



# In Touch

*First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita  
founded in 1887*

July 2010

## From the President

Thank you to everyone who made our June 6 annual meeting such a success. I was pleased that we had such a strong turnout—one-third of our membership attended for lunch and participation in our church's governance, well above the 25 percent mandated for a quorum. We elected Mike Felton and Ash Roberts to serve on next year's board. (I am very pleased to add that at the June board meeting, runner-up candidate Kim Talbot was appointed to fill the slot vacated by David Brewer, who begins his term as president-elect this year.) We also elected LaRilla Combs, Brandy Niblett, and Courtney Ruthven to serve on our nominating committee, the first to serve on a 12-month term. I am grateful to all these individuals—new and familiar—for agreeing to serve our church in these critical roles.

As I hope I made clear at the meeting, I loved putting together and presenting the volunteer recognition event, and especially love the fact that there are so many people to honor in years ahead. Immediately following the annual meeting, Trina Wheeler, our new president, asked me to head up the volunteer recognition event for next year, and I am delighted to do so. I welcome nominations later this year.

I am very pleased that Charlie Jenney has continued to pursue vendor bidding and mechanical details of the gate to be installed on the north drive. At the June board meeting, Charlie presented cost and vendor options, and the board voted to accept the bid from the Wichita Fence Company. I will work with Trina to ensure that we communicate our plans to neighborhood residents before the gate is in place. In perusing old board minutes, I note that board discussions about traffic through our lot have taken place throughout the entire three years I have served in this body; I am gratified that actions toward the gate's completion took place before I left office. Progress!

Also at June's board meeting was discussion of logistical options for the new lights (maybe even solar-powered!) to be installed for the front of the building in my honor. As this is my last opportunity to reach you, my captive audience, from this bully pulpit, I will ask your indulgence for the remainder of this paragraph. While I wish I had inherited more of my mother's skills and attributes, I did inherit a few of them, including the joy I derive from giving. So, before this year, I had few church experiences that rivaled the pleasure I took from selecting, purchasing, and publicly presenting the tree in honor of last year's departing president, Marsha Diggs, at our 2009 annual meeting. But I must confess to you now that being on the receiving end of this gift—the thought that went into it, its magnitude, its

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## Guest Presenters in July

**7/11 - Kalen Fristad** is an ordained United Methodist Minister. After serving churches in Iowa for 27 years he embarked upon an independent ministry. He conducted this ministry full time from 2003-2006. It consisted of traveling around the country with his wife, Darlene, accepting invitations to speak to churches and other groups, countering the teaching that many people will suffer for eternity in hell and instead, proclaiming the hopeful message of universalism. He went back to the parish ministry in July 2006. As of January 2008, while continuing to serve churches in Iowa part-time, he resumed his traveling ministry, spending half time on the road speaking on the subject of universalism.

**7/18 - Deanna Harms** is from The Greteman Group. If you haven't seen the cards around town or the ads in the newspaper for their "Do The Deed" campaign, you can learn more about this effort at [www.gretemangroup.com](http://www.gretemangroup.com).

## A note of Sorrow

We are saddened by the death of Jackie Erickson who passed away Friday, May 14, 2010. Jackie and her husband, Woody, joined the Church in 1998 and had been very active members until health problems prevented them from attending Church. Jackie served on the Worship committee, enjoyed the Dinners for Eight and participated in many other activities of the Church.

The Caring Committee

## 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 July 19 to be mailed July 26. Please  
submit items for this issue to:*

*newsletter@firstuu.net*

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

**A Huge THANK YOU to all  
you UU booklovers!**



**You made our  
Chalice Book-  
store Summer  
Sale a big suc-  
cess netting  
\$150.00.**

## Minister's Musings

### Don't Want No Empty Visions

I stop at the door. On the other side, a man is shouting. "That's just it. That's your problem! You never gave your heart to anyone. Not once! Not to me. Not to the children. You've never known what it means to love and now it's too late!"

It sounds bad from the doorway where I lurk. As the hospice chaplain, I have come to visit a man who is hours or minutes away from death. I strain to hear more, hoping the bitter exchange might provide a clue to helping me assuage the anguish of those inside.

A woman sobs. "And how would you know, Ray? How would you know? When did you ever have time for me, or for anyone or anything other than numero uno?"

Enough! I knock and slip through the door, hopeful that my training and experience will afford the combatants some respite from their anguish. But inside there are no combatants. Except for a shriveled man lying unconscious in the tidy hospital bed, there is no one to confront. Only the TV.

The flap continues. "Are you going to pretend that *you* loved the kids? Maybe you think money equals love and that that was all they wanted, or all they needed, but you're wrong, Ray. After a moment's pause, "Get out, Ray! I never want to see you again. Get out!"

I move to switch it off, but I can't. I'm hooked.

They face off, Ray and his furious partner, intent on venting their rage. I am being pulled in. But no! I have come to comfort a dying man, not to be entertained. Still, the glamour is formidable and I am momentarily attracted –vicarious wealth, the ghost of aesthetic beauty, the strutting of Vanity Fair's inmates – a smorgasbord of distractions and delectable illusions. I struggle against the undertow of subliminal messages that pulls me from my purpose. Then I turn it off.

True, these tinsel soap stars are a more pleasing sight than the dying man. But they aren't real! Recently, a couple in Suwon, South Korea was indicted by police for the death by negligence of their infant daughter –the child died of dehydration and malnourishment while the parents doted twelve hours a day on their virtual baby, a computer generated figment of cyberspace, leaving their flesh and blood child to cry for love and attention to no avail.

Except for the dying man's breathing, sound is now conspicuous by its absence. I scan the room. A neatly handwritten card with a Biblical quote, a visiting minister's calling card, and other items confirm for me what I had suspected from a prior reading of the man's chart. He is a practicing Christian. I draw close to the man's bedside and lean in to his ear to identify myself by name and occupation. Even though he is unresponsive, I

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## Minister's Musings *(Continued from page 2)*

know that he can still hear my words. I propose reading from scripture. After a moment, in a soft but audible voice, I read into his ear: *"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his faithful love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his faithful love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his faithful love endures forever."*

He revives at these words despite the fatigue and debilitation brought on by his imminent death. His aged face turns towards my voice, full of eagerness and attention. Eyebrows that had previously been motionless now quiver and arch in the direction of my intonation. His closed eyes flutter and dart behind the lids, indicating rapt attention to the messages I share. *"Even darkness to you is not dark, and night is as clear as the day. You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders."* Minutes slip by until abruptly his breathing ceases. I look up from my text and realize I am alone. He is gone. I pull the cord to summon the nurse. Moments pass and the nurse appears. She probes for vital signs and finding them absent, confirms his death.

What is it that we want to fix our attention on when it is our time to leave this world? The dying man heard me turn off one TV and turn on another. From my lips, he heard an outpouring of Transcendental Vision (TV) that was framed in a lexicon he was steeped in, and this moved him in his last moments to hope and joy. Just as he was helped at the ultimate moment, I too want to be comforted and edified by TV (transcendental visionaries) when I am at death's door. Read to me, then, inspired words from Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, or Olympia Brown. Read to me from Khalil Gibran, Rumi, William Blake, Bhaktivinod Thakur, and the Gita. But by all means, turn off that spurious other TV, that empty vision, that MTV.

Rev. David Carter

**UU Singles 4th of July Potluck Picnic**  
**July 4, 5:00pm at the church**  
**Everyone is welcome!**  
**No RSVP needed**  
**You need not be single to attend**

## From the President *(Continued from page 1)*

symbolic meaning, and, especially, our genuine need for it—has brought me even greater pleasure. I now know the pleasure of receiving, and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

The other significant item of discussion at June's board meeting was of the June 26 Restoring Our Community March through neighborhoods in central northeast Wichita, spearheaded by the NAACP, to walk "past the sites where our young men and women have lost their lives to senseless violence... to march, sing, and pray, and recall that spirit of the community we used to be... march together, arm-in-arm, and work together to bring about the rebirth of our community spirit." Participation is contingent on our commitment to start an outreach program to benefit the target neighborhoods of this march, and I am gratified that even with this (admirable!) stipulation that marchers follow through with real action, the board agreed to participate in the activity. I'm personally a little irritated at my husband, outgoing board member Corey Swertfager, for insisting on participating as an officer of Wichita NOW rather than a First UU representative, but I'm happy that we are involved, even if Corey will be a little further down the street from us.

I thank the 2009-10 board for all your help and support this past year; I don't know how I would have made my way without you. For any of our members who have not taken on the role of presidency, I encourage you to consider it—even if, as was the case with me, your instinct when approached by a member of the nominating committee is to run screaming in the opposite direction. You will grow in ways you never imagined; you will come to know yourself much more deeply—in ways not always happy, but always insightful; and you will discover at an intimate level how much energy, integrity, and love pulse through the people who inhabit our church. It's an opportunity not to be missed, so please do consider future leadership with First UU.

Thank you! And shine on!

Annie Welsbacher, Outgoing President

**Hymnals:** We can never have too any. Thank you to the people who have donated \$28 for each of our new hymnals. We could always use a few more. Please make your check out to First UU Church of Wichita and put "Hymnal" on the memo line. I can't wait to thank you for your generosity!

Anne Bailey

## 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. Sat, 7/24, Lughnasad 6:30 pm potluck. Bring food to share. 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. Sat, 7/10, 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** will not rehearse during the summer.

**Monday Movie Night** meets the Third Monday at 7 p.m. Critically acclaimed movies. Kathryn Vernon selects the films and leads the discussion after each showing. Series coordinator, Del Smith, 269-0525..

**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, 84-8819 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 Swerfager, 201-6921

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

The **Book Discussion** group has chosen as its book for July *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave. On a beach in Nigeria, the lives of Little Bee, a teenager from a small village, and Sarah O'Rourke, editor of a posh British women's magazine, are brought into brutal conjunction. Chris Cleave's *Little Bee* works because the unflinching, brutal story balances an outwardly political motive with rich, deep character development (and even some welcome humor), focusing narrowly on events before broadening to reveal some larger truths. *You are welcome to join us at 7:30 on Wednesday, July 14 at the home of Joe Brewer for lively discussion whether you have read the book or not.*

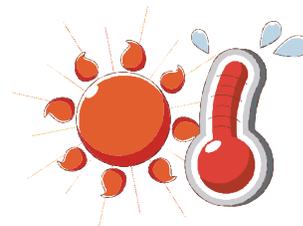
**Eclectic Readers** will meet at 11:30 on Friday, July 16 for lively discussion and lunch. The groups has chosen *Fences*, "a 1983 play by American playwright August Wilson. Set in the 1950s, it is the sixth in Wilson's ten-part *Pittsburgh Cycle*. Like all of the *Pittsburgh* plays, *Fences* explores the evolving African-American experience and examines race relations, among other themes. The play earned Wilson the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and a Tony Award for Best Actor for James Earl Jones."

This is an open group. If you are available over the noon hour, bring a lunch and join us.

**Movie Night** will be Monday, July 19th at 7pm. The movie will be *Distant*, a Turkish film by director Nuri Bilge Ceylan that won the Grand Jury Prize at Cannes in 2003. The lead actors won best actor awards. The movie portrays a common human condition with beauty and subtlety. For more information, contact Kathryn Vernon at 269-0525.

## Sangha to hold special work retreat

A tradition in Zen Buddhist practice is a working retreat, ("samu" in Japanese). The first ever Southwind Sangha Work Retreat will be 8 am to 10:30 am, Saturday, July 3. Del Smith is consulting with Joe Niblett to identify work to do around the grounds. As always, the Sangha Work Retreat will be silent, with minimal instructions given at the beginning. The retreat will be canceled in case of rain. Please call Del, 612-0826, if you have questions. (The regular third Saturday retreat will be held as usual.)



# July 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6p Buddhist Meditation	2 OFFICE CLOSED FOR 4TH OF JULY WEEKEND	3 8a-12p Sangha Work Retreat- SAMU Working Meditation
4 8a Buddhist Med 12p First Sun. Lunch 12:15p Music Comm 5p Singles Potluck <i>No Adult RE</i>	5 6p Buddhist Discussion Group	6 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi	7 7p Buddhist Med	8 6p Buddhist Meditation 7p Aesthetics Committee	9	10 7p New Moon Circle
11 8a Buddhist Med 9:30a Adult RE 12:15p Leadership Council 12:30p Med Class	12 6p Buddhist Discussion Group 6:30p Meatless Monday	13 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi	14 6p Child Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Med 7:30p Book Discussion at Brewer's	15 6p Buddhist Meditation 7p Private Event- NOW Meeting 7p Worship Comm	16 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	17 8a-12p Buddhist Silent Retreat
18 8a Buddhist Med 9:30a Adult RE 9:30a RE Committee 9:30a Seeking Circle 12:30p Med Class	19 6p Buddhist Discussion Group 7p Movie Night	20 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi	21 NEWSLETTERCAL- ENDAR DEADLINE 6p Child Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Med 7p Board Meeting	22 6p Buddhist Meditation	23	24 10a Caring Committee 7p Full Moon Dance and Lughnasad Potluck
25 8a Buddhist Med 9:30a Adult RE 10a Membership Com 10:15a Personnel Com 12:30p Med Class	26 6p Buddhist Discussion Group	27 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi	28 9:30a Newsletter Mail 6p Child Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Med	29 6p Buddhist Meditation	30	31

First Unitarian Universalist Church  
7202 E 21st St N  
Wichita, KS 67206

Return Service Requested



See our website  
at  
[Firstuu.net](http://Firstuu.net)

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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

7/4 Rev. Carter

7/14 ***Universalism: Past, Present and Powerful*** - Rev. Kalen Fristad  
The teaching of universalism has a long rich history, and is growing into a powerful spiritual movement today. This is of enormous significance because it not only relates to people's spiritual journey, but dramatically affects the world.

7/21 ***Do The Deed*** - Deanna Harms  
The Greteman Group's campaign for living more kindly and thoughtfully.

7/25 Rev. Carter

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### ***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.