



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita
founded in 1887

August 2010



COMING SOON!
DINNERS for EIGHT
2010-2011 Season

Join the Dinner's for Eight crowd on Saturday, August 28, at 6:30 pm to help kick off the 2010-2011 season! If you haven't participated before, Dinners for Eight is a group of open minded individuals and couples (mostly UUs), who enjoy meeting monthly in rotating groups of eight to share a great meal and socialize in the comfort of one another's homes.

Interested? Come see what we are about on August 28 at Bruce and Maxine Wells' home. We will be getting together as a large group to start the new season. All interested couples and individuals are invited to this initial get-together whether or not you decide to participate during the remainder of the year. We just ask that you come with an open mind and a favorite dish to share. Please call Marcia Ellsworth at 688-5352 or Maxine Wells at 681-0442 for more details and to RSVP by August 26. If you decide to join as a regular member, you will be asked to host at least one time during the year. Don't worry, hosting just means providing dinner service for eight, drinks, and bread. The appetizer, main course, vegetable, and dessert will be brought by the others in your group. Mark your calendars now!

Do You Have a Wonderful Workshop Idea to Share With Our District?

Prairie Star District is seeking workshop applications for the PSD Annual Conference 2011, "It Matters What We Believe," to be held April 8-10 in Des Moines, Iowa. Our conference theme comes from a favorite reading in our hymnal, (#657) by a beloved UU religious educator, Sophia Lyon Fahs. It begins, "Some beliefs are like walled gardens. They encourage exclusiveness and the feeling of being especially privileged. Other beliefs are expansive and lead the way into wider and deeper sympathies." Workshops are sought that respond directly to this theme, or will foster leadership development and grow our UU community through multigenerational conversation. Information about the Conference and copies of the application are at <http://www.psduua.org/AnnualConference2011/AnnualConference2011> .

Public Presentation at First UU: Friday, September 17

Is the Way One? Buddhism, Liberal Religion and the Yoga Tradition

Rev. David Carter and Rev. Taiun M. Elliston will collaborate in presenting a public program at 7:00 pm on Friday, September 17, at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita. Each will speak on the topic, with a question and answer period following their formal presentations. A "meet and greet" reception will be held

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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 Aug. 18 to be mailed Aug. 25.
Please submit items for this issue to:*

newsletter@firstuu.net

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

Green Tip:

Protect the environment and create jobs for people with disabilities by taking computers, keyboards, monitors, hard drives, printers, fax machines, VCRs, and DVD players to Starkey, Inc. at 4500 W. Maple, Wichita, Monday thru Friday, 9 am to 3 pm. 316-512-4243.

Minister's Musings

When Religion Is Irreligion

My favorite story in the Bible is oftentimes not there. Now you see it, now you don't, depending on your choice of religious tradition. But the story of "Suzanna and the Elders," disregarded by many as apocryphal, is remarkable both for its narrative and feminist appeal. In a secluded orchard, Suzanna is accosted by two members of the religious elite who attempt to rape her but are thwarted by her alacrity and wit. Fearing repercussions equal to their behavior, the two concoct a lie about Suzanna. Being clergy, they are considered beyond reproach. Moreover, under Hebraic law a woman cannot speak up in her own defense. In a large assembly the elders impugn Suzanna, testifying that she is a harlot. The crowd, swayed by the false testimony, clamors for her execution, and things are looking grim for Suzanna until, out of nowhere, a stranger makes an appeal on her behalf. He proposes that her accusers be cross-examined, and the crowd agrees. It then turns out that the stories the two elders relate do not match. In fact, each tells a version that so contradicts the other that the lie is revealed. Justice is served and the two are put to death. Our heroine is redeemed.

So why has this moral tale been deemed spurious and tossed out of the canon? My suspicion is that misogyny of an entrenched patriarchy intent on preserving its hegemony is the culprit. After all, there is as much evidence against the authenticity of the story of Christ's intervention on behalf of the woman caught in adultery as there is against the narrative of Suzanna's rescue. But in the Christ-as-redeemer narrative the woman is portrayed as fallen, saved by a man's virtue, not her own which is non-existent. But, in the version of Suzanna's rescue that I first read, Suzanna's savior, the young stranger who instigates the pivotal cross-examination, is said to have been an angel, dispatched to earth by a loving God who cannot bear the humiliation and destruction of an innocent. So, while the angel is the immediate cause of Suzanna's rescue, the remote is her own virtue. The deity is thus depicted as one swayed by the power of a chaste and defenseless women's sanctity. She is in effect her own redeemer. But this is way too much for patriarchy. That a lowly daughter of Eve, a descendent of the one through whom evil entered the world, could bring about her own salvation by virtue of her unexceptionable character—no way!

The story of Suzanna and the Elders is still relevant today, and not just as a theatre piece with remarkable plot twists. Rather, its continued relevancy derives from its holding up to scrutiny the misogyny and patriarchy that still obtain in various places around the world where, evidently, God's angels have not as yet been dispatched. Or else, if they have been dispatched, then they've not yet been heeded. Take, for example, the case of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani in Iran. Hers is the old story. A woman is charged with adultery but is really the victim of a spouse lusty to replace a wife he is tired of with a "newer model."

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Minister's Musings

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The accused, a victim of perfidy, cannot legally speak against her accuser/s. And what justice can she expect? Under the "religious" law of Iran, she will be buried in the earth up to her bosom and then publicly stoned to death. And not with just any stones. The stones must be large enough to inflict pain, large enough to eventually prove fatal, but not large enough to spare the victim protracted torture. Such would have been the fate of Sakiheh Mohammadi Ashtiani had not the world intervened.

These practices, existent not only in Iran but in places in like Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates, are rooted in the hatred of women. Whenever and wherever so-called "religion" is based on such atavistic ideation, its practice is the very definition of irreligion. For the vulnerable, the disenfranchised, the impoverished, the despised, the conquered, religious justice of this brand means legalized persecution, humiliation, brutalization, enslavement, and genocide. And for the privileged orthodoxy, it means a license for unbridled wickedness. It's not hard to miss these more outrageous offenses against women as evidenced by the international outcry against the proposed Ashtiani stoning, but what of the "religious" practices in our backyard that deny women full equality?

Rev. David Carter

R. E. Corner

I hope everyone is having lots of summer fun and finding ways to deal with the excessive heat warnings. One way to beat the heat is to join us on Sunday mornings for all kinds of Cool activities.

So far, we've made crafts with Jean Babcock; learned about bugs with Sonia Hayse; created origami Father's Day gifts with Pat Felton; became more culturally aware with Magda Garrett; learned about runes and made our own sets of Rune cards; visited Betty Hensley's home and saw flutes from around the world; and played card games with Nicole Kaempfe. A BIG thank you to all of you who shared your time and talents with the children and youth of UU!!!

And....there's more to come with fun-filled Sundays through August led by wonderful members of the congregation. So, please join us. Remember...it's much more fun when you're here. And it's COOL!

Denise Jackson-Simon
Director of Religious Exploration

Public Presentation

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following the program.

First UU's Board of Trustees voted to co-sponsor the program with Southwind Sangha. Rev. Elliston, Abbot of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center, will be in Wichita for the Sangha's annual retreat. He and Rev. Carter met each other last year and discussed the possibility of just such a program. The program will be open to the general public.
Contact: Del Smith, 612-0816

Congregations Do Transgender Outreach

Eleven UU congregations from the District of Columbia to northern New Jersey reached out to the transgender community in early June with a presence at the Mazzoni Center's Trans-Health Conference in Philadelphia. The congregations placed a two-page ad in the event program and staffed an information table. They also contributed \$500 to the Mazzoni Center, which provides a range of services for the lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender community.

Ken Goldberg, chair of the social justice committee at the UU Church in Cherry Hill, N.J., said, "we shared our compelling message—you are welcomed to our churches, at all levels of congregational life; please share your personal journey with our loving, spiritual communities; ours is a place where you can be your real self."

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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. Sun, 8/23, 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. Sun, 8/8, 7:00 pm. Information: Kathy Hull, 267-3860.

Eclectic Readers group meets the 3rd Friday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at the church. Contact: Del Smith, 612-0826

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, 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. Information: 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 Marcia Ellsworth, 688-5352, or Maxine Wells, 681-0442.

Music Committee meets the 4th Sunday after church.

Every Week at First UU:

Southwind Sangha Zen Buddhist Meditation meets at the church. Book Discussion, 6 pm, Mondays, 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: Questions of Value. Corey Swertfager, 201-6921

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

The **Book Discussion Group** will be reading *Catcher in the Rye*, A 1951 novel by J. D. Salinger for August. Originally published for adults, it has since become popular with adolescent readers for its themes of teenage confusion, angst, sexuality, alienation and rebellion. *You are welcome to join us at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, August 11, at the home of Joe Brewer for lively discussion whether you have read the book or not.*

Looking ahead, the group has chosen *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* by Susan Jacoby as its September book.. If this title intrigues you, join us on September 8.

Eclectic Readers have chosen *Sacred Clowns*, a 1993 mystery by Tony Hillerman, as the book for their discussion on Friday, August 20 at 11:30 am. It involves koshares, or sacred clowns, which the book is named after. The story also involves several homicides and the relationship between Jim Chee and Janet Peet. Bring a lunch and join us for a change of pace.

Movie Night, Monday, August 16, 7:00 pm.
Rivers and Tides -

"Portrait of Andy Goldsworth, and artist whose specialty is ephemeral sculptures made from elements of nature." IMDB

"If you love art and you love nature, this movie should thrill you. I saw this movie when it came out in 2001, and I'm looking forward to seeing it again. It's completely beautiful." Kathryn Vernon

Congregations Do Transgender Outreach

(Continued from page 3)

He said five people who attended the event came to services the following Sunday at First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, the closest congregation to the event.

He also noted Unitarian Universalism was the only faith group represented at this event. "We became more aware of transgender issues, trans folks became more aware of us, and we developed contacts with other groups supporting this community," he said.

From *InterConnections Tipsheet*, an email newsletter from the Unitarian Universalist Association.

August 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>1</i> 8a Buddhist Meditation 9:30a Adult RE 12p First Sunday Lunch 12:30p Meditation Class</p>	<p><i>2</i> 6p Buddhist Discussion</p>	<p><i>3</i> 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi</p>	<p><i>4</i> 6p Children's Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Meditation 7:45p C.O.M.</p>	<p><i>5</i> 6p Buddhist Meditation</p>	<p><i>6</i></p>	<p><i>7</i> 2p Private Event— Memorial Service for Harriet Sumner (family of Les and Courtney Ruthven)</p>
<p><i>8</i> 8a Buddhist Meditation 9:30a Adult RE 12:15p Leadership Council 12:30p Meditation Class 7p New Moon Circle</p>	<p><i>9</i> 6p Buddhist Discussion 6:30p Meatless Monday</p>	<p><i>10</i> 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi</p>	<p><i>11</i> 6p Children's Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Meditation 7:30p Book Discussion at Brewer's</p>	<p><i>12</i> 6p Buddhist Meditation 7p Aesthetics Committee</p>	<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p>
<p><i>15</i> 8a Buddhist Meditation 9:30a Adult RE 9:30a RE Committee 9:30a Seeking Circle 12:30p Meditation Class</p>	<p><i>16</i> 6p Buddhist Discussion 7p Movie Night</p>	<p><i>17</i> 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi</p>	<p><i>18</i> NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR DEADLINE 6p Children's Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Meditation 7p Board Meeting</p>	<p><i>19</i> 6p Buddhist Meditation 7p Private Event— NOW Meeting 7p Worship Committee</p>	<p><i>20</i> 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group</p>	<p><i>21</i> 8a- 12p Buddhist Silent Retreat</p>
<p><i>22</i> 8a Buddhist Meditation 9:30a Adult RE 10a Membership Comm. 10:15a Personnel Comm. 12:15p Music Committee 12:30p Meditation Class</p>	<p><i>23</i> 6p Buddhist Discussion 7p Full Moon Dance</p>	<p><i>24</i> 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi</p>	<p><i>25</i> 9:30a Newsletter Mailing 6p Children's Meditation 6:30p Meditation Class 7p Buddhist Meditation</p>	<p><i>26</i> 6p Buddhist Meditation</p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i> 10a Caring Committee 6:30p Dinners for Eight at Wells'</p>
<p><i>29</i> 8a Buddhist Meditation 9:30a Adult RE 12:30p Meditation Class</p>	<p><i>30</i> 6p Buddhist Discussion</p>	<p><i>31</i> 6p Meditation and Book Discussion 7p Tai Chi</p>				

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

Return Service Requested



See our website
at
Firstuu.net

Sunday Programs at First UU

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

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Upcoming Services:

August 1– Sheri Barnes
August 8– Reverend David Carter
August 15– TBA
August 22– Reverend David Carter
August 29– TBA

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.