



Red River Ramblings

November 2023 - Vol. 25 No 5

Sunday, November 5, 2023 - 11:15 am

Swords into Plowshares

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

How can we work for peace in times of war without losing sight of the importance of establishing justice? Read Mark's bio [here](#).

Sunday, November 12, 2023 - 11:15 am

Reflections on Our Fragile Moment

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

What can climate past teach us about this fragile moment, and how can it prepare us for our possible future climate? Read Mark's bio [here](#).

Sunday, November 19, 2023 - 11:15 am

Found 'Family'

Jack Bolderjack & Adrian Hinman, *co-leading*

Join us to honor the lives of those who have lost their lives to anti-trans violence in 2023 and learn about the importance and value in building community, making connections, and finding family. When we only have each other, we must strive to build each other up, honor our memory when we're gone, and celebrate life while we're here.

Sunday, November 26, 2023 - 11:15 am

A Rousing Peace Experience

The Worship Team, *leading*

Most of us remember the old songs like Blowin' in the Wind, Where Have All The Flowers Gone, and lots of others. Join us this Sunday for some live music, some recorded music, and all songs will include lyrics and congregational singing.

Come Ye, Thankful People, Come - to our Potluck Thanksgiving Dinner

While many in our community share a Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends, there are those whose families live far away or have rejected them, or who are alone. Again, this year, all who wish to share a Thanksgiving potluck dinner at church are warmly encouraged to indicate who's coming and what your food contribution will be on the signup sheet posted on the foyer bulletin board. We will break bread together @ 2 pm. Open to all who wish to come.

Marilyn's Musings

November makes me think of falling leaves, wearing warmer clothes, gathering firewood, and lighting the wood stove to keep the house cozy and warm. Then comes Thanksgiving and the beginning of the Season of Giving. Notice I did not say the season of shopping. That's because people become more caring and benevolent during this season, thanks to the multitude of religious practices of giving during this time of year. I only wish we could carry those warm, good feelings with us always, because happy, good feelings enrich our lives and make the world a better place.

In October, we held our Fall Congregational Meeting as we do every year. It was well attended, and participation was enthusiastic. We heard from the many teams that make our church community so vibrant and welcoming. For a small congregation, it is simply amazing that we have so much going on.

During the morning assembly before the meeting, we welcomed six new members. They are Cristin Mackey, Jack Bolerjack, Sherilyn Bolerjack, Liz Rapp, Pau-la Jennings, and Martina Hernandez. Hopefully, more people will find us during this 2023-2024 church year and join our happy community.

During our Fall Meeting, it was suggested that we partner with a Black church for the Juneteenth Picnic and events. We heard about the status of some special community events our church has planned through this year: Coat Drive, Fan Drive and School Supply Drive. All will be advertised in the newsletter, morning program, and the UPDATE. Be watching for information and when you can volunteer to support these drives.

After the firebomb at the Plano UU church, and the man with weapon at the Ft. Worth UU church, we recognized the need for additional safety for our congregation and our building. Jim installed a new security system and Marilyn and Amy attended a Safety Workshop put on by NTUUC at Horizon UU in Carrollton. That meeting provided a lot of good ideas for emergency preparedness, which we will be implementing in the coming months. Note: Jack is certified in CPR and is willing to become certified as a trainer. Everyone is encouraged to become certified in CPR and learn how to give directions to others, even if unable to perform CPR.

Last summer, Red River UU joined the Chamber of Commercences in Denison and Plano. On Wednesday March 6th from 3:00-5:30 PM, our church will be the location for a ribbon cutting and Open House hosting the Denison Chamber of Commerce. We will need to provide refreshments and

adult beverages. These events typically draw 20-50 people. We are excited about being able to show off Red River UU to the community. Your help will be needed to provide and serve refreshments, show off our church and tour people around.

The October Board Retreat gave us some direction in building membership, stewardship, delegating responsibilities to get more people involved in our activities and we developed a sample vision statement which was discussed at the Fall Meeting. A Vision Task Force composed of Amy, Doug, Cristin, and Jack and Sherilyn was formed. Hopefully, a vision statement will be proposed, and we will consider voting on it at the Spring Congregational Meeting.

Jim announced that the board has approved revisions to the Strategic Plan. The Plan lost its direction during the pandemic and needed to be revised to include what is in place now instead of where we were before the pandemic. The pandemic changed the landscape for a lot of churches and organizations.

I am happy to welcome Paula and Larry Jennings, who have volunteered to maintain our grounds. We can all be really pleased with their eagerness and skill. The grounds look a lot better under their care. Please thank them when you get a chance.

We still need another person to help with Conversation and Calories on the 1st Sunday of each month. The Worship Team is pleading for additional people to help with planning and presenting each Sunday's morning assembly. This is a function that we must maintain as the center of our church mission. People are needed as Worship Associates (those who read the parts that are not part of the discourse.) People are also needed to be part of the Worship Team (those who design our worship and upload the service to YouTube.) Please contact Marla to volunteer.

At the time of the Fall Meeting, the NTUUC grants committee had not yet met about our request for funds for minister compensation, so we could search for a minister. They met on October 28th, so I hope Jim will have more information by the time this newsletter is published.

If you are as excited about our tiny congregation as I am, I invite you to seek ways that you can be more involved in this adventure of having a UU church in Texoma. Yes, we are few, but there are droves of potential UU's within our reach. We live in a culture where locals unabashedly talk with strangers about their faith – checkout lines are a great place to talk about an open religion. If those folks can do it, so can we.

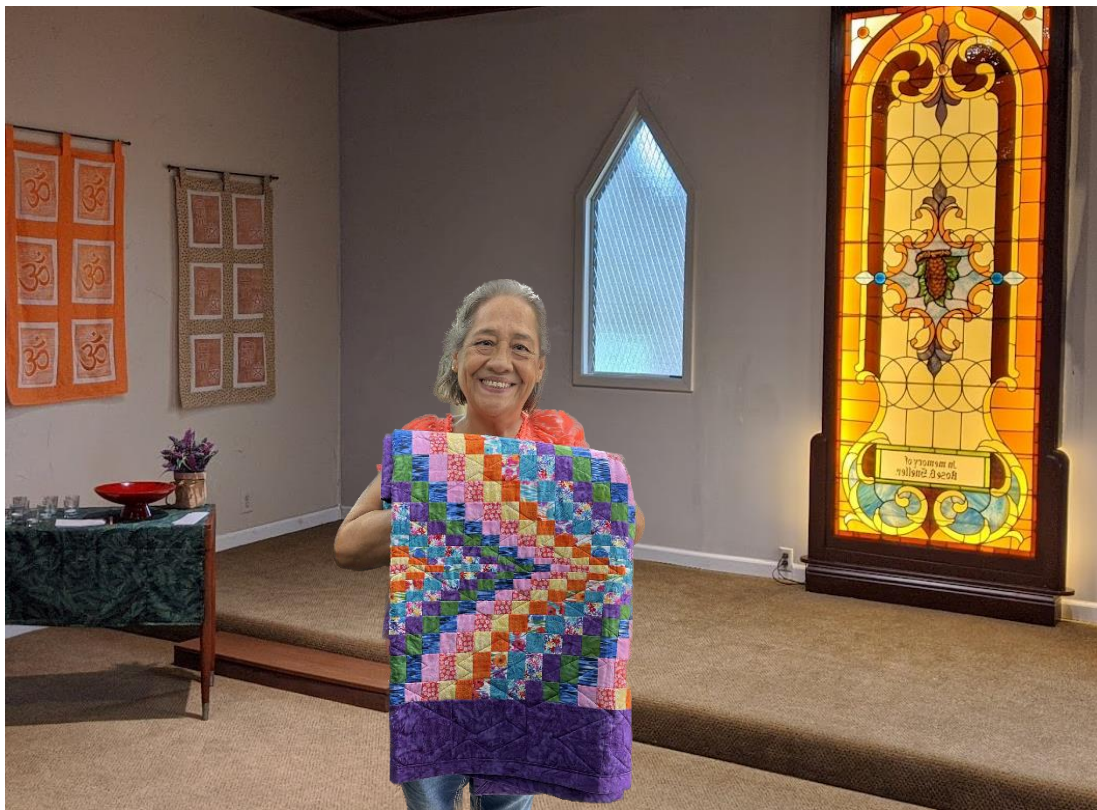
Marilyn Alexander, president

Quilt Raffle Winner is ...

Some months ago, a quiet fundraiser started. Marla Loturco created a lovely quilt and several people worked on selling tickets.

At the conclusion of the fall Congregational Meeting, Marla drew the winning ticket. It was purchased by **Minnie Cantu** who reports was very surprised and even more delighted with the quilt.

May you snuggle down and stay warm in your new quilt, Minnie! We raised \$770.00 from the raffle. Well Done, Y'all.



Thanks to Marla and all who helped in their fund raiser in support of the minister compensation fund.

A FriendsGiving? Yes!

All are welcome to attend a special event, new for our congregation. It's called a FriendsGiving. This occasion is designed to include in our Beloved Community those who may have lost their family attachments due to their sexuality/gender expression and who feel disconnected from love and acceptance. These family-centric holidays are important in our society, and we never want anyone left in the cold. Friendsgiving will be a full buffet of all the Thanksgiving favorites with turkey & ham provided by the LGBTQIA+ Welcoming Congregation Team and attendees bringing their family favorite side dishes. So please join us in surrounding others in your light and warmth. The Friendsgiving Potluck is scheduled for **Saturday November 18th** from 2pm to 4pm. Our Family Christmas Celebration will be on **Saturday December 16th** from 2-4 pm and will include food, games, and prizes!

Social Justice To Do ... Can You?

In today's world, there is never enough support for ways to improve the needs of society and our world. Yet your email, phone call, letter, postcard, or petition signature may be the one that is needed to make that difference. Our Unitarian Universalist Principles call on us to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Our Social Justice Team, in conjunction with Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM), endeavor to practice this principle through a weekly Action Hour.

Each Thursday, TXUUJM offers a Zoom event with links to ways we can make a difference in this world. If on the zoom event, you have the opportunity to click various links and sign petitions, send emails or whatever is offered. In that one hour, you can impact four or more situations.

I choose to work at a more leisurely pace later with a copy of the Action Hour items. As leader of the Social Justice team, I forward them to team members and other friends. The Social Justice Team would love to have your help with this. If you want to make a difference, please contact Jan Fletcher to be added to the weekly email list. Or you can

go to txuujm.org and sign up to get weekly reminders to work with the Action Hour team. It's a great way to live our principles! Thank you and Remember to Vote This Month

November 7: **Texas voters** will decide on fourteen amendments to the Constitution this coming November 7. The 88th Legislature passed these earlier this year and the voting public decides if these changes will benefit or not. For the complete list of the ballot for your area, go to Grayson County Elections. The amendments are listed there as well as a section which explains what the legal wording means. Early voting continues through November 3 in most areas. TX voter guide [here](#).

November 14: **Oklahoma voters** go to the polls Tuesday, November 14 to decide their Special Elections, Candidates and Propositions. Early voting is Thursday, November 9 and Friday, November 10. Go to your County Elections website for details. OK voter guide [here](#).

Voting is the strength of our Democracy! Please speak up with your vote!

Money Matters

In the month of September, we had total receipts of \$2,957.61. Total expenses for the month were \$4,568.92, leaving us with a net loss for the month of (\$1,611.31). The net loss for the month was primarily due to costs of improving building security and to the timing of various other budgeted costs.

We had a net profit for the fiscal year-to-date of \$3,494.61. The year-to-date net profit was primarily due to the timing of pledge income, partly offset by costs to improve building security and the timing of various other budgeted costs.

As of September 30, 2023, we had \$13,559.89 available in checking. There is a total of \$20,747.33 in the bank savings account, including \$4,352.08 restricted for the Minister Fund and \$5,951.89 held in trust for Kat Walston from the sale of her personal effects prior to moving into assisted living. There is a total of \$66,784.40 invested in the UUA Common Endowment Fund. The congregation voted to use up to \$51,000.00 of the Endowment Fund for minister compensation, if needed.

Carole Harner,
treasurer

Minister Search Team

I got a call from Daniel Polk, Executive Director of NTUUC, informing me that the Grants Panel has approved our application for funds in support of a minister. There is but one remaining step needed. Because of the size of our application, \$90,000 spread over two years, the amount must be approved by the full NTUUC Board which will most likely pass.

On behalf of the entire congregation, we extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Grants Panel for sharing their support in our belief that this is the right time for us to be seeking a minister and to Daniel Polk for his guidance and support throughout the grant process.

More to follow.

Jim

Chair Yoga

The weekly chair yoga under the leadership of Marsha Runnels meets each Tuesday from 10-11 am in the chapel. It is gentle impact approach which leaves participants feeling pretty spiffy when done. Newcomers are always welcome.

Spiritual Perspectives

Revitalize your love of truth and understanding by studying with us each Tuesday evening 6:30 – 7:30 in the chapel. Good conversations in a caring atmosphere. Newcomers and the curious are most welcome to come.

Need a Crib?

A member of our congregation has a baby crib she would like to give to someone who can use it. It's a beautiful crib and has been used only when baby stayed with Grandma. If you'd like to see it, I have a picture. Carolyn Cameron [email her [here](#)].

November Birthdays



- 08 Dan Althoff
- 08 Carolyn Cameron
- 13 Marla Loturco
- 13 Maura Shehan
- 16 Sylvia Lawrence
- 22 Peter Schulze

Welcoming Congregation update

Greetings! Sooooo much is going on with our friends & family right now!

October 21st was the annual Grayson Pride and although the temperature went over 90 degrees, it was certainly much more enjoyable and safer than 120 in the shade! This year, to increase safety & security for everyone, the festival was held at the beautiful Mustang Creek Ranch Event Center (info at the bottom). The venue was amazing & the staff were so embracing. When I approached the owner to thank him, he exuberantly expressed his appreciation and said that we (Pride) were welcome back anytime.



As planned, two Pride Prizes gift baskets worth a total of \$1800 were given away after a day of over one hundred entries. We had many compliments (thank you Amy), and people were genuinely surprised at the number of local businesses who contributed. I am proud to say that our efforts at donations were exceptionally successful. The winners were a young boy who was thrilled to get the gaming merchandise and a young lady who appreciated the basket she received with the art supplies. We had several visitors to our booth, especially some young folks from AC, who were thrilled to learn of a church that was not just accepting but emphatically welcoming and nonjudgmental. Hopefully, we'll see some new faces soon!

Our Family Christmas Celebration will be on Saturday December 16th from 2-4pm and will include food, games, and prizes!

We are working hard to have a positive impact in our Beloved Community and we'd like to make sure our members - Jack, Sherilyn, Cristin, Adrian, Marla, Amy and Olivia - know that they are appreciated for all their work to make Pride a success and to keep our outreach going with the two upcoming celebrations. We can always use more voices so join us!

From our non resident poet

Friends and family across the country will gather in the kitchen and dining room at Thanksgiving. Time for a poem!

A Kitchen Poem – by Don Mathis

This poem speaks to me
of the crock pot Ted gave me in 2009
of the hundred rubber bands
from the Tulsa World newspaper
of the potholder woven by Granddaddy Walker
in the last year of his life
(and that I never use,
but always keep in the kitchen drawer)
and spices that I've had five years
the wok from my first ex-wife
hand-blown glass from Mexico
Grandmother Walker's silverware
(embossed with the letter "W"
that I pretend is an "M")
the ceramic cup with my name,
gifted by Aunt Pete
a dozen years before she died
the electric grill from Mom and Dad
the milk-glass bowl that Grandma Mathis
served ice cream to little me
and so on.
It's a wonder I can ever consume a meal at home
with all these memories stirring about.

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Week Special

From the *Denison Herald*, Nov. 17, 1965, found in my attic. DMS

Our Leaders

Board of Trustees:

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

Committee on Ministry:

Carolyn Cameron, *Elbert Hill*, Jim Holmes

Nominating:

Jana Norris, Jim Runnel, Linda Tracy

Team Leaders/Members:

Adult Forum: Marilyn, Jim, Amy, Marion
Aesthetics: Amy, Jana, Adrian
Audio Visual: Carole, Don, Jim, Marla
Caring Circle: Carolyn, David
Communication: Amy, Doug, Marla
Endowment: Carolyn, Doug
Facilities: Jim A Carole, Marilyn
Grounds: Marilyn
Long Range Planning: Jim, Marilyn
Membership: Marion
Minister Search: David, Jana, Jim, Marilyn, Marla
NTUUC Rep: Marilyn
RE Team: David, Marilyn
Safe Congregation Panel: Marilyn
Social Justice: Jan
Web Team: Hannah, Jim, Marla
Welcoming Congregation: Adrian, Amy, Marla, Thomas, Jana, Jack, Sheryl
Worship: Dan, Jan, Jana, Marla

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