



In this issue:

Welcoming  
another two  
new members!



A new QR  
Code is com-  
ing so you can  
send feedback  
about our  
morning as-  
semblies to the  
Worship Team



Remember to  
bring home  
water from any  
summer travel  
you make!



Why not sit in  
on the Worship  
Team's meeting  
this evening,  
July 1<sup>st</sup>? details in-  
side.



This Sat, July 4  
kicks off the of-  
ficial plans for  
our nation's  
250<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary.  
Join the plan-  
ning [here](#).

# Red River Ramblings

July 2025 ♦ Volume 26 ♦ Issue 1

July 6, 2025 - 11:15 am

## Interdependence

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

As we celebrate our declaration of freedom from a king, it is also helpful to reflect on what our freedom is for. True freedom entails using our freedom for each other, seeing ourselves as in this together, living into our interdependence with one another, and cultivating a culture of empathy. .

July 13, 2025 - 11:15 am

## Science and Religion

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

If religion is understood as that which pertains to our ultimate concern there is no reason for religion and science to be in conflict. Tragically, religion often clings to antiscientific perspectives that impede human progress, making it difficult to address social and ecological challenges , and hindering overall human flourishing, but it does not have to be this way.

July 20, 2025 - 11:15 am – *Another All-Music Sunday*

## Be A Better Me

Folk Singer George Ensle, *in concert*

Join us for a very special Sunday with George Ensle. He says of this morning assembly, "My songs will reinforce a message of building bridges, appreciating God's natural beauty, reaching out to those in need, and wanting what we have over having what we want." His concerts are filled with wit, wisdom, hope and grit, along with his intricate fingerstyle guitar playing and keyboard. Read George's extensive bio on his website [here](#).

July 27, 2025 - 11:15 am

## "Revolution Began with a Dream

The Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk, *leading (video message)*

Download the morning program [here](#)

The UUA holds a General Assembly every year in June. UU's from all over the country meet in person or virtually during this time. The closing Sunday Service this year was extremely powerful and featured Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk, Program Minister at All Souls UU Church in Tulsa, OK. Join us in watching this moving service. Note: this service will last longer than our normal service, (approximately 1:40) please attend, even if you must leave early.

## QR CODE HITS REDRIVERUU and it is a good thing!

The Worship Team wants to continue to bring meaningful worship to Red River Unitarian Universalist Church. We would like your input to help us understand what you like and don't like; your immediate reaction to the morning assembly you just attended.

To the end of receiving timely feedback, we are creating an ongoing survey form that you can access with a QR code that will appear in the morning program. You will be able to scan the code on your phone, give us the date of the Morning Assembly, and tell us how you feel about our effort for the morning, good or bad. Did the various elements of the morning set a tone for the discourse? Did the music enhance the overall theme? What impact did worship have for you? Did you learn anything new? Were you disappointed?

You may leave your name or not, as you desire.

The Morning Program QR Code will be appearing sometime in July, this month. Open the "Find a QR code" option on your phone and take a moment in your to offer your reactions, ideas, joys, or disappointments.

## MEET ANDREA & CHRIS KYSOR

who recently joined the congregation. Warm welcome to you both.

## WORSHIP TEAM MEETING

Our faithful worship team is meeting on Wednesday, July 2 @ 6:30 via Zoom. The team will be reviewing those questionnaires that those who attending the Spring Congregational Meeting completed. Since worship is the most important part of the life of any religious institution, the team will be reaching out to those who volunteered to be an independent scout looking for ways to enrich our Sunday Morning Assemblies.

During the meeting there will be a review of the questionnaire completed by those who attended the May congregational meeting. The results may well change what we do on Sundays. If you want to be part of creating worship, you will find attending this month's Worship Team meeting an effective way to learn more about keeping what we do on Sundays inviting, challenging,

and rewarding. The Zoom meeting ID is 989 0789 7878 and the meeting starts at 6:30 pm.

## MONEY MATTERS

In the month of May, we had total operating receipts of \$2,339.93. Total operating expenses for the month were \$3,547.13, leaving us with a net loss for the month of (\$1,207.20). The net loss for the month was primarily due to the timing of pledge payments.

For the fiscal year-to-date we had an operating net profit of \$4,247.54. The year-to-date net profit was primarily due to lower grounds maintenance, worship, and communication expenses.

Marilyn Alexander's daughter, Merrilee Kick, donated \$60,361.00 this year to cover repairs and renovations. A total of \$58,170.07 has been spent. That leaves \$2,190.93 remaining in this fund as of May 31.

As of May 31, 2025, we had \$19,999.59 available in checking for general operations. There was also \$9,941.84 available in the bank savings account plus \$4,871.08 restricted for the Minister Fund and \$5,951.89 held in trust for Kat Walston. In addition, we invested a total of \$66,784.40 in the UUA Common Endowment Fund in 2020, which has increased in value. The congregation voted to use up to \$51,000.00 of the UUA Savings Fund for minister compensation. Carole Harner, *treasurer*

## THE HISTORY OF WATER COMMUNION

In 1980, two Unitarian Universalist women—Carolyn McDade and Lucile Schuck Longview—were asked to create a worship service for the Women and Religion Continental Convocation of Unitarian Universalists.

As they shaped that service, McDade, and Longview wanted to create a new ritual "that spoke to our connectedness to one another, to the totality of life, and to our place on this planet." They included a new, inclusive symbol of women's spirituality: water.

They write, "*Water is more than simply a metaphor. It is elemental and primary, calling forth feelings of awe and reverence. Acknowledging that the ocean is considered by many to be the place from which all life on our planet came—it is the womb of life—and that amniotic waters surround each of us prenatally, we now realize that [this worship service] was for*

Continued next page

*us a new story of creation... We choose water as our symbol of our empowerment."*

The November service, held in East Lansing, Michigan, was called "Coming Home Like Rivers to the Sea." As its creators, McDade and Longview enacted their ritual in the liberating space of a semicircle around a large earthenware bowl. They asked eight different women—each coming from distant places—to bring water, and they did: water from the Rio Grande and Assiniboine Rivers, rainwater from Maryland, water from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and others were poured into the earthenware bowl as each bearer described its significance.

"As the ritual is continued," says Carolyn McDade, "water deepens in meaning for us, just as water deepens during its long and winding journey to the sea."

For more on the 1980 water ritual and the women who created it, please read Rev. Dr. Susan Ritchie's [detailed history](#). [*The Original Water Ritual* from the UUA Website]

*Join the Red River Unitarian Universalist Worship Team on Sunday, September 14 in this lovely ritual by bringing some water from your home, local lake, river, or summer travels.*

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I usually sit in the front row during our Sunday assemblies. If you sit across from me, you might notice that I often play with my hands during the homily. If I am not anchored physically, my mind takes off on me. I hear a bit of the homily and then comes an idiotic brain message like, "I wonder what it would be like to vacation in Albania?" "What??? Brain, shut up and listen to this!" Note: *I know nothing about Albania except that it is where Mrs. Polifax escaped from in the first book of the eponymous mystery series, and I read that a very long time ago. And yes, this really happened one Sunday not long ago.*

I heard a bit more of the homily, and then Brain interrupts with, "I wonder what the weather is like in Albania. The Balkans are in the mountains, right?" "Yeah, I think so. Shut up and leave me alone. I want to hear this." It's like living with a hyperactive two-year-old with a wider range of nonsensical questions. Anything I can do to anchor my mind in place helps me quiet it. Doodling on note pads, slightly moving my feet, rubbing my

hands, doing needlework—it all helps me to drown out The Pest and pay attention.

On the Sunday we had the Awards Luncheon, the tables were set up before worship, and I ended up sitting in the back row. During worship, I saw people engaged in various activities such as playing with their phones, drawing, coloring, and taking notes. I realized that they were like me! These were my people! Some prefer to call neurodivergent neurospicy, and I quite like that.

I learned that some congregations have baskets of fidget toys by the entry into the sanctuary to help those who need to keep their hands busy. I just googled Fidget Toys. It led me to a topic on ADHD ([attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#)) stimming that said rubbing one's hands together can be a way to improve focus and attention. I have been doing this stuff right!

If you think people are ignoring our worship by drawing, playing with their phone, etc. instead, you have it backwards. They are doing those things so they can pay attention and follow things. If you have been worried about what other people would think if you soothed your neurospiciness, you are in a safe place here.

If you have any questions, I'll try to find answers. And if you know anything about Albania, I'd like to hear from you.

Jana Norris, *president*

## SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The team met on June 12th, 2025.

We went over the forms to fill out for the Perkins School of Theology (at SMU). These forms were submitted to the school's minister job-board website on June 14th. We reviewed the current minister search information on our website and made some changes and improvements and updated the web pages with these changes.

We reviewed our list of questions and updated the list that we will use once we have a candidate to interview.

Jim Holmes, chair; Marilyn Alexander, Marla Loturco, Liz Rapp, Walter Norris

## FROM OUR NON-RESIDENT POET

Recommended Summer Reading — Don Mathis

As a little boy, I went to Bible class at least twice a week and learned from the stories I heard. Daniel was not afraid in the lions' den. Noah stood up against his neighbors. Moses led his people in the wilderness for 40 years. The Old Testament is overflowing with characters who triumph over adversity.

As a young teen, I devoured the books by Mark Twain. The importance of a sense of humor is manifested in my favorite characters. I wanted the independence and adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

A few years later, I sought that freedom. Just before I set out on the road, I read "On the Road." Jack Kerouac gave me a unique viewpoint to appreciate the experiences and sights I would see hitchhiking to Colorado, Washington, California, and back to Texas.

A generation later I read "Man's Search for Meaning." Viktor Frankl distills from his Holocaust experience the importance of purposeful work, love, and courage in the face of difficulty.

These books taught me to be my own individual and to follow my moral compass. Regardless of the status quo or public opinion, I strive to choose my own attitude, to be my own man.

## July Birthdays



Happy July Birthdays!

08 Jana Norris  
10 David Dyer  
13 Linn Cates  
16 Susie Norris  
23 Melleissa Bayes

## Our Elected or Appointed Leaders

### Board of Trustees

Jana Norris, *President*  
Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *Vice president*  
Carole Harner, *Treasurer*  
Jack, *Secretary*  
David Dyer, *Trustee at large*

### Committee on Ministry

Jim Holmes, Elbert Hill, Bruce Cameron

### Nominating

Marilyn Alexander, Liz Rapp, Jack

## Our Various Teams

*The first name is the team leader*

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

**Aesthetics:** Amy, Adrian Jana

**Audio Visual:** Jim, Carole, Liz, Marla

**Caring Circle:** Paula, David, Susie

**Choir:** Marilyn, Bill, Cindy, Doug

**Children's R.E. Teacher:** Shanna (Jack)

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

**Committee on Ministry:** Bruce, Elbert, Jim

**Communications:** Amy, Doug, Marion

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

**Endowment:** Doug

**Facebook Admin:** Amy

**Finance:** Carole, Jim, Marilyn

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

**Greeters:** Amy, Paula, Shanna, Sherilyn, Susie, Walter

**Grounds:** Marilyn, Paula

**Historian:** Marla

**IT Support:** Jim

**Long Range Planning:** Bruce, Jim, Marilyn

**Membership:** Susie, Amy, Adrian, Doug, Marion, Marla, Paula

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

**Monarch Way Station:** Linn, Michelle, Paula, Sherilyn, Susie

**Moveable Feast:** Elbert & Marion, Amy, Bruce, Carole, Cindy, David, Doug, Jan, Jana, Joyce, Kelly, Liz, Marilyn, Marla, Michelle, Susie, Walter,

**Music:** Dan, Jan

**NTUUC Rep:** Marilyn

**Publications:** Doug

**Rainbow Team:** Jack, Adrian, Amy, Billie, Cristin, Jana, Jamie, Jana, John, Lisa, Lynda, Olivia, Sherilyn, Thomas

**RE Support Team:** David, ~~Marilyn~~

**Safe Congregation Panel:** Jana

**Spiritual Perspectives Group:** Jim, Liz, Melleissa

**Social Justice:** Jan

**TUUUM Rep:** Jan

**Web Team:** Jim, Hannah, Marla

**Worship:** Marla, Adrian, Dan

**Worship Associates:** Adrian, Cristin, Jana, Marilyn, Marla, Megan, Paula, Thomas