



1997-2022

Red River Ramblings

March 2022 Vol. 23 – No. 9

To Seek the Truth in Freedom

Sunday, March 6, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Waşing Peace in a Climate of Conflict

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

An exploration of proactive practices for peace in a world ripe for Conflict.

Sunday, March 13, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Spring ahead! Daylight Savings Time Starts Today.

What If I Had Only 30 Days to Love

Side With Love Sunday

This year's Side with Love Sunday focuses on Love, featuring stirring music, deep-hearted discourse, and moving testimonies from a range of UU leaders.

Sunday, March 20, 2022 – 11:15 AM

Special Congregational Meeting today – 12:30 (in person & on Zoom)

Democracy In Danger

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

An exploration of why democracy as a system for just political participation of all people is under threat throughout the world.

Sunday, March 27, 2022 – 11:15 AM

History Now? Diversity, Race, and Schooling

Dr. William Lloyd Fridley, *speaking*

America's public schools, and in some cases colleges, are being subject to a host of measures regulating and restricting what is taught. At least 36 states have adopted or introduced laws or policies that restrict teaching about race and racism. Bills targeting *divisive concepts* ("ideas about race and sex that challenge the dominant narrative of America's founding and history") have been introduced in seven states and enacted in three. School boards across the country have taken steps to "investigate" and remove curricular materials and content, to prohibit training about diversity, and to ban books from school libraries. We'll examine select examples of these phenomena through historical, philosophical, and pedagogical lenses to address the question: Does history have a future in our schools?

Red River Unitarian Universalists

Serving the World from Denison, Texas

Jim's Jabber



This month we have an especially important meeting on March 20th. We are meeting to decide if we want to start the search for a minister. I know that many of you like the variety of services that we have and would be concerned that we would lose this variety. I too have that concern however I have other concerns that also impact my thinking on this subject. Here are my thoughts and concerns in no particular order or priority.

When I look at our church today, I see that we are starting to strain in certain areas. We are losing members faster than we are gaining them. Our current members are aging, and many are over 65. Some have health issues that keep them from taking part as they would like to. We are all enormously proud of the work the worship team does in putting together a variety of Sunday morning assemblies, but the team is understaffed and

in need of people who are willing to put in the work to help keep our Sunday mornings uplifting and meaningful.

When I imagine where our church might be two years from now my concerns increase. We will continue to lose more members to health and aging issues. Many of whom are key contributors to running and financing the church. This problem is even more dire 4 to 5 year out. What can we do about it?

It's said that insanity is doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results. From my perspective we need to investigate how we can do things differently because we need help now and even more help in the future.

What having a minister will do for us will depend on what we define as needs, goals and how we see a minister working with us in achieving them. Once we are clear among ourselves of the direction, we want our church to go over the next several years, then we can work with the UUA in finding a minister whose skill sets would provide the leadership we're currently lacking. I think a minister would need to work in partnership with our worship team, as well as providing leadership within Texoma community to make Red River UU more visible and thus help attract new members. Compensation will be an issue but there are grants and funding available to help support a minister over a few years.

You will receive an information packet on Monday, March 7 outline the agenda for the March 20th meeting. Please read it and please come to the meeting on March 20th, immediately following the morning assembly. Join in on the discussion. Be ready to vote on the future direction of our church. If you can't make it in person, you will be able to join us on Zoom. If you can't make it at all, be sure to vote online (information in the packet) or fill out your proxy card and give it to someone who is attending.

I want to congratulate Amy Hoffman-Shehan for winning the Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award. This was presented to her at our appreciation lunch we had after the February 20th service. What I most appreciate about Amy is that when she accepts a task to do, she does it and always exceeds my expectations. And she does many of them. Thank you, Amy.

The Board has approved reinstating Conversations & Calories on Sundays following worship. For this to happen, we need 4 teams of 4 people – with each team working one Sunday a month. If you want to help, please speak with Marilyn Alexander.

Take care, keep safe, wear your mask!

And *Keep on Truckin'*

Jim Holmes, *president*

New Member Welcoming Ceremony

Red River UU hasn't inducted new members for over two years, what with our not meeting in person for several months, then curtailing some of our usual activities out of caution over the virus. Now we have five new members, who have already joined by signing the membership book and who are now ready to participate in a new-member induction ceremony. The next such ceremony is tentatively planned for March 13. This is a brief ritual in which new members are introduced to the congregation, and the congregation welcomes them.

If anyone else has been considering joining the church, now would be a good time. Contact Marion Hill, membership chair (marionh3719@gmail.com), and she will discuss with you the process of becoming a member.

Amy Hoffman-Shehan Honored



Amy Hoffman-Shehan was the 2022 recipient of the Bruce Cameron Distinguished Service Award at a special luncheon following the morning assembly on February 20th. Amy, a birth-right Unitarian Universalist raised at First Unitarian Church Dallas became a charter member of Red River along when we officially became a certified UU congregation. During her second year as facilitator the Green Team held a small Earth Day Festival at the church, one attended by approximately 100 people. She led the group in expanding the festival into an area-wide event, drawing participants from throughout Texoma. Amy's leadership the Texoma Earth Day Festival would never have survived that first gathering.

Amy is a Sunday greeter, on the membership team, has served on the nominating committee, the Board of Trustees where she is again serving. She is an excellent source of information helping people in times of illness, and because of her outreach in the wider community received the first Marty Robinson Award for Volunteerism from NTUUC. We want to believe, sometimes we desperately want to believe, with Margaret Mead when she said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has..." Amy Hoffman-Shehan validates that for us.

Elbert Hill Joins North Tx UU

Good news - Elbert Hill has agreed to be the new North Texas UU Congregations (NTUUC), replacing Marla Loturco who has performed the rep duties for the last 10 years. Each UU congregation in NTUUC is encouraged to have one volunteer join the NTUUC board which oversees the many and multiple responsibilities of NTUUC – including dispensing grants to enrich and expand Unitarian Universalism throughout North Texas. Thank you, Elbert!
Editor's Note: And thanks to you, too, Marla for a decade of devoted representation at NTUUC. Board meetings, retreats and being the board secretary.

Red River UU Turns Twenty-Five

Everything was arranged and those planning the event had thought of everything from the Trumpet fanfare to the napkins for refreshments. There was a handful of people organizing the event – the first ever Unitarian Universalist worship experience in Texoma. The decision was to hold this event in a space people would see as ‘religious’ so it was that the small chapel at Austin College was secured, probably because in a small town like Sherman those willing to put together a UU service had connections with Austin College.



The date, March 26, 1997, was a Wednesday – when traditional congregations across Texoma gathered for evening worship seemed perfect. The chapel filled up with a curious, caring assembly of humanity not at all sure what to expect. Evidently, we did well since here we are twenty-five years later acknowledging a milestone worthy of our time and pride.

The details are far more intriguing as is the history over the next 25 years. Suffice to say silver jubilees are so named because it is good to pause and thank ourselves for coming to this threshold in our history. Over the next 12 months the worship team, with the blessing of the Board of Trustees are planning to have 12 jubilee moments during the morning assembly – twelve brief pauses to remember and remind ourselves all that we’ve wrought.

Since it turns out March 27, 2023, *is a Sunday* – we will conclude our year with a special yet-to-be-arranged celebration. First, there is the need to ask, just how does a small, feisty, caring lay-led congregation celebrate turning 26? Your suggestions are most welcome. Send them to worship@redriveruu.org.

The Caring Circle

Red River UU have always helped other members and friends in illness, bereavement, or other difficulty. But we haven’t had an official Caring Circle for a while. Now we have one again. Our deep appreciation to Kelly Cofield-Dyer for carrying the torch even while working full-time. ! It currently has three members but would welcome more. And if you know someone who needs care or attention, please call, text, or email one of these three: Carol Powell, David Dyer, and Carolyn Cameron. This is to everyone: We can’t care about it until we know about it.



Good Time Team Needs U

Like food? Enjoy having treats after the Morning Assembly each week? So does everyone else ... but alas we still need three more volunteers to join the Good Times Team. You work one Sunday a month with 2 other volunteers, bringing whatever you wish to bring. Volunteer set up and clean up. Speak with Marilyn Alexander for details.

Words to Live By

This week marked the beginning of election season - which will end in November and start again right after that. It's so easy to forget that we at RRUU are not of one mind on ANY issue including politics but we are all dedicated to tolerance and inclusivity. It's unlikely that any of us will change our opinions significantly but we can disagree respectfully. Let's keep our political discussions away from RRUU so that our church home will be a peaceful sanctuary for everyone, regardless of their politics. I needed this reminder, if you did too - you're welcome.

Treasurer's Report

We start off the new calendar year with a fairly average month. Total receipts were \$3,085.00, including pledges totaling \$2,870.00. Expenses for the month totaled \$3,962.13, resulting in a modest net loss for the month of (\$877.13). Net income for this fiscal year-to-date (thru 1/31/22) is still significantly over budget by \$22,367.30.

As of January 31, 2022, we had \$6,524.88 available in checking. All of the \$1,469.13 previously available for additional support for Lanan Shelton was spent in January to assist her move to Austin. Savings accounts total of \$19,103.13, including \$2,545.00 in the Ronda DeCaire Memorial Fund. Our investment in UUCEF funds remains at a total of \$81,847.52.

Dick Powell, *Treasurer*

Adult Forum

Is continuing an exploration of the Great Books Series Science and Religion. During March, the topics include Church, Copernicus, and Galileo; Galileo's Trial; God the Watchmaker; and Natural Theology and Arguments from Design. The Forum meets in the Alexander room at 10:00 and via Zoom @ Meeting ID 989 0789 7878. Open to all who wish to join in.

Look for information ...

On Monday, March 7 all members will receive a packet of information detailing the March 20 special congregational meeting. Online voting for those unable to attend the meeting – either live in the chapel or via our Zoom account (Meeting ID: 989 0789 7878) will open on Sunday, March 13. Vote by proxy ballots will be included in the packet of information for those wishing to give your proxy to another member or mail them back to the board secretary, David Dyer (at the church address below).

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:

Carole Harner, Don Rogers, Linda Tracy

Team Leaders/Members:

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

Aesthetics: *Carol, Doug*

AV: *Don, Carole, Jim, Marla*

Caring Circle: *Carol, Carolyn, David*

Communications: *Doug*

Endowment: *Carolyn, Dick, Doug*

Facilities: *Jim*

Finance: *Jim, Dick, Jan, Marilyn*

Grounds: *Marilyn*

Long Range Planning: *Jim, Marilyn*

Membership: *Marion*

Minister Investigation: *Dick, Marla*

NTUUC Rep: *Elbert*

RE Team: *David, Ellie, Marilyn*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*

Social Action:

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



The Irish Word

by Don Mathis,
Our Poet in Residence (who happens to live in Austin)

The Irish are so good with words
with shortened verse or rambling dirge;
it provides an inspiration.

It makes me want to emulate
minstrels of old or imitate
their sources of stimulation.

How they used to praise their king!
Of his exploits, they would sing.
It gives me admiration.

Life, according to bards of yore
and tales of ancient troubadour,
was rich beyond imagination.

The women all were hardy souls
whose beauty writers would extol
with their frequent recitation.

The Irish warrior's speed and strength
were simply far beyond belief
as per poet's proclamation.

And the curses of the Irish tongue
would make the Devil's own ears burn
with unending consternation.

Ahh, but the Irish prayers are best.
You know when you've been blessed
with heavenly adoration.

The Irish have a way with words
with shortened verse or rambling dirge;
the best in all creation.

March Birthdays

12 – Jan Fletcher
14 – Marilyn Alexander
19 – Carole Harner
21 – William Lloyd Fridley
22 – Elbert Hill
25 – Lanan Shelton

Contact Us

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Find the church calendar on the home page
of our website.