



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita

Founded 1887

Special Congregational Meeting

On Sunday, September 22, a Special Congregational Meeting was called by David Brewer, Susan Hund-Milne, Jana Rambo, Marcia Ellsworth, Lara Pollock, Sigrid Trombley, Charles Merrifield, Debbie Wadman, Matt Mastrolly, Magda Garrett, Jack Regehr, Bonnie Till, Nancy Milner, And Lila Arnold in order to discuss Reverend Carter's contract. Reverend Carter had been offered a final contract by the Board at the end of August. The contract was returned with amendments made by the Committee on Ministry (CoM). The Board voted to not accept the contract as amended and proceeded to communicate with Nancy Heege of the Midwest Region of the UUA for next steps. At this point the Special Meeting was called.

The motion given and seconded was should the Congregation direct the Board to accept Reverend Carter's contract as amended by the CoM? Presenters of background information for the meeting included Charles Merrifield, Lara Pollock, David Brewer, and Jana Rambo reading a letter from Susan Hund-Milne. The Board was not included as a presenter on the agenda. After one hour of discussion, the Board was allowed 10 minutes to present. The vote was taken and the majority of Congregation members voted to direct the Board to accept Reverend Carter's contract as amended by the CoM.

-Helen Barnes, President

Covenant of Right Relations and Conflict Resolution Process Workshops

The final workshops for First UU are to develop a covenant of right relations and a procedure for resolving conflict in the congregation. The documents will be drafted by volunteers between the 2 sessions, and presented for revision, approval, and implementation plans at the final session.

Objectives for Session I – Oct 5, 10am to noon

- Share in a forgiveness ritual
- Practice empathy/speaking from another's point of view
- Develop content for draft of *covenant* (to be drafted between sessions)
- Review conflict resolution processes from other congregations
- Outline *conflict resolution process* for First UU (to be drafted between sessions)

Objectives for Session II - Oct. 26, 10am to noon

- Finalize *covenant*/ agree to draft or revised draft
- Develop a few steps for introducing covenant to congregation
- Develop charge for structural change task force to support covenant objectives through structural checks and balances.
- Finalize a *conflict resolution process* policy proposal
- Plan implementation within church structure/culture

Rev. Thea Nietfeld is coaching us at these workshops.

Treasurer's Report

	Budgeted	Actual	Net
Cash In	\$12,600.03	\$19,901	\$7,301
Cash Out	\$12,600.03	\$11,915	-\$685

Kim Talbot –

Interpretation: A large annual pledge was paid in full this month, thus inflating our income. We will just have to watch our cumulative net carefully over the next several months. This will be something the Board will be discussing monthly.

Treasurer's concerns: 1) No significant fundraisers have been

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The newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita is published monthly.

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The deadline for In Touch and for the monthly calendar is the third Wednesday of each month.

What's In Your Wallet? A Dillon's Gift Card? Use It, Please!

If you are one of the 30 some folks who used your Dillon's Card between June 16 and August 10, give yourself a huge "Thank You!" on behalf of the church's operating budget. The church received a total of \$771.10 because you swiped the card at Dillon's and at KwikShop. As Kim Talbot, treasurer, notes those 30 plus cards are out and working for the church.

Bonnie Till sells the card and advises that approximately 100 cards have been sold since the program began a couple of years ago. That means quite a few cards are NOT working for the church.

So look in your wallet, in your desk, your purse, wherever you keep "stuff," and get that unused Dillon's card out and put it to work for the church.

If you haven't bought a card yet, please do so, as the church gets a 5% return whenever you swipe the card. Painless, eh?

Helon King Memorial Service

Helon King's memorial service will be on October 17th. A light supper arranged by First UU's Caring committee will be held from 6-7, with the service and sharing of remembrances of Helon following. Helon attended First Sunday lunches with her son Charlie and our Thanksgiving feasts. She lent her talents as pianist for the Holiday Sing-a-Long prior to her lengthy illness.

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 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.

Member Profile, David & Hilda Holmes

The Holmes family found their way to First Wichita Unitarian Universalist Church by diverse means. When they moved to Andover, they dealt with a pressing spiritual problem. Veronika and Tara, now enrolled in 1st grade and pre-kindergarten, kept asking “why don’t we ever go to church” and “Who is Jesus?” The girls’ friends at school were all going to Sunday school. What David and Hilda wanted was to find a spiritual community of like-minded people, where the girls could learn about kindness, generosity, and essential values in a “neutral environment.” Churches in Andover being overwhelmingly Christian, they turned to the Internet. Hilda said they asked the question via Google: “How do you explain to kids if you’re an atheist”? Though both parents were raised Catholic, they have been skeptics from childhood.

David and Hilda met in Thule, Greenland, where both were posted; Hilda is now a pharmacy technician at McConnell Air Force Base while David retired from his financial management job to stay at home with the girls, at least until Tara enters 1st Grade. Their many postings included German, England, and most recently Alaska. Veronika was baptized a Catholic in Bury St. Edmonds, and Tara in Alaska for reasons of tradition. Hilda recalls the Christian sense of guilt and the instilled belief that there is only one authority. “We are human, and have biological needs that we shouldn’t repress. Why do we have to be ashamed of ourselves or our acts because an organization tells us to?” At a retreat in an Alaskan Catholic church, which provided no child care,



Pictured are David, Hilda, Veronika and Tara Holmes and our biographer Vivien Minshull-Ford.

Hilda was rebuked for breast feeding in public; she also found that she did not share the happiness and enthusiasm felt by others at the retreat. For Hilda, this was a turning point, though David continued to support her during her crisis of faith by attending mass. He confesses that he was only confirmed “because of a girlfriend.” He was always skeptical of “worshipping” an ambiguous entity and of the hypocrisy of many religions: “Yet I still felt that there was something missing or wrong with me because I couldn’t muster up the faith in Jesus that many other people around me had.” His turning point was much self-searching after reading Richard Dawkin’s book, “The God Delusion.”

As Hilda and David both felt “lonely, in spiritual terms, in Andover,” they pursued their quest on the Internet: the Andover branch of “Skeptics of Oz”, which meets once a month in a local pub was a good start. David found an impressive group of young free thinkers telling “wise” jokes, and discussing science and current events. Their website led them to First UU. David wondered why a skeptics group would advertise for a church, as neither he

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Member Profile (continued)

nor Hilda knew about Unitarian Universalism. David called First UU to “make sure that it wasn’t a hidden Christian church.” When the family attended, the first person they met was Reverend Carter: “I really liked his message.” The Holmes family had found what they had been looking for: “It was eye-opening to find people so friendly and welcoming.” Hilda likes the sense of community and the diversity of the congregation—and “no labels”. She wants to volunteer, bring new ideas to the church. “I will even mow lawns,” she said. David has already found time when he isn’t volunteering at the girls’ school to paint the kindergarten room at the church. If you haven’t met the family yet, you can’t miss them: they all have red hair. You will find them the most positive, outgoing, and thoroughly Unitarian. – by Vivien Minshull-Ford. *Look for a profile for*

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

Treasurer’s Report (continued)

planned. 2) We need to have the president and treasurer appeal to the UUA and Mid America Region for a re: a reduction in the pledged dues. This has been discussed at the Annual Meeting. 3) No new pledges received. This is a large part of our growth plan for our budget. Please see Helen Barnes or Anne Bailey if you would like to help in growing the membership of our church.

You will receive pledge statements late in October to update you on the status of your pledge payments. If you have any questions about the budget please email Kim at kltalbot17@gmail.com. Please allow a couple days for a response.

Eclectic Readers Choices

October 18: “The Surgeon: A Rizzoli & Isles Novel” by Tess Gerritsen reveals much of the backstory to the popular TV show. Many times our choices ask us to step out of our comfort zones. This novel about a serial killer may just do that.

November 17: “Dakota: A Spiritual Geography” by Kathleen Norris is nonfiction, a “contemplative book, a book of stories, a book of prayer,” which vividly illustrates the life lived in the small towns of the Midwest prairies.

Join us at 11:30 on the third Fridays for a brown-bag lunch and discussion.

Did you know?

Rev. James Reeb will be one of three honorees at The Kansas African American Museum’s annual Trailblazers Gala Saturday, October 19, at Corporate Caterers Venue, 2949 N. Rock Road. Reception is at 6 PM, Dinner and Program at 7 PM.

Rev. Reeb was born in Wichita in 1927. While marching for civil rights in Selma, Alabama, in 1965, he was beaten severely by white segregationists and died of head injuries two days later in the hospital. He was 38 years old. His death hastened the passage of the 1965 Civil Rights Act. His honor is the Posthumous Trailblazer, for “those who have walked the path before us and given us hope as we move into the future.”

The other 2013 Trailblazers are Veryl Switzer, Sports (K-State and Green Bay Packer Great), and NAACP Dockum Sit-In Youth Group, the Nation’s 1st Lunch Counter Sit-In (Civil Rights). Call 262-7651 for reservations or more information.

First UU periodically recognizes a local organization with the James Reeb Memorial Award, established by Minister Emerita Greta Crosby. The last Award was to Sunflower Community Action.

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Committee on Ministry Replaces Ministerial Relations Committee

The Committee on Ministry is tasked with the rather daunting job of looking after all the ways that the church ministers to its members and the community at large. It is not just what the Minister does, but all sorts of things that are done by the church and its members that can improve the lives of the community.

The Committee on Ministry has replaced the old Ministerial Relations Committee, and is a very important voice in focusing a congregation on its identity, mission and vision -- and on monitoring its ministry - the whole ministry of the congregation.

If it has to do with the spiritual life of the church then it is the job of the Committee on Ministry to be interested in it. If it is something for our Board of Trustees to deal with we will let you know.

Your First UU Committee on Ministry is: David Brewer, Chair, Marcia Ellsworth, Jana Rambo, Susan Hund-Milne, Rob Williams, and Lara Pollock.

Please feel free to ask any of us questions about the spiritual life of our church. We will take all such question and comments in a respectful and confidential way, and try to address any problems you have with the church.

Did you know? (continued)

Information about our congregation's award may be found on the Reeb Memorial Bookshelf

From the RE Corner:

Thank you again to everyone from the congregation who helped with our summer RE program. Your presence, patience, talents and gifts are much appreciated.

We have begun our new Fall curriculum and activities. Our theme of study this year is Peace and Social Justice. Our lessons will focus on topics like prejudice, tolerance, peace, getting along, building a Utopian Society, etc... When we meet for lessons twice a month, we divide the children up by grade levels: K-2; 3-5; and 6-8. We begin each month with Way Cool Sunday School. Other Sundays are typically celebrations and/or activities which focus on our 7 UU principles. There are also times we share an intergenerational service with the congregation. The high school students (YRUU) will meet two or three times a month with Ashley Roberts to discuss and participate in topics and activities of interest. We'd like to welcome Sherri Barnes to our RE team. She will be helping us out this year. If you didn't get a chance to register your child for our program on September 22, be sure and ask me for a form so we can have the information and get to know you better. Parents, be on the lookout for monthly e-mails from me (simontrio3@aol.com) letting you know what's going on in Religious Education for kids at UU. We hope to see all our children at church a lot. It is much more fun when they are there!

-Denise Jackson-Simon (DRE)

In Touch Editorial Team

Welcome to the first edition of In Touch put together by the newly formed team. We will do our best to provide members and friends of the congregation with information about UU matters, both at home and in the wider Unitarian Universalist Community. Please be patient with us as we layout the new format; and on occasion try something new and possibly silly.

Del Smith's primary responsibility is for content of the newsletter. Rolando Gomez' primary responsibility is putting together all those articles, bits and bobs of filler items and photos to fit into available space.

The Long Road

We are as various as the winds,
we play the gentlest breeze
conduct the rainstorm
we are the percussion of tornadoes
our eye in the center of cymbals

We carry various hungers in us
tarry along various roads, to war, to peace
we variously reject and variously accept
to this point where we come together

We, the various, cranks and criminals,
doers and don'ters, pagans and priests
many are the roads we travel
unvaryingly striving toward love

by Lila Arnold

Editor's Note: Lila wrote this poem some 50 years ago as a tribute to our church.

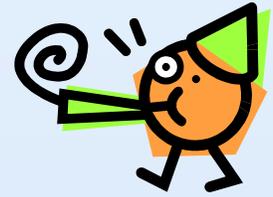
We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

Joys & Sorrows: A Shared Ministry

Each Sunday the Service Leader invites the congregation to share briefly events which move us to "joy or sorrow, hope or gratitude." Joys and Sorrows' sharing is meant to be of a personal nature. Although most of us at times are deeply affected by events in the news, or by a development in our favorite cause, sharing such emotions is generally not as meaningful to the rest of the congregation as are events in which we participate, and which take place in our day to day lives. It is through this kind of sharing that our connections with each other are strengthened and we are better able to minister to one another.

A musical interlude follows the sharing at the microphone so that those of us whose joy or sorrow is private may drop a stone into the chalice of water. As stated from the pulpit each Sunday, the ripple of the water as the stone is dropped reminds us that we are all interconnected and that what touches one of us affects us all.
– Dan DeMott, Chair of the Worship Committee

Hip, Hip, UUrah!



Give a hearty shout out to these First Church of Wichita Unitarian Universalist young folks:

Ash Roberts has started her pre-student teaching at Heights High School.

Zora Jenney, East High School, is a semi-finalist for a National Merit Scholarship, one of 31 in the area.

Christan Vitkus attended Midwest Leadership School via a scholarship from David Brewer.

Congratulations!

(Editors' Note: We can't possibly keep up with all the good things that are happening for our members in the wider community. Let us know. As space permits we'll share the good news.)