

Red River Ramblings

Sunday, September 4, 2022 - 11:15 am

THE CREATIVE TENSION OF JUSTICE MAKING

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

Martin Luther King said, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice." Creating justice is not a passive enterprise. It requires action, and sometimes it requires direct action that presses creatively on the places of tension within society to provoke positive social change.

Sunday, September 11, 2022 - 11:15 am

NINE ELEVEN: THE NOUN

The Worship Team, *leading*

It was a Tuesday when Nine Eleven became a noun. Since then, it has fallen on a Sunday only three times, in 2005, 2011 and this year.

America began as an experiment and as these widely divided times reminds, us we are still in the thick of it. On this 9/11, we gather to share our grief for those who died, to reflect on where we are as a people, and to perhaps better understand that what happened will never go away. We can't 'celebrate' Nine Eleven, but we will remember and honor this important day in our nation's history.

Sunday, September 18, 2022 - 11:15 am

PEACE BUILDING IN A WAR-TORN WORLD

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

Each generation seems to find ways to perpetuate war in our world, leading us to wonder if true peace will ever be possible. In this discourse, I will explore the factors and conditions that might bring us to an experience of a more peaceful and just world. What will it take to move in the direction of perpetual peace rather than perpetual war of justice."

Sunday, September 25, 2022 - 11:15 am

PEACE SUNDAY #3 - LIVING PEACE

Jana Norris & Marla Loturco, *leading*

This morning for our third Peace Sunday we continue this special series based on the *book Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World* by Ken Beller and Heather Chase by taking a look at leaders who 'live peace'

Mother Teresa

Thich Nhat Han

Colman McCarthy

Oscar Arias.

Their lives stand out for peace in our current situation and learning more about them can be inspiring.

Texoma's only Sanctuary for Religious Liberals

Search Team Update

The Minister Search Team meets each month at 2pm in the Alexander Room on the Thursday prior to the Sunday monthly Board meeting. It is an open meeting so join us live or on Zoom with the Zoom ID 989 0789 7878.

Our August meeting was held on August 18. Our next meeting will be on Sept. 15.

The team reviewed the results of the 4 congregational meetings we held to discuss what the congregation is looking for in a new minister. We still have some members that missed the meetings so the team will be contacting them to get their feedback.

We are also asking our congregation if they would be able to make a financial commitment toward covering the minister's compensation. We are in the process of designing a pledge card that will be available soon. We already have some verbal commitments toward this funding. We will also be adding a donation category to

GiveButter so that people may make direct donations to the minister Compensation Fund.

We discussed our financial projections analysis for the cost of a minister over time. In looking at the first 2 years with a full-time contract minister our analysis is showing that we have some challenges affording them based on our income and expense assumptions. Once we receive the pledge cards and know what additional financial commitments our congregation can do, the team will be able to put together a more accurate cost projection for the contract minister.

Based on our financial assumption it still looks like we will need to pull some money out of savings to cover the additional funds needed to pay for the minister's compensation package. We will recommend to the Board that they discuss this in the Fall Congregational Meeting and let the voting members determine an amount they feel comfortable taking out of savings.

Report prepared by:

David Dyer, Jana Norris Jim Holmes, Marilyn Alexander, Marla Loturco

Chair Yoga Starts

When someone starts talking about yoga, do you picture incredibly flexible fitness fanatics bending their bodies into pretzels? While some advanced poses can be mind-bendingly twisty, you don't have to be an aspiring contortionist to enjoy this form of exercise.

You can do yoga if you are struggling with limited mobility, balance issues, or stubborn stiffness. Without ever leaving your seat, you can take advantage of the many benefits of chair yoga.

Some benefits of chair yoga may surprise you because they include increased flexibility, improve strength, increase your ability to sense where your body is in space (technically called [proprioception](#)).

Intrigued? Show up **Tuesday, Sept 6 @ 10 am in the chapel** for a one-hour class that just might make you leave smiling and feeling terrific. Emphasis will be towards improving standing balance, core stabilization, joint mobility, coordination and ENJOYING LIFE! Marsha Runnels, a PT is the leader. 903-744-074

Marilyn's Musings

In August, we had several new things occur. The Minister Search Team held four meetings with members of the congregation to get their opinions on what type of person and what characteristics they would like to have in a minister. A few people volunteered to help with grant writing and the Minister Search Team is starting to get pledges just for minister expenses beyond peoples' normal pledge! Jim and his Minister Search Team are working hard for you, but they still have a lot of people who haven't responded to the questions for the congregation. So, the Minister Search Team will be calling those who haven't responded to get their views.

On Sunday, October 9th, we will have our **Annual Labor of Love** and all work together to take care of those things that can't get done with usual weekly cleaning. We will be putting away things that have gathered around the back hall, straightening the F. Forrester Church library, nursery, and office. Things have just been piled there and not put away where they belong. The carpet in the Gil Alexander room needs to be steam cleaned. Since we serve Conversation and Calories there every Sunday, it needs some attention. The sheers in that room also need washing and rehung and one of the curtain rods is unlevel and needs to be straightened and reattached. The outside windows on the first floor need washing. It would help if you brought newspapers and a squeegee for working on that project. The kitchen and adjacent closet need to be reorganized now that we have the carts for holding a lot of those items. As always, the basement needs attention, and something needs to be done with the boxes of books Doug put down there when he moved years ago.

The Fall Congregational Meeting is October 16th. The deadline for becoming a member and making a contribution of record to be eligible to vote is September 16th. We will need all Committees and Teams to submit their annual reports. If you are head of a team, please start preparing these reports and email them to me so they can go in the packet. (See list below)

Also, we will have a potluck lunch that Sunday, so you might want to be thinking of what you want to bring.



New Purchases

We have new porch lights, and they illuminate the ramps and stairs really well. You may not have noticed them, but you will when we have events in the evening this fall and winter. Thanks Jim and Don.

We purchased a new printer and the other tired one has been put upstairs in the church office for occasional use. Doug is using the new one for all the church communications he handles and printing the Sunday Morning Program.

We bought new carts with drawers for under the counters in the kitchen. This should make organizing the kitchen and the table linens a lot easier, will eliminate the clutter, and look nicer.

The board approved up to \$5,000 for materials and labor to repair and put new siding on the garages. We hope to get a grant to reimburse us for much of that cost, but it was necessary that the work begin now instead of waiting. One wall has shifted completely off the foundation and will need to be lifted and supported again, as well as holes in siding repaired and new siding put on. Jim is working with Oscar to get this done, but he may ask for some additional help. See Jim if you want to help.

The **Austin College Service Opportunity Fair** is September 8th. If you would like to help at either the Red River UU booth or the Earth Day Festival booth, please see Amy.

Replacing name tags and getting new ones printed has changed since the company we worked with has new owners. Amy is working on finding a suitable solution so we can continue to have nice name tags.

The **Policy and Procedures Manual** is being revised to reflect what is needed for our hybrid church. Jim, Dick, Marla, and I are working to get that revised and presented to the board. (Continued on next page)

The next board meeting will be September 18th, so if you have items that need to be on the agenda, please let me know. In the box below is the list of committees/teams/interest groups that need to submit their reports to president@redriveruu.org

Marilyn Alexander
president

Annual Reports Are Due

Editor's Reminder: *Annual reports are statements of what your group **did** not what you plan or hope to do. Our annual reports cover the 12-month period starting October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. Save that for next year's report*

- a. Adult Forum- Marilyn
- b. Art fest- Amy
- c. Aesthetics- Carol
- d. Audio/Visual- Jim
- e. Caring Team- Marion
- f. Communications- Doug
- g. Community Outreach- Jim
- h. Earth day Planning and Recycling- Amy
- i. Endowment Committee- Jim
- j. Grounds- Marilyn
- k. Facilities- Jim
- l. Little Library- Jim
- m. Long Range Planning- Marilyn, Jim
- n. Growth and Outreach- Jim
- o. Movable Feast- Elbert
- p. North Texas UU Congregations- Marla
- q. Religious Education- Marilyn
- r. Safe Congregation- Jim
- s. Website- Jim
- t. Worship Team- Jim
- u. Web of Life Monarch Garden- Linn

Reports due by September 25th. President@RedRiveruu.org

September Birthdays

- 26 - Paula Blackshear
29 - Kat Walston

Register at Church!

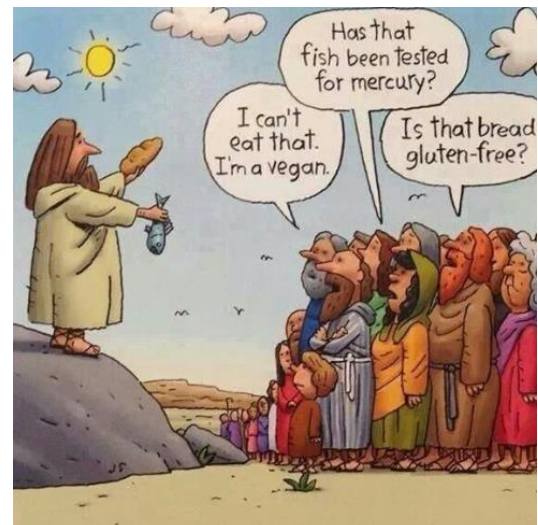
National Voter Registration Day Event At Red River UU Church in Denison

Your neighborhood Red River UU Church will offer anyone eligible the opportunity to fill out a new voter registration card or update for name or address changes on **Tuesday, September 20, from 4 - 7 pm.**



This specific Tuesday is set aside every year to register new voters or update information prior to early voting that starts in October for the November election.

Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrars will be on duty at the Church from 4 to 7 pm on that date to not only help get your voter registrations ready but also to answer any questions you may have about changes in the new Texas Voter Laws. Please be sure to stop by that afternoon.



Social Justice Ministry

Red River UU listed a blank for some years in its Social Justice Ministry while I worked for outside groups. With our hopes of a minister showing interest in social justice, my conscience finally won, and I volunteered to become our Social Justice Chair.

For those who may not know me, I have been involved with Red River UU since 2008 either musically or through Earth Day. For a short period, I even tried my hand as Treasurer. Doug has placed articles in the Newsletter about some of my political activities over the past few years.

I'm a Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar here in Grayson County, a precinct chair for pct #305 and have taken part in the Black History Month events. I'm a member of the Historical Marker for the Sherman Riot of 1930 Committee and taken part in numerous parades. Currently, the; fourth Monday of each month I present a speaker on some side of the political process as a public service through a nonpartisan program titled CIVICS 101: How America Works.



The past 2 weeks, I've found valuable information for Social Justice work on **Texas UU Justice Ministry** (TXUUJM). They have a weekly Action meeting each Thursday listing links to items each of us can take the time to include in our week. I also took part in a training on leading a phone bank team. There is a UU Guide to Actions we can take as UUs politically besides the phone bank such as letter writing and texting. You can Zoom in any Thursday from 7-8 pm here: Zoom Meeting ID: 333 042 6480. These are things we should be doing as UUs.

If you are interested in being a member of the new Red River UU Social Justice Committee, let's plan to meet at the church on **Saturday, September 17 at 2** in the afternoon. We can discuss plans for the next weeks as well as write post-cards. Bring your ideas and energy.

Between now and then, I do have items you can get started doing or you can contact me for the zoom information to join the Action meeting each week on Thursday. Till then, remember, we all should "Side with Love"

Jan Fletcher - 972-897-5796

Social Justice chair

Confronting Racial Violence

An open invitation to anyone who is interested, to the Confronting Racial Violence and Resistance convening on **September 23-24**, held on the Austin College campus, and sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges and the Gilder Lehrman Center. This convening will highlight ongoing work to identify racial violence and resistance as legacies of American slavery, confronting those histories of violence and lifting up strategies of resistance. Bringing together community leaders, writers, artists, scholars, educators, and students from around the nation, this convening will acknowledge and address such legacies with a particular focus on the Texas-Oklahoma region. Looking at everything from community history and commemoration efforts to the visual arts and creative writing, we invite you to join us to learn, contribute, and move the conversation forward in spaces designed for generating conversations and sharing experiences. **Registration is free and open to all.** Register [here](#). See poster in the foyer outside the chapel at church.

Texas Children Need Us

Our children need you to [act for public education now](#).

On August 30, the State Board of Education voted to delay revisions to the social studies curriculum until 2025 and shirk their responsibilities.

They allowed a fringe minority, who have spread politically motivated falsehoods and misinformation, to pressure them.



Our students deserve better. They deserve an accurate and updated social studies curriculum where they can learn about the experiences of people of color and LGBTQIA+ people, not see those experiences erased.

This Board started the process, and they need to finish the process, not push it off until a new Board is elected.

[Tell the SBOE](#): Texans want our schools to teach the truth.

We can still [make sure the SBOE does the right thing](#) by pushing the Board to reconsider their preliminary vote and committing to teaching the truth. In recent months we have seen the far-right movement spread falsehoods about what is happening in our public schools. They do not represent all Texans. It is imperative and urgent that we push for a curriculum that is inclusive of all Texas students and does not whitewash our history.

Tell SBOE members to act on a social studies curriculum that is representative of all Texas students now and [join our movement to #TeachTheTruth today](#).

Money Matters

In July, we had total receipts of \$13,483.00, almost all of which was pledges, most pre-paid for the year. Total expenses for the month were \$3,694.09, leaving us with net income for July of \$9,788.91.

As of July 31, 2022, we had \$21,604.45 available in checking, including \$3,663.00 held in trust for Kat Walston. We also have a total of \$19,107.86 in all savings accounts, including \$2,545.00 in the Ronda Decaire Memorial Fund. The total market value of our investment in UUCEF funds was \$67,004.17, reflecting a market value increase of \$219.77 (0.3%) from the value of our original investment (virtually no change).

It is worth noting that following month end, several fairly significant expenditures were made which will show up in the August financial statements:

- \$364.98 – for a new printer
- \$476.62 – various upgrades to video streaming
- \$710.00 – payment of the total balance of our current UUA Fair Share pledge
- \$500.00 – payment of our budgeted contribution to Texoma Family Shelter
- \$800.00 – labor for AV project and facility maintenance
- \$320.58 – purchase of carts for the kitchen
- \$1,174.28 – A/C repair

Dick Powell,
treasurer

How America Works - Civics 101:

CIVICS 101: How America Works is a nonpartisan community service program presented each month to educate and inform Grayson County voters about the process of voting, how the system was meant to function and what the issues really mean. Previous sessions covered various local courts, the relationship between Sherman's City Council and City Manager and a discussion of the New Changes to Texas Voter Laws in Effect this November.

Plans for the September and the October events which will take place the fourth Mondays of each

month are planned to focus on descriptions of the State and National political offices. The information will not cover the specific candidates but the generic description of the office duties. Speakers to present these topics are not yet confirmed but soon will be.

Please come join us the fourth Monday, Update 26 from 5:30-7 pm at Grand Avenue Presbyterian Church, 901 N Grand Ave. Sherman, Tx. check for any announcements in the Wednesday Updates or on the Civics 101 Facebook page. See you there!

Our Common Read for September

Make "A Warm Welcome" Part of your "New Normal"

By [Sharon Dittmar](#)

August 17, 2022

The pandemic changed many facets of congregational life, including attendance. In the past two and half years, congregations have learned new dance steps to accommodate COVID-19. Amidst all the masking/not masking and closing/not closing, congregations wondered what happened to their members. Some congregations moved to multi-platform worship and welcomed new faces or faces they had not seen in a while via online technology. Yet most lay leaders, staff, and clergy speak with are uncertain, after all these changes, about their membership

During my time in parish ministry, I observed that people continually came to congregations looking for something; education for their children, pastoral care and connection for themselves

About a year into the pandemic congregational consultants in a variety of denominations noted that whatever happened, congregational life would never return to what it had been, that the pandemic would permanently alter facilities, staffing, technology, worship, communities, as well as attendance and membership. Thus far, this seems to be the case. Congregations that never thought it possible to place virtual technology in their historic sanctuaries found a way. And congregations that heavily relied on in-person events found ways to connect in online spaces.

and their families, a place to grieve, a place to search for meaning, a place to be whole, something more. The pandemic changed many things, but not these needs. With the arrival of

vaccinations for children, good weather, past years spent adding tents and outdoor options, daily updated CDC data, and lots of masks this could be the fall that we welcome visitors and former members. Will your congregation be ready?

In his article [5 Hospitality and Stewardship Lessons from a Homecoming](#), Reverend Ken Sloane reminds us of the importance of connection. Any time someone enters online or in-person congregational space, there are several opportunities for multiple connection points from which a long-term relationship can continue and grow. Here are some examples:

Recommit to a Community Habit of Greeting

This fall make sure to have welcomers at the door (whether online or in-person doors). Remind congregants to greet people they don't know. If you are a congregant, alternate between greeting an old friend and meeting a new friend.

Ask Open Questions

If in doubt about whether someone is new try saying, "Hello! My names are XX. I am not sure we have met before" (this statement works in online space too). Ask open and honest questions and share a little about yourself such as "What brought you here today? I came for the XX (singing, sermon, chocolate buffet – fill in the blank)." Avoid asking questions that can be experienced as exclusive such as "What do you do for work?" or "Where do you come from?" or "Where did/do you go to college?" See [Widening the Welcome](#) for more ways to be inclusive.

Create More Opportunities for Greeting!

If your connection points are in online space with the capacity for personal engagement, try joining the online room early, or staying late. If there is an enabled chat feature say "hello" to people, or message someone you don't know and offer greetings.

Your Attention Is a Gift

When you meet someone new, truly listen to them. In his introduction, [Learn to Listen Well](#) Reverend Prince Rivers reminds us of what a rare and powerful gift it is to listen to others. It is a ministry to take an interest in a "stranger," to fully listen, without distraction or interruption. True hospitality involves sincere attention to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others.

Help Create Further Connections

Based on your interaction you can discern if this visitor would like to be introduced to other people, leave the online space, or just find the coffee pot. As the minister, I often kept an eye on visitors, and after first introductions, would find an opportunity to circle around before they left to ask if they had any questions, or just thank them for stopping by.

Create coordinated entry points for visitors to get on the congregational mailing list, either by filling out a card, or through a link that can be shared in an online format. If you have the capacity, create entry points that collect visitor interests and questions. If a visitor indicates an interest in religious education, mail a brochure. If they are interested in social justice, send an email with upcoming congregational events where they can engage.

Personal Invitations Make a Difference

Finally, if you have not seen a member in a while, invite them back. According to a [One Invitation Away from Returning](#) by Reverend Rebekah Simon-Peter, a significant minority of former members would return if a friend or acquaintance invited them, and an even higher percentage of millennials would considering returning if invited by someone they know.

Our ministry is to share hospitality and welcome at all connection points, spaces, and places. People are hungry for our values and message. Take the time to engage, listen, and grow.

Our non Resident Poet

Our Leaders

Remembering that September 1 was World Letter Writing Day

Letter Without 'A' Vowel

by Don Mathis

The letter she wrote on yellow sheets symbolized her timidity, her shyness. Or the lemony note could represent her bittersweet decision.

She used blue ink to show her mood – deep like the gulf, somber like the morning mists.

The brown blot spoke of trembling sips of coffee, spilled enough to imprint brunette rings – chronicle of thoughtful moments between the times ink met note.

The envelope seemed to be closed with one kiss – vestiges of red lipstick. There were tints of light cherry with degrees of pink; pink like lobster shell brightened by months of summer sun. These rose hues must convey our love's intensity from previous times.

The missive seemed to be closed with drippings from liquid resin. This likely represents the excitement of our former life, the swirling mixture of glorious beginnings with hopeful desires.

She wrote goodbye, cheerio, so long, God-speed, toodle-oo, see you round, not to mention wiedersehen. She used yellow sheets with blue ink. There were umber blotches on the document with red lipstick beside colorful swirls on the envelope. This is the method she used to convey her desertion.

These colors comprise the prism of my gloom. XXX



Board of Trustees

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

Committee on Ministry:

Carolyn Cameron, Elbert Hill, Jim Holmes

Nominating:

Carole Harner, Jana Norris, Linda Tracy

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: Marilyn, Jim, Amy, Marion

Aesthetics: Carol, Doug

AV: Carole, Don, Jim, Marla

Endowment: Carolyn, Dick, Doug

Facilities: Jim

Finance: Jim, Dick, Marilyn

Grounds: Marilyn

Long Range Planning: Jim, Marilyn

Membership: Marion

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

NTUUC Rep: Elbert

RE Team: David, Ellie, Marilyn

Safe Congregation Panel: Dan

Social Action:

Web Team: Hana, Jim, Marla

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

Worship: Dan, Doug, Jana, Marla

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](#)