

# Red River Ramblings

December 2022 - Vol. 24 No 5

Sunday, December 4, 2022 - 11:15 am

## For and Against

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

plus

## The Hanging of the Green

### Following Conversations & Calories

Sometimes being for love and justice in the world requires us to work against those forces in the world that perpetuate hate, violence, and injustice. This discourse will address the difficult and complex reality of how living a life for love and justice leads us to actively work against the systems of hate and injustice in the world. You may read Dr. Davies's bio [here](#).

Sunday, December 11, 2022 - 11:15 am

## In the Midst of Darkness, Light Persists.

The Worship Team, *leading*

With December having the longest nights, it's no surprise that people have developed customs and traditions which include light. We have selected 7 rituals and celebration that are held in December: Chanukah, Advent, St Lucia's Day, Winter Solstice, Yule, Christmas, and Kwanzaa - Join us as we explore the various approaches people use to honor, as Mahatma Gandhi mused, "in the midst of darkness, light persists".

Sunday, December 18, 2022 - 11:15 am

## A Light Shines in the Darkness

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

This week we experience the shortest day of the year for this part of the world. As we prepare for the return of longer days, let us reflect on the ways we can bring light into the darkness of the world like so many who have gone before us and like so many who journey on this earth with us now. You may read Dr. Davies's bio [here](#).

Sunday, December 25, 2022 - 11:15 am

## Christmas In the Chapel

The Worship Team, *leading*

The last time Christmas was on Sunday, we swapped worship for eggnog and Xmas cookies. This year a hybrid approach. We took the short sermon *A Christmas Birthday* by the Rev. Don Fielding and recorded the script as a stage reading while showing images to accompany the text. We will have eggnog, cookies, coffee, Christmas music and debut the video. The video will be available on our YouTube channel Christmas morning as well.

*The Worship Team is excited to announce the Rev.*

*Dr. Mark Y. A. Davies*

*will be leading worship twice a month during 2023.*



# 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.

At our fall congregational meeting the members voted to use up to \$51,000 from savings to help cover the 2-year minister compensation package. With these additional funds the team sent the grant request for \$50,000 to NTUUC on Oct 29th. Unfortunately, we were contacted by NTUUC (Daniel Polk) to inform us that NTUUC grants are on hold until their investment markets recover from their current loss. They will re-view this position each quarter starting in January 2023.

What this means is that we will not be able to apply for a contract minister until we can get this grant. We expect that this will happen and hopefully the investment markets will recover enough for NTUUC to accept our grant request sometime next year.

This is not necessarily bad news because it allows Red River more time to save or find additional funds so that we do not have to pull the full \$51,000 out of savings. However, this also means that it is even more important to get additional volunteers for the worship team.

This search team is also looking at new ways we can find or raise additional money. More on this later as we investigate options.

We will not meet in December. Our next meeting is January 2023 at 2pm.

Jim Holmes, chair | members: Marilyn Alexander, David Dyer, Marla Loturco, and Jana Norris,



# Children & RE...

## NEEDS TO EXPAND!

We won't see our church grow and include younger people unless we can take care of the religious education needs of their children.

We need to expand the RE program for children to accommodate the current primary/elementary age group and open a middle school/high school age offering.

Elle has taken a job in Prosper and works Saturday night, so she is hopeful that we can find someone to take over the primary/elementary position. The curriculum for the middle school/high school group teaches leadership skills and social justice. We believe that there are youth in those age groups that would attend if we had something to offer them.

Please talk to or email [David](#) or [Marilyn](#) about what you can do to help us meet this need someone to take over the primary/elementary position. The curriculum for the middle school/high school group teaches leadership skills and social justice. We believe that there are youth in those age groups that would attend if we had something to offer them.

Please talk or email to [David](#) or [Marilyn](#) about what you can do to help us meet this need

# Help Cards Are Here

The collage shows three 'NEED Help?' cards. The top card is for Oklahoma and lists services like Counseling, Food Bank, and Job Training. The middle card is for Texas and lists services like Food Bank, Job Training, and Substance Abuse. The bottom card is for other regions and lists services like Food Bank, Job Training, and Substance Abuse. Each card includes a phone number and a website URL.

The new Help Cards are now available at church. They contain useful phone numbers for those who may need support services. The plan is for folks to take a small pile of cards for either TX or OK and ask if you can leave them of libraries, community centers, restaurants, etc.

# Marilyn's Musings



The winter solstice is approaching, and the days are getting shorter. While the ancients banged drums to bring back the life-giving sun, we decorate with traditional red and green to issue in the season of holiday cheer and giving. Hopefully, many of you will join us after the morning assembly and Conversation and Calories on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, to decorate our chapel. Many hands make light work, and we will enjoy the brightening of our chapel for weeks to come. Then, so the decorations will be removed in a timely manner, we will plan to gather and take down the decorations on January 8<sup>th</sup> following Conversations and Calories.

We have a list of supplies that we need to get us through the year. This includes paper towels, paper napkins, dishwasher detergent and rinse aid, and coffee and other items. If you are interested in helping, please look over the list in the foyer on Sunday and sign your name by the item(s) that you want to contribute. Those items that you purchase can be brought to the chapel and put around the tree.

Can you find it in your hearts to give these children in the Homeless Shelter a little joy this Christmas? Please sign your name to the list in the foyer on Sunday to indicate which child you can help. Then, please bring those items to the chapel and place in the box under the tree designated for the shelter. These need to be wrapped gifts with a tag indicating the TFS# for each child on the list, so the shelter administrator can tag them for the right children.

All these kids could use PJ's, athletic, sweat or winter type clothing, shoes, socks, underwear. A gift card might be best for each of the teenagers. Three more children are expected, but they don't have information on them, yet.

## TEXOMA FAMILY SHELTER KIDS CLOTHING LIST

TFS #	gender	age	shirt	pants	shoe	coat	
R-2 a	m	2	2	3t	9	3T	
R-3 a	m	7	5-6	5-6	13	5-6	
R-3 b	m	6	5-6	5-6	12	5-6	
R-3 c	f	2	3T	3T	7c	3T	
R-7 a	f	14	l	14	10	xl	Gift card
R-14 A	m	9	10/12	10/12	5	1	Gift Card
R-4-14	m	14					

Following our Fall Meeting and approval to take some funds from savings for minister compensation fund, Jim submitted the grant to NTUUC. They called him back to say that they are currently suspending grants because of market losses, but they will review them again in January and April, next year. That was disappointing, but it gives us more time to save for minister compensation.

We all need to give Jim a pat on the back for all the work he has done to revise the Policy & Procedures Manual to reflect the operation of our hybrid church. The board reviewed that document and will be editing that document to reflect the responses each team has submitted. Many thanks, Jim!

Have you ordered your new name tag yet? They are bright and easy to read. They even have our own logo on them as well as the option to add your pronouns. They are \$9 each and to place your order, see Amy. Thanks for your work on these, Amy!

As you may already know, Marsha Runnels is conducting chair yoga classes every Tuesday at 10:00 in the chapel. Go stretch and get flexible!

Doug informed the board that the Worship Team has new, resourceful active members and he has been the lead coordinator for over ten years. He said that the team is in a good place with both long-term and new members, and he felt it was time for him to step aside. Doug's leadership has served this congregation well and I'm sure that he will be missed as the team finds its new direction.

Amy is still working on making it possible for folks to donate to RedRiverUU when they make purchases on eBay and others, but she has run into some hiccups.

I'm sure this will be resolved soon, and she will let us know that it is working. Thank you, Amy.

So, as we enter this holiday season, please remember the needs of those in our community who need assistance recovering from illness, hardships, and disasters as you also cherish your loved ones. My son, Kevin, asked to be removed from everyone's Christmas list and asked that instead, everyone help someone in need. He will be doing the same. He felt that it was obscene for people shop for things, just to put something under the tree for people who really don't need anything, when there are so many people hurting and needing help. We all need to share that spirit of giving during this holiday season. Marilyn Alexander, *president*

## The Caring Circle

Carol and Dick Powell have made the decision to move back to Plano, sell their home at the late, and move into an Assistant Living Residence because Carol's health indicates this would be the safe thing to do. They joined the church in 2017, Carol served as a greeter, membership, aesthetics, and caring circle chair while and Dick was on finance, endowment and still is the treasurer (thru Dec.). They both were Feasters, and the Good Times Team. Current contact address is 6401 Ohio Dr., Apartment 7108, Plano TX 75024.

Lanan Shelton called recently, sounding cheerful and full of life. She is so pleased to have made the decision to return to Austin (and be out of the horrible place she was in when Robert died). She sends her best and ask that we report, "I miss you all."

## December Birthdays



04 – Donna Toerper  
07 – David Lawrence  
12 – Cindy Buffington  
17 – Amy Hoffman-Shehan  
18 – Jim Holmes  
20 – Jim Runnels

## A Workshop for Us



The UUA Congregational Life Staff is offering a program just for us: **Essentials for Lay-Led Congregations**. This special one afternoon workshop will be held Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am – 4:00 pm on ZOOM

The program includes an email subscription to a newsletter (full of helpful tips, tools, training opportunities, and other resources), and admission to the December 10, 2022, Lay Led Congregation Convergence. There you will get to connect with leaders from other lay-led congregations. There will be several break-out opportunities for small group sharing ideas and approaches that work. Those attending can select up to three different breakout topics: Worship, Pastoral Care, Staffing, Small Group Ministry; Leadership Development and Family Ministry. [Past issues of the newsletter](#) are free and available in Leader Lab.

The workshop is free to all who participates.

If enough of us want to participate, we could gather at church and participate together. Intrigued? Please speak with Marilyn if you want you participate. You can also [Register Now](#).

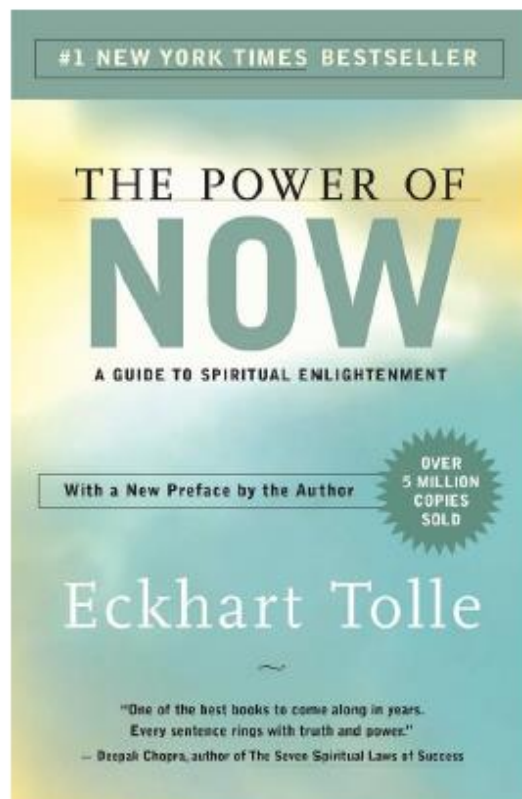
**NOTE: If you are interested Marilyn needs to know by Sunday afternoon, 3. Please reach out to her ASAP.**



# Spiritual Self-Help Group/Book Club

Revitalize your love of truth and understanding by studying with us: *The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, by Eckhart Tolle.

Ongoing weekly conversation, please join us at any point



You are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold. That is how important you are.

-----Eckhart Tolle

The pain you create is always some form of nonacceptance, some form of unconscious resistance to what is.

The past has no power over the present moment.

-----Eckhart Tolle

Listen to the author read the book [here](#).

<b>Facilitator:</b>	<b>Jim Runnels, LPC</b> 903-744-2860
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Red River Universal Unitarian Church</b> 515 North Burnett Ave. Denison, Texas
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6:30 to 7:30 pm</b>
<b>Beginning:</b>	<b>Tuesday, January 10, 2023</b>
<b>Cost:</b>	<b>\$1.00 suggested donation</b>

# Social Justice

CIVICS 101: HOW AMERICA WORKS Takes a Break  
After the first six months of programs, Civics 101 will take a break during the month of December. After all, most folks are still celebrating the holidays on December 26.

If you have missed some of our sessions, most are available on the Facebook page. Our first local speaker was Sherman attorney Barry Rubarts who spoke about Understanding Our Local Courts with a lively discussion after. Next, we brought you City Councilman Josh Stevenson and Assistant City Manager Terrence Steele to explain how their offices Benefit Residents

Our third session educated us on New Texas Election Laws. Voter Education Ambassador for Texas Voter Access Amy Hoffman-Shehan explained how they affected our Voter Registration and mail-in ballots. September focused on the upcoming election. Mary Linder of Grayson College provided us with the job descriptions for the November election races.

In October, we stepped back from the election to hear from a new American Citizen. John West, Austin College Librarian Emeritus, spoke to us of the steps necessary to change from a Canadian resident alien to become a permanent resident and then a naturalized U.S. citizen. We closed out November with an education on The Electoral College, Checks and Balances from an educator expert, Iro Omere.

Plans are to return January 23, 2023, with continued nonpartisan topics for insight into our democracy.

Please join us then. Jan Fletcher, *chair*

# Nerdy New Year's Eve

It's gonna be a Nerdy New Years! Help us ring in the new year with a night of board games, geeky gifts, and great company. Visit for a couple hours or stay for the whole event. Either way, it'll be fantastic to have you here.



At 6 pm on December 31<sup>st</sup> we'll start things off with some games. Bring your own or try out some games supplied by members of the church.

Around 10 pm we'll kick off the White Elephant Gift Exchange. If you bring a gift, join us in choosing, opening, and sometimes stealing cool presents. Gifts don't need to be new, but we do ask that they be in good condition and fit the nerdy theme of the event (games, sci-fi, fantasy, comics, etc.).

Then, games resume, with a pause before midnight to watch the ball drop.

At 1 am, we say our goodbyes and head home, so we can be well rested enough to make corny jokes about how you haven't seen your friends 'since last year'.

We have a new large-size wall calendar on the bulletin board in the foyer where committees/teams and interest groups can post upcoming events/meetings etc.

This is to *augment*, not *replace*, our church calendar that is always available both on the church app and the homepage of our website. Remember if you list something on the wall, to make sure email the details to [news@redriveruu.org](mailto:news@redriveruu.org) so your listing also will appear in the church calendar and mobile app.



From our non resident poet

## Gratitude

By Don Mathis

Thank you for the peace you always bring me.

Thanks for the insight that helps me to see.

I appreciate the encouragement and the assistance you have always sent.

Thank you for the growth, the chance for learning, the chance to see how seasons are turning.

I give thanks for the opportunity to serve the poor in my community.

And all those times when my spirits were raised,

I give gratitude and blessings and praise.



## 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  
AV: Carole, Don, Jim, Marla  
Communication: Amy, Doug, 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: Marilyn  
RE Team: David, Ellie, Marilyn  
Safe Congregation Panel: Dan  
Social Justice: Jan  
Web Team: Hannah, Jim, Marla  
Welcoming Congregation: Adrian, Amy, Lisa, Marla, Thomas  
Worship: Dan, Jana, Marla, Michelle, Walter

## Contact us

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