



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

President's Report

-Charles Merrifield

The special congregational meeting on September 7 voted to approve the purchase of a sign from L.E.D. Sign Company. After the meeting, sufficient checks and pledges were collected to pay for the sign. Zach Storm from the sign company is working to get the sign installed and operational in early October before Ecofest.

Ecofest is approaching October 11. Many church members are involved in planning for the event. This could be the largest event at the church since we moved into the new building 6 years ago. We should have an opportunity to make a big impression while being with our friends. If you have not volunteered yet, please contact LaRilla Combs or Nancy Milner who are the volunteer coordinators for Ecofest.

The MidAmerica Region financial development workshop will be in Lawrence at the Lawrence fellowship on September 27 from 10 am -3 pm. Representatives from many of the UU congregations in the area will be in attendance. It is very important that we have a sizable turnout to maintain our relations with the churches in the area and to take advantage of the insights from Dr. Lisa Presley. It will be interesting to see how this information dovetails with our consultant, Michael

[Continued on page 8](#)

Coming Soon, Our Matted and Framed Covenant

Our Covenant of Healthy Relations is nearly ready to hang above the credenza at the entry. It could possibly happen before the first of October. Or not. At "press time" it was still at the shop where the custom built frame was made. We definitely expect it to be ready before EcoFest 2014, October 11.

Last month we highlighted the first Covenant, Respect. This month's we remind each other of the second Covenant, Safety (courteous, sincere, and thoughtful consideration for others).

"I covenant to:

- Request and give confidentiality.
- Share diverse ideas in a physically and emotionally safe manner.
- Help provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for myself and others.
- Take time to process information before responding.

The third and fourth covenants are transparency and honest. All four are part of our agreement to support an environment which allows our community to relate in harmony. The congregation's vote to adopt the Covenant at the annual meeting marked a year of work, but was only the beginning of moving forward.

Finance Committee Report

Through September 15:

Income	\$46,566.14
Expenses	\$46,823.98
Net Loss	(\$ 257.84)

However, expenses include payment of the \$16,000 down payment for our sign and the September mortgage payment has already been made. Please make note on your check if you are making a payment to your sign pledge so that it can be properly credited. Thank you all for helping to make our sign a reality.

In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

Member
Unitarian Universalist
Association

Minister: Rev. David Carter
minister@firstuu.net
(316) 684-3481

President: Charles Merrifeild
cmerrifield@cox.net
(316) 688-5352

Office Manger:
officemanager@firstuu.net
(316) 684-3481
Anita Culp

Director of Religious
Education:
Denise Jackson-Simon
simontrio@aol.com
(316) 644-2022

Webmaster: Jack Regehr
web@firstuu.net

Newsletter Staff

Copy Editor: Del Smith
wichitadel@aol.com

Layout Editor:
Rolando Gomez
shadoe7@mac.com

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

LED Sign Approved! Cost Covered by Checks & Pledges

Monday, September 8, Charles Merrifield and Bonnie Till signed a contract and made the down payment on the sign for 21st street which the congregation approved at a special meeting on Sunday, September 7. Sufficient pledges and checks were collected to cover the cost of the sign. Bonnie and Charles delivered a check which paid for 59% of the cost of the sign. The remaining 41% will be paid within 24 months. (Those who pledged are reminded to put "Sign" on the memo line of checks so payments can be properly credited.)

Zach Storm of L.E.D. Sign Company thinks the sign may be operational before Ecofest.

EcoFest: A Festive, Fabulous Day

- Marcia Ellsworth

The countdown to EcoFest has begun. Only two more weeks until October 11 when the fun and festivities begin! We have lots going on and are very excited about all the community participation and interest in our church. Educational booths designed to inspire people to live green, great vendors who are interested in recycling, church booths, children's activities, and yummy environmentally friendly food.

If you have not already signed up to help in some way, we need your participation to make this day a success. (See LaRilla Combs' "ad" on page X.) Besides, you will be guaranteed a fun day and perhaps go home with some new ideas and items to help you live green. We are expecting to have a large crowd, perhaps the largest crowd our church has seen. EcoFest is going to be a wonderful way to showcase our green building, our values, and demonstrate environmental awareness. At the same time, we will be raising some funds for our church.

One of the ways you can help raise funds is to buy some raffle tickets for yourselves or take some with you to sell to your friends. You can buy tickets before or after church for the next 2 weeks. We have fabulous donations from the community for raffle prizes. Tree Top Nursery has donated a crepe myrtle (value \$200), Bicycle X-CHANGE has donated 2 nicely refurbished/recycled children's bikes (one girls and one boys valued at \$75 each), and we have another donation of an installed rain barrel for your home or place of business. Tickets are a mere \$1 each or you can save money by buying 12 for \$10! Each ticket will be placed in a drawing for the item desired. The drawing for the prizes will take place at the end of EcoFest. It will not be necessary to be present to win.

Hope to see you and your friends there!

Please see Larilla Combs ad on page 8 for how you can help.

Minster's Musings

Joyful Disciplines of the Heart for Positive Transformation

- Rev. David Carter

Whenever I review my shifting states of consciousness (or unconsciousness, as the case may be – LOL) and seek to analyze the behaviors that arise there from, I reflect on my accountability. After all, my spiritual state is a determining factor in the direction of my evolving situation as a peripatetic pilgrim of Love, accountable for my thoughts, words, and deeds. Sometimes I feel regret over choices I made or actions I took. Such reflections are probably inevitable and, if engaged in with integrity, may be useful for effecting positive change. After suitable reflection and consultation with responsible others, whatever subsequent endeavors I engage in to transform the areas I deem wanting of transformation have the potential to be healthy and in order.

To ensure that the process is constructive and helpful, I am careful to avoid self condemnation. Self condemnation is worse than useless, being in fact injurious to self and others. Low self esteem, self condemnation, excessive feelings of guilt, etcetera, are all simply diversions from the real business of self observation, self realization, and enlightened transformation. Instead, as I am able, I dispassionately and lovingly examine the whys and wherefores concerning things I did, or neglected to do, which I later have cause to question or regret.

There are two avenues of approach I find profitable. One is the “discipline of solitude” and the other the “discipline of community.” Both are extolled by Henri Nouwen in his book, “Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life.” Nouwen notes that desirable transformation comes, both, through disciplined introspection on the one hand, and through disciplined processes of community interaction, through engagement in healthy interpersonal relations, on the other.

Because I agree with Nouwen, I carefully and self-protectively seek and find, both within myself, and in covenantal community with others, reliable, constructive, and enlightened avenues of healing to assuage any and all grief, fear, or regret I may be feeling. And, if I discern the need to amend behaviors that are antithetical to universal good, then I dedicate my energies to amending those. In the process, I remember to love my self.

At all times, I engage in the manifold processes of loving myself and others. Bona fide self love is the beginning and foundation of all Love. Therefore, I always seek to authentically love and cherish who and what I am – a divine being worthy of love. And in everyday interaction, I always strive to remember that each encounter, however improbable it seems, is but that – encounter with another divine being, eternally worthy of unconditional Love. Now, if that sounds like a mighty tall order, just remember this: the practices are named spiritual “disciplines” for good reason! LOL.

I believe that each of us is inherently capable of living and giving to others, unconditional Love. It is the essential truth of our being. It is who we are. You are and I am worthy; now and always. We are worthy of loving consideration (however that may be manifested), worthy of fair and just treatment, worthy of forgiveness or emulation as the case may be. And always, all who live are worthy of our love and consideration – as irreducible and indispensable divinities in the unspeakably complex, beautiful, and inextricably interdependent web of life – always.

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.

Into The Fall

With the sweetness of September
comes a calming breeze
gently sweeping summer
sites into digital memories.

Suntans fade to chaotic routines
daylight dims and gardens wither
while trees prepare to bloom with colors

Envious evergreens drop pine cone tears
Earth now crowned in purple, yellow and golden red
Backpacks grown heavy with history, science and algebra dreads

Faded colors fall on cooling ground as arrogant pines
point their tops in laughter; crispy air warms our hearts
then it's costumes we are after

Apple cider and childhood dreams
super heroes, angels and evil queens
pumpkins glowing with grotesque faces

Between two worlds the veil now thins,
crackling leaves call those who know to ritual gatherings beneath moon's
glow
ancestors wait while witches rejoin in secret circles well hidden
Drumming flames, the dance ignites, on this, the witches' sacred night.

Amy Geyer, 10/10/13

Fern VanGiesen: Trailblazer

The Kansas African American Museum will honor Fern VanGiesen at their Trailblazer Gala on November 1st. Fern, long time member of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita, was a co-founder of the Urban League. Last year the posthumous Trailblazer award was made to the Rev. James Reeb, Unitarian Minister martyred in the March to Selma. Rev. Carter accepted the award, which is displayed in the library. More information about Fern and the Gala will be coming during the month. In the meantime, you might check with Marcia Ellsworth and Charles Merrifield about the event. (Charles is Fern's nephew.)

UU Holiday Party Group Pot Luck Saturday, October 4

Many wonderful holidays are celebrated on October 4, including International Frugal Fun Day – National Golf Day - National Frappe Day . Please help us celebrate one or all of them. Doors open at 5:30. Eat at 6.

UU Pagan Update

October (and early November) events for the Pagan Group are:

Full Moon Dance on Thursday, October 9. All are welcome to join us at 7:00 at the Church on the night of the full moon for earth-centered chants set to easy folk dance movements. New comers are always welcome, full instruction is provided. Bring your drums or rhythm instruments.

Our traditional Feast for the Dead will be celebrated on Saturday, November 1. Join us for a pot luck feast at 6:00 pm and stay for a special ritual celebrating the life of Margot Adler, Feel free to bring mementos of your loved ones who have passed away recently.

Call Kathy Hull, 204-9956 or Anne Bailey 650-4905 for further details.

October 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:00p Committee on Ministry	2	3	4 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop 5:30p Holiday Party Group
5 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	6 6:00p Zen Friends	7 10:00a UU History Video 7:00p UU Craft Night	8 7:00p Book Discussion 7:00p Worship Committee	9 8:00a EcoFest Setup 7:00p Full Moon Dance	10 8:00a EcoFest Setup	11 10:00a - 4:00p EcoFest
12 8:30a Adult Relig. Explor. 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	13 6:00p Zen Friends 6:30p Ethical Eating Vegan Potluck	14	15 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	16	17 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	18 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop
19 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	20 6:00p Zen Friends	21	22 2:00p Newsletter Mailing	23	24	25 10:00a Caring Committee 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop 7:30p February Sky Concert
26 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	27 6:00p Zen Friends	28 6:30p Dismantling Injustice Action Group	29	30	31 	

Who's Who @ First UU

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-Coxby
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

Bonnie Till

Doug Wilson

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

Meet Sheri Barnes

-by Del Smith

Sheri Barnes' journey to First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita was long and deliberate. A Women's Studies class in college raised the value of "critical thinking," which made Sheri realize her Catholic upbringing had squelched that in her and she gave herself permission to start using it. "I explored different options within the Catholic Church for a while and then stopped attending church at all until I found First UU." In the mid-90s a client mentioned UU to her. Intrigued, Sheri took a quiz on beliefnet.com and found that UU was a 100% fit for her.

A decade later when her son Logan was 5 months old, Sheri attended her first UU service. The guest speaker (probably Robert Miner from KU) spoke on homophobia. Sheri had heard him speak at a training session for her then-employer ConnectCare. At lunch Sheri (then a vegetarian, now a vegan) was pleased to find food she could eat. "I felt an immediate fit and have been attending ever since, raising Logan in the First UU Community."

She is involved with the Ethical Eating group and the RE Committee currently. In the past she has been a pledge canvasser and a member of the Caring Committee. She would like to see the First Principle include every "being," not just human persons. "I am an ethical vegan, committed to creating the most good and causing the least harm for ALL living beings."

Sheri manages the volunteer program for American Red Cross Humanitarian Services and has been married to Kenny Barnes for 13 years. They've lived

[Continued on page 9](#)

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon (DRE)

Several years ago when we were still at the "old" church on Fairmount, I asked the children why they loved coming to church. Some of their responses were: We get to learn new things; The special activities; We practice our religion; Celebrating holidays; Learning new songs; Meeting new people and seeing friends; Pennies for Peace; I get to do community service activities that I wouldn't participate in on my own; The questions make me think a little harder; Learning about different religions; Not feeling judged; We learn new ways to help the Earth; The people are open to new ideas; We're free to share our opinion and be part of the process of learning; I feel cared for, loved, relaxed and peaceful when I'm here.

How wonderful is that?! Out of the mouths of our children...this is exactly the kind of environment we want to provide for them here at UU. This year, we have chosen a curriculum from UUA's *Tapestry of Faith*, titled "Toolbox of Faith". It looks at what tools Unitarian Universalism offer for the challenges of life. By using tools as symbols, children discover what aspects of UU faith are helpful to them, developing a toolbox of faith. The Lessons' topics include: Faith, Questioning, Integrity, Flexibility, Reflection, Expression, Power, Courage, Listening, Humor, Love, Justice, Atonement, and Resiliency.

It is easy to see how this program would be beneficial to anyone participating. Along with the Lesson Sundays, we celebrate holy and holidays, do special projects including community service, and invite guests to share their knowledge, interests, and experiences with us. We have our own Way Cool Sunday School Service once a month, and the children and youth have also performed and made presentations for the congregation.

It is our hope and intention that through involvement in our Religious Exploration program, our children and youth will not only learn the Seven Principles, but will also begin to live them. Please consider making Sunday mornings at UU a part of your child/children's week. You'll be glad you did.

President's Report - continued

Durall. I encourage you to carpool to Lawrence. Register for the event

through Anita Culp.

I have reserved October 16, 17, and 18, **2015** for Southern Cluster at White Memorial Camp. Let me know if you would be interested in making a presentation or leading a discussion on a topic that would be consistent with our values. Southern Cluster has been an important means that we have used over many years to stay in touch with UUs throughout the Kansas and Kansas City region. The Friday session is informal; a time to relax with nature and friends. Friday usually is a day of light attendance. Saturday and Sunday are the days of workshops and projects, along with relaxing with nature and friends. I strongly encourage you to pencil in October 17 and 18 in next year's calendar in anticipation of attending Cluster next year.

Laura Roberson made a presentation to the September 17 church board meeting to request that the church work with her employer, Behavioral Link, to provide respite care for children who are clients of the agency. As conceived, two groups of four children with a caregiver would spend three hours at the church on Saturday mornings and two other groups would spend three hours on Saturday afternoons. The children would be involved in art projects, games, play, movies, and other activities. Church members could volunteer to support the project. The church board liked the idea and agreed to work on developing the project. Let me know if you would be interested in helping with the project.

Celtic New Year/Halloween/Samhain Celebration and Concert

Folk/Celtic duo February Sky has presented several music-based services for First UU. They return on Saturday, October 25, for a concert focusing on music that reflects a Halloween/Celtic New Year/Samhain theme, honoring the ancestors and the turning of the year, the spooky along with the spiritual. Concert time, 7:30 pm. Suggested donation, \$10.00

Costumes are encouraged (but not required).

February Sky features traditional singer and Celtic guitarist Phil Cooper with songwriter and singer Susan Urban. Cooper sings and plays his own arrangements of traditional songs and tunes on six string guitar and cittern. Susan Urban is a writer of story songs and humorous "slice of life" songs. She accompanies her singing on guitar, six string banjo, mountain dulcimer, and hand percussion instruments.

(February Sky will present the Sunday service, which will be very different from the Saturday concert. See page 9 for a description of the Sunday morning service.)

First Sunday Lunch: October 5th

First Sunday Lunch is Pizza and Pasta, with a side of "Decomposed Salad" and "Rest in Peas." Ha ha ha (evil laughter!) Get in touch with Magda Garrett if you can help by bringing a dish or prepping the meal.
magdagarrett@gmail.com

**ECOFEST
ECOFEST
ECOFEST**

**Have Fun And Help
Raise Money:
Volunteer!**

**Sat., October 11, 2014,
10:00 AM To 4:00 PM.**

All or part day. There are lots of fun booths and activities that need YOU.

Call or email:
LaRillaCombs@aol.com
733-2089

If you don't call us, we'll call you. LaRilla and Nancy

OCTOBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

10/5 Rev. Carter – **Natural and Supernatural “Miracles”**: Are “miracles” supernatural events or perhaps phenomena occurring under the jurisdiction of a nature beyond common familiarity.

10/12 Lara Pollock – **Reframing**: Intentional listening – hearing the message despite biased language.

10/19 Rev. Carter – **Things I Learned Listening at Death’s Door**: Ministering to the actively dying and their families as a hospice chaplain; insights and lessons in chaplaincy work subsequently.

10/26: February Sky (Phil Cooper and Susan Urban) – **Samhain**: “Summer’s end” in Celtic. A time for giving thanks for harvest, for letting go of what no longer serves; when the veil between the worlds of the living and dead is said to be thinnest and the dead invited back for loving remembrance. The service will observe all these ancient traditions and reflect on significance in our modern lives. Bring a picture or other memento of a departed loved one for the Samhain altar.

Meet Sheri Barnes, continued

in Andale since 2006. The family bikes across Kansas every year and Sheri serves on the Board of Directors for Biking Across Kansas. Reading nonfiction and cycling are her escapes.

Sheri’s prowess as a cyclist is rather well known, but few are aware that she’s a champion basketball player. She was a starter on two state championship basketball teams in the Oklahoma Catholic Grade School Athletic Association during her 5th and 8th grade years. Don’t mess with Sheri – she says she played some tough 3-on-3 defense when girls in Oklahoma still played 3-on-3, half-court basketball.

“The Seven Principles really resonate with me and I am now a firm believer in ‘a free and responsible search for truth and meaning,’ which I work to instill in Logan.” It’s not surprising that Logan, who will turn 10 years old on October 1, has signed up to exhibit in the Green Art show at EcoFest 2014 on October 11. Like his mother, he’s a contributing member of our beloved community.

No Medicaid Expansion = 330 Lives Lost “Death Vigil” October 18th Planned

- By Peter Ninemire

I am involved with a core group of people who are planning an event to publicize how many people in Kansas will lose their lives because of the Governor and Kansas Legislature refusing to expand Medicaid. The Kaiser Foundation has estimated that number to be 330 people in Kansas. We are planning a “Death Vigil” to publicize this atrocity at the Warren Theatre on October 18th. It is our hope to have 330 people burning that many candles and we would like to enlist the congregation in helping us to gain those numbers and support.

The bottom line is that 182,000 Kansans have been denied health insurance because Governor Brownback refuses to accept Medicaid. It is estimated that it will cost Kansans between 500 to 800 million dollars in funding that we have already paid for, as well as the 4,000 jobs it would take to run this program that is paid for by the federal government. The loss of Medicaid funding is also having a huge negative impact on Kansas hospitals who are no longer receiving the funds they used to receive in this regard. The greatest impact is being felt by the rural hospitals that are in the process of being forced to close.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7202 E. 21st St. N.

Wichita, KS 67206

www.firstuu.net



From Our Book Reading Groups

Wednesday Evening Book Club:

Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*, will be discussed at the 7:30 Wednesday, October 10, meeting. The book is intriguing the members of the group, as well as readers in the city. One UU tried to get a copy, but found that 49 other people were ahead of her on the "hold" list at the library! If you can get a copy of the book, it's not too late to join in the discussion. Anne Bailey, 650-4905.

Eclectic Readers Group

11:30 am, Friday, October 17 (brown-bag lunch). E. M. Forster's *Howards End* revolves around three families in England at the beginning of the 20th century: the Wilcoxes, rich capitalists with a fortune made in the Colonies; the half-German Schlegel siblings (Margaret, Tibby, and Helen), whose cultural pursuits have much in common with the real-life [Bloomsbury Group](#); and the Basts, an impoverished young couple from a lower-middle-class background. The idealistically motivated, well read, highly intelligent Schlegel sisters seek to help the struggling Basts, wishing at the same time to rid the Wilcoxes of some of their deep-seated social and economic prejudices.

In November we'll take the recommendation of the National Endowment for the Arts' Big Read and read Dashiell's Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*, a classic American spy novel published in 1930. It's part thriller, part love story, and part dry, dark comedy. Del Smith, 612-0826.
