

Red River Ramblings

Sunday, July 3, 2022 - 11:15 AM

Justice Interconnected

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

Martin Luther King wisely noted that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Social Justice concerns within our society are intimately connected with one another, and it is critical for advocates and activists for a just society to recognize these connections for a holistic approach to social change. Read Mark’s bio [here](#).

Sunday, July 10, 2022 - 11:15 AM

Adaptive Ministry

Cameron Young, *guest speaker*

This year has been unprecedented for Unitarian Universalist Congregations, as many have sought ministers only to come up empty-handed. This shortage in ministers is not unique to UU or even religious organizations, but universal to all helping professions in the country. Why the shift? What does our shared theology say about how we, as beacons of liberal faith, must adapt to an era where change is constant?

Sunday, July 17, 2022 - 11:15 AM

The Power of Humility

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

We have so much to learn from other cultures and political systems in the world, but the myth of American exceptionalism keeps us from recognizing our faults and shortcomings and looking to others for ideas to make our society more just, peaceful, participatory, and sustainable. A good dose of humility is needed as we seek the path of wisdom together.

Sunday, July 24, 2022 - 11:15 AM

Radicals Rise Up - NOW Is a Moment

Pastor Jacqueline Duhart, *(video message)*

Pastor Jacqueline is a Queer feminist of African heritage, mother, prison abolitionist, beloved partner, daughter and sibling, Minister Emerita of First Unitarian Church of Oakland, NURTURER, and LOVER of everything that supports life to thrive in joy. Note: This sermon was delivered at the General Assembly’s Service of the Living Tradition. Read

Sunday, July 31, 2022 - 11:15 AM

Peace Sunday #1 – *Choosing Non violence*

Jana Norris & Marla Loturco, *leading*

This morning we kick off a special series based on the book *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World* by Ken Beller and Heather Chase. This Sunday, we take a look at Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, & Martin Luther King lives to see what we might learn from their wisdom.

5th Sunday Potluck Lunch

The Entire Congregation



Everyone one is invited – friends, visitors, lapse worshippers, faithful followers and first-time guests (who get to eat without having to bring a dish to share.) There is no food ‘theme.’ You get to bring whatever food dish (to serve 6-8) you wish to bring.

Marilyn's Musings



It is with tremendous trepidation that I take this office. I have always been the one to work in the background as facilitator, shoring up other people and positions. That being said up front, I will do my best by relying heavily on the strengths of our very capable board members. Amy as vice-president is well-versed on the church history, organizational structure, and operation. Jim as past president thinks strategically and for that will be invaluable. David as secretary is well read and can give a world view perspective. Dick as treasurer is knowledgeable in finance and can keep us informed and in the black. Don as trustee at large is dedicated and brings a knowledge of how things work and experience from other parts of the country. Red River UU is very fortunate to have this board leading as we progress into a new phase of operation, that phase being to look for and contract a minister.

For being lay led, we have functioned rather well. Much of that success has been because of the work that Doug has done to manage communications and assist with worship. Likewise, Marla and the worship team have designed wonderful worship programs, without which we wouldn't assemble. The AV team really stepped up to provide quality virtual live streamed and YouTube services to help keep us together as we were apart for almost 2 years.

Now, our other teams are coming together again to make us whole. We are all recovering from the pandemic whether we got the disease or not. We will again flourish, with activities of interest to a diverse congregation. It is time to literally and figuratively clean out the cobwebs that have accumulated and strangled us as we move forward into a brighter day. RedRiverUU Lives!

Marilyn Alexander
President



Search Team Update

The Minister Search Team was appointed by the Board at the May 15th Congregational Meeting. The team members are Jim Holmes, Marilyn Alexander, Jana Norris, Marla Loturco, and David Dyer.

Per a conversation with Christine Purcell, UUA Transitions Manager, prior to beginning the official search process, we must:

1. Have at least 1 year of compensation (salary and benefits) lined up before we begin the official search.
2. Discuss the needs and wishes of the congregation through small group meetings. Also use this time to go over the questions the UUA church profile to make sure the answers match the position of the congregation.
3. Enter our church profile in the Ministry Search System, UUA website by Dec 1st. Potential ministers search these profiles from mid-December to May, looking for positions of interest. Having the UUA approve our profile also allows us to search applicants that are posted in the UUA system.
4. Work with the UUA Transition Program Team as we find candidates of interest.

We held our first team meeting on May 24th.

Since lining up the first year of the minister's compensation is the first and most important item on our action item list, our first assignment was to begin looking at possible funding sources.

We also revisited the projected costs that were presented to the congregation. As was recommended based on the UUA guidelines, we should target a contract minister's annual compensation at around \$89,000. That number may vary some, based on family size for insurance and moving expenses.

At our second meeting on June 16th, we reported our findings on funds for helping pay for the minister's compensation:

1. NTUUC is capping their grants at a max of \$50,000. We should be able to apply for a grant that could give us up to \$30,000 for year 1 and up to \$20,000 for year 2. The grant will not be awarded until the minister is under contract, which

means we must have at least the first year's compensation and other costs in hand or pledged.

2. Faithify is a UUA crowd funding organization. Their campaigns typically run for 30 days and typically raise around \$10,000. Campaigns can raise funds for hiring a minister and for social justice programs. Again, the minister must be under contract.
3. Chalice Lighters is also a UUA crowd funding service and is very similar to Faithify in how it works and the amount of funds it typically raises. The minister must also be under contract.
4. UUA funding sources do not help pay for minister salaries. They are designed to help pay for special projects that promote UUA-ism and social justice programs.

We have not found any non-UUA sources that would help pay a minister's compensation, but there are some that might help fund a social justice program.

It looks like finding a social justice issue for the church to focus on is going to be key to helping us get Grant funding. We also plan to recommend to the Board that they set up a Minister Compensation Fund that members and friends may pledge money into to cover some of the expense for getting a minister.

We will also begin work on questions to ask the members about their needs and wishes for a minister and for a social justice program to serve as our focus while interviewing candidates and seeking funding. We plan to start the group discussion process in July.

Please feel free to share your ideas and concerns with us at any time.

Report prepared by:

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

Social Justice & Us

We received two distinct but closely related emails that deserve to be shared. Unitarian Universalists have a long tradition of affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of *all* people. As we search for a minister, our involvement in social justice issues is important.

Here's the first email:

From the Rev. Erin Walker, the executive Director of the HTexas UU Justice Ministry:

Two weeks ago, I was in Washington D.C. for the Moral March and Low Wage Workers' Assembly. You can [watch the whole six-hour event on YouTube](#), including speeches from Rev. Dr. William Barber, Dr. Cornel West, and UU [Rev. Abhi Janamanchi](#), but the most powerful, unforgettable moment was one that few people witnessed. Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson (UU Justice North Carolina) and I stayed until the very end of a long day, and after the luminaries had left the stage, the Poor People's Campaign volunteers -- poor and low-wage organizers from around the country -- stayed on stage in a huddle, dancing and singing to each other the refrain that stays on my heart: "**I hear the chains falling! I hear the chains falling! I hear the chains falling!**"

She sent photos:



As justice seekers, we must be able to envision -- to hear as clearly as if it were right in front of us -- what collective liberation will feel like, look like, sound like,

when we bring it forth. We must believe so deeply in its eventuality, through our efforts, no matter how small the incremental wins, no matter how many generations it takes. That is what it means to be people of faith. To work together and hear the chains falling, even in often heartbreaking times like these.

Here's the second email:

From Elbert & Marion Hill: *A warning ... I'm sending this from Elbert's nephew in Chattanooga who is friends with this pastor. Frightening but no doubt true. This was posted on Facebook by a friend of mine.*

From Pastor Jon Pavlotitz.

"I've been a pastor in the church for over two decades, much of that in predominantly white churches in the American South. I've spent countless hours in church staff meetings and men's Bible studies and youth pastor conferences. I've stayed connected on social media with thousands of people still there in those churches. I read what they share and post and amplify and I know how they think and what they believe.

I need you to understand something and I say it without any hyperbole: white Evangelicals need to be stopped, now.

If the 2022 midterms elections allow Republicans to gain control of Congress, Conservative Christians will decimate this nation, and LGBTQ people, Muslims, women, people of color, and non-Christians will never have equality under the law again. We will all be at their mercy—and they will no longer have use for mercy. This is not alarmist, sky-is-falling histrionics, it is the clear and sober forecast from someone who knows these people better than anyone.

Over the last decade and a half, as my theology shifted and my beliefs grew more and more progressive, I've been a kind of undercover Liberal in an increasingly extremist movement, that while once relegated to minor fringe noisemakers is now at the precipice of Roman Empire-level power. They are less than two years away from having a dominance that they will wield violently and not relinquish.

I watched it all unfold from the inside: I was at a North Carolina megachurch when Obama was elected, and I saw the shift take place firsthand. I saw the fear slowly being ratcheted up and the agenda become solidified,

and the prejudices leveraged. I was speaking regularly at the Billy Graham headquarters when Fox News reporters and Republicans like Sarah Palin started walking the halls with frequency. I saw the messages at pastor's conferences grow more incendiary and urgent, and heard the supremacist dog whistles become louder and more frequent.

While many decent people around this nation celebrated the progress of a Black president and the many civil and human rights victories and gradually let down their guard—the white Conservative church set off the alarms and prepared for a holy war.

Yet, they were still a largely powerless, dying dinosaur until 2016, when Donald Trump acquired the presidency and gave the Evangelicals the perfect amoral partner to serve as the biggest bully pulpit they've ever had. Combine that with a fragmented Left, a general fatigue by the larger population, a ceremonial victory in Congress (thanks to Joe Manchin and Krysten Sinema), and Republican attacks on voters' rights—and we are now a hair's breadth from the subjugation of diverse humanity here.

These are not followers of Jesus despite the trappings and window dressing. They are Jesus-less extremists: blind zealots for nothing but power. They have been conditioned by decades of polluted theology and Fox News alternative facts to see diversity as a threat, to see progress as attacks on America, and to interpret more people being treated with dignity as oppression of white people.

Trust me when I tell you that we won't recover from the theocracy Evangelicals are constructing once it is established. If we fail in 2022, they will have a political power that will render every election null and void, and we will never have a voice again in our lifetimes. Women will lose autonomy over their own bodies. LGBTQ people will have the rights to marry and adopt taken away. People of color will be fully squeezed out of the electoral process. Immigrants will be denied access to opportunity and refuge here. These are not creative projections. They are precisely what Evangelicals have repeatedly stated as their intentions, and they're closer than they've ever been to having a rubber stamp.

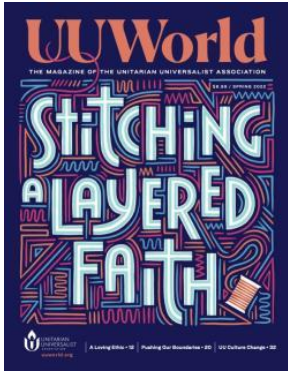
We can still stop it, though. We just need a unity and coordination that transcends theirs. We need a sustained, passionate, dedicated defense of humanity that rivals their relentless assaults on it. I hear many people say they're terrified, but being terrified alone doesn't do anything but help these people. Be terrified and get angry. Be terrified and get busy. Be terrified and go to work. Be terrified and fight like hell. I wish more decent people in America remembered they are among the vast majority instead of acting as if they are helpless victims of Republican Christians. We could defeat them, and we need to. We just need to stop lamenting how much damage they are doing and start doing something to oppose them.

We've seen this play out throughout history and we know how it ends. We know what unchecked religious extremism is capable of, and we know the cost of the silence and inaction of good people. We also know what people are capable of when they refuse to accept fascism and white supremacy cloaked in the Bible and wrapped in the flag when they fight for something inherently good together.

As someone who knows just how much these Christians have lost the plot of their faith tradition, believe me when I tell you that they cannot be allowed to steer this nation. It will not end well for the disparate people who call it home or who one day wish to. Love and equality and diversity are in the balance. It's time we made a choice. It may be the last one we get. Pastor John Pavlovitz"



July Common Read



The spring issue of the UU World – the magazine from the Unitarian Universalist Association is a benefit of being a member of RedRiverUU. This issue, devoted to spirituality, touches on the vast expanse of ways UUs define spirituality.

It is a good read! For non-members and to help entice you to consider

joining our ranks, here are links to the articles which your editor thinks may both surprise and delight you. (There are a few hard copies of the issue. available at church as well, feel free to borrow one.)

This issue begins, as always, with messages from the editor and the UUA president:



[From the Editor: Meet the Moment](#)

by Roger Santodomingo



[From the President: Our Fundamental Interdependence](#)

by Susan Frederick-Gray

Part 1: Nurturing Our Spirit



[Stitching a Layered Faith](#)

by James Ishmael Ford, Abhi Janamanchi, Janice Marie Johnson, and Amanda Poppei

[Embracing an Ethic of Love](#)

by Susan Frederick-Gray

[Q&A: Jé Exodus Hooper](#)

On Our Theology's Leading Edge

[The Flaw](#)

by Molly Peacock

Part 2: Beloved Ministries



[Change From the Inside Out](#)

by Elaine McArdle

[What Is Critical Race Theory?](#)

by Sue E. Houchins

[Engaging with the UU Common Read](#)

[Family and Youth Ministry in Challenging Times](#)

by Kat McKim

[Our New Day Begun](#)

by Gwendolyn Magee

Part 3: A Living Tradition



[Leading from the Edge](#)

by Karen Hutt, Arif Mamdani, Lauren Wyeth, and Jen Crow

[Snapshot in Time: A Different Church](#)

by Gail Geisenhainer

[ReVisioning History](#)

[Meeting Trauma with Choices and Radical Hospitality](#)

by Heather Beasley Doyle

[Black Joy](#)

by Kimberly Quinn Johnson

[Poem: The Change](#)

by Mathew P. Taylor

New 4 Worship Series

The Worship Team announces a new 5-part worship series "Great Peacemakers" starting on Sunday, July 31 and continuing on the last Sunday of August, September, October and November. The series is based on the book *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World* by Ken Beller and Heather Chase.

Winner of more than 30 awards, and endorsed by 3 Presidents and 3 Nobel Peace Prize winners, *Great Peacemakers* is an entertaining and inspirational book. During the series, we will meet twenty inspiring individuals who have made peace their choice in life, from a Vietnamese monk to a Brazilian musician, from a Swedish children's author to an Iranian American architect.

The series is organized into five paths to peace: choosing nonviolence, living peace, honoring diversity, valuing all life, and caring for the planet. Each path showcases the true-life stories of four amazing peacemakers who have successfully cultivated peace in a variety of ways.

Dr. Oscar Arias, Nobel Peace Prize winner and former president of Costa Rica, said, "Powerful, well-researched and, above all, timely, *Great Peacemakers* should be required reading for the youth of the world."

Jana Norris and Marla Loturco are co-leading this innovative and thoughtful series.

Caring Circle



Lanan Shelton called recently and sent a photo to let us know how well she is doing. She voice was full of joy and she reports the move was the perfect solution and she's very pleased, but she sure does miss church and all her friends she and Robert made while living here. **Marilyn Alexander** recent surgery went well and she reports she raring to go home **Jim Holmes** daughter, **Keller**, is home recovering from Covid, even though she has been vaccinated. Jim is self quarantining but reports the two are managing well. **Thomas Garland**, one of our youngest members recently stopped by **Carolyn Cameron**, who is in home hospice, for a visit. They

made grilled cheese sandwiches and watched the movie *Harold & Maude*. Both report it was a great movie and visit!. **Kat Walston** has been moved into the Alzheimer's unit at The Terrace and her former residence totally vacated. She seems quite comfortable at The Terrace.

Money Matters

The month of May, had total receipts about \$300 more than in the prior month (\$2,308.36 compared to the \$1,938.00 that was received in April). Total expenses for the month were \$3,735.33, leaving us with a net loss for May of (\$1,426.97). Net income for this fiscal year-to-date stays very positive at \$20,450.02.

As of May 31, 2022, we had \$8,350.90 available in checking. We also have a total of \$19,105.48 in all savings accounts, including \$2,545.00 in the Ronda DeCaire Memorial Fund. I will make an adjustment at the end of this fiscal year to reflect decline of the total market value of our investment in UUCEF funds. At the end of May it was at \$66,784.40, a market value decline of \$15,063.12 (18.4%) from the value of our original investment. Please note: All markets go up and down. Dick Powell, *Treasurer*

July Birthdays

- 03 - Don Rogers
- 10 - David Dyer
- 13 - Linn Cates
- 14 - Scott Bowie
- 14 - Robert Shelton - would have been 75

The first birthday after a loved one dies is hard. If you wish to reach out to Lanan, here's her contact info: 11406 Rustic Rock Drive, Austin TX 7875. Cell: 903.436,2423

Were you a July baby but your B-day isn't listed? It can be by sending an email to news and we'll add your birth month and day in the dBase.

An Invitation for All of Us

RUSTY DOG RANCH

AMERICA

1776



Land That I Love

3RD ANNUAL INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

(SUN, JULY 3!)



Hosted by Jeff and Michelle Haynes
55 Possom Trot Hollow Rd, Whitewright, TX 75491
R.S.V.P.s greatly appreciated: (949) 350-5335 | (626) 975-0860
MichelleDeetsHaynes@gmail.com
6:30 – 11:30 p.m.



Join us to celebrate Independence Day with "family," food, games, music, and toasts! We're celebrating on Sunday, July 3 so you can recover (or re-celebrate) on Monday.

Once again, we'll enjoy the self-evident awesomeness of the blues / rock / folk / funk ("Americana") tunes of The Oliver White Group. Celebrate your 'unalienable' rights to Chef Jeff's wood-fired pizzas!

- We're in the country: fireworks are allowed! 
- Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.
- We have many chairs, but if you have a favorite lawn chair, bring it.
- Kids and their rideable/walkable toys are welcome.
- Campers are invited to stay overnight and enjoy July 4th PJs and Pancakes
- Closed-toe, flat shoes or boots recommended for prairie walks. 

Moveable Feast Event for July

In July, The Moveable Feast will gather on Wednesday, July 20th @ 12:30 for a Dutch-treat lunch at Rustico's Restaurant in Denison. Everyone is warmly invited to take part. You only need only contact [Marion Hill](#) to assure there the restaurant sets up enough tables for us.

The Moveable Feast's goal is to find ways for those within and beyond the congregation who enjoy gathering to break bread together. Sometimes it is at someone's home, or at church, or a picnic or a restaurant or maybe something no one has thought of yet! Everyone is warmly invited to participate.

From our resident poet

July 24 is National Tequila Day in the United States. Celebrate with a drink of the national beverage of Mexico!

Raise a glass, raise a toast!

Tequila & Truths

by Don Mathis

Every day should be passed
as if it were your last.

And may the glass we know as life
hold no taste of bitterness or strife.

Never make a foe if you can make a friend.
Always take the high road until the journey's end.

Share some tequila with your amigo
and watch how fast your troubles go.

Give a toast to love, a toast to laughter,
a toast to living happily ever after.

Here's to a cool wind when it's hot,
and a warm breeze when it's not.

Here's to always giving your best shot.
Here's to the arrow hitting the dot.

Remember the words, Salud a la Vida,
as you enjoy a shot of tequila



Our Leaders

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*

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

NTUUC Rep: *Elbert*

RE Team: *David, Ellie, Marilyn*

Safe Congregation Panel: *Dan*

Social Action:

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

Worship: *Dan, Doug, Jana, Marla*

Contact Us

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