



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

Minster's Musings

Moving the Decimal Point: Modern Day Miracles

- Rev. David Carter

In First Unitarian Universalist of Wichita's (FUUW's) recent common read, Michael Durall's "The Almost Church Revitalized," Durall insists that tithing builds fruitful community while simultaneously transforming and empowering one's individual life in miraculous ways. What an intriguing statement, especially from a longtime UU. Generally, UUs don't effuse about "miracles."

Anyway, I accepted Durall's challenge to tithe and, twice a month, began "moving the decimal point." Clearly, my tithings help strengthen FUUW financially, and thus they strengthen FUUW's ability to transform the world through its social activism, cultural programs, and other services. And I am happy about that. But, miraculously transform and empower my personal life; would my experience bear witness to the accuracy of Durall's optimistic predictions? Well, I was willing to experiment.

But, wait a minute. I am no stranger to tithing. For decades I have tithed a tenth of my time each day,

Continued on page 7

The Common Read

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

"Making the Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete" by Timothy Dombek and Michael Durall is the chosen book for the Common Read at 12:15 after the service for three weekly sessions beginning October 19th in the meeting hall. Michael Durall's workshop last October, focused on his book "The Almost Church Revitalized", introduced First Unitarian Universalists to remedial ideas which have been implemented during the year and are proving beneficial. This latest book deals with finance as well as questions about the real value of a church.

At the October 19th meeting, we will cover Chapters 1 - 3, and Chapters 4 - 6 on October 26th; on November 2nd we will discuss, review, and consider applications. If you miss the first session, the book is only 58 pages long, although each chapter is packed with information. The church office has several copies of the book for sale at \$12.50. You can also order the book from book dealers for about \$15 or the Kindle version for about \$10. There will be sandwiches available for a reasonable cost, including vegetarian options. Please RSVP to cmerrifield@cox.net for catering purposes.

A Friendly Reminder from your Office Manager.

- Anita Culp, FUUW Office Manager

Scheduling your event or meeting with the Office Manager gets it put on the official church calendar, in the Weekly Update, and in the Sunday Order of Service. In this way you can make sure there are no scheduling conflicts. It also prevents other events from being scheduled in conflict with yours. Contact the Office Manager at office@firstuu.net or call 684-3481. The Office Manager will respond to your email or telephone message within 1 business day and acknowledge your scheduling or tell you of conflicts. You can get an idea of free times by looking at the First UU website calendar which is updated at least once a week. Our Covenant of Healthy Relations says we should "maximize sharing of congregational information". Sharing your scheduling with the Office Manager goes a long way toward meeting this covenant. So the next time you are setting a date, click or call your friendly Office Manager.

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.

Covenant Of The Month: Transparency

Each month *In Touch* highlights another of the four covenants entered into by the congregation in our Covenant of Healthy Relations.

Transparency: (Open and candid decision making with free access to all).

"I covenant to:

- Make official decisions through the democratic process according to church by-laws.
- Maximize sharing of congregational information.
- Frame information for accuracy and understanding rather than distort it for persuasive advantage.
- Speak directly to the person or committee when issues arise or ask for mediation."

Take time to stop at the front entry and read the entire covenant which hangs above the credenza. The Covenant was adopted by the congregation at the annual meeting. Respect, safety, and honesty are the other three covenants.

Editors' Note:

There will be no report from the board or treasurer in this issue of *In Touch*, as the Board rescheduled their regular third Wednesday meeting to the fourth Wednesday at 7 pm. Board meetings are open to any member of the congregation. This is a one-time date change, Charles Merrifeild, president, advised.



Ecofest 2014 – A Fond Retrospective

-Vivien Minshull-Ford

From a germ of an idea in January this year, which began with defining goals, setting parameters, conjuring some pie-in-the-sky plans and knocking them down to realistic and workable elements, EcoFest went through many stages of growth and greenness. Committees morphed into Team UU, or rather into teams, and UU members delivered what they do best and did it beautifully. Long before we reached the big day, EcoFest seemed to have taken on an organic life of its own. The second miracle, after Team UU, was the weather, one fine day sandwiched between two cold rainy ones. It does not get much better than that, except it did: once we opened the doors, ready or not, the members of the public poured in and continued to do so until we closed the doors at 4:00. They bought raffle tickets, ate black beans and rice and leek and potato soup and delicious desserts, tried on upcycled clothes, visited the Sedgwick County Extension Service compost expert, the worm farm, or the bee man, listened to music from Jana Rambo and David Brewer, and Jennifer “the Voice” Connolly singing the industrial hemp song and making announcements, took home jewelry, antiques, organic cleaning products, pear butter, and aloe vera plants. Children made a group sculpture and bottle cap wind chimes.

Small glitches like a vendor pulling out at the last minute or a sponsor not coming through with promises, were nothing: another vendor got more space, and any other gaps were filled by incredible adaptable problem solving teamwork, in publicity (managed skillfully by Del Smith), sign and poster making, food tasting, cooking and baking, used book pricing, art display hanging – and traffic control. It’s true that during the last two preparation days, we had no idea how EcoFest would go – but we were stunned and delighted by what actually happened. I put it down to Team UU, without whose good humor, stamina, and creative energy made EcoFest 2014 the overwhelming success it was. And it was a joy working alongside the members of Nancy Milner and Larilla Combs’ splendid army of volunteers, members of the congregation whom I now count as new friends. EcoFest 2014 netted more than \$2,800, give or take a few dollars for expenses. Team UU did it proud this year, and we are already planning next year.



My Sabbath

Sabbath is that moment I cease all doing
and embrace a holy mood that visits
always unexpected, always welcome.
Sabbath is any moment I am moved
by the light I see in a long darkness
by the goodness that flashes out
of the humdrum dregs and driftwood
of living, the pure giving
not of burnt offerings to some greedy god
but of gifts to the needful
disguised in our midst.
Sabbath is any moment I am purified
in the fire of all my past that whispers
burning low:
now you are tempered, all accounts balanced.
Start here, start now, clean.
Sabbath is rest, repose, dream.
it's leaving behind the outgrown shell
to stretch, to grow, to fill
the clean emptiness.

- Lila Arnold

The photographs in this issue were taken by Rolando Gomez at EcoFest 2014. To see the other photos taken that day, as well as many others, go to www.flickr.com/groups/1stuu/

Chalice Bookstore Open For Business

Have you visited the Chalice Bookstore lately? Lots of great books are available at very reasonable prices. It's self-serve and on the honor system. Prices are posted in a standing frame. A few "newer and nicer" (or rarer) books are priced individually. No donations are needed, due to space considerations. The Bookstore is on the EAST side of the Library (near the foyer). There is no official Bookstore Manager at this time. The other side of the room (next to the kitchen) is our lending library. Janet Schoentrup is the Church Librarian.



November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop 6:00p Samhain, Feast for the Dead
2 9:45a Adult R. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch 12:15p Common Read	3 6:00p Zen Friends	4 7:00p UU Craft Night	5 7:00p Committee on Ministry	6 7:00p Full Moon Dance	7	8 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop
9 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	10 6:00p Zen Friends 6:30p Ethical Earting Vegan Pottluck	11	12 7:00p Book Discussion Group 7:00p Worship Committee	13	14	15 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop
16 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	17 6:00p Zen Friends	18	19 7:00p Board of Trustees Newsletter & Calendar Deadline	20	21 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	22 10:00a Caring Committee 12:00p Heart & Soul Memoir Writing Workshop
23 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	24 6:00p Zen Friends	25 6:30p Dismantling injustice Action Group	26 2:00p Newsletter Mailing	27 2:00p Thanksgiving Pottluck Feast	28	29
30 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 1:00p Private Event						

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 - VACANT
 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
 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
 Dismantling Injustice Action Group - 6:30 pm, fourth Tuesdays, Rev. Carter 684-3481

As announced

Garden Group - Anita Culp, 744-2840

Minister Musing's - continued

scrupulously setting aside two hours daily for meditation. What a joy those hours have been, and how nourishing. And, without doubt, those treasured hours have repeatedly provided me gateways for accessing the miraculous. Tithing to church, though, was unprecedented in my personal life. Yet, lo and behold, since I began tithing to FUUW, not just one, but two “miracles” have taken place. Let me elaborate.

Well, to be honest, at first tithing didn't seem to be going the way Michael Durall described that it would. He'd assured that those he'd interviewed who tithed all agreed – tithing didn't create any sense of strain or scarcity for them. Rather, they felt and experienced greater abundance. Well, I felt a “pinch.” But, rather than dismiss Durall's affirmation as erroneous and go back on my commitment to FUUW, I decided to look more closely at my financial habits. Maybe the “problem” was owing to some other source. Why was it difficult for me to tithe comfortably?

Turns out, my careful scrutiny quickly revealed the problem. Over time, I'd allowed myself to become habituated to undisciplined buying and spending. I suffered from a kind of devil-may-care recklessness in managing my money. So tithing *comfortably* would require of me a hither-to-fore unprecedented conscientiousness in money matters. Then, and only then, could I responsibly *and comfortably* pay all my bills timely and keep up my tithes. Voila. Problem solved; the pinch was gone! In its place I felt gratification from my enriched ability to strengthen FUUW. That positive transformation, I reasoned, was a kind of miracle – the kind I believe in.

But then a second, unexpected miracle dawned. Here, a little background is in order:

Years ago I read George Clason's classic, “The Richest Man in Babylon” a self-help book on developing personal wealth. Clason admonished readers to “pay themselves” first by setting aside ten percent of their earnings as the essential first step in acquiring affluence. He marveled that anyone could imagine prosperity dawning when, habitually, they pay every other person first – the landlady, the utilities company, the grocer, the internet provider – with no thought whatever of setting aside some part to develop oneself. Clason's recommendation, I thought, was a great idea! But, through all the many years since first reading Clason's book, I reasoned that I didn't have enough money to save.

Now, of course, through the inspiration FUUW provided me to brave the experiment Michael Durall proposed, I know better. Actually, all that was ever lacking was the discipline and the wisdom to set aside some of the abundance I regularly squandered by mismanagement. So a second miracle has occurred – a favorable, unexpected revolution in my personal lifestyle: now I am “moving the decimal point” over for myself as well as for FUUW! And, ironically, I feel like I got a raise! LOL.

So not only am I able to strengthen FUUW, but I am also able to strengthen my personal life. And, getting my sea legs as a financially responsible steward of the resources the universe makes available to me is a quiet source of comfort and joy. Naturally, I am thankful for this unexpected “miracle.” My hope, of course, is that my experience may inspire you to make the experiment. What “miracles” might manifest in your life from the discipline of intentional giving?

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.

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon, DRE

It's great to see new faces in our RE classes. We continue our discovery of what aspects of UU faith are helpful as we develop a "toolbox of faith." So far, the ruler, magnifying glass, compass, and duct tape have helped in our exploration of faith, questioning, integrity and flexibility.

Be sure and mark your calendars for Sunday, October 26. That is our celebration of United Nations Day when we have AFS students share information about themselves and their countries. It is always exciting and informative. And they usually bring tasty snacks to try, too!

See you at church. Remember, it's always more fun when you are there!



UUA MidAmerica Region: Who We Are

The sources of our UU faith include "Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life...." Christianity remains the largest religion practiced in many varieties in the United States (Religion Census conducted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies). No surprise there.

Buddhists "represent the largest non-Christian religious bloc in most states." But in MidAmerica that is true of only 1 state: Kansas! At First UU there's a long history of a Buddhist presence at the church.

Of the 20 states where Islam is the second-most practiced religion, 9 are in MidAmerica: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, both Dakotas, and Wisconsin.

Other sources of our UU faith are: "--Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life; -- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love; -- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves; --Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit; --Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature." (from the UUA Principles and Purposes.)

Thanksgiving Day Feast: A UU Family Tradition

Members and friends are invited to share a feast on Thanksgiving Day, November 27th, at the church. Bring your extended family and friends, too. All are welcome!

Judy Naillon will roast the turkey. A tofuturkey would be very welcome! Anyone? The rest of the meal will be provided by those attending. Sign-up sheet is on the office window. Or sign up with Del Smith on Sundays or via email (wichitadel@aol.com).

We usually eat around 2 pm, but the kitchen will be open earlier for those who enjoy cooking together. And after the meal? Games and conversation, and possibly putting up our holiday tree.

NOVEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

11/2 Amanda Beals - **Results Education Fund:** We know that promoting access to education, health care and economic opportunity proves to be the most effective way to lift people out of poverty worldwide and give people a fair chance at life. Hear how a non-profit encourages grass roots participation.

<http://www.results.org>

11/9 Rev. Carter - Continuation of his **Famous UU Series.**

11/16 Charles Merrifield - **Guest at your Table and UUSC:** An often unsung branch of our faith, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee leads the way in social justice issues. President Charles Merrifield will explain what this organization does and how assisting their mission strengthens ours.

11/23 Rev. Carter - **Gratitude: A Key that Unlocks Many Doors**

11/30 Marsha Diggs - **A Pagan Perspective on Christmas:** The purity and spirituality of Christmas touches all faiths. Hear First UU member Marsha Diggs talk about reconciling the Christmas season with her pagan spirituality.

Alternative Gift Market

November 8, 10 am to 4 pm, Alternative Gifts Market will be held at Grace Presbyterian Church, 5002 E. Douglas in Wichita. Alternative gifts are tax-deductible gifts to honor family and friends by supporting a project such as books for schools in Ethiopia, food pantries, milk goats in Haiti. This is the 20th annual event; tangible gift items will be available as well.

Dillons Gift Card: Yours to Use, First UUs to Gain

We are entering what some call the "Eating Season" and others just say "The Holidays." Likely you'll be entertaining more. You may be doing some traveling. You probably will be buying some gifts.

Those of us who bought a card and keep it filled probably remember to use it to purchase groceries and prescriptions at Dillons and gasoline and other items at KwikShop. We're less likely to remember it at gift-giving time. Who doesn't appreciate receiving a pre-paid gift card for a favorite restaurant or store? Or a pre-paid credit card? For those of us with relatives and friends at a distance, a gift card is a handy solution to giving at the holidays.

The church's budget benefits by an average of \$350.00 monthly through Gift Card purchases. Can we increase that in November and December? If you don't have a card, purchase one for \$5 from Anne Bailey or Anita Culp in the office. Then load it at Dillons for any amount you choose. First UU gets 5% of your purchases with the Gift Card including purchase of gift cards for a long list of other businesses available at Dillons.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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From The Eclectic Readers Group

11:30 am, Friday, November 21. We've joined the rest of Wichita's Big Read and selected Dashiell's Hammett's classic spy novel, *The Maltese Falcon*. The novel was originally serialized in the magazine *Black Mask* beginning with the September 1929 issue. Probably most of us have seen one of the several movie adaptations. Even though Sam Spade appears in this novel only and three short stories, he became the iconic hard-boiled detective. [Raymond Chandler's](#) Philip Marlowe, for instance, was strongly influenced by Hammett's Spade. Sam Spade combined several features of previous detectives, most notably his cold detachment, keen eye for detail, and unflinching determination to achieve his own justice. Hammett's book was selected by the National Endowment for the Arts as the Big Read for this year.

In 1998, the [Modern Library](#) ranked *The Maltese Falcon* 56th on its list of the [100 best English-language novels of the 20th century](#). Do you agree? Bring a sack lunch on November 21st and let us know!

In December we'll do something special. Tell us about and/or read a selection from your favorite book from your childhood or a children's book you discovered as an adult which is particularly meaningful to you. - Del Smith, 612-0826

