



Red River Ramblings

September 2025 ♦ Vol. 26 ♦ Issue 3

In this issue:

Come to the
Picnic on Sept 1
in protest
against a chang-
ing approach to
democracy

♦♦♦

An Important Re-
port from the
president Jana
Norris!

♦♦♦

Watch the fa-
mous Baltimore
Sermon

♦♦♦

It is easy, quick
you can use the QR
code in this news-
letter.

♦♦♦

Interesting update
from the minister
search committee

♦♦♦

Remember ...
Water Commune is
more meaningful
when we remember
to bring some water.

♦♦♦

And more!!

September 7, 2025 - 11:15 am

The Problem of Heresy

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

The use of the word “heresy” in any context is in itself problematic, especially given the historical violence connected with this word through the violent enforcement of a doctrinal purity created by all men and backed by the force of Empire. It has become a clobber concept to enforce one patriarchal version of Christianity, much like certain passages in the Bible have been used to clobber persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. It has nothing to do with living out the way of love and justice for the transformation of the world for good.

September 14, 2025 - 11:15 am

Another Look at Water and Water Communion

The Worship Team, *leading*

Join us this Sunday for our annual Water Communion Service! Bring a small amount of water from a place meaningful to you—whether from your travels, your backyard, or your kitchen tap. Together we will pour our waters into a common bowl, symbolizing the many streams of our lives flowing into one shared community. All are welcome to this special Unitarian Universalist tradition of connection and renewal.

September 21, 2025 - 11:15 am

Living in Exile

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

Millions of us in the United States are living in a kind of exile in our own land - an exile that oppressed groups in our country have experienced for centuries, an exile from economic justice and political power, an exile from safety and security for our lives, an exile from justice and true freedom.

September 28, 2025 - 11:15 am

The Turtle Moves: Life Lessons from the Discworld

Elena Westbrook, *leading*

Everything around us, the air we breathe, the rivers and streams we drink from, the food we eat, every institution, relationship, and connection with others, is a string supporting a world of 8 billion people. What happens when those strings are cut, one by one? What happens when our rivers and fields are poisoned; when the wealth gap becomes a chasm; when people lose agency over their own bodies; when governments are actively working against their citizens and institutions have failed us? Will those strings that remain be able to withstand the weight of the collected burden, or will the entire world come crashing down? Explore these questions and what we can do as individuals to add more strings to distribute the load for the future.

Introducing our guest speaker: Elena Westbrook is a member and lay worship leader at Community UU Church of Plano. She is mostly retired from a career in marketing writing and copyediting, and now spends much of her time traveling with her husband and dog in a camper van, looking for good weather and hiking trails.

Spiritually Alive ~ Joyfully Inclusive ~ Justice Centered

Board Report

By Jana Norris

This year's board members are Jana, President; Carole, Treasurer; Jack, Secretary; and Cristin, Member-at-Large. We lack a Vice President—if you are interested in this position, see Marilyn, who is the chair of the Nominations Committee. She is also an *ex officio* member of the board as our past president.

[Let me add a personal note here: I have missed a number of Sundays due to new complications of my autoimmune disease and, because things weren't bad enough, a severely sprained ankle. After 45 years of limping on my left leg, trying to limp on my right leg is, well, comic. I will be there when I can.]

We are busy making the board's activities ship shape as we go through our Policies & Procedures Manual and making sure we are not in violation or that we make necessary updates thereto. See, I told you I was a lawyer.

We have asked the Committees to do this, too.

We have spent much of the last year making sure we are in compliance with all of the laws and regulations that govern non-profit organizations. It isn't fun, but it is cost effective to get free legal services to do it. Now we are working on contracts for the people who are paid for services they provide the church.

The Austin College Nonprofit and Volunteer Fair is held on September 11th from 10:30 to 1:30. We will have a table there. If you would like to help staff it, let me know! The volunteers will come to us on a Saturday morning in November to help us clean up the basement and (weather permitting) clean the outside of the building and work in the flower beds. We will try to get them back in April for their Green Serve day to help us with our Monarch Way Station. Many of them also volunteer to work at Earth Day.

We have been told that the congregation sees the board as unapproachable and out of touch. Given how many people wander over and join us, I'm surprised by this. But to be official, the Policies and Procedure Manual state that:

15 minutes of each Board meeting will be reserved for comments from members, if needed. Each church

member may speak for up to five minutes, except that all visitors must allocate the total 15 minutes among themselves. Board members may ask clarification questions only – no discussion.

A member of the congregation may request to be on the agenda. This prior arrangement allows the member to speak for up to 10 minutes on the agenda topic.

Further, the P&P gives the Member-at-Large, Cristin Mackey, special duties to the congregation: she “represent[s] the congregation as a whole to the board. As a member-at-large, any member of the congregation can bring to the Trustee any questions, issues, or concerns they have about Red River UU. The Trustee will provide answers or bring their concern before the board and report back.”

The Board meets the third Sunday of each month unless it conflicts with a Congregational Meeting or a holiday. You are welcome to come. You are welcome to make brief comments. If you need more time, contact me to get on the agenda. If you need ten minutes or more, I may offer to help you cut it down to get your most important concerns properly addressed.

There has been a bit of upset because we removed the minutes of board meetings from the public view. We were the last member of NTUUC to do this. We discuss money and church matters that should not be prey to on-line scammers. The 2024-25 Minutes are available in print in the Board Book kept in the Soul Café (where the round table is), and those of the 2025-26 fiscal year are added as they are approved. Should you need minutes from an earlier date, ask Jim.

My phone number is 972-489-0989. My email address is jana.rruu@gmail.com. If you have questions or concerns (or want to tell me what an excellent job we're doing), let me know.

Labor Day Picnic



LABOR DAY PICNIC IN THE PARK. Indivisible Sherman has invited the public to celebrate Labor Day with FREE hot dogs & chips! Ice-cold water will be provided.

The billionaire agenda is converting the government into their private slush fund. They're stealing from working families, destroying our democracy, and building private armies to attack our towns and cities. We are coming together to demand "workers over billionaires." We're raising hell (Ann Richards) and having fun doing it (Mollie Ivins).

At the same time that they are attacking workers' rights and driving up the cost of everyday life for working people, they just passed a tax bill that is the largest wealth giveaway in the history of the US. The money they take from working families, they put in billionaires' pockets and set aside the rest to fund a private army of ICE agents.

On Labor Day, our strategy is simple: build a movement by and for America's working class! We will turn the page and usher in a new era for working families.

We are rising up because our lives, our families, our public schools, and our health care depend on it. Labor and citizen organizations are using collective action, legal challenges, and political mobilization to counter the billionaire takeover.

You are invited to have a free democracy hotdog! Sept 1, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm Pecan Grove Park, Pavilion 1 3200 Canyon Creek Drive, Sherman.

Money Matters

We started a new fiscal year on July 1. Thanks to everyone for your pledges.

In the month of July, we had total operating receipts of \$5,445.65. Total operating expenses for the month were \$6,841.50, leaving us with a net loss for the month of (\$1,395.85). The net loss for the month was primarily due to the timing of both pledge donations and insurance payments. As of July 31, 2025, we had \$14,663.80 available to be used for general operations in our bank checking account, \$9,947.14 available in our bank

savings account, and approximately \$19,017.83 available in our UUA savings fund. The amount available in the UUA savings fund varies based on market value. In addition, we have the following restricted amounts: \$4,871.08 in our bank savings account restricted for the Minister Fund; \$5,951.89 in our bank savings account held in trust for Kat Walston; \$51,000.00 restricted in the UUA Savings Fund for minister compensation; and \$21,190.93 restricted to cover continuing repairs and renovations to the building and to increase visibility in the community in order to grow membership. Carole Harner, Treasurer

Minister Search Committee

The Minister Search Team met on August 14th to discuss the UUA Internship program. The UUA is putting effort into their intern program and NTUUC is supporting this effort through help and funding. An intern is a potential ministerial candidate in training. The program is designed to help the applicants develop ministerial skills. An intern is required to complete a minimum of 1000 hours of training in the areas of pulpit support, pastoral care, RE, and other areas that a typical minister would provide for their church. Each minister is required to have a supervising minister as their mentor and NTUUC will provide this minister that will meet with the intern on a regular basis and coach them as needed. Each church will require an Internship Committee that will interface with the intern and provide whatever they need to help them improve their ministerial skills. Intern salary is estimated by UUA to be around \$23,000/year and NTUUC will provide funding up to \$30,000. The intern program is typically a full time one year program or a half time two year program.

The Minister Search Team feels that this intern program would be a good fit for Red River UU and will be applying to the UUA Intern Clearinghouse Website in hopes of finding an intern. We will be submitting our application in September in hopes of attracting an intern. The interview and acceptance process is similar to that of selecting a minister and once a match is found and accepted, the intern usually starts in August. More to Follow. Liz Rapp, Walter Norris, Marla Loturco, Marilyn Alexander, Jim Holmes

September Birthdays



13 – George Noval
13 - Lynda Sheridan
14 - Jack
20 - Samuel Cates
24 - Irene RegisterD
26 - Paula Blackshear
29 - Kat Walston

A Reminder

The fall congregational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, October 17, 2025, and if you are a friend of the congregation who might want to join the church, our bylaws require a thirty day hold before new members can vote. So, want to join AND vote? You will need to sign the membership no later than September 17.

A Lesson in our history . . .



LEARN MORE ABOUT UU HISTORY – LISTEN TO THE BALTIMORE SERMON' The **Baltimore Sermon**, formally titled "*Unitarian Christianity*", was delivered by **Rev. William Ellery Channing** on **May 5, 1819**, at the ordination of Jared Sparks in Baltimore, Maryland. It is widely regarded as the **defining moment in the birth of American Unitarianism** and a cornerstone of Unitarian Universalist theology. Watch it [here](#)

Bring Water on Sept 17



To Help you remember to bring water on September 17...Read the history of Water Communion [here](#) and bring water with you so you, too, can partake in this wonderful UU tradition – now in its 45 year.

And speaking about water here's our non-resident poet's contribution for September.

From our non-resident Poet

I want a Poem like Water

by Don Mathis

I want a poem like the marriage of hydrogen and oxygen.

I want a poem like an hour in the shower.

I want a poem like the air before a rainstorm.

I want a poem like clouds, large as the sky, racing across the earth.

I want a poem like sheets of rain like silver.

I want a poem like a river in flood.

I want a poem like droplets of water on bare branches, sparkling like diamonds.

I want a poem like a rainbow.

I want a poem like an enveloping fog.

I want a poem like a walk in the snow.

I want a poem like ice skating.

I want a poem like the sweat of the dance.

I want a poem like a cool drink of water.

I want a poem like a refreshing swim on a hot day.

I want a poem like water skiing.

I want a poem like the roll of the ocean.

I want a poem like water!

Our Various Teams

The first name is the team leader

Adult Forum: Jim, Amy, Cristin, Marilyn, Marion

Aesthetics: Amy, Jana

Audio Visual: Jim, Carole, Liz, Marla

Caring Circle: Susie

Choir: Marilyn, Bill, Cindy

Children's R.E. Teacher: Jack

Children's Clothing Swap: Amy, Cristin, Jim, Sherilyn

Communications: Amy, Doug, Marla

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

Endowment:

Facebook Admin: Amy

Finance: Carole, Jim, Marilyn

Good Times Team: Marilyn, Amy, Andrea, Bill, Carole, Cindy, Elbert, Eva, George, Irene, Jim, Lisa, Liz, Marion, Pat, Samuel, Susie, Walter.

Greeters: Susie, Amy, Jack, Sherilyn

Grounds: Marilyn

Historian: Marla

IT Support: Jim

Membership: Susie, Amy, Doug, Marla

Minister Search: Jim, Liz, Marilyn, Marla, Walter

Monarch Way Station: Linn, Sherilyn, Susie

Moveable Feast: Susie, Amy, Bruce, Carole, Cindy, David, Doug, Irene, Jan, Jana, Joyce, Kelly, Liz, Marilyn, Marla, Michelle, Walter. This event, usually monthly, is open to everyone who wishes to participate. Speak with Susie if you're interested.

Music:

NTUUC Rep: Marilyn

Publications: Doug

Rainbow Team: Jack, Amy, Billie, Cristin, Jana, Jamie

Social Justice:

Strategic Plan: Jim, Bruce, Marilyn

TxUUJM Rep:

Web Team: Jim, Hannah, Marla

Worship: Marla, Eva, Marilyn, Megan, Susie

Worship Associates: Marla, Cristin, Jana, Marilyn, Megan, Thomas

Please Note: Changes happen. If your team's listing is wrong, email news@redriveruu.org with updates. Keeping this list as current as possible is important for us all. Thanx.

Our Elected or Appointed Leaders

Board of Trustees

Jana Norris, *President*

TBA, *Vice president*

Carole Harner, *Treasurer*

Jack, *Secretary*

Cristin Mackey, *Trustee at large*

Committee on Ministry

Jim Holmes, Marion Hill, Bruce Cameron

Nominating

Marilyn Alexander, Liz Rapp, Walter Norris