



December 2021 - Vol. 23 - No. 6

RED RIVER

To Dwell Together in Peace

RAMBLINGS

Sunday, December 5, 2021 - 11:15 am

JUSTICE AS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY
THE REV. DR. MARK Y.A. DAVIES

Reflections on John Rawls' veil of ignorance thought experiment that led him to develop the theory of justice as equal opportunity. How would the adherence to a view of justice as equal opportunity change the way we think about our systems of economics, politics, education, healthcare, and more?

Sunday, December 12, 2021 - 11:15 am

**CELEBRATING THE ONLY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
EXCLUSIVE HOLIDAY**

DICK POWELL, DON ROGERS, ELBERT HILL, JAN FLETCHER,
JIM HOLMES,
MARION HILL, MEGAN HUTCHINSON

We UU's may disagree about many issues, but one thing we do agree on is the Unitarian Universalist Seven Principles, as stated in Article II of the [Bylaws and Rules](#) of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

This year Chalica starts on Monday, December 6 and concludes the following Sunday, December 12th. On Sunday seven of our own will be sharing a principle and its meaning for them.

Chalica is a week-long celebration of our [Unitarian Universalist Principles](#). The holiday [first emerged in 2005](#) out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values. It begins on the first Monday in December and lasts seven days. Each day, a [chalice](#) is lit, and the day is spent reflecting on the meaning of that day's principle and doing a good deed that honors that principle. Not all Unitarian Universalists celebrate Chalica, but it has a growing following. There is a Chalica [Facebook page](#), [blog](#), and many Chalica-

December 19, 2021 - 11:15 am

DO ATHEISTS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?
MATT DILLAHUNTY AND BETH PRESSWOOD

A great debate occurs around Christmas. Is it only for Christians? What about the holidays that Christmas supersedes? Join us to hear some of the answers to this question.

[Note: Check out How the Unitarians and the Universalists Invented Christmas on the last page of this newsletter.]

December 26, 2021 - 11:15 am

A SEASON AND A TIME FOR SHARING
EVERYONE AND THE WORSHIP TEAM

At the cusp of each year, it has been our tradition to devote the last Sunday in December as our Sharing Morning Assembly. We invite anyone who wishes to share a poem, song, dance, reading, or anything else that shares themselves and their interests with the rest of us. This will be recorded for YouTube so please keep that in mind. People who normally watch on Zoom may decide for us to video their selection prior to the 28th, by contacting the worship team for assistance here: [Contact Us](#)

Some years we have a theme. Not so this year. Come share whatever you wish. Our free pulpit awaits your gifts.

Whatever you wish to share has only one restraint - time. Kindly keep your "whatever" to no more than 6 or 7 minutes. That way no one is left out.

Red River Unitarian Universalists
Serving the World from Denison Texas

UMs in the news

Religious Leaders, Organizations React to Supreme Court Arguments on Mississippi Abortion Law

Dallas Morning News 12.02.2021

The same divisions among Texans at large were just as evident among leaders in different faiths Wednesday as they reacted to arguments made to the Supreme Court as it took up a challenge to a Mississippi abortion law.

First Unitarian Church of Dallas was one of the [first churches to foster activism](#) around the 1973 Roe vs. Wade case that legalized abortion. The Rev. Daniel Kanter, known for his support of [abortion rights](#), said in a statement that a “public health crisis” could result if justices uphold the Mississippi law.

“The thing everyone needs to understand is the potential consequence of this case is huge for all Americans. If Roe is overturned 41% of women of reproductive age would see the nearest abortion provider close. This is a public health crisis our country and communities can’t afford,” Kanter told *The Dallas Morning News*.

“As a person of faith, I believe that we need to consider the lives of people we encounter every day in our families, congregations and communities and how this case asks us to love our neighbors without standing on

Continued next side bar

Jim's Jabber

Welcome everyone to December, the month of spending, overeating, family gatherings, and religious celebrations. I hope your December turns out to be all that you wish it to be.

In the Board meeting this November we discussed several important topics.

- We appointed a team to investigate "**what it would take**" to get a minister. Thanks to Dick Powell, Marla Loturco and Linda Tracy for agreeing to serve on the team. Their mission is to investigate what it would take to get a minister. The most important aspect of this is funding. The UUA new ministerial salary recommendations will be released early next year. Two years ago (the UUA didn't update the recommendations last year) the price tag was in the range of \$52,000 (salary and benefits) to have a full-time minister for our size congregation. This team will investigate grants available to help cover staff compensation the resources available from the UUA along with the process we would follow to call a minister. The Team will present their finding to the congregation for discussion and for a vote to determine if we want to officially proceed. If so, according to our bylaws the nominating committee will nominate nine church members to serve on a ministerial search committee. The search committee work takes a full year to successfully find a candidate to recommend to the congregation. Check out Article XIV for the exact details.
- The Board also discussed a request to lessen our mask requirements to allow people that have been fully vaccinated to make mask wearing optional. The Board feels that lessening our mask requirements is a bit premature, especially with the announcement that the new Omicron variant has been identified in the US. We will review this position at each future Board meeting.
- The Board is also putting together a booth kit. It will consist of a box of literature that can be easily grabbed to take to any event. In addition, it will include signs and a new banner and stand to identify Red River UU at our table or booth. We will also have a tent and other necessary items when needed. We expect the first use of this will be the spring Earth Day event this coming spring.

On Saturday, December 11th a workshop "Living with What IS", with Maria Silén, and QiGong and Ayurveda Yoga instructor and Ayurveda Consultant. It will be held in the chapel. Be sure to check out the details for this event in this newsletter and in the events section on our website. Hope you can make it. I plan on going.

This December we will skip the Giving Tree. We still have plenty of supplies for the church. If you still feel the need to give, pick your favorite charity to support.

Take care, keep safe, wear your mask! *And Keep on Truckin'*

Jim Holmes, *president*

UMs in the news

ideologically narrow positions," he said.

The Rev. Erin Walter, acting executive director of the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry, says she's concerned by the attacks on Roe v. Wade because "attacks on abortion rights are attacks on health care and human rights, freedoms each of us should cherish and defend."

"As a minister in the diverse state of Texas, I am especially concerned that attacks on Roe v. Wade jeopardize the lives of Black and Indigenous people, people of color, young, poor, or undocumented people. Many faith communities strongly support abortion rights, as we support the right of people to make decisions for their own bodies and families, and we need those strong, loud voices of faith right now. This is a pivotal moment, lives are at risk, and we need to make a spiritual practice of showing up and saying, loudly and proudly, that people of faith support abortion rights," she said

Other religious voices

Outside of Texas, other faith leaders urged the faithful to pray for an overturn.

Brent Leatherwood, acting president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention asked, "What good is precedent if it is bad?"

"At multiple points, whether it was, for example, the faulty reasoning of Justice Harry Blackmun

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Treasurer's Report

In the month of October, we had total receipts of \$2,598.63. Pledges for the month totaled \$2,375.00. Expenses for the month totaled \$3,572.71, which included another quarterly payment of \$507.00 for our Fair Share pledge to UUA. This resulted in a net loss for the month of (\$974.08). Please note that net income for the year-to-date was \$17,349.12

As of October 31, 2021, we had \$7,944.14 available in checking, of which \$1,469.13 remains available for additional support for Lanan Shelton. We also have a total of \$19,097.53 in all savings accounts, including \$2,545.00 in the Ronda DeClaire Memorial Fund and a total of \$81,847.52 in UUCEF funds.

Dick Powell,
Treasurer

A Special Workshop

"Living with What IS" - a 2:30 hour workshop on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 2-4:30 pm in the chapel.

This workshop is for anyone that wants to ease the mind, body, and bring more joy into the holidays. – Your investment: \$20 / 2.5 hrs

Topics:

- Introduction to practices and tools to bring harmony and balance into the New Year.
- How to hold and learn from your pleasures and challenges moment by moment.
- Live with awareness and become more intentional.
- We will join in discussions, how to actively use modalities like meditation and breathwork in everyday living. Further, how to awaken our awareness and intentionally practice gratitude and act of kindness towards ourselves and others.
- The practices we will explore will be sitting during breathwork and meditation along with standing when we practice the moving meditation, called QiGong. The movements are gentle, slow, and easy to master.
- You are encouraged to take notes, so bring a notebook and a pen and come as you are.



Leading: Maria Silén is a certified Qigong and Ayurvedic Yoga instructor and founder of Serene Harvest Yoga Studio. She began her Medical QiGong practice and training in 1996, and she later advanced to Medical QiGong instructor. Since 2002, she taught workshops and courses in the United States and Sweden. She has taught JanTerm courses at Austin College several times and teaches Yoga/QiGong classes at Grayson College. She is certified in the Tibetan Ayurveda yoga form. Additionally, she is a certified Reiki performer and Prana Karma therapist.

in his Roe opinion or the irrelevance of the viability standard, it should be abundantly clear that the precedent around abortion is completely unmoored from the Constitution itself," he said in a statement.

The commission [filed an amicus brief](#) in the Dobbs v. Jackson case earlier this year.

The National Council of Jewish Women, Catholics for Choice and Muslim Advocates, among others, marched outside the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

During the "Abortion is Essential" rally Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, said people of all faiths have abortions.

"Spoiler alert: Jews have abortions. Christians have abortions. Muslims have abortions. People of faith and people of no faith have abortions," she said.

"For too long, this country has allowed a small but loud group from the religious right to dominate the narrative around abortion and religion, claiming that abortion access is a violation of religious freedom. So, we ask them? Whose religious freedom are you trying to protect?"

From the Editor:

This article also included statements from Dr. Robert Jeffress, the senior pastor at First Baptist of Dallas, Bishop Edward Burns of the Dallas Catholic Diocese and Bishop Michael Olson of the Fort Worth Diocese who each, in his own words, asked people to pray that the Supreme Court will act to protect unborn children.

December Birthdays

04 - Donna Toerper	17 - Amy Hoffman-Shehan
07 - David Lawrence	18 - Jim Holmes
12 - Cindy Buffington	18 - Jennifer Schwichtenberg

How UUs contribute to Christmas

From an article by Mike Kruze, representing the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Southwestern Utah.

UUs helped create how Christmas is celebrated in the USA. For two hundred years the Puritans squelched Christmas celebrations due to too much drinking, partying, and overeating. Universalists openly celebrated Christmas for years in New England in the 1780s. In the 19th Century they actively pushed for Christmas celebrations. Unitarians called for public observance of Christmas around 1800. It was not Biblically sanctioned, and they wished to celebrate a secular holiday.

Our founding fathers were UUs, free-thinkers and Deists. Franklin, Jefferson, John, and John Q. Adams gave us freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Jefferson hoped in this blessed free-thinking country all would become Unitarians.

UUs have contributed significantly to some of Christmas' most enduring customs and themes. In 1881, a UU minister, James Pierpont wrote "Jingle Bells". UU minister Charles Follen was one of the first in the USA to decorate an indoor Christmas tree. Abolitionist Edmund Sears, a UU Minister wrote "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" as a protest the Mexican American War, calling for peace, goodwill, and justice. UU Noel Regney wrote "Do You Hear What I Hear" during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Christmas belongs to all who recognize Jesus as an inspiring, significant historical figure.

A Free Book of Xmas Stories

How The Universalists and Unitarians Invented Christmas, Plus an Anthology of Historical Unitarian Christmas Stories

Harvard Square Library is delighted to present our first ebook, which includes an account of the Universalist and Unitarian role in giving shape to the American Christmas celebrations we know today. It also includes five classic Christmas stories by Unitarian authors, including Rev. Theodore Parker's own Christmas story. In Parker's story, the gospel story of Jesus' birth is overlapped with the account of the Christmas generosity of an elderly brother and sister that heals their New England village of its social divisions (including those related to which villagers voted for which Presidential candidate).

To read the book online, simply click [here](#).

The tool bar that will allow you to print the book or share it with friends and family through either email or social media.

Happy Holidays from Harvard Square Library!

Board of Trustees

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

Finance: Jim, Dick, Jan, Marilyn

Grounds: Marilyn

Long Range Planning: Jim, Marilyn,

Membership: Marion

Ministerial Exploration: Dick, Linda, Marla

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

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The church calendar is now merged with the EVENTS listing on the church website home page



WORTHY NOW

Not at Some Future Time

Worthy Now is a liberal religious coalition powered by the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and we invite people on both sides of prison walls into beloved community.

More than 1,300 people, nearly half of the CLF members, are currently incarcerated, with at least 130 right here in the **six North Texas prisons**. One of CLF's programs resembles the Adult Religious Education classes in our own congregations. This lifeline costs about \$150 a person per year, which is of course not possible on prison wages; other members and friends contribute.

We at NTUUC want to help, and will match the first \$10,000 contributed before December 31 by North Texans. This can be however each congregation wants to collect their funds — through Share the Plate, individual donations, or in the regular budget.

Our dream is for all people who are imprisoned to know they are inherently worthy of love and justice — and for them to have access to religious freedom. This means all are worthy of love, respect and support right now — **not at some future time when we are better people, but as we are.** We are committed to strengthening our Unitarian Universalist First Principle with this declaration.

The Worthy Now Prison Ministry Network goes deeper than mission work. Our call is to build relationships in an inclusive, justice-seeking community that makes liberal religious values accessible to people who are incarcerated.

Will you be part of this vital and life-saving ministry?

To donate directly, please [click here](#).

To learn more, [click here for an article in the UU World](#).

You may also visit the Worthy Now website at [WorthyNow.org](#).

Please contact any of us with your questions, and join us in this important work.

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