



# RED RIVER RAMBLINGS

MARCH 2024 ~ Vol. 25, No. 9

Oklahoma Indian Paintbrush by Damon Lane, Jan 2024

**Sunday, March 3, 2024 - 11:15 am**

## **Existentialism for Today.**

Dr. Elbert Hill, *guest speaker*

Many people have the idea that Existentialism is a philosophy of doom and gloom—partly because newspeople and others in the media often say we are living in existential times, citing the political turmoil in our country and around the world. They are only partly right. All times are existential. Today, Elbert Hill will emphasize the positive aspects. You can read his bio [here](#)

**Sunday, March 10, 2024 - 11:15 am**

## **UU Women of Power**

Jana Norris, *leading*

In honor of Women's History Month, the Worship Team invites you to meet two UU Women of Power - graduates of North Texas' own First Unitarian Church of Dallas: Attorney Louise Raggio, the first female prosecutor in Dallas County and the second female governor of Texas, Ann Richards. Then sprinkled on selected Sundays through the year, the worship team will share stories from the abundant resources to lift UU women's historic contributions to our faith.

**Sunday, March 17, 2024 - 11:15 am**

## **Reflections on the Eight Principles: 7th Principle: *The Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part***

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

The 7th principle of Unitarian Universalism affirms the truth that we as persons are part of the ecological community of all life and our flourishing as humans is dependent on the flourishing of the entire biotic community.

You can read Mark's bio [here](#).

**Sunday, March 25, 2024 - 11:15 am**

## **Reflections on the Eight Principles - The 8th Principle: *Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.***

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

The 8th principle of Unitarian Universalism affirms that racism and oppression are the antithesis of Beloved Community, and any serious attempt at cultivating beloved community for all life must be proactively anti-racist and work for the liberation of all who are oppressed in our world.

**Sunday, March 31, 2024 - 11:15 am**

## **Voices from the Trans Community**

The Welcoming Committee, *leading*

This Trans Day of Visibility, join us in hearing what it means to be visibly trans, directly from some of our transgender community members and their family, as well as a special musical guest, Jo Rodriguez. Jo is a nonbinary trans woman, singer songwriter, adjacent to both folk and punk, who sings songs about mental illness, love, loss, and transition.



Fifth Sunday Potluck is Today! Bring a dish of your favorite food and plan on enjoying the bounty of others. See you there, OK?

Hope so! Potlucks are a terrific way to meet folks you may not know 🙏

# Marilyn's Musings

I just completed a workshop, "Love Beyond Belief." One of the takeaways from that workshop was how to build connections among people and in the process build membership. A minister in California was called to a church with a membership about the size of ours. He did a demographic study to determine which people in the community were most likely to hold Unitarian Universalist values and he contacted them. He invited them to visit just one special Sunday. On that Sunday, he planned a really uplifting program, filled with music people would know and enjoy singing and a message of principles and purposes to which they could relate. Then, he met with each one and invited them to a small group gathering just to get to know each other better. None of the groups were larger than 8 people, so there were many small groups meeting at various times. They included some new visitors and some current members. People felt welcomed. They felt heard. They gained connections and through this they built community. Over time, the congregation membership grew to 5,000.

I am not advocating that we make these cold calls, but when we could meet new people in our community, we could visit a bit and find out more about their beliefs and needs and invite them to join us for a Sunday at Red River. When they do attend, let's make them feel welcomed.

People are lonely, whether they admit it or not. They work in their own little world, whether in an office or from home. Or they are working to build their own business or someone else's. They have little opportunity to meet other people and build lasting connections. Their life is routine. They seek confirmation that they are valued, and that other people care about them, and that they in turn can care about other people. People crave connections. They want to feel important and needed.

I challenge you to seek out new people, invite them to go to church with you and build connections. Some of you already are meeting in a small group once a week for coffee. Perhaps, you can invite new visitors to join you.

Others of you may want to invite one or two new visitors to meet you for coffee and just get to know each other

better. I hope we can all work toward building community at Red River UU.

Our biggest opportunity to introduce ourselves to the wider community is on March 6<sup>th</sup> at our Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting and Open House. Please contact me at [galex ranch@gmail.com](mailto:galex ranch@gmail.com) or call me at 580-980-1267. Let's work together to make this special!

Marilyn Alexander, *president*

# Lgbtqai+ Update

This month has seen the WCT host another successful social event – The Fairy & Fae Tea Party! More than 25 people attended, including some new faces. Amy was our Tea Mistress, with Marla serving as her lovely assistant and Right hand (literally). We enjoyed lessons on properly brewing different teas as well as yummy teatime treats and fabulous company. Jack led visitors on a tour of our lovely and historically significant building and Amy learnt her knowledge of the history of the families that owned it. Many thanks to all the members of the team and their contributions, especially the Biasi kids who were willing to joyfully do a lot of the heavy lifting.

We are continuing to monitor the situation at SISD regarding the investigation into Dr. Tyson Bennett regarding the *Oklahoma!* Casting and the discrimination against Max Hightower. Newly reported and brought to the Board is the reporting of bullying by students of a non-binary 6th grader at Piner Middle School. Although the parents have legitimate fears that keep them from identifying themselves and their child, we are supportive of this family in every way possible and will persist in calling for all the local school districts to be accountable for the safety and security of ALL students at ALL times.

Please join us on Sunday, March 31st for the Transgender Day of Visibility service. We will be hearing from the Biasi Family as they describe what it is like being a family that is very visible with their kids being non-gender conforming in such a hostile environment. We are also being visited by non-binary transgender singer-songwriter Jo Rodriguez as a musical guest. She sings songs from the heart about love, transitioning and life.

The next event on our agenda is the Texoma Earth Day Festival on April 20th, 2024, at the Sherman Municipal Building and Kidd-Key Park. We will be helping at the church's booth, staffing the Children's Clothing Exchange, and assisting wherever we are needed. The Welcoming Congregation Team is going to assist Adrian with the Kid's Clothing Exchanges from her on out.

In May, Grayson Pride is hosting their annual Pride Prom. Just like last year, some of our members will be on hand to protect the attendees, work the door, or even escort people to & from their vehicles. We will not let haters ruin this event! Our WCT knows that it is so important to support the work of other local LGBTQ++ groups and allies and to represent RedRiverUU in these endeavors. Jack Bolerjack, *chair*



# Minister Search Team

Activity is slowly picking up in our Minister Search process. So far, we have two candidates that have applied for consideration for our contract minister position.

The first application was posted to our UUA portal on January 31st. We sent the applicant an introductory email acknowledging the receipt of their application and requested a time when we could discuss the position with them in more detail. They informed us that they were already in contract negotiation with another church and did not want to be distracted but wished us well in our search.

The second application was posted to our UUA portal February 9th. We contacted them and had our first-round meeting with them on February 21st. This person is currently a retired UU minister looking to get back into it for another five years. This candidate felt that coming here for only two years would not be in their best interest so will pass on our position.

The Team will continue to search for candidates in hopes of finding someone who will be a good fit for our needs.

More to follow and this process unfolds.

Your Minister Search Team: Jim Holmes, David Dyer, Jana Norris, Marilyn Alexander, Marla Loturco

Your Minister Search Team:

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

# Money Matters

In the month of January, we had total receipts of \$3,657.00. Total expenses for the month were \$4,540.66, leaving us with a net loss for the month of (\$883.66). The net loss for January was primarily due to the timing of insurance and utility payments.

We had a net profit for the fiscal year-to-date of \$4,060.31. The year-to-date net profit was primarily due to higher other income, the timing of pledge income and lower worship expense, partly offset by costs to improve building security and the timing of various other costs.

As of January 31, 2024, we had \$14,122.98 available in checking. There is a total of \$20,749.94 in the bank savings account, including \$4,771.08 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.

Carole Harner, *Treasurer*

# Our Open House March 6

Come show off who we are as Unitarian Universalists by greeting, welcoming, and engaging with visitors who have come to 'check us out' so to speak. This event, created by the Chamber of Commerce and designed to let business leaders get to spend time seeing our building, meeting us, and learning about who we are. Very few visitors have never heard of Unitarian Universalism, let alone meeting one! Be part of what will be an intriguing experience for us all – church folks and the rest of the world who have been invited. Ribbon cutting @ four, followed by food, drink, and fellowship (and tours of our church home).

**Red River Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**Ribbon Cutting & Business After Hours**

Join us for appetizers,  
adult beverages, door  
prizes and facility tours.  
[redriveruu.org](http://redriveruu.org)

**Wed, March 6th**  
**4:00pm - 6:00pm**  
**515 N. Burnett, Denison, TX**

*Denison*  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Part of our approach to becoming better known in Tecoma, the church joined the local Chamber of Commerce in both Denison and Sherman. Jan Fletcher is our liaison to both organizations. We are inviting local chamber members to visit Red River Unitarian Universalist Church with a Ribbon Cutting at 4 pm followed by a Business After Hours event until 6 pm on Wednesday March 6, 2024. We provide beer, wine, soft drinks, snacks, and door prizes. If you have volunteered to help with food, hosting, and tours, please be at the church by 3 pm to help set up. Contact Marilyn or Jan with any questions.

# Sherman Chamber Event

Red River UU volunteers donated breakfast casseroles, mini quiches, fruit trays, pastry, juice, and coffee to serve Sherman Chamber members last month at a the Plug-In Texoma Networking meeting. The tasty spread was a welcome start for the day. The event invites chamber of commerce members to stand and tell what their business is. Thank you to our volunteers for making this a successful outreach event.

# March Birthdays

12 Jan Fletcher	21 Wm Lloyd Fridley
13 Lillie Pauline Paterson*	22 Elbert Hill
14 Marilyn Alexander	23 Dawn Beeler
19 Carole Harner	25 Lanan Shelton

# Scheduled Meetings in March

- **Spiritual Perspectives:** Tuesdays 6:30 – 8 pm
- **Membership Committee:** Mar 10 - 12:45 pm
- **Welcoming Congregation:** Mar 10 - 1 pm
- **Board of Trustees:** Mar 17- 1 pm
- **New Moon Celebration:** Mar 10 -7:30-9 pm
- **Earth Day Planners :** Mar 14 - 6-7 pm
- **Lone Grove Coven Craft Day:** 6:30 - 8 pm
- **Ostara Celebration:** Mar 20 – 7:30 - 8:30
- **Minister Search Team:** Mar 21 – 2:00 - 3 pm
- **Newsletter Deadline for April:** Mar 24 - 10 pm
- **Worship Team:** Mar 27 6:30 - 7:30 pm

# The Votes Are In ...

Sun. Mar 3 – 5:30 pm The results of the email vote of the membership to add our church in a letter expressing our unwavering solidarity with Annunciation House, a Catholic organization that accompanies migrants in El Paso, and to decry Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's actions targeting it. The vote passed, with 100% of voters saying YRS. You are encouraged to read the multi-faith letter [here](#).



## THE 2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

# New Outside Group

A new outside organization, **Aspen Grove Coven**, has started using our building twice a month. The Coven does a bi-weekly book club along with new and full moon rituals along with the 8 wiccan sabbaths. If you are looking for a path within the witchy world, this group might be of interest to you. This group meets in the Gil Alexander room. There is limited seating so if you are interested in this group, contact Jim Holmes.

# Need some Dishes?

The Hills are divesting themselves of excess possessions, including dishes. Some are blue-rice pattern (plates and bowls), some are other Asian-theme patterns (small bowls). And there is a nice set of glasses and matching pitcher. If anyone in the church knows of someone in need of dishes (perhaps someone whose home has burned?), please get in touch with Marion or Elbert, [marionh3719@gmail.com](mailto:marionh3719@gmail.com) or 580-924-7715.

# Time To Vote, Texas!

Texas voters could exercise their citizenship on Tuesday, March 5 in the Texas Primary Elections. Some members of Red River Unitarian Universalist Church will be on hand at various poll locations as Election workers and judges for the Grayson County Election Process. Be sure to VOTE



Texas  
Unitarian  
Universalist  
Justice Ministry



Celebrating  
**10 Years**  
of Bending Texas  
Toward Justice

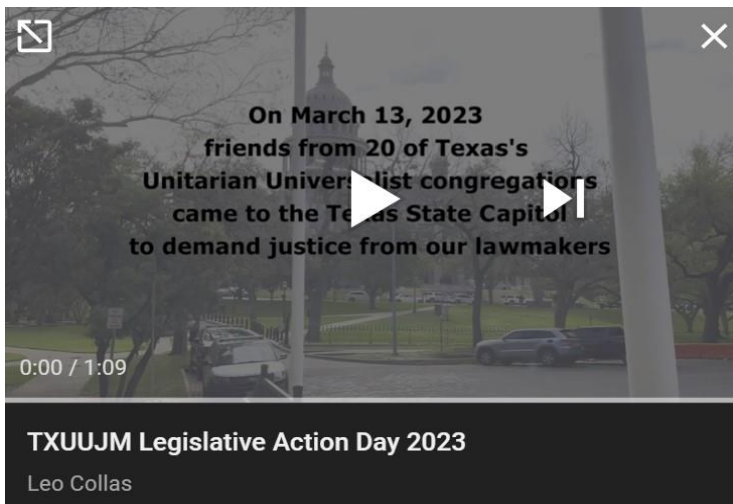
You're Invited to the  
TXUUJM Annual Gathering!

REGISTER FOR OUR GATHERING

MARCH 23, 2024, ~ 9:30AM-4:30PM

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF DALLAS

4015 NORMANDY AVE DALLAS, TX 75205



We are so excited! Registration is open NOW for this year's TXUUJM annual gathering! (See video above from Rev. Erin, also on TXUUJM YouTube and Facebook for sharing.)

Like our 10th Anniversary gathering last January in Austin -- but with a lighter agenda to allow for more fellowship and connection time -- we will gather at First Unitarian Church of Dallas and online, Saturday, March 23, 2024.

SPACE IS LIMITED. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#) (and let us know your dietary needs)

The day will include an election-year update, opportunities for regional caucusing, yummy food, time for youth to gather, and a panel and small group engagement focusing on our theme: Bodily Autonomy, Safety, and State Control.

Most important, this annual gathering is a chance to see friends, connect with other Texas UUs and TXUUJM partners, renew our spirits, and strategize for the meaningful work we are called to do.

We can't wait to see you, in person and online! The event is FREE, though we ask for your contribution for lunch cost and if you would like a TXUUJM t-shirt. At TXUUJM, we never want cost to be a barrier, so we also have a spot-on registration for folks who can donate a lunch to share with someone who needs it.

## Social Justice Update

This year Social Justice is highlighted for important follow up each month during this Election Year.

- The Team is working on Criminal Justice with a 30-day stay of execution for Ivan Cantu.
- TXUUJM is one of 40+ organizations joining the Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) in the "We Will Resist" campaign, demanding a repeal of Senate Bill 4 and end to Operation Lone Star.
- The Poor People's Campaign will stage simultaneous Saturday, March 2, marches on the Texas Capitol and on statehouses in battleground states including Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. There will be a sister march at the Grayson County Courthouse in Sherman at 11 am this Saturday. The marches will be the first coordinated actions in what the Poor People's campaign describes as a 41-week effort to mobilize 15 million poor and low-income voters nationwide. Among other demands, the group wants state and federal lawmakers to set a \$15-an-hour living wage, expand voting rights and provide healthcare and affordable housing for all.
- I know we are all still reeling from the news about the death of Nex Benedict, 16-year-old non-binary and Choctaw student in Oklahoma. Nex's death is a consequence of the hate and bigotry being pushed by anti-2SLGBTQI+ politicians around the country,
- This is outrageous and a 6<sup>th</sup> grader here in Sherman is also under attack. What is wrong with these adults who fail to stop bullying and abuse!!!

And these are just a few of the injustices of today. Please, Be A Part of the Solution!!!!

# From our Non-Resident Poet

March 22 is [World Health Day](#) and here is a poem from our non-resident poet Don Mathis:



by Don Mathis

Let me receive the waters  
as they flow from the source.  
And let me set free the water  
when it's time for it to go.  
I want to flow on the stream  
of new adventures  
and relish the excitement  
when it comes  
and find calm  
in the still water  
when it comes.  
I will change my boat  
for the deep ocean,  
for the white water,  
for the wide river  
as need be.---\_  
And I will do it willingly  
until my journey's end.

## Red River Unitarian Universalists

515 North Burnett Ave  
mail to:  
PO BOX 1806  
DENISON, TX 75021-1806  
Phone: 903.231.3232

### Useful Links

[Current Newsletter](#) [Our Mobile App](#) [Email](#)  
[Website](#) [Our Facebook](#) [LGBTQ+ Facebook](#)

# 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 Runnels, Walter Norris (not related to Jana)*

## Our Various Teams:

*The first name is the team leader*

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

**Aesthetics:** *Amy, Jana, Adrian*

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

**Caring Circle:** *Carolyn, David*

**Communication:** *Amy*

**Earth Day Planning:** *Amy*

**Endowment:** *Carolyn, Doug*

**Facilities:** *Jim, Carole, Marilyn*

**Grounds:** *Marilyn, Paula*

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

**Membership:** *Paula*

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

**Monarch Way Station:** *Lynn*

**Moveable Feast:** *Elbert & Marion*

**NTUUC Rep:** *Marilyn*

**Publications:** *Doug*

**RE Team:** *Jack*

**Safe Congregation Panel:** *Marilyn*

**Social Justice:** *Jan*

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

**Welcoming Congregation:** *Jack, Adrian, Amy, Billie, Cristin, Jana, Olivia, Sherilyn, Thomas*

**Worship:** *Marla, Dan, Jan, Jana*