



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA
FOUNDED 1887

News from your Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees wishes to thank Kim Talbot for her service as Treasurer. Kim's dedication of her time and talent to the position of Treasurer brought a more businesslike approach to First UU's finances. Among the many things Kim did for us is more intentional tracking and accounting of funds. In addition, Kim gave us the gift of finding her own replacements so her departure would be seamless. Kim is stepping down as Treasurer at the end of December.

Treasurer's Report

Three people are taking over the duties of Treasurer: Anne Bailey (donations/accounts receivable), Marsha Diggs (payroll), and Anita Culp (bills/payables). In her final report, Kim stated that First UU's financial picture is solid although pledged income is lagging behind expenses. It is time for everyone to catch-up on her/his pledge. She reminded us again that \$6,000.00 of income is to come in via fundraising. The congregation needs to do some fundraisers asap! Also, she reminded us that increasing our membership (which includes pledges) is one of the keys to maintaining financial stability.

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Rev. Thea Nietfeld's Final Workshop

10am - Noon - Sat., Jan. 18
Make Attendance a Top Priority

"We will shape a process from what those attending need for a future with mutual trust. I hope and expect that the process can be transformational for individuals and the whole body. As always it is an honor to work with the leaders in the Wichita congregation." -- Thea Nietfeld

"Are you a participant or a spectator at First UU? If you are a participant, you will insist upon having a voice in revitalizing our beloved church. How can you have a voice? One way is by attending Rev. Thea Nietfeld's workshop designed to give us the tools for creating a covenant of mutual trust. Given the recent turmoil in our church, this covenant will be essential in helping us move forward in an atmosphere of love and respect." - President Bonnie Till

Need child care? Contact Magda Garrett (684-0520 / magdagarrett@gmail.com) by Wednesday,

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Treasurer's Report

-Kim Talbot

For the Month of November 2013

	Budgeted	Actual	Net
Cash In	\$12,600	\$7,083	-\$5,517
Cash Out	\$12,600	\$9,522	\$3,078

While the last 2 months saw a negative cash flow, this would be not unexpected due to the major transitions the church has undergone since the beginning of our fiscal year. There are some cash reserves and the cash flow will be sufficient for the next few months

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In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

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

Easiest Ever 1st Sunday Lunch! Casserole Potluck

Magda Garrett is making it easy for First UU cooks on January 5th. She's sending an "all-call for casseroles. That should help beat any post-holiday let down and/or over-indulgence in those comestibles or potables which are associated with the season.

Bring your favorite casserole with a copy of the recipe. Magda and friends will serve them up, along with dessert.

"Hunger For Justice" Theme Of UUA Regional Assembly In Topeka, April 11-13, 2014

Reproductive Justice is a UU study objectives for the next year. One of the workshops at the MidAmerica UUA Regional Assembly in Topeka will be led by Julie Burkhart. She is President of Trust Women, the foundation which successfully opened South Wind Women's Clinic at the site of Dr. George Tiller's practice. (As an aside, did you know that Julie's mother is LaRilla Combs of this congregation?)

Since the Regional Assembly is so close to us this year we could have a strong presence. Let Bonnie Till know if you are interested in attending.

Information about UUA's study/action issue Reproductive Justice is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the nursery.)

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: ...
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning; ...*

Pagan Group Programs - Kathy Hull

Full Moon Dances are multi-faith, feminist spirituality and earth-centered chants set to easy folk dance movements. All ages and abilities welcome so be prepared to join in the fun!

Seasonal Sabbats are family friendly gatherings for earth-centered celebrations of the turning of the year. Merry meet for seasonal ritual and potluck feasting!

News from your Board of Trustees

- continued

Social Action

Louis Goseland has 25 members of First UU fired up and ready to go on a social action project. The project is Food Distribution and Community Kitchen Partnership with St. Paul AME. Social action (alongside Membership development) is the other main key to making First UU a vibrant and financially viable church.

Church Computers

As you may recall from my December Board report as of April 2014 Microsoft will no longer support its Windows XP operating system. This means the system will be vulnerable to hackers and viruses. All of the church computers use Windows XP. We must replace the three main computers at First UU to insure security.

Jack Regehr has advised the Board to wait until January to purchase the new computers. He feels the January sales will insure the best price. If you have a computer to donate or wish to contribute funds toward this absolutely essential project, please contact Jack (648-2218) or Bonnie Till (722-8208).

Board Action

Motion: Beginning in January 2014 and for a six month trial period, the money collected the first Sunday of each month will be donated to Sunflower Community Action. Motion passed unanimously

We, your Board of Trustees, thank you for your commitment and dedication to our beloved First UU. The energy that is flying around the church with the new emphasis on social action and all the activities of the various committees is cause for celebration.

Bonnie Till, President

Welcome!

Anita Culp is the new office manager at the church. Anita has been attending First UU of Wichita since she moved to Bel Aire four years ago. Before that she attended the UU Church and the Mennonite Church in Pueblo, Colorado.

Anita moved to the Wichita area from Colorado when she retired from the federal government. After living in New Mexico and Colorado for many years she was ready to move back to be near family. Her parents and siblings live in nearby Hesston where she grew up.

When she first came to Wichita and was looking for a house, her realtor's office was in the building across the street from First UU. She didn't have to look for the church; it was right there in front of her. She took that as a good sign.

Anita has been active in the church volunteering with the front-door flowerbeds. Although she doesn't claim to have a green thumb, growing flowers, especially natives, has always been an interest. She has a prairie flowerbed at her house along with several more traditional flowerbeds.

Although the office manager position is a paid one, Anita also sees the job as an opportunity to serve the church and its members.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

while we continue to recover. Charles Merrifield, President Elect and Financial Committee Chair, has started an interim pledge drive.

I am resigning from the job of the treasurer, effective December 31, 2013. The Financial Committee, the Board, and I have delegated tasks of this position to people who have the background and skills to be good stewards of the church's finances. Anne Bailey will be overseeing donations and receivables. This includes the pledges and the upcoming annual pledge drive accounting work. Marsha Diggs will be overseeing payroll including paychecks and payroll and tax liabilities. Anita Culp, Office Manager, will be managing the bills and payables.

Please keep in mind that we will continue the search to find more people to help on this great and important committee. If you have ever had the desire to see if finances are your thing, please contact Charles.

Again, thank you for all the support and gratitude as I took this role on; it is a labor of love and because of you, it was not a thankless one!

Getting to Know Us: Jack Regehr by David Holmes

Jack Regehr is an integral part of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita. If you don't think you know Jack, odds are you know of him. He can be seen on Sundays filming the sermons or taking care of the church's IT support. He also manages our website and is involved in a myriad of other ways. The youngest of four children, Jack comes to us by way of Hesston, KS. If you wanted to peel the onion back a little further, he is a direct result of Mennonites that sought refuge from persecution in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation. Jack's ancestors settled in Kansas and built a strong Mennonite community that still thrives today. His transition to Unitarian Universalism came inconspicuously and because of what he considers common sense. In 2006, Jack attended an event concerning human rights at our former Fairmount location. His recollection is vague, but it was there that he first became aware of Unitarian Universalism. It only made sense

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

Caring For One Another

The Caring Committee would like to say "Thank You" to all the members and friends who helped the Caring Committee this year. You are greatly appreciated for so many things: making telephone calls, sending cards, making hospital and/or home visits, preparing and/or taking meals, assisting with receptions for memorial services, providing transportation to Church and Church activities.

Each of you proved it true that "as we care for one another we are cared for."

We invite anyone interested in the committee to join us. We meet on the last Saturday of the month at 10 AM. - LaRilla Combs and Jana Rambo



January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 9:45 Adult RE 11:00 Sunday Service 12:15 1st Sun Lunch	6 7:00 UU Craft Night	7 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita 7:00 Book Discussion	8 6:00 UU Craft Night	9 6:30 Game Night 7:00 NOW Meeting	10 11:30 Eclectic Readers Group	11 10:00 – 12:00 Thea Nietfeld Workshop 2:00 Private Event
12 9:45 Adult RE 11:00 Sunday Service 12:15 Leadership Council	13 6:30 Ethical Eating Potluck	14 6:00 UU Board (newsletter deadline)	15 6:00 UU Board (newsletter deadline)	16 7:00 Full Moon Dance	17 11:30 Eclectic Readers Group	18 10:00 – 12:00 Thea Nietfeld Workshop 2:00 Private Event
19 9:30 Seeking Circle 9:45 Adult RE 11:00 Sunday Service	20 9:30 am Newsletter Mailing 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	21 9:30 am Newsletter Mailing 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	22 9:30 am Newsletter Mailing 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	23 9:30 am Newsletter Mailing 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	24 9:30 am Newsletter Mailing 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	25 10:00 am Caring Committee
26 9:45 Adult RE 11:00 Sunday Service 12:15 Music Committee Board Information Mtg	27 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	28 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	29 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	30 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	31 6:00 Zen Friends of Wichita	

Every Week at First UU

Adult Religious Exploration, Sunday, 9:45 am – Corey Swertfager, 201-6921

Social Justice Task Force, Sunday, 12:15 pm – Louis Goseland, 204-9972

(exception: when there is other church business, i.e, congregational meetings)

Zen Friends of Wichita, Wednesday, 6:00 pm – Bob Feleppa, 683-9295

Every Month at First UU

Board Meeting – third Wednesday, 7 pm – Bonnie Till, 722-8208

Book Discussion – second Wednesday, 7 pm - Anne Bailey, 943-3861

Caring Committee – fourth Saturday, 10 am – LaRilla Combs, 733-2089

Craft Night – first Tuesday, 7 pm – 440-3097, Amy Geyer

Dinners for Eight – dates vary, Marcia Ellsworth, 688-5352, Sigrid Trombley, 683-7075

Eclectic Readers – third Friday, 11:30 AM, Del Smith, 612-0826

Game Night – second Thursday, 6:30 PM, Joie Vitkus, 613-2527

Meatless Monday (Ethical Eating) – second Monday, 6:30 PM, Dianne Waltner, 946-1115

Music Committee, fourth Sunday after church

Newsletter Deadline – third Wednesday, evening – Del Smith, 612-0826

Newsletter Folding – fourth Wednesday, 9:30 AM – Del Smith, 612-0826

Pagan Group – Seasonal ritual and potluck feasting – Kathy Hull, 204-9956, Anne Bailey 943-3861

As announced

Garden Group – Anita Culp, 744-2840

Who's Who @ First UUOfficers & Board Of Trustees

President – Bonnie Till

President-Elect – Charles Merrifield

Board of Trustees

Anne Bailey

Elaine Edens

Jamey Findling

Magda Garrett

DeeDee Jordan

Nancy Milner

Vivien Minshull-Ford

Treasurer – Kim Talbot

Committee Chairpersons

Adult RE - Corey Swertfager

Buildings/Grounds - Tom Moore

Caring - Jana Rambo and LaRilla Combs

Children's RE – Wendy Haynie-Coxby

Communications - Del Smith

Denominational Affairs - Mike Diggs

Finance/Financial Commitment

- Charles Merrifield

Kitchen Mavens - (vacant)

Membership - Anne Bailey

Music - David Brewer

Partner Church - Betty Hensley and

Debbie Wadman

Personnel – Janet Roberts and

Magda Garrett

Social Action - Louis Goseland

Worship - Marsha Diggs

Committee On Ministry

David Brewer, Chair

Marcia Ellsworth

Kathy Hull

Susan Hund-Milne

Lara Pollock

Jana Rambo

Rev. Carter's office hours: Wednesday 11 am to 2 pm and by appointment.

Keep "In Touch" with First UU between newsletters: Weekly Up Dates (contact Anita Culp, Office manager); ListServ (contact Charles Merrifield); Website www.firstuu.net has links to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+ and best of all, attend Sunday Services, 11 am.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION: Spirituality, History, Theology Plus Respect & Fellowship

-Marque Payne

Unitarian Universalist Religious Exploration programs in general focus on comprehensive explorations of spirituality, history, and theology. Sessions I have attended have been initiated by a group book reading, a short film presentation, or by playing a segment of an audio lecture to stimulate ideas on the subject. This is followed by a discussion on the topic. Topics generally alternate between spiritual or religious based themes and more secular matters. Inclusion of secular matters in a religious exploration program may surprise you but we find it appropriate in a community that embraces social activism as a valued form of religious expression.

The current topic is a study of the Anglo-American conservative tradition. The next topic will be chosen by attendees. Suggestions include a course exploring religious life in America from the first European contacts to the late twentieth century. Another suggestion is a course on the New Testament which is undoubtedly the single most influential book in the history of Western civilization, whether seen as a religious book of faith or as a cultural artifact.

My personal experience is that the discussions are very enlightening but that the surprising major benefit has been the interaction with the participants, the exchange of diverse ideas, the respect shown for contrasting points of view, and the unlikely friendly relationships that develop. I think of our group as a true manifestation of the UU tradition of inclusiveness and respect.

I look forward to attending and participating each week and would love to have you join us at 9:45 AM on Sunday mornings.

The following is from Debra Clements, who has been a participant in Adult R.E for six years. Debra says she comes because of the topics and the people. "We choose topics, sometimes spiritual and sometimes secular, that typically are not covered in Sunday services but that we think will be interesting and expand our perspectives. I feel a comfortableness in the small group because I've come to have a relationship with the participants and I feel that I can safely express and explore provocative ideas."

*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; ...*

Rev. Thea Nietfeld's Final Workshop (continued)

For much of the last fiscal year, as your minister I reached out to a number of seasoned UU leaders—locally, regionally, and nationally—seeking the best means to preserve what we have at First UU and acquire what we lack. And in the process I came to know and appreciate Rev. Thea Nietfeld.

Our UU Principles and Sources have an ultimate purpose. What's that? It's simple, really. Both as individuals and as a church, we UUs intend to live in the world as agents of Love. 'Course, what's simple to wish for is not especially easy to manifest, is it?

Please, on Saturday, January 18th, join us. - Yours in the faith we share and in Love, Rev. David Carter

Coming Soon To Our Website "Our Chosen Faith" Blog

Beginning in January, First UU's website will launch a blog, titled "Our Chosen Faith." The exact date and name of the "First Blogger" will be announced in Up Dates, Orders of Service, Facebook and ListServs.

Forrest Church and John Buehrens wrote: "Unitarian Universalists are neither a chosen people nor a people whose choices are made for them by theological authorities--ancient or otherwise. We are a people who choose. Ours is a faith whose authority is grounded in contemporary experience, not ancient revelation.... When it came time for us to affiliate with a religious institution we sought one that fit our own thinking, not one that imposed its thinking on us. This is even true for individuals born into Unitarian Universalist families." ("A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism," Beacon Press, 1989, 1998).

"Blogger of the week" may be the minister or a church leader, a new member or someone who has been a member "forever." They will share spiritual journeys and hopes and dreams for our church. The blog may be interesting, may be inspiring, may provoke or intrigue. We hope you will never find it boring.

- Jack Regehr, Webmaster, and Del Smith, Communications Chair

New Year's Eve

The snow is falling silently,
No wind, no other sounds,
The leaves are gone, birds and squirrels
Are nestled down....
The year is ending peacefully
As if it too desperately hunts
For rest from the chaos
Of the last twelve months –
The floods, earthquakes, hurricanes,
Tantrums on a geologic scale –
Making human antics pale.

Did I hear the earth sigh
As the flakes caressed her breast
Bringing beauty, peace and rest?

May the new year be so blessed!
- Jean Vaughn

HIP, HIP, UURAH!



Celebrating life through the arts is deeply woven into the fabric of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita. Selecting just a few creative members to give our monthly shout-out was a dilemma, but we think you'll agree that these four are worthy of our Hip, Hip, hUURah!

Writing and Music intersect in the creative lives of *Anne Welsbacher* and *Betty Hensley*.

Anne is a freelance writer and playwright and currently has a theatre column for the alternative newspaper f5. Betty Hensley teaches flute and takes most joy in expanding the concept of flute to include the world's many kinds of flutes. Anne is publications director for the National Flute Association. One of her editor's letters was "devoted to the remarkable collection of world flutes owned and curated by our longtime member Betty Hensley, who is also an active member of the NFA."

A talented couple, *Jenny Bowen* and *Doug Clayton*, recently joined the church. Jenny is church musician. Doug custom designs and builds tree houses. We will miss Jenny, Doug and their daughter Ilana, for the next few months, as Doug is commissioned to build a \$100,000 tree house featuring a 200 foot zipline and a rock climbing wall in South Carolina. They will return in March. Do not despair, Doug designs and builds tree houses at a much lower cost!

A Commitment From A Member, A Question For The Rest Of Us

As we approach the end of the calendar year, it is a time to consider one of Michael Durall's primary strategies for church growth. You may recall that he listed 5 strategies:

1. Attending Sunday services regularly,
2. Participating in one program each year that deepens your faith,
3. Participating in one outreach or mission project each year,
4. Telling others about the church, and
5. Reaching the 5 to 10 percent giving level as soon as possible.

The one to consider at this time of year is the last one: reaching the 5 to 10 percent giving level. Michael Durall takes this strategy very seriously. He even returned 10% of his fee that we paid him as an example of giving 10% to the church.

On a personal level, I admit that I have not given to the church at his level. But, I can increase the amount that I give the church and work towards his goal. So, before the end of the year when half the fiscal year is over, I am going to do some catch up towards Michael's goal. I'm going to give the church an additional donation to bring me closer to the goal.

If you are in the same position, maybe you can, too. Wouldn't that be a nice Christmas gift for the church?

- Charles Merrifield

"Faith is a commitment to live as if certain things are true, and thereby help to make them so. Faith is a commitment to live as if life is a wondrous mystery, as if life is good, as if love is divine, as if we are responsible for the well-being of those around us.... Faith is a leap of the moral imagination that connects the world as it is to the world as it might become." - Galen Guengrich

Getting to Know Us (continued)

to him that if there is a God responsible for creating the world we live in, than God must bigger than any one religion, denomination or sect. UU's pantheistic views and social awareness attracted Jack, and he became a member in 2009.

Jack has had an interesting life and quite extensive background. He's earned not one -- not two -- but three bachelor's degrees in Human Services, International Development and Spanish. To complement his varied educational background, he's also received A.A.s in liberal arts and computer information technology. He worked as a volunteer for Mennonite Central Committee in Brazil for three years assisting with a project that helped get poor people into homes of their own. Shortly after starting to attend First UU, he was intrigued by a story Judy Naillon told during a sermon and approached her with a question about it ... they married in 2009 and have a beautiful daughter together, Niecy. Jack is currently a Customer Experience Data Analyst for Cox and is considering transitioning to a career in web hosting. Aside from spending time with his family and being active in the church, Jack's hobby is macro photography, an area he's interested in because the subjects are not easily recognizable and he finds beauty in the details of life.

One thing you may not guess about Jack is that he used to go sky diving. During his college days, he sought out this thrilling adventure and jumped eight times. Asked if he'd do it again, he said, "No way!"

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7202 E. 21st St. N.

Wichita, KS 67206

www.firstuu.net



We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: The inherent worth and dignity of every person: ...

From Our Book Reading Groups

ECLECTIC READERS: Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize in October, 2013, only the 13th woman out of 106 recipients. “Too Much Happiness,” published in 2009, takes on some sensational subjects: violence, adultery, extreme cruelty, duplicity, theft, suicide, murder. The 10 short stories are all set in Munro’s native Canada. We meet at 11:30 on January 17, for a brown-bag lunch and lively discussion. All are welcome. Del Smith, 612-0826.

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION: We will use Recommended Reading from Michael Durall’s “The Almost Church Revitalized.” At 7 pm on Wednesday, January 8th, we’ll tackle “Elmer Gantry” by Sinclair Lewis, the story of a rather unsavory character who begins as a narcissistic college athlete, leaves the legal profession and eventually becomes a Methodist minister. During his career Gantry contributes to the downfall, physical injury and even death of key people around him. Lewis’ research in the Kansas City area included ministers, one a Unitarian.

All are welcome to join whether you have read the book or just remember the movie. (For those who like to plan ahead: February “Dakota,” March “The Rapture of Canaan,” and April “Christianity for the Rest of Us.”) Anne Bailey, 943-3861.

CornUUCopia; AN On-Going Success

Members have really bought into supporting the Food Bank through CornUUCopia. Some 312 items of non-perishable food (plus \$30.00) have been donated. To emphasize that this is not just for the holiday season Mary Erickson, a talented artist, contributed her beautiful painting “CornUUCopia,” now hanging by the collection point in the Gathering Space. Mary, along with Marcia Ellsworth, Jana Rambo and Vivien Minshull-Ford, takes her turn delivering our contributions to the Food Bank.