



RED RIVER RAMBLINGS



MAY 2024 ~ VOL 25, No. 11

Sunday, May 5, 2024 - 11:15 am

Music. MS. And Me.

Bill Nash, *leading*

Bill Nash has been a musician all his life, starting as a boy soprano and has an all-consuming passion of wanting to make music for the rest of his life. In 1988, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. On Sunday, we'll hear of Bill's determination to compensate for the physical obstacles of a changing body. We'll listen as Bill explains his creative multi-capo method of guitar playing and enjoy a fine singer/ songwriter sharing his heart and his music. Read Bill's bio [here](#) and read a poem he sent us elsewhere in this issue.

Sunday, May 12, 2024 - 11:15 am

A Transgender Students gets a Lead Role. The District Shouts No!

Amy and Phillip Hightower, *leading*

Phillip and Amy Hightower along with their 17-year-old son Max were catapulted into the news last winter after their trans son was offered a leading role in his high school's production of "Oklahoma!" playing Ali Hakim, a peddler who is a love interest opposite one of the musical's female leads. The Sherman school district yanked the role from Max, announcing a "new policy" (!) that actors could only appear in roles that matched their biological gender. The enraged—and hurt—family was dumbstruck when not only the citizens of Sherman but of the nation *and the world* stood behind them demanding that the school restore the roles to the students who earned them.

Phillip and Amy Hightower join us on Mother's Day to talk about unconditional love for their children and about standing tall amid hate.

Sunday, May 19, 2024 - 11:15 am

T.B.A.

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

THE SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING IS TODAY

Sunday, May 28, 2024 - 11:15 am

T.B.A.

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

SPECIAL NOTICE:

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NATIONAL CONFERENCE IS BEING HELD APR 23-MAY 3 IN CHARLOTTE, NC

After Mark returns home and back into life as usual, he'll send us the details of his two Sundays with us.

ONE VOTE OF INTEREST FOR UUS:

[40-year ban on gay clergy struck down](#)

In an emotional morning, General Conference has eliminated the ban on "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy. Following the vote at break, delegates and observers sang hymns in joy.

THE SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING IS
MAY 19 STARTING WITH A
POTLUCK LUNCH

THE MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL

Marilyn Musings



Big things are happening at Red River UU! This month, we have our Spring Congregational Meeting on Sunday, May 19th following our potluck luncheon. Please bring your best food offerings! We will be adopting the new budget, electing church lead-

ers, and voting on goals and on the Vision, Statement proposed by the task force.

We will discuss plans for outreach and new public relations directions to make the community aware of us and increase membership. We also have plans for Emergency Preparedness. As with other churches, we slowed down a lot in 2020, but we are now in a rebuilding mode to take us further than we have been. Our Pledge for Progress Drive was successful. It gave us a little extra to work with beyond just what was necessary to operate. We must expand our reach into the community if we are to progress. Maintaining the status quo is a prescription for falling behind. We are on it! We will discuss more during the Spring Congregational Meeting. Let's progress and grow!

Notes from the April board meeting.

The board voted to allow Don to take over as secretary in place of David and allow David to take over as at-large-trustee until it is voted on at the Spring Meeting.

The board approved \$500 to go to the Earth Day Festival for advertising for a substitute event following the rained-out event.

The board approved putting unspent funds in the 2023-24 budget into Advertising for hiring someone for public relations.

The board discussed the situation with finding a minister. This will be discussed with the congregation at the Spring Meeting.

Marilyn discussed items to be on the agenda for the Spring Meeting.

Amy gave an update on Emergency Preparedness and the need for us to have our own 501 (c)(3) so we can apply for FEMA funding.

Jana suggested that we need to have a fire drill and mapped escape routes with exits defined. Fire extinguishers and the defibrillator need to be inspected and certified.

The Vision Task Force proposed the vision statement, "To create a local community that is Spiritually Alive, Joyfully Inclusive, and Justice Centered." To be voted on at the Spring Meeting.

Information was relayed that the Temple Beth Emmeth was looking for a different place for their services. Note: Marilyn contacted their president who said they were satisfied with where they were and were not looking for a different place.

The Welcoming team has their own email now: RRUUWelcomingteam@gmail.com.

The Spring Meeting will take the place of a board meeting in May.

Marilyn Alexander, *president*

Earth Day Rescheduled

The Texoma Earth Day Festival has been rescheduled for June 15. The recycling partners have all been confirmed, as have been more than 50% of the vendors who had registered.

Some of the entertainers and workshop providers who were committed to the April 20 date are not going to be available on June 15. We are currently working on the entertainment and workshops schedules, and we are recruiting organizations to provide children's activities.

Registration for vendors and sponsors has been reopened. The new deadline for registration is June 1, 2024.

Please reach out to any member of the Earth Day Planning Committee for more information about how you can be involved.

Social Action Updates

AN OPEN INVITATION FROM TXUUJM...

Social Justice meetings are open to everyone...and we have guest speakers coming you won't want to miss!

May 2, Elle Cross is the Right to Justice Coordinator of Mano Amiga, a nonprofit that organizes alongside immigrants and people harmed by the criminalization to advocate for systemic policy changes in Hays County. The hour will be dedicated to the DeVonte Anderson case. DeVonte has a trial set in June, even though at the trial of his co-defendant, Cyrus Gray, it became clear that "Hays County had poor evidence against [Gray], especially considering the gravity of the charges – no eyewitnesses, video, fingerprints, or DNA connected Gray or Amerson to the murder." Learn about the case and take action to prevent a miscarriage of justice.

Rachel Myslivy, climate Justice Organizer with UUA Side with Love and Rev. Kelly Dignan, Co-Director of UU Ministry for Earth will join us and share more about increasing UUA work with climate Justice. They will invite us into a time of education and reflection about shifting our climate work to include not just the 7th Principle but also our 1st and 8th Principles. It's fun and you're invited! Come every week or pop in when you can. Invite friends, UU or not, Texan, or not. ALL WELCOME.

June 6, special guest Steve Phillips, the New York Times bestselling author, columnist, and political commentator will join us. Mr. Phillips brought his successful tour to UUs For Social Justice in Washington DC. Now, he is focusing on Texas! He will join us to share about his new book, *How We Win the Civil War: Securing a Multiracial Democracy and Ending White Supremacy for Good*. There is a particular chapter on Texas included in the book. Steve is a national political leader, civil rights lawyer, and a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress; this author talk provides a unique opportunity to equip us for the work ahead.

If you have any questions, please contact Social Justice Team Leader, Jan Fletcher.

TXUUJM SPECIAL INVITATION THURSDAY NIGHT ACTION HOURS SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

Thursday, May 2 at 7 pm

Elle Cross, the Right to Justice Coordinator of Mano Amiga, a nonprofit that organizes alongside immigrants will join us for the full hour..



IMMIGRATION

Thursday, May 23 at 7 pm



Rachel Myslivy, Climate Justice Organizer with UUA Side with Love and Rev. Kelly Dignan, Co-Director of UU Ministry for Earth will discuss Moving from Environmentalism to Climate Justice

ENVIRONMENT

Thursday, June 6 at 7 pm

Steve Phillips, New York Times bestselling author, columnist, and political commentator. He will share about his new book, *How We Win the Civil War: Securing a Multi-racial Democracy and Ending White Supremacy for Good*, which includes a particular chapter on Texas.

RACISM



Stewardship Results



A BIG thank you goes out to all who pledged. We received a total of \$50,310 in pledges for the 2024-2025 budget year starting July 1st. We exceeded our goal of \$47,000 by \$3,310! We had 22 pledge units from 27 members. We also had 3 friends pledge.

We used this excess to cover unexpected increases in the budget line-item Communications - Advertising to provide more funds for outreach and social action activity.

This proposed budget was approved by the Board at the April 21 meeting and is presented in the Proposed Budget section of the Packet of Docs for the May 19 Congregational Meeting. Your Finance Team:

Carole Harner, Marilyn Alexander, Jim Holmes



Hannah Peterson

Recipient of 19th Amendment Award

Hannah Peterson received a \$500 award from the 19th Amendment Committee for a female student from Southeastern University in Durant who has overcome adversity, just as the suffragettes overcame adversity in order for women to get the right to vote. The award was presented at the April meeting of the Bryan County Federation of Democratic Women, a group that contains many members of the 19th Amendment Committee that funded the award. She was nominated by Dr. Sondra Petty. Here is a little about Hannah that you may not know.

Throughout school, she was recognized as gifted, but struggled to keep up with assignments. She was different from other students and did not fit into any groups. She rarely had more than one friend, if any. She did not graduate from high school traditionally, but instead received top marks on the GED exam.

Marriage, her first child and economic survival, took its toll until she was hired to work at Apple with the original iPhone launch. That gave her some perspective on her skills and after a few years, on where she wanted to be in life. During this time, she was diagnosed with ADHD, which was a surprise to her. She began learning to cope with her symptoms, but it was a challenge. But then the car was repossessed, and she was unable to get to work reliably. Later, they moved to Arizona for her husband to manage a Dairy Queen and that is when she became a compliance officer at two separate cannabis-growing facilities. She learned a lot about this new industry and was offered a job as a cannabis compliance consultant. She still has that role. While in Arizona, she was

officially diagnosed to be on the autism spectrum. From this she learned

more about how her brain works and she is still working on managing the differences in her brain.

She and her family spent 5 months in Vermont attending to the business associated with her mother's death and caring for her dad. They decided that they should combine households and move to Durant, because her husband had family there and he would be able to care for his family while she cared for her father.

Once she got to Durant, she became determined to settle in and find people. First, she found the Red River UU church and began attending with her father in order to help him be more socially active. Then, Marilyn introduced her to the Bryan County Federation of Democratic Women. In the course of her life, Southeastern University kept coming up. She kept meeting people who worked there or had attended classes there. She day-dreamed about going back to school. At first, she thought it would be too difficult to return to school, but the more she thought about it, the easier it became in her mind.

Eventually, she decided to return to school full-time. She was very nervous since she was a non-traditional student: she was older, was on the autism spectrum, and she had not succeeded before. This worrying helped her to discover that there was no way that she could do less than her best, because that would be a complete betrayal of this opportunity. She has put everything into her education and has achieved a 4.0 GPA for 5 semesters.

For a while, she felt like she had something to prove, but didn't know who she was trying to prove it to. Then she realized that she was trying to prove it to herself. She needed to show herself that she could achieve her own goals and overcome the obstacles put in her way. She hopes to be an example to others, especially her children, as someone who is focused on achieving her goals despite life's challenges. She wants to show them that they can do it too.

Hannah is a member of Red River UU and serves on the Good Times Team, furnishing refreshments one Sunday per month for Conversation and Calories and she has worked to optimize the website.

Welcoming Team/Committee

Happy Spring!!! That time of year when flowers bloom and rainbows start to appear everywhere!

Last month, the Welcoming Congregation Team (name in flux) was ready to help with Earth Day Festival, but Mother Nature had other plans. We have rescheduled the Kids Clothing Exchange to May 4th at the church from 10 am to 2 pm. Jack, Sherilyn, Cristin & others will be working at the event. The Team will, of course, still be available for the Earth Day Reboot, lol.

There are lots of events happening for us soon! On May 12th, the Hightower family will talk to the congregation about living in this area with a transgender family member and their recent battles with Sherman ISD. They've attended several of our special occasions & we love it when they join us!

We have been communicating with the new Grayson Pride board about supporting each other. They've asked us to help with Pride Prom on the 25th of May With donations of drinks and snacks. There will also be some of us volunteering as parking lot escorts to keep attendees safe from any protesters who show up.

June means Gay Pride Month! Grayson Pride Festival will be June 29th at the Sherman Municipal Ballroom! We will have a booth and are looking at sponsorship for this important event. We want to make sure that everyone has a safe & fun time to be uniquely & authentically themselves. Check the new Grayson Pride website at graysoncountypride.org or their FB - Grayson County Pride for the details.

Call To Action: WE NEED DONATIONS OF DRINKS & SNACKS FOR PRIDE PROM.

Thank you & we love & appreciate each one of you.

Jack B. *Team chair*

I'd Lend You

A Poem by Bill Nash

I'd lend you my feet, if I thought then you'd know,
You ask, "How does it feel?" and I can't begin to show
you,

I can only put out useless words that never can touch...

I'd lend you my shins, so brittle and frail,
But essential to standing and walking and balancing,
Kind of like wooden legs, mostly useless for just about
everything...

I'd lend you my knees, but not for praying,
Because they wouldn't hold you up for it,
And you'd spend your prayer time wondering,
how you're going to get back up...

I'd lend you my hands, when they still work they're
useful,
But it gets harder and harder, stiffer and stiffer they
become
And I know one day they may completely fail me too...

I'd lend you my eyes, when there is no heat to make
them sightless,
Only perfect when cool times prevail, blind when not,
Can't see the forest or the trees...

I'd lend you my brain, controller and hostile entity to
all parts at once,
Loser of memories and occasional phrases I'm wanting
to use...
and what was your name again?

I'd lend you my existence in this body of betrayal,
If you were my enemy, it would be most fitting,
My friend, most devastating... I wouldn't do that to
you...

Just let me live without you knowing what this is like,
That is my hope and prayer, live long and healthy
times,
And I'll do what I can to carry on, and not get in your
way,
It's only this wish I want to lend you...

Minister Search Team

Because we have had no new minister inquiry activity, the Team has not been doing our monthly formal meeting but has been communicating in person and through email.

The team: Jim Holmes, David Dyer, Jana Norris, Marilyn Alexander, Marla Loturco

It Happens in May

Every Sunday

- **Adult Forum - 10-11 am**
- **Morning Assembly - 11:15-12:15**
- **Conversations & Calories 12:15 - 1**

Every Week

- **Mondays - OverEaters 6-7 pm**
- **Tuesdays - Spiritual Practices 6:30-8 pm**

During the Month

- **May 05: Worship Associate training 1-5 pm**
- **May 11 - Worship Associate training 10-2**
- **May 12 - LGBTQIA team meeting - 1-2:30 pm**
- **May 16 - Search Team meeting - 2:30-4 pm**
- **May 19 - Congregational meeting 1 - 3 pm**
- **May 25 - JUNE NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 10 pm**
- **May 29 - Worship Team meeting (zoom) 6:30 pm**

May Birthdays

May 09 - Eleanor Dyer

May 27 - Don Mathis

If you add a year each May and don't find yourself listed here, tis because we don't have your birthday (month and day only, please) in the church database. You can update this by sending Marla an email [here](#).

Worship Associate Training

The need for worship associates is an ongoing part of our Sunday morning assemblies. Their efforts are important because without them, the quality and impact of worship is thwarted. The next training session will be on Sunday, May 5 following the morning assembly. The training will also be presented on Sat. May 11 @ 10. If you'd like to be part of the WA team, please speak with Marla.

Money Matters

In the month of February, we had total receipts of \$1,712.00. Total expenses for the month were \$2,867.63, leaving us with a net loss for the month of (\$1,155.63). The net loss for February was primarily due to the timing of pledge income.

We had a net profit for the fiscal year-to-date of \$2,904.68. The year-to-date net profit was primarily due to higher other income and lower worship expense, partly offset by costs to improve building security and the pm

As of February 29, 2024, we had \$12,967.35 available in checking. There is a total of \$20,749.94 in the bank savings account, including \$4,771.08 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.

Carole Harner, Treasurer

Nominating Committee report

The committee makes the following nominations:

Board Treasurer: Carole Harner

Board Secretary: Don Rogers*

Board Member-at-Large: David Dyer*

Committee on Ministry: Jim Holmes

Nominations Committee: Marilyn Alexander

*David and Don are switching positions. The terms of both end next year.

From our non-resident Poet

Don Mathis

My spiritual home in San Antonio has a Mother's Day tradition: Each member and guest are invited to stand and state their name and maternal lineage. Often our congregation has an altar where members can display a photo of their mother for the duration of the service. Perhaps Red River Unitarian Universalist Church would like to adopt a similar custom. – D.M.

Mother's Ancestry

My name is **Don Mathis**. I am the son of **Bernadine**.

I am the product of English heritage, Welsh-Celtic extraction, German stock, Scotch-Irish descent, and French lineage.

And my heirs have even more cultural influences.

- **Lynnea**, my granddaughter, is of African ancestry. The mother of Thomas, my son, has Indian blood.
- I am the grandson of **Rose Dumas Walker**, and her mother was **Ida E. Henley Dumas**, and her mother was **Mary Malindie Faulkner**.
- **Alice Hearnberger Mathis** was my other grandmother, and her mother was **Martha Matilda Fielder Hearnberger**, and her mother was **Martha Ann Jones Fielder**.

To all the women of my family of origin and my family of destiny, I wish a Happy Mother's Day!

How to reach us ...

Red River Unitarian Universalists
515 North Burnett Ave
mail to:
PO BOX 1806
DENISON, TX 75021-1806
Phone: 903.231.3232



Our Leaders

Board of Trustees:

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

Committee on Ministry:

Carolyn Cameron, Elbert Hill, Jim Holmes

Nominating:

Jana Norris, Jim Runnels, Walter Norris
(not related to Jana)

Our Various Teams:

The first name is the team leader

Adult Forum: Marilyn, Jim, Amy, Marion

Aesthetics: Amy, Jana, Adrian

Audio Visual: Jim, Carole, Don, Marla

Caring Circle: Carolyn, David

Communication: Amy

Earth Day Planning: Amy, Marla, Jan, Megan, Cristin

Endowment: Carolyn, Doug

Facilities: Jim, Carole, Marilyn

Grounds: Marilyn, Paula

Long Range Planning: Jim, Marilyn

Membership: Paula

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

Monarch Way Station: Lynn

Moveable Feast: Elbert & Marion

NTUUC Rep: Marilyn

Publications: Doug

RE Team: Jack

Safe Congregation Panel: Marilyn

Social Justice: Jan

Web Team: Hannah, Jim, Marla

Welcoming Congregation: Jack, Adrian, Amy, Billie, Cristin, Jana, Olivia, Sherilyn, Thomas

[current newsletter](#)

[our mobile app](#)

[email us](#)

[visit our website](#)

[our Facebook](#)

[our LGBTQ+ Facebook](#)