  *Be sure to press Share, Like, or write a comment for all online Red River UU events that catch your attention.*

During the month of November, our church has helped the Texoma Family shelter with two events. The first event was a blanket and socks hand-

out called "Share the Warmth".

These items were handed out in the church parking lot. (Check out the photos on page 4!) People drove through to get their packages. The second event was held also as a drive through for Thanksgiving food packages that the shelter handed out. Both events were very successful.

Since the pandemic has started we have been using the Little library to also distribute food items. Jolene has been leading this effort, but she has to pass this on to others since the Whitens are relocating to McKinney. We are looking for someone to take Jolene's place. If you are interested, please contact me. Also, we can always use food donations (canned goods and non-perishables) or money so we can buy items to place in the Little Library/Food Pantry.

The UU Ministers Association is recommending that visiting clergy receive an honorarium of \$315 (an increase of \$70 over the previous recommendation). The Board would appreciate donations to help defray the unexpected increase in clergy honoraria, but we are committed to providing high quality online assemblies, and we will find a way to guarantee that they continue.

Finally, I know that I am seeing some light at the end of the tunnel we seem to be stuck in. The election results have helped many of us feel more optimistic for 2021 and now there appears to be a vaccine on the near horizon that should finally stop this pandemic. I'm cautiously optimistic that we may be able to reopen our doors sometime in 2021. Fingers crossed!

Take care, keep safe,
And Keep on Truckn'

Jim Holmes
President

How to record what you want to share on December 27:

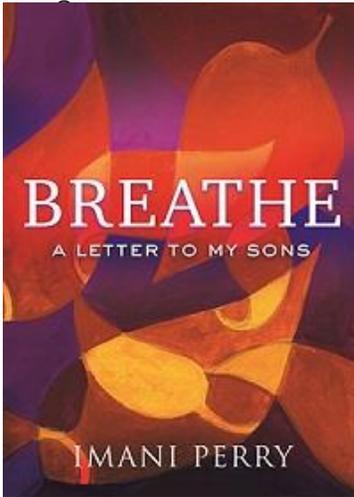
Would you like to share something with the congregation but don't feel confident about making a video on your own? We can help!

Dan Althoff is offering his assistance in helping you record your own message. On December 18, 19, and 20 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) from 2:00 to 5:00 pm each day, he will be available to meet with you online and record your thoughts to share with our virtual assembly on December 27.

You can click on this link to schedule your own time with Dan at the time that best suits your schedule: <https://calendly.com/spnish-chat/red-river-uu-sharing>

You will receive an email confirmation that also includes the link to the Zoom session with Dan--a one-click operation!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dan at his personal email: fdalthoff@gmail.com.



The UU Common Read for 2020-2021

The UUA is pleased to announce that [Breathe: A Letter to My Sons](#) by Imani Perry (Beacon Press, 2019) is the new Common Read.

Emotionally raw and deeply reflective, Imani Perry issues a challenge to society to see Black children as deserving of humanity. She admits fear and frustration for her African American sons in a society that is increasingly racist and at times seems irredeemable. However, as a mother, feminist, writer, and intellectual, Perry offers an unfettered expression of love—finding beauty and possibility in life—and she exhorts her children and their peers to find the courage to chart their own paths and find steady footing and inspiration in Black tradition. The *New York Times* calls *Breathe* “an elixir of history, ancestry and compassion, which, together, become instruction...a parent’s unflinching demand, born of inherited trauma and love, for her children’s right simply to be possible.”

Breathe offers a broader meditation on race, gender, and the meaning of a life well lived and is also an unforgettable lesson in Black resistance and resilience.

PURCHASE THE 2020-21 COMMON READ! Congregations, groups, and individuals may purchase this book in hardcover from [inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop](#); group discount available. The e-book and audio book (CD or MP3) are available from [Bookshop.org](#). Direct link to order: [In hardcover from InSpirit, the UUA Book and Gift Shop](#).

At this moment in time, we are in the midst of a historic national reckoning with what it means to live as a Black or Brown American and systems of institutional racism that have been operating to control, traumatize, and oppress people of color since our country’s founding. As our President, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, has written, “It matters that we support the uprisings whose goal is the liberation of Black people and communities who for too long have been crushed

by white supremacy, militarism, and capitalism. We must find the sources within ourselves to give us courage in this moment.” In choosing *Breathe* as the 2020-2021 Common Read, our hope is that it nurtures this necessary courage.

Congregations, groups, and individuals may purchase this book in hardcover from [inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop](#); group discount available. The e-book and audio book (CD or MP3) are available from [Bookshop.org](#).

Discussion materials for UU congregations, groups, and individuals will be available online, at no charge.



Imani Perry: this Princeton professor urges us to reclaim black history. Sneak Peek: 3:57 minute video

Born to social activist parents in Birmingham, Alabama, just nine years after the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, scholar and author Imani Perry grew up during a time of great change. At age 7, her family relocated to Cambridge, Massachusetts; her mother earned a Harvard doctorate while Perry’s own academic and literary ambitions took root. Today, Perry is the Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University where she examines the rich, layered interplay between history, race, law, and culture, with an emphasis on hip-hop music. Her interdisciplinary work is deeply reflective and also grounded in experience – her own, of those who came before her and that of the next generation. By sharing her multifaceted perspective, Perry hopes to reframe the way we think about black culture. “If there were one impact I’d like my work to have, it would be that people would cease talking about African American history and culture in terms of deprivation or inadequacy and actually acknowledge its depth and complexity and beauty,” she says.

Contact [Marion Hill](#) if you want to be part of our Common Read Discussion.

A Common Read invites participants to read and discuss the same book in a given period of time.



Marion Hill and Doug Strong invite all who would like to join this Zoom Common Read to contact [Marion](#) to sign up.

The book, 184 pages, has 3 chapters plus an afterword.

Our plan is to meet via Zoom once every two weeks during January and February, to discuss each chapter and than a summary discussion of the entire book.

Won’t you join us?





The Adult Forum

During December, the Adult Forum will be all about the stars and the universe.

December 6: The first presentation will be a YouTube video on the birth of the universe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OpbdMjvni0>

December 13: will be two videos: How the universe is bigger than you think.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly7NziCmUf0>

And the Hubble's collection of anniversary images.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09H9xgwGycw>

December 20: We will watch a YouTube video on the Christmas star.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKNLLnA-TMU>

December 27: We are still deciding what to show for the final Sunday in December.

Jim Holmes is December's coordinator

December's Birthdays

- 04 - Donna Toerper
- 05 - Ronda DeCaire
- 07 - David Lawrence
- 12 - Cindy Buffington
- 17 - Amy Hoffman-Shehan
- 18 - Jennifer Schwichtenberg
- 18 - Jim Holmes



Jan's Musical Circle ~ Dec 19

Deck the Halls with sounds of music! After missing last month due to covid-19 quarantine, let's get together to make some joyous music in December. Jan's Virtual Music Circle will meet Saturday, December 19 on Zoom. The site opens at 5:30 for performance sign up and music begins at 6.



If you have not joined us before, I began my music "jam" in 2008 as a chalice circle at Red River Unitarian Universalists in Denison, TX. The acoustic music circle has continued in my home most years since then until COVID-19. Though a virtual circle is not the same as being able to play songs together and interact, it is at least a chance to share music and friendship. I'm very grateful that RRUU supports this through use of their zoom account.

So, get out your acoustic instrument of choice, warm up your voice, send me a an RSVP that you will perform and join us for Jan's Virtual Music Circle on Sat, 12/19 at 5:30. All acoustic song styles as well as non-performing listeners are welcome and encouraged. Please contact me if you plan to join us and I will send you the zoom ID and password the week of the event.

Let the Music Play On,
[Jan](#)

Treasurer's Report ~ October 2020

In the month of October, we had total receipts of \$2,517.07. Expenses for the month totaled \$3,098.81. The result was an excess of expenditures over receipts of \$581.74.

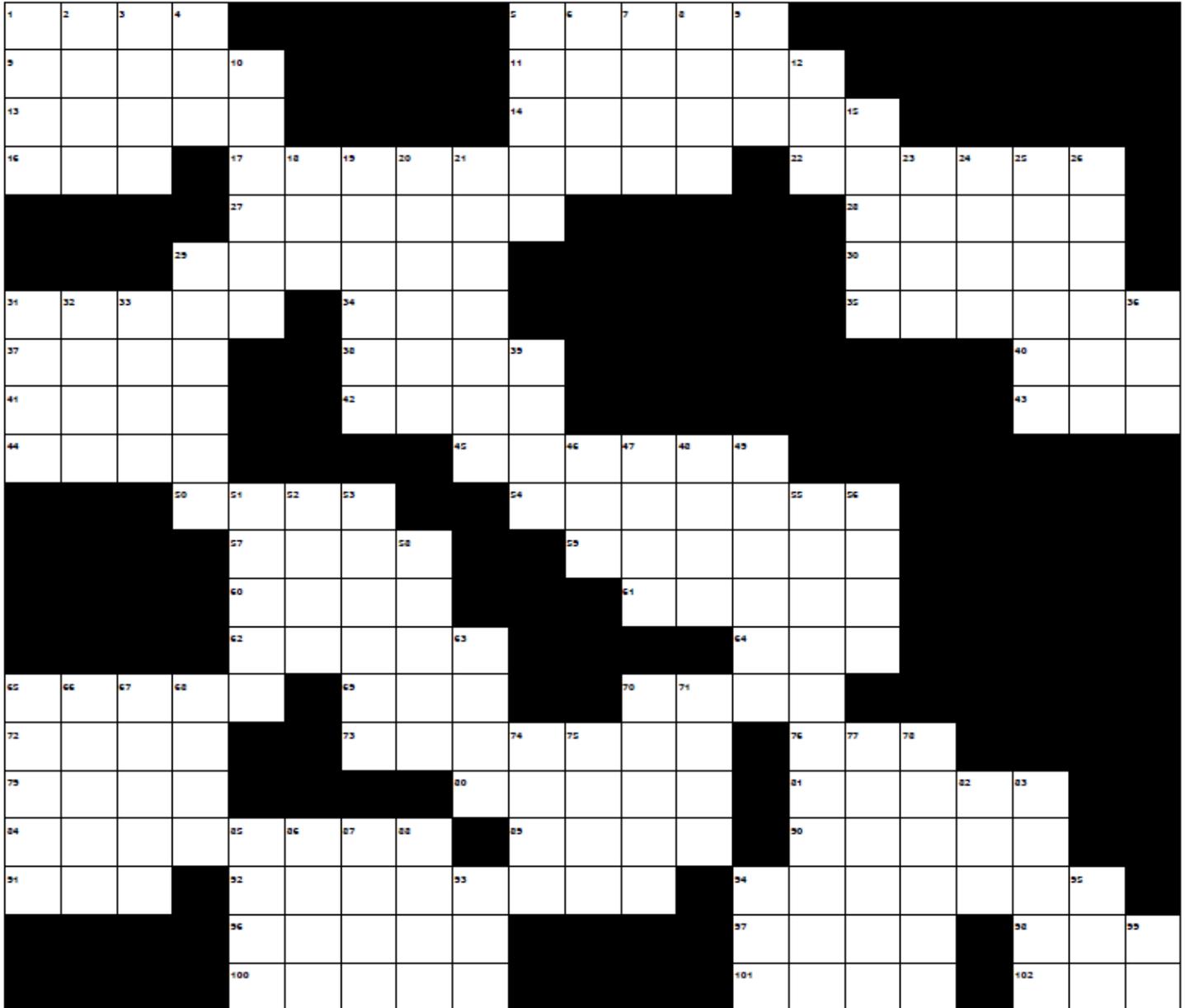
As of October 31, 2020, we had \$2,575.17 available in checking, \$18,025.74 in general savings, \$12,058.50 in the Endowment Fund at UUCEF, and \$54,725.90 in the Savings Fund at UUCEF for a total of \$84,872.21 in all savings accounts. We have a total of \$6,779.39 remaining on the renovation loan.

Marilyn Alexander, *treasurer*

Photos from the Share the Warmth



Famous UU's Crossword Puzzle ~ Created by Robert Shelton



ACROSS 1. 27th in line [UU]

5. Gem stone
 9. Belonging to Mr. Sandler
 11. Fundamentalists Bane [UU]
 13. Type of Juror
 14. Not for
 16. Direction [Abbr]
 17. News bad boy [UU]
 22. Sculptor
 27. Rents
 28. Ancient Turkish region
 29. Card game
 30. ASPCA founder [UU]
 31. Chemical element
 34. Tit for ____
 35. Blissful
 37. Child's toy
 38. Elevator man
 40. Airport [Abbr]
 41. Unit of matter
 42. English shire
 43. Lower
 44. Battle hymn [UU]
 45. Encircled
 50. Ego
 54. In the zone [UU]
 57. Part of speech
 59. Showy plant
 60. Valley
 61. Part of ship's hull
 62. Dark
 64. Alsace region
 65. Crown
 69. Self
 70. Shop
 72. Edible tuber
 73. Parallelogram
 76. Put away
 79. Front of phobia
 80. Lecture
 81. Scandinavian
 84. Leading apostle [UU]
 89. Valid
 90. Sticky

91. Islet

92. No scent
 94. Founder ACLU [UU]
 96. Strange
 97. General Robert
 98. In the box
 100. Bodies of light
 101. Square
 102. Obtained

DOWN: 1. Adhesive

2. Arabian gulf
 3. Lot
 4. Enough said! [Abbr]
 5. Founding Father [UU]
 6. Crazy about
 7. Island group
 8. One of two
 9. German article
 10. Taken
 12. Agency in the news
 15. Clan

18. Pasture
 19. Composer/pianist [UU]
 20. Holdings
 21. At ease
 23. ____ the line
 24. In the matter of
 25. Inked
 26. Society island
 31. Biblical wife
 32. ____ Rooter
 33. Shine
 36. Lid
 39. Program language
 46. Primary color
 47. Olive ____
 48. Grades 1-12
 49. Funny Phyllis
 51. Finish
 52. Temporary gift
 53. Feminist [UU]
 55. Red Cross [UU]
 56. Irish

58. Horse denial
 63. Spree
 65. Pile
 66. Hiding place
 67. Finery display
 68. Crazy bird
 70. Lubricant
 71. Tennis great
 74. Allot
 75. Night spots
 77. The Jug
 78. Eaten
 82. Baste
 83. Watching
 85. Yuletide
 86. Thought
 87. Standard
 88. Clasp
 93. French article
 94. Gentle ____
 95. Recent
 99. Heft [Abbr]

Our Leaders

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~~Jan Fletcher~~ [Marilyn Alexander](#), *Treasurer*

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Dan Althoff, Elbert Hill, Marla Loturco

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Kelly Cofield Dyer, Amy Hoffman-Shehan,

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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: [Adrian](#), [Amy](#), [Lisa](#), [Marla](#), [Thomas](#)

Worship: *Dan, Doug, Marla, Robert*

Contact Us

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How to reach us:

- Phone: 903.231.3232
- [Mobile App](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)

The church calendar is now merged with the EVENTS listing on the church website home page

Share Your Faith this Season

inSpirit Holiday Gift Guide

Make the holiday season a little easier this year with the [holiday guide](#) from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop! We've highlighted some of our favorite gift ideas in the guide and hope these small joys bring some comfort and delight in these challenging times. Free standard shipping on orders of \$50 or more within the US is available now through December 13th.

You can also browse our beautiful and ethically made [holiday cards](#) and check out our new [books for children and teens](#). Your purchase from inSpirit contributes directly to the work of the Unitarian Universalist Association to support our congregations—thank you. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season!



UU Service Committee Guest At Your Table



2020-2021 Theme: *The Meaning of Home* For many of us, our relationship with home has intensified this year. The pandemic has given many of us new appreciation for, and concerns about, the places

we call home and the centrality of these places in our lives.

This year during Guest at Your Table, focuses on home. Our partners in Central America are working to make sure no one is forced to flee their home due to violence or economic devastation. Our partners in Alaska, Louisiana, and the Pacific are fighting for their homes and ancestral lands against the ravages of extractive industries and climate change. And our partners in Burma, Bangladesh, and beyond are working tirelessly to support the rights of the Rohingya ethnic minority of Burma after facing government backed genocide in their homeland.

The ways in which our congregations and families come together may look different, but the beloved tradition of Guest at Your Table is here and needs your support.

To donate by mail, please make checks out to "UUSC" with "Guest" or "GAYT" in the memo field and send to: UUSC