



# In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

## President's Report

December 18, 2014

- Charles Merrifield

The Board of Trustees meeting was delayed due to snow Wednesday night, Dec 17. The meeting was rescheduled for Sunday, Dec 21, which is after the deadline for the newsletter. Therefore, this report will discuss the information that is scheduled to be discussed at the meeting, although by the time you read this report the meeting will be history.

A report from the Leadership Council meeting from Dec. 14 will be discussed. Highlights from the Leadership Council report are:

- Children's RE - Two college students are working to develop middle school & high school youth program. The RE team will meet January 4 to plan the spring schedule.
- Aesthetics - Gallery XII will have the Hermine Greywall sale in March.
- Caring Committee - A survey is being planned to find members in need and persons who could help.

Continued on page 4

## Chalice Bookstore: Books Recommended By Your 1<sup>st</sup> UU Friends

- Del Smith

The Chalice Bookstore, located on the east wall of the library, is in business! Prices? Quite reasonable (posted on a sign) and depend upon the size and condition of the book. Hours? Any time the church is open. Staff? None, it's self-serve. Just put your money in the plastic box on the small table by the door.

We're short on mysteries, so donations in that category are sought. During the discussion of Michael Durall's "Making the Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete" interest was expressed in simplified living, "confronting the consumer culture." We have a few books in that genre, but others will be welcome. Science fiction titles are also scarce.

Put donations on the table by the door, but please, be selective and considerate of limited shelf space..... leave only books you GENUINELY recommend to your UU friends. All proceeds go to support the programs of the church.

## From the Caring Committee: We thought you'd like to know that...

- LaRilla Combs

Nona Ponder is so happy to be home again and is continuing to gain strength with the assistance of Home Health care and friends.

Caring Committee is the arm of the Church that acknowledges events in the lives of members and friends, such as illness, surgeries and bereavements. We also acknowledge celebratory events such as Birthdays, Weddings, Births, and Graduations.

A note of thanks!

Thanks to everyone who has taken soup and other comfort foods to our members and friends recovering from illness or surgery.

# In Touch

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

[www.firstuu.net](http://www.firstuu.net)

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

## Regional Assembly April 17-19

Join fellow UUs the weekend of April 17-19, in Naperville, Illinois (a western suburb of Chicago) for Regional Assembly 2015. It will be a great chance to be together as one region to explore The New in a New Era of Unitarian Universalism with presentations by two major speakers: the Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt and the Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar. You can benefit from workshops designed to strengthen your congregation, deepen your social justice work, and enrich you on a personal level. Come and experience the Regional Business Meeting, good food, and time for meeting new friends and old from congregations across our great Region, culminating with the joy of shared worship and musical celebration on Sunday morning.

See <http://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly> .



*Charlie King cleaning up at our Thanksgiving Fest.*

## Meditation, Mysticism & Consciousness

Kathy Hull is offering a four-week intensive class in multi-faith meditation techniques meeting Thursdays, February 5th to 26th. Each session will meet 6:30 to 8:00 pm, at First Unitarian Universalist Church. Discussion topics will include mystical and scientific understandings of consciousness, and the effects of silence and sound, stillness and movement, in meditative practice. Techniques include chanting, walking & dancing meditations, and compassionate communication practice.

Fee for the class is \$60 in advance or four \$20 weekly installments. Work-exchange scholarships & childcare available by arrangement. Fee covers a textbook and journal designed by Kathy, other materials and a donation to the church. Preregistration is required! Call or text Kathy at 316-204-9956 to preregister & make needed arrangements.

## Meet George Riviera

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

George plays chess. It's not easy imagining him sitting in quiet contemplation over his next move as he's much more an outgoing man of action. He spent his childhood in Los Angeles and was baptized a Roman Catholic, and understood that "You must have faith and you can't ask questions" from his godparents, one of whom read tarot cards. He argued with a godmother about the nature of God, remembered nothing of learning the catechism, nor was he confirmed. During 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, George was converted by a neighbor to a Christian sect where people spoke in tongues and the women wore long dresses to cover their bodies. Despite those extremes, George loved being a Christian and talking about Christianity until his early 20's, when he read *The Da Vinci Code*, which made him question his sense of self and his faith. It made him ask if there was a god, if he was wrong about the nature of Jesus – and if so, were we possibly mistaken about everything else? Up to then he had thought his relationship with God to be personal, but at that time he felt that talking to God was empty of meaning. He read about others who questioned faith. He listened to the irreverent comedy of George Carlin and Bill Hicks and read the evolutionary biology writings of Richard Dawkins. At this point, George entered his "atheist period."

George has always liked jobs where he deals with people, customer service, waiting tables. He's also profoundly sensitive to effects of social and political changes on his and our world. 9/11 happened while he was in high school: immediately it was "all prayers and patriotism." And after the Columbine shootings, the student body was subjected to weapon searches with metal detectors, but it was mostly "the loners, punk kids, and those who stood out" who were picked on.

Currently he's selling auto parts – but this is only a fraction of what George does with his life. Recently he had an organizing job with Kansas Peoples Action, fighting for voter rights and working to unseat Kobach and Brownback. He organized the Get Out the Vote Campaign, hiring student canvassers to do phone surveys from October up to the election. Currently he is a paid intern with the Communication Workers of America. He has also canvassed for Trust Woman. He is involved with the atheist group Meet Up.com, which matches people with similar but non-militant interests for discussion of "Life in the Bible Belt" and how to cope with political frustration and anger. He also meets with the Doom and Gloom Group to have a beer at Kirby's on Mondays, is an active member of Films for Action (a huge catalog of documentaries on areas of social and political concern), and recently has become friends with Peter Joseph, the state coordinator for Zeitgeist Films. See what I mean about Man of Action!

George, now agnostic, reached First UU through the Occupy Wall Street Movement and attended a Meatless Monday, where he met UU members. He has been attending services with Louis Goseland: he likes many things about UU from the COEXIST bumper stickers on cars to UU respect for the faith of others, and a genuine effort to "create a planet we can live in." He would like to see more diversity, more young people interacting at the church and to learn more about the faith of others. Above all, he would like First UU congregation members to donate food and time to hosting an occasional meal at the Lord's Diner, where people who are not religious but like to talk about faith need the community of a liberal church.



*Left, Susan Hund-Milne, Betty Hensley, Bonnie Till, Lara Pollock. Recognizing Betty's contributions.*



*Right, Tom Moore - Chalice Bookstore supporter*

*President's Report, continued*

- W.U.U.P.S - Plans for next year include 12 full moon celebrations, as well as Beltane, May Day, and major holidays.
- Denominational Affairs - Members are encouraged to attend the MidAmerica Region annual meeting which will be April 17-19 in Naperville, IL, and the national General Assembly this June 24-28 in Portland, OR.
- Worship Committee - The minister will be on vacation for several Sundays in January, returning to the pulpit on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The Worship Committee is arranging some very interesting guest speakers.
- Fundraising - Del Smith has proposed a silent auction for Valentine's Day.
- Communications - Jack Regehr is updating the website.
- Social Action - 1. Church members have been involved in several actions related to the non-indictments in Ferguson and New York. 2. Food Bank, Bags of Blessings, Mitten Tree, and the coat drive are being collected at church. 3. Several church members have met with Julie Burkhart of Trust Women to discuss how we can be of assistance. 4. Rev. Carter and other members have been involved in creating other social action opportunities.
- Membership - We are happy to announce that George Rivera joined the church.
- Finance - Now that the 21<sup>st</sup> Street sign is almost completed, we will need to start paying off the unpaid balance. Pledged contributions should cover this cost.

January 25<sup>th</sup> Midyear Meeting:

Voting members will need to attend the Midyear Meeting to vote on the Nominating Committee members and to approve the prospective budget for 2015-2016. The Midyear Meeting will have an introduction to the proposed new bylaws. The proposed bylaws will not be approved at this meeting, rather public discussion will begin and continue for several months. Another vote might be taken at the Midyear Meeting on signs regulating the presence of guns in the building. Do we want to have signs near each entrance that either forbid all guns, or forbid "open carry" guns, or forbid "concealed carry" guns, or not have any signs that limit guns in the building?

## Wanted: Church Archivist

Are you interested in the church's history? First UU of Wichita could use someone to help build and maintain the church's archive. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please contact Jamey Findling ([jamey.findling@gmail.com](mailto:jamey.findling@gmail.com)) or Charles Merrifield ([chasmerrifield@gmail.com](mailto:chasmerrifield@gmail.com)) for more information.

## First UU's annual White Elephant Party January 17th 7:00-9:00

Did you receive a gift that has you saying-What were they thinking?


1st UU gives you the perfect opportunity to recycle the joy! Wrap up that un-special gift and bring it, along with your favorite snack to share. Family Friendly.

See U there!

## How much ground could a ground hog grind if a ground hog could grind ground?

We don't know so we were going to form a committee, but then we had a better idea! After all we are the party group and we invite you to join us at First UU's Ground Hog Day Party! Bring your favorite ground, or from the ground, dish to share. Saturday January 31st. Doors open at 5:30, Dinner at 6:00.

# January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Office Closed	2	3 7:00p Full Moon Celebration
<b>4</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Childrens RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	<b>5</b> 6:00p Zen Friends	<b>6</b> 7:00p UU Craft Night	<b>7</b> 7:00p Committee on Ministry	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Childrens RE 12:15p Leadership Council	<b>12</b> 6:00p Zen Friends 6:30p Ethical Eating Vegan Potluck	<b>13</b> 7:00p Facebook Seminar	<b>14</b> 7:00p Worship Committee	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	<b>17</b> 7:00p White Elephant Party
<b>18</b> 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Childrens RE 12:15p Call to Action Committee	<b>19</b> 6:00p Zen Friends	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 10:00a Caring Committee
<b>25</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Childrens RE 12:15p Mic-Year Meeting	<b>26</b> 6:00p Zen Friends	<b>27</b> 6:30p Dismantling Injustice Action Group	<b>28</b> 1:00p Newsletter Folding	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 6:00p Ground Hog Day Potluck Party

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  
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  
Dismantling Injustice Action Group - 6:30 pm, fourth Tuesdays, Rev. Carter 684-3481  
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  
Social Justice - third Sunday after church - Louis Goseland, 204-9972

As announced

Garden Group - Anita Culp, 744-2840

## Bags Of Blessings From The Heart

Time again to start collecting hygiene items for our community members in need. Last year our church was asked by the local agency, Partners for Wichita to participate in a program called "Bags of Blessings" that they sponsor each year during February. It has been very successful in getting hygiene items distributed to low-income and homeless people. This year they have a goal set of 1700 bags as the need has increased from last year. It is hard to imagine that many people cannot afford the basic toothbrush and toothpaste but, unfortunately, it is a reality for many. It would be wonderful if each of our members could bring a gallon zip lock bag filled with enough items for one person. Or, bring unbagged individual items. Whatever you can spare, will be helpful.

Small hotel size soaps, lotions, and shampoos are perfect for filling bags, so if you are traveled somewhere over the holidays, donate those saved unused items. Any size, however, are greatly appreciated.

Start saving items below now then bring them to church and place in the basket located in the gathering space.

Soap (bar, liquid or sanitize)	Shampoo/conditioner	Chapstick/lip balm
Emery board/clippers	Shaving cream	Lotion
Deodorant	Washcloth	Toothpaste
Razor	Comb	Kleenex
Toothbrush		

## Bhagavad Gita Text Available for Purchase

Along with a number of other sacred holidays that fall in December, we celebrated Gita Jayanti. Gita Jayanti is the Birthday of the Bhagavad Gita. Several different versions are displayed in our Sanctuary though December. The texts are graduated for entry to advanced level study and are available for a suggested donation ranging from \$12 to \$30. Experience for yourself why Emerson, Thoreau, and Gandhi so loved and were so deeply influenced by this timeless spiritual classic.

**Henry David Thoreau:** *"In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial."*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson:** *"I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad-Gita. It was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."*

**Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi:** *"When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day."*

## December Song

More than the year's capstone  
 Mysterious December  
 Harbinger of May's tumescence  
 White shroud of silent night  
 Cloak of muted colors  
 Winter's Gordian countenance

Countless meteors of tiny white flowers  
 Born in heaven dervish on the breeze  
 Alight on naked trees making everything new  
 Pulling over all a blanket of crystal hours

December's suchness will test your mettle

Way down deep  
 There's a way

Upon a chariot without wheels  
 Upon a wheel  
 Whirling without a chariot

- David Carter

## Dismantling Injustice Group Resumes in January

-Mike Diggs

We've all seen the news – unarmed black men bring killed by police; even a twelve year old holding a toy gun. Grand Juries that fail to bring indictments against police officers. Incarceration rates for people of color are eight times higher than for white people, while crime rates are similar for both groups. Income inequity is increasing for 99% of Americans, and a Republican controlled Congress will try to keep it that way. The “War on Drugs” has failed, with usage rates almost exactly the same as forty years ago, despite the expenditure of many billions of dollars and the imprisonment of millions.

Go to the UUA website ([www.UUA.org](http://www.UUA.org)) for information on all these issues, along with statements from UUA President Reverend Peter Morales concerning the recent grand jury decisions, as well as on other issues (the homepage also features a video holiday message from Rev. Morales.)

So what can we of First UU do here at home? The thing to do is become involved. Sunflower Community Action is actively involved in these and other issues. And please come to the next Dismantling Injustice Task Force meeting, on Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, at the church. We are working on actions that we as a church can act on together and individually to solve the problems we face here in Wichita, in Kansas, and as a nation. Childcare can be arranged by calling Reverend Carter.

## Partner Church Greetings

Debbie Wadman, Partner Church Committee, posted on the church's Facebook a beautiful Christmas Greeting from Csaba and Eva Tudor. Eva's accompanying message noted that Casaba was nominated as Regional Bishop. He received 40% of the vote at the December 5 election, which was won by the incumbent bishop, Balint Benczedi Ferenc. Eva wrote Debbie, “Csaba gave a smart, marvelous speech.” We join Eva in being proud of the minister of our Partner Church in Transylvania.

## Facebook Seminar for Cyberphobics: Tuesday, January 13, 7-8:30 PM

Corey Swertfager and Rolando Gomez will reveal “everything you wanted to know” about Facebook at a hands-on session, Tuesday, January 13, 7-8:30 PM, at the church. The cut-off date for signing up is January 11. The class will be limited to 12. At publication time seven plan to attend. If more than four additional participants signup, a wait list will be established. Corey is creating a sign-up sheet which can be found in the library.



## January Worship Schedule

1 /4 Louis Goseland **Social Justice** Louis, chair of the Social Action Committee, will be sharing recent actions taken and supported by First Unitarian Universalists. What is the next step? Come hear Louis present!

1/11 Cristan Vitkus **Becoming a Congregation of Missionaries** Cristan offers a New Year's Challenge to the congregation – a call to serve our church and community

1/18 Marsha Diggs **Hakuna Matata "No Worries"** Is it a spiritual path, a higher plane of existence, or the cause of an uninvolved hopeless electorate? Join us for a little *Lion King* fun, and some serious thoughts about personal choices.

1/25 Rev. Carter **Pluralism and Censorship** We are blessed with a diverse and vibrant congregation. But how much should you have to censor your beliefs to accommodate another? Shouldn't you be accepted for who you are? Rev. Carter will address the thorny issue of pluralism during his presentation.

## Love Somebody? Remember Them On February 14

- Del Smith

First UU is planning a fundraiser to make it easy to remember loved ones on Valentine's Day. A silent auction from February 1-8 will feature items which will be sure to please most anyone. The list isn't complete yet, but will include baskets of sweets, jewelry, maybe a private serenade for your sweetie, or childcare while the parents take in a movie or have dinner out.

There will be details in UpDate as plans are firmed up. In the meantime, if you have something to contribute, let Elaine Edens of the Stewardship Committee know. We have a goal of 10-15 items on which to bid.

## The End of Dillons Cards?

- Anne Bailey

Yes, but it's a good thing. After January 31, 2015 we will no longer need to refill our Dillon's gift cards in order to earn rewards for our Church. Simply enroll your Plus Card online at [Dillons.com/communityrewards](http://Dillons.com/communityrewards). Once you've picked your favorite nonprofit (First UU, we hope) and enroll online, the Church will earn rewards every time you shop and use your Plus Card! Dillons will award up to \$500,000 to various organizations each quarter. No need to refill cards each time you shop; you only need to re-enroll once a year. There is no cost to enroll, and Community Rewards enrollment will not affect your fuel points or coupon discounts. There will be a way for those without internet access to sign up.

Watch for details as they are known: Weekly UpDates, Facebook and ListServ posts, the Website, and in Sunday Orders of Service. We'll keep you informed!

RE Corner

## "Calling all children and youth!"

Make Religious Exploration on Sunday mornings one of your New Year's Resolutions.

It's much more fun when you are here!

- Denise Jackson-Simon, DRE

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# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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## From The Eclectic Readers Group

**11:30 am, Friday, January 16.** Alice McDermott's *Charming Billy* is our selection. This book, winner of the 1998 National Book Award for Fiction is typical of McDermott's fiction, reflective of the way an individual's life can be distorted by the expectations of others. The *New York Times* reviewer noted that "her characters are mostly decent people -- yet they find themselves struggling to maintain their dignity in the face of increasing evidence that the world is a much darker, more capricious place than any of them cares to acknowledge. Telling stories is a reassuring way to sort things out, but storytelling (or, to be less gracious, lying) is always, as someone in *Charming Billy* puts it, 'a matter of interpretation.'"

We'll return to an old classic in February. Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* was written in 1951 in Cuba and published in 1952. It was the last major work of fiction he wrote and published in his lifetime. One of his most famous works, it is the story of an aging fisherman struggling with a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1953, it was cited by the Nobel Committee as contributing to Hemingway receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.

Join us for a brownbag lunch at 11:30 on the third Friday every month. All are welcome! – Del Smith, 316-612-0826.