



In Touch

*First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita
founded in 1887*

May 2010

From the President

On March 27, we hosted the kickoff dinner for the 2010-11 stewardship campaign, Let's Keep Making History! We ate well, folks enjoyed themselves, and a healthy number of members left their pledge statements with our treasurer before departing the premises. A rousing start to our annual campaign!

Now the party is over, and as of this writing we are at about 60 percent of our goal. All members by now, I hope, have received calls from a visiting steward and have gotten envelopes with information about our campaign. (If you have not, or have misplaced yours, please contact Kat or Anne Bailey ASAP!)

The budget we envision will support a full-time minister, an important aim for us not only to fill the bursting needs of our growing congregation, but to ensure that our minister can serve us in a healthy and equitable manner. Other urgent needs are landscaping and extended parking, and none of them can be filled without your support. Please take the time, right now, to complete and return your pledge forms. The campaign closes May 2, when a final budget based on pledges will be drafted for vote at the annual meeting.

Speaking of which, be sure to save the date! The annual meeting, at which we will elect a new slate of officers and next year's nominating committee, will be held June 6 right

Midwest Leadership School for Youth

Midwest Leadership School for Youth is a weeklong intensive experience designed to engage participants in all aspects of leadership in a Unitarian Universalist faith community. For the second year we are pleased to offer Midwest Leadership School for Youth (ages 14-18) in tandem with our Adult School. It will challenge and train Unitarian Universalist youth in three areas: Leadership Skills, Worship, and Religious Values & Heritage. This Leadership School is an intentional community and learning experience. It equips young UU's with a foundation that deepens their religious development and expands their ability to contribute, both in their UU community and beyond.

Students should be motivated to learn and engage. They should be able to manage their time and needs in an environment that includes long days filled with group and individual learning opportunities along with theological reflection. Youth entering grades 9-12 may attend; youth grades 10 - 11 are especially encouraged. Congregations sending adult students would especially benefit from sending youth! Registration fees are \$475 per youth and there is no additional "congregational fee". Cost includes housing, food, and materials. Some scholarships will be available from your district office (contact Sherry Warren at swarren@psduua.org). Registration Information can be found at: [Registration Materials](#) Registration Deadline is JUNE 1, 2010 and a 50% Deposit due upon acceptance of registration. Balance of school due in full June 15, 2010

after service and First Sunday Lunch. We'll also celebrate our volunteers that day with the first volunteer recognition event, and we'll reveal as many names as we can in the "Let's Keep Making History!" brochure picture. Thanks to those of you who have sent in names. It's not too late to try to identify the folks in the picture—if you recognize anybody, send in their names to Kat.

It was wonderful to see such a strong turnout for our special meeting March 28. Forty-five people met to vote on proposed changes to our church bylaws. After brief discussion and minor wording revisions, a vote was taken and all proposed changes passed.

Shine on!

Annie Welsbacher

In Touch

with The First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Wichita

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*The deadlines for In Touch and for the
monthly Calendar are the third
Wednesday of each month. The next dead-
line is May 19 to be mailed May 26. Please
submit items for this issue to:*

newsletter@firstuu.net

*or bring items to the church office.
Late submissions may be omitted.*

*We would like to order at least a
dozen new hymnals. You can help
by making a special donation of all
or part of the cost—\$28 each. If
you pay for one, you will be invited
to dedicate it to a particular individ-
ual or we will give you underwriting
credit just like public broadcasting.
“This hymnal brought to you
through the generosity of”
Please make your checks out to
First UU and put “hymnals” on the
memo line.*

Minister's Musings

What a Welcoming Roof

*“I have dreamt of a place and time
Where nobody gets annoyed
I must admit, I'm not there yet
But something's keeping me buoyed.*

*I have dreamt of an open world
Borderless and wide
Where the people move from place to place
And nobody's taking sides.*

Maybe there's a world that I'm still to find...”

(words excerpted from the song “Maybe There's a World” by Yusuf Islam)

There I was under the U.U. roof with the witches. As their dance spiraled and their spirits soared, I too felt the joy. This group of dancers had been coming together for twenty years to celebrate the ebb and flow of their fair and dark sister, the Moon. But on that night, their twentieth anniversary, I had been pulled into the divine rave by a little raven-haired child eager to take a twirl with his daddy in the Moon Dance. He'd grown tired of the nursery, and when I had agreed to take him, he took off running, tugging me by the hand. In a moment, we entered the Meeting House, and he raced off to join the dance. I stood back, a silent witness.

There in the center, all smiles, and spinning slowly like an enchanted top, the Leader beat her drum and chanted. Around her two concentric rings of dancers wove an ancient pattern, *widdershins* and *deosil*. Encompassing all of these dancers and the drummer was a larger, surrounding circle of non-dancing chanters, and at ritual points along its circumference were four other drummers who embellished the Leader's musical weave of drum beats. Periodically, on a signal from the Lady, the drumming shifted and the dancers changed partners. Like a living flower in bloom, the dancers seemed to be expanding outwards and upwards. But then I noticed a remarkable thing—the Leader was chanting in Arabic. Arabic? Indeed, she was uttering the *ne plus ultra* Arabic declaration, known to all Muslims—*there is no God but God*. Now, I associate pagan Moon Dance with the cold European North, with the hoary Druids and the Celtic Bards of the Gael, not with the sufi dervishes of Arabia's fiery deserts where Mohammad was called to prophecy. “What's this,” I wondered? Well,” I intuited, “it's the celebration of universal love.” Of course.

A few minutes later, I slipped out of the Meeting House to rejoin my wife and son in the nursery. Just outside the Meeting House door, I was again bemused as I gazed down at a dozen pair of shoes outside of the Buddhist meditation room. The shoes and the fragrance of incense told me that within were a dozen souls silently seeking or else having silent encounter with the Buddha nature. I stood processing this, another delight—dancers in one room and meditators in another, seekers who adopted paths from

(Continued on page 5)

R. E. Corner

Wow! It was so great to see over 30 children and youth participating at church on Easter Sunday. We love having each and every one of you involved in our classes and activities. You are welcome and encouraged to hang out with us every Sunday. There is always something wonderful going on.

Thank you! Thank you! To all of you who helped make our Pennies for Peace campaign a success. We collected 37,488 cents. I mailed a check to the Central Asian Institute this week for \$375. It was a great campaign which generated a lot of excitement and interest. The children and youth learned firsthand how they could make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time. They have a better understanding of the life a child in Pakistan and became active participants in global peace. It was great to see congregation members supporting our effort.

It's that time again where we begin to invite members of the congregation to share their interests and talents with our children and youth for the summer. We will begin a sign-up sheet in early May. We believe it's important that the adults and children know each other and there is no better way to get to know one another than to spend some time together sharing what you know and love.

Please mark your calendars for May 16, RE Recognition Sunday. The children will be presenting something wonderful and we will have music provided by some very special musicians and singers. This is a time to show your appreciation for the incredible people who teach our children throughout the year. Please plan to come and show your support of the RE program.

Denise Jackson-Simon,
Director of Religious Exploration

Skeptics and Believers: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition

What are we doing if we profess belief in God? When we pray? When we join with others in rituals of worship? How do we know that God exists? Can reason defend any of the assertions about God and the world claimed by our religious traditions? Is religion a force for good in human life, or is it something that belongs to a past age, a symptom of the childhood of humanity?

The 36-week course, *Skeptics and Believers: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition*, examines the different challenges to religion that have emerged from the modern worldview and the ways in which Christian and Jewish thinkers have responded to these challenges. Join us Sunday mornings at 9:30 at church, beginning May 2. Childcare will be provided upon request. Contact Corey Swertfager, 316-201-6921.

WayCoolSundaySchoolWayCoolSundaySchoolWayCoolSu

Summer Opportunities for UUs

Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly has been gathering for over 60 years, building a community of sharing, support and friendship every summer. Our remarkable UU community will share their talents, humor, concerns, love, learning and spirit of adventure as we again create a blessed week in a beautiful space. Trout Lodge is located in 5,200 acres of pine and oak forest on a private 360-acre lake 75 miles southwest of St. Louis, Missouri, outside Potosi. New and returning campers are invited to enjoy the tennis, miniature golf, volleyball, horseback riding and other activities provided by Trout Lodge as well as MUUSA workshops and opportunities for spiritual growth and celebration. People of all ages are warmly invited to join our MUUSA family in 2010. Go to [MUUSA_Brochure_2010_forWeb\[1\].pdf](#)548.5KB for more information.

For other summer opportunities, check out www.psduua.org/CampStarTrail and www.psduua.org/Camps/CampUniStar

Note: This year, the financial commitment committee has asked people who were involved in First UU as kids and have since moved away to tell us how their lives were affected by our church. Gary Gardenhire, Jo Gardenhire's son, was a youth with First UU in the 1960s. He writes the second in a series of testimonials. Scott Smith, Del Smith's son, was a youth with First UU (previously First Unitarian) in the 1960s and 1970s. He writes the third in a series of testimonials.

My Church: Gary Gardenhire

My early religious upbringing was haphazard. Born into a middle-class, black family, my paternal grandma wanted us kids to be (mysteriously) raised as Catholics. My siblings and I drifted in and out of masses, confirmations, confessions, and Latin mumbo-jumbo for years, with only lukewarm reinforcement from our folks. Mixed into the brew was a Baptist undertow provided by frequent visits to friends' churches—mostly to hear the choirs.

When given the choice, I later followed my mother to the Unitarian (later Unitarian Universalist) Church in the early 1960s—a wonderful, rapidly changing time in American politics and an exciting, revolutionary era for social thought and behavior. Joining the UU for me was a blast of fresh air, a cold bath, a kick in the pants combined. I found a liberal oasis in conformist-minded Kansas to help guide me through a particularly difficult time for myself as a teenager in a changing nation.

I think that thanks to the UU my exposure to a wide range of religious ideas and philosophies coupled with its sound liberal political orientation gave me a foundation upon which I build continually. Even though living far from America now, the church is still with me in the ways which I participate responsibly, socially and politically, in my adopted community.

Thanks to UU for offering a long, cool drink in an arid land,

Gary Jo Gardenhire
garyjgardenhire@gmail.com
Campello-sul-Clitunno, Italia

Reflections on My Childhood in the Fairmount Unitarian Church: Scott Smith

A list of personal gratitudes.

One of the things I associate strongly with the Unitar-

ian church is the civil rights movement. As a very young person, what I really got into was the singing of folk songs in the big woody room upstairs in the building on Fairmount in my very own neighborhood—Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Odetta, and “movement” folk song generally. I assume that the adults were doing more practical work as well, but I am grateful for the experience of that music from that time in my life. It was certainly a pleasant and lyrical antidote to band and orchestra practices. At any rate, I am nostalgic about these memories, and consider them a formative musical experience.

Aside from the music, I might even make a very general assumption, that organizations like the Unitarian church did their bit to make it possible for Barack Obama to be elected as an American head of state.

So that's something to be thankful for.

A pluralistic view of religion(s).

As a child growing up in Kansas, I had many close friends (and family) who came from more strict Christian-formed homes, beliefs, and practices, and I remember a period of being bemused by the Unitarians' absence of Judea Christian paraphernalia, (bibles, crosses, and what-all), and the inclusion of diverse faith symbols and signifiers in the church building. I remember this especially in the Sunday school down the stairs. At the time, it may have been slightly confusing (peer/social pressure). But in retrospect, I have been grateful for the information. I am thankful that people in the church advocated a position of choice, or self-determinacy. An individual social/moral responsibility—that is an on-going process.

Liberalism...A notion of diverse community. Inclusion, difference as value.

Specific memories include trick-or-treating for UNICEF, fundraising through fun fair activities on the church grounds, walking home from Fairmount grade school every weekday past the church, my mother singing in church choirs, mixed groups playing guitars and singing songs in the big room up stairs on the north side of the building, Easter egg hunts on the church grounds (the rock garden in front, and the crumbling stone work in the back garden), and an anthropological introduction to world religions in Sunday school downstairs.

Minister's Musings (Continued from page 2)

opposite corners of the globe finding sanctuary and sacred space under one roof.

What delighted me most was that I too felt welcome. I am the minister here and, unlike other places in Kansas, I don't have to hedge about my embrace of *Bhagavat Dharma*. People here know me and are genuinely interested in my journey, in my thoughts and feelings. No one is intimidated. No one feels threatened or hateful because I may be different. Rather, I am accepted for who I am. My experiences, personal choices, realizations, and skin color are valued and validated. Without fear of rejection, I can be me. And everyone here experiences the same.

Here at U.U., we have done what so few have been able to do: In the words of the singer-songwriter Yusuf Islam, we have created an "open world, borderless and wide, where the people move from place to place and nobody's taking sides."

Rev. David Carter

From the Recycling in Kansas newsletter: courtesy of Jana Rambo

ELECTRONIC RECYCLING (E-CYCLING) AT STARKEY

Starkey accepts a variety of electronic waste for recycling, including computers, peripherals such as hard drives, monitors, keyboards, printers, copiers, VCRs and DVD players. At Starkey, individuals with disabilities disassemble these electronic items and sort the parts for recycling companies. Items such as monitors that are considered hazardous waste are packaged and removed as whole units.

Starkey is the exclusive electronic recycler for the Wichita school district and receives donations from the general public. Starkey's e-cycling program processed 91 tons or 182,000 pounds of materials from electronics in 2007. According to the EPA, electronic waste is growing 2 times faster than any other waste stream.

Electronic items are accepted at Starkey's main facility at 4500 W. Maple, Wichita, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 3 pm. People wanting to recycle should come to the north door of Starkey's warehouse and ring the bell. Companies with many items should call in advance at 316-512-4243.

(from Starkey, March 2010)

Meet Matt Ablan, our pianist

Matt Ablan, who has been playing for UU services for several months, is also the aquatics coordinator for the YMCA at Central and Ridge, where he spends his time teaching 3 – 5 year-olds to swim. He's also working on a degree in piano at Wichita State University because he loves it, but the real purpose of his degree is to pursue a career with the YMCA.

While he has previously played at catholic churches, Matt finds the services at the UU church interesting, enjoyable, and occasionally fun, such as the one recently devoted to the topic of humor. In addition to playing for special events like the Valentine party, Matt enjoys being free to pick and choose the pieces he plays for the gathering music, interludes, and postludes during services, random selections such as Luis Bacalov's music for the film *Il Postino*, George Gershwin, David Lanz (a favorite composer), Wayne Gretz, and Yanni, to name a few. Although he sight-reads music, he runs through each piece a few times before playing it in the church. The piano and the sanctuary acoustics, he says, are really good, but it is occasionally hard to hear himself play when the congregation is singing hymns!

When he's not working, Matt likes to play a mixture of classical and romantic music, as well as a bit of jazz: "I've been teaching myself jazz chord progressions." In addition to playing the piano, he also sings music theater. In fact, he toured for over a year with the Missoula Children's Theater's musical version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, alternating between directing the children and performing.

Currently, Matt is writing a musical which is "a comedic take on the end of the world," in the way that every religion has its own take on that subject. His musical, which opens with Bible verses, intriguingly has five characters: the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse—and a homeless man! The music, he says, is a blend of pop and jazz: "When I finish it, I would like to see it performed."

Every Month at First UU:

Full Moon Dances are open to both women and men. Join in the dance to connect with the earth's power, celebrate the elements, and discover your personal power. Wed., 5/26, 7:00 pm
Information: Kathy Hull 267-3860.

New Moon Circle meets at the church. Intended to complement the Full Moon Dances, we offer this time to gather on the New Moon for study, meditation, and ritual exploration of earth-centered spiritual growth. Wed., 5/12, 7:00 pm. Information: Kathy Hull, 267-3860.

Eclectic Readers group meet the 3rd Friday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at the church. Contact: Marsha Ebaugh, 683-4782

Book Discussion Group meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Joe Brewer, 2531 N Roosevelt. You are welcome to attend whether or not you have read the book. Information: 686-8575

Ethical Eating group meets the 2nd Monday of every month at 6:30 pm. Meal followed/accompanied by round table discussion. Bring a vegan dish to share! Contact Dianne Waltner, dwaltner@sbcglobal.net, or 946-1115 for additional information.

Family Choir meets at 10 a.m. the 2nd Sunday to practice the song for that service. All ages welcome. Information: Denise Jackson-Simon, 644-2022

Monday Movie Night meets the Third Monday at 7 p.m. Critically acclaimed movies. Kathryn Vernon, 210-2731.

Membership Committee meets the 4th Sunday at 10:00 am.

Personnel Committee meets the 4th Sunday at 10:15 am in the library.

Dinners for Eight. Date varies. Contact Nancy Milner, 685-7682.

Music Committee meets the 1st Sunday during 1st Sunday Lunch.

Every Week at First UU:

Southwind Sangha Zen Buddhist Meditation meets at the church. Introductory session, 7 pm, first Wednesday. Also meets 8-9 am on Sundays, 7-8 pm on Wednesdays and 6-6:45 pm on Thursdays. Half day retreat on third Saturdays, 8 am to 12 noon. Information: <http://www.southwindsangha.org/>, or Kathryn Riley, 684-8819 or Del Smith 612-0826.

Tai Chi classes. Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Cost: \$5.00 per class. Dress comfortably. Information: David Larsen, 612-4726 or davidlarsen@sbcglobal.net

Adult RE meets Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the southwest corner R.E. room. Current topic: *Skeptics and Believers: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition*; Corey Swertfager, 201-6921

Meditation and Book Discussion Tuesday, 6 p.m., Bob Feleppa, 304-9170

The Soloist by Steve Lopez will be the topic of discussion for **Eclectic Readers** on May 19 beginning at 11:30 am. The movie will be shown after the discussion for anyone who wants to view it. This is an open group. If you are available over the lunch hour, we'd love to have you bring your lunch and join us.

Movie Night Pick for Monday, May 17

The Passenger, 1975, starring Jack Nicholson and Maria Schneider, director, Michelangelo Antonioni. Set in the middle east. A famous war correspondent, unhappy with his life, assumes the identity of a dead man he's only recently met. That man was an arms dealer. A thriller - well balanced with a human drama.

Kathryn Vernon

Fundraising Possibilities

Most years, we have a First UU garage/rummage sale in the summer. Sometimes we have it at someone's home and sometimes it is held at the church. Does anyone want to step up and be in charge of this year's sale?

Some items that people want to donate to the church are too good for a garage sale. In that case, it has been suggested that we sell them using Craigslist or on eBay. Does anyone want to help with or be in charge of online selling?

If you would like to be involved with either of these fundraisers, contact a member of the board or Kat in the church office.

Karen Kimmel

May 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9am-3pm Private Event 7pm-Private Event 7:30pm Chamber Concert
2 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 12pm 1st Sun Lunch 12:15pm Music Com 12:30pm Med Class	3 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group	4 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi 7pm Green Sanctuary Committee	5 6pm Kid's Meditation 6:30pm Meditation Class 7pm Buddhist Med 7:45pm COM	6 6pm Buddhist Meditation	7	8
9 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 10am Second Sunday Singers 12:30pm Med Class	10 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group 6:30pm Meatless Mondays	11 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi	12 6pm Kid's Meditation 6:30pm Med Class 7pm Buddhist Med 7pm New Moon Circle 7:30pmBook@Brewers	13 6pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Aesthetics Committee	14	15 8am-12pm Buddhist Silent Retreat
16 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 9:30am RE Comm 9:30am Seeking Circ 10am RE Rehearsal 12:30pm Med Class	17 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group 7pm Movie Night	18 6pm Private Event—Democratic Soc. Mtg. 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi	19 NEWSLETTER CAL- ENDAR DEADLINE 6pm Kid's Meditation 6:30pm Med Class 7pm Buddhist Med 7pm Board Meeting	20 6pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Worship Committee 7pm Private Event—NOW Meeting	21 11:30am Eclectic Readers Group	22 10am Caring Committee
23 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 10am Member Comm 10:15am Personnel C 12:30pm Med Class 30 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 12:30pm Med Class	24 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group 7pm App;ewppd Home Owner's Meeting 31 OFFICE CLOSED 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group	25 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi	26 9:30am Newsletter Mailing 6pm Kid's Meditation 6:30pm Meditation Class 7pm Buddhist Med 7pm Full Moon Dance	27 6pm Buddhist Meditation	28	29

First Unitarian Universalist Church
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See our website
at
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Sunday Programs at First UU

Every Sunday: 9:30a Adult Religious Exploration
11:00a Children's Religious Exploration
11:00a Worship Service

- 5/2 ***Fearless and Female*** - Cindy Coughenour
5/9 ***Maiden, Mother and Crone*** - Rev. David Carter
5/16 **RE Recognition Sunday!**
5/23 ***Issues of Violence in the LGBT People*** - Jessica Farmer
5/30 ***The Process of Enlightenment*** - Reverend David Carter

Vision Statement

It is our vision:

To be a growing, inclusive, vital congregation that encourages shared values amidst differing beliefs and nurtures creative exploration of intellectual and spiritual paths.

To be a visible community leader that promotes human equity and compassion, and celebrates life through the arts.

Mission Statement

Our mission, consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles, is to provide a joyful, safe, healing environment where diversity is embraced. We will inspire and uplift the whole person through enriching programs and services for all ages, and serve the larger community through social action and active promotion of the arts.