

Sunday, September 3, 2023 - 11:15 am

Ending Poverty

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

We live in the wealthiest nation on earth, yet we have the highest poverty rate among advanced democracies. What is behind the perpetuation of American poverty, and what can be done to end it? Read Mark's bio here.

Sunday, September 10, 2023 - 11:15 am

What Will You Bring to the Feast?

The Worship Team, leading

Please bring a small vial of water and a contribution for the Texoma Family Shelter. The list for the shelter includes: (Mayonnaise, miracle whip, Paper Plates, Plastic Wear, Paper Towels, Solo Cups, Hamburger Buns, Hotdog Buns, Sliced bread, sliced cheese, shredded cheese, bottled water, snack foods, drinks like fruit juice, gallon zip lock bags, black sharpies, flour tortillas, tortilla chips, potato chips)

In 1980, two Unitarian universalist women, Carolyn McDade, and Lucille Shuck Longview, were asked to create a worship experience for the Women and Religion Continental - Convocation of Unitarian Universalist. As they shaped that ceremony McDade and Longview wanted to create a ritual "that spoke to our connectedness to one another, to the totality of life, and to our place on this planet." They included a new, inclusive symbol of women's spirituality: water. They write that the first water communion was for them "a new story of creation," and that water was their chosen symbol of empowerment.

This year our Water Communion will be celebrated with a folk tale about trickery at a royal feast.

It provides a fresh lens for our Unitarian Universalist tradition of the water ceremony, also called "water communion," "ingathering," or "homecoming." As we begin a new congregational year by mingling our various contributions of water from the summer, each of us must answer these questions: Will I contribute the best of myself to this beloved community? Will I share my gifts, adding to our abundance, or will I hold back my gifts for my own use?

Sunday, September 17, 2023 - 11:15 am

Education Under Siege

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

Teachers, professors, and the value of academic freedom are currently under attack in a number of locations throughout the United States, including Oklahoma and Texas. Such attacks on education represent a bright red flag that Christian Nationalism is waxing within our society. How can we support education and educators during these perilous times?

Sunday, September 24, 2023 - 11:15 am

Peace Makers #9 – Leaders Caring for the Planet

Marla Loturco, leadina

Rachel Carson and David Suzuki are excellent examples of leaders who model caring for the earth. Join us as we learn about their lives and contributions. Information on both of these leaders is based on the book "Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World" by Ken Beller and Heather Chase.

Continued on next column

Marilyn's Musings

I think we are making it through summer. July and August were brutal for everyone. We experienced excessive heat, while California dealt with the first hurricane since the 1930's and also had to contend with an earthquake. The southern states had floods. Washington and Oregon had fires and everyone from time to time had low visibility and choking smoky air from the northwest and Canada. Should I say, "climate change?" It's not just coming. It is here. I'm proud that Red River UU is already onboard, and we are trying to do our part to educate the public about the causes of these changes in our environment. Red River is a place where we talk about environmental causes and effects along with our own responsibilities.

In August, I took a three-day course in how to teach Our Whole Lives to grades 7-9 and 10-12. This is a course on sex education and sensuality that is written by the UUA and the United Churches of Christ (UCC). The course is medically correct and has appropriate age-activities to help teens create understanding. The course was informative, and I became certified to teach it. But it must be taught with another OWL certified teacher and there must be a minimum of students in the class, so it will be a while before we have enough students to offer the class. We must have 8 students enrolled in order to offer the course. Also, I hope others in our congregation will be willing to take the training to become OWL certified.

I joined Jan Fletcher, Curtis & Sue Severins, Amy, Melleisa, Barb Rush and Tony Beaverson at the NAACP banquet and Red River UU had a full table with our sign in the middle of the table. The Hon. District Judge Angela Tucker, who has served as judge of the 199th District Court in Collin County since 2012, was the keynote speaker who spoke to a room filled to capacity. She is a graduate from UT Austin and Dedman School of Law at SMU. She would be an interesting speaker for one of our Morning Assemblies.

On another note, I asked in my last musing for activity and content suggestions for the SumFun class David, Megan and I plan to offer next summer and haven't received any.

If any of you have ideas or would like to help with the Sum-Fun class, we would love to hear from you.

Also, I asked for some of you to volunteer to serve for either the fan drive committee or the school supply drive committee. Please visit with Amy or me about this.

From our board meeting (I did not attend, so this is what I read in the minutes):

- 1. The Board approved an updated Strategic Plan.
- 2. The Board approved the Minister Compensation Grant for submission to NTUUC.
- 3. The next clothing swap will be in October.
- 4. Remaining school supplies will be put in our Little Library for distribution.
- 5. Amy is pursuing a variance from the city for the placement of a textile bin.
- 6. A request from the Aesthetics Committee to rehang the wall hangings depicting the different religions and frame Red River achievements to place on the wall you face when exiting the sanctuary at a cost of \$165.45 was approved with funds taken from savings. It was suggested that the membership be asked to donate to a fund to cover aesthetics projects, since they are not on the budget.
- Community Outreach: ArtFest is Sept 16 and will be used as a venue to promote our Tuesday groups of Yoga and the "Power of Now" and continue to sell raffle tickets for the quilt. PRIDE is October 21st.

We will not participate in the Denison Fall Festival.

- 8. Kerry is recovering from his injury and will be able to manage lawn care soon.
- 9. On September 28th, the board will have a retreat at my house, facilitated by Daniel Polk, NTUUC Executive Director.

Marilyn Alexander, president

Fall Congregational Mtg

HELLO, ALL Committees, Teams, and Interest Groups! It is time to be preparing your report for the Fall Congregational Meeting on October 22nd. Please keep your comments brief, remembering to report on the last 12 months (Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept 30, 2023).

A new request for this year (as we gather information for our minister's search), please tell us your committee/team/interest group's purpose and give examples of how that purpose is being fulfilled. These are the teams due to report. If I left any team off, please add yourself in and report back to me. Thanks for all you do to make Red River the wonderful place that it is. Marilyn Alexander, president

- Aesthetics
- Audio Visual
- Board Games
- Caring
- Chair Yoga
- Chambers of Commerce
- **Communications**
- Community Outreach
 - ArtFest
 - Austin College Volunteer Opportunity & Internship Fair
 - Denison fall Festival
 - Free Children's Clothing Swap
 - LGBTQ+ Welcoming Committee
 - Little Free Library
 - NAACP Dinner
 - Pride
- Earth Day Planning
- Endowment Committee
- Facilities
 - Building
 - Grounds
- Movable Feast
- National Voter Registration Day
- North Texas UU Congregation
- Power of NOW

- 🥙 Religious Education
 - Adult Forum
 - Children's Program
- Safe Congregation
- Shelter Meals
- Social Justice
- Strategic Planning (Long-range Planning)
- MLUUXT 🕸
- Website
- Web of Life Monarch Waystation
- Worship Team

Thinking of Joining Red River

If you have been visiting for a while and have thought, "This church feels right for me, I think I'd like to join." Please know we will welcome you. If you're curious why this is appearing on the same page as the annual reminder about Annual Reports, the reason is important.

Our bylaws - like many, if not most, of other UU congregations - state that one must be a member for at least 30 days in order to vote at annual, or specially called congregational meetings. This means you gotta sign the book by Friday, September 22nd so that you can vote.

Unlike many other communities of faith, Unitarian Universalists do not ask that you make a formal declaration of faith; or that you commit yourself to any set of doctrines, decrees, or adherence to specific beliefs.

Rather we ask that you complete our Pathway to Membership, in which you can explore ways you can become involved in the congregation while deepening your own understanding of what expectations the church asks of all members. Once you feel that this is a community to which you feel ready to become a member you simply sign the membership book. A brochure Pathway to Membership that outlines the guidelines can be found in the pamphlet rack in the foyer. Speak with Marion Hill, membership team chair, for more information.

Worship Survey

The deadline for taking the new worship survey is Wed, Sept. 13th. You can take the survey <u>here</u>.

A Special Event Coming in September

Understanding and Eliminating Social Arxiety



An evening exploring the causes and methods of eliminating anxiety.

Did you know ...

- We humans experience anxiety in unique ways not seen in any other life form?
- Our brains are a highly complex (and dysfunctional) processor that lets us think about things that do NOT exist?
- This ability lets us solve problems, BUT it also causes us to suffer anxiety?

Location: Red River Unitarian Universalist Church

515 North Burnett Ave. Denison, Texas

Date: Thursday, September 26, 2023 ~ 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Contact: Jim Runnels, LPC Phone: 903-744-2860

Suggested Donation \$10.00

Leader: Jim Runnels, LPC has provided counseling services to a variety of

individuals, families and adolescents for a variety of mental health

issues for over 25 years.

Summer Ends ~ Action Peturns

With the return to school, we say good-bye to vacations. Hopefully decent temperatures will return soon as well. So, let's get back to ways to embrace our UU Social Justice.

The Texas UU Justice Ministry resumes their weekly Action Hour. Email txuujm@gmail.com to be added and join us Thursday, September 7 at 7 pm for the opportunity to step up and respond to action needs around the state and country. The topics are almost always urgent and follow our UU beliefs. Or, I generally can add you to my email copy of action items after the meeting.



TXUUJM offers, <u>Virtual Sessions of the Trans Inclusion in Congregations</u> <u>Program</u>, **7:30-8:30 pm Mondays**, **Sept. 11 - Oct. 16**, **on Zoom** facilitated by Sarah Berel-Harrop and Heather Malkawi, with videos from Rev. Mykal Slack and Zr. Alex Kapitanbegins. It is free to Texas UUs, but space is limited. Use the link above to register.

The latest TXUUJM newsletter calls on us to fight Gov. Abbott on the Op-

eration Lone Star continuing harm and cruelty to immigrants along the Texas border. He continues to deprive basic human rights to immigrants, including family separations by TXDPS. We need to stand united against illegal arrests in Eagle Pass, send investigators to key localities along the border, and insist Gov. Abbot remove Buoys, concertina wire and shipping containers from the Rio Grande and off private property. Go to the TXUUYJM August 22 newsletter for the link to write President Biden about these outrageous actions. If you are not yet a member of Red River UU Social Justice Team, please contact me to be added. Jan Fletcher, Social Justice Leader

Moveable Feast for Sept.



Movable Feast will have lunch at 691, the student-run restaurant at College, on September 22 at either 11:30 or 11:45, Grayson whichever time is available. The food is always excellent, the service pleasant. Cost is \$15 per person, and tipping is encouraged since tips go to student scholarships. Nearer the time, Marion will forward a menu for the chosen day. Everyone is welcome to join this group. If interested in participating, contact Marion here.



"Uh, I don't suppose we could become Unitarians or something instead?"

Mirister Search Team

The Minister Search Team meets each month at 2pm in the Alexander Room on the Thursday prior to the Sunday monthly Board meeting. It is an open meeting so join us live or on Zoom with the Zoom ID 989 0789 7878.

HOT-OFF-THE-PRESS-Rev 2:

NTUUC has reinstated their grant program. At our meeting on August 17 via Zoom, we reviewed and approved the grant request form and the Grant Narrative document. These documents were then presented and approved by the Board. Once we collect the necessary supporting documents required by NTUUC we will submit the grant. The completed packet of documents for our grant proposal was submitted to NTUUC on August 31st.

In a phone conversation with Daniel Polk, NTUUC Exec, we asked what the limit was for requesting funds to hire a minister. After a brief pause, Daniel said that we should ask for what we need.

Since we started the analysis 2 years ago on determining the funding needed, things have changed.

- UUA adds a 3% inflation factor to the minister compensation calculation. Two years with a 3% inflation factor have increased the projected salary for Year 1 from \$89,000 to over \$94,000. Two years of compensation has increased by over \$12,000 over our original estimate two years ago.
- We have gained new members over the last two years, but we have also lost members, so the overall count has gone from 43 to 39 for active members.
- Our budget continues to increase each year so there is less surplus available to add to minister funding.
- We spent over \$5,000 on repairing the garage which ate up any surplus we would have had in our last budget year (July 2022-June 2023).

Because of these factors will be asking for a grant of \$90,000 to be paid \$45,000 per year for two years. We feel this is the amount necessary for Red River UU to be

able to afford a minister without overburdening us to cover the remaining funds.

We will keep the congregation posted on the progress of this grant request and we will have a detailed report at our fall congregation meeting.

At our team meeting in September, we will review the status of the grant request and update the UUA profile document and the Church History document. Both documents will be necessary once we apply for a minister on the UUA site. Once we get the NTUUC grant we will then begin the process to apply for other grants, especially a possible grant from Chalice Lighters (UUA Southern Region)

Money Matters

Treasurer Report as of July 31, 2023

We started a new fiscal year on July 1. Income was unusually high in July due to payments of annual pledge amounts by some of our very generous donors. A special thanks to everyone for pledging for this new year.

In the month of July, we had total receipts of \$15,908.62. Total expenses for the month were \$7,059.69, leaving us with a net profit for the month of \$8,848.93.

The net profit for the month was primarily due to the timing of pledge income, partly offset by the annual UUA Program Fund expense and by repairs to the wheelchair lift.

As of July 31, 2023, we had \$18,951.82 available in checking. There is a total of

\$20,709.72 in all savings accounts, including \$4,317.08 restricted for the Minister Fund and \$5,951.89 held in trust for Kat Walston from the sale of her personal effects prior to moving into assisted living. There is a total of \$66,784.40 invested in the UUA Common Endowment Fund.

Volunteer Opportunities

Are you looking for ways to get involved and show your support for Red River Unitarian Universalist Church? Several projects and committees need your help! Please look for the new Volunteer Opportunities list on the bulletin boards, with the names and contact information for the various ways you can be of service.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

September 7, 11 am to 1 pm – Austin College Non-Profit & Volunteer Opportunity Fair. Speak to Amy Hoffman-Shehan for information and to volunteer.

September 16, 8 am to 5 pm - Sherman Arts Festival Speak to Amy Hoffman-Shehan or Jim Holmes for information and to volunteer.

September 26 – 6:30-8:30 - Understanding and Eliminating Social Anxiety. An evening exploring the causes and methods of eliminating anxiety.

October 7, 8 am to 5 pm – Free Children's Clothing Swap. Speak to Adrian Hinman for information and to volunteer.

October 21, 9 am to 4 pm – Grayson Pride Festival Speak to Jack for information and to volunteer.

April 20, 2024, 8 am to 5 pm – Texoma Earth Day Festival. Speak with Amy for information. Help is needed on the 20th as well as the set day on April 19th.

COMMITTEES:

Worship Committee: The Worship Committee plans Sunday services. Help is needed with many aspects of planning. Among the ways you can help are select readings, music, suggest speakers. Worship associates are also needed to help with presentations. Any level of contribution is welcome, and some computer experience is helpful. Speak to Marla for information and to volunteer. Greeters: We rely on volunteers to greet members, friends, and visitors on Sunday mornings. We are short on volunteers, meaning some volunteers must be the greeter twice per month. Please consider being on our greeter list, even if (you can't commit every month. Speak to Marion Hill for information and to volunteer.

Membership Committee: We need volunteers to track and follow up with visitors and members who haven't

attended recently. Speak to Marion Hill for information and to volunteer.

Good Times Teams: The Good Times Teams provide refreshments for Conversations and Calories after the church Sunday. This is a long-term commitment to be on a team for a set Sunday of the month. If you are not able to make a long-term commitment, let Marilyn know you can be called on to fill in occasionally. Speak to Marilyn Alexander for information and to volunteer.

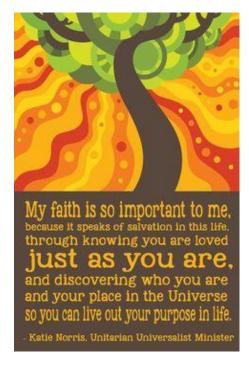
Monarch Way Station: Volunteers help maintain our certified Monarch Way Station, pulling weeds and keeping plants alive. Plantings of host and nurturing plants are planned by the garden sponsors. Speak to Linn Cates for information and to volunteer.

Chair Yoga

The weekly chair yoga under the leadership of Marsha Runnels meets each Tuesday from 10-11 am in the chapel. It is gentle impact approach which leaves participants feeling pretty spiffy when done. Newcomers are always welcome.

Spiritual Self-help / Book Club

Revitalize your love of truth and understanding by studying with us each Tuesday evening 6:30 - 7:30 in the chapel. Good conversations in a caring atmosphere. Newcomers and the curious are most welcome to come.



Welcoming Congregation update

This month the LGBTQIA WELCOMING CONGREGATION COMMITTEE members had 2 meetings. One was a special one just to plan for Pride, the other was our regularly scheduled meeting where we discussed our upcoming events. Partnering with Grayson Pride to offer family friendly events in a safe space is a priority for us so we are planning a Friendsgiving along with a Family Christmas dinner. Details are coming so watch your weekly updates as well as your newsletter because everyone is welcome!

We are moving forward spectacularly with our efforts to fill baskets for Pride Prizes! We have gathered more than \$500 of items & gift cards/certificates so far with more on the way! The response from local businesses has been absolutely fabulous! Remember, if you want to add to the prizes, contributions are due by October 10th because Pride is the 21st.

We are always looking for new members to add their distinct voices to our chorus, so join us after C&C on the 4th Sunday of every month.

Aesthetics Changes

The aesthetics committee is in the process of making a few minor changes over the next month or so. We hope you notice and enjoy the changes. The committee does not have a budget, and the board approved approximately \$165 be taken out of savings to cover materials for two small projects.

Let us know if you are interested in helping fund current or future visual improvements to our building. If you have suggestions for areas that need attention, please speak to Amy, Jana, or Adrian.

Remember, any donations of furnishings or decor must be approved by the aesthetics committee. We are in the process of developing a form for donations requests

How to fill up empty space our newsletter

The Unitarian Universalist was out in his boat fishing when suddenly the Loch Ness Monster rose up out of the lake and attacked his boat. The Loch Ness Monster grabbed the bow of the boat in its huge mouth, flipped the Unitarian Universalist way up into the air, and opened its mouth wide, prepared to catch the guy in its mouth and eat him.

As the Unitarian Universalist fell towards that huge mouth filled with sharp teeth, without thinking he said, "Oh my God, help me!" Suddenly time froze. As the guy hung there in mid-air, a huge voice boomed out, "I thought you didn't believe in a personal God on whom you could call in times of crisis!"

"Hey, give me a break, God," said the Unitarian Universalist. "A minute ago, I didn't believe in the Loch Ness Monster, either."

A Unitarian Universalist was walking through an old graveyard and saw a tombstone with the inscription "I still live."

"Huh," said the Unitarian Universalist, "If I were dead, I'd own up to it."

What do you call a Unitarian Universalist without any eyes?

A Untaran Unversalst.

"I know my humor is outrageous when it makes the Unitarians so mad, they burn a question mark on my front lawn." – Lenny Bruce





14 Shanna (Jack) Bolerjack

20 Samuel Cates

24 Paula Blackshear

29 Kat Walston

From the ULLA

Reflecting Upon the 60th Anniversary of the March on Washington



On August 28, 1963, an estimated 1,500 Unitarian Universalists joined the 250,000 Americans who gathered in Washington, D.C., for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The Unitarian Universalist Association recognizes this seminal history with the following message, and UU World magazine shares its commitment.

"As the 60th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington approaches, we honor this foundational moment. Yet, we know that the fight for full equity and civil rights is far from over.

While we recognize the dedication and courage of those who came before, we also recognize that this history, especially for UUs, is complex. In his well-known speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. shared a vision of Beloved Community. As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to continue working in solidarity with Black-led movements for justice.

We recommit to this essential work in the face of rising authoritarianism and attacks on civil liberties, including voting rights."

The Association's <u>UU the Vote</u> initiative has focused UU organizing not only on voter mobilization, but on democracy as a whole beyond election cycles. It also continues to deepen collaborations with congregations, UU State Action Networks, and Movements led by frontline communities.

For further reading on Unitarian Universalism's complicated history on issues of race, *UU World* recommends this article, which includes a list of additional resources: "The Empowerment Tragedy" by the Rev. Dr. Mark D. Morrison-Reed.

Did you know...The new Barbie movie was co-written and directed by a Unitarian Universalist? Greta Gerwig is a talented filmmaker and also a proud UU!

Back in 2013 she told UU World "Unitarianism is the most complete expression of my multiple and, at times, contradictory thoughts about the spiritual life. I think the openness of the community allows for a greater variety of personal faith and ideas. It isn't oppressively open, but generously so.I think I keep returning to a UU church again and again because it resonates with something deep inside of me that feels that all I really know is that I don't know. Unitarian Universalism is the best place for me to experience the fullness of that sentiment of not knowing."



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From our non resident poet

September 16 is National Dance Day. Every culture, every society, every era, has its own form of dance. Celebrate by doing your favorite dance. Celebrate with a poem.

Dance Lesson

by Don Mathis

"Do you want to dance?"
That's the way it starts.
But a bad romance
leaves two broken hearts.

The love you meet at the Boogaloos may start off sweet but you'll surely lose.

There's truth to the witty and oft-quoted line, "The girls all look pretty at closing time."

And the guys who flirt out on the dance floor are just chasing a skirt, just trying to score.

Couples may do the Swim while the band's playing, just her and him moving and swaying.

They may dance Free-Style, arms a' flailing, but all the while their relationship's failing.



People that arrive to do the Tango or Staying Alive at the old Disco

may Two-Step it at first, and it will be OK, but they'll regret it by the hundredth day.

Because folks who visit clubs at night may wake up Twisted next to a fright.

If you Fox-trot until the morning dew or if you Hip-hop with someone that's new,

you may think its rapture, you're doing the Hustle, but it's more like rupture, like you've pulled a muscle.

You can be Swinging, or Walking the Duck, but at the ending, the Jig is up.

If you're looking to find a one-night stand, you can Bump and Grind to the beat of the band.

But if you're craving an affair that will survive, avoid the Raving, and stay out of that dive.

Our Leaders

Board of Trustees:

Marilyn Alexander, *President*Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *Vice-President*Carole Harner, *Treasurer*David Dyer, *Secretary*Don Rogers, *Trustee*

Committee on Ministry:

Carolyn Cameron, Elbert Hill, Jim Holmes Nominating:

Jana Norris, Jim Runnel, Linda Tracy

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: Marilyn, Jim, Amy, Marion

Aesthetics: Amy, Jana, Adrian

Audio Visual: Carole, Don, Jim, Marla

Caring Circle: Carolyn, David

Communication: Amy, Doug, Marla

Endowment: Carolyn, Doug Facilities: Jim A Carole, Marilyn

Grounds: *Marilyn*

Long Range Planning: Jim, Marilyn

Membership: Marion

Minister Search: David, Jana, Jim, Marilyn, Marla

NTUUC Rep: *Marilyn* RE Team: *David, Marilyn*

Safe Congregation Panel: Marilyn

Social Justice: Jan

Web Team: Hannah, Jim, Marla

Welcoming Congregation: Adrian, Amy, Marla,

Thomas, Jana, Jack, Sherilyn Worship: Dan, Jana, Marla

Contactus

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Current Newsletter

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