



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

President's Report

-Charles Merrifield

Our church runs on a fiscal year and officer term year from July 1 - June 30. Hence, with July we are off and running on a new year. Bonnie Till successfully led the church through the bulk of last year. I hope I can maintain the energy that she instilled in the church.

Part of the success came from the visit by the church consultant Michael Durall in October. He has a new book out that we will use for a common read among the congregation in September and October. The book is titled, "Making the Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete." The board would like for everyone to read the book so we can consider incorporating his ideas into our practices. I have arranged a reduced price through a bulk purchase for congregants to buy the book for \$12.50. The book is short, less than 100 pages, but it takes time to analyze the ideas. The book is available, also, through Kindle.

One project that originated from Michael Durall's visit is the goal of having a church sign on 21st street. Durall suggested that a sign is essential in capturing the public's attention. This necessary project will be expensive so we are examining ways to pay for it. We will hold a special congregational meeting on September 7 to approve the expenditure of funds for a sign. Talk to Bonnie Till if you have any questions about the project.

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Unitarian Universalist Association: General Assembly 2014

-Mike Diggs

This year's General Assembly of the UUA was held in Providence, Rhode Island June 25th through the 29th, with 4500 attendees.

Delegates approved "Escalating Inequality" as the Social Consciousness Action Item to be studied over the next four years. Congregations will be given the chance to contribute as they see fit. Since this is a subject I have spoken on from our pulpit, I expect to be pushing this action item often.

Three Actions of Immediate Witness were approved as well. Support was given to the "Pray for Relief" Faith Summit on Stopping Deportations. This summit will be held July 31st through August 2nd in Washington, DC. "Affirming Congregational Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention", and UUA support for "Uganda New Underground Railroad" to safely extract LGBTQ People from prosecution in Uganda were also approved.

Eighty UUs volunteered to rappel 110 feet down the side of the Rhode Island Convention Center in the "Brave Souls" fundraiser. Those making the descent included UUA Moderator Jim Key and President Peter Morales. Brave Souls was organized to raise money for the Rev. Terry Sweetser Fund for Stewardship, in honor of Sweetser, who is retiring after 20 years as the UUA's Vice President for Stewardship & Development. \$500,000 was raised in the event.

One major result of the plenary sessions was an overwhelming vote to divest all UUA

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Covenant of Healthy Relations

-Rolando Gomez

Hopefully you will see some printed copies on our new covenant around the church soon. I'll try and place a reminder in the newsletters. We are in the strange calm of having recently adopting a covenant and learning what the heck it means, and what exactly have we promised to each other. So if you feel a bit odd, you are in good company.

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.

Unitarian Universalist Association: General Assembly 2014-continued

investments in fossil fuel companies as a way to fight Climate Change. Just over one week later, the World Council of Churches voted to do the same. The WCC represents over a half-billion Christians, including the Church of England. UUs are in the forefront in working for environmental reform!

For further information see the GA Blog at <http://blogs.uuworld.org/ga/>. Video of the Worship Services, Plenary Sessions, and the Ware Lecture can be found online at www.uua.org/ga.

As members of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita, we value our liberal diverse community and endeavor to work together for the good of the whole. Realizing that our different experiences and ideologies may lead to misunderstanding or disagreement, we promise to strive to support each other in our personal and community growth by entering into [a] covenant of healthy relations.

Meet Jim Hammer

-Marque Payne

I was delighted to receive the assignment of interviewing Jim Hammer for a First UU Member Bio. I am not alone in finding him very interesting and colorful. I have also personally experienced his kindness.

At an early age Jim lost interest in the religion of his youth. He cites the negatives. No dancing, no card playing, no fun. The explanation of the universe and our place in it he found there was unsatisfactory. Still, he must have felt a spiritual curiosity for, as an avid reader, he found an affinity with Taoist and Buddhist works. From friends he heard of a church where many members aspired to knowledge and practices of a similar nature. In 1989 he came to First UU. Along with the practice of Zen sitting with Southwind Sangha in the 90's, he found a good measure of what he sought.

Jim gets paid to do engineering, but outside of work he is deeply involved in art, broadly defined, and dance. His unique art projects include rayguns, rickshaws, and lasers he has built. He is currently studying drawing and painting and is in the process of starting a Contact Improv dance group in Wichita. He has attended the main Burning Man event and some regionals for years. He helped organize our own Burning Man inspired event near Wichita. I have experienced his photographs of Burning Man on the internet. There is a singular allure to these photos and in their perspective that I find simply jaw-dropping. Currently First UU enjoys Jim's services as curator of the art exhibits.

Jim has a spouse of 32 years, a stepdaughter and two grandchildren who are alternately fascinated and bemused by his hobbies.

I asked him to tell me one thing no one would expect about him. He replied that most people have come to expect weird things of him. What he came up with was that one of his friends was shocked to learn that he had never taken hallucinogens. I had to laugh!

Spotlight On The Garden Group

-Del Smith

The "Garden Group": not a committee, not a task force, not an elected entity. But this loosely organized group certainly establishes an attractive and inviting First Impression of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita.

The group is focused on the front entrance flowerbeds. Anita Culp, who has been the point person and guiding force for several years, said she "got tired of seeing all the weeds in the garden beds" and eventually formed a planning committee to plant the beds. In the spring of 2012 serious efforts began to implement a design which would capture the spirit of the church, as well as look good with the building. "We didn't want a formal garden because our members aren't a formal bunch. We decided on perennial plants and flowers that would be drought tolerant and perhaps native. We wanted a variety of plants which would create flow lines of varying heights to create a sense of openness and guiding people to the entrance."



Plants were donated by congregants from their yards and money was donated to purchase some nursery plants. The front entrance beds have been successful because when the church was built good soil was deliberately put into the front entrance beds. "What wonderful foresight!" Anita exclaimed. "On the other sides of the church this is not the case and the soil is incredibly hard with a lot of construction debris."

Many of the shrubs originally planted around the parking lot did not survive the two years of drought, despite hand watering efforts. Anita notes that a few more years of normal rainfall might have gotten them established to weather the drought. "It would be nice to replant the shrubs, but without an automatic irrigation system it's probably not realistic. I have replaced some of the shrubs with perennial flowers. It's an experiment."

The biggest obstacle the Garden Group has faced is finding plants that fit the vision of the original plan. Tall plants and 2-foot-tall plants are available, but there are very few 1-foot tall plants. Anita asks that anyone who has 1-foot-tall plants come talk to her.

The greatest reward for the Garden Group is knowing that people appreciate the flowers. That gives the impetus to go out and weed on a hot day when they'd rather stay inside where it's cool. "For me, weeding is a 'bringing order to chaos' kind of thing. There is also the reward of seeing the results, seeing the beauty of nature as even in winter the dormant plants have a beauty."

There is a relationship to the 7th principle for many of the Group. Anita's response is typical: "I love that the flower gardens are not a sterile bunch of flowers. I delight in seeing the insects that visit the blooms. Some of the native plants can be just covered in bees and flies buzzing about the flowers. I'm always on the lookout for monarch butterfly caterpillars on the butterfly milkweed."

Some folks believe in "stopping and smelling the roses." At First UU we believe in "stopping and enjoying the flower beds, and murmuring a heartfelt Thank You to the Garden Group."

*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; ...*

WHAT A MUDDLE!!

A gaggle of geese, a murder of crows,
 And fishes form schools as everyone knows.
 Sheep form packs or flocks or hurtles,
 But a bale or dole refers to turtles.
 Crocodiles make a bask and chickens a peep.
 Cockroaches are an intrusion, leopards are a leap.
 Porcupines are a prickle which is easy to see.
 Buffaloes can be stubborn and are an obstinacy.

Troups are apes, kangaroos or baboons;
 Pelicans are pods; don't know about loons.
 There are animals called droves, herds and coveys.
 Others form packs, beds, knots and bebies.
 Dogs and seals have young ones called pups.
 Does anyone know? Do guppies have gups?
 Mice are a mischief; storks are a mustering.
 Cats are a clowder or a pounce when they are clustering.
 Goldfish are a troubling and giraffes are a tower.

Owls form parliaments and confer by the hour.
 Hawks are a boil, a cast or a kettle.
 Goats are a trip and love to meddle.
 Butterflies are a flutter; flamingoes, a flamboyance;
 Gnats are a horde, but to me they're an annoyance.

With Google to help me, I could add more terms,
 But I have opened quite enough of a can of worms!!!

- Jean Vaughn

Ecofest 2014 Update

Our green living festival on 11th October is burgeoning! It will be a family event with plenty of fun activities for children, including a group sculpture project. We now have seven educational booths, including Sierra Club and Kay Drennan from Water Conservation. Kathy Hull is working on the final version of the Vegan Cookbook, and Natural Grocers has donated 200 shopping bags. First UU members will sell repurposed and upcycled clothing. Susan Hund-Milne needs antiques, jewelry, and collectibles. Proceeds will go to the church. If you can help by donating items, please contact Susan Hund-Milne, 832-1599; for clothing, Deborah Burnham, 519-5878. We also need used books of all kinds for the book sale.

We will be distributing flyers to the subdivision around the church, thanks to Del Smith, who has compiled a list of free or inexpensive publicity sources and is also planning a Publicity Postcard Party for members to send to non-UU friends and relatives. The quest for vendors and sponsors is ongoing, but we are now focusing on raffles and door prizes which we would like to be environmentally friendly, as well as items like terrariums or coffee table books on green topics. Our wish list, some of which may be donated, include a bicycle, a non-power mower, a rain

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Calling All Children

Please join us on Sundays at 11:00 for a variety of fun lessons led by congregation members.

We miss seeing you!

Remember, it is much more fun when you are here.

From The Caring Committee

Remember that old saying "Let George Do It"? Well, we've got our own version when it comes to kitchen duty: We seem to "Let Anne Do It." Only a few folks are needed. Are you willing to stay an extra 20 or 30 minutes after fellowship time to do kitchen duty? Would you commit to one Sunday a month? See Jana, please! We would like to have people sign up in advance so we can be sure this job will be covered. (And good news: First Sunday Lunch clean-up is already covered.)

A private memorial service for Hermine Greywall was held at the church Saturday, July 12, with Rev. Carter as officiant. She died in Texas in January. Hermine and Mahesh moved to Texas to be near family several years ago. She curated the art exhibits at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita for many years. The children and families live within a few blocks of each other, conveniently located near the assisted living facility where Mahesh lives. Friends who wish to send condolences may write to: Greywall Family, c/o 7600 Harbor Town Dr., McKinney, TX 75070.



August 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop 6:00p Lughnasadh
3 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	4 6:00p Zen Friends	5 10:00a EcoFest Event Promotion Meeting 7:00p UU Craft Night	6 7:00p Committee on Ministry	7	8	9 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop 7:00p Full Moon Dance
10 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	11 6:00p Zen Friends 6:30p Ethical Eating Vegan Potluck	12 7:00p EcoFest Food Committee	13 7:00p Book Discussion 7:00p Worship Committee	14	15 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	16 11:00a Private Event 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop
17 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	18 6:00p Zen Friends	19	20 7:00p Board Meeting 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	21	22	23 10:00a Caring Committee 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop
24 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	25 6:00p Zen Friends	26 6:30p Dismantling Injustice Action Group	27 2:00p Newsletter Mailing	28	29	30
31 No Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE						

Who's Who @ First UU: 2014-15

OFFICERS & BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President – Charles Merrifield

President-Elect – Vivien Minshull-Ford

Board of Trustees

Mike Diggs

Elaine Edens

Jamey Findling

Magda Garrett

DeeDee Jordan

Nancy Milner

Cristan Vitkus

Co-Treasurers – Anne Bailey & Marsha Diggs

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Adult RE - Corey Swertfager

Buildings/Grounds - Tom Moore

Caring - Jana Rambo and LaRilla Combs

Children's RE – Wendy Haynie-Cosby

Communications - Del Smith

Denominational Affairs - Mike Diggs

Finance:

Financial Commitment- Charles Merrifield

(Stewardship – Elaine Edens)

Kitchen Mavens – Magda Garrett

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

Lara Pollock

Note: The board will name two COM members to replace Susan Hund-Milne and Jana Rambo, who rotated off the committee in July.

Every Week at First UU

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

Chalice Bookstore – Marque Payne, 941-8385

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, Monday, 6:00 pm – Bob Feleppa, 683-9295

Every Month at First UU

Board Meeting – third Wednesday, 7 pm – Charles Merrifield, 688-5352

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 – Anita Culp, 744-2840

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

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

First Sunday Lunch – Magda Garrett, 765-3352

Leadership Council – second Sunday, 12:15, Vivien Minshull-Ford, 683-9295

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, 2:00 PM – 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

Minister's Musings

-Rev. David Carter

Love's Servants

At church Sunday, July 6, Jennifer Winn delivered an appeal to us from her heart. She encouraged her listeners to demand that transparency be restored to government in Kansas and beyond. With facts and figures, she detailed a train of abuses that brutally deny many thousands their basic human rights, flagrantly obstruct justice, and make a mockery of America's ideals and democratic values. When she concluded, she received a standing ovation.

What else is new? In keeping with UU tradition, First UU Church has always welcomed voices of dissent that call for enlightened opposition to injustices. In times past and today, we have been and are active agents of love. So I am happy and deeply gratified because we choose to be a safe haven for progressive thought, a sanctuary for enlightenment, and a gathering place where engaged religious activism for a better world can fructify. But there is yet a deeper happiness and gratification that I feel. Let me explain.

After a yearlong interlude of congregational soul-searching, seeking ways to transform the conflict which had hampered healthy communication for too long, we developed a Covenant of Healthy Relations. (The Covenant was adopted by the congregation and you'll be hearing more about it as we go forward). Significantly we also elected to reassert our core identity as a public church. It was a consequential decision, and since then we have been busy:

- Donating our first plate each month to Sunflower Community Action.
- Hosting an informal forum on the fourth Tuesday of each month, inviting local clergy and their congregants to join us to abolish the social blight of mass incarceration.
- Participating with other faith communities in a community garden.
- Actively supporting food justice initiatives.
- (Members have been) volunteering at Kansas Peoples Action to protect democracy from internal subversion by unscrupulous parties in business and government.

These and other ongoing commitments are cause for great happiness because they signal our renewed dedication to countering abuse and unnecessary suffering. But there is yet an even greater happiness which I feel. What is that? I am most happy because, as a religious community, we are consciously connecting the dots between our church's financial health and its ability to initiate, develop, and sustain our mission for social justice in the world. This is my greatest happiness. I want to elaborate:

As a church, we exist to serve. Spiritually, our church home is like the celebrated cathedral over whose entranceway is a sign that proclaims, "Servant's Entrance". Yes, as Love's agents we are servants – servants of truth and beauty, servants of justice. Because we uphold the worth and dignity of all, we stand on the side of love and compassion in social interaction, democracy, and freedom for all.

Right now, First UU of Wichita is gearing up for a common read of a new book by Michael Durall and Timothy Dombek entitled "Making the Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete." And we aim to do just that!

Also, in Lawrence this fall, we will gather and participate in a regional financial workshop with other UU congregations from the Midwest.

We are done with a narrative of financial debility, with hovering on the border betwixt the red and the black; done with perpetuating a situation of financial inability that hinders us from powerfully manifesting our progressive religious values and mission. The world is too dangerously afflicted for us to be lukewarm in our spiritual resolve and commitment to love.

Therefore, we have embarked on a journey of becoming financially stronger and stronger. Our intention is clear, because our vision is clear: PROGRESSIVE VALUES CAN'T WAIT! We want marriage equality, gender equality, racial justice, economic justice, transparency in government, excellence in public education, and voter rights justice – now. Social justice is as urgent a need today as it was in the 19th and 20th centuries. For those who are being abused and brutalized today, it is more urgent than ever in the past.

So, my greatest happiness is that not only are we hearing humanity's

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President's Report - continued

Another of Durall's ideas is what he calls being a public church: a church that is involved with the larger community in working on human issues. Our church has a considerable history of social action so this idea is a natural for us. We have become involved with the Kansas Food Bank, Sunflower Community Action, a community garden, and several other projects. I anticipate becoming more involved in community action, and continuing and expanding the church's social action history.

On another matter, you may recall that in June we had church service that focused on the committee structure of the church and on how everyone can be involved. About 15 people volunteered to serve on several important committees. Nevertheless, there are a few committees that need more members. Specifically, the Building Committee and the Grounds Committee need more help. Are you good with home maintenance? Do you like to fix things around the house? Do you like to work outside?

Various fundraising projects are in the works. Ecofest, a one-day family-friendly environmental festival, is being planned for the church and community for October 11. Two art sales are being planned. The family of Hermine Greywall has donated several of her paintings to the church to sell for the church's benefit. Hermine was a dedicated church member for many years, and I am thankful for her family's generosity. Speaking of generosity for which I am thankful, Mary Erickson, a current active member, would like to donate several of her paintings to the church and Trees for Life.

Kent Rowe has received board approval to install a wind generator on the church building. Kent will donate the generator to the church. He has incremental plans that would allow the building to use solar and wind energy. We will begin with a wind generator and progress onto using more wind and solar sources as we determine the viability of each part. Finding the financial resources will be a crucial aspect of each part.

Please contact me if you would like to participate in any of these projects.

Charles Merrifield, 688-5352, cmerrifield@cox.net

Ecofest 2014 Update -- continued

barrel, a solar battery charger, a thermal imager gun (for gauging temperatures from a distance), a composter, a bird house, a solar cooker, a water conserving shower head, a smart remote thermostat, or LED light bulbs (thanks to Kent Rowe for his suggestions). If you know a business which might donate any of these items – or would like to donate one yourself (several items listed cost \$15 – 20)--or donate money for our raffle fund, please contact Marcia Ellsworth, 688-5352, or Vivien Minshull-Ford, 683-9295. We are also looking for volunteers for the antiques and collectibles, raffle wrangling, and children's eco-crafts.

Invite a Friend to Church

If you've been thinking about inviting a friend to church, the first Sunday in August would be ideal. Rev. Carter will be in the pulpit ("Indian and Unitarianism: Encounter and Response"). Sheri Barnes, our Biking Across Kansas heroine, will be leading the special activity for the kids.

And a BONUS! First time visitors are our guests at First Sunday Lunch. Magda Garrett and Friends make sure there's something delicious to eat while enjoying fellowship.

Mark your calendars: *August 3rd, Invite a friend to church!*

Dillon's Gift Cards Available

The church now has Dillon's Gift Cards available for purchase at \$5.00. After purchasing the card, load it at the store for whatever amount you choose and use it at Dillon's for groceries, gift cards for other stores and gasoline. The church benefits by 4% on every purchase made using the Gift Card. Painless giving! HINT: If you don't get to church to buy a gift card, just send a \$5.00 check to Anita Culp, Office Manager, and she'll mail the card. Write "Dillon's" on the memo line.

August Worship Schedule

8/3 Rev. Carter: *"India and Unitarianism: Encounter and Response"*

In the nineteenth century, Unitarians met with important intellectual and spiritual leaders of India, leading to a cultural, spiritual renaissance that cut both ways. Important progressive thinkers among the most influential movers and shakers of nineteenth century India embraced modernity and were transformed through their contact with Unitarians. Simultaneously, Unitarian and other religious leaders and intellectuals from the west, most notably the American Transcendentalists, were profoundly impressed and transformed by Indic theological/philosophical teachings which they encountered in India's Bhagavad Gita and other religious texts.

8/10 Rev. Carter: *"The Unitheist Mission of Charles Dall in India"*

Early in his ministry, Charles Dall's Unitarian vocation aimed at transforming the afflicted lives of the economically disadvantaged in America through education. However, he is most well remembered today for his decades of pioneering "missionary" work in India. He termed his mission "Unitheist," honoring what he held to be his greatest gift to Indian spiritual thought. Historical retrospect may, instead, view his mission as instrumental in helping foster India's entry into modern spiritual discourse.

8/17 Debbie Wadman and Nancy Ross-Milner: *"Our Partner Church"*

Our congregation was among the first to have partner churches in Transylvania. Our partner church is both a social mission for our church and a connection to our Unitarian roots. Debbie and Nancy recently visited and have news and well-wishes to share.

8/24 TBA Rev. Carter has invited a guest speaker and we are awaiting confirmation.

8/31 Julie Burkhart of Trust Women:

The mission of Trust Women is a shared vision of an America where women could, without burden, control their reproductive lives, have healthy pregnancies, and deliver safely. For many women here in the United States, these basic rights are out of reach. That's why Trust Women plans to expand abortion care and maternal health care to tens of thousands of women by opening more clinics.

9/7 *Homecoming/Water Ceremony with Dedication of Board & Congregation*

A water ceremony is a long-standing tradition of UU churches all across the country. Water--actual or symbolic, from near or far--is mingled together as members of the congregation share significant events of the summer in "homecoming." In Wichita this tradition includes watering our Partner Church Tree with the ceremonial water after the service.

Minister's Mussings - Continued

impassioned cry for peace, love and justice-- we choose to respond with dedicated action for social justice. And particularly, I am thrilled that we are beginning to understand the connection between our financial health as a church, and our ability to carry out love's mandates.

Please join in our church wide common read, "Making the Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete." Contact Charles Merrifield to buy copies at a discounted rate. And, come fall, journey with us to Lawrence (or otherwise support the enterprise) to workshop with our UU colleagues from around the region. There is great and good work to be done.

"Protestantism desperately needs to reclaim its rightful heritage of breaking the bonds of ignorance and prejudice, talking firm stands against injustice, and creating a church that is an unmistakable force for good in the world. None of this will happen if the church is a comfortable, convenient, inexpensive (or free!) stopover for middle class members, many of whom are the most privileged people this planet has ever known. Was the life of Jesus about comfort and convenience? We think not." Page 16, "Making The Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete".

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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From Our Book Reading Groups - And Now We Are Three

Wednesday Evening Book Club:

7 pm, August 13th- John Esposito's book "What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam" will be discussed. The group selects from the list suggested by Michael Durall. Esposito identified the most pressing questions people ask about Islam in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11. Durall's recommendations are chosen for their insightful views in regard to broad religious themes. Join the group for discussion, even if you have not yet read the book. Contact Anne Bailey, 650-4905.

"Every now and then" Book Group:

6 pm, Thursday, August 14th - This newly formed group will meet to discuss "The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America." This 2003 non-fiction book by Erik Larson is presented in a novelistic style. The book is based on real characters and events around the Chicago World's Fair, circa 1893. It received the Edgar Award for Best Fact Crime and was a nominee for the National Book Award for Nonfiction. As the name implies, no fixed meeting date has been established. Bring a sandwich and join the group. Contact Amy Geyer, 440-3097.

Eclectic Readers:

11:30, Friday, August 15th - Sheri Reynolds' "The Rapture of Canaan" centers on an adolescent who lives in a fundamental community called "The Church of Fire and Brimstone and God's Almighty Baptizing Wind" led by her grandfather. The community's strict rules cover everything from drinking to talking to people outside the community and the punishments severe. This book was the selection of the Wednesday Evening Group in March (from Durall's list) and was highly recommended to the Friday group. If you read it in March and didn't get your fill of discussing it, come join us. Bring your lunch and be prepared for a lively discussion. Contact Del Smith, 612-0826.