

Reel River Ramblings

Sunday, May 1, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Right Belief or Right Living - The Rev. Dr. David Usher, guest minister (video message)

David was the hula hoop champion Manchester before going on to write one of the greatest books of knock knock jokes and it's probably most famous for his art exhibition at the Guggenheim of cotton candy sculptures. He was raised a Unitarian in Adelaide, Australia. After four years as a jackaroo in the outback of Australia and then traveling solo around the world he studied for the ministry in Oxford, England, where he gained a master's degree in Philosophy & Theology. He then earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Andover Newton Theological School. He has ministered in the UK and the USA, finishing his thirty-six-year career as Interim Minister in Grass Valley, California. He was the founding President of The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) and is the author of two books. He is now retired and lives in San Mateo.

Sunday, May 8, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Strong Families - More than Cards and Flowers - The Worship Team, leading

There are reasons the worship team decided to focus on history of Mother's Day and Flower Communion today. Both Unitarian women invented events, both carry intriguing messages about families and connections. One is still predominately a UU celebration while the other was co-opted by the Methodists and Hallmark. Both speak to our hearts, and both can challenge us to deepen our connections with one another and in the larger world.

Bring with you a flower, or two as together we remember the creation stories of both events, along with introducing ourselves to the Strong Family Network, of which the UUA is a member.



Sunday, May 15, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Pernicious Propaganda - The Rev. Mark Y.A. Davies, leading

Everywhere we turn we are immersed in propaganda that is being used to persuade us to believe and act in ways others wish us to believe and act, often with little regard for the truth or the common good. Are there ways for us to weaken the pernicious power that propaganda has in our lives?

Sunday, May 22, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Going Local - The Rev. Dr. Mark Y.A. Davies, leading

2000-mile salads, money streaming out of our local communities, dependence on global corporations, living in debt, little to no connection and commerce with the people around us, over-dependence on fossil fuel, depopulation and impoverishment of rural communities – these are the hallmarks of a global economy with little concern for the flourishing of our local communities. But there is a movement that is working to transform our systems in a more local direction.

Sunday, May 28, 2022 – 11:15 AM

What's In a Name? - Dr. Rachael Tudor, guest speaker

Names and labels are used to identify and, all too often, exclude, marginalize, and literally demonize people who are different or see the world differently. Through the use of the power of naming, individuals and communities are deprived of their rights and dignity as human beings. The neologism "transgender" is one such name / label. I will share my experiences with this label in reference to employment justice and our culture.

Jim's Jabber

Make sure you have your calendar marked for our Spring Congregational Meeting scheduled for May 15th at 1pm. We are planning on Potluck so please come to the meeting in person and bring a food dish to share. You will be receiving the packet of information for this meeting by May 2nd.

Thank you to everyone that responded to our Minister Search survey. As I write this the Board has completed a team to present at the May 15th meeting. With several of our members in not the best of health, or busy with work or family, the list of people that we asked was very short but I'm sure you will be pleased with the ones that were selected.

Another item we will be discussing in the May meeting is "What do we call ourselves"? Here are some interesting observations I uncovered:

- Our legal name is "Red River Unitarian Universalist Church, Inc." (Bylaws and Texas nonprofit documents).
- Our sign outside and some of our documents say Red River Unitarian Universalists.
- On other documents it shows Red River Unitarian Universalist Church.
- On some documents I also see Red River UU or Red River UU Church. I know that I do this because I am a lazy typist and don't like to type out Red River Unitarian Universalists!
- NTUUC calls us Red River Unitarian Universalist Church and UUA refers to us as Red River UUs.
- The location field for Events on our website says Red River UU Church.

If I do a Google search for Unitarian (or Universalist) churches near me, I get Red River Unitarian Universalists. If I search churches near me, Red River does not show up on the list. If I search pagan churches near me, I get Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. Facebook calls us Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. There is also a Red River LGBTQ community group on Facebook that says it is sponsored by the Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. If I Google search on RRUU, I do

get hits. Most link back to our website but there are links that try to go to our old site and result in "page not found". A search on YouTube using Red River shows us as Red River UU Church in the search list and when I go to that link our subscription page it shows as Red River Unitarian Universalists.

The Board has been looking into this and feels that we need to be consistent. Once we are consistent, we can address improving our search hits on Google, Facebook, and YouTube. This will be one of the discussion items in the May Meeting.

Our Stewardship Campaign for the next budget year of 2022-2023 starting July 1 has completed. The proposed budget set a target of \$38,000 and I am happy to report that we exceeded this amount. This will not only allow us to support our plans for the upcoming year but allow us to save a few dollars for future minister expense. This budget will be presented at the May Congregational Meeting on May 15th for membership approval. Thank you to everyone that pledged!

As an Earth Day Festival volunteer this year, I am happy to report that it was very successful. It was nice to see it return after being closed for 2 years because of the pandemic. I hope many of you had a chance to attend. Red River UU had a booth in a prominent location and were visited by many attendees. We handed out pens and notepads with our name and website, and assorted UU flyers. It will be interesting to see if this leads to any new visitors. Thankyou everyone who volunteered at the festival and helped out in our booth.

See you after service on May 15th. I hope to be first in line for the potluck food. Take care and keep safe,

And Keep on Truckin'.

Jim Holmes
president

Poem for Mother

*I think that I shall never see another
Poem as lovely as my mother.*

*A woman who went hungry if pressed,
To ensure her children were fed and blessed;*

*One who looked to providence each day,
And, by example, taught us how to pray;*

*A woman, in our Spring so fair,
Flowered us with love and care;*

*And in the Summertime of childhood,
Shined on us peace, illuminated good;*

*As leaves fall down in the Autumn of life,
Still, she strived to protect us from strife;*

*And as the Winter arrived, cold and drear,
She held us in her heart, warm and dear.*

*Poems are made by folks like me,
But only God can make a Mommy.*

by Don Mathis (inspired by Alfred Joyce Kilmer's "Trees")



Flower Communion - Follen UU Church, Lexington MA

Flower Communion

In its essentials, the ritual involves the following: each congregant brings a flower to be used in the service; congregants leave their flowers in a central location either as they enter or during the service. Early in the service the bouquets of flowers are carried in, often by children. Towards the end of the service, the flowers are distributed, or congregants come forward and choose a flower different from the one they brought.

Many congregations include this blessing used by Čapek to consecrate the flowers before they are passed to or distributed among the people:

"Infinite Spirit of Life, we ask thy blessing on these, thy messengers of fellowship and love. May they remind us, amid diversities of knowledge and of gifts, to be one in desire and affection, and devotion to thy holy will. May they also remind us of the value of comradeship, of doing and sharing alike. May we cherish friendship as one of thy most precious gifts. May we not let awareness of another's talents discourage us, or sully our relationship, but may we realize that whatever we can do, great or small, the efforts of all of us are needed to do thy work in this world."

As with the flaming chalice there is no one orthodox interpretation of this flower ritual. The beauty and diversity of flowers is seen as symbolic of the beauty and diversity of life. Czech Unitarian Iva Fišerová has written: "*The flower is the most beloved symbol for Czech Unitarians... The symbol of various unique beings -- flowers/people -- uniting to create a unique bouquet... Parting and being given a flower as a symbol of anybody in attendance whom I am expected to accept as my brother or sister.*"

Yet Another Earth Day Festival

The 2022 Texoma Earth Day Festival had a special joy ... it did not rain! People wandered around looking at various booths, including the one from RedRiverUU. The only bummer was the wind that kept people diving down to grab pamphlets, and other literature that the mother nature wanted to spread all over the grounds. Thanks for all who send photos, here's an overview of the day:



RED RIVER UU ~
THE REASON
EARTH DAY IS
IN TEXOMA.



It is Not too Late to Sign Up

Did you know that Falls are the most common cause of serious injuries as we age? Even the fear of Falling can affect the active participation in life. A Matter of Balance is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.



Join Wellness Coaches, Tommi Homuth and Joyce White, the Texas A&M Family & Community Health County Extension Agent as they present an 8-session workshop to help improve balance, flexibility, and strength. The course starts Tuesday, May 5 and runs each Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am to noon. Classes will be held in the Alexander and Emerson rooms at church.

A Matter of Balance uses practical coping strategies to reduce fear of falling and to diminish the risk of falling including group discussions, mutual problem solving, exercises to improve strength, coordination and balance, and home safety evaluation. The \$20.00 Workshop fee will be sponsored by Tracy Realty for all who sign up. BE AWARE: There are *only* 5 places remaining for this important workshop.

The Spring Congregational Meeting

This year's Spring Congregational meeting will be **May 15** starting with a potluck finger food snackable lunch followed at 12:45 for the start of the meeting. This is the meeting where we must, according to the church bylaws, elect leadership positions to replace those whose terms of office expire; approve the budget for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023); approve new annual congregational goals; along with discussing the reports (which will be sent to the membership, and available to friends as well, on Monday, May 2nd) and have an opportunity for an open discussion about things people want to discuss. A major discussion will also offer everyone some more details about the process we voted to begin as we search for a contract minister.

Because we will have several opportunities to vote, for those unable to attend the meeting - either in person or on Zoom (Meeting ID: 989 0789 7878) online voting will open on Sunday, May 8 and close at Noon on Sunday, May 15.

The complete packet of documents will be available to be read and/or downloaded from three places: 1) the home page of the church website, 2) the home screen of our mobile app, 3) from the email sent to the voting membership from the Board of Trustees. The contents of the packet will also be projected on the screen during the meeting.

The Caring Circle



Birthdays during May

09 - Ellie Dyer

27 - Don Mathis

Carol, Carolyn, and David
caringcircle@redriveruuu.org

With Gratitude



The 2020 Stewardship Campaign

BELIEVING WE CAN

Kudos to you, and her, and him, and them and everyone else who expressed their faith in BELIEVING WE CAN because by believing we can, we did it! Each who could give, did. Some gave more, some gave less but adding up all the gifts, great and small, we raised sufficient amounts to assure our financial stability during the next fiscal year. We believed all right! In numbers, the 2022 Stewardship Campaign final tally is 15% more than last year. Granted we can't look at it as 'prophet' (oops 'profit'), but we can rejoice at how well we believe in RedRiverUU.

Treasurer's Report

March 2022 had receipts considerably lower than in the prior month (\$2,394.05 compared to the \$7,300.00, that was received in February). Fortunately, expenses were also less than in February (by about \$500), which, unfortunately, was not enough to avoid a net loss for March of (\$544.56). Net income for this fiscal year-to-date remains very positive at \$25,456.81.

As of March 31, 2022, we had \$4,858.04 available in checking. We also have a total of \$19,105.48 in all savings accounts, including \$2,545.00 in the Ronda DeCaire Memorial Fund. I still haven't made any adjustment, but, as reported last month, the total market value of our investment in UUCEF funds has declined from \$81,847.52 to \$77,296.88, a market value decline of \$4,550.64 (5.6%).

Dick Powell, *Treasurer*

Adult Forum

Starting in May and continuing through July 17, the Adult Forum will be presenting a new Great Courses Series by watching 12 separate videos, followed by an open conversation about the universe. Led by Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson. In My Favorite Universe, the astrophysicist who directs the nation's most famous planetarium takes you on a spirited and intellectually engaging journey through the cosmos and all its history, from before the Big Bang to the most likely ways in which Earth, and perhaps the entire universe, might end. Of the series, Dr. deGrasse Tyson comments, In My Favorite Universe, the astrophysicist who directs the nation's most famous planetarium takes you on a spirited and intellectually engaging journey through the cosmos and all its history, from before the Big Bang to the most likely ways in which Earth, and perhaps the entire universe, might end. The Forum meets Sunday mornings @10 in the Alexander Room and for those in our hybrid congregation, via Zoom (Meeting ID 989 0789 7878). Open to all. The weekly topics are available on the church calendar (or just tap/click [here](#)).



Read This! It Matters

There is an historic process under way to review and revise Article II of our UUA Bylaws. Anyone who has sought guidance or sustenance in our seven UU Principles and six Sources has a stake in the outcome of this review. Article II is the section of our Bylaws that articulates these points, as well as the UUA's Purposes, our Inclusion Clause, and our Freedom of Belief Statement.



The Article II Study Commission, made up of UU youth and adult leaders from across our Association, is eager to hear from you about what changes are needed. Meet the members of the Commission and **learn more about this historic opportunity** to shape the future of our faith.

These are consequential, exciting times for Unitarian Universalism. However, you decide to show up for this moment, your UUA will be right there with you. Here is a quick overview of why many UUs want to create an 8th Principle:

There is a group working to add an eighth principle to our Purposes and Principles. Given the current rancor concerning the growing divide between various ethnicities in the world a reflection of our UU values might well deserve to be added as an 8th principle. Perhaps it is time to re-ignite the chalice! If you are interested in exploring the addition of an eighth principle.

For more information contact info@uua.org.

Our Leaders

Board of Trustees

Jim Holmes, *President*
Marilyn Alexander, *Vice-President*
Dick Powell, *Treasurer*
David Dyer, *Secretary*
Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *Trustee*

Committee on Ministry:

Elbert Hill, Carolyn Cameron

Nominating:

Kelly Cofield Dyer, Don Rogers, Linda Tracy

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: *Marilyn, Jim, Amy, Marion*
Aesthetics: *Carol, Doug*
Caring Circle: *Carol, Carolyn, David*
Communications: *Doug*
Endowment: *Carolyn, Dick, Doug*
Facilities: *Jim*
Finance: *Jim, Dick, Jan, Marilyn*
Grounds: *Marilyn*
Long Range Planning: *Jim, Marilyn*
Membership: *Marion*
Minister Investigation: *Dick, Marla*
NTUUC Rep: *Marla*
RE Team: *David, Ellie, Marilyn*
Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*
Social Action:
Welcoming Congregation: *Adrian, Am*
Lisa,
Marla, Thomas
Worship: *Dan, Doug, Jana, Marla*

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