



RED RIVER

And Service is its Law

RAMBLINGS

January 2022 Vol. 23 – No. 7

January 2, 2022 – 11:15 am

An Ending and A Beginning

Marla Loturco, *leading*

The new year calls us forward, filled with mystery. As we turn toward that new year, we take a final glimpse of the past year, and reckon with all that it held for us. We will consider what we might leave behind from the old year, and what we are grateful to take forward into the mystery. Please join us

January 9, 2022 – 11:15 am

Making the Empire Great Again

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

An exploration of the historical and contemporary use of religion for the maintenance and expansion of political power.

January 16, 2022 – 11:15 am

The Great Depression: Pain and Relief

Professor Glenn Melancon from Southeastern will be our guest speaker

The Great Depression caused an incredible amount of physical and psychological pain. Conservative economists believed the pain necessary for a return to normal. Pain taught people the cost of failure and motivated them to recover. To remove the pain was to remove

January 16, continued...

the moral hazard. The New Deal rejected this orthodoxy. The New Deal relieved the pain by putting money in the hands of consumers. Consumers spent money in housing, food and clothing. Consumer spending jumped started the economy and gave Americans hope.

January 23, 2022

The Sin of Nicaea

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

An exploration of problematic relationships between church and state, especially when the power of the state is used to enforce adherence to religious beliefs and doctrines.

January 30, 2022 – 11:15 am

Finding Your One True Thing

Elena Westbrook, *leading*

We share a faith that claims to value questions over answers. Nevertheless, UUs are as vulnerable as everyone else to all the ways humans leap to judgment and even dogmatism. In a complicated, angry country lining up to take rigid sides, is there a way to discover what is true ... and truly important?

During January the Adult Forum will focus on various changing technologies that impact our lives. Details of the various short video clips exploring the topic are listed in the church calendar and on the This Sunday tab of the church mobile app.

Kindly note:

As we wait out the Omicron variant, we are continuing to ask those who join us in the chapel to mask up and support social distancing. During these times we will continue to live stream our Morning Assemblies on our Zoom account (Meeting ID: 989 0789 7878). All our Assemblies are uploaded each Sunday afternoon/evening to our YouTube channel ("Red River UU"). Thanks for you understand of our need to have these protocols in place while at church.

Red River Unitarian Universalists - *Serving the World from Denison Texas*

The Church of England's God is Becoming More Liberal

By Catherine Nixey: Britain Correspondent, The Economist

Smiting used to be so simple. God smote and the people trembled, and they sometimes died. He smote the rebellious Israelites (tens of thousands died); the firstborn Egyptians (they all died) and the Philistines (they got haemorrhoids). The Sodomites suffered a particularly striking smiting. In Genesis, the men of Sodom are "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly", so God rained "brimstone and fire" upon Sodom. The brimstone smouldered for centuries; the word "sodomy" entered popular parlance—and English lawbooks. Homosexual acts remained a crime in England until 1967.

Few in Britain celebrate a smitey Almighty today. God, as the Archbishop of Canterbury put it recently, "is love". And now fewer celebrate a homophobic God. In June 2021, Methodists voted, after "prayerful consideration", to allow same-sex marriage. In September, the Church of Wales voted to allow blessings for same-sex relationships. In 2022 the Church of England (c of e) will consider similar questions. The signs are promising. As a recent c of e book put it, in a tone not easily confused with that of Leviticus: "together we stand against homophobia".

Continued on next page

Jim Jabber

Welcome to 2022. Let's hope it's a nicer year than what we got from 2021.

In the December Board meeting we discussed several topics of interest:

- We accepted Dick Powell, Marla Loturco, and Linda Tracy as our Minister Investigation Committee. The goal for this team is to present to the May congregation the various grants and funding available to pay for a minister, how we apply for them, and how obtainable they are. They will also present the typical steps involved in doing a minister search. In the May meeting the membership will then vote on if they wish to pursue getting a minister. If we do approve going forward, then there are certain rules in the Bylaws we need to follow to make this happen. More detail on this as we get closer to the May meeting.
- The Board reviewed the funds we have received to date (as of Dec 18) from GiveButter through our on-line Donate button on the website, mobile app, and various emails. Here are the numbers:

GiveButter contributions to date:

Restricted funds	\$1,100.00*
Pledge payments	\$ 445.00
General giving	<u>\$ 680.00</u>
Total received	\$2,225.00

- The Board is planning to hold the Appreciation Dinner on February 20th after the Sunday morning assembly. Currently we are planning to have a lunch catered, thinking that a catered lunch would be safer than a potluck. This may change depending on how we are affected by the various current and future Covid mutations. Zoom will also be available for those who cannot attend in person but Zoom attendees will have to supply their own food!

I got an email from Marion Hill about this year's UUA General Assembly (GA). It will be held in Portland. Marion is planning to attend the virtual GA. Registration opens in March. If anyone is interested in attending the virtual GA with Marion, contact her for more information.

Take care, keep safe, wear your mask!

And Keep on Truckin'

Jim Holmes,
president

*The restricted funds are earmarked for the Ronda DeCaire & Robert Shelton Memorial accounts.

The evidence is clear: God is becoming more liberal.

In theory this should not be possible. God, as well as being love, and on occasion a cause of haemorrhoids, is supposed to be eternal: the same yesterday, today, for ever. And yet, as critics have noted for centuries, He manifestly is not. Historians have a theory as to what is going on. "On earth as it is in heaven" runs the Christian prayer. A concept called "politicomorphism" argues that the divine chain of command runs in the opposite direction: in heaven as it is on earth. Democratic, liberal nations get democratic, liberal deities; undemocratic, illiberal countries get the opposite. Just ask an Afghan.

Few in Britain celebrate a smiley Almighty today

Shrewd politicians have long known this, says James Crossley of St Mary's University, Twickenham. God has been used to justify slavery and its abolition, the oppression of women and their emancipation, as well as numerous wars. "Left, right, centre...He's the authority that you want," adds Mr Crossley. God is "a complicated chap".

He may be about to get more so. It is possible that a deity who once stated, "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination," may, in 2022, be used to justify same-sex blessings
Continued on last page

Earth Day Planning

The Earth Day Planning Committee will meet in January, date to be decided. We will begin planning the Texoma Earth Day Festival, which will be held on April 23. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact [Amy Hoffman-Shehan](#).

Assisting Afghan Refugees

Catholic Charities is the relief agency appointed to aid Afghan refugees. Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City and Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma have combined efforts for refugee resettlement in Oklahoma. The organizations have received confirmation that 800 Afghan refugees will be resettled in Tulsa and 1000 will be resettled in the Oklahoma City area.

Anyone who wants to volunteer can fill out the volunteer form here: <https://cceok.org/node/906>

You can donate household items here: <http://refugeesok.com/afghan/>

Please note, they are currently in need of sheets, blankets, and dishes. They have received an abundance of toothbrushes and ask that those not be donated.

Financial contributions can be sent here: <https://cceok.org/node/911>

Treasurers Report

In November, we had total receipts of \$7,315.68. Pledges for the month totaled \$3,540.00, and we received donations totaling \$3,300.00 for the purchase of new AV equipment. Expenses for the month totaled \$2,893.93. This resulted in net income for the month of \$4,421.75. Net income for this fiscal year-to-date was \$21,770.87. As of November 30, 2021, we had \$9,167.89 available in checking, of which \$1,469.13 stays available for added support for Lanan Shelton. We also have a total of \$19,097.53 in all savings accounts, including \$2,545.00 in the Ronda DeCaire Memorial Fund and a total of \$81,847.52 in UUCEF funds.
Dick Powell, *Treasurer*



Untouched and Still Possible

December 31, 2021

A REVIEW OF UUU's IN ACTION DURING 2021: The cusp of the New Year is always a moment for pause and reflection, looking back over the winding paths that have brought us to the present while gazing ahead toward the road stretching before us. Here at Side with Love, we too join in this practice of breathing in all that has been, and exhaling our hopes for all that is to come.

2021 brought us both the unprecedented, and the all-too familiar. And while we could catalogue all the heartbreaks of what it means to be alive in this moment, at this turning of the year, your Side with Love team is choosing to look back on this year through the lens of gratitude. Today, we reflect and offer our deep thankfulness for our life-giving faith, for the movements that are leading us and imagining a new world into being, and for YOU—Unitarian Universalists across the land who are doing the brave, difficult, gratifying, maddening, mundane, critical work of embodying our faith in our shared work for justice.

There are so many inspiring stories of your witness and your action, and we are blessed to hear them day in and day out as we collaborate with UU individuals, congregations, and organizations. Today, we lift up just a few of these beacons of hope:

- During the critical runoff election in Georgia, our UU the Vote volunteer Squads ran 14 phone banks in partnership with Reclaim Our Vote, training and supporting over 800 volunteers to make calls to voters in Georgia. UU the Vote contributed more volunteer time and organizing than any other 501(c)3 non-partisan organization in Georgia.
- Unitarian Universalists answered the call of Water Protectors to show up to fight the construction of the Line 3 Pipeline. On several occasions, and in collaboration with an interconnected network of UU organizations, UU activists showed up, putting their bodies on the line, and supporting the leadership of the Anishinaabe and Lakota peoples leading the #StopLine3 movement.
- More than 170 people made up 21 cohorts of our [It Starts With Faith: Organizing School](#). These teams worked together to deepen their skills, strategize about their shared work, and sharpen their political analysis. These teams are now putting their learnings into inspiring practice. To name just a few examples, the DRUUMM cohort is focusing on the 8th Principle, the new Kentucky state action network (SAN) is working for reproductive justice, our North Carolina SAN is organizing for fair mapping and hosting a defund police camp, and UUs in Schenectady, NY have been mobilizing for the Freedom to Vote Act.
- UU congregations continue to show up prophetically in their communities, meeting the political moment with skill and courage. During the national #Faiths4ClimateJustice week of action this fall, several UU congregations engaged in or hosted local events, such as First Unitarian Society of Madison, who organized an interfaith demonstration at the Capitol building to collect and send messages to the United Nations prior to their 26th Climate Change Conference.
- More than 40 Unitarian Universalists traveled to Washington, D.C. in October to take part in the People vs. Fossil Fuels week of action. The week centered Indigenous leadership and youth organizing, and brought our UU kin into movement and solidarity with thousands of people and partner organizations who are fighting for a fossil-free future. Dozens of UUs were arrested at the White House and the Capitol as they engaged in civil disobedience with the GreenFaith delegation to tell President Biden and Congress to build back fossil free. Read UU young adult leader Zoë Johnston's firsthand account of the experience [here](#).
- In the first three months following the launch of [Side With Love's Action Center](#), UUs have participated in more than 50 justice-centered events, both local and national, with nearly 3,000 people engaging. Most recently, on the National Day of Action for the Freedom to Vote Act, 10 congregations hosted or participated in their own distributed actions in local communities.
- Close to 100 UUs from across the country converged at the Poor People's Campaign national action earlier this month, urging the passage of both Build Back Better and the Freedom to Vote Act. Six UU clergy and 2 lay leaders engaged in non-violent moral direct action, including UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray.

There is so much we are grateful for, today and every day. It is such a gift to be in an ever-deepening relationship with this network of faithful, courageous people working to build a world in which all people are truly free.

We know that time is not linear—we spiral forward and back, again and again, generation after generation. And yet, at certain precious moments, we can find the stillness of a long pause, perched on the threshold between past and future. As the poet W.S. Merwin writes:

*so, this is the sound of you
here and now whether or not
anyone hears it this is
where we have come with our age
our knowledge such as it is
and our hopes such as they are
invisible before us
untouched and still possible – W.S. Merwin, "To the New Year"*

We are so thankful to be in the work with you, sharing our faith that another world is possible. In faith and solidarity, The Side with Love Organizing Strategy Team (Adrian Ballou, Michael Crumpler, Audra Friend, Rev. Ranwa Hammamy, Rev. Ashley Horan, Susan Leslie, Jeff Milchen, Nicole Pressley, Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, & Aly Tharp) P.S. Want to go deeper with SideWith Love in the new year? [Subscribe](#) to our newsletters, [join](#) one of our volunteer Squads, and [host or join](#) an upcoming event.

In the c of e. And traditionalists should brace themselves for even more change.

Take God's pronouns which—like all pronouns—are currently a cause of contention, as some now refer to Him as Her. As always, there are obscure historical texts that appear to justify this: ancient Syriac Christians referred to the Holy Ghost as "she". So if He seems complicated now, that is nothing to what He/She might yet become.

This article appeared in the Britain section of the print edition of The World Ahead 2022 under the headline "Nearer, my God, to me"

Birthdays in January

- 07 – Joe Combs
- 09 – Kelly Cofield-Dyer
- 26 – Megan Hutchinson

North Texas Winter

I've seen cities,
silent as a forest,
in the falling snow.

The path I shoveled
in Germany's January
watched March's thaw.

Slush and slop-turtles
in D.C.'s streets
shows ugly freeze.

But I have never seen
the same white blossoms
in a variety of trees,

Signs with teeth
fearsomely demanding
respect for the road,

Teeth that bite,
in a North Texas Winter,
with a bitter cold.

By our poet in non-residence,
Don Mathis



Our Leaders

Board of Trustees

Jim Holmes, *President*
Marilyn Alexander, *Vice-President*
David Powell, *Treasurer*
David Dyer, *Secretary*
Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *Trustee*

Committee on Ministry:

Elbert Hill, Carolyn Cameron

Nominating:

Kelly Cofield Dyer, Don Rogers, Linda Tracy

Team Leaders/Members:

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

Aesthetics: *Carol, Doug*

Caring Circle: *Kelly*

Communications: *Doug*

Endowment: *Carolyn, Dick, Doug*

Facilities: *Jim (until we find someone)*

Finance: *Jim, Dick, Jan, Marilyn*

Grounds: *Marilyn*

Long Range Planning: *Jim, Marilyn*

Membership: *Marion*

Minister Investigation: *Dick, Marla, Linda*

NTUUC Rep: *Marla*

RE Team: *David, Ellie, Marilyn*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*

Social Action:

Welcoming Congregation: *Adrian, Amy, Lisa, Marla, Thomas*

Worship: *Dan, Doug, Marla, Thomas*

Contact Us

Red River Unitarian Universalists

515 North Burnett Ave

mail to:

PO BOX 1806

DENISON, TX 75021-1806

How to reach us:

- Phone: 903.231.3232
- [Mobile App](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)

The church calendar is now listed on the church website home page