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# January 2026 ♦ Vol 17, No 1

Sunday, January 4, 2026

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

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

As we begin a new year, we are reminded that time marches on, but we rarely take time to think about what time actually is or is not. In this discourse, I will focus on the concept of time as an expression of relations and reflect on how we might more effectively use this concept to enhance relations within community.

Sunday, January 11, 2026

## A VALUE-ADDED LIFE

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

What would be the implications for community if we committed ourselves to bringing more value into the world than we take from it? In this discourse, I will reflect on how we might live in such a way as to increase the value of all life for the long run and on what kinds of systemic transformation would be needed for us all to live value adding lives.

Sunday, January 18, 2026

## A SPACE FOR RELEASE, RENEWAL, AND HOPE

Rebecca Crystal & Marla Loturco, *leading*

If you're looking for a way to start the year that feels deeper than a typical resolution, join us this Sunday. We're hosting a heartfelt service that blends music and words with a beautiful, symbolic ritual. Together, we'll move through a circle of light and water, practicing the art of letting go, the joy of starting fresh, and our connection to the earth. It's a gentle, supportive environment where you can connect with your own spirit and a community that cares. We'd love to have you in our circle.

Sunday, January 25, 2026

## WHO ARE U'S?

The Worship Team, *leading*

Curious about Unitarian Universalism? Join us this Sunday for a special look at Unitarian Universalism. We'll explore the values that guide us—like justice, equity, and a deep respect for the earth—and discuss how we live those out in the real world.

Newcomers, old friends, and the simply curious are all welcome.

Come explore with us!



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## From the Prez...

2025 was a rollercoaster year here at Red River UU Church. We began with a proposed budget cut to the bone. Then our pledges didn't meet that, and we had to dip into savings to meet our operating costs. I was truly afraid that we were a couple of years away from closing our doors.

Then as we moved into summer, I started noticing synchronicities. Someone would say they wanted to work on X to meet one of our needs, and someone else would respond that they had been thinking about that, too, and were figuring out Y. That kept happening. There was a palpable shift in energy.

We had 14 people formally join our congregation! A few were long-term visitors who suddenly felt called to deepen their relationship. The rest were new to us, and many were new to Unitarian Universalism. They bring a wide range of talents, a lot of enthusiasm, and their beautiful and kind selves to make us better than ever.

The Board has caught up on a lot of a-church-is-also-a-business-entity work: the boring but necessary things that keep us going. We have always been under the UUA's 501(c)(3) umbrella, but we are creating our own so that we can qualify for grants.

We have some cleaning up of the Bylaws and the Policies and Procedures Manual to do, and it's time to start creating our new budget and getting ready for the stewardship campaign. Save us from the terror that we won't meet our budget: pledge early and often

Susie Norris, who has done a remarkable job chairing the Membership Committee, has offered to take on even more work by serving as our Vice President.

Susie and Walter have also proposed that we give the artists among us a chance to share their creativity with us. We will host our first Art Exhibit in March. Pat Bley has accepted the newly created position of Community Outreach Director and will help us become more visible by participating in events in Denison, Sherman, and Durant. We have a lot of work to do in 2026, and most of it is going to be a lot of fun. I can't wait.

## Nerdy New Year's Eve Party

The Rainbow Team hosted the 2025 [Nonalcoholic] Nerdy New Year's Eve Party. Twenty-two people came; only nine were members! There were board games, a spirited white elephant gift exchange, and so many snacks. Jack was an adept Master of Ceremonies and Mayhem, and 2026 was ushered in with joy, community, and laughter!

SEE IMAGES on last page

## NAACP Hosts MLK March

Join us Saturday January 17, 2026, at 10 am at the Grayson County Courthouse at Houston and Travis in downtown Sherman. The March will line up and proceed to MLK Jr. Park between East St and 1120-1198 N Broughton St, Sherman. There will be a short program there followed by continued celebration.

*Jan Fletcher*

New Social Action Team leader

972-897-5796.

## Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Report as of November 30, 2025. For the fiscal year-to-date period of July 1 through November 30, we had an operating net profit of \$7,239.19. This was due to the timing of pledge donations and to lower expenses in several categories, partially offset by unbudgeted expenses for yard work. We continue to expect to have a loss this fiscal year due to lower pledges and additional expenses for yard work. As of October 31, 2025, we had \$22,642.92 available to be used for general operations in our bank checking account, \$9,957.39 available in our bank savings account, and approximately \$23,967.06 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; \$645.67 in our bank checking account for share the plate; \$16,518.51 in the endowment fund; and \$51,000.00 restricted in the UUA Savings Fund for minister compensation. In addition to the results from operations, we have spent \$1,407.49 year-to-date leaving \$19,783.44 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*

## Banned Book Club

The Banned Book Club will meet at the church at 2:00 pm on January 15th. This month's selection is *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou.

## Our New Website, an Update

Our new website has been live since Dec 8th, and during that time we've been actively working to improve our SEO (search engine optimization—the system Google and Bing use to rank search results).

When we first checked Google, our church appeared on page 2 for these searches:

- *Liberal churches near me*
- *LGBTQ friendly churches near me*
- *LGBTQ welcoming churches near me*

As of December 18th, those same searches show real progress:

- **Liberal churches near me** - 17 on page 1 (20 results per page)
- **LGBTQ friendly churches near me** - #11 on page 1
- **LGBTQ welcoming churches near me** - #6 on page 1

These results vary during the time of day, by device, and by browser I use. However, we're clearly moving in the right direction.

So why are some other churches still ranking ahead of us? One major reason is **Google reviews**. I checked several Baptist and Trinity churches that appear before us, and many of them have **40 or more reviews within the past year**.

Until recently, we had only six reviews dating back to 2023. Marla, Kacci/Lady, and I each added a review, bringing us to nine—and even with just those three latest reviews, we've already seen our search rankings improve.

**This is where you can help.**

We're asking each of you to post a Google review for Red River Unitarian Universalist Church.

**How to leave a Google review:**

1. Go to Google and search "**Red River Unitarian Universalists.**"
2. Our church information should appear on the right side of the screen.
3. Under our name, you'll see **Google Reviews** with star ratings—click there.
4. Click the "**Write a review**" button and share your experience.

When writing your review, please try to include keywords such as **liberal, friendly, welcoming, progressive, and LGBTQ**. You're welcome to read Marla's or Kacci/Lady's, or my review for inspiration, but please use your own words.

Thank you for helping us become more visible to people searching for a welcoming, inclusive spiritual community.

Also - looking for Our Governance and other pages that are missing? In the utility menu (upper right of a web page) you will see a menu item "Members". We moved them under that

menu item. Our future plans are to turn this into a members logon area.

Email the web team if you see any issues or have any suggestions for improving the website.

Peace! & Thank you,

*Marla Loturco & Jim Holmes*

Web Team

## Rainbow Team Update

As we say goodbye to one year & prepare to welcome the next, we tend to become reflective. Looking at the last several years of my 5+ decades living this lifetime, I, like most of humanity, can see things with not quite 20/20 vision, but with a clarity that comes from introspective survival.

I can see things I like, things I don't like, things I wish I had done differently & things I'm proud to have done just exactly as I did them.

I don't tend to make resolutions; they don't work for me, but I do have hopes for 2026.

- I hope we take leaps forward to cover ground we've lost to racism, misogyny, homo & transphobia & "Christian" Nationalism.
- I hope the people of Gaza can find peace & be able to live their lives again.
- I hope the leaders of our world can learn from our mistakes & not be tempted to punish the next leaders of our country.
- I hope that, somehow, we can find faith in our government once again. Not to be blind again, but to believe that they truly represent us.

Here's To 2026 & working together for the Beloved Community!

Please see the Church Calendar for upcoming Rainbow Team events for January! We meet every 2nd Sunday from 1-2 pm after C&C & all voices are welcome!

Jack

*for the Rainbow Team*

## Dinner for the Shelter

Today is January 1<sup>st</sup> – probably the one day a year when more people sleep in than any other day of the year. **Not so** for a coterie of devoted women (and a couple of men) who chose to spend today preparing a sumptuous selection of delicious delights and will deliver their results this afternoon to the Texoma Family Shelter. The menu includes ham, mashed potatoes, black eyed peas, collard greens, coleslaw, jello salad, cornbread casserole, beans, pumpkin bread cake, cookies, banana pudding, and pumpkin bread cake.



To the devoted cadre of volunteers: Amy, Carole, Eva, Elbert, George, Marla, Marilyn, Marion, Megan, Paula, and Susie who are laboring in their kitchens knowing their food will bring warm smiles and grateful appreciation from the current residents at the shelter.

What a terrific and giving way to start a new year.

## Earth Day Planners

The planning team is busy planning the upcoming festival, which will be April 18 from 9:00 to 4:00 at the Sherman Municipal Building and Lucy Kidd-Key Park. The theme for this year's festival is "Planet vs Plastic." Alexis Taylor of TCOG will present a workshop on The Case of the Mysterious Vanishing Plastic Bag.

We are also recruiting and considering proposals from other potential workshop leaders.

We plan to educate the public about ways the reduce the use of plastics by consumers. The planning team will create a display that provides information about cost and benefits of different water filtration systems in comparison to the cost of buying bottled water. We also are in the process of purchasing a new tent with graphics for our information tent.

Vendor and sponsor registration is open, and forms can be found on our website [www.earthdaytexoma.org](http://www.earthdaytexoma.org). We also encourage volunteers to sign up early so we can order t-shirts for them.

The planning team meets the second Thursday of the month at the church at 5:30 pm. We would love to welcome more members to the planning team.

## New Adult Forum starts

Emerson, Thoreau, and the Transcendentalist movement that transformed America and which continues to influence many aspects of our culture, today, from efforts to preserve large tracts of wild nature to civil disobedience around the world.

## January Moveable Feast

Where will the Moveable Feast gather in January? 'Tis a wee bit too soon, given today is only the first of January, to know. Be patient, folks since half of our fearless feast facilitators are busy with what she is taking to the Shelter Dinner today.

For those who may not know, Moveable Feast is a terrific way to enjoy a meal with others from church. Our Fearless Feast Facilitators select a restaurant and everyone who wants to join in for a Dutch Treat liberal religious meal are warmly invited. Currently there are 32 folks on the M.F. text message list. Look for details the January feast in an upcoming UPDATE.

## From our non-resident poet

### *Endings and Beginnings*

by Don Mathis

Isn't it amazing that how the years pass, they bring  
peace, understanding, patience, generosity, and  
acceptance and those feelings foster more of those  
attributes, which brings the bounty of long-held  
desires, and things don't go wrong as much as they  
used to, and troubles aren't as troubling, which  
brings more comfort from, conscious of this  
happiness and thankful for all I know, all I have,  
and look forward to what may come.





## The Nerdy New Year's Eve ...



## 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

## 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](mailto:news@redriveruu.org) with updates. Keeping this list as current as possible is important for us all. Thanx.