



# Red River Ramblings

December 2023

Vol. 25 No 6

Sunday, December 3, 2023 - 11:15 am

## **Reflections on the Seven Principle: The Inherent Worth and Dignity of Every Person**

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

How can we work for peace in times of war without losing sight of the importance of establishing justice? Read Mark's bio [here](#).

Sunday, December 10, 2023 - 11:15 am

## **Ghosts of Christmas Past**

Elena Westbrook, *leading*

Are you overwhelmed by tinsel, lights, gift obligations and Jingle Bells on endless repeat? Join us on December 10th to search for the deeper meaning of the season and sources of healing in midwinter. Read Elena's bio [here](#).

Sunday, December 17, 2023 - 11:15 am

## **Reflections on the Seven Principles: 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle: Equity, and Compassion in Human Relations.**

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

What do we mean by justice and equity and how are they related to our expression of compassion within community? Read Mark's bio [here](#).

Sunday, December 24, 2023 - 11:15 am

## **Candles & Carols**

The Worship Team, *leading*

From our earliest days as a congregation, we have always been fond of candles and have used them generously in our gatherings and assemblies. At the winter solstice and especially on Christmas Eve, they seem to burn a little brighter and warmer as we celebrate in our own way a joyous tradition shared by millions around the world. Join the Worship Team on this special Sunday for an event filled with candlelight and cherished carols.

Sunday, December 31, 2023 - 11:15 am

## **The Congregation . . .Sharing Joy!**

Our Sharing Morning Assemblies are usually on the last Sunday of the year. This year it just happens to fall on New Year's Eve so not only are we asking you to bring a favorite poem, reading, song, or anecdote to share your joy, but we will also be celebrating our annual **Burning Bowl** tradition. Afterwards, we will have the last **5th Sunday All Church Potluck** lunch along with a **New Year Eve's special surprise** event.

**Live Your Values aloud, not alone.  
Our open-minded, open-hearted spiritual community helps people lead lives of justice, love, learning and hope.  
Your adventure in faith starts here! Come visit!**

# Minister Search Team

It is now official. The full NTUUC Board met on November 26th and voted unanimously to fund our full grant request of \$90,000. A big thank you goes out to Daniel Polk and Marilyn Alexander for making this happen.

Now the work for finding candidates begins. The Minister Search Team has submitted our completed application to the UUA through their web portal. It is now being reviewed by our UUA representative, Cameron Young with our Southern Region. I have a phone meeting with Cameron on Friday, December 1, to see what they recommend for our next steps.

We have sent a copy of our application to Daniel Polk. He says he may know of some candidates. A copy of our application was sent to Rev. Mark Davies so he can pass it on to any of his colleagues who might show some interest. We also sent a copy to Rev. Cooper with First UU in Houston who may also know of some possible candidates.

Our website home page has been updated and now has a section on our minister search. We have also added a link to a new Givebutter campaign so people can donate directly to the Minister Compensation Fund, which you can do [here](#).

Your Minister Search Team: David Dyer, Jana Norris, Jim Holmes, Marilyn Alexander, Marla Loturco

# Marilyn's Musings

December, the season of love, compassion, and joy. The multitude of religious practices of giving during this time of year contributes to our focus toward the needs of others instead of ourselves. May we all give to those in need. We make the world a better place and it makes us happy.

Since my last letter, we have received word that our NTUUC grant for potential minister compensation has been approved by the endowment committee in an evening zoom meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup>. I am our congregation's representative on the NTUUC Board as they reviewed the grant and after many questions, they approved the grant funding unanimously. So, the Minister Search Team is actively working to complete the UUA Ministerial on-line portal to advertising for prospective ministers and is currently completing the interview questions for applicants.

At our Fall Meeting we talked briefly about rewriting our vision statement. A vision statement should be an image of how the community will be changed just by having Red River UU as a presence in it. The statement should not have verbs. A sample is: "a more welcoming and accepting society in Texoma." We have a group of folks who volunteered to be on a

vision writing committee. To give the committee broader input, let's meet after the Morning Assembly in the chapel on December 10<sup>th</sup> to brainstorm ideas. Bring your plate from Conversation & Calories and let's converse! **December 10<sup>th</sup> – Plan on it!**

# The Hanging of the Greens

Please plan to stay after the service on Sunday, Dec.3 to help decorate for the winter holidays! Grab a snack upstairs, decide on an area you would like to decorate and grab decorations from the tubs in the foyer. There is no right or wrong way to decorate, so let your creativity flow! Sunday,

# Money Matters

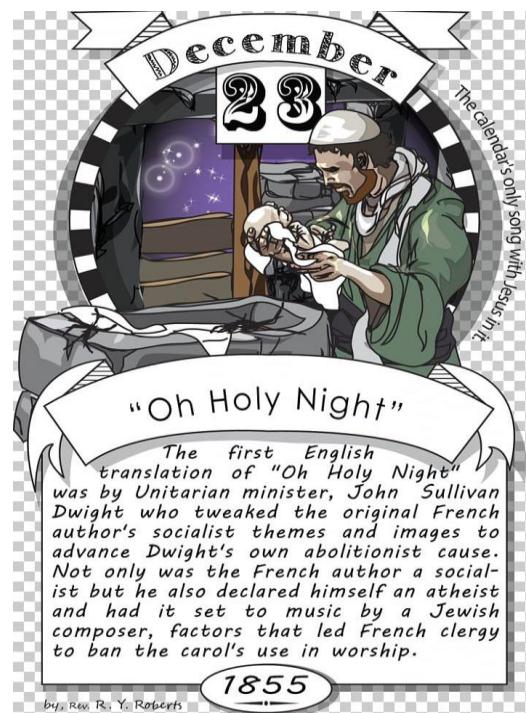
In the month of October, we had total receipts of \$4,413.00. Total expenses for the month were \$4,510.39, leaving us with a very small net loss for the month of (\$97.39). The net loss for the month was primarily due to costs for additional trifold brochures partly offset by the timing of pledges.

We had a net profit for the fiscal year-to-date of \$3,397.22. The year-to-date net profit was primarily due to the timing of income, partly offset by costs to improve building security and the timing of various other costs.

As of October 31, 2023, we had \$13,462.50 available in checking. There is a total of \$20,747.33 in the bank savings account, including \$4,642.08 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. The congregation voted to use up to \$51,000.00 of the Endowment Fund for minister compensation, if needed.

Carole Harner, treasurer





## Chair Yoga

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

## Spiritual Perspectives

Revitalize your love of truth and understanding by studying with us each Tuesday evening 6:30 – 8 pm in the chapel. Good conversations in a caring atmosphere. Newcomers and the curious are most welcome to come.

## December Birthdays



04 – Donna Toerper  
07 – David Lawrence  
12 – Cindy Buffington  
17 – Amy Hoffman-Shehan  
18 – Jim Holmes  
20 – Jim Runnels

## Welcoming Congregation update

Family Holiday Celebration: The Welcoming Congregation Team is hosting an LGBTQIA friendly holiday gathering on December 16 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. There will be a Sweater Contest with prizes for the following categories: Most Likely to Belong to Your Mom, Most Retro, Ugliest Thrift Store Find, Most Creative, and Ugliest Sweater. There will also be White Elephant Re-Gifting, where we are asking attendees to bring something they already own but don't want to keep, something purchased at a thrift store, or something they made. There is no minimum value, but the value should not exceed \$30. Gifts need to be wrapped! We will serve finger foods, a hot cocoa bar and mulled cider. The event is free, but we ask anyone who plans to attend to reserve tickets on EventBrite. You can access the signup on line [here](#).

## The Giving Tree Returns

The Giving Tree has been a tradition at Red River Unitarian Universalist Church since we moved into our current home. Items needed to support the facility and programs have been identified, and a wire tree has been decorated with tags. Many of the tags have inexpensive items that need to be purchased, and some of them ask for monetary donations toward special purchases or projects. A sign-in form has been created. Please take a tag or several tags for items you can provide for the church and put your name on the form, so we know who signed up for that item. Please bring your contribution any time during the month and place it under the decorated tree in the chapel.

The list can be previewed [here](#). If you see an overlooked need, please contact Amy so it can be added to the list. If you want to sponsor a specific item financially, please reach out to Amy for instructions.

## Earth Day Planners

The Earth Day Festival Planning Committee will meet on Thursday, December 14 at 6:00 pm in the Emerson Room at church. We will discuss the content of two permanent displays we plan to have manufactured: Comparison of tall prairie grasses compared to lawn grass and Benefits of Trees to our Environment and Mental Health.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
JANUARY 15 -  
FEBRUARY 14, 2024

**30 DAYS OF LOVE**

spiritual nourishment  
for the long haul

This annual event offers a month of spiritual nourishment, political grounding, and shared practices of faith and justice. Each week, you can expect to received

Various kinds of offerings, each from a different voice within Unitarian Universalism. To get an idea of what to expect or to enjoy some meditative breaks during your lunch this month, you can see last year's offerings [here](#).

# From our non resident Poet

*Stille Nacht/Silent Night* – A Christmas story by Don Mathis

"7 O'clock News/Silent Night" by Simon & Garfunkel came out in the mid-60s, about the time I began to think. The traditional song starts out strongly but then a voice-over comes in with the evening news.

The events of the day (crime, politics, war) become louder as the carol grows fainter until only the news is heard. The end is a Walter Cronkite-type voice bidding all a good-night.

"Silent Night" by Johnny Cash provides a traditional melody, but his harsh voice offers a juxtaposition in this folk song.

A dozen seasons later, my neighbor's son sang it in the original German at a Christmas concert. The voice of a 10-year-old child is heartrendingly beautiful while the Germanic language is so gravely guttural, yet this child combined the words and music so hauntingly.

Years later, I heard the story of the Christmas truce during World War One. German troops singing "Stille Nacht" were answered by British soldiers singing "Silent Night." The suspension of hostilities that followed allowed enemies to become friends for a spell.



Cigarettes and stories were shared. Each viewed the other's photographs of loved ones. And, for a while, the combatants saw each other as human. Again, I appreciate the friction in this 200-year-old song, this time between war and peace, between enmity and fraternity.

What is it about this song — what is it about me — that finds the antithesis of "Silent Night" so fascinating? I think it allows me to see the peace that should be, the compassion that lives within each of us, and the love that is.

May your season be calm and bright.  
And may you sleep in heavenly peace.

# 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, Walter Norris (not related to Jana)*

## Our Various Teams:

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*

Moveable Feast: *Elbert, Marion*

NTUUC Rep: *Marilyn*

RE Team: *David, Marilyn*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Marilyn*

Social Justice: *Jan*

Web Team: *Hannah, Jim, Marla*

Welcoming Congregation: *Adrian, Amy, Cristin, Marla, Jana, Jack, Sherilyn, Thomas*

Worship: *Dan, Jan, Jana, Marla*

## Red River Unitarian Universalists

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## Useful Links

[Current Newsletter](#) [Our Mobile App](#)

[Email](#) [Website](#)

[Our Facebook](#) [LGBTQ+ Facebook](#)